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**KEY=WESTERN - NICKOLAS PRATT**

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## Western Esotericism

### A Brief History of Secret Knowledge

*Routledge* **Esotericism is the search for an absolute but hidden knowledge accessed through mystical vision, the mediation of higher beings, or personal experience. In Western cultural history esoteric approaches to religion have often been in conflict with - and suffered at the hands of - more established forms of religious belief and practice. 'Western Esotericism' presents a very broad and engaging history of the people and ideas which have shaped occult history from antiquity to today. Throughout the history of esotericism the dynamic of concealment and revelation has characterized the search for secret knowledge. Pursued both publically and privately, esotericism has come to influence more mainstream religious practice and culture and has significantly shaped our understanding of modernity. Today, esotericism continues to be practised by a range of both established and new religious movements. 'Western Esotericism' presents the essential guide to one of the most fascinating, provocative, and sustained of religious traditions.**

## Western Esotericism

### A Brief History of Secret Knowledge

**Magical Orders or Egypt in England -- 8. PIONEER OF MODERN ESOTERICISM: THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY -- Helena Petrovna Blavatsky: The Sphinx of the West -- Ascended Masters and Mundane Squabbles -- 9. ESOTERICISM AND MODERNITY -- Modernity and its Discontents -- And the 'New Age'? -- Bibliography -- Index**

## Contemporary Esotericism

*Routledge* **The study of contemporary esoteric discourse has hitherto been a largely neglected part of the new academic field of Western esotericism. Contemporary Esotericism provides a broad overview and assessment of the complex world of Western esoteric thought today. Combining historiographical analysis with theories and methodologies from the social sciences, the volume explores new problems and offers new possibilities for the study of esoterica. Contemporary Esotericism studies the period since the 1950s but focuses on the last two decades. The wide range of essays are divided into four thematic sections: the intricacies of esoteric appeals to tradition; the role of popular culture, modern communication technologies, and new media in contemporary esotericism; the impact and influence of esotericism on both religious and secular arenas; and the recent 'de-marginalization' of the esoteric in both scholarship and society.**

## The Book of Secrets

### Esoteric Societies and Holy Orders, Luminaries and Seers, Symbols and Rituals, and the Key Concepts of Occult Sciences through the Ages and Around the World

*Weiser Books* **From the strange symbols on a one-dollar bill to the secret signs of the Knights Templar and Freemasons, invisible societies, and the world of magic and alchemy, The Book of Secrets is a comprehensive introduction to the world of secret and esoteric knowledge throughout history. It offers a doorway into the initiated secret traditions of the fascinating unseen spiritual world: its symbols, secret societies, and seers. You'll discover: Key Concepts: the**

Great Work, the Universal Force, Polarity, the Four Elements, Magick and Mysticism, Esoteric Anatomy, Qabalah, Alchemy, Astrology, the Astral Plane, and more. Symbolism: More than 100 secrets symbols, words, objects, including their meanings and the secret powers they invoke. Secret Societies and Holy Orders: The gatekeepers and the transmitters of sacred knowledge: Freemasons, O.T.O., Cathars, Templars, Assassins. Pineda places them all in history and geography and explains who they are/were and what they stood for. Luminaries and Seers: More than 200 legends and historical personages: Hermes Trismegistus, Jesus, Siddartha, Osiris, and other seers from the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the 19th and 20th centuries.

## Secret Groups in Ancient Judaism

*Oxford University Press* **Were there groups in Ancient Judaism that cultivated esoteric knowledge and transmitted it secretly? With the discovery and burgeoning study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and particularly of the documents legislating the social structure of the Qumran group, the foremost paradigm for analysis of the group's social structure has become the "sect." This is still dominant, having replaced the monastic paradigm used by some of the earliest scholars of the Scrolls. But after studying what has been written on secret societies more generally, Michael Stone has concluded that many known ancient Jewish groups—the Qumran covenanters, Josephus's and Philo's Essenes, and Philo's Therapeutae—should be viewed as societies at the heart of whose existence were esoteric knowledge and practice. Guarding and transmitting this esoteric knowledge and practice, Stone argues, provided the dynamic that motivated the social and conceptual structure of these groups. Analyzing them as secret societies, he says, enables us to see previously latent social structural dimensions, and provides many new enriching insights into the groups, including the Dead Sea covenanters. By examining historical and literary sources, Stone uncovers evidence for the existence of other secret groups in ancient Jewish society. This line of study leads Stone not only to consider the "classical" Jewish apocalypses as pseudo-esoteric, but also to discern in them the footsteps of hidden, truly esoteric traditions cultivated in the circles that produced the apocalypses. This discovery has significant implications, especially considering the enormous growth of study of the apocalyptic in the Judaism of the Second Temple period and in nascent Christianity over the last seventy years.**

