

**[Esotericism, Magic, and Occultism : Virtual Conference :
NEW DEADLINE EXTENSION DEC 13 : SWPACA \(Southwest
Popular/American Culture Association\) Feb 22-27](#)**

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Type:

Conference

Date:

December 13, 2020

Location:

New Mexico, United States

Subject Fields:

Popular Culture Studies, Humanities, American History / Studies, Contemporary History, Cultural History / Studies

Call for Papers

ESOTERICISM, OCCULTISM, AND MAGIC

Southwest Popular / American Culture Association (SWPACA)

DEADLINE EXTENDED AGAIN!

42nd Annual Conference, Week of February 22-27, 2021

<http://www.southwestpca.org>

Submission **Deadline EXTENDED FURTHER to December 13, 2020**

For the 2021 Conference, SWPACA is going virtual! Due to concerns regarding COVID-19, we will be holding our annual conference completely online this year. We hope you will join us for exciting papers, discussions, and the experience you've come to expect from Southwest.

Proposals for papers and panels are now being accepted for the 42nd annual SWPACA conference. One of the nation's largest interdisciplinary academic conferences, SWPACA offers nearly 70 subject areas, each typically featuring multiple panels. For a full list of subject areas, area descriptions, and Area Chairs, please visit <http://southwestpca.org/conference/call-for-papers/>

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<https://networks.h-net.org/node/73374/announcements/6921828/esotericism-magic-and-occultism-virtual-conference-new-deadline>
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Esotericism, Occultism, and Magic invites proposals relating to magical worldviews, practices, and representations, as well as consciousness transformation, hidden meanings, the power of transmutation, and related phenomena. Characteristic beliefs and practices include: arcane symbolism, imagery, and aesthetics; unseen forces and spiritual intermediaries; synchronous patterns, non-ordinary causation, and anomalous processes. Examples of concepts and systems include Theosophy, Freemasonry, Rosicrucianism, Hermeticism, Gnosticism, Sufism, Satanism, Tantra, witchcraft, sorcery, demonology, astrology, alchemy, shamanism, yoga, parapsychology, and psychic and paranormal phenomena, along with beliefs and practices relating to altered states of consciousness, overlapping with the study of mysticism as well as New Age spirituality, channeling, positive thinking, manifest intention, guardian angels, and Ascended Masters. Esoteric, occult, and magical ideas, beliefs, and practices appear in every culture and civilization; contemporary media and popular culture have embraced them enthusiastically, yet at times have reacted against them. The impact of esotericism, occultism, and magic on genre formation/content and popular cultural perceptions has been profound.

Individual papers, organized panels, and roundtable discussions welcomed. Please contact the area chair with questions/suggestions. Special themes for 2021 may include: esoteric and occult conspiracism, including belief as well as representation; esotericism, occultism, and magic in the counter-culture including revolutionary, radical, and/or extremist movements; the Immediatism of Hakim Bey and related contributions to chaos magic; political rhetoric and endeavor (e.g.: the cursing of political figures; the secular Satanism of Lucien Greaves and the Satanic Temple; esoteric Traditionalist and identitarian occult memes in the alt-right, etc.); esoteric, occult, and magical heritage of minority groups and its role in the construction of identity.

Sample Ideas for topics categorized by media:

Literature: Fiction by practitioners, such as Philip K. Dick, William S. Burroughs, C. S. Friedman. Books by practitioners (for example, Evola, Gurdjieff, Crowley, Anton LaVey, Gerald Gardner, Peter Carroll, Edgar Cayce). Influences and themes in magical realism, speculative fiction, gothic fiction, weird fiction, historical fiction. Fiction influential on practitioners, such as *Zanoni*, Goethe's *Faust*, *The Illuminatus!* Trilogy. Historical representations of magicians, witches, and wizards, including stylized and mythic figures (Merlin, Morgan La Fey, Circe, Medea, Kostchie the Deathless, etc.), in genre fiction (contemporary Arthurian adaptations) or

modernizations (Neil Gaiman). New Age and/or popular manifestation guides, such as *The Secret*. Conspiracist and/or extra-terrestrial cosmologies related to esoteric concepts (David Icke, the Seth transmissions to Jane Roberts, the Michael channelings, etc.).

Visual Art: Examples, Wassily Kandinsky, Austin Spare, Rosaleen Norton, Nicholas Roerich, Michael Bertiaux.

