

Consciously Illicit : Transgression in Western Esotericism

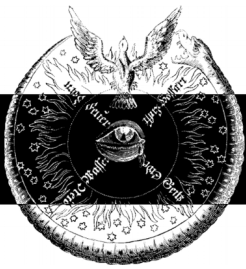
6-7 June 2018 ← Brno, Masaryk university ◦ Czech Republic

The traditions and ideas which are part of what in the academic sphere is currently defined as Western Esotericism, have, for the most part, operated on the fringe of mainstream religious thinking. These were sometimes integrated but depending on the era either more in opposition with the predominant religious current or simply tolerated. Most of its fascination for the public is drawn from a basic concoction of mystery, exclusivity and the forbidden. This has generated reactions which have ranged from violent to relentless attraction, an unyielding call towards that which is considered as a spiritual taboo, to become a renegade and possibly for this reason, being more in line with a perceived authentic extramundane. It is exactly this last sentiment that our conference will address, the men, women and traditions which in time have willingly opposed societal and religious or spiritual conformity.

More specifically, this conference will research how, within the context of Western Esotericism, groups or individuals are willing to violate or break taboos, transgressing social boundaries or values. In particular, we will investigate the underlying motivations which push an individual or group to transgress a perceived or established social or spiritual normativity. It will, moreover, investigate the appearance, action and consequences of taboo violation. Rather than taking the perspective of societal opinions towards minority transgressive groups the direction of research will concentrate on the insider perspective of the dissidents. We will investigate whether the insiders consider themselves to be effectively dissident, whether they wish to keep their practices public or private and what their objectives and motivations are for transgressing. However, the conference will not exclude societal or external perceptions as transgression maintains reactionary characteristics or generally in opposition to a perceived overpowering majoritarian presence. Another key aspect will rest within historic investigation as the perception of transgression is necessarily different within the context of Antiquity as opposed to the Renaissance or the Contemporary era.

Topics we want to address include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Western Esotericism and the desire for power: A utilitarian approach to violating taboos and transgressing. To do whatever it takes to acquire supernatural powers and advantages.
- Western Esotericism and societal taboos: Self-construction as an adversary. Voluntarily incarnating the consideration of what society considers as “dark” and “evil” in order to shock, protest or teach.
- Western Esotericism in crime, violence, immorality and illegal acts: Esoteric Nazism, non-consensual human sacrifice, The Order of Nine Angles, committing crimes for magical practices.
- Western Esotericism, on the fringes of the outcast: Dissidence within outsider groups. The spiritual Left Hand Path has tendencies which go against the traditional view of



magical and mystical practices which are per se already a dissident societal subculture. The degrees of dissidence can vary however the central point remains within the pursuit of damnation as a goal for spiritual superiority or enlightenment.

- Western Esotericism and westernization of alien religions: Re-interpretation and association with practices and traditions perceived as transgressive from within a Western esoteric framework such as the Aghiori, but also the cultural perception of Voodoo, Candomblè, Paleros associated to black magic in the imagination of the general public.

Scholars and students who wish to participate must submit their proposals by 28 February 2018 (**extended deadline**) using the conference's [online registration form](#). There is no conference fee. The conference barbecue and social event have a cost of 20 €.

- You will find all the important dates (including deadlines for the submission of abstracts) in the home section. Webpages: <http://religionistika.phil.muni.cz/consciously-illicit/>
- The conference will be in English. Proposals for papers (including abstracts of 200-300 words in length) are to be submitted via the [registration form](#).
- Each paper will be given 20 minutes + 10 minutes for the discussion.
- If you have any questions, please contact the organizers via this e-mail, consciously.illicit@gmail.com

Selected conference papers will be considered for publication in a thematic section of the international journal of CASR [Religio: Revue pro religionistiku](#).

We look forward to seeing you in Brno!

On behalf of the organizing committee, Yours sincerely,

Miroslav Vrzal

Tancredi Marrone

Zdenko Vozár

David William Mac Gillavry

František Novotný

Andrej Kapcár

If you have any questions or issues with registration, please contact the organizers via the conference's e-mail, consciously.illicit@gmail.com.