

is also an authority along with the organization itself. Jacobs analyzes different discourses of authority in AOL, relating to science and representations of Indian traditional wisdom, as well as narratives of personal experiences and charismatic authority. There is a common historical appropriation of India as a place of lost wisdom, which is also used by AOL. The use of Sanskrit terminology in the group suggests that the teachings are rooted in the authentic and ancient traditions of India.

The last chapter deals with AOL in the light of globalization and mediatization, that is, the increasing use and integration of media processes which shape and transform phenomena such as religion. AOL was created in India, yet has a global appeal. Jacobs suggests that AOL should be seen as a hybrid that intentionally fuses elements associated with Hindu culture with aspects associated with the West; it is thus a product of global encounters. According to Jacobs, AOL asserts that spirituality transcends the particularity of specific religions traditions and can thus be understood as a form of religiosity that addresses the global-human condition. AOL sees all major religious traditions as being expressions of universal human values. Jacobs opines that networks of spirituality like AOL can be seen as a direct response to globalization. The idea that spirituality transcends cultural, religious, and political distinctions is both a product and an agent of globalization.

This book is written in a very helpful way, and engages with contemporary academic discourses and theories, making it a useful book both for students and the academic community. For the beginner in Hinduism, Jacobs explains the terms and contexts necessary to understand AOL, and thus contextualizes the movement not only religiously but also sociologically. AOL is an organization displaying many significant characteristics of our time, which makes it a useful example of a current religious organization being a part of a historical and cultural context. Jacobs also continuously makes useful comparisons to other Hindu-derived groups which increases our knowledge about the phenomenon overall. The part of the story which still waits to be written is that of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's years with Maharishi and the split between TM and AOL. It would be of historical interest to know more about this event. This would be a fruitful research project.

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Apocalyptic Anxiety: Religion, Science, and America's Obsession with the End of the World. By Anthony Aveni. University of Colorado Press, 2016. xiv + 252 pages. \$28.95 paper; ebook available.

Despite having been the object of widespread millennialist speculations for decades, 21 December 2012 came and passed in an uneventful

manner. Reflecting on this non-apocalyptic event, and citing Gallup polls indicating that apocalyptic beliefs among the U.S. population remain stable at around 60%, the astronomer Anthony Aveni argues that American culture has an insatiable appetite for the end of the world that beckons a historical investigation. *Apocalyptic Anxiety* is Aveni's attempt to write that history.

The book is divided into twelve chapters distributed over four parts, each tackling a separate historical period. As so many others before him, Aveni starts his story with the nineteenth-century Millerites, presenting a standard account derived largely from Francis Nichol's 1944 study of the movement. The second chapter takes a giant step back, to give "A Brief History of Apocalyptic Thinking in the West" that provides a sweeping overview spanning millennia, from the ancient civilizations of the Fertile Crescent, via Zoroastrianism and early Christianity, to early modern pietists and the late modern Y2K panic.

Part 2 is entitled "American Apocalypse" and includes chapters on the importation of Protestant apocalypticism to the American colonies, the Great Awakenings of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, and the "secular" (according to Aveni) millennialism of mesmerism, New Thought, Christian Science, Spiritualism, Theosophy, and other manifestations of the so-called American metaphysical movement.

Part 3 moves on to New Age millennialism in a very broad sense, with chapters on the Age of Aquarius and relations with the psychedelic movement, UFO religions, and various ancient astronaut and alternative archaeology currents. The final part focuses on the 2012 phenomenon, introducing founding figures such as Terence McKenna, Frank Waters, and José Argüelles, discussing the enduring connection with perennialist ideas and the psychedelic subculture. It critically assesses the re-mythologization of the Maya civilization, its cosmological knowledge, and calendar systems. The book concludes with a useful summary and comparison of the main cases examined in the book, and offers a brief overview of other recent millennial predictions, notably those of Harold Camping. While the author reflects at length on some common themes, such as a romanticized past, a distrust of "establishments," a belief in conspiracies, a rhetoric of rational calculations, and a yearning for salvation and utopia in the face of social anxieties and a feeling of relative deprivation, the only attempt at explaining *why* Americans seem disproportionately prone to apocalyptic beliefs (in comparison with Europeans, for example) is buried in a single sentence: "The nuclear age and the threat of terrorism, coupled with the nonunified nature of religious denominations in America," Aveni speculates, "have only strengthened apocalyptic leanings" (208). The importance placed on religious individualism in this context echoes Barkun's theory of "improvisational millennialism," although, surprisingly, Aveni does not engage it.

While the book delivers a useful, though rough, overview of American apocalypticism for the general audience, scholars are not likely to learn much from it. The book's story is too derivative of other, better-researched work, including classics by Norman Cohn, Michael Barkun, Catherine Albanese, Wouter Hanegraaff, and Joscelyn Godwin, as well as more recent work on the 2012 phenomenon by John Hoopes and Kevin Whitesides. With the possible exception of archaeoastronomy (on which Aveni is an authority), experts in the fields covered are likely to be irritated by the large number of factual errors and inaccuracies that riddle the book whenever it moves from generalities to specifics. Scholars of religion will also find the discussion of key thinkers such as Durkheim and Eliade a bit off, and will likely question the idiosyncratic use of Joseph Campbell's monomyth concept.

Nevertheless, Aveni's interest in bringing in the history of science to shed light on apocalyptic ideas related to astronomical occurrences, his critical evaluation of the scientific content of various beliefs and predictions, and even his transparent stance that "the two basic ways of knowing—reason versus revelation—are irreconcilable" are, to this reviewer (knowing full well that other readers may disagree), commendable and refreshing, even as one may question the success of their execution.

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Paranormal America: Ghost Encounters, UFO Sightings, Bigfoot Hunts, and Other Curiosities in Religion and Culture. Second Edition. By Christopher D. Bader, Joseph O. Baker, and F. Carson Mencken. New York University Press, 2017. viii + 311 pages. \$89.00 cloth; \$28.00 paper; ebook available.

Since *Paranormal America* was first published in 2010, paranormal themes such as cryptozoology, Ufology, and ghost hunting have continued to dominate popular culture. A website maintained by skeptic researcher Sharon Hill catalogues 231 television series exploring paranormal topics, of which 101 premiered after 2010. The paranormal appears to be more mainstream than ever. The second edition of *Paranormal America* includes new survey data and ethnographic information to provide an updated picture of America's paranormal culture. It also offers further analysis of how the second order categories of "paranormal" and "religion" relate to one another.

The second edition draws from the 2014 Baylor Religion Survey as well as the 2014 and 2015 Chapman University Survey of American Fears, which also asked Americans about such topics as ghosts, aliens, and Bigfoot. These data were organized into charts and graphics showing how belief in paranormal topics correlates with such factors as