

# Esotericism and the Varieties of *Transformation*

## Student Conference

**26-27 July, 2021**

The principle of ‘transformation’ manifests in many domains and on many levels in the history of esotericism. Whether we think about ideas/practices of individual deification, alchemical transmutation, or global consciousness change in New Age schemas, ‘transformation’ appears an almost unavoidable concept within the field. While not exclusive to esotericism (e.g. ‘transubstantiation’ in the Christian Eucharist), ideas of transformation do seem to occupy a privileged space specifically in esoteric belief systems and practices. Is this coincidental? Or are ‘transformative’ themes symptomatic of larger patterns intrinsic to esotericism? Claims of ‘ordinariness’ notwithstanding, we believe the terms ‘deviance’, ‘marginality’ and its cognates to still hold currency with respect to esotericism. One could reflect on whether it is the cause of inhabiting such marginal spaces – e.g. the boundary between science and religion – that esotericism displays a natural propensity to ‘transformative’ ideas.

Deemed transformative times, we believe the present to be a particularly fitting moment to examine the esoteric facets of transformation as well as its relationship to religion, politics, science, ecology, gender, culture, and technology, to name a few domains.

We invite BA, MA, and PhD researchers to submit proposals for **20-minute presentations** connected, but not restricted, to the following topics and their relationships to esotericism:

- Jewish, Christian, and Islamic ideas of transformation
- ‘Transformation’ in cross-cultural analysis (Hinduism, Buddhism, ...)
- Deification from antiquity to present
- Therianthropy/Shapeshifting
- Magical/Occultist beliefs and practices of transformation
- Alchemy and transformation (material, spiritual, ...)
- Gender and sex (feminist/queer socio-politics, transformative sexuality, ...)
- Body modification
- Symbolisms of transformation (Tarot, alchemy, ...)

- ‘Transformative’ readings of mythology (mytho-alchemy, ...)
- Jungian ideas and practices of individuation/transformation
- New Age conceptions of consciousness change
- Ecology and transformation (Deep Ecology, ecofeminism, ecosex, ...)
- Biopolitics and esotericism (bio-determinism, eugenics, ...)
- Radical politics (esoteric utopian/socialist/anarchist/fascist ideas of transformation)
- Practices of transformation (ritual, initiation, music, drugs, ...)
- Representations/practices of transformation in art, literature, and film
- Psychedelic/entheogenic notions of transformation
- Post-/trans-humanism (futurism, cyborgism, augmentation, VR, ...)
- Sociologies of transformation (‘transformation’ as social capital, ...)

Paper proposals should include an abstract of up to **250 words**, and a short bio of up to **50 words**, including level of study, academic affiliation, and research interests. Proposals should be submitted no later than **February 19, 2021**. Applicants will be notified of acceptance by June 30. Please consider that this is an academic event and not a platform for the dissemination of ideological or commercial content.

Please send your proposals to [eso.transformation2020@gmail.com](mailto:eso.transformation2020@gmail.com)

**Attention artists and performers!** We invite you to submit proposals for 10 to 30 minute performances of any nature – the closer to the theme of ‘transformation’ the better! Naturally, presenters are more than welcome to perform as well.

The performance(s) will be held on the first evening of the conference (10/08) during the reception. Performance proposals are to be submitted by June 20, 2020. We will get in touch shortly thereafter.

**The conference fee is €15 per day. For students and scholars the conference is free of charge.**

There are a limited number of seats available. **Registration is required!**

Email us at [eso.transformation2020@gmail.com](mailto:eso.transformation2020@gmail.com) to reserve your seats.

The conference will be held at the **Embassy of the Free Mind**, Amsterdam.

Address: Keizersgracht 123, 1015 CJ Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

L. Faith Pramuk & Misha Kakabadze

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