

LEGEND-TRIPPING ONLINE: SUPERNATURAL FOLKLORE AND THE SEARCH FOR ONG'S HAT. By Michael Kinsella. Jackson: University of Mississippi, 2011. Pp. xii +211. \$55.00.

Legend-Tripping Online explores the intersection of legend-tripping—a tradition in which participants visit sites of alleged supernatural phenomena—and the influence of new media in order to theorize how legend complexes grow and generate supernatural experiences. Kinsella's object of study is a mysterious set of documents known as "Ong's Hat" and "The Incunabula Papers." These documents describe a colony of chaos scientists who have discovered how to travel to other dimensions. They also contain "clues" inviting the reader to find their hidden ashram and seek initiation as an inter-dimensional traveller. In the 1980s these documents were disseminated through the mail as Xeroxed copies. In the 1990s a vast body of material sprung up online, interpreting and assessing these texts. Some came to believe these documents might genuinely hold the key to interdimensional travel, either in a literal or subjective sense. While the "Ong's Hat" material can be classified as a legend, its original intention may have been as a hoax, a game, or an experiment in the spread of ideas. Regardless, the material took on a life of its own, making for a fascinating case study in the spread of folklore and metaphysical systems online. In theorizing this material, Kinsella draws on the study of folklore, Western esotericism, anthropology, and ludology (theories of play). Drawing on such theorists as Tanya Luhrman, the legend-trip is framed as a performative and collective ritual that facilitates an experience of the supernatural. While the legend-trip resembles magical ritual, it also functions as a kind of game in which alternate epistemologies become possible. Finally, Kinsella demonstrates how the participatory aspects of the legend-trip can be replicated through such media as television and the Internet. *Legend-Tripping Online* sheds light on an understudied aspect of culture and opens the door to further theorizing of how media and popular culture mold supernatural belief.