

which are found in all of our languages, but which are often ignored by those teaching and researching endangered languages. For Ojibwe, this book gives us the opportunity to begin understanding discourse markers, and it gives us a model for collecting more examples of discourse markers from our fluent speakers, their texts, and their recordings. For other endangered languages, this book provides a model for what needs to be included in future language revitalization materials and research. It also suggests scenarios for finding discourse markers in other languages. We all need this information if we are going to improve our own fluency, that of our families and students, and if we are going to conduct useful research on these languages in the future.

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**Fee, Christopher, and David Leeming:** *The Goddess. Myths of the Great Mother*. London: Reaktion Books, 2016. 176 pp. ISBN 978-1-78023-509-7. Price: £ 16.00

This ambitious work co-authored by the two professors of English, Christopher Fee (Gettysburg College) and David Leeming (University of Connecticut), sets out to cover the myths of the Great Mother from ancient India in the East, via Iran, the Near East, Greco-Roman culture to the Norse culture and Ireland in the North and West, respectively, in order to explore this central aspect of ancient spiritual thought as a window into human history and the deepest roots of our beliefs.

In addition to an introduction, presenting “The Many Guises of the Goddess,” the book consists of five chapters leading us from India to Ireland and a conclusion, which gives a short discussion of “The Identity of the Goddess.” A short section presents further reading on each of the five chapters, general acknowledgements, photo acknowledgements, and an index.

It is stated that as long as humans have sought God, they found the Goddess, accordingly, the book wants to analyse the goddess or understand the evolution of the woman as a deity throughout cultures. The authors are thus concerned with drawing parallels, although they state that the deities, be that god or goddess, “always reflect the souls of” those “who worship them” (9), accordingly, they change as cultures change. The authors, consequently, want to use the goddess to gaze into the lives and souls of those who worshipped her. An overarching theme of the book is “[t]he emergence, dominance and subsequent subordination or erasure of powerful female figures of worship” (9), since they claim the goddess became subordinated to the god as the humans became mobile and looked upon male deities for assurances of survival in movement and battle. Here one may object that although the methods of transportation have changed, it is an historical fact that people have always been mobile and belligerent, especially when food or other important requirements were at stake. Nonetheless, the topic of the goddess has, according to the authors, never “been more relevant than it is today” (9). Moreover, the entire “Western civilization ... traces some large cultural debt to” the “ancient ancestors” discussed in the volume, “and thus related ancient transformations regarding the role of women and of

conceptions of the feminine divinities are of immediate and urgent interest to those who have a stake in modern gender roles” (9). We are also informed that “[t]he emphasis of the book is on the patterns of ways in which goddesses – as opposed to male deities – transform and evolve,” and “how such changes may be correlated with cultural and religious shifts” (11).

All the chapters are structured in the same way, and as the goddess is connected to humankind’s earliest agricultural civilisations, chap. 1: “The Dawn of the Indian Goddess,” starts the journey addressing issues concerning female agency and power, with the “Genesis,” followed by the “Faces of the Goddess,” dealing with various goddesses and their characteristics within the Indian culture, from the Great Goddess Devi to the two faces of Kali, the blessing and nurturing mother, versus her aspect as a killer with a great appetite for drinking the blood of her human victims. The chapter concludes with stating that “as Mother Earth, everything that emerges from her is also preserved by her and ultimately is returned to her” (34), a statement which indeed is relevant to all the various Mother Goddesses concerned.

Chapter 2: “The Religious Conversion of the Near Eastern Goddess,” starts the “Faces of the Goddess” by stating the importance of “the nurturing and beneficent figure of the Cosmic Cow” in Iranian mythology (41), a topic which is also important in Mediterranean cultures, one may mention Hera of the Greeks. The chapter also introduces the importance of the equine association with relevant goddesses, a topic which is similarly found in the Mediterranean and also further north, among the Celts. We learn how “[t]he ancient Avestan Anahita ... in a sense ... converted to a new, Islamic form when Fatima, daughter of the Prophet, takes on the epithet of the Powerful Pure One; [and] Islamic women were ... encouraged to take Fatima as a role model” (49).

Chapter 3: “The Scourge of the Middle Eastern and Mediterranean Goddess,” discusses mythologies from a variety of cultures and places, including Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. We are informed that “a group called ‘Habiru’ by the Egyptians moved out of Egypt into Canaan in about 1250 BCE ... [to be] the ancestors of the Hebrew people” (60). This is one of the instances where it would have been fruitful to have a reference, especially since this is not a standard accepted view among scholars. According to Anson Rainey, for instance, there is absolutely no relationship “between the *habiru*, who are well documented in Egyptian and Near Eastern inscriptions, and the Hebrews of the Bible” (“Who Were the Early Israelites?” *Biblical Archaeological Review* 34, 2008.6: 51–55). The same chapter also substitutes former goddesses with Mary, as a later new “Queen of Heaven,” in the aftermath of the Hebrew prophets who saw the Goddess Asherah, “as a threat to the emerging monotheistic religion of the Israelites” (65). It would have been interesting to have a discussion of whether the ideologists’ demands were followed by the people, since reading their repeated reports about peoples’ transgresses towards the very monotheistic “Almighty God” by continuing their old cultic customs, such as performing sacrifices and making of-

ferings on the high places, and so on, seems to give another version of monotheism in practical life. The same chapter moves on to the Greek religion, whose mythology also “is patriarchal in character” (66). This is reconfirmed by the authors when stating that “[w]ith the emergence of Zeus ... goddess power was greatly reduced,” exemplified by Demeter, who in the authors’ terms is “a ‘single mother’ with limited power” (78). When reading the “Homeric Hymn” to Demeter, however, one may obtain a more nuanced view of this assertion. Indeed, also the authors state that Demeter forced the very Zeus to a compromise after having threatened the very existence of humanity (80) by denying the grain to sprout. The topic may illustrate that neither goddesses nor the women they reflect were totally powerless, after all. One may also add that the “Mysteries of Eleusis” were not “beginning in fifth-century BCE,” as the authors claim (80), since the “Mysteries” actually took place for more than one thousand years from the archaic period until the cult site was destroyed by the Goths in 395 CE.

