

Consciousness in Crisis

An International Conference on Spiritual Crisis

15 - 16 september 2012 (The Netherlands)

The World Health Organisation has officially included Spirituality as a component in health impact assessment: the WHO constitution defines health as "a dynamic state of complete physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being". As such, health may be affected by suffering crisis experiences that are related to spirituality.

A spiritual crisis is specified as a process of transformation that includes "exceptional human experiences", examples of which are: altered states of consciousness, visions, paranormal experiences, energetic disturbances and unusual physical sensations. Experiences such as these are often associated with extreme emotions, ranging from numinous sublimity to profound anxiety. In this realm of existence, creativity and inspiration meet psychopathology.

At the conference, the following topics will be addressed:

- the experience of spiritual crisis
- treatment of spiritual crisis
- research into spiritual crisis
- spiritual crisis and the limits of science
- spiritual crisis and philosophical investigation

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Day 1: 15 september 2012

Consciousness in crisis (Science and Philosophy)

Place:

Leiden University

Lipsiusgebouw, Cleveringaplaats 1 (room 011), Leiden, The Netherlands

Throughout the ages, exceptional human experiences have triggered creative processes in science, philosophy and art. Moreover, they are massively reported in our society. These experiences may cause severe crisis in the individual. They are fascinating and dangerous, constructive and destructive. In our society their status is ambiguous. Individuals in whose lives these experiences manifest themselves are admired or pathologized. At this conference not only the function, meaning and potential of exceptional experiences and crisis is explored, but also coping strategies for both clients and therapists are examined.

09:00 *Registration & coffee*

09:30 *Consciousness in crisis: Introduction to the Conference Theme*

Prof. dr. Hans Gerding (Leiden University & Parapsychology Institute, Utrecht)

10:00 *Spiritual Crisis in DSM-IV and DSM-V*

Prof. dr. David Lukoff (Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, USA)

Visionary spiritual crises, such as mystical, psychic, near death, and alien encounter experiences, challenge our understanding of the world and can be confusing and frightening. In 1994, DSM-IV included a new diagnostic category for Religious or Spiritual Problem (V62.89) that covers a wide range of religious and spiritual issues in treatment. This talk reviews how this category contributed to the recent opening of the mental health field to serious consideration of spiritual issues in clinical practice.

11:00 **Coffee-break**

11:30 ***Spirituality and Religiosity in Psychotherapy***

Dr. Liane Hofmann (Institute for Frontier Areas of Psychology and Mental Health, Freiburg)

Central findings of a national survey with German psychotherapists about their attitudes and experiences concerning spirituality and religiosity will be presented. Furthermore some major approaches of integrating spirituality within professional psychotherapy as well as the necessary preconditions, potentials and pitfalls associated therewith, will be discussed.

12:30-13:30 **Lunch**

PARALLEL-SESSIONS

	Consciousness & Soul (in Dutch) Room: 003 Chair: Drs. Barbara Zwaan	Exploring Spiritual Crisis Room: 011 Chair: Drs. David Sars	Expanding Psychology Room: 005 Chair: Drs. Stella Lackore
13.30	<p><i>Wijzgerige bezinning op het karmische. Met bijzondere aandacht voor Nietzsche</i></p> <p>Dr. Gerard Visser (Leiden University)</p> <p>In deze voordracht zal worden ingegaan op betekenis en zin van een karmisch begrip van het leven en de wijze waarop Nietzsche daar in menig opzicht aan raakt.</p>	<p><i>The UK Spiritual Crisis Network</i></p> <p>Catherine G. Lucas M.A. (SCN, Spiritual Crisis Network, United Kingdom)</p> <p>The SCN exists to promote understanding and support for those going through profound personal transformation. We will look at how the SCN does this, its ethos of peer support and the value given to personal experience of spiritual emergence and emergency.</p>	<p><i>Exceptional Experiences: non-pathological aspects</i></p> <p>Dr. Elpine de Boer (Leiden University)</p> <p>Many exceptional experiences (out of body, trance, visions, hearing voices) are labeled as 'pathological'. Nonetheless these experiences are indispensable in the complex creative processes that contribute significantly at connectedness and meaning in our society.</p>
14.15	<p><i>Dromen als handelings-inspiratie. Het geval van een 'godsdienstfanaticus'</i></p> <p>Dr. Rico Sneller (Leiden University)</p> <p>Dromen inspireren zowel profeten als 'terroristen'. Mijn hypothese is dat 'gebiedende dromen' een dubbelzinnigheid bezitten die eigen is aan zowel de psyche van de dromer als aan de dimensie waarmee het gedroomde hem of haar confronteert: het 'religieuze'.</p>	<p><i>Spiritual Emergence and Emergency</i></p> <p>Drs. Pieter Loomans (Spiritual Emergency Network Germany)</p> <p>Founded in the USA by Stan and Christina Grof, the German SEN (spiritual emergence Network) exists since 1993. Primary goal is to provide guidance in spiritual processes and related crises.</p>	<p><i>Eckhart and Dogen: Mystical experience as the continuous self-revelation of being</i></p> <p>Prof. dr. A. van der Braak (VU University Amsterdam)</p> <p>Both Eckhart (1200-1328) and Dōgen (1200-1253) talk about mystical experience in the context of a continuous self-revelation of being, which can be uncovered through a spiritual practice that includes a form of mystical hermeneutics.</p>
15.00	<p><i>Inspiratie, vormgeving, melancholie</i></p> <p>Dr. Hein van Dongen (Filosofie Oost West)</p> <p>'Inspiratie' klinkt luchtig en verheven, maar wat te doen als de inspiratie chronisch ontbreekt? Vormgevingsproblemen kunnen leiden tot wat men 'creative illness' heeft genoemd. Creativiteit is geen recept voor succes.</p>	<p><i>Spirituality in psychiatry; why and how?</i></p> <p>Drs. Rogier Hoenders (Centrum Integrale Psychiatrie - Lentis)</p> <p>In this lecture the importance of spirituality in psychiatry will be discussed based on Western scientific studies, other sources of knowledge and also based on clinical cases in the center for integrative psychiatry, Lentis, Groningen.</p>	<p><i>High Sensitivity: A normal condition pathologicalised</i></p> <p>Prof. dr. Anna Bosman (Radboud University)</p> <p>Although psychologists tend to classify 'high sensitivity' as a disorder, highly sensitive people have probably been around ever since the emergence of Homo sapiens. To understand (high) sensitivity, I will relate its origin and meaning to empathy (einführung), and intuition.</p>