## A Cultural History of the Soul

### Europe and North America from 1870 to the Present

*Columbia University Press* **The soul, which dominated many intellectual debates at the beginning of the twentieth century, has virtually disappeared from the sciences and the humanities. Yet it is everywhere in popular culture—from holistic therapies and new spiritual practices to literature and film to ecological and political ideologies. Ignored by scholars, it is hiding in plain sight in a plethora of religious, psychological, environmental, and scientific movements. This book uncovers the history of the concept of the soul in twentieth-century Europe and North America. Beginning in fin de siècle Germany, Kocku von Stuckrad examines a fascination spanning philosophy, the sciences, the arts, and the study of religion, as well as occultism and spiritualism, against the backdrop of the emergence of experimental psychology. He then explores how and why the United States witnessed a flowering of ideas about the soul in popular culture and spirituality in the latter half of the century. Von Stuckrad examines an astonishingly wide range of figures and movements—ranging from Ernest Renan, Martin Buber, and Carl Gustav Jung to the Esalen Institute, deep ecology, and revivals of shamanism, animism, and paganism to Rachel Carson, Ursula K. Le Guin, and the Harry Potter franchise. Revealing how the soul remains central to a culture that is only seemingly secular, this book casts new light on the place of spirituality, religion, and metaphysics in Europe and North America today.**

## Hidden Wisdom

### The Secrets of the Western Esoteric Tradition

*Red Wheel Weiser* **From Egyptian mythology to Jewish mysticism, Rome and Greece to the druids and the gnostics, Tim WallaceMurphy exposes a fascinating lineage of hidden mysteries and secret societies, continuing through the Templars, Rosicrucians, and Freemasons to our modern visionaries. This hidden stream of spirituality and that of sacred knowledge are inseparably entwined to form the single most important continuous strand in the entire Western esoteric tradition. This tradition exerted a seminal influence on the thinking of the builders of the great cathedrals/ leading teachers in ecclesiastical schools/ philosophers/ playwrights/ poets such as Shakespeare, Goethe, Blake, and W. B. Yeats/ and on artists and Renaissance giants such as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. It is also the root from which sprang alchemy and modern science. Now, as more people are looking to find information on the alternatives to dominant religions and dogmas that have told us what to think and how to behave, as faith has been questioned by religious scandals, economic meltdowns, and an increasingly sick planet Earth, WallaceMurphy reveals the secrets of the masters, including invaluable spiritual insights into everyday life that have been hidden throughout the ages. He shows us who kept this spiritual tradition alive despite appalling persecution, so that we in the twentyfirst century might benefit from its accumulated fruits and ennoble our lives. Hidden Wisdom will be of immense interest to readers of the number one bestseller The Lost Symbol as it explains much of Dan Brown's focus on the ancient mysteries.**

## Aleister Crowley and Western Esotericism

*Oxford University Press* Henrik Bogdan and Martin P. Starr offer the first comprehensive examination of one of the twentieth century's most distinctive occult iconoclasts, Aleister Crowley (1875-1947), one of the most influential thinkers in contemporary western esotericism.

## Esotericism and the Academy

## Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture

*Cambridge University Press* The neglected history of how intellectuals since the Renaissance have approached ideas of the occult which challenged biblical religion.

## Translating Myth

*Routledge* Ever since Odysseus heard tales of his own exploits being retold among strangers, audiences and readers have been alive to the complications and questions arising from the translation of myth. How are myths taken and carried over into new languages, new civilizations, or new media? An international group of scholars is gathered in this volume to present diverse but connected case studies which address the artistic and political implications of the changing condition of myth - this most primal and malleable of forms. 'Translation' is treated broadly to encompass not only literary translation, but also the transfer of myth across cultures and epochs. In an age when the spiritual world is in crisis, *Translating Myth* constitutes a timely exploration of myth's endurance, and represents a consolidation of the status of myth studies as a discipline in its own right.

