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***Different Attitudes to Esotericism in Peter Ackroyd's and Dan  
Brown's novels***

Thesis Résumé Booklet

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## 1. Introduction: Bridging Ackroyd and Brown

The shift from religious paradigms to spiritual experiences and the emergence of occulture are some instances of the proliferation of esoteric conceptions within contemporary literature. Occulture, born from occult practices within the realm of popular culture, has transformed the whole idea of authoritative aspects of faith, reshaping them into personal paths of self-discovery and self-development. The ubiquitous character of these ideas since the 1960s, also fuelled by Romanticism and the Victorian era, is rooted in the accessibility, growing appeal, and decency of esotericism. Consequently, esoteric, and occult ideas, spiritualities, religions and practices continue to maintain their popularity within contemporary fictional world.

In this doctoral dissertation, I compare two differing approaches to the fictional utilisation of esoteric motifs in the selected novels by contemporary British writer Peter Ackroyd<sup>1</sup> and American writer Dan Brown.<sup>2</sup> They represent contemporary Anglophone literature and draw their inspiration from a similar pool of esoteric ideas. On the one hand, Peter Ackroyd's profound obsession with Englishness and the English literary tradition positions him as a visionary literary figure among fiction writers. By employing anti-realist methods, he offers brand new looks through his transcendental interpretations of both existent and non-existent events and characters from English literary history and culture. In contrast, Dan Brown, uses conspiratorial accounts of existing religio-cultural (hi)stories and presents them as alternative historical narrations.<sup>3</sup> I believe these variables underlie the authors' unique ways of representing occult ideas in their literary endeavours.

Esotericism, the occult, and occulture have been examined from diverse viewpoints, including mystical, religious, cultic, psychological, medical, and more. Although earlier literary texts have been widely analysed from the prism of esotericism, fictional esotericism has

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<sup>1</sup> Here, I side with the majority attributing Peter Ackroyd's writings to postmodernism (Chalupský 2012; 2016, 55–58; Miquel-Baldellou 2017; Wisner 2014; Farahmandfar 2022), even though he is not seeing himself in this or any other category (Chalupský 2016, 20, 54–55; Onega and Ackroyd 1996; Vianu and Ackroyd 2006).

<sup>2</sup> In case of Dan Brown's attribution to postmodernism (Liefeld 2005; Wagner 2007; Douglas 2016), here I agree with the minority of scholars regarding his alternative storytelling as presenting a "postmodern paradox" in terms of blurring the line between fact and fictions, yet in line with the realist tendencies of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>-century literature, in Günter Leypoldt's term "new realism 'after' postmodernism which recovers the interest in 'experience' and 'social relevance' that postmodernists had lost (2004, 19).

<sup>3</sup> Dan Brown and Peter Ackroyd are mainly being regarded as popular literature and high literature, respectively. By being evaluated as "'macdonalized' writing, ready-in-2-minutes, offered to a global palate for whom natural flavours are the remnants of a forever-gone world" (Calabrese and Rossi 2015, 433), Brown's texts face significant amount of criticism alike about being at all an example of proper literature (Brown 2006). However, to stay within the premises of the primary academic focus on the subject matter of this dissertation, I am restraining myself only to discussing the author's use of esoteric motifs.

received relatively limited scholarly exploration in contemporary literature. To the best of my knowledge, a comparative analysis of Peter Ackroyd and Dan Brown, and their use of esoteric devices, has not been approached from this perspective, while they have separately been subject to numerous studies. Thus, the academic world would benefit from further investigation into the literary representations of such esoteric practices in contemporary fiction, to which this work aims to contribute. The authors' motivations for incorporating esoteric themes, and the resulting structural, stylistic, and semantic changes that literary texts may undergo as an outcome, will also add to scholarly discussions about the place of esotericism in literature and the conceptualisation of fictional esotericism.

In terms of the selection of novels under investigation, I acknowledge that not all of Peter Ackroyd's fictions delve into esoteric themes with essential occult conceptions. *Hawksmoor*, *The House of Doctor Dee* and *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* are specifically centered around vital occult practices and concepts dealing with sacrificial rituals, homunculus, and golem creation, respectively. However, his other novels also do feature esoteric concepts to varying degrees, serving multiple objectives.

