



In Memory of Friederike Schriever

OBITUARY

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It is unspeakably sad for me, in my capacity as managing director of the Gesellschaft für Anomalistik and as a friend, to honor and mourn a long-time member and supporter of our association – and this only seven years after the much too early death of her life companion Gerd H. Hövelmann.

Friederike Schriever joined the Gesellschaft für Anomalistik, the German sister organization of the Society for Scientific Exploration, in January 2012. At that time, her own research activities in the field of parapsychology and anomalistics were already several years old. She initially studied mathematics, biology, educational science, and psychology at Bielefeld University. One of her professors was Prof. Dr. Oskar Lockowandt (1935–2000), who completed his doctorate in 1966 at the Psychological Institute of the University of Freiburg on the subject of graphology under Prof. Dr. Robert Heiß (1903–1974). At that time, Prof. Dr. Hans Bender (1907–1991) was one of the directors of the Institute of Psychology. Bender was an enthusiastic advocate of research into paranormal phenomena, gave lectures on this subject to large audiences, and had already gained a public reputation as an expert in this field by this time. Lockowandt was obviously not unaffected by this enthusiasm and aroused the interest of his student Friederike Schriever in these topics, who, with her own skepticism, asked how such elusive phenomena could be scientifically investigated at all. Lockowandt said: “Why don’t you go to Professor Bender in Freiburg and do a research internship at the Institut für Grenzgebiete der Psychologie und Psychohygiene [IGPP – Institute for Frontier Areas of Psychology and Mental Health]. Then you’ll see.”¹

In addition to his work as a university professor, Bender also headed the private IGPP, which was financed by foundation funds. This still existing institute has been dedicated to researching paranormal phenomena and all their various aspects for almost 75 years. In 1984, Friederike climbed the Eichhalde for the first time, the place with the beautiful view over the city of Freiburg, which was also called the “magic hill” by some, where the IGPP was located for the first 50 years of its existence. Friederike, who

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was well grounded – after all, she had grown up on a large farm – and in some respects could be described as sober or even skeptical, was not at all sure at the beginning what to expect from the “ghost professor” or “Doctor Psi”, as Bender was sometimes somewhat disrespectfully called. He was very impressed by Friederike’s accuracy, thoroughness, and intelligence and quickly offered her a student assistant position at the institute after her research internship.

Friederike worked at the IGPP from 1985 to 1987 and was significantly involved in two research projects. The first concerned the analysis of so-called truth dreams, i.e., dreams that were later said to have come true. These dream reports were part of a collection of around 3,000 dreams that the German actress Christine Mylius had written down since 1953 and sent to the IGPP, including what she believed to be corresponding later events.

In her precise and critical manner, Friederike analyzed the dreams to see whether the “truth content” or predictive character of the dream content could really be confirmed by subsequent events, but also whether the dreams in which this seemed plausible had a particular structure. This study formed the basis of her diploma thesis entitled “Zur Untersuchung präkognitiver Traumhalte” [On the investigation of precognitive dream content]. The key findings of this work have also been published in two English versions (Schriever, 1987, 1988).

Another important piece of work that Friederike carried out together with psychologist Monika Huesmann concerned the reanalysis of case reports on a total of 54 haunting cases that had been investigated by the IGPP between 1947 and 1986. On the one hand, the research team attempted to statistically record the frequency of certain phenomena and compare them with the values of studies from Great Britain and the USA, and on the other hand, to obtain more precise information about the people affected by hauntings. The importance of this work, which was first published in German in 1989, is demonstrated by the fact that an English translation of the article was published almost two years ago (Huesmann & Schriever, 1989, 2022).

Friederike also presented her research at conferences and international specialist conferences, for example, with five lectures at workshops of the Scientific Society for the Advancement of Parapsychology (WGFP) in Offenburg, partly together with Monika Huesmann, but also in 1987 at the Convention of the Parapsychological Association in Edinburgh and in 1999 at the PA Convention in Palo Alto/California.

Her last major work related to the field of parapsychology was her doctoral thesis entitled “Grenzbereiche der Realitätserfassung” (Border areas of reality percep-

tion), which was published in 1998 as an almost 800-page book. In this extremely elaborate work, Friederike investigated how people who believe in paranormal phenomena differ from non-believers in their reasoning as to why they believe in them (Schriever, 1998, 2000).

Here, we find a combination of three of Friederike’s interests: parapsychology, personality psychology, cognitive psychology, and linguistics. It is no coincidence that she was also a member of the “Society for German Language”. The fact that she has been the owner and director of two language schools for children with reading and spelling difficulties (LOS Institut) for the last 20 years, after gaining experience as a research assistant at the Department of Educational Science at the Free University of Berlin from 1988 to 1993 and at the University of Giessen from 1999 to 2001, seems very logical to me. It also points to the determination with which Friederike was able to pursue her interests and make them concrete.

However, this inevitably led to him turning away from his own research projects in the field of parapsychology, as these could simply no longer be realized due to time constraints. Thus, an obituary written jointly with Gerd in 2004 for the parapsychologist Prof. Dr. Robert L. Morris, who died all too soon, and the co-authorship of a text entitled “The Case History as an Exemplar: The Recurrent Apparitions of Emélie Sagée” on a historical case of strange “apparitions” her last two publications related to parapsychological topics (Hövelmann et al., 2019; Hövelmann & Schriever, 2004). The case of the apparitions of Emélie Sagée had occupied Gerd a great deal, and he had prepared a chapter for an anthology together with two other authors, the completion of which had been prevented by his death. Thankfully, Friederike was persuaded to bring together the existing text sections by Gerd and the two other authors and create a complete text from them, which was then published in 2019.

This shows how much Friederike wanted Gerd’s work to be honored and – as far as she was able – to continue it in his spirit. It is, therefore, easy to understand why she has willingly made the rooms of her LOS Institut available for the annual conferences of the Gesellschaft für Anomalistik since 2018. A conference should have been held there again this year in May, and it is painful that this can no longer be the case. Not only did we enjoy being guests there, but she had also looked forward to these conferences. This was also reflected in the generous care with which she hosted us.

Friederike and Gerd are a story that the international parapsychological community sees as an inseparable unit. The two met through parapsychology, regularly attended international conferences together, and made many friends through their engaging nature. The shock and

dismay of these friends and colleagues was correspondingly great when they learned of Friederike's death. One of them, the parapsychologist Mario Varvoglis, director of the Institut Metapsychique International (IMI) in Paris, shared a personal memory of Friederike with colleagues as a token of his appreciation, which I would like to pass on with his permission. Mario wrote on February 26:

I held both Friederike and Gerd Hövelmann in high esteem – a wonderful couple. Over the last three or four decades, our paths crossed regularly at Bial symposia, EuroPAs and PA congresses, and we always made sure we got to spend some time together. One of my last encounters with Friederike was at PA 2017 in Athens. She was still very affected by the recent loss of her partner, and I found her to be particularly melancholic, even frail. But in some moments, her face lit up again, and you could see the beauty of her soul through the sadness.

Friederike will be missed very much.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ E-Mail from Friederike Schriever to Cedar S. Leverett dated December 4, 2022.

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