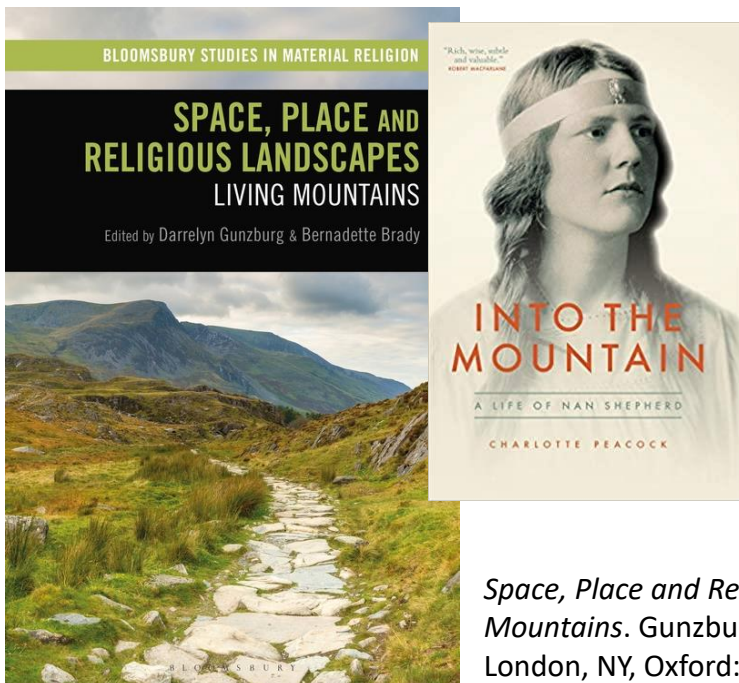


Mountains as Other

Dr Bernadette Brady



1



A mountain's presence lies 'in living encounters, moments of their life that have crossed moments of mine...'

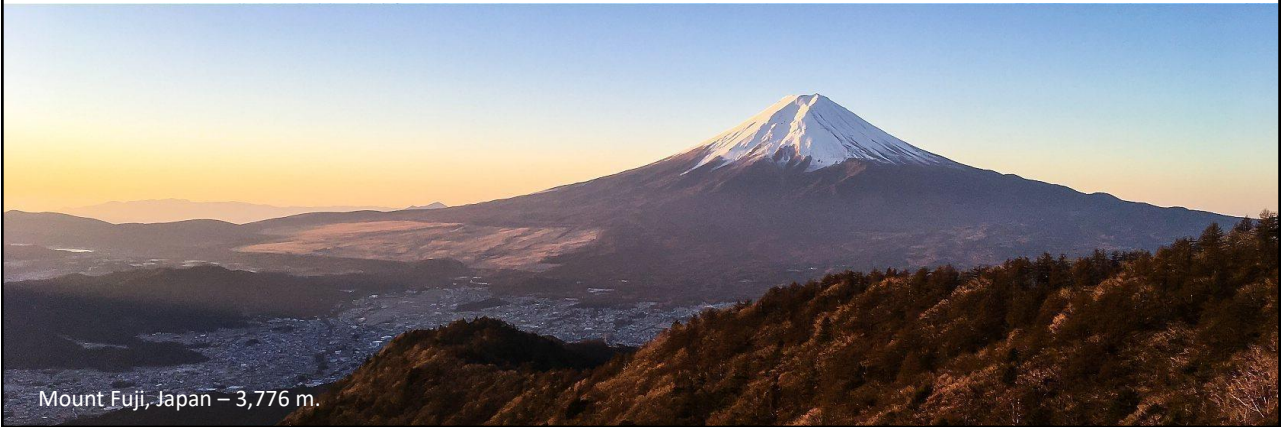
Shepherd, Nan. *The Living Mountain: A Celebration of the Cairngorm Mountains of Scotland*. Edinburgh: Canongate, 2011, p.48.

Space, Place and Religious Landscapes, Living Mountains. Gunzburg, D. & Brady, B. (eds.) London, NY, Oxford: Bloomsbury (2020).

