

RELIGION & **the** STRANGE

Boundary Making and Crossing

Boston University Graduate Program in Religion Conference 2019

CALL FOR PAPERS

Sunday, September 15, 2019

**“People are strange, when you’re a stranger.”
- The Doors**

Religions sanction and sacralize, they legitimate and legislate, creating rhythms for solidarity and comfort. But not everyone hears the same tune. Who defines the strange, and how? What does religion look like after sundown? Hungry ghosts, crystal visions, hidden realms, secret teachings, and a myriad of mysteries lie between and outside the lines of official histories of belief and practice. Is the study of religion adequately attuned to “the strange”? How do we listen to the margins, the unofficial, and the esoteric?

What happens to the concept of religion itself when we embrace the uncanny, the unusual, and the unknown?

Boston University’s Graduate Program in Religion Student Association is pleased to announce a **Graduate Student Conference** on “**Religion and the Strange.**” We invite papers from many disciplinary and theoretical perspectives and welcome creative and provocative presentations that open up new avenues of inquiry. **For more information, contact Chad Moore at cdmoore@bu.edu.**

POSSIBLE TOPICS INCLUDE:

Making Strange

How is strangeness produced and for what purposes? How are boundaries of religious normativity policed? What happens to those rendered outside such bounds? How should religious studies scholars account for the processes by which the heterodox, the heretical, the esoteric, or the exotic are generated?

Covenants and Covens

How does the concept of conformity impact perceptions of witchcraft and magic? Do secrecy and exclusivity heighten the effects of religious conformity? Can religious communities be defined by contracts?

Sojourners and Strangers

From invading caravans to faithful pilgrims, how does the framing of the journey affect the sojourner’s reception? What differentiates those who are unfamiliar from those who are unsafe? Between religious insiders and outsiders, what strange encounters emerge?

Consecrating and Conjuring

Spiritual entities are revered and sought after, exorcized and protected against. But why are some welcomed and others feared? Who has the power to invoke these entities, and in what ways have humans conceived their impact and effect in connecting the physical and spiritual world?

Queer as Folklore

How are hegemonic traditions opposed or subverted by other movements? How does popular culture challenge religious authority? What does the queering of religious systems look like on the ground? How do traditions exclude alternative ways of being and knowing?

Voices and Visions

From angelic messages and prophecies to divine inspiration and oracles, how do religious traditions negotiate the changes initiated by revelation? How do encounters with supernatural beings or visits to the heavens introduce new traditions or authenticate ideas? What happens when visions conflict or compete with one another?

Please submit a CV and a 300-word abstract by May 20, 2019 to BUreligionconference@gmail.com