## The Brill Dictionary of Religion

The new and impressively comprehensive Brill Dictionary of Religion addresses religion as an element of daily life and public discourse. Richly illustrated and with more than 500 entries, the dictionary is a multi-media reference source on the many and various forms of religious commitment. It is unusual in that it not only addresses the different theologies and doctrinal declarations of the official institutionalized religions but it also gives equal weight and consideration to a multiplicity of other religious phenomena. People perceive and express religious experiences in many different ways: through dance, sensuality, in relations between sexes and in compassion at death. Religions help determine how people form and perceive their identity as part of a social group. The diverse effects of religions can also be perceived in the environment, society and the public sphere. The Brill Dictionary of Religion helps map out and define the networks and connections created by various religions in contemporary societies, and provides models for understanding these complex phenomena.

## Aramaica Qumranica

## Proceedings of the Conference on the Aramaic Texts

## from Qumran in Aix-en-Provence 30 June - 2 July 2008

*BRILL* The articles in this book tackle important linguistic, exegetical and historical questions concerning the Aramaic scrolls from Qumran, addressing for instance the issue of their relevance to the development of apocalypticism and messianism in the Jewish tradition.

## Contemporary Esotericism

*Routledge* The study of contemporary esoteric discourse has hitherto been a largely neglected part of the new academic field of Western esotericism. *Contemporary Esotericism* provides a broad overview and assessment of the complex world of Western esoteric thought today. Combining historiographical analysis with theories and methodologies from the social sciences, the volume explores new problems and offers new possibilities for the study of esoterica. *Contemporary Esotericism* studies the period since the 1950s but focuses on the last two decades. The wide range of essays are divided into four thematic sections: the intricacies of esoteric appeals to tradition; the role of popular culture, modern communication technologies, and new media in contemporary esotericism; the impact and influence of esotericism on both religious and secular arenas; and the recent 'de-marginalization' of the esoteric in both scholarship and society.

## Esotericism in African American Religious Experience

## "There Is a Mystery" ...

*BRILL* **Esotericism in African American Religious Experience: "There is a Mystery" ...**, brings together groundbreaking essays that inaugurate **Africana Esoteric Studies (AES)**: a new trans-disciplinary enterprise that investigates esoteric lore and practices in Africa and the African Diaspora.

## Hidden Intercourse

## Eros and Sexuality in the History of Western Esotericism

*BRILL* The history of Western esotericism is rich in references to the domains of eros and sexuality, but this connection has never been explored in detail from a critical scholarly perspective. Bringing together an impressive array of top-level specialists, this volume reveals the outlines of a largely unknown history spanning more than twenty centuries.

## Secret Body

## Erotic and Esoteric Currents in the History of Religions

*University of Chicago Press* This latest work by the renowned historian of religions Jeffrey Kripal crystallizes his twenty-five years of work on two aspects of the contemporary study of religion: the erotic expression of mystical experience and the rise of the paranormal in American culture. Combining elements of memoir, manifesto, and anthology (a Kripal Reader, as it were), **Secret Body** reveals Kripal's oeuvre not as a series of disconnected books but as a dynamic corpus with the potential to renew and reshape the study of religion. Kripal explains how this oeuvre came about with his trademark humor and honesty, answers his censors and critics, and lays the foundation for a future theory of religion grounded in the cosmic nature of consciousness as such. No one interested in the history of religion and the erotic dimension of mysticism can afford to overlook Kripal's latest, his definitive intellectual self-portrait.

## Rider Haggard and the Imperial Occult

## Hermetic Discourse and Romantic Contiguity

*BRILL* In **Rider Haggard and the Imperial Occult**, Simon Magus explores the occult world of H. Rider Haggard through an analysis of his literary engagement with ancient Egypt, Romanticism and Theosophy.

## Secret Groups in Ancient Judaism

*Oxford University Press* **Secret Groups in Ancient Judaism** proposes a new approach to the understanding of many Jewish groups and sects from the last centuries BCE and the first centuries CE. Michael Stone argues that the known ancient Jewish groups - the Qumran covenanters, Josephus's and Philo's Essenes, and Philo's Therapeutae - can be viewed as societies at the heart of whose existence were esoteric knowledge and practice. Guarding and transmitting this esoteric knowledge and practice, Stone argues, provided the dynamic that motivated the social and conceptual structure of these groups. Analyzing these groups as secret societies enables us to see previously latent social structural dimensions, and provides many new enriching insights into the groups, including the Dead Sea covenanters. Drawing on sociological analyses of secret societies, Stone also compares these Jewish groups with mystery religions of the contemporary Greek and Roman world, and of early Christianity. His approach casts a powerful new light on ancient Jewish religious groups and highlights unstudied aspects of the world of Christian origins.