2

Mountains tend to be viewed by their measurements

- How rapidly they rise from the landscape.
- The height they reach – as if they were in competition with each other.
- Their visual dominance – that is their relationship to the local terrain.



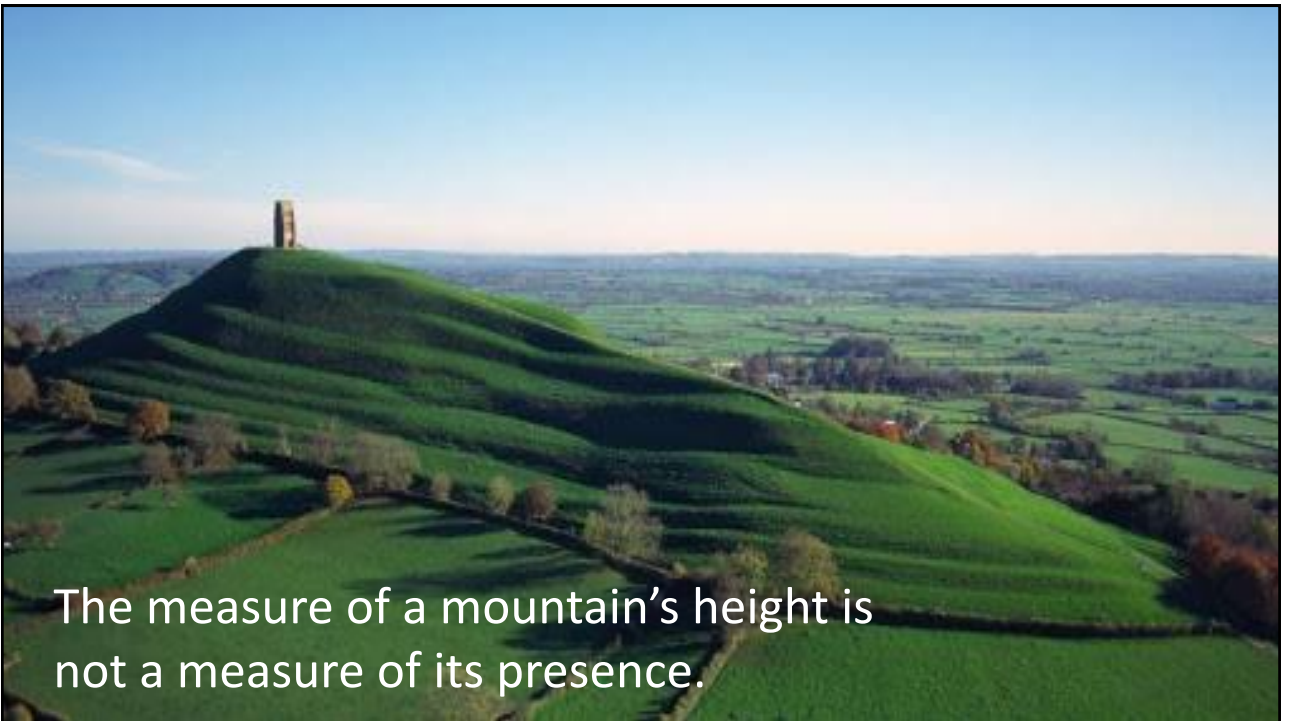
3



4



5



The measure of a mountain's height is
not a measure of its presence.

6

A photograph of a mountain range with snow-capped peaks under a clear blue sky. The foreground shows dark, forested slopes.

Mountains – as living

- Mountains move, they are not static objects
- They grow by thrusting upward.

