Embodying the Dharma explores the centrality of relic veneration in Asian Buddhist cultures. Long disregarded by Western scholars as a superstitious practice reflecting the popularization of “original” Buddhism, relic veneration has emerged as a topic of vital interest in the last two decades with the increased attention to Buddhist ritual practice and material culture. This volume includes studies of relic traditions in India, Japan, Tibet, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, as well as broader comparative analyses, including comparisons of Buddhist and Christian relic veneration.

“The chapters accomplish a reenvisioning of Buddhism in society, past and present. With excellent scholars known for their command of their sources, and many controversies and unsolved questions in Buddhist studies being touched upon, the exemplary value of this book is proven.” — Todd T. Lewis, author of Popular Buddhist Texts from Nepal: Narratives and Rituals of Newar Buddhism

Perhaps fearing that conceptions of Buddhism would be tainted by superstition, Western scholars have tended to overlook relics and the practices surrounding them. Embodying the Dharma brings together essays by scholars who take holy remnants seriously. The reader will emerge with a good sense of the complexity—and importance—of relic worship in the Buddhist world.” — Roger R. Jackson, coeditor of Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre

David Germano is Associate Professor of Buddhist and Tibetan Studies at the University of Virginia. He is the coeditor (with Helmut Eimer) of The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism and the founder and director of the Tibetan and Himalayan Digital Library. Kevin Trainor is Associate Professor of Religion at the University of Vermont and the author of Relics, Ritual, and Representation in Buddhism: Rematerializing the Sri Lankan Theravāda Tradition.

The first book in English devoted to the religious philosopher Frithjof Schuon (1907–1998) to appear since his death, this biography also provides an analysis of his work and spiritual teachings. Relying on Schuon’s published works as well as unpublished correspondence and other documents, the authors highlight the originality of Schuon’s life and teachings in terms of his consistent focus on esoterism, defined as the inner penetration of sacred forms and spiritual practices vis-à-vis the religio perennis, the eternal wisdom that lies at the core of all sacred paths. Schuon’s life, they argue, is a quest for the inner meaning of religious experience, as is indicated by his connections to Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Native American Shamanism. Spiritual seekers from all backgrounds will appreciate this comprehensive study of this towering figure of comparative religion.

“The authors of this book are to be congratulated for having produced this important introduction to the life, works, and thought of one of the most remarkable intellectual and spiritual luminaries of the past century. Their study combines personal devotion to the subject with extensive knowledge drawn from both oral and written sources not generally available. This book will likely become a primary source in future years.” — from the Foreword by Seyyed Hossein Nasr

Frithjof Schuon was a man whose private life, largely unknown to all but a small circle of friends until his death, was of a single substance with his message. This excellent book brings together essays by scholars who take holy remnants seriously. The reader will emerge with a good sense of the complexity—and importance—of relic worship in the Buddhist world.”

— Roger R. Jackson, coeditor of Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre

David Germano is Associate Professor of Buddhist and Tibetan Studies at the University of Virginia. He is the coeditor (with Helmut Eimer) of The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism and the founder and director of the Tibetan and Himalayan Digital Library. Kevin Trainor is Associate Professor of Religion at the University of Vermont and the author of Relics, Ritual, and Representation in Buddhism: Rematerializing the Sri Lankan Theravāda Tradition.

For a list of contributors, see page 61.
This book penetrates the assumptions of Western technological society and exposes the powers that govern it. The contributors argue that it is a mistake to think that religion and belief have been relegated to the private sphere and are no longer important in the public and political domains. They assert that the twenty-first century has a set of new gods—the powers of globalization, technology, the market, and military might—that reign alongside those of traditional religions. These are the forces to which the modern era has granted ultimacy. This book looks at how major religions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism play an important role in politics and society on both the global and local levels. The new gods of technology, globalization, and war are shown to exacerbate the existing cultural divisions and religious strife that mark our time.

By understanding the importance of that which is held sacred, whether traditional belief or modern practice not acknowledged as belief, the contributors help us to comprehend our present situation and challenges.

“The issues that are raised by the contributors to this book are vital in the modern world. They deal with the impact of technology and war in the modern world and capture one’s imagination.”
— Robert D. Baird, author of Essays in the History of Religions

David J. Hawkin is Professor of Religious Studies at Memorial University of Newfoundland and the author of The Johannine World: Reflections on the Theology of the Fourth Gospel and Contemporary Society, also published by SUNY Press.

