dreams in Amsterdam, arising from his work as a prison chaplain in multifaith dream-sharing groups.

The book is to be welcomed for making available a broad range of perspectives on Christian and Muslim dream work, despite its somewhat uneven quality.

Elizabeth Sirriyeh

Carrier, James G., and **Paige West** (eds.): Virtualism, Governance, and Practice. Vision and Execution in Environmental Conservation. New York: Berghahn Books, 2009