Indiana Mountains

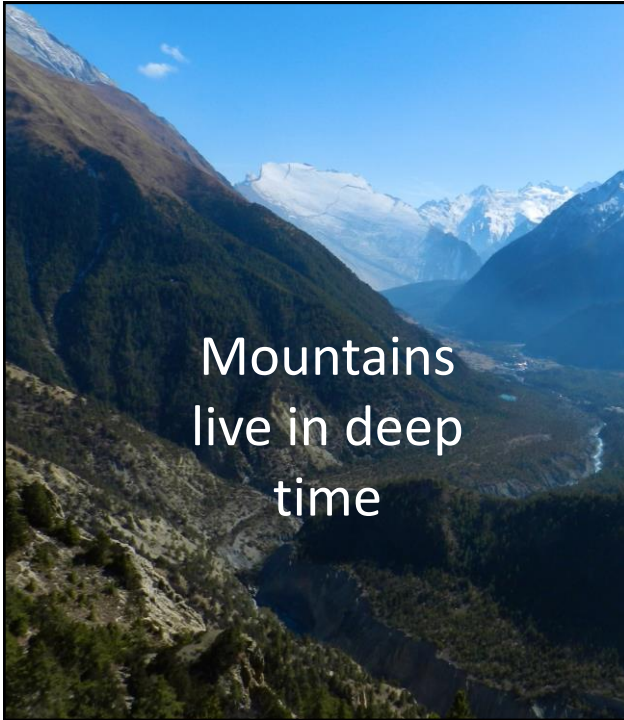
7



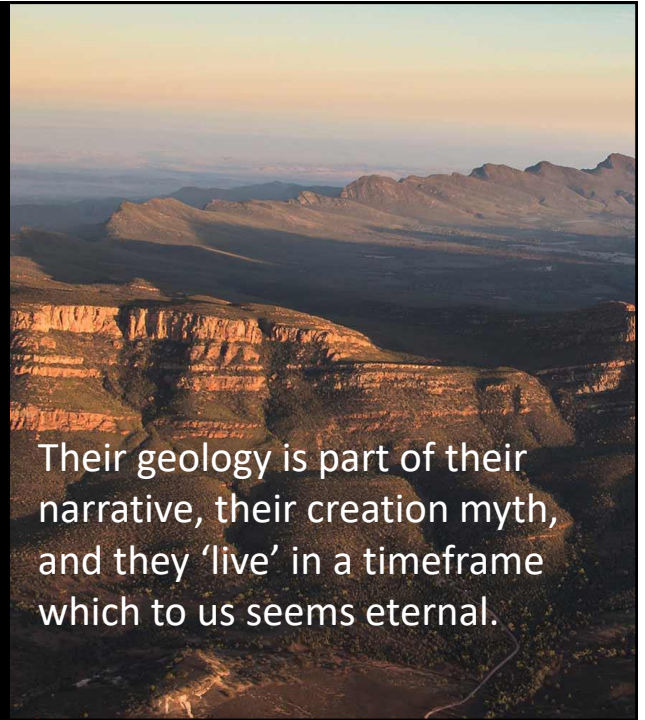
Flinders Ranges, South Australia

Mountains also shrink and flow back into the earth.

8



Mountains
live in deep
time



Their geology is part of their
narrative, their creation myth,
and they 'live' in a timeframe
which to us seems eternal.

9



'We do not see them change – and if they were alive, they would not see us – our story is too short to register in their time frame. We however see them. We see them as unchanging entities guarding, protecting, or threatening, entities that have always been there and always will be there, eternal and, at times, dangerous and as such we name them.'

Gunzburg, D. & Brady, B. (2020). 'Introduction', in Gunzburg, D. & Brady, B. (eds.) *Space, Place and Religious Landscapes, Living Mountains* London, NY, Oxford Bloomsbury pp. 1-2.

10



The Naming of Mountains – cultural divides.