August ■ 224 pp.
$65.50 hc ISBN 0-7914-6181-5

For a list of contributors, see page 61.

This book explores how Ibn al-'Arabî (1165–1240) used the concept of barzakh (the Limit) to deal with the philosophical problem of the relationship between God and the world, a major concept disputed in ancient and medieval Islamic thought. The term barzakh indicates the activity or actor that differentiates between things and that, paradoxically, then provides the context of their unity. Author Salman H. Bashier looks at early thinkers and shows how the synthetic solutions they developed provided the groundwork for Ibn al-'Arabî’s unique concept of barzakh. Bashier discusses Ibn al-'Arabî’s development of the concept of barzakh ontologically through the notion of the Third Thing and epistemologically through the notion of the Perfect Man, and compares Ibn al-'Arabî’s vision with Plato’s.

“Salman H. Bashier has rightly identified the importance of the concept of the Limit (barzakh), a central theme in Ibn al-'Arabî’s thought, and situates the concept in two new contexts: earlier Islamic thought as a whole, and the larger Western philosophic tradition. It is a worthy ambition.” — John Walbridge, author of The Wisdom of the Mystic East: Suhrawardi and Platonic Orientalism

Salman H. Bashier is Visiting Lecturer at Ben Gurion University and Haifa University.

October ■ 224 pp.
$45.00 hc only ISBN 0-7914-6227-7
GREEN MAN,
EARTH ANGEL
The Prophetic Tradition
and the Battle
for the Soul of the World
Tom Cheetham
Argues for a renewed vision
of the cosmos based on the
centrality of the human encounter
with the sacred.

Green Man, Earth Angel explores
the central role of imagination for understanding the place
of humans in the cosmos. Tom Cheetham suggests that lives can
only be completely whole if human beings come to recognize
that the human and natural worlds are part of a vast living
network and that the material and spiritual worlds are
deeply interconnected. Central to this reimagining is an exami-
nation of the place of language in human life and art and in the
worldview that the prophetic religions—Judaism, Christianity,
and Islam—presuppose. If human language is experienced only
as a subset of a vastly more-than-human whole, then it is not
only humans who speak, but also God and the world with all
its creatures. If humans’ internal poetry and creative imagina-
tions are part of a greater conversation, then language can have
the vital power to transform the human soul, and the soul
of the world itself.

“Cheetham gives a very good overview of the many problems
of scientific rationalism as they connect to monotheism
and Christian teleological thinking. In contrast, he offers
a new interpretation of ecology that is aesthetic and soulful,
based on the writings of Henry Corbin.” — Lee Irwin, author of
Awakening to Spirit: On Life, Illumination, and Being

Tom Cheetham has taught human ecology and is the author of
The World Turned Inside Out: Henry Corbin and Islamic Mysticism.

A volume in the SUNY series in Western Esoteric Traditions
David Appelbaum, editor

November ■ 192 pp.
Illustrated: 1 b/w photograph
$21.95 pb ISBN 0-7914-6270-6
$65.50 hc ISBN 0-7914-6269-2

FEMALE ASCETICS
IN HINDUISM
LYNN TESKEY DENTON
Provides both a first-hand look at
and an insightful analysis of
a little-known world—that
of female ascetics in India.

Female Ascetics in Hinduism
provides a vivid account of the lives
of women renouncers—women
who renounce the world to live
ascetic spiritual lives—in India. The author approaches the study
of female asceticism by focusing on features of two dharmas,
two religiously defined ways of life: that of woman-as-householder
and that of the ascetic, who, for various reasons, falls outside
the realm of householdership. The result of fieldwork conducted
in Vārānasi (Benares), the book explores renouncers’ social and
personal backgrounds, their institutions, and their ways of life.
Offering a first-hand look at and an insightful analysis of this
little-known world, this highly readable book will be indispensable
to those interested in female asceticism in the Hindu tradition
and women's spiritual lives around the world.

“Although renunciation and asceticism in India have received
much attention, female asceticism—both historical and
contemporary—has not. This is an important work, which makes
a significant contribution to this topic.” — Patrick Olivelle,
author of Rules and Regulations of Brahmanical Asceticism

Lynn Teskey Denton (1949–1995) was Assistant Professor
of Religion at Concordia University and also taught at
McMaster University.