Film: Content as in *The Color Out of Space*, *The VVitch*, *Hereditary*, *Midsommar*, *The Skeleton Key*, *The Serpent and the Rainbow*, *The Ninth Gate*, *The Conjuring* series, *The Wicker Man*; Gnostic allegories such as *The Matrix*, *Dark City*, *The Truman Show*; explorations of consciousness such as *eXistenZ*, *Altered States*, *2001 Space Odyssey*; representations of occult aesthetic, such as *Eyes Wide Shut*, or traumatic initiation, such as the *Saw* series; stylized depictions of magicians, wizards, and witches (*Dr. Strange*, *Shazam*, *Maleficent*, *Oz*, *Warlock*, *Thulsa Doom* of *Conan*, *Jafar of Aladdin*) ; esoteric/occult films such those by Kenneth Anger and Alejandro Jodorowsky; pseudo- and crypto-history in fiction (*Tomb Raider*, *National Treasure*); New Age documentaries, such as *The Secret*; conspiracist receptions of esoteric and occult history, such as *Zeitgeist*.

Television: Theme and/or content examples *The Witcher*, *The Magicians*, *Stranger Things*, *Shadowhunters*, *Game of Thrones*, *The Man in the High Castle*, *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*, *Twin Peaks*, *Westworld*, *Penny Dreadful*, *DaVinci's Demons*, *American Horror Story*, *American Gods*, *Lucifer*, *True Detective* (season one), *Twelve Monkeys*, *Hannibal*. *Strange Angel*, fictionalized biography of occultist/magician Jack Parsons. Significant protagonists and anti-heroes; fourth-wall-breaking or uncanny figures, presented with esoteric, occult, or quasi-ritualistic aesthetics (Dr. Hannibal Lecter, Frank Underwood of *House of Cards*).

Comics / Graphic Novels: Contain esoteric, occult, and magical motifs and tropes. Some are actively esoteric; Grant Morrison claims *The Invisibles* and *Promethea* as personal magical workings; the graphic novels of Neil Gaiman embrace esoteric, occult, magical themes and

characters.

Music: Specific artists (e.g., Genesis P-Orridge, David Bowie, Coil, Marilyn Manson, Ghost, Watain, Dissection, Behemoth, Wardruna, Tori Amos, Loreena McKennitt, Gustav Holst), genres (black metal, viking/Nordic ambient, apocalyptic folk, witch house).

Video Games: Theme and content, e.g., *The Witcher*, *Silent Hill*, *Darkest Dungeon*, *Cultist Simulator*, *Deus Ex*, *Dark Souls*, *Xenogears*, *Devil May Cry*, *Arx Fatalis*; pseudo-history *Assassin's Creed*, *Tomb Raider*; historical worldviews, *Civilization VI* (secret societies), *Crusader Kings* (cults, witchcraft, demonolatry).

Tabletop Roleplaying Games: White Wolf's *Mage* (*World of Darkness* generally), Atlas Games *Unknown Armies*, Monte Cook's *Invisible Sun*. RPGs have influenced the conception of magic in popular culture across media, and present extensive representation of magical figures. *Warhammer* and *Warhammer 40K* are notable in having contributed aesthetics, imagery, content, and specific demonic figures adopted by actual chaos magic practitioners.

Other possible topics:

Influence of esoteric/occult/magical/New Age beliefs, practices, symbols on popular culture and aesthetics (e.g., memes, clothing, tattoos, jewelry).

Influence of popular culture on esoteric/occult/magical beliefs, practices, and practitioners (e.g., Lovecraft mythos as actual magical practice, fictional gods of chaos in Chaos Magic, and real vampire communities using concepts from *Vampire: The Masquerade*).

Popular beliefs about esotericism/occultism/magic: fads, trends, moral panics, witch-hunts, witch-crazes, conspiracy theories (e.g., occult-conspiracism in QAnon; Illuminati paranoia, bloodline of the Holy Grail beliefs, Satanic Ritual Abuse scandals).

Reactions and polemics against esoteric/occult/magical beliefs and practices.

All proposals must be submitted through the conference's database at <http://register.southwestpca.org/southwestpca>

For details on using the submission database and on the application process in general, please see the Proposal Submission FAQs and Tips page at <http://southwestpca.org/conference/faqs-and-tips/>

Individual proposals for 15-minute papers must include an abstract of approximately 200-500 words. For information on how to submit a proposal for a roundtable or a multi-paper panel, please view the above FAQs and Tips page.

SWPACA will offer registration reimbursement awards for the best graduate student papers in a variety of categories. Submissions of accepted, full papers are due January 1, 2021. SWPACA will also offer registration reimbursement awards for

select undergraduate and graduate students in place of our traditional travel awards. For more information, visit <http://southwestpca.org/conference/graduate-student-awards/>. Registration for the conference will be open and available in late fall. Watch your email for details!

In addition, please check out the organization's peer-reviewed, scholarly journal, *Dialogue: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Popular Culture and Pedagogy*, at <http://journaldialogue.org/>

If you have any questions about the Esotericism, Occultism, and Magic area, please contact its Area Chair, Dr. George J. Sieg (georgejsieg@gmail.com) / 505 440 2105

We look forward to receiving your submissions!

Contact Info:

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Area Chair : Esotericism, Occultism. and Magic (Southwest Popular/American Culture Association)

Philosophy : Liberal Arts (Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute)

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