11

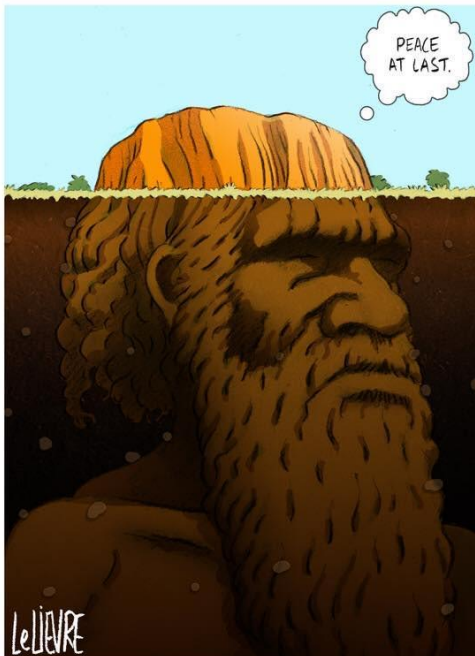


12

The climbing of Uluru was always discourage by the Anangu traditional owners.



13



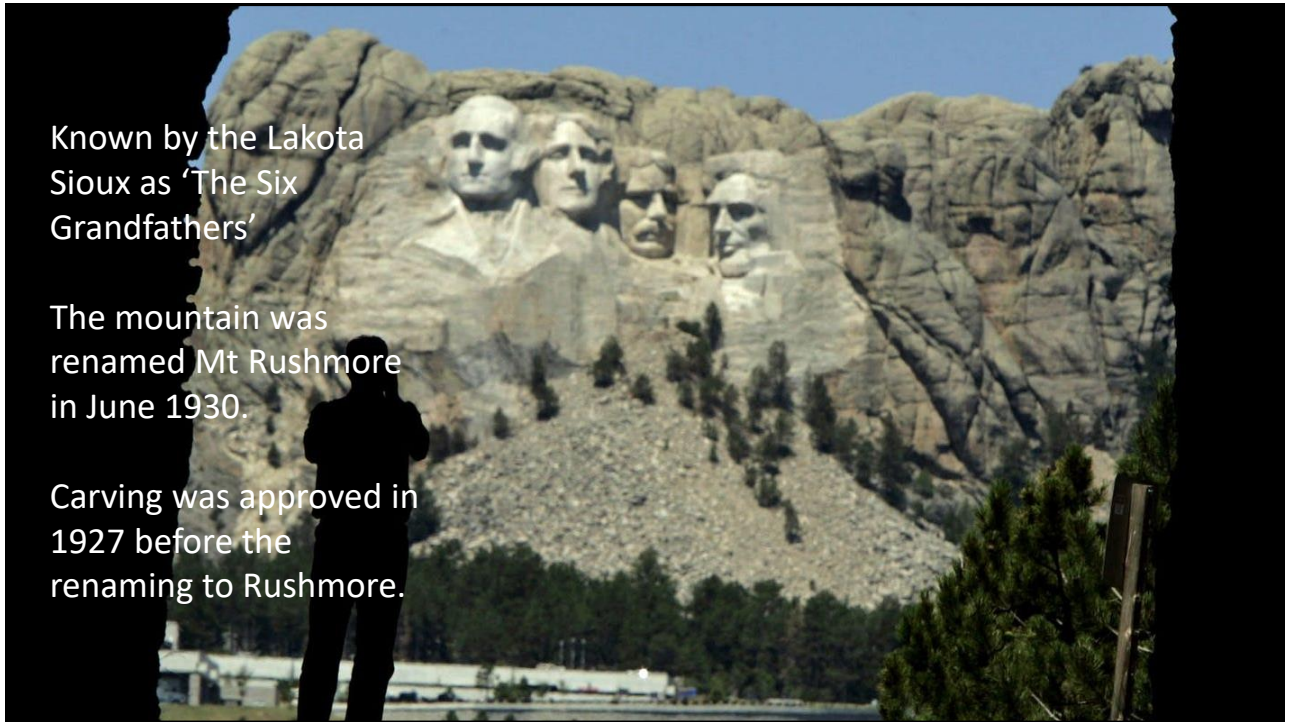
The climbing of Uluru was finally banned 26 Oct 2019.

This could only have come about because of the slow change of name back to its original name given by the traditional culture with its mythology embedded in the rock.

