

## Call for Papers: ESOGEN Symposium – Esotericism, Gender, and Sexuality (April 16, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

The Esotericism, Gender, and Sexuality Network (ESOGEN) welcomes proposals for an international graduate student symposium, to be held at the University of Amsterdam on April 16, 2020.

From antiquity until the present, individuals have deployed esoteric ideas to explicate, challenge, or overhaul traditional binaries of sex and gender; as such, the history of Western esotericism overlaps with that of feminism, eugenics, sexology, free love, celibacy, gay and lesbian liberation, polyamory, gender non-conformity, and other such currents. Despite these convergences, gender and sexuality have only recently emerged as key analytical categories within the study of esotericism, and many of their implications are yet to be explored. With this in mind, ESOGEN was founded in 2019 as a thematic network of the European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism (ESSWE).

The symposium welcomes students from all academic disciplines and parts of the world working towards an MA and PhD whose work approaches aspects of esotericism, gender, and sexuality broadly understood from antiquity until today, including Gnosticism, Hermeticism, and Neoplatonism, Hermeticism, the “occult sciences” (astrology, alchemy, magic), *Naturphilosophie*, Swedenborgianism, Rosicrucianism, occultism, Spiritualism, Neopaganism, Satanism, and New Age movements, as well as esoteric themes and motifs in literature, art, cinema, and other forms of popular (oc)culture. Submissions may highlight one or several of the following themes including, but not limited to:

- Gendered and sexual symbolism
- Representations and concepts of gender including, but not limited to, masculinity/masculinities, femininity/femininities, transgender, agender, gender queerness, et cetera.
- Erotic imagery and sexual allegories in esoteric cosmologies, cosmogonies, and theologies
- Gendered role division in ritual and organization
- The role of women and/or LGBTQ persons
- Intersections of esotericism, gender, and sexuality in literature, art, cinema, and other forms of popular (oc)culture
- Gender nonconformity, androgyny, and hermaphroditism in symbolism and practice
- Non-normative or “deviant” sexual modalities and practices (e.g., polyamory, celibacy, BDSM, sex work)
- Esotericism and gender/sexual politics (e.g., feminism, gay and lesbian liberation)
- Sexual occulture

We also welcome proposals focusing on methodological issues relevant to the study of esotericism, gender, and sexuality, pertaining to, e.g., historical-archival research, translation, ethnography, feminist methodologies, interviews, and online research.

You are welcome to submit a proposal for **one** of two presentation formats, which differ in structure:

- 1) **A 15-minute conference paper**, which presents a targeted area of your research and makes an argument. Your proposal should include an abstract of no more than 200

words including the title of your talk, as well as a biographical statement of no more than 50 words, listing your name, affiliation, level of study, and research interests.

- 2) **A 6-minute lightning thesis presentation** including 20 PowerPoint slides (20 seconds for each, instructions to follow), which gives an outline of your thesis topic and research questions, and identifies methodological and/or conceptual questions you wish to discuss with the group. Your proposal should include a title for your presentation, as well as a biographical statement of no more than 50 words, listing your name, affiliation, level, and research interests (no abstract required).

The event is organized in collaboration with the Center for History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents (Center HHP) at the University of Amsterdam, with the support of the ESSWE Sponsorship Programme for Independent Scholarly Initiatives.

Please submit your proposal to [m.hedenborgwhite@uva.nl](mailto:m.hedenborgwhite@uva.nl) no later than **February 15, 2020**.

Applicants will be notified of acceptance via email on or before February 29, 2020. At this point, lightning thesis presenters will receive further instructions how to structure the PowerPoint slides.

The event is free of charge and open to the public. A limited number of seats are available.