As to Dan Brown's novels, all of them delve into mysterious and often manipulative knowledge that is challenging to identify with. Nevertheless, these selected ones respond to the motifs found in Peter Ackroyd's novels in the sense that they also explore fundamental esoteric traditions. *The Da Vinci Code* covers the story of the Holy Grail, the sacred feminine origin of Christianity, and an occult ceremony of sacred marriage. *The Lost Symbol* illuminates the activities and characters associated with the fraternal organisation of the Freemasons, and *Origin* explores questions of the genesis according to three major religions and their future as explained within the context of the age of science. Therefore, the corpus of this dissertation revisits these six novels, each embracing some crucial esoteric lore. Their study will address some of the significant research questions in the realm of literary representations of esotericism. This includes exploring the core reasons behind the authors' engagement with this field and examining the outcomes of these encounters.

Being the products of the latest centuries, the novels under study can be categorised within the realms of postmodern literature, with realist elements in Dan Brown's works. Contemporary literature significantly benefits from the diverse array of occult practices, presented in particularly an intriguing manner. Therefore, the **primary objective of this dissertation** is to explore the use of such esoteric conventions in the contemporary literary contexts crafted by these two widely acclaimed authors. Through the analysis of selected novels by Peter Ackroyd and Dan Brown, **my research postulates the questions** of how and to what

extent esoteric motifs affect the historiography in Peter Ackroyd's novels and the factual aspects of Dan Brown's fictions. Furthermore, I aim to identify the motivations that drive these authors to take resources in esotericism. I believe that the findings to these inquiries will help in filling the existing gap in the comparative study of Peter Ackroyd's and Dan Brown's novels and contribute to the broader exploration of contemporary literary representations of esotericism.

These research questions should guide the intellectual, social, and cultural analyses of literary representations of esotericism through the given works of Peter Ackroyd and Dan Brown. Regarding the first research question, I argue that both Dan Brown and Peter Ackroyd, despite their distinct approaches to the occult, employ esoteric themes to challenge religious canons, create alternative rationality, convey the sublime and terror through mystical quests, play with history and serve commercial and marketing purposes. They are unafraid to craft quest-like or visionary narratives and to manipulate history in order to blur the perception of time. In this way, Peter Ackroyd's treatment of history blended with esoteric motifs results in historiographic metafiction, and Dan Brown's incorporation of life-like accounts give rise to conspiratorial alternative historical novels. As to the second research question, I argue that both authors' use of esoteric elements serve as a potent literary technique to directly engage readers' emotions, and influence their consumer behaviour.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

In this dissertation, I rely on the definition and understanding of *esotericism* as proposed by Antoine Faivre and further expanded by Wouter J. Hanegraaff. Esotericism is considered a "form of thought" or worldview dealing with the hidden, secret, "non-communicable, non-testable," experiential and absolute knowledge that is central to all forms of esoteric practices (Hanegraaff 2006, 2013, 87–101; Faivre 1994, 4–6; 2010, 1–7). As a result, esoteric conventions can vary significantly from one another depending on their methods and teachings for attaining this supreme knowledge. It is noteworthy to mention here that the term *occultism* is frequently used interchangeably with *esotericism*, although it has a different meaning today. As Antoine Faivre points out, this differentiation did not exist in the study of esotericism until the mid-nineteenth century when it was adopted to indicate a set of practices related to astrology, magic, alchemy, and the Kabbalah (1994, 34). For Antoine Faivre, esotericism constitutes a form of thought, while occultism is the method of "manipulating it" which

signifies a “form” of action or set of practices “that would derive its legitimacy from esotericism” (Faivre 1994, 35; Wistrand 2020). Sided with this very clear and comprehensible definition, I also use the term *occultism* to refer to a group of practices that originates from esoteric conventions and is employed for the mining of esoteric thought and attaining absolute knowledge.

For the **theoretical framework** of this dissertation, I adopt Wouter J. Hanegraaff’s two models of esotericism that he classified based on nature of the thought. He treats esotericism as an elusive concept of thought and identifies inner traditions, early modern enchantment, and postmodern occult as three varying models. I particularly rely on the last two as the fictional representations of esoteric currents in contemporary. Consequently, esoteric motifs that Ackroyd and Brown use, are the examples of esoteric thought originating from the premodern period and modelling the world as enchanted against the backdrop of contemporary age of technology and reason, and the traces of 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> reenchanted.

As a well-established literary device, esotericism emerged in early modern fictional writings of the early nineteenth century. These writings prominently featured elements of premodern esotericism, such as secret sciences, ritual magic, astrology, alchemy for the creation of doppelgängers, artificial life, like homunculi or golems, angelology and demonology, creeds of secret societies and sects, etc. (Szönyi 2020, slides #6-10). Falling under the gothic novel genre or early science or crime fiction, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1818) and James Hogg’s *The private Memoires and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) set a pioneering pace for the further employment of esoteric motifs within creative writing styles. Many works along with Dan Brown’s and Peter Ackroyd’s novels, carry on the traditions that the early modern prototypes set and now constitute modern literature of fictional esotericism.