## Secrecy

## Silence, Power, and Religion

*University of Chicago Press* The powers of political secrecy and social spectacle have been taken to surreal extremes recently. Witness the twin terrors of a president who refuses to disclose dealings with foreign powers while the private data of ordinary citizens is stolen and marketed in order to manipulate consumer preferences and voting outcomes. We have become accustomed to thinking about secrecy in political terms and personal privacy terms. In this bracing, new work, Hugh Urban wants us to focus these same powers of observation on the role of secrecy in religion. With **Secrecy**, Urban investigates several revealing instances of the power of secrecy in religion, including nineteenth-century Scottish Rite Freemasonry, the sexual magic of a Russian-born Parisian mystic; the white supremacist Brüder Schweigen or "Silent Brotherhood" movement of the 1980s, the Five Percenters, and the Church of Scientology. An electrifying read, **Secrecy** is the culmination of decades of Urban's reflections on a vexed, ever-present subject.

# Essays on Women in Western Esotericism

## Beyond Seeresses and Sea Priestesses

*Springer Nature* This book is the first collection to feature histories of women in Western Esotericism while also highlighting women's scholarship. In addition to providing a critical examination of important and under-researched figures in the history of Western Esotericism, these fifteen essays also contribute to current debates in the study of esotericism about the very nature of the field itself. The chapters are divided into four thematic sections that address current topics in the study of esotericism: race and othering, femininity, power and leadership and embodiment. This collection not only adds important voices to the story of Western Esotericism, it hopes to change the way the story is told. Amy Hale is an anthropologist and folklorist specializing in contemporary esoteric history, art and culture. Co-edited collections include *New Directions in Celtic Studies*, and *The Journal of the Academic Study of Magic* 5. She has written widely on surrealist and occultist Ithell Colquhoun, and is the author of the Colquhoun biography *Genius of the Fern-Loved Gully*.

## The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to the Study of Religion

*John Wiley & Sons* Explore a rigorous but accessible guide to contemporary approaches to the study of religion from leading voices in the field. The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to the Study of Religion delivers an expert and insightful analysis of modern perspectives on the study of religion across the humanities and the social sciences. Presupposing no knowledge of the approaches examined in the collection, the book is ideal for undergraduate students who have yet to undertake extensive study in the humanities or social sciences. The book includes perspectives from those in fields as diverse as globalization, cognitive science, the study of emotion, law, esotericism, sex and gender, functionalism, terror, the comparative method, modernism, and postmodernism. Many of the topics covered in the book clearly hail from religious studies, while others are grounded in other areas of academia. All of the chapters contained within are written by recognized authors who show how their chosen discipline contributes to the understanding of the phenomenon of religion. This book also includes topics like: A comprehensive exploration of multiple approaches to religious study, including anthropology, economics, literature, phenomenology, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and theology. A review of various topics germane to the study of religion, including the study of the body, cognitive science, the comparative method, death and the afterlife, law, magic, music, and myth. A selection of subjects touching on modern trends in extremism and violence, including chapters on terror and violence, fundamentalism, and nationalism. A discussion of the influence of modernism and postmodernism in religion. Ideal for undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate students in humanities and social science programs taking courses on religion and myth, *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to the Study of Religion* will also earn a place in the libraries of specialists working in the fields of Religious Studies, Theology, Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, Political Science, History, and Philosophy.

## Western Esotericism

### A Concise History

*SUNY Press* An overview of Western esoteric currents since late antiquity, with an emphasis on the last six centuries. Widely received in France, this brief, comprehensive introduction to Western esotericism by the founder of the field is at last available in English. A historical and pedagogical guide, the book is written primarily for students and novices. In clear, precise language, author Antoine Faivre provides an overview of Western esoteric currents since late antiquity. The bulk of the book is laid out chronologically, from ancient and medieval sources (Alexandrian Hermetism, Gnosticism, Neoplatonism), through the Renaissance up to the present time. Its coverage includes spiritual alchemy, Jewish and Christian Kabbalah, Christian theosophy, Rosicrucianism, Illuminism, "mystical" Freemasonry, the "occultist" current, Theosophical and Anthroposophical Societies, the Traditionalist School, and "esotericism" in contemporary initiatic societies and in New Religious Movements. Faivre explores how these currents are connected, and refers to where they appear in art and literature. The book concludes with an annotated bibliography, which makes it an essential resource for beginners and scholars alike. "A characteristically erudite, sweeping brief survey of the field of Western esotericism, at once accessible and bristling with details. This is a valuable overview, from the inimitable perspective of the field's founder, for those who wish to delve into this fascinating and thriving area of contemporary scholarship." — Arthur Versluis, author of *Restoring Paradise*, *Wisdom's Children*, and *Magic and Mysticism* "The classic survey of Western esotericism by the most knowledgeable and influential scholar of his generation is now finally accessible to English readers, in an updated edition that takes account of current developments. This small but precious volume will be indispensable for anybody who wishes to be well informed about the historical backgrounds and development of esoteric currents from antiquity to the present." — Wouter J. Hanegraaff, University of Amsterdam