If it was still named Ayers Rock – people would still be climbing it and also there would possibly be chair lifts installed!

A twitter feed from October 2019

14



Known by the Lakota
Sioux as 'The Six
Grandfathers'

The mountain was
renamed Mt Rushmore
in June 1930.

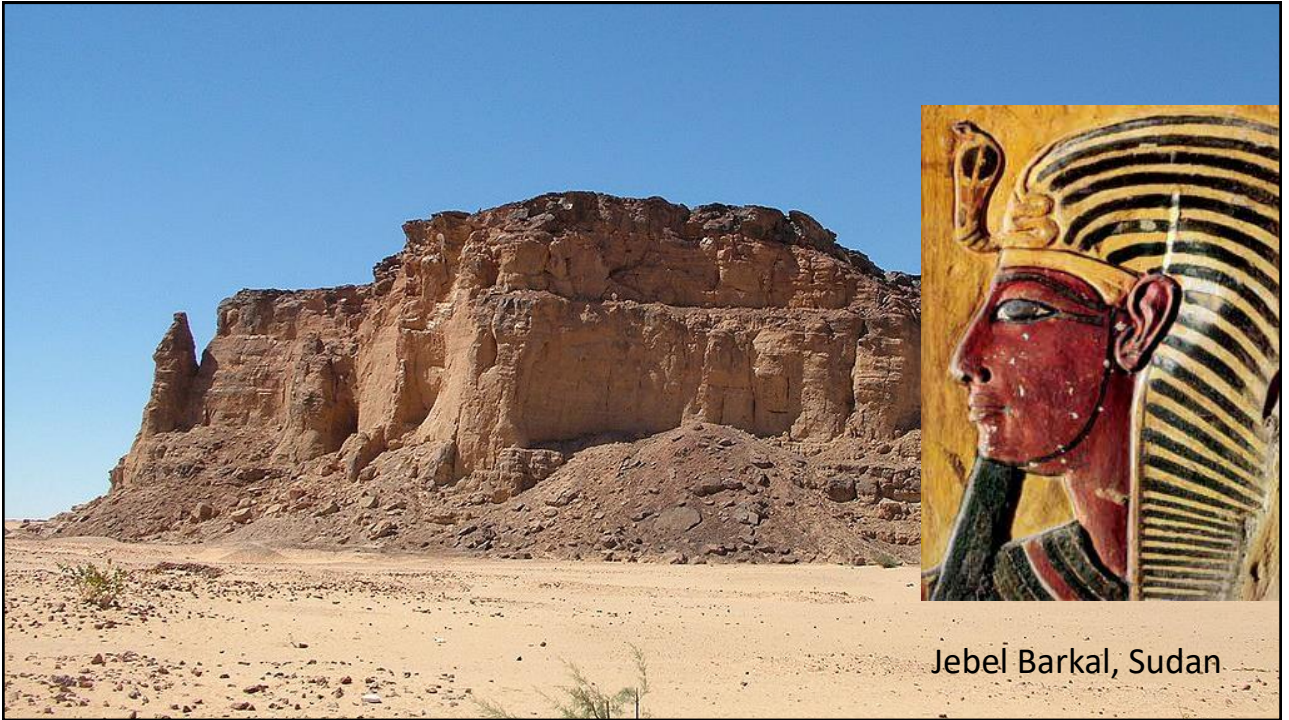
Carving was approved in
1927 before the
renaming to Rushmore.

