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Siv Ellen Kraft, Trude Fonneland, and James Lewis, eds., *Nordic Neoshamanisms* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 270 pp., £66 (hardcover), £58.44 (ebook).

Nordic Neoshamanisms, a volume in the Palgrave Studies in New Religious and Alternative Spiritualities series, explores the interface of global neo-shamanic trends and local Nordic traditions, the relationship between neoshamanisms and New Age and secular contexts, and specific ethnographic instances of Sami and Norse neoshamanisms. The authors challenge the idea that neoshamans are urban romantics attempting to reconnect to nature, that the noble savage is distant in space and time, and that Pagans are either reconstructionists or eclectics. They argue that neoshamanisms attract people in rural areas, that the Noble Savage is reified in the present, and that the boundaries between reconstructionism and eclecticism, and New Age and neoshamanism, are blurred. Avoiding lengthy debates about terms, they are concerned with "sensemaking on emic grounds," how Nordic neoshamans "anchor their practices in ancient pasts, or what they see and experience as ancient pasts," so that "traditions" are "authentic to the degree they are articulated as such." The twelve chapters cover a diverse and exciting range of material although certain papers are more critically engaged than others and the discussion is skewed towards Sami neoshamanisms, with sustained examination of Heathen neoshamanisms and Heathen/Sami engagements lacking.

To give a flavor of this variety, Merete Demant Jakobsen, for example, considers how many Scandinavian teachers of core shamanism have increasingly incorporated a conglomerate of other beliefs into their courses since the 1990s, reinvesting Harner's "bare bones" of "core-shamanism" with cultural traits. Torunn Selberg analyzes how the past is deployed in the discursive construction of shamanism as both "a spiritual heritage" of humankind and as a localised "cultural heritage." Jim Lewis discusses how critical analysis of the appropriation of American Indian culture by "New Age shamans" contrasts with liberal Scandinavians' reluctance to critique ethnic Sami adoptions of an essentialized, universal "indigenous spirituality" combined with Harner's core-shamanism and incorporating historical knowledge on the *noaidi*, partly because of guilt over

historic mistreatment of Sami. Bente Gullveig Alver considers the life of one Sami wise woman and healer, Ellen Marit Gaup Dunfjeld, and how she negotiated the "older Sami conceptual world" of a close-knit community with an increasingly globalized "neo-religious universe." Torunn Fonneland examines *Isogaisa*, the largest neoshamanic festival in Scandinavia (established in 2010), a site where "the local and global are merged, where power relations [and] political interest are materialised, where cultural identities are tested, and where new dreams take shape." Siv Ellen Kraft explores shamanistic dimensions of the leading Sami world music artist Mari Boine, "probably the best-known ambassador of Sami culture in Norway and internationally," whose work has "helped soften resistance against shamanism in Sami circles and contributed to the establishment of a cultural heritage version of Sami shamanism." Within the limits of a short book review I offer a more detailed overview of the remaining chapters.

Part 1, Background, consists of one chapter by Olav Hammer, "Late Modern Shamanism: Central Texts and Issues," a reprinted work originally published in Swedish in 2000 which sets out some of the main texts and issues presented by neoshamanism, focusing on the influence of Mircea Eliade and Michael Harner. Much of this criticism (e.g. how some neo-shamans decontextualize, universalize, and individualize shamanism) has been treated in detail elsewhere but Hammer makes the interesting point that areas of Eliade's and Harner's work which have been of least interest to scholars (e.g. shamanism as an underlying religious essence, synonomization) is what most appeals to many neoshamans (although he does not evidence this). Scrutinizing the illustrations in Harner's book (hitherto neglected in favour of the text itself), he argues that the juxtaposition of original drawings by and of Shuar shamans, and images of neoshamans, results in a synonimization that visually reinforces core-shamanism as authentic. Hammer also contrasts the small-scale organization of indigenous shamanic societies with the bureaucratic organization of Harner's *Foundation for Shamanic Studies* which follows a US private educational model, offering increasingly advanced courses and conferring award certificates on successful students, concluding that "the distance between the Siberian Tungus' local specialist and the neoshamanic foundation's bureaucratized method of training would-be shamans seems vast."

Part 2, "Late Modern Shamanism in Nordic Countries," containing most of the chapters, opens with Trude Fonneland's discussion of "The Rise of Shamanism in Norway: Local Structures—Global