## Satanic Feminism

### Lucifer As the Liberator of Woman in Nineteenth-Century Culture

*Oxford University Press* According to the Bible, Eve was the first to heed Satan's advice to eat the forbidden fruit and thus responsible for all of humanity's subsequent miseries. The notion of woman as the Devil's accomplice is prominent throughout Christian history and has been used to legitimize the subordination of wives and daughters. In the nineteenth century, rebellious females performed counter-readings of this misogynist tradition. Lucifer was reconceptualized as a feminist liberator of womankind, and Eve became a heroine. In these reimaginings, Satan is an ally in the struggle against a tyrannical patriarchy supported by God the Father and his male priests. Per Faxnel shows how this Satanic feminism was expressed in a wide variety of nineteenth-century literary texts, autobiographies, pamphlets, newspaper articles, paintings, sculptures, and even artifacts of consumer culture like jewelry. He details how colorful figures like the suffragette Elizabeth Cady Stanton, gender-bending Theosophist H. P. Blavatsky, author Aino Kallas, actress Sarah Bernhardt, anti-clerical witch enthusiast Matilda Joslyn Gage, decadent marchioness Luisa Casati, and the Luciferian lesbian poetess Renee Vivien embraced these reimaginings. By exploring the connections between esotericism, literature, art and the political realm, *Satanic Feminism* sheds new light on neglected aspects of the intellectual history of feminism, Satanism, and revisionary mythmaking.

### The Threat and Allure of the Magical

### Selected Papers from the 17th Annual Interdisciplinary German Studies Conference, University of California, Berkeley

*Cambridge Scholars Publishing* This collection of essays is borne out of the 17th Annual Interdisciplinary German Studies Conference at the University of California, Berkeley. The essays gathered here cover a broad range of topics moving from intersections between the occult and the political, to the entanglement of conceptions of the magical, modernity, media, and aesthetics. The first two essays primarily rely on historical analysis and present a wealth of original research. One chronicles the construction of the witch in Early Modern print media, while the other unfolds the complex relationship of an infighting Third Reich with a multifaceted occult deemed at once fascinating and menacing. The third essay in the collection combines critical, literary, and feminist theories in order to address the magical as an aspect of the fairy tale - a theme in the works of Jelinek and Adorno - and as a challenge to Enlightenment reason. The next two essays, influenced heavily by narratology and semiotics, present close readings of 19th century novellas that question the nexus of mediality and perception, magic and narrative structure. The first of these two essays deals with the liminality of the marionette as it is caught between its mechanical and marvelous qualities in E. T. A. Hoffman's *Rat Krespel* (Councilor Krespel), while the latter addresses the collapse of reality mirrored by the magical collapse of metaphor in Theodor Storm's *Pole Poppenspüler* (Paul the Puppeteer). The last essay rounds out the compilation with a focus on new media. With close analyses of the films in Lang's *Mabuse* trilogy, this essay charts their relation to the enchantment and disenchantment of the medium of film.

### The Eloquent Blood

### The Goddess Babalon and the Construction of Femininities in Western Esotericism

*Oxford University Press* In the conventional dichotomy of chaste, pure Madonna and libidinous whore, the former has usually been viewed as the ideal form of femininity. However, there is a modern religious movement in which the negative stereotype of the harlot is inverted and exalted. *The Eloquent Blood* focuses on the changing construction of femininity and feminine sexuality in interpretations of the goddess Babalon. A central deity in Thelema, the religion founded by the notorious British occultist Aleister Crowley (1875-1947), Babalon is based on Crowley's favorable reinterpretation of the biblical Whore of Babylon, and is associated with liberated female sexuality and the spiritual ideal of passionate union with existence. Analyzing historical and contemporary written sources, qualitative interviews, and ethnographic fieldwork in the Anglo-American esoteric milieu, the study traces interpretations of Babalon from the works of Crowley and some of his key disciples--including the rocket scientist John "Jack" Whiteside Parsons, and the enigmatic British occultist Kenneth Grant--until the present. From the 1990s onwards, this study shows, female and LGBTQ esotericists have challenged historical interpretations of Babalon, drawing on feminist and