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

August ■ 224 pp.
Illustrated: 7 tables
$65.50 hc ISBN 0-7914-6179-3
This book furthers the development of American public theology by arguing for the importance of narrative to a theological interpretation of the nation’s social and political life. In contrast to both sectarian theologies that oppose a diverse public life and liberal theologies that have lost their distinctiveness, narrative public theology seeks an engaged yet critical role consistent with the separation of church and state and respectful of the multireligious character of the United States. Mary Doak argues for a public theology that focuses on the narrative imagination through which we envision our current circumstances and our hopes for the future. This theology sees both our national stories and our religious ones as resources that can contribute to a public and pluralistic conversation about the direction of society. Doak highlights arguments from Paul Ricoeur, Johann Baptist Metz, William Dean, Stanley Hauerwas, Franklin Gamwell, and Ronald Thiemann that can both contribute to and challenge a narrative public theology. She also proposes a model of public theology using narratives from Abraham Lincoln, Virgil Elizondo, and Delores Williams.

"Mary Doak has taken up a very important set of issues and she explores them with insight and care. She is especially effective in defending the responsibility of Christians for the larger world, and in countering sectarian models of Christianity. Her analyses of various thinkers are clear and her criticisms thoughtfully articulated." — Linell E. Cady, author of Religion, Theology, and American Public Life

Mary Doak is Assistant Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame.

A volume in the SUNY series, Religion and American Public Life

William Dean, editor

October ■ 256 pp.
$40.00 hc only ISBN 0-7914-6233-1

In Deference to the Other brings contemporary continental thought into conversation with that of Bernard Lonergan (1904–1984), the Jesuit philosopher and theologian. This is an opportune moment to open such a dialogue: philosophers and theologians indebted to Lonergan have increasingly found themselves challenged by the insights of thinkers typically dubbed “postmodern,” while postmodernists, most notably Jacques Derrida, have begun to ask the “God question.” While Lonergan was not a continental philosopher, neither was he an analytic philosopher. Concerned with both epistemology and cognition, his systematic and hermeneutical proposals resonate with the concerns of philosophers such as Derrida, Foucault, Levinas, and Kristeva. Contributors to this volume find insight and affiliation between Lonergan’s thought and contemporary continental thought in a wide-ranging work that engages the philosophical problems of authenticity, self-appropriation, ethics, and the human subject.

“In the current revival of interest in religion among recent continental philosophers, the name of Bernard Lonergan is an unlikely partner. But, if the studies in this present volume succeed, that is likely to change, and Lonergan will assume a growing importance in this discussion.” — from the Foreword by John D. Caputo

Jim Kanaris is Faculty Lecturer in Philosophy of Religion at McGill University and author of Bernard Lonergan’s Philosophy of Religion: From Philosophy of God to Philosophy of Religious Studies, also published by SUNY Press. Mark J. Doorley is Visiting Assistant Professor of Ethics and Assistant Director of the Ethics Program at Villanova University. He is the author of The Place of the Heart in Lonergan’s Ethics: The Role of Feelings in the Ethical Intentionality Analysis of Bernard Lonergan.

October ■ 176 pp.
$35.00 hc only ISBN 0-7914-6243-9

For a list of contributors, see page 61.
THINKING THROUGH THE DEATH OF GOD
A Critical Companion to Thomas J. J. Altizer
Lissa McCullough and Brian Schroeder, editors

A critical exploration of the thought of radical theologian Thomas J. J. Altizer, including a response from Altizer and a comprehensive bibliography of his work.

The leading exponent of the “death of God” theology of the 1960s, Thomas J. J. Altizer created a media sensation at the time and defined a major new direction in philosophical theology. Altizer has continued to refine his thought throughout his career, and his systematic theological work has achieved its prime as shown in this collaborative critical response to his thought. This book is also the first collection of its kind to appear in nearly thirty years and, thus, the first to deal with the most sophisticated period of his work. A response from Altizer is included, along with a comprehensive bibliography of his work.

“This book is a successful treatment of the work of one of the most serious, singleminded, and challenging theologians at work today. Altizer’s theology, forty years in refinement, is radical and profound, and to read him is to be forced to think through serious theological issues. The contributions are diverse and of uniformly high quality.” — J. Harley Chapman, author of Interpreting Neville and Jung’s Three Theories of Religious Experience

Lissa McCullough is Assistant Professor of Religion at Muhlenberg College. Brian Schroeder is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Rochester Institute of Technology and is the author of Altared Ground: Levinas, History, and Violence.

A volume in the SUNY series in Theology and Continental Thought
Douglas L. Donkel, editor

October ■ 288 pp.
$73.50 hc ISBN 0-7914-6219-6

For a list of contributors, see page 61.