Currents." Fonneland shows how premillennial neoshamanism in Norway was hardly distinguishable from such practices elsewhere in Europe and North America but in the 2000s such neoshamans as Ailo Gaup ("the first Sami neoshaman"), Eirik Myrhaug, Anita Bong, and Ronald Kvernmo drew increasingly upon Sami traditions in "a growing reaction against Harner's coreshamanism [*sic*]" (Swedish neoshaman Jørgen I. Eriksson was probably the first to criticize Harner in print in 1984 for stripping cultural nuance from indigenous and historic practices). Fonneland examines this process of glocalization (combining global and local goals) by focusing on Norway's "Shamanic Association" (SA), founded by a charismatic leader or "vision keeper," Kyrre Gram Franck, a/k/a White Cougar, who was instructed to form the SA by one of his spirit helpers in a trance/dream. The SA was granted status as a religious community in 2012, enabling the organization to perform legal religious ceremonies and obtain financial support, an achievement reflecting "how religious practices are adapted, transformed, and changed to fit government regularities." The SA holds a problematically exclusive position but the organization creatively avoids tensions over who should practice Sami traditions by integrating both Sami and Norse elements (e.g. a wedding ring made of iron and copper) and looking to the (suitably vague) pre-Christian "roots of Nordic shamanism … 5,000 to 10,000 years ago when the … boundaries between Sami and Norse traditions were supposedly blurred." While New Age events and entrepreneurs in Norway have been overlooked in the media, Fonneland points out that neoshamanisms have been received "as a positive contribution and a necessary alternative, embodying the important attitudes concerning contemporary environmental issues and materialistic lifestyles."

In "Shared Facilities: The Fabric of Shamanism, Spiritualism, and Therapy in a Nordic Setting," Anne Kalvig studies the unexamined interface between neoshamanisms, spiritualism, mediumship, and therapy in Norway, and the diverse ways in which some neoshamans engage with indigenous shamanisms to legitimate their practices. While some ethnic Sami, for example Ailo Gaup, re-connected with Sami shamanism through Harner's core shamanism, others such as Anneli Guttorm dress in traditional costume, play the drum, sing *joik,* and look like a Sami shaman, but avoid this nomenclature altogether. The celebrity medium Gro-Helen Tørum, author of *Shaman in High Heels* (2012), meanwhile, draws on American Indian "shamanism" while the folk healer Bergit Loen Hatlenes openly

identifies with Sami tradition despite not having Sami ancestry. And Lars Magnar Enoksen teaches the chanting of Viking runic *galdr*, but unlike other Heathens he thinks this is not "shamanic." Kalvig concludes that "with or without Sami descent, people who adhere to neoshamanism and/or (folk) healing in Norway thus seem to employ a whole range of strategies concerning how to make their own position(s) meaningful."

The book extends beyond the traditional boundaries of the Nordic countries in the chapter by Henno Erikson Parks, who examines the history of shamanism and neoshamanism in Estonia. The term shamanism was introduced via Russian and became used interchangeably with the local term, *nõid* (similar to the Finnish *noita* and Sami *noaidi*), but Parks prefers the term "metroshamanism" because of the urban flavor of practices in Estonia. The ubiquitous core shamanism has also contributed to today's Estonian metroshamanism, but Parks also considers shamanic historical influences from Estonia's eastern and northern neighbors, for example, the Finnish *Kalevala* and archaeological remains of Norse settlers. Furthermore, Estonian ethnographers studying shamans elsewhere in the Soviet Union and Estonian deportees to Siberia returning in the post-Soviet period with shamanic understandings of such Estonian concepts as *Maatark*, "a person who is wise about the land," have contributed to the construction of Estonian "shamanism." As the case of Estonia shows, "the shamanisms of the north are intimately entwined with each other."

In part 3, "Neoshamanism in Secular Contexts," Cato Christensen analyzes Nils Gaup's film *Pathfinder* (1987), "the first ever Sami feature film" and a "Sami Western" or "Northern." Gaup, an ethnic Sami, drew heavily on ethnographic accounts of *noaidevuohta* in representing Sami religion and society. Identifying the narrative as "a moral tale, about the essence and foundation of Sami culture, and its resilience to outside threats," Christensen situates the positive representation of religion in the film within the broader indigenous filmmaking movement worldwide, and localized "discourses of reclaiming the Sami past and processes of 'indigenization' of Sami ethnopolitics." Stein R. Mathisen, in a chapter entitled "Exhibited Versions of Sami *noaidevuohta*," examines representations of the Sami *govadas*, shaman's drum. The Steilneset Memorial, Vardø, for instance, is a monument (by artist Louise Bourgeois and architect Peter Zumthor) to the victims of witch trials between 1600–1692. Sami Anders Pouelsen, the last such case, was "accused of having used a rune drum and

of practicing godless witchcraft," imprisoned, and murdered two days later by a civil servant. Mathisen contrasts this dark, somber example with a romantic painting by the Sami artist Merja Aletta Rauttila he saw in a hotel room, of a Sami child innocently but determinedly playing a "rune drum" with a "rune hammer." These and other examples, including museum exhibitions of *govadas*, the postcolonial reclamation of the drum as a positive attribute in the Sami ethnic revival, and commercialization of the drum and its imagery in the tourist industry (e.g. the interior design of the Santa Claus Hotel, Rovaniemi), attest to the shifting discursive meanings and contexts of the *govadas* through time.

This is an important book, offering the first close examination of a diverse range of Nordic neoshamanisms and situating them within the frame of international influence and concerns. It is essential reading for scholars of shamanism/neoshamanism and of the confluence of indigenous/New Age politics in the twenty-first century.

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