

tions of faiths, which is shown by radical Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist organizations that started to “evangelize” the laity. In this context, Brekke can write for instance that the Buddhist revival at the end of the 19th century in Sri Lanka “was conceptualized as Christian-style revival with different contents” (236). At the end of the 19th century, the new object of religious concern was not the ritual and the maintenance of religious practices by clerics, but above all the community and – thus – the “right faith” of its members. So it is not a coincidence that in the first two decades of the 20th century most religious institutes focusing on proselytization were established, but rather a sharp response to Christian missions reflecting a serious competition for the lay soul.

In the first part of the book, Brekke illuminates the historical and ideological context of fundamentalism, sketching privatizations of religion and the decline of religious authority as result of Western concepts of secularization. An important argument in Brekke’s book, partly based on the work of sociologist Talcott Parsons, is found in his analysis of secularization as a process of differentiation. Whereas religion in premodern societies was part and parcel of all social domains, in modern secular society, religion is differentiated from most other social domains like the law, politics, and science, becoming itself a (private) domain. As a result, religion loses its grip on society which generally results in two directions; the first direction is that of value-generalization (Parsons’ term) which refers to an effort to accommodate everybody and leads to dilution, while the second direction is negatively linked with the first and wants to regain what was lost. This may be understood as the fundamentalist response. This response contains a highly objectified form of “true” or “real” religion (doctrine and practice) (63) and clear-cut ideas that are presented through public preaching (88) which may be understood as a modern communicative tool with a strong focus on conversion and transformation. The fundamentalist “agenda” is focused on reversing the modernizing trend of differentiation in order to reassert the impact it (thinks it) has lost (101). This makes the fundamentalist someone who realizes the importance of an all-encompassing religious authority (which was lost due to differentiation that resulted in the dilution of true faith) and someone who “steps into the vacuum with a new message of religious regeneration” (268) by addressing the new “true” and “real” individual believer. In the second part of his book (“Fundamentalist Struggles”), Brekke analyzes the different domains that were lost due to differentiation and that depend on competitive authorities. He discusses the struggle for the political state, over the law, for the sciences, over education, and over women, asking attention for Islamic, Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist responses to differentiation, privatization, and the decline of religious authority. In these sections, which are enriched by many specific examples, Brekke succeeds in combining the different traits of fundamentalism that he analyzed in the first part of his book. Doing this, both the congruence and the diversity of fundamentalism as a global response to modern social changes is convincingly stressed. The importance of Brekke’s publication lies in

his analysis that fundamentalism is not only a movement sharing resemblances at a global level, but also and even more a response that is dialectically part of the world it criticizes.

Lucien van Liere

Brightman, Marc, Vanessa Elisa Grotti, and Olga Ulturgasheva (eds.): *Animism in Rainforest and Tundra. Personhood, Animals, Plants, and Things in Contemporary Amazonia and Siberia*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2012. 209 pp. ISBN 978-0-85745-468-3 Price: \$ 90.00

What a wealth of topics the title and subtitle promise! And the book does not disappoint. It brings together expert Amazonianists and Siberianists to survey and advance debates that are not only at the cutting edge of their interests but deserve further dialogue. In recent decades research and debate about animism (and its nested shamanic worldviews and performances) have engaged scholars in many disciplines. Examples include ethnographies of specific indigenous peoples, philosophical ferment about personhood, sociological attention to relationality, and scientific treatises on cognition among other-than-human species and participation at every cosmic scale. Within this wide range of work we can find a willingness to think again about some of the core tropes of modernity – especially human exceptionalism, religion as private nonempiricism, and the elevation of European rationalism to the status of a universal standard. All these, and more, are challenged and alternatives proposed. Data and analysis from Amazonia and Siberia have been regular sources of inspiration for debate, some of it quite vigorous. Even where ethnographies have been treated merely as information about “other cultures” they have often been eloquent provocations of significant scholarly activity. The extension of the originally Siberian term “shaman” to other geographical and cultural areas is a well-established example of the value and complexity of comparative and critical endeavours. This book offers and aids advances in many of these interlinked realms. It deserves reading, reflection, and debate and ought to lead to yet more work of its kind.

After a clear and valuable introduction by the editors, there are ten substantive chapters. The introduction does not resort to merely summarising the chapters but offers a wide view of how scholarship about Amazonia, Siberia, animism, shamanism, personhood, relationality, perspectivism, and other topics have arisen and been developed. It notes the views of scholars who have opened up new ways of thinking about “cultures and natures” and “nature-culture.” Importantly it is willing to contest some powerful notions and approaches so that the chapters that follow cannot but be seen as contributions to a vibrant debate.

