



# Hidden Intercourse: Eros and Sexuality in the History of Western Esotericism

By Wouter J. Hanegraaff, Jeffrey J. Kripal

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From rumors about gnostic orgies in antiquity to the explicit erotic symbolism of alchemical texts, from the subtly coded eroticism of medieval kabbalah to the sexual magic practiced by contemporary occultists and countercultural translations of Asian Tantra, the history of Western esotericism is rich in references to the domains of eros and sexuality. This volume, which brings together an impressive array of top-level specialists, is the first to analyze the eroticism of the esoteric without sensationalism or cheap generalizations, but on the basis of expert scholarship and attention to textual and historical detail. While there are few domains where the imagination may so easily run wild, the various contributions seek to distinguish fact from fiction-only to find that historical realities are sometimes even stranger than the fantasies. In doing so, they reveal the outlines of a largely unknown history spanning more than twenty centuries.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

Hidden Intercourse is a book that turns people's heads around, so that they can never think of sex the same way again.-Joscelyn Godwin

A collection of essays addressing a doubly fascinating topic, namely, the intersection of the erotic and the esoteric in western culture from ancient Greece to contemporary California--where west meets east, as the American counterculture supplements its already eclectic garb with the mantle of a refashioned Asian Tantra.-Virginia Burrus

A thoughtful, well-written, and extremely wide-ranging text that examines the crucial role of eros/sexuality in the western esoteric tradition.-G. William Barnard

#### From the Back Cover

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#### About the Author

**Wouter J. Hanegraaff** is Professor of History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents at the University of Amsterdam, and a member of the Royal Dutch Academy of Arts and Sciences. Among his many publications is the two-volume Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism.

**Jeffrey J. Kripal** holds the J. Newton Rayzor Chair in Philosophy and Religious Thought at Rice University, where he is also the Chair of the Department of Religious Studies. He is the author of numerous books, including *Authors of the Impossible: The Paranormal and the Sacred* and *Esalen: America and the Religion of No Religion*.

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