

late 1950s resemble figures from, for instance, Margery Perham's interwar account "East African Journey." The colonial regime's limited capacity for reform, the way the colonial order remained to the last glued to fictions of racial superiority and monolithic tradition, becomes very evident. Concomitantly, the ambivalent role of the postwar language of improvement and modernisation becomes very palpable: on one hand, the assumption of the superiority of British civilisation, and of a "civilising mission," is clearly central to officials' understanding of what colonial rule was about. But the insistent optimism about the speed and extent of change both possible and desirable that characterised the postwar period remains awkwardly superimposed on the intrinsic traditionalism, the pessimism about change, of the indirect rule regime.

Particularly in his detailed accounts of the working of local courts, but also in the broader discussion of the "Native Authorities," Beidelman delivers a very clear picture of the indeterminacy and contingency that characterised the process of colonial rule at the local level. The competing agendas of different local actors interact unpredictably. The ones who obtain colonial endorsement carry the day, but they do not add up to the sort of civilising effort that expatriate officials liked to think they were involved in. To borrow Mamdani's phrase from his "Citizens and Subjects," official endorsement could create "decentralised despots," but had very little control over the despots' subsequent doings.

Note, though, that Beidelman's observations do not, to this reader's mind, bear out Mamdani's claim that decentralised despotism had deep roots in local culture. They do chime with Mamdani's insistence on the many continuities between late-colonial and independent politics. But the "Culture of Colonialism" of the title is a political and bureaucratic culture created by the colonial encounter, a set of practices and rhetorical tropes that are awkwardly patched together from pseudotraditional and modernising material. It seems that neither the survival of deep-rooted cultural forms of legitimacy nor grand modernising hopes hold it together, but rather everyday necessity, its role in the securing or expansion of livelihoods does.

This is, then, a very engaging and thought-provoking book. At times, the reader may find her/himself wishing Beidelman had "cashed out" the many insights to be had from his material more explicitly. The author confesses early on to having, in his later judgment, been somewhat abrasive and judgmental in early encounters with colonial officials. He clearly came to understand the constraints and compulsions they laboured under better over time. Both impatience and sympathy with the actors on the colonial scene, with appointed chiefs, their underlings, and petitioners, but also with the British "men on the spot," are very much in evidence in his writing.

Yet when it comes to the generations of anthropologists and historians who have sought to make sense of the colonial experience since the time captured here, Beidelman appears to come down, on balance, on the side of impatience. He mentions early on that he was tempted to call this book of his "Take Me to Your Leader," but was talked out of it by colleagues who thought this title too irrever-

ent. He appears to begrudge his colleagues their strait-laced views, and perhaps the loss of this title really is to be deplored (the current reader certainly had an interesting time googling the phrase). But then, why not go with the preferred title and make a case for it? It seems at times a little bit as if Beidelman feels unhappily constrained by the conventions of his academic discipline.

This is true especially of anthropology's habitual attention to theory. For example, he just-about acknowledges Peter Pels' theoretically well-informed work on the Kaguru, but does not really engage with it. Beidelman appears most comfortable in the role of the hard-nosed empiricist – ironically, a very British pose. In fact, notwithstanding the critical distance Beidelman vividly recalls putting between himself and British colonial officials, he sounds at times a lot like a member of that group. In particular, he shares the tendency of such officials to explain events with reference to judgments of the character of African intermediaries, and he uses references to "modernisation," of the kind common in the late colonial period, fairly uncritically. It would have been interesting to see an explicit defence of late-colonial modernisers' assumptions, but with Beidelman, there is a feeling that he just can't quite be bothered to confront critics whom he probably finds rather predictable. This, too, makes him look oddly like his erstwhile research subjects.

Felicitas M. Becker

**Bouvier, Hélène, et Gérard Toffin** (éds.) : *Théâtres d'Asie à l'oeuvre*. Circulation, expression, politique. Paris : École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2012. 253 pp. ISBN 978-2-85539-146-5. (Études thématiques, 26) Prix : € 40,00

Cet ouvrage construit à partir d'une dizaine d'études anthropologiques questionne l'art de la scène en Asie. Introduit par un excellent état des lieux qui problématise les récentes perspectives et réflexions sur le théâtre, il cherche à présenter la richesse et la diversité de ses formes et de ses contenus tout en soulignant l'importance des fonctions qu'il a occupé par le passé et qu'il continue d'exercer au sein des sociétés complexes dans lesquelles il s'est développé. La multiplicité des cas d'études présentés n'est de loin pas exhaustive – comment l'être ? – mais réussit à rendre compte de la fabrique culturelle de genres théâtraux spécifiques et à porter l'attention avec nuance et subtilité sur les nombreux échanges religieux, intellectuels et artistiques à diverses échelles : globale (Orient-Occident), continentale (Asie), subcontinentale (Asie du Sud-Est), nationale, régionale et locale.

