



BIWEEKLY COLLOQUIUM  
Monday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 4:15 p.m.

THE ROLE OF RITUALIZED MIND ALTERATION IN THE ORIGINS  
OF THE SYMBOLIC MIND:  
A NEW PERSPECTIVE FROM COGNITIVE SCIENCE

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The potential roles of altered states of consciousness and hallucinations for the early stages of human prehistory have been hotly debated. Recently, this debate has become caught up in disputes about how such altered states could have been induced and what kind of hallucinations might have been experienced. In this article I first sidestep these issues in order to return to the big question of why we might expect such states and experiences to have been important in the first place. I draw on ongoing developments in the cognitive sciences to provide several interdependent reasons for hypothesizing that they played an essential role in the origins and evolution of the symbolic human mind. Finally, I show that this hypothesis is unaffected by current disputes about the potential availability of certain psychoactive substances in prehistoric Africa and Europe.

Selected reading material:

Froese, T. (2013). Altered states and the prehistoric ritualization of the modern human mind. In C. Adams et al. (Eds.), *Breaking Convention: Essays on Psychedelic Consciousness* (pp. 10-21). London: Strange Attractor Press

Froese, T. (2015). The ritualised mind alteration hypothesis of the origins and evolution of the symbolic human mind. *Rock Art Research*, 32(1), 90-97

Froese, T., Woodward, A., & Ikegami, T. (2013). Turing instabilities in biology, culture, and consciousness? On the enactive origins of symbolic material culture. *Adaptive Behavior*, 21(3), 199-214

Venue: Leibnizstraße 1, Seminar Room 204