GODHEAD AND THE NOTHING
THOMAS J. J. ALTIZER

An eminent theologian argues that nothingness is necessary in order to fully actualize the Godhead.

Eminent theologian Thomas J. J. Altizer breaks new ground by exploring the ultimate transfiguration of the Godhead as a question of the Nihil or nothingness and God. The Nihil is essential to the full actualization of the Godhead in that it fully occurs in both a primordial and an apocalyptic sacrifice of the Godhead. Virtually unexplored by philosophical and theological thinking, the Nihil is luminously enacted in the deepest expressions of the imagination, and most clearly and decisively so in the Christian epic tradition. Altizer looks at the works of philosophers and theologians such as Spinoza, Barth, Hegel, Nietzsche, and epic writers such as Dante, Milton, and Blake to ultimately posit a God that is necessarily a dichotomous God.

"Startling in its originality and cumulative power, this is a remarkable achievement in philosophical theology by a major thinker who has reshaped the way in which God is understood in a post-Nietzschean world. The most significant and widely read of the death of God theologians, Altizer focuses on the inseparability of nothingness and God. A consummation of his lifework, this question is considered in its most important historical and metaphysical expressions. This work cannot leave the reader indifferent. It will provoke admiration and disagreement, but it will be read."

— Edith Wyschogrod, coeditor of Lacan and Theological Discourse

Thomas J. J. Altizer is Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. He is the author of a number of books, including The Contemporary Jesus; History as Apocalypse (both published by SUNY Press); The Genesis of God: A Theological Genealogy; Radical Theology and the Death of God (with William Hamilton); The Self-Embodiment of God; and The Descent Into Hell: A Study of the Radical Reversal of the Christian Consciousness.
RELIGION AND PEACEBUILDING

Harold Coward and Gordon S. Smith, editors

Acknowledging that religion can motivate both violence and compassion, this book looks at how a variety of world religions can and do build peace.

In the wake of September 11, 2001 religion is often seen as the motivating force behind terrorism and other acts of violence. Religion and Peacebuilding looks beyond headlines concerning violence perpetrated in the name of religion to examine how world religions have also inspired social welfare and peacemaking activism. Leading scholars from the Aboriginal, Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, Jewish, Muslim, and Christian traditions provide detailed analyses of the spiritual resources for fostering peace within their respective religions. The contributors discuss the formidable obstacles to nonviolent conflict transformation found within sacred texts and living traditions. Case studies of Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Cambodia, and South Africa are also examined as practical applications of spiritual resources for peace.

“This book grows on you and merits more than a quick read. Due to its scope, it offers an abundance of useful insights and ramifications. There can be no doubt as to the significance of this book.” — Robert D. Baird, editor of Religion in Modern India

Harold Coward is with the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at the University of Victoria and is the author and editor of many books, including, most recently, Yoga and Psychology: Language, Memory, and Mysticism, also published by SUNY Press.

Gordon S. Smith is Director of the Centre for Global Studies at the University of Victoria and the author and editor of many books, including (with Daniel Wolfish) Who Is Afraid of the State?: Canada in a World of Multiple Centres of Power.

A volume in the SUNY series in Religious Studies

For a list of contributors, see page 58.
HINDU BIOETHICS FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY
S. CROMWELL CRAWFORD

Explores contemporary controversies in bioethics from a Hindu perspective.

S. Cromwell Crawford breaks new ground in this provocative study of Hindu bioethics in a Western setting. He provides a new moral and philosophical perspective on fascinating and controversial bioethical issues that are routinely in the news: cloning, genetic engineering, the human genome project, reproductive technologies, the end of life, and many more. This Hindu perspective is particularly noteworthy because of India’s own indigenous medical system, which is stronger than ever and drawing continued interest from the West. The Hindu bioethics presented in this book are philosophically pluralistic and ethically contextual, giving them that conceptual flexibility which is often missing in Western religions, but which is demanded by the twenty-first century’s complex moral problems. Comprehensive in scope and passionate in nature, Crawford’s study is an important resource for analyses of practical ethics, bioethics, and health care.