queer thought and conceptualizing femininity in new ways. Tracing the trajectory of a particular gendered symbol from the fin-de-siècle until today, Manon Hedenborg White explores the changing role of women in Western esotericism, and shows how evolving constructions of gender have shaped the development of esotericism. Combining research on historical and contemporary Western esotericism with feminist and queer theory, the book sheds new light on the ways in which esoteric movements and systems of thought have developed over time in relation to political movements.

## The Oxford Handbook of New Religious Movements

*Oxford University Press* The study of New Religious Movements (NRMs) is one of the fastest-growing areas of religious studies, and since the release of the first edition of *The Oxford Handbook of New Religious Movements* in 2003, the field has continued to expand and break new ground. In this all-new volume, James R. Lewis and Inga B. Tøllefsen bring together established and rising scholars to address an expanded range of topics, covering traditional religious studies topics such as "scripture," "charisma," and "ritual," while also applying new theoretical approaches to NRM topics. Other chapters cover understudied topics in the field, such as the developmental patterns of NRMs and subcultural considerations in the study of NRMs. The first part of this book examines NRMs from a social-scientific perspective, particularly that of sociology. In the second section, the primary factors that have put the study of NRMs on the map, controversy and conflict, are considered. The third section investigates common themes within the field of NRMs, while the fourth examines the approaches that religious studies researchers have taken to NRMs. As NRM Studies has grown, subfields such as Esotericism, New Age Studies, and neo-Pagan Studies have grown as distinct and individual areas of study, and the final section of the book investigates these emergent fields.

## The Return of the Perennial Philosophy

## The Supreme Vision of Western Esotericism

*Watkins Media Limited* Intelligent and perceptive, this examination of the universal truths inherent in all cultures and religions is a powerful, scholarly analysis of Western esotericism's deepest teachings. John Holman contends that the perennial philosophy is not only at the heart of all world religions, but also of all major schools of thought and writings by the great thinkers and philosophers—no matter how diverse the presentation of their perceived truths. In an accessible way, Holman sheds light on a number of esoteric topics including: The Absolute and the One, the Great Chain of Being, the Philosopher's Stone, the Seven Spirits, the evolution of consciousness and the Eternal Now—paying particular attention to the subject of time. This thought-provoking book helps us to develop a better understanding of the nature of reality and our potential for transcendence—and revolutionizes the debate on the perennial philosophy.

## The Study of Shi'i Islam

## History, Theology and Law

*Bloomsbury Publishing* Shi'i Islam, with its rich and extensive history, has played a crucial role in the evolution of Islam as both a major world religion and civilization. The prolific achievements of Shi'i theologians, philosophers and others are testament to the spiritual and intellectual wealth of this community. Yet Shi'i studies has unjustly remained a long-neglected field, despite the important contribution that Shi'ism has made to Islamic traditions. Only in recent decades, partially spurred by global interest in political events of the Middle East, have scholars made some significant contributions in this area. *The Study of Shi'i Islam* presents papers originally delivered at the first international colloquium dedicated exclusively to Shi'i studies, held in 2010 at The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. Within the book are eight sections, namely, history, the Qur'an and its Shi'i interpretations, hadith, law, authority, theology, rites and rituals, and intellectual traditions and philosophy. Each section begins with an introduction contextualizing the aspects of studying Shi'i Islam particular to its theme, before going on to address topics such as the state of the field, methodology and tools, and the primary issues with which contemporary scholars of Shi'i studies are dealing. The scope and depth here covered makes this book of especial interest to researchers and students alike within the field of Islamic studies. The volume benefits from the diverse expertise of nearly 30 world-class scholars, including Mohammad-Ali Amir-Moezzi, Meir M. Bar-Asher, Farhad Daftary, Daniel De Smet, Gerald R. Hawting, Nader El-Bizri, Etan Kohlberg, Wilferd Madelung, Andrew Newman, Ismail K. Poonawala, Sabine Schmidtke and Paul E. Walker.

## Esotericism and Narrative: The Occult Fiction of Charles Williams

*BRILL* In *Esotericism and Narrative: The Occult Fiction of Charles Williams*, Aren Roukema looks through the portal of Charles Williams's fantastic fiction, analyzing the author's narrative translations of ritual experiences with modern magic, kabbalah and spiritual alchemy.