15:45 **Tea-break**

16:30 *Can a Near-Death Experience be defined as a spiritual crisis?*

Dr. Pim van Lommel (cardiologist, author of *Consciousness beyond Life*)

A Near-Death Experience (NDE) is an unforgettable confrontation with unlimited dimensions in our consciousness, and people appear to be permanently changed by an NDE. Despite the mostly positive experience the NDE is also a traumatic event, with strong feelings of depression, homesickness and loneliness, and hardly any acceptance by healthcare workers and family.

17:30 *Information: Network Spiritual Crisis*

18:00 *Closing*

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Day 2: 16 september 2012

**Consciousness in crisis
(Spirituality)**

Place:

**International Theosophical Centre
Meentweg 9, Naarden, The Netherlands**

On this second day spiritual aspects of 'consciousness in crisis' are explored. Spirituality, understood as a process of purification and a quest for meaning, can not only be seductive, fascinating and inspiring, but also threatening, unpredictable and catastrophic. Personal spiritual narratives, together with therapeutical and philosophical interpretations are the focussing point this day. The presentations are interactive with much room for dialogue.

09.00 *Registration & coffee*

09:30 *Welcome*

prof. dr. Hans Gerding

09:45 *Altered States and Spiritual Awakening In Psychosis*

Prof. dr. David Lukoff (Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, USA)

During psychotic episodes, many people have genuine spiritual experiences, even mystical ecstatic experiences. I will describe my own such experience when I was 23, and also present my clinical work as a psychologist helping clients integrate a psychotic episode.

10:45 *Coffee break*

11:15 *Spiritual Emergency: How Can We Work Therapeutically With It?*

Catherine G. Lucas, MA (Spiritual Crisis Network, UK)

Drawing on personal stories and case studies, we will explore the dangers and opportunities of spiritual emergency. We will then focus on three key phases of moving successfully through such profound personal transformation, along with the central tool of Mindfulness.

12:15 *Kundalini Awakening as Spiritual Emergence/y: Classical and Clinical Perspectives*

Dr. Liane Hofmann (Institute for Frontier Areas of Psychology and Mental Health, Freiburg)

Central historical stations of the transcultural transfer of concepts and practices of the Indian Kundalini-Yoga traditions and professional psychology and psychotherapy will be sketched. The main focus will be on clinical-psychotherapeutic issues, such as phenomenology, psycho-diagnostic classification and treatment of kundalini-type clinical problems.

13:15 *Lunch break*

14:15 *Music experiment.*

Escape from Big Brother – Exploring morality from within

Ilebele Abel (PhD-researcher Leiden University)

Moral ambiguity in society may induce individual psychological crisis. In the face of ruling determinism disputing free will and soul, undercurrent ideologies claiming mind-matter correspondence revive. A psi-related apparatus producing indeterminate music is presented, inquiring inner revelations from the experience.

15:15 *The diagnostic, therapeutic and prognostic value of dreams in the individuation process*

Drs. Pieter Loomans (Spiritual Emergency Network Germany)

Dreams can give hints to the question if ego-structuring or ego-transcending should be the main objective in guiding people to cope with experiences and crises related to consciousness development.

16:15 *Tea break*

17:00 *Spiritual crisis and philosophical counseling*

Prof. dr. Hans Gerding (Leiden University & Parapsychology Institute)

Since the mid-eighties philosophical counseling is gaining ground. A free 'philosophical space' proved to be effective for a special category of clients who want to explore their (often not sought after) exceptional experiences, including spiritual crisis.

18:00 *Closing*

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Registration: www.parapsy.nl

Admission fee on both days includes lunch, coffee, thea

Registration before 15 juli:

Day 1 + Day 2	€	170,-
Day 1	€	100,-
Day 2	€	90,-

Registration after 15 juli:

Day 1 + Day 2	€	200,-
Day 1	€	120,-
Day 2	€	110,-

Students:

Day 1 + Day 2	€	100,-
Day 1	€	55,-
Day 2	€	50,-