Les contributions de Gérard Toffin sur le théâtre religieux Indra Jātrā à Katmandou, Marianne Pasty sur le *mutiyēttu*, théâtre sacré au Kerala, Isabelle Henry-Dourcy sur le théâtre tibétain *ache Ihamo*, Stéphanie Khoury sur le théâtre rituel khmer *Ikhon khol* au Cambodge, Victoria Clara Van Groenendael sur le *wayang* javanais, Michel Picard sur l'indianisation de Bali par le théâtre, Hélène Bouvier sur les épopées indiennes dans le théâtre masqué madourais en Indonésie, Tùng Nguyễn et Nelly Krowolski sur le théâtre chanté *hát bội* au Vietnam, Catherine

Capdeville-Zeng sur le théâtre *nuo* en Chine du Sud-Est et Sabine Trebinjac sur le théâtre révolutionnaire *yangge* en Chine, réunies dans ce dense recueil – issu d'un colloque intitulé "Entre Inde et Chine. Le rôle du théâtre dans les processus de transmission et de circulation" tenu à Villejuif en 2007 – sont ordonnées selon trois axes principaux. La circulation des formes théâtrales, notamment les échanges entre les différentes expressions de la culture lettrée et populaire, constitue le premier thème abordé. Il s'agit ici de considérer le théâtre comme "une voie d'accès pour la compréhension d'une société" afin d'étudier les processus d'emprunt, d'appropriation et d'indigénisation qui s'y élaborent. Le théâtre est analysé comme objet hétérogène et dynamique – pas forcément figé dans la tradition passée –, en phase avec le contexte dans lequel il évolue, auquel l'ensemble de la société peut y prendre part. Le second thème traité dans cet ouvrage renvoie à l'ensemble des expressions par lesquelles l'art théâtral se traduit au delà du texte et de la narration. Les auteurs insistent sur l'importance des formes et moyens qui renvoient à un art total où spectacles parlés, chantés, dansés, théâtres musicaux, supports et dispositifs scéniques constituent un ensemble difficilement dissociable, à l'opposé de la conception occidentale qui distingue plus clairement les genres artistiques (théâtral, musical, poétique, opéra, littéraire). Enfin, le troisième thème est consacré au rôle du pouvoir politique ou religieux exercé sur les formes matérielles du théâtre. Utilisé pour mettre en scène le prestige des souverains ou comme mode de communication pour l'édification nationale ou encore pour transmettre des messages pédagogiques (médecine, hygiène, propagande politique, éducation), ces formes théâtrales ont souvent contribué à renforcer un processus d'identification auprès des populations tout en devenant des pierres angulaires de la construction des politiques culturelles locales.

Il est beaucoup question d'héritage matériel et immatériel dans cet ouvrage sans pour autant se référer au récent regain d'intérêt que cette notion a suscité auprès des spécialistes de la culture, du patrimoine et de la tradition. La lecture minutieuse des nombreuses contributions, qui traitent de pratiques théâtrales dont le mode de transmission est paradoxalement vulnérable et (re)vitalisé, pourrait pourtant apporter de nombreuses réponses aux interrogations que se posent les responsables des politiques culturelles, notamment celles qui prennent exemple sur les Conventions de l'Unesco – tout particulièrement celle pour la sauvegarde du patrimoine culturel immatériel (2003) –, et les chercheurs qui tentent d'articuler la dialectique entre tradition et modernité en mettant en lumière les forces et tensions qui "trient, conservent, modifient, abandonnent, transmettent ou adoptent".

Je recommande ainsi vivement la lecture de cet ouvrage qui actualise les réflexions anthropologiques sur les performances théâtrales en Asie et offre aux lecteurs, spécialistes ou non de ces questions, d'excellentes études de cas d'une grande richesse ethnographique et d'un intérêt théorique certain.

Florence Graezer Bideau

**Brekke, Torkel:** *Fundamentalism. Prophecy and Protest in an Age of Globalization.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. 291 pp. ISBN 978-0-521-14979-2. Price: \$ 30.99

Since the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the establishment of the Christian Right Movement in the U.S., religious fundamentalism enjoys a great amount of attention. At scholarly, political, and popular level, fundamentalism is widely addressed from a range of different perspectives. Political analysts and journalists alike are warning for the threat of violence that lies embedded in radical religious fundamentalist thinking, discussing the phenomenon from mostly democratic perspectives on safety, while many scientists address fundamentalism from a more historical perspective, discussing the genesis and development of fundamentalism starting at the beginning of the 20th century. Between 1987 and 1995, the Fundamentalism Project, sponsored by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, researched the phenomenon at several levels; historical, social, psychological, doctrinal, etc. This project, which was supervised by Martin Marty and Scott Appleby, produced not only many publications on the subject, but also dominated the discussion for quite a long time. Many scholars linked their research to the fundamentalism-project, which described the phenomenon as a complex global resistance movement that, although it produced very different visibilities, shared similar patterns of thinking and acting. These "family resemblances" could very well be analyzed among the different fundamentalisms produced by different religions.

Torkel Brekke's book on fundamentalism is an intelligent and welcome contribution to the analysis of the subject. His focus is sharp and his analysis well-structured. His contribution to the on-going discussion on fundamentalisms is that he does not start from a definition of fundamentalism as a typical religious product, but he takes fundamentalism as a "reaction to processes that take place at a particular stage in world history" (6). Understanding fundamentalism means understanding the dialectics between religious traditions, authorities, and practices on the one, and processes of secularization, modernization, and modern control on the other hand.

Brekke starts to elaborate on fundamentalism by touching the nerve of this dialectics: the crisis in and competition over authority. This is not so much a struggle for power, as some would have it, but much more a "believe that the modern state has wrongly appropriated a number of fields and emptied them of religious and moral content" (34). Brekke argues that this shift in authority, which did not only took place in Europe and the United States but disseminated across the non-Western world during colonial times which brought European perspectives on power and religion to the non-European world, inaugurated a competition on the social domains in religious societies. But not only this perspective on power resolved and decreased the influence of religion in the public; Brekke also argues that Christian missionaries in the 19th and 20th centuries activated a kind of mimetic competition among non-Christian religions. Especially this last development had a huge impact on the radicaliza-