15



Crazy Horse Memorial – under construction

16



Jebel Barkal, Sudan

17



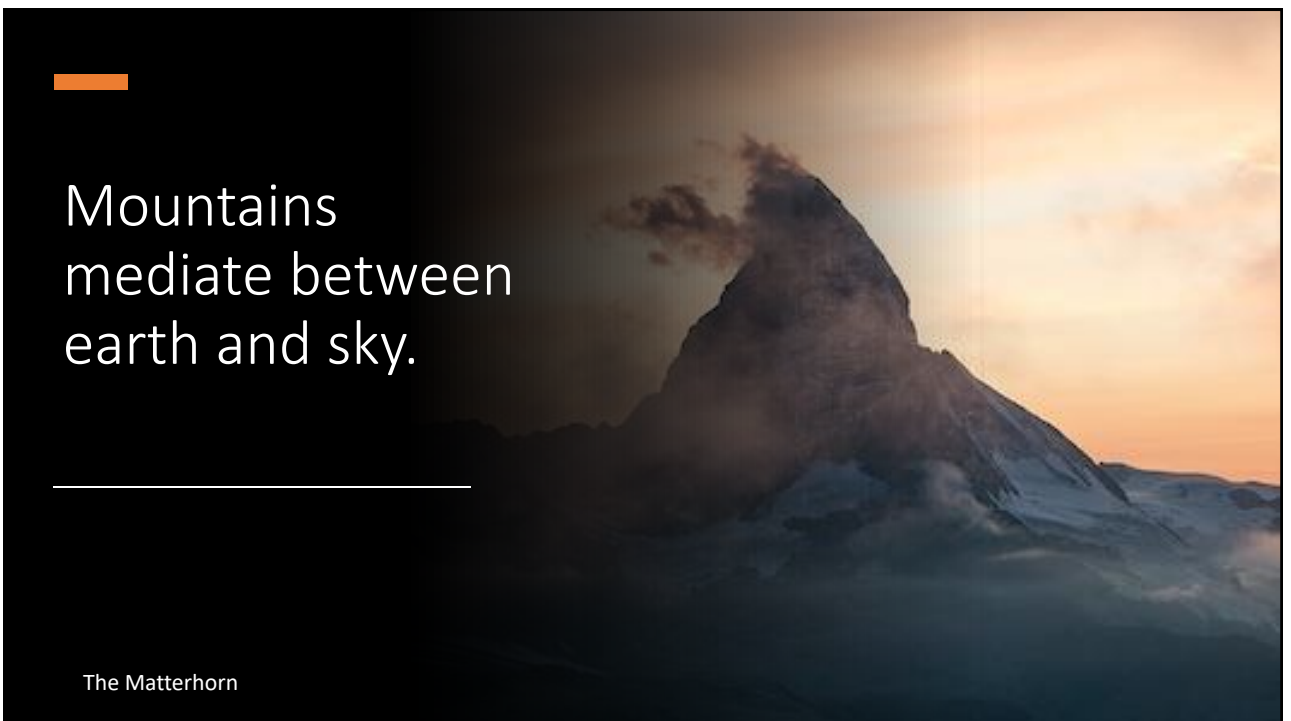
Mountains create
weather which gives
them a voice.

Haystacks (Lake Districts), UK

18



19



20

Independent of any possible attributions of personality,

‘a mountain mediates between land and sky. High or small, they are all material metaphors of liminal spaces, guardians, gateways, and bridges from one realm to another.’