In general, depending on the dominance in the inter-relationship between esotericism and fictional practices, the nature of this entanglement can be of two types: 1) practice-inspired fictions and 2) fiction-inspired practices. Practice-inspired fictions deal with fictional writings, which take their stimulus from esoteric practices. Fiction-inspired practices deal with fictional esoteric writings that fuel actual practices.

The genres of the studied novels are significantly appealing from a theoretical point of view, too, as they facilitate an intriguing use of esoteric motifs that differ from the mainstream utilisation of the novel genre. Peter Ackroyd’s historiographic metafiction mirror the postmodern genre of fiction that was conceptualised by Canadian literary theoretician Linda Hutcheon in her 1988 book *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*, which aims

at overcoming the separation of history writing between literary and theoretical realms within the poetics of postmodernism (Hutcheon 1995). This type of fiction is deeply aware of its self-reflexivity and paradoxical treatment of historical events and figures. The self-awareness that it imposes on fiction and history as human fabrication allows for the “rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past” (Hutcheon 1988, 5). It self-consciously claims that though historical events indeed occurred in the past, they are being written about from a positional standpoint of different subjects. At this point, Hayden White’s and A.R. Louch’s emphasis on history being a human construct is also utilized along with Hutcheon’s theory.

Dan Brown’s alternative historical fictions emerge from alternative history writing as a sub-genre of science fiction that emerged between the years 1871 and 1875 and suggested alterations to historical events or their different resolutions stemming from an “alternative locus (in space, time, etc.) that shared the material and causal verisimilitude of the writer’s world” (Suvin 1983). The production and dissemination of distorted knowledge about the actual past are products of the authors’ creative mind. However, this form of alternative historical narration is rich with instances where the fictional historical world is not only “asserted to be accurate, factual representations of reality” (Barkun 2003, 29) but also is argued “to offer a kind of knowledge about the past that factual historiography cannot” (Koenigs 2021, 141). These fictions, also known as “as-if or could-be fictions” (Mikkonen 2006; Miller 1997; Vaihinger 2021), do not act as a form of history or its replacement but rather as “a qualifying supplement” for shifting the emphasis from the accustomed usual to their possible concealed double (Koenigs 2021, 143). This style of historical construction plays with the actual perception of events *as if* they reflect truth and form an alternative historical category existing in parallel (Mikkonen 2006).

In the fifth chapter, when I identify the main motivations for the authors’ use of esoteric themes, I argue that they utilise it to cause the experience of the sublime during the readers’ encounter with the novel. The definition of the sublime that I use coincides with concept of “aestheticized terror” conveyed through mystical occult teaching, practices, quests and secrets involving monstrous, horrifying and bloody experiences present in the novels under study.

### **3. Peter Ackroyd’s Esoteric Narration**

Ackroyd’s literary endeavours are intrinsically connected to his relationship with London and its unique spirit in the same fashion belonging to the London Luminaries or Cockney Visionaries, like the pantomime and music hall artist Dan Leno, the well-known novelist



Charles Dickens, the English Romantic painter and Royal Academician Joseph Mallord William Turner, known as William Turner in his life-time, the famous poet William Blake, the architect Nicholas Hawksmoor, etc.<sup>4</sup> His distinctive way of writing includes his metaphysical presence inside the narration, along with his fictional characters, even though he is not explicitly present in the text. Ackroyd's fictions are imbued with mystical and esoteric motifs that bestow a transcendental quality upon the readers' perception of the novels, rendering them multi-dimensional. Ackroyd believes that there exists an interconnectedness between London's spirit and the creative sensibility of its denizens. This sensibility is not an individual property exclusive to a handful of people but rather is an open flow rejuvenated recurrently. Consequently, his concept of English literary sensibility is an atemporal, ever-present, orally transmitted canon that ascended from the dawn of the English civilisation to English writers and artists who are living forever and persist in feeding the "continuity of English literature" in the state of eternity called Albion (Ackroyd 2001).