The two final chapters, 4: “The Battle Lust of the Northern Goddess,” and chap. 5: “The Seductive Destruction of the Goddess of the Western Isles,” are the best chapters in the volume, presumably also representing the authors’ main field of research, covering the “Viking” or rather “Old Norse” culture of Scandinavia, and the links with neighbouring peoples. Chapter 4 brings in a much broader source material than the former chapters, and the authors continue drawing parallels between the various cultures discussed, such as when examining the similarities between the Indian practice of *sati* and episodes like that one in Norse texts (111 f.), despite the long distance between the two cultures. Here, one may add that if we have traces of *sati* in Norse culture, we certainly also have that in the Greek, as evidenced by the tragedian Euripides’ “Suppliants” (1070), when Evadne threw herself on her husband Kapaneus’ funeral pyre and died in front of her father’s eyes (Euripides. Vol. 3: Bacchanals, Madness of Hercules, Children of Hercules, Phoenician Maidens, Suppliants. London 1946–1953 [1912]).

The last chapter brings us to the cultural ancestors of the British and the Irish, the Celts, who moved from East to West. One of the most widespread faces of the Celtic goddess, is the equine deity Epona (127), whose face or attributes are reencountered in several of the Irish and Welsh goddesses discussed, also with parallel references to more Southern and Eastern variants. One may add that Demeter also has an equine aspect, which may help to fill in one of the holes between the cultures at hand. The very goddess also lamented her dead daughter in the aforementioned Demeter hymn, and although the authors claim that a mourning woman embodies “[a] feminine figure who has no power but to lament” (152), one may argue that in some of the cultures discussed, women’s laments have been seen as dangerous voices, both in antiquity and in more recent times.

The conclusion continues drawing parallels, also including some words about goddesses from Africa, via Kina and Mexico, the latter of which also has replaced an earlier goddess with the Virgin of Guadalupe, one of the

many appearances of the Virgin Mary who, by the way, also even today appears to her devotees, especially female ones, at several places in Europe, Greece, and Italy included, although the authors claim the Christian Mary as a survival of the goddess, in modern times is manifested in new-age resurrections such as Gaia.

All in all, the book is well written, especially the two last chapters, but such an ambitious topic would have gained from being treated by various experts in the different fields. Perhaps in the future one may see such a book, also treating the goddesses in the cultures which were only mentioned in the conclusion, and if female scholars were among the contributors, the goddesses might also be described somehow differently.

Evy Johanne Håland

**La Fontaine, Jean:** *Witches and Demons. A Comparative Perspective on Witchcraft and Satanism.* New York: Berghahn Books, 2016. 150 pp. ISBN 978-1-78533-085-8. (Studies in Public and Applied Anthropology, 10) Price: £ 67.00

Jean La Fontaines Band “Witches and Demons. A Comparative Perspective on Witchcraft and Satanism” ist eine Sammlung von acht kurzen Aufsätzen, die auf Vorträge oder frühere Publikationen zurückgehen. Wann genau die Texte ursprünglich entstanden sind, wird nicht bei allen geklärt. Versehen mit einer knappen Einleitung und einem zusammenfassenden Schlusskapitel bieten die Texte einen Einblick in zwei von La Fontaines Schwerpunktthemen: Afrikanische Hexereivorstellungen und die Angst vor Satanisten, die Kinder missbrauchen sollen, in Großbritannien und den USA. La Fontaine macht die Überschneidungsräume deutlich: Die neue Angst vor Kinderhexen in Teilen Afrikas und magische Vorstellungen in angelsächsischen Ländern mit hohem Anteil an afrikanischen Einwanderern werden ausführlich thematisiert. Die alten Texte, die in “Witches and Demons” zugefasst werden, hätten eine Materialbasis für eine neue Monografie mit stringenter Struktur und aktualisierter Sachinformation sein können. Leider ist es bei der Sammlung von Einzeltexten geblieben. Das bringt es mit sich, dass der Band deutlich repetitiv ist. Unterschiedliche Kapitel verwenden unterschiedliche Definitionen von *witch* bzw. *witchcraft*. Nicht einmal die Anordnung der Kapitel überzeugt, da ein Text über Hexerei und afrikanisch geprägte Pfingstkirchen eine kurze Reihe von Texten über Kinder und Magie stört.

La Fontaines vergleichender Ansatz ist kühn. Sie bringt Informationen aus unterschiedlichen afrikanischen Kulturen des 20. Jh.s zusammen, um ein kohärentes Narrativ zu kreieren. Die Abwägung zwischen oberflächlichen Ähnlichkeiten und aufschlussreichen Strukturparallelen gelingt häufig. Interesse beanspruchen dürfen insbesondere La Fontaines Ausführungen zu “muti”-Morden in Westeuropa. Hier kann sie zeigen, dass kulturelle Missverständnisse oder eher oberflächliche Recherche polizeiliche Ermittlungen zeitweilig in die falsche Richtung haben laufen lassen. Mit diesen Teilen des Bandes wendet sich La Fontaine vornehmlich an Laien, denen