



Pagan/Academic European Associates Network

The 2nd Online International PAEAN Conference

The changing of magic: Modern and ancient witchcraft



The conference is in cooperation with Pagan Federation International

The lectures focused on the different aspects of the changes of witchcraft during the years from ancient time to nowadays. The online conference in a platform in which scholars, pagans and non-pagans can engage in, includes, amongst other things, an inter-religious dialogue that will hopefully increase learning, understanding and developing from the combined discussions. The conference takes place on 09.10.2014 at 18:00-21:00 / CET.

Introduction and arrival/log-in – 18:00

The First Panel – Ancient witchcraft and its adaption

Susan Leybourne -Ancient Greek cave mystics, dark retreats and the search for the spirit world, MA student at the department of ancient religions at the University of Wales trinity Saint David.

Since ancient times all cultures have attempted to attune themselves to unseen forces, visions of a world beyond the physical and communion with revered ancestors, heroes and non-human teachers; the ancient Greeks were no different; and in this talk we will explore some of the practices that ancient Greek philosophers, mystics and shamans employed in their search for visions and teachings from another world. The development

of oracular powers, cave nymphaea and the famous oracle shrines of the ancient world have been explored in textual analysis in such authors as Homer, Hesiod, Vergil, Plutarch and Pausanias to name just a few; and excavations of cave oracles give scholars a wealth of new information for those interested enough to peel back the layers of history to experience actual valid techniques still carried out today in many cultures around the world. The power of darkness is well documented in consciousness research from Tibetan dark retreats, to Vodou initiations to the 19th exploring visionary states. What is it that the ancient Greeks knew about the dark and its effects on consciousness that modern seekers of spiritual knowledge can utilise? Century séance rooms to modern parapsychologists

Morgana Sythove, The Wheel of the year - Seasonal rituals in Wicca, International Coordinator at Pagan Federation International

The Second Panel – Western Esotericism practices and the academy

Dr. Kamila Velkoborská, Secrets, Initiations and Western Mysteries, Coordinator of CPASE, Czech Republic.

The paper aims at exploring the ideas of secrecy and initiation as the key concepts of the Western mysteries, in the past and today. Second goal is to explore the way these concepts are viewed and employed by contemporary pagans, witches and magicians in their group and individual practice. The paper draws on fieldwork research conducted in the Czech Republic and Austria since 2007.

Dr. Dmitry Galtsin, Wouter J. Hanegraaff and Paganism –, Rare Book Department, Library of Russian Academy of Science (Saint-Petersburg).

Prof. Wouter J. Hanegraaff is a founding figure of Western Esotericism studies in Europe, having held the post of first President of the European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism (2005-2013) and being made a professor of History of Hermetic Philosophy and related currents (at Amsterdam University). His mapping of Western Esotericism as the field of academic studies includes the notion of “Pagan” as the key

component which came to shape the range of phenomena that field comprises. The present report focuses on three Hanegraaff's texts

– a monograph “New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought” (1996), which includes a section on Neo-Paganism, a programmatic article “The Trouble with Images: Anti-Image Polemics and Western Esotericism” (published in *Polemical Encounters: Esoteric Discourse and Its Others*, 2007) and “Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture” (2013), which summarizes his view on how Western Esotericism was born and what it generally constitutes. The author of the report seeks to trace how notions of Pagan/Paganism develop in these texts and the role these notions play in Hanegraaff's thought concerning Western Esotericism.

Stanislav Panin, Insider and academia: phenomenon of “going native in reverse” in the study of religion and esotericism, Lecturer at the Department of Philosophy in D. Mendeleev University of Chemical Technology of Russia.

The concept of “going native in reverse” reflects the fact that nowadays more and more people involved in new religious movements and esoteric groups participate in academic activities related to the study of religion in general and particularly in the study of their movements. On the one hand, these people bring insider's perspective in the academia. On the other hand, they bring academic knowledge and critical mind in esoteric community and change it. This situation seems to be a positive tendency in the development of modern spirituality both for insiders and for the society in general, because contemporary knowledge and critical mind can make religious and esoteric currents more subtle and adequate for the modern world. But what is the future of this tendency in regard to an insider/outsider problem? Maybe they can change the academia by bringing new unexpected perspectives in the study of religion and esotericism. However, conservative academic elites can finally reject researchers who try to bring the insider perspective in the academia and even expel them from academic circles. In this case they will turn into a marginal group inside the academia, and for their skeptical colleagues they will remain to be those eccentrics who want “to wear the esoteric and the scholarly hat simultaneously”, as W. J. Hanegraaff put it. On the other hand, such

researchers may try to form a new discipline, so to speak an “esoteric divinity” that will fight for the place both in the academia and in the esoteric community in the next decades. However, the esoteric community itself may reject this tendency, because many of its participants today seem to have an inimical attitude toward to rationalism and the academia.

21:00- closing speech

We wish to thank the PAEAN conference committee for organising this event and the lecturers who participates in it.

The PAEAN Conference committee:

Morgana Sythove

Hili Ratzon

Daniel Exposito Romero