As a devout believer in London's genius, Ackroyd's literary activity is built around this *sensibility*. His vision is so impressive that to understand it properly, Barry Lewis proposes "to reverse the metaphor of the city-as-human and to consider this English writer as if he were a city. He has his landmarks, his suburbs, and his neglected boroughs" (Lewis 2007, 3). These facets are manifested through his writing, borne out of his personal physical strolls along with London streets. Thus, his visionary embodiment of the city as a perpetual maze-like continuum is mirrored in his entire body of work, particularly his London novels, which show a mythical London, "whose roots go back to the dawn of civilization" (Lewis 2007, 2). The inclusion of esoteric motifs further serves for the transcendental disposition of spatial and temporal overlapping for metaphysical purposes, which gives way to the construction of occult city, transcendental time, and mythical unions.

As a member of the third-generation of historiographic metafiction writers who combine their artistic creativity with critical consciousness, Peter Ackroyd utilizes historiographic metafictional writing as his deliberate selection of expression. All three novels, along with some of his other works, correspond to the exact definition of historiographic metafiction introduced to literary theory by Linda Hutcheon. The self-reflexivity and self-awareness in the paradoxical

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<sup>4</sup> For Ackroyd, Cockney Visionaries are the creative individuals who reflect London's genius through their activities, regardless of the ethical or moral context. This sensibility, present in these people living across various historical periods, is materialised—consciously or unconsciously—through their works, serving as an expression of London's continuity. Further insights can be found in Ackroyd's lecture titled "London Luminaries and Cockney Visionaries" in *The Collection: Journalism, Reviews, Essays, Short Stories, Lectures*. (London: Random House UK, 2001).

treatment of historical events and figures identify his heritage since, for him, “the formal and playful use of historical style... placed very firmly at the heart of the English sensibility itself” (Ackroyd 2001). This dissertation shows that in Peter Ackroyd’s writing, history is his own construct, his retire into history, in which he modifies the very essence of historical evidence for the sake of particular moral and philosophical preoccupations. While re-writing history and infusing it with contemporary events, Ackroyd not only levels it with fictional composition but also plays with its conventional perception. The metafictional text, that he creates in this order, challenges both the traditional flow of the time and history’s only truth. His play with history involves the fusion of esoteric and occult elements, similar to North American “fabulation” and Spanish-American “magic realism,” as a way of challenging the “pre-modernist rationality” (Onega 1995, 95) Therefore, the historical motifs of his novels serve as a ploy for the disclosure of the silenced histories, and thus, Ackroyd presents his own version in supernatural environments, yet possible for comprehension.

#### **4. Dan Brown’s Occult Language**

Dan Brown’s Langdon series mainly deals with secretive speculations around ancient mysterious organisations and belief systems. Brown’s occult writing is profound due to the uncanny and thrilling themes that drive the narrative. He mainly relies on conspiratorial opinions that allow him to “blend fact and fiction in modern and efficient style to tell a story” (Minzesheimer 2013). Brown uses general occult topics as factual catalysts to maintain the continuous flow of the narration. He blends in the Harvard symbologist, Robert Langdon’s expertise in the symbolism surrounding these esoteric themes and creates scientific yet comprehensible interpretations to the existing currents. The background of the events is connected to some questionable dark moments in history from several centuries ago which are now abandoned or forgotten. These details are linked to one another in a specifically simple yet progressive relation, ensuring that complex and confusing implications loaded with intense historical information do not pose a sophisticated description that requires symbolic interpretations for solving the mysteries on behalf of the readers. Langdon does that for everyone. Brown himself presents the exact configuration of puzzles and keys for the next steps of Robert’s chases to build a smooth, logical flow that can be easily comprehended at once. Such linear development, infused with speedy hunts throughout picturesque urban landscapes, is the reason that makes Brown’s novels a “page-ripper” (Hesse 2013).

Dan Brown's infusion of occult practices injects an additional layer of excitement and intrigue into his writing, particularly in his exploration of the occult. By melding the coexistence of contradictory elements and mysterious, esoteric themes, Brown crafts narratives that are not only gripping but also intellectually stimulating. This juxtaposition of the rational and the mystical, the known and the enigmatic, serves to heighten the allure of his occult-themed works, offering a world where secrets, symbols, and hidden knowledge dance in dialectical unity, making all phases of the journey more thrilling and thought-provoking.