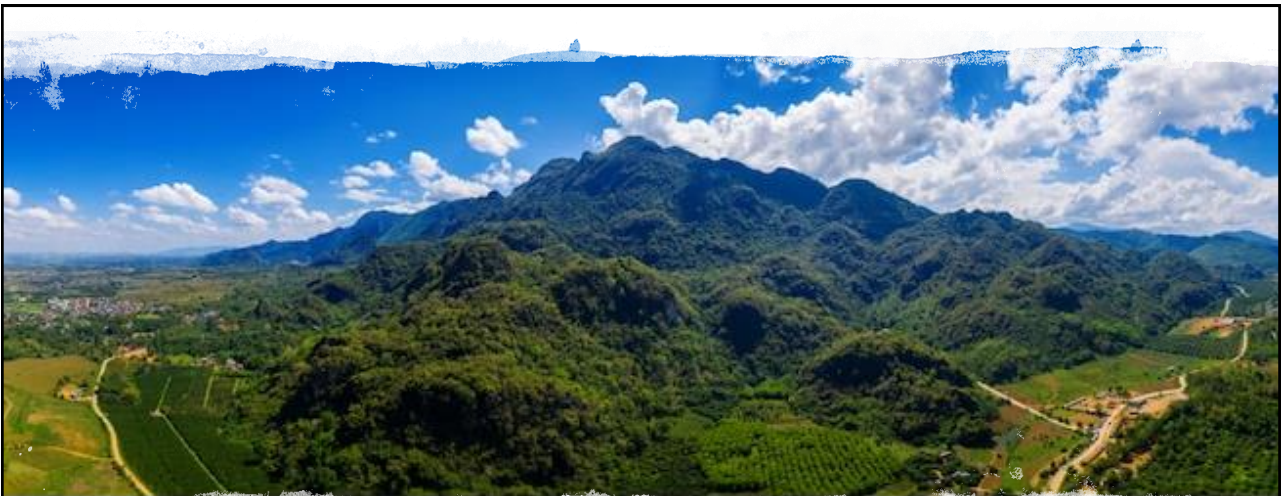
Gunzburg, D. & Brady, B. (2020). 'Introduction', in Gunzburg, D. & Brady, B. (eds.) *Space, Place and Religious Landscapes, Living Mountains* London, NY, Oxford Bloomsbury pp. 2.

Lionel Obadia,

‘the ways in which fantasies produced by Western people about the Asian (Himalaya) mountains challenge the local people’s conception and imagination regarding these peaks’

Lionel Obadia. (2020). 'Are Himalayan peaks sacred?: The paradoxical and polylogial construction of mountains', in Gunzburg, D. & Brady, B. (eds.) *Space, Place and Religious Landscapes, Living Mountains* London, NY, Oxford Bloomsbury pp. 213-238 p.213.

21



An Encounter with a Mountain ‘Other’.
The mountains of the Doi Nang Norn, Thailand