# Esoteric Transfers and Constructions

## Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

*Springer Nature* Similarities between esoteric and mystical currents in different religious traditions have long interested scholars. This book takes a new look at the relationship between such currents. It advances a discussion that started with the search for religious essences, archetypes, and universals, from William James to Eranos. The universal categories that resulted from that search were later criticized as essentialist constructions, and questioned by deconstructionists. An alternative explanation was advanced by diffusionists: that there were transfers between different traditions. This book presents empirical case studies of such constructions, and of transfers between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in the premodern period, and Judaism, Christianity, and Western esotericism in the modern period. It shows that there were indeed transfers that can be clearly documented, and that there were also indeed constructions, often very imaginative. It also shows that there were many cases that were neither transfers nor constructions, but a mixture of the two.

## The Problem of Disenchantment

### Scientific Naturalism and Esoteric Discourse, 1900-1939

*State University of New York Press* Challenges the conventional view of a “disenchanted” and secular modernity, and recovers the complex relation that exists between science, religion, and esotericism in the modern world. Max Weber famously characterized the ongoing process of intellectualization and rationalization that separates the natural world from the divine (by excluding magic and value from the realm of science, and reason and fact from the realm of religion) as the “disenchantment of the world.” Egil Asprem argues for a conceptual shift in how we view this key narrative of modernity. Instead of a sociohistorical process of disenchantment that produces increasingly rational minds, Asprem maintains that the continued presence of “magic” and “enchantment” in people’s everyday experience of the world created an intellectual problem for those few who were socialized to believe that nature should contain no such incalculable mysteries. Drawing on a wide range of early twentieth-century primary sources from theoretical physics, occultism, embryology, radioactivity, psychical research, and other fields, Asprem casts the intellectual life of high modernity as a synchronic struggle across conspicuously different fields that shared surprisingly similar intellectual problems about value, meaning, and the limits of knowledge. Egil Asprem is Associate Professor of History of Religions at the Department of Ethnology, History of Religions, and Gender Studies, Stockholm University, and the author of *Arguing with Angels: Enochian Magic and Modern Occulture*, also published by SUNY Press.

## The Evolution of Blake’s Myth

*Routledge* Interpreting Blake has always proved challenging. Hermeneutics, as the on-going negotiation between the horizon of expectations and a given text, hinges on the preconceptions that structure thought. The structure, in turn, is derived from myth, a cultural narrative predicated on a particular set of foundational principles, and organized in terms of the resulting symbolic form. The primary impediment to interpreting Blake has been the failure to recognize that he and much of his audience have thought in terms of two radically different myths. In *The Evolution of Blake’s Myth*, Sheila A. Spector establishes the dimensions of the myth that structures Blake’s thought. In the first of three parts, she uses *Jerusalem*, Blake’s most complete book, as the basis for extrapolating the components of the consolidated myth. She then traces the chronological development of the myth from its origin in the late 1780s through its crystallization in *Milton*. Finally, she demonstrates how Blake used the myth hermeneutically, as the horizon of expectations for interpreting not only his own work, but the Bible and the visionary texts of others, as well.

## The Western Esoteric Traditions

### A Historical Introduction

*Oxford University Press* Western esotericism has now emerged as an academic study in its own right, combining spirituality with an empirical observation of the natural world while also relating the humanity to the universe through a harmonious celestial order. This introduction to the Western esoteric traditions offers a concise overview of their historical development. Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke explores these traditions, from their roots in Hermeticism, Neo-Platonism, and Gnosticism in the early Christian era up to their reverberations in today’s scientific paradigms. While the study of Western esotericism is usually confined to the history of ideas, Goodrick-Clarke examines the phenomenon much more broadly. He demonstrates that, far from being a strictly intellectual movement, the spread of esotericism owes a great deal to geopolitics and globalization. In Hellenistic culture, for example, the empire of Alexander the Great, which stretched across Egypt and Western Asia to provinces in India, facilitated a mixing of Eastern and Western cultures. As the Greeks absorbed ideas from Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, and Persia, they gave rise to the first esoteric movements. From the late sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, post-Reformation spirituality found

expression in theosophy, Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry. Similarly, in the modern era, dissatisfaction with the hegemony of science in Western culture and a lack of faith in traditional Christianity led thinkers like Madame Blavatsky to look East for spiritual inspiration. Goodrick-Clarke further examines Modern esoteric thought in the light of new scientific and medical paradigms along with the analytical psychology of Carl Gustav Jung. This book traces the complete history of these movements and is the definitive account of Western esotericism.

## A History of Modern Yoga

## Patanjali and Western Esotericism

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## Plato's Ghost

## Spiritualism in the American Renaissance

*Oxford University Press* In its day, spiritualism brought hundreds of thousands of Americans to s?ance tables and trance lectures. It has alternately been ridiculed as the apogee of fatuous credulity and hailed as a feminist movement. Its tricks have been exposed, its charlatans unmasked, and its heroes' names lost to posterity. In its day, however, its leaders were household names and politicians worried about capturing the Spiritualist vote. Cathy Gutierrez places Spiritualism in the context of the 19th-century American Renaissance. Although this epithet usually signifies the sudden blossoming of American letters, Gutierrez points to its original meaning: a cultural imagination enraptured with the past and the classics in particular, accompanied by a cultural efflorescence. Spiritualism, she contends, was the religious articulation of the American Renaissance, and the ramifications of looking backward for advice about the present were far-reaching. The Spiritualist movement, says Gutierrez, was a 'renaissance of the Renaissance,' a culture in love with history as much as it trumpeted progress and futurity, and an expression of what constituted religious hope among burgeoning technology and colonialism. Rejecting Christian ideas about salvation, Spiritualists embraced Platonic and Neoplatonic ideas. Humans were shot through with the divine, rather than seen as helpless and inexorably corrupt sinners in the hands of a transcendent, angry God. Gutierrez's study of this fascinating and important movement is organized thematically. She analyzes Spiritualist conceptions of memory, marriage, medicine, and minds, explores such phenomena as machines for contacting the dead, spirit-photography, the idea of eternal spiritual affinity (which implied the necessity for marriage reform), the connection between health and spirituality, and mesmerism.

## Magic and Mysticism

## An Introduction to Western Esotericism

*Rowman & Littlefield* Provides overview, from antiquity onwards, on various Western religious esoteric movements. This book includes topics such as: alchemy, Gnosticism, Hermeticism, Rosicrucianism, Theosophy and more.

## Philosophy Between the Lines

## The Lost History of Esoteric Writing

*University of Chicago Press* "Shines a floodlight on a topic that has been cloaked in obscurity . . . a landmark work in both intellectual history and political theory" (The Wall Street Journal). Philosophical esotericism—the practice of communicating one's unorthodox thoughts "between the lines"—was a common practice until the end of the eighteenth century. Despite its long and well-documented history, however, esotericism is often dismissed today as a rare occurrence. But by ignoring esotericism, we risk cutting ourselves off from a full understanding of Western philosophical thought. Walking readers through both an ancient (Plato) and a modern (Machiavelli) esoteric work, Arthur M. Melzer explains what esotericism is—and is not. It relies not on secret codes, but simply on a more intensive use of familiar rhetorical techniques like metaphor, irony, and insinuation. Melzer explores the various motives that led thinkers in different times and places to engage in this strange practice, while also exploring the motives that lead more recent thinkers not only to dislike and avoid this practice but to deny its very existence. In the book's final section, "A Beginner's Guide to Esoteric Reading," Melzer turns to how we might once again cultivate the long-forgotten art of reading esoteric works. The first comprehensive, book-length study of the history and theoretical basis of philosophical esotericism, *Philosophy Between the Lines* is "a treasure-house of insight and learning. It is that rare thing: an eye-opening book . . . By making the world before Enlightenment appear as strange as it truly was, [Melzer] makes our world stranger than we think it is" (George Kateb, Professor of Politics, Emeritus, at Princeton University). "Brilliant, pellucid, and meticulously researched." —City Journal

## Kabbalah and Modernity

### Interpretations, Transformations, Adaptations

**BRILL** This volume brings together leading representatives of the recent debate about the persistence of kabbalah in the modern world. It breaks new ground for a better understanding of the role of kabbalah in modern religious, intellectual, and political discourse.

### Locations of Knowledge in Medieval and Early Modern Europe

### Esoteric Discourse and Western Identities

**BRILL** Addressing discourses of perfect knowledge in Western culture between 1200 and 1800, this book integrates the study of Western esotericism in a larger analytical framework of European history of religion.

### Polemical Encounters

### Esoteric Discourse and Its Others

**BRILL** In its historical development from late antiquity to the present, western esotericism has repeatedly been the issue of polemical discourse. This volume engages the polemical structures that underlie esoteric identities and the controversy about esoteric currents in European history.