Dan Brown's historical narratives alter events or offer alternative resolutions that arise from a different context (in terms of space, time, and more) while maintaining a level of plausibility consistent with the world he has created. His stories, rich with conspiracy narratives, are designed to be presented as faithful and factual depictions of "reality". Brown presents historical events embellished with various elements of fictionality, driven by his desire to reinterpret and provide alternative perspectives on history. Consequently, his alternative histories do not convey entirely different straightforward religious histories but instead offer fresh interpretations or cultural historiography regarding the reception of existing religious conventions. These interpretations constitute a "moral grey area" that Brown deliberately crafts as a juncture where fact and fiction intersect, prompting questions about the possibility of alternative plots (Smith 2018).

To James Kaplan's question whether he is a conspiracy theorist, Brown replied by stating that he was "not in any way, shape, or form" (Kaplan 2009). He identifies himself as a sceptic, yet he sees symbols, religion, conspiracy as the raw material for his Langdon, thus, mainly inclines toward those themes sympathetic to conspiracy ideas involving events that challenge established sources. These historical speculations employ stylistic devices that evoke skepticism, if not outright hostility, in the reader. Brown deliberately introduces distortions and enigmatic elements into the narrative, recognizing that secrecy plays a central role in conspiracy theories. For this reason, Brown frequently constructs additional conspiracies by extracting elements from medieval sects and ancient global conspiracies and reshaping them into conspiratorial devices of global significance.

This dissertation shows that Dan Brown's (hi)stories present intriguing details as facts about publicly-claimed historical and religious events, figures, and confidential belief systems. These concealed aspects are explored and revealed in a hierarchical, quest-like fashion, where the disclosure of one secret leads to the discovery of a new one. Dan Brown's alternative approach to historical events also coincides with Petr Chalupský's definition of "counterfactual history," often referred to as "what ifs" or virtual history (Chalupský 2016, 41). This

contemporary approach to history mainly challenges traditional historical events by focusing on different sequences of publicly acknowledged historical causalities. Virtual history writing offers versions of historical accounts that could have unfolded differently if certain events had taken an alternative course, as envisioned possible by the author. The primary purpose of creating what ifs is to serve as a toll designed to enrich historical comprehension and bring history to everyday life.

## **5.The Authors' Acquiescence to the Lore of Esotericism**

This chapter deals with Ackroyd's and Brown's motivations in extensively using esoteric themes in their novels. The **first drive** is to channel the sublime which creates addiction in readers by providing them with thrilling reading experience. The concept of the sublime and its relation to esoteric currents demonstrate how danger is aestheticized and can serve as a powerful motivation for writers of the occult to delve into the lure of the occult. The connection of the sublime to general aesthetics focuses on the gothic novel and the horror genre (Morris 1985). Although Ackroyd's and Brown's novels do not completely fall under the taxonomy of these literary genres, Ackroyd's texts can be seen very close to neo-Gothic fiction, and Brown's are mystery thrillers that feature the characteristic devices of these styles. These devices include medieval architecture consisting of secret passages, antiquated settings multi-dimensional houses, mystical or aging city, etc., all populated with sensitive inhabitants facing lethal dangers or secrets from the past that hunt them in the contemporary timeline (Hogle 2002, 2).

The occult practices illuminated in these novels involve uncanny experiences arising feelings that dictate the physiological senses of readers. In general, the quest for hidden supreme knowledge that grants godlike status to ordinary mortals, the creation of an artificial man as a skill that empowers humans, the pursuit of the Philosopher's Stone for the brew of an immortality elixir, the appearance of Earth from a chemical soup, the erroneous development of an entire religion, and more specifically, the detailed descriptions of the murders of virgin boys and prostitutes, natural magic and conjugation of chemicals, sex magic for *hieros gamos*, Masonic rituals involving the placement of stars, buildings or the extraction of blood, the drinking of blood from a skull, the positioning of artifacts as having supernatural powers, and so on, are the experiences that cause uncanny thrill.

The **second drive** motivating Ackroyd and Brown is the economic value that esoteric discourses have gained within contemporary occulture. Since Christopher Partridge defines the

term as a “reservoir that is constantly feeding and being fed by popular culture” and thus, fuelling the re-enchantment’s continuity, it causes the simplification of complex occult language which has made its way into “prose of the popular prose” (Partridge 2013, 116, Gunn 2005, 144). At the same time, as the attraction models of the sublime indicate, the written esoteric novels are essentially directed at the sentient perception and emotional spots of the reading market. The mystified aesthetics of Peter Ackroyd’s and Dan Brown’s prose obscure the interpretations of the conventions enriched with occultural nuances. This camouflaged description creates a certain kind of discrimination among the readers. While one group familiar with such occultural texts enjoys reading them and constitutes the growing ground of the readers’ market, thus, navigating successful sales, the other group is intrigued for not being able to access its core. Thus, the longing for the inaccessible makes it appealing to even larger masses. Writers with such enormous fan bases intentionally keep writing in a homogenous style to keep their audience on the hook and guarantee the sales of the books.