“Crawford makes accessible a wealth of Hindu perspectives on biomedical reasoning and practice that are at once practical and profound. His book is indispensable for practitioners and educators in biomedicine and health care who are concerned with utilizing the contributions of world traditions to attain more comprehensive and satisfactory solutions to some of the most challenging problems faced by humankind. It is a tremendous resource for understanding Hindu value theory and philosophy of person and body, as seen through the lens of health and medicine.” — Gregory P. Fields, author of Religious Therapeutics: Body and Health in Yoga, Ayurveda, and Tantra

S. Cromwell Crawford is Professor and Chair of Religion at the University of Hawaii and the author of many books on Hindu ethics, including Dilemmas of Life and Death: Hindu Ethics in a North American Context, also published by SUNY Press.

A volume in the SUNY series in Religious Studies
Harold Coward, editor

WOMEN IN THE YORUBA RELIGIOUS SPHERE
OYERONKE OLAJUBU

Foreword by Jacob K. Olupona

An exploration of gender and power relations in Yoruba religion—both Christianity and Yoruba traditional religion.

Drawing on a wide range of oral and written sources, this book shows that women occupy a central place in the religious worldview and life of the Yoruba people and shows how men and women engage in mutually beneficial roles in the Yoruba religious sphere. It explores how gender issues play out in two Yoruba religious traditions—indigenous religion and Christianity in Southwestern Nigeria. Rather than shy away from illuminating the tensions between the prominent roles of Yoruba women in religion and their perceived marginalization, author Oyeronke Olajubu underscores how Yoruba women have challenged marginalization in ways unprecedented in other world religions.

“This book’s thorough study of the interplay of gender and power relations in the Yoruba religious sphere provides a fresh interpretation to dominant theses and ideas in this area of study.” — Akintunde E. Akinade, coeditor of The Agitated Mind of God: The Theology of Kosuke Koyama

“There is no other book on Yoruba women and religion with such breadth, ethnographic richness, and updated data. Olajubu provides an opportunity to consider Yoruba gender practices in various socio-historical contexts, and she fills an information gap on Yoruba women in more recent charismatic and Pentecostal churches.” — Deidre H. Crumbley, North Carolina State University

Oyeronke Olajubu is Senior Lecturer of Comparative Religion at the University of Ilorin.

A volume in the McGill Studies in the History of Religions, A Series Devoted to International Scholarship
Katherine K. Young, editor
THE JOURNEY TOWARD GOD IN AUGUSTINE’S CONFESSIONS
Books I–VI
CARL G. VAUGHT

A new interpretation of the first six books of Augustine's Confessions, emphasizing the importance of Christianity rather than Neoplatonism.

This detailed discussion of Augustine's journey toward God, as it is described in the first six books of the Confessions, begins with infancy, moves through childhood and adolescence, and culminates in youthful maturity. In the first stage, Augustine deals with the problems of original innocence and sin; in the second, he addresses a pear-stealing episode that recapitulates the theft of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden and confronts the problem of sexuality with which he wrestles until his conversion; and in the third, he turns toward philosophy, only to be captivated successively by dualism, skepticism, and Catholicism. Augustine's journey exhibits temporal, spatial, and eternal dimensions and combines his head and his heart in equal proportions. Vaught shows that the Confessions should be interpreted as an attempt to address the person as a whole rather than through our intellectual or volitional dimensions exclusively. The passion with which Augustine describes the end of his journey is reflected best in a sentence found in the opening chapter of the text—"You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."

Interpreting this statement, Carl G. Vaught presents a more emphatically Christian Augustine than is usually found in contemporary scholarship. Refusing to view Augustine in an exclusively Neoplatonic framework, Vaught holds that Augustine baptizes Plotinus just as successfully as Aquinas baptizes Aristotle. It cannot be denied that Ancient philosophy influences Augustine decisively. Nevertheless, he holds the experiential and the theoretical dimensions of his journey toward God together as a distinctive expression of the Christian tradition.

Carl G. Vaught is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Baylor University. He is the editor and author of several books, including The Quest for Wholeness and The Sermon on the Mount: A Theological Interpretation, both published by SUNY Press.