SLEEP AS A STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN ADVAITA VEDĀNTA
Arvind Sharma

Explores deep sleep (susupti), one of the three states of consciousness in Advaita Vedānta, and the major role it plays in this philosophy.

Indian philosophy bases itself on three states of consciousness: waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. Deep sleep, or susupti, plays an important role in Advaita Vedānta, the major philosophical school that advocates a doctrine of pure consciousness. Explaining and savoring this paradox, this book shows how the concept of deep sleep can be used in Advaita Vedānta to reveal a philosophical insight, validate an argument, illustrate a moral, or adorn a tale. Arvind Sharma explores why sleep is a phenomenon that philosophers should be interested in and examines it in classical Hindu religious texts, including the Upanishads, and in foundational, early, and modern Advaita Vedānta.

“This is a superb treatment of an important topic.” — John M. Koller, author of Asian Philosophies, Fourth Edition

Arvind Sharma is Birks Professor of Comparative Religion at McGill University. His many books include Methodology in Religious Studies: The Interface with Women’s Studies, also published by SUNY Press, and The Study of Hinduism.

October ■ 190 pp.
$35.00 hc only ISBN 0-7914-6251-X
JOHN DEE’S OCCULTISM
Magical Exaltation through Powerful Signs
GYÖRGY E. SZŐNYI

A comprehensive look at the life and work of one of the towering figures of Renaissance mysticism.

Delving into the life and work of John Dee, Renaissance mathematician and “conjurer to Queen Elizabeth,” György E. Szőnyi presents an analysis of Renaissance occultism and its place in the chronology of European cultural history. Culling examples of “magical thinking” from classical, medieval, and Renaissance philosophers, Szőnyi revisits the body of Dee’s own scientific and spiritual writings as reflective sources of traditional mysticism. Exploring the intellectual foundations of magic, Szőnyi focuses on the ideology of exaltatio, the glorification or deification of man. He argues that it was the desire for exaltatio that framed and tied together the otherwise varied thoughts and activities of John Dee as well.

“György E. Szőnyi writes with intelligence and clarity. This work is a useful complement to past scholarly works on John Dee and is a must for any specialized library.”
— Antoine Faivre, author of Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition: Studies in Western Esotericism

“Szőnyi has much of value to say about John Dee. He makes a significant contribution to the field of Dee studies and to the understanding of Renaissance/early modern European esotericism, especially from the perspective of Eastern Europe.”
— Arthur Versluis, author of Restoring Paradise: Western Esotericism, Literature, Art, and Consciousness

György E. Szőnyi is Associate Professor of English and Director of the Institute of English and American Studies at the University of Szeged, Hungary. He is the author of two other books on John Dee.

A volume in the SUNY series in Western Esoteric Traditions
David Appelbaum, editor

October ■ 288 pp.
Illustrated: 25 figures
$30.00 hc only ISBN 0-7914-6223-4

RESTORING PARADISE
Western Esotericism, Literature, Art, and Consciousness
ARTHUR VERSLUIS

Explores European and American esoteric traditions as reflected in literature and art.

Focusing on how spiritual initiation takes place in Western esoteric religious, literary, and artistic traditions from antiquity to the present, Restoring Paradise provides an introduction to Western esotericism, including early modern esoteric movements like alchemy, Christian theosophy, and Rosicrucianism. The author argues that European and American literature and art often entail a written transmission of spiritual knowledge in which writing itself works to transmute consciousness, to generate, provoke, or convey spiritual awakening. He focuses on several important figures whose work has not received the attention it deserves, including American writer and Imagist poet H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) and British painter Cecil Collins, among others. While Arthur Versluis presents a new way of understanding Western esotericism in a contemporary light, above all he has crafted a book about knowing, and about how we come to know, and what “knowing” by way of literature and language actually means.

“This is a courageous attempt to forge a connection between esoteric literature, as defined in relatively conventional academic terms, and modern literature and art—and thereby a connection between esoteric traditions and the modern mind.”
— Jacob Needleman, author of The American Soul: Rediscovering the Wisdom of the Founders

Arthur Versluis is Professor of American Thought and Language at Michigan State University and the author of many books, including Wisdom’s Children: A Christian Esoteric Tradition, also published by SUNY Press. He is also the editor of the journal Esoterica.

A volume in the SUNY series in Western Esoteric Traditions
David Appelbaum, editor

June ■ 192 pp.
$35.00 hc only ISBN 0-7914-6139-4