## **6. Conclusion**

Having engaged with this dissertation, my intention was to contribute to the study of literary esotericism, especially to fill the gap of missing comparative studies of literary esotericism by presenting a novel comparative study of Peter Ackroyd’s and Dan Brown’s uses of esoteric motifs, enriching the already existing studies of esotericism with a literary horizon.

The main goal of this dissertation has been to perform an in-depth comparative examination of fictional esotericism by analysing certain novels written by Peter Ackroyd and Dan Brown. Esoteric motifs used in their novels, either intentionally or unintentionally, add extra semantical layers to the perception of the narrated stories by causing possible conversions of the texts’ structural and stylistic bases. Dan Brown’s thrillers become mysterious, and Peter Ackroyd’s historiographic narrations gain metafictional nature.

My research has shown various reasons for the authors’ acquiescence to the lore of esotericism. While some share their knowledge to educate others for their enlightenment or to challenge religious dogmas, play with history, create alternative rationalities and histories, convey the failure of disenchantment of the world, and more, many want to entertain the masses through esoteric discourses of popular novels, periodicals, pamphlets, newspapers, magazines, performances and so on. One of such drives is firmly attached to psychological factors such as evoking powerful feelings through the emotion of terror, which, when skilfully employed, can

create a profound and captivating experience for readers. Thus, the occult is closely associated with terror and the concept of the sublime in Peter Ackroyd's and Dan Brown's novels. Today's popular, re-enchanted esotericism also contributes to the immense popularity and success of these novels. Ackroyd's and Brown's fictional esoteric novels blended with sublime are captivating readers worldwide, enticing them with mystical realms, occult motifs, and exciting quests. As such novels target the emotional and conscious perceptions of the audience, their reading creates a unique adventure that resonates profoundly and makes such books bestsellers.

Along with conducting analyses of more fictional writings and detecting further implementations of esoteric motifs, the genre specifications of fictional esoteric novels posit promising subject for revealing their peculiar perspectives in future. The possible transformations of the genre levels of the texts as a result of the application of esoteric devices can further assist to develop the study of fictional esotericism.

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### **Publications pertaining to the dissertation's topic:**

1. Garayeva, Khanim. 2023. Book Review. "Fictional Practice: Magic, Narration, and the Power of Imagination, Aries Book Series: Texts and Studies in Western Esotericism. Bernd-Christian Otto and Dirk Johannsen (eds.)" *Correspondences: Journal for the Study of Esotericism* 11, no. 2, p. 1-7.
2. Garayeva, Khanim. 2022. "Transcendental Disposition of Time in Peter Ackroyd's 'Hawksmoor'" in *Fidele Signaculum. Írások Szőnyi György Endre tiszteletére/Writings in Honour of György Endre Szőnyi*. Ed. by Attila Kiss, Ágnes Matuska and Róbert Péter. Szeged: Jatepress, p. 355-364.
3. Garayeva, Khanim. 2021. "Poetics of an abstract author in Ackroyd's 'The House of Doctor Dee.'" *The ESSE Messenger* 30, no. 2, p. 75-80.
4. Garayeva, Khanim. 2021. "Peter Ackroyd's Distorted Psychogeography." *Prague Journal of English Studies*, 10, no. 1, p. 59-74.
5. Garayeva, Khanim. 2021. "Scientific Nature of Esotericism in Antal Szerb's 'The Pendragon Legend' and Peter Ackroyd's 'Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem.'" *Cultural Texts and Contexts in the English Speaking World (VII)*, p. 88-98.

### **List of conference papers given on the subject of the dissertation:**



1. “Locating the Central and Eastern European Re-Enchantment in Contemporary ‘Western’ Esotericism.” International Conference on the *New Approaches to ‘Re-Enchanted’ Central and Eastern Europe*. Mohaly-Nagy University of Arts and Design of Budapest (MOME), Budapest, 7-8 April 2022.
2. “Scientific Nature of Esotericism in Antal Szerb’s ‘The Pendragon Legend’ and Peter Ackroyd’s ‘Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem.’” International Conference on *Cultural Texts and Contexts in the English-Speaking World* (VII), University of Oradea, March 19, 2020. Online.
3. *ESSE Doctoral Symposium*. Project Presentation. August 31 – September 2, 2020. Online.