

Call for Papers

New Approaches to ‘Re-Enchanted’ Central and Eastern Europe

The Institute for Theoretical Studies of the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design
of Budapest (MOME)

in cooperation with

the Network for the Research of Modern Mythologies (MoMiMű),
the Hungarian Cultural Anthropology Association (MAKAT),
the SIEF Ethnology of Religion Working Group,

and

The ‘Re-Enchantment of Central and Eastern Europe’ Research Project (*Re-Ench-Eu*) at
Charles University in Prague

are pleased to announce their International Conference to be held in

Budapest, December 2-3, 2021

As is well-known, the idea has for decades been theorized and formulated of significant and constant religious transitions and transformations in the post-socialist part of Europe since the fall of socialist regimes. Inspired by the literature on “Western” spiritual and religious transformations, some authors have envisioned the “desecularization”, “re-sacralization”, “re-confessionalization” of the region, and the coming of the “post-secular” era. While others have questioned the validity of the secularization/desecularisation paradigm altogether. Recent decades, however, have not only demonstrated that these terms had sometimes too broad, imprecise, or controversial meanings, but also challenged the idea of a linear process of modernization. The unevenness of modernization can be considered a paradoxical yet indubitable late modern condition which implies that spiritual and religious transformations are happening unevenly in Europe today. Recent events and cultural phenomena such as the refugee and migration crisis, the emergence of neonationalism, the influx of conspiracy theories, or the COVID-19 pandemic suggest that Central-Eastern Europe might respond differently as compared to the rest of Europe. At the same time, it also suggests that religions, whether in its official or vernacular forms, and spiritualities, play an active role in these responses. Despite their diverse religious histories and denominational traditions, Central and Eastern European countries are associated by a common recent past under socialist regimes and official ‘state atheism’, and the subsequent transition to democracy and religious freedom. It could be argued that “re-enchantment” of social life contributes to what could be thought of as a Central- and Eastern European religious habitus and a region-specific spiritual milieu. Therefore, the notion of “re-enchantment” in the region bears a high explanatory force in the attempt to interpret and understand social changes, historical transformations, and cultural dynamics.

The aim of this conference is to shed light on the various dimensions and aspects of re-enchantment in Central and Eastern Europe. We invite paper proposals from different disciplines such as social anthropology, ethnology, sociology, folkloristics, religious studies, cultural studies, and arts that examine, but are not restricted to, the following questions:

- Is there anything eminently ‘Central-Eastern European’ in the so-theorised process of re-enchantment, and if so, what precisely?
- Is it appropriate to think of an “emergence” or “re-emergence” of some of these phenomena? Or is it more likely that they actually never fully disappeared from the individual and social and mental landscapes of Central-Eastern European peoples during socialism?
- How do new religious and spiritual movements interpret and respond to the current sociocultural and political transformations (e.g. the Covid-19 pandemic, migration and refugee crisis, growing diversity, populism)?
- What are the region-specific characteristics of re-enchantment’s artistic dimension? How does the material culture of re-enchantment differ from its “Western” parallels?
- How is ethnic and religious identity manifested in the artistic dimension of re-enchantment in Central-Eastern Europe?
- Who are the most prominent or charismatic figures of re-enchantment? What movements, modes of sociality and forms of authority emerge around these personalities?
- In what ways do new religious and spiritual movements use local heritage and traditions? How do invented and re-invented traditional forms emerge in these movements? How are they present in the ritual and artistic dimension of re-enchantment?

Guidelines for submissions:

The conference fee is 20 EUR (participation cost and coffee breaks). Participants are responsible for their own travel and accommodation costs.

Please submit your proposals to reenchanting@mome.hu

Submissions for papers should include a ca. 300-word abstract and a 100-word author’s bio.

Deadline for proposals: August 31, 2021.

Notification of acceptance/rejection: September 15, 2021.