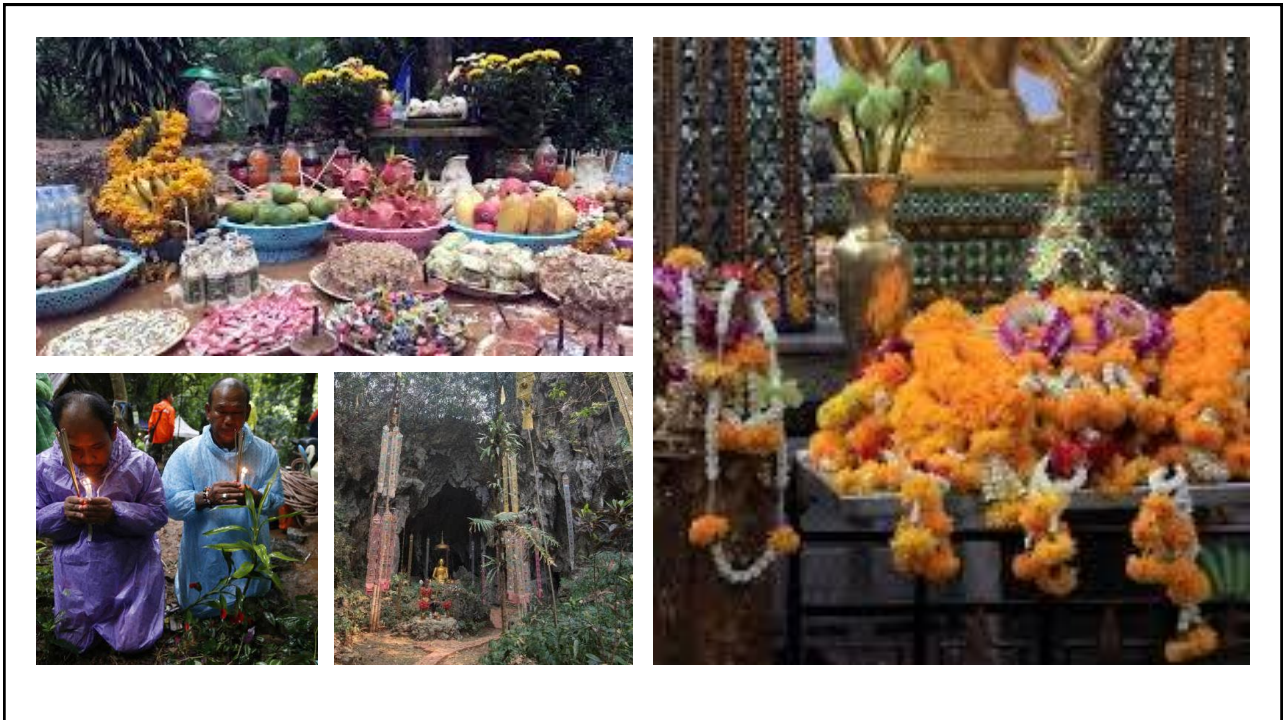
22



23



24



25



26



27



28

The Encounter with the Other

Sean Flynn, December 2018

It is no comfort to Gunan's family (the diver who died), but that the cave took only one of those multitudes who trespassed upon her was in its own way a miracle. That those multitudes even came was a miracle.



A department store mannequin of the image of Jao Mae Nang Non, the guardian spirit of Nag Non Cave.

<https://www.gq.com/story/thai-cave-rescue-miracle-at-tham-luang>

29

Sean Flynn, December 2018 – writing about the reaction of the people upon the safe return of the boys.

‘And so the people came early in the morning, trudging up the park road from the police checkpoint, and they continued coming until the afternoon, and they stayed until nightfall. The dignitaries sat silently in their chairs, and the monks chanted, monotone and rhythmic, and the volunteers filled in the empty areas where the journalists and the food stalls and the electrical feeds had been days before, all of them facing the monks on the dais. They stood for hours, only occasionally kneeling, as if a field of enormous yellow flowers with pale blue centers had risen from the mud and the gravel, all of them together in the green of the forest and the steamy heat of July, under a sky heavy with clouds but leaking only a light and misty rain.’

They were making merit, and they were thanking the spirit of the cave for the miracle she had allowed and atoning for the indignities inflicted upon her—the miles of hose and rope and cable run along the limestone, the endless boot prints in the mud, the lights and the noise and the chaos—in creating that miracle.

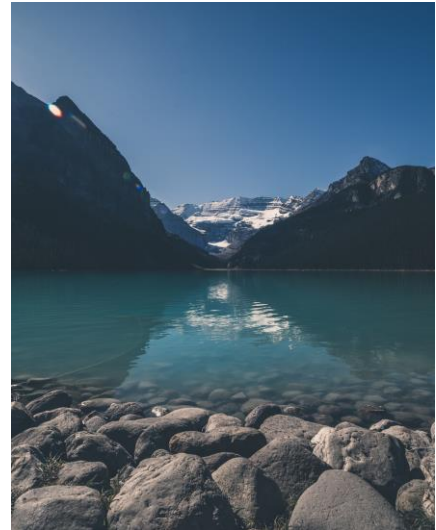
<https://www.gq.com/story/thai-cave-rescue-miracle-at-tham-luang>

30

Conclusion

We can ask the question of whether bonding and reverence to a mountain is constructed by people, intrinsic to the mountain, or whether this is a mutual endeavour.

Such questions further the current debates in ontology and new animism studies and also advance what Viveiros de Castro's suggested when he argued that mountains may be capable of a point of view.



Lake Louise, Canada. Photo: Neil Rosentech.

31

References

Eduado Viveiros de Castro, *Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism* in The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol. 4 (3), (1998).

Gunzburg, D. & Brady, B. (eds.) *Space, Place and Religious Landscapes, Living Mountains* London, NY, Oxford Bloomsbury (2020).

Shepherd, Nan. *The Living Mountain: A Celebration of the Cairngorm Mountains of Scotland*. Edinburgh: Canongate, 2011.

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Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

- Keynote Lectures on Mountains are planned
- Late February and March 2021