The titles of the main chapters seem to promise a focus on Amazonia followed by a focus on Siberia, then back to the Amazon and Siberia again until we have been in each place five times each. Some chapters do, indeed, focus on only one of these regions. Others at least note that comparison could be interesting. Some go further and indicate areas where what has been learnt in one place has inspired research or reflection elsewhere. All these styles or ap-

proaches are conducted skilfully and the end result is not a set of discrete snapshots but an incitement to work with connections and contrasts. It is not that the two regions are identical or that a theory that has proved fruitful in one place must generate similar results elsewhere. Indeed, the chapters powerfully demonstrate diversity and diversification within both Amazonia and Siberia. Nonetheless, the varied ways of being in the world that might be called “animism” (or the plural “animisms”) generate topics that reward this kind of collaborative dialogue of experts.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, it is possible to see the book as debating the relative and shifting meanings and roles of categories like nature, culture, and the supernatural or spiritual. We meet animals (domesticated, hunted, consumed, predatory, and “spirit-charged”) and shamans (some of whom are animals, or vice versa) in every chapter. But the topics generated by these underlying themes engage with what it might mean to be a person – a self, an individual, a human, a “non-human” or “other-than-human”, a relation of plants and/or animals, a “spirit” or an “enemy”? – and what it might mean to own or be owned, consume or evade, to participate or differentiate, and otherwise relate to place and larger-than-human community. Widespread Amazonian and Siberian notions of transformability of persons (whatever that category means) might encourage a richer openness to a transformation of our ethnographic disciplines in the face of work by colleagues elsewhere. This, finally, is a significant part of this book’s interest, power, and promise.

Graham Harvey

Buckley, R. P.: *The Night Journey and Ascension in Islam. The Reception of Religious Narrative in Sunnī, Shī‘ī and Western Culture.* London: I. B. Tauris, 2013. 360 pp. ISBN 978-1-84885-986-9. Price: £ 59.50

Nach allgemein islamischer Überzeugung begab sich der Prophet Mohammed sowohl auf eine Nachtreise von Mekka nach Jerusalem (*Isrāʿ*), als auch auf eine Himmelfahrt (*Miʿrāj*). Die harmonisierende Deutung der sog. Orthodoxie, die bereits in der paradigmatischen Prophetenbiografie von Ibn Ishāq aus dem 8. Jh. vorgestellt wurde, verknüpft die Erzählung der nächtlichen Reise nach Jerusalem unmittelbar mit der Himmelfahrt. Weiterhin hat sich in den verschiedenen Ausprägungen des Islams eine Mehrheitsmeinung herausgebildet, die besagt, dass die wunderbaren Reisen von Mohammed körperlich und im wachen Zustand stattgefunden hätten. Jedoch waren schon zu Lebzeiten des Propheten sowohl die horizontale als die vertikale Reise umstritten und im Laufe der Zeit ist das Thema in allen möglichen Facetten von islamischen Gläubigen durchdekliniert worden. Die einschlägigen Koranstellen und Prophetenüberlieferungen sind nicht eindeutig und haben deshalb Anlass für vielfältige Diskussionen gegeben, die bis heute fortdauern. Dem Arabisten Ronald Buckley ist es gelungen, ein Standardwerk zu verfassen, das eine wertvolle Übersicht der unterschiedlichen Interpretationen bietet. Klar thematisch strukturiert, schöpft dieses Buch vor allem ausgiebig aus arabischen Quellen. Aber auch (englischsprachige) Web-

sites aus der ganzen Welt und englischsprachige Debatten aus dem indischen Subkontinent werden berücksichtigt. Die Studie widmet sich hauptsächlich dem sunnitischen Islam, während die beiden Schlusskapitel sich mit Sonderthemen befassen: Kapitel 6 setzt sich mit den Auffassungen zu *Isrāʿ* und *Miʿrāj* innerhalb der Strömung der Imamiten oder Zwölfer-Schiiten auseinander, während Kapitel 7 näher auf westliche Sichtweisen eingeht, wobei die Zeitspanne vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart behandelt wird. Buckley hat hier ein fast enzyklopädisches Werk geschaffen, das außerdem in einem sehr angenehmen, gut lesbaren Stil verfasst worden ist.

Edwin P. Wieringa

Couderc, Pascal, and Kenneth Sillander (eds.): *Ancestors in Borneo Societies. Death, Transformation, and Social Immortality.* Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2012; 390 pp. ISBN 978-87-7694-092-8. (NIAS Studies in Asian Topics, 50) Price: £ 19.99

This volume examines the various ways ancestors factor into social life in Borneo. Many studies have been done on mortuary rights, including the complex secondary mortuary rituals that involve exhuming the bones of the deceased and placing them in ossuaries. However, many of these studies ended there, without examining the role of ancestors in Borneo religions and societies. This volume seeks to situate Borneo ancestors within the literature on ancestorship and examine the types of ancestor spirits that play a role in Borneo societies.

To begin to position Borneo ancestors within the literature, Couderc and Sillander grapple with terminology in the introduction. Definitions of ancestorship that work well for unilineal societies fall flat in Borneo societies that reckon kinship bilaterally and collaterally. Additionally, ancestors integrate within the larger religious domain in Borneo, so we do not find the distinct ancestor cults one may find elsewhere. Becoming an ancestor requires more than simply dying; even complex mortuary rituals do not guarantee that one will become an ancestor. Conversely, while those who become influential in life may be more likely to receive complex mortuary treatment, failure to receive those rituals does not preclude one from becoming an ancestor. At the same time, ancestorship is not constrained by biological descent. In some cases, accomplished individuals may become important local ancestors despite not having left any descendants (see the chapters by Sillander, Couderc, and Oesterheld). Even death is not always necessary, as described in Couderc’s discussion of transformed ancestors among the Uut Danum and Béguet’s chapter on transformed ancestors among the Iban.

In addition to the issue of how one becomes an ancestor, there is a wide variety of types of ancestor spirits and of relationships with the living found in Borneo. Genealogical forebears may undergo mortuary rituals that separate them from the living, so that they become part of one collective unit that has little or no influence in the daily lives of the living. At the other end of the spectrum, some societies include distant mythological ancestors who actively aid the living within the list of influential ancestors.