



## **Access to Western Esotericism (Suny Series, Western Esoteric Traditions)**

*Antoine Faivre*

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This is the first systematic treatment of esotericism to appear in English. Here is also a historical survey, beginning with the Alexandrian Period, of the various esoteric currents such as Christian Kabbalah, Theosophy, Alchemy, Rosicrucianism, and Hermeticism. Common characteristics of these currents are the notion of universal interdependency and the experience of spiritual transformation. The author establishes a rigorous methodology; provides clarifying definitions of such key terms as "gnosis," "theosophy," "occultism," and "Hermeticism;" and offers analysis of contemporary esotericism based on three distinct pathways.

The second half of the book presents a series of studies on several important figures, works, and movements in Western esotericism--studies devoted to some of the most characteristic and illuminating aspects that this form of thought has taken, such as theosophical speculations on androgyny, rosicrucian literature, and Masonic symbolism.

The book is completed by a rich and selective Bibliography conceived as a means of orientation and a tool for research.

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