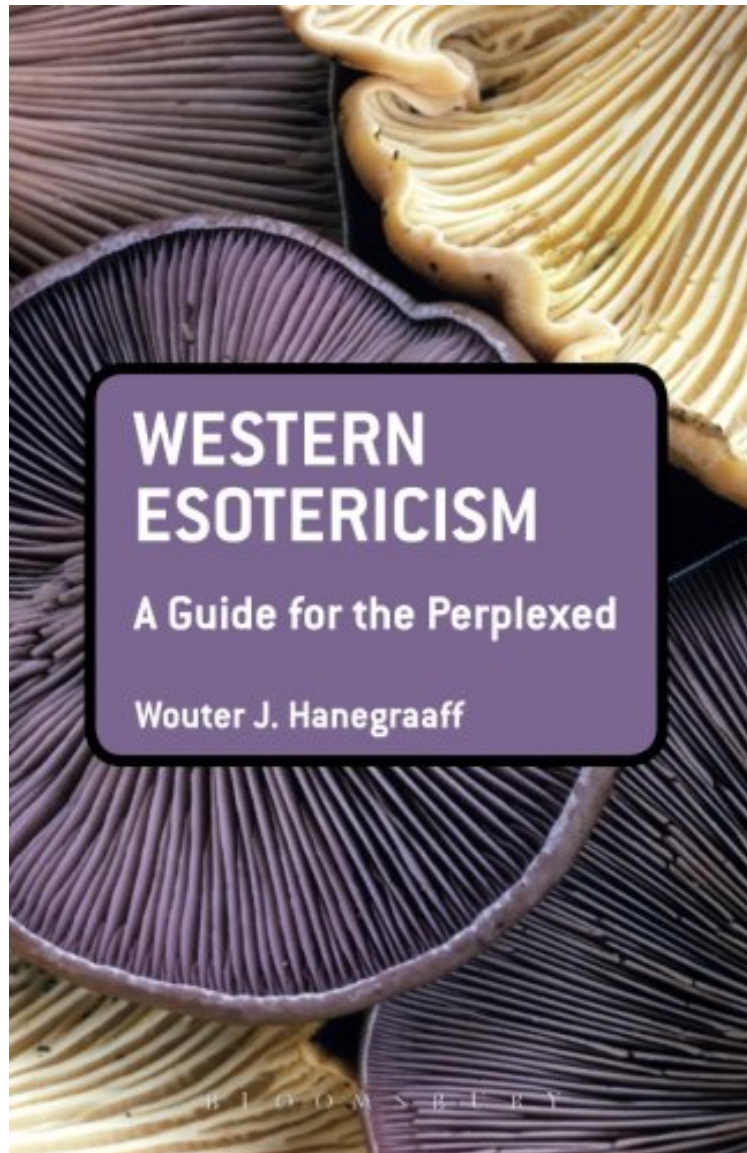


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## **Western Esotericism: A Guide for the Perplexed (Guides for the Perplexed)**

*Wouter J. Hanegraaff*

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**Wouter J. Hanegraaff : Western Esotericism: A Guide for the Perplexed (Guides for the Perplexed)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Western Esotericism: A Guide for the Perplexed (Guides for the Perplexed)*:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A great textbook for the field By Mike Carpenter Hanegraaff's work

is an excellent beginning textbook for anyone wanting to become acquainted with the field of esotericism. By the nature of subject matter, it has to cover a wide field with a polyglot literature in what seems to this reviewer to be an insufficient number of pages. But it is a beginner's textbook. As one who has a reasonable command of the literature in French on the subject, I was, of course, aware of a few gaps in the coverage. But it is a beginning textbook. Hanegraaff wisely points out gaps in the literature, especially with respect to early twentieth century occultism, especially relating to Papus, de Guaita, and others of the same generation. As to the utility of the book, I suggest that it is the equal of the latest edition of Antoine Faivre's *\*L'sotrisme (Que sais-je ?)\** and some of the works of Joscelyn Godwin. If you're interested in this field, you really need to read Hanegraaff's book. I cannot write highly enough of it. 3 of 5 people found the following review helpful. review and suggested author By Patrizia Trotta This book is great for putting into order and context one's accumulated knowledge in the field! not all the amount of detail might be of interest to a general reader, but it is certainly great for academics! Another academic author I would highly recommend because more approachable and readable is J. Godwin, especially *The golden thread*. 5 of 7 people found the following review helpful. One of the few experts in this field By Paul Giurlanda Hanegraaff is the man. This is exactly what is says. If you're interested in a scholarly review of esotericism in the West, you can't go wrong with this.

Western esotericism has been a pervasive presence in Western culture from late antiquity to the present day, but until recently it was largely ignored by scholars and surrounded by misconceptions and prejudice. This accessible guide provides readers with the basic knowledge and tools that will allow them to find their way in this bewildering but fascinating field. What is it that unites phenomena as diverse as ancient gnosticism and hermetism, the "occult sciences" of astrology, alchemy, and magic, rosicrucianism, as well as Christian theosophy, occultism, spiritualism, and the contemporary New Age spiritualities? What can the study of them teach us about our common cultural and intellectual heritage, and what is it that makes them relevant to contemporary concerns? How do we distinguish reliable historical knowledge from legends and fictions about esoteric traditions? These and many other questions are answered clearly and succinctly, so that the reader can find his way into the labyrinth of Western esotericism and out of it again.

It is lucid, wide-ranging and extremely well researched ... this text is a must for those who are merely curious, those who are studious and those alternative philosophers of nature, and esoteric ... practitioners themselves. (De Numine) Wouter Hanegraaff offers the reader here a crystallization of his celebrated scholarship on the history of Western esotericism, from the ancient world to the New Age, as the "rejected knowledge" of Western religion, culture, and science. Along the way, he strikes all the right notes, introduces key terms and figures, and traces the influence of esotericism on science, art, literature, and music. The result is an impeccable piece of historical analysis that shows why the critical study of Western esotericism should lie at the center of the academy and not in its margins. (Jeffrey J. Kripal, author of *'Authors of the Impossible: The Paranormal and the Sacred'* 2012-08-08) About the Author Wouter J. Hanegraaff is Professor of History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents at the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and President of the European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism.