THE PARTICIPATORY TURN

Spirituality, Mysticism, Religious Studies
Jorge N. Ferrer and Jacob H. Sherman, editors

Cuts through traditional debates to argue that religious phenomena are cocreated by human cognition and a generative spiritual power.

Can we take seriously religious experience, spirituality, and mysticism, without reducing them to either cultural-linguistic by-products or simply asserting their validity as a dogmatic fact? The contributors to this volume argue that we can, and they offer a new way: the “participatory turn,” which proposes that individuals and communities have an integral and irreducible role in bringing forth ontologically rich religious worlds. They explore the ways this approach weaves together and gives voice to a number of robust trends in contemporary religious scholarship, including the renewed study of lived spirituality and the postmodern emphasis on embodied and gendered subjectivity.

Jorge N. Ferrer is Chair of the Department of East-West Psychology at the California Institute of Integral Studies. Jacob H. Sherman is a doctoral candidate in the Faculty of the Divinity at the University of Cambridge.

CONTRIBUTORS

G. William Barnard
Southern Methodist U.
Bruno Barnhart
Big Sur, CA
William C. Chittick
SUNY Stony Brook
Jorge N. Ferrer
CIIS, San Francisco, CA
Lee Irwin
Coll. of Charleston
Sean Kelly
CA Inst. of Integral Studies
Brian L. Lancaster
Liverpool John Moores U.
Beverly J. Lanzetta
Tuscon, AZ
Robert McDermott
San Francisco, CA
Donald Rothberg
Berkeley, CA
Jacob Holsinger Sherman
Emmanuel Coll,
Cambridge, UK

SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS OF BEDIUZZAMDAN SAID NURSI’S RISALE-I NUR

Edited and with an Introduction by Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi'c

Essays on various facets of Nursi’s spirituality as portrayed in his Risale-i Nur.

The Nur community is one of the most significant religious and social movements in contemporary Turkey, with millions of adherents and a strong institutional and educational system throughout the country. This volume presents a picture of its spiritual dimensions by focusing on the ideas of its founder, Turkish theologian Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1877–1960). Prominent scholars in contemporary Islamic studies and comparative spirituality examine the various facets of Nursi’s spirituality as revealed in his magnum opus, Risale-i Nur, which began to take shape in the 1920s and is considered Nursi’s deep reflection on the Qur’ān in light of rapidly changing conditions in Turkey.

Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi’c holds the Edmonton Council of Muslim Communities Chair in Islamic Studies at the University of Alberta.

JULY • 416 pp
$99.95 pb 978-0-7914-7474-7
$89.50 hc 978-0-7914-7473-0
This book provides an exhaustive examination of the historical development of a key story in the life of Muḥammad, the tale told of his journey to the divine realm and back. It shows how in the early centuries of the Islamic community, both Sunnī and Shiʿī Muslims appropriated this fascinating story and interpreted it to suit their own ends. In particular, the book traces the development of a critical and influential strand of this rich ascension literature ascribed to one of Muḥammad’s famous companions, the scholar known as Ibn ʿAbbās. Frederick S. Colby demonstrates that this version of the tale originated in the early period and spread throughout the Islamic world, affecting how people from Spain to Afghanistan came to think about Muḥammad and his legacy. Colby also includes translations of richly textured ascension narratives that have never before appeared in English.

“This is a very important subject that will be of interest to all serious students of premodern Islam.” — Marion Holmes Katz, author of Body of Text: The Emergence of the Sunnī Law of Ritual Purity

Frederick S. Colby is Associate Professor of Comparative Religion at Miami University in Ohio. He edited and translated The Subtleties of the Ascension: Early Mystical Sayings on Muḥammad’s Heavenly Journey, by the famous mystic Abū Ṭabd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī.

AUGUST • 336 pp • 4 tables, 3 figures
$85.00 jacketed hc 978-0-7914-7517-1

In this book Donald A. Crosby looks at how a religion based on the sacredness of nature deals with the problem of evil. Further developing and defending the vision of religious thought and life elaborated in his previous work, A Religion of Nature, Crosby explores how such a vision can enable us to interpret, respond to, and cope with the diverse forms of evil in the world, arguing that an ambiguity of goods and evils in human life, in nature as a whole, and in any conceivable or desirable realm of existence is inevitable. It is therefore futile to seek recourse in powers, presences, states, or realms thought to wholly transcend a combination of goods and evils or to be entirely devoid of evil. This being the case, the central problem of an adequate religious faith is how to live a constructive, meaningful life in the face of this intractable ambiguity.

Religion of nature, as it is laid out and explained here, confronts this problem and offers a comprehensive, sustaining, and fully adequate way of conceiving and living a religious life.

“Crosby argues that nature, rather than anything supernatural, deserves reverence and devotion. He sets forth a vision of life and the universe that is as hopeful as it is realistic.” — Nancy K. Frankenberg, editor of Radical Interpretation in Religion

Donald A. Crosby is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Colorado State University. He has published several books, including A Religion of Nature and The Specter of the Absurd: Sources and Criticisms of Modern Nihilism, both also published by SUNY Press, and Novelty.

AUGUST • 144 pp
$55.00 jacketed hc 978-0-7914-7519-5
MIRACLE AS MODERN CONUNDRUM IN SOUTH ASIAN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

*Corinne G. Dempsey and Selva J. Raj, editors*

Looks at perceptions of the miraculous in a variety of contemporary South Asian religious traditions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity.

Claims of the miraculous are foundational to faith and skepticism, making and breaking religious careers and movements in their wake. Drawing on a variety of South Asian religious traditions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity—this book revolves around the theme of conundrum, demonstrating how miracles offer divine proof, tenacious embarrassment, and, in many cases, both. The contributors explore not only how modern miracles are conundrums themselves but also how they make conundrums out of assumed divides between scientific and supernatural realms, modernity and tradition, the West and the rest, and ethnographer and native.

**CONTRIBUTORS**

Chad M. Bauman
Whitestown, IN

Corinne G. Dempsey
U. of WI, Stevens Point

Joyce Burkhalter
Flueckiger

Emory U.

Ann Grodzins Gold
Syracuse U.

Sunil Goonasekera
Bowdoin Coll.

William P. Harman
U. of TN, Chattanooga

Selva J. Raj
deceased

Robin Rinehart
Lafayette Coll.

Neelima Shukla-Bhatt
Wellesley, MA

**Corinne G. Dempsey** is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point.

**Selva J. Raj (1952–2008)** was Chair and Stanley S. Kresge Professor of Religious Studies at Albion College.

**AUGUST**

*224 pp* • 10 b/w photographs

$65.00 jacketed hc 978-0-7914-7633-8

---

THE TRINITY AND CREATION IN AUGUSTINE

*An Ecological Analysis*

*Scott A. Dunham*

Looks at Augustine’s theology in light of environmental concerns.

The first English-language book on Augustine’s Trinitarian doctrine of creation, *The Trinity and Creation in Augustine* explores Augustine’s relevance for contemporary environmental issues. Modern, environmentally conscious thinkers often see Augustine’s doctrines in a negative light, feeling they have been used to justify humankind’s domination of nature. Considering Augustine’s thought in his own time and in ours, Scott A. Dunham offers a more nuanced view. He begins with a consideration of the major themes that have characterized ecologically sensitive theologies and Augustine’s place in those discussions. The primary examination considers how Augustine’s doctrine of the Trinity informed his interpretation of the opening chapters of Genesis, especially his conceptions of divine creation, providence, and dominion. This analysis of Augustine’s Trinitarian interpretation of Genesis stands in contrast to recent characterizations of classical conceptions of creation. The book concludes with a discussion of Augustine’s relevance for modern theological thought by appraising Augustine’s Trinitarian doctrine of creation in relation to ecological themes in theological ethics.

**Scott A. Dunham** is Visiting Scholar and Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of New Brunswick.

A volume in the SUNY series on Religion and the Environment

*Harold Coward, editor*

**AUGUST** • 208 pp

$65.00 jacketed hc 978-0-7914-7523-2
THE TEACHINGS OF THE ODD-EYED ONE
A Study and Translation of the Virūpāksapañcāśikā, with the Commentary of Vidyācakravartin
David Peter Lawrence

A study and translation of a tantric contemplative manual and the commentary on it.

This book offers the first published translation of the contemplative manual Virūpāksapañcāśikā, written circa the twelfth century CE, and the commentary on it, Viyūrī by Vidyācakravartin. These late works from the Pratyabhijñā tradition of monistic and tantric Kashmiri Śaiva philosophy focus on means to deindividualize and disclose the primordial, divine essential natures of the human ego and body-sense.

David Peter Lawrence situates these writings in their medieval, South Asian religious and intellectual contexts. He goes on to engage Pratyabhijñā philosophical psychology in dialogue with Western religious and psychoanalytic conceptions of identity and “narcissism,” and also demonstrates the Śaiva tradition’s strong concern with ethics. The richly annotated translation and glossary illuminate the texts for all readers.

“I think this is a marvelous book, filled with original insights into the mystical dimensions of the divine-human subject and the cosmicization of the human body.” — Jeffrey J. Kripal, author of Esalen: America and the Religion of No Religion

David Peter Lawrence is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Philosophy and Religion at the University of North Dakota. He is the author of Rediscovering God with Transcendental Argument: A Contemporary Interpretation of Monistic Kashmiri Śaiva Philosophy, also published by SUNY Press.

A volume in the SUNY series in Hindu Studies
Wendy Doniger, editor

SEPTEMBER • 192 pp • 3 tables, 1 figure
$60.00 jacketed hc 978-0-7914-7553-9

FREEDOM, FAITH, AND DOGMA
Essays by V. S. Soloviev on Christianity and Judaism
V. S. Soloviev
Edited, Translated, and with an Introduction by Vladimir Wozniuk

A collection of works by nineteenth-century Russian religious philosopher V. S. Soloviev, critic of secularization, anti-Semitism, and the religious life of his time.

Often remembered for his association with the Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky, V. S. Soloviev (1853–1900) remains the foremost representative of ecumenism in nineteenth-century Russia. Working in the name of the Universal Church, with the goal of restoring its unity, he often criticized the institutional churches severely for their contradictions and imperfections.

Freedom, Faith, and Dogma is Vladimir Wozniuk’s fourth volume of translations of Soloviev’s writings. These essays display the Christian philosopher’s concerns about the obstacles that religious and political dogma present to the free pursuit of faith. Wozniuk’s introduction places Soloviev squarely in the mainstream of Christian thought and highlights the concerns that dominate this collection: the meaning of church unification, the proper relationship between church and state, and how to deal with the tendency of the powerful to exploit the powerless, concerns that remain relevant to this day.

Vladimir Wozniuk is Professor of Political Science and Director of International Studies at Western New England College and Center Associate at Harvard University’s Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies. He has translated many of V. S. Soloviev’s writings, including Enemies from the East? V. S. Soloviev on Paganism, Asian Civilizations, and Islam.

AUGUST • 240 pp
$70.00 jacketed hc 978-0-7914-7535-5
RELIGIOUS NATURALISM TODAY
The Rebirth of a Forgotten Alternative
Jerome A. Stone

Looks at the history and revival of religious naturalism, a spiritual path without a supreme being.

Previously a forgotten option in religious thinking, religious naturalism is coming back. It seeks to explore and encourage religious ways of responding to the world on a completely naturalistic basis without a supreme being or ground of being. In this book, Jerome A. Stone traces its history and analyzes some of the issues dividing religious naturalists. He includes analysis of nearly fifty distinguished philosophers, theologians, scientists, and figures in art and literature, both living and dead. They range from Ursula Goodenough, Gordon Kaufman, William Dean, Thomas Berry, and Gary Snyder to Jan Christian Smuts, William Bernhardt, Gregory Bateson, and Sharon Welch.

“This is a timely contribution to contemporary theology. I know of no other book that provides such a clear yet nuanced account of the origins, development, and contemporary forms of religious naturalism. Stone’s achievement ensures that religious naturalism will again be a major contender in theological debates.” — Mary Doak, author of Reclaiming Narrative for Public Theology

Jerome A. Stone is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at William Rainey Harper College. He is the coeditor (with Creighton Peden) of both volumes of The Chicago School of Theology: Pioneers in Religious Inquiry, and the author of The Minimalist Vision of Transcendence: A Naturalist Philosophy of Religion, also published by SUNY Press.

AUGUST • 256 pp
$75.00 jacketed hc 978-0-7914-7537-9

THE LEGACY OF ANNE CONWAY (1631–1679)
Reverberations from a Mystical Naturalism
Carol Wayne White

Explores the work of Anne Conway, whose philosophy of the natural world incorporated a spiritual vision.

Carol Wayne White introduces readers to the religious naturalism of the seventeenth-century English philosopher Anne Conway, whose work offers an analysis of the mechanical conception of nature. White shows how Conway’s mystical cosmology provides an alternative to the dominant mechanistic models advanced by her leading male contemporaries, especially Descartes. She connects these philosophic impulses to Conway’s late religious conversion to Quakerism, arguing that Quaker practical mysticism and its emphasis on equality within the natural order resonate with Conway’s philosophic naturalism. White also explores Conway’s continuity with and departure from current veins of religious naturalism, which entail an aesthetic ethical mandate seeking the increase of goodness in the world.

“Conway studies are burgeoning, and this book will be useful for undergraduate teaching.” — Jane Duran, author of Eight Women Philosophers: Theory, Politics, and Feminism

Carol Wayne White is Associate Professor of Religion at Bucknell University and author of Poststructuralism, Feminism, and Religion: Triangulating Positions.

JUNE • 160 pp
$55.00 jacketed hc 978-0-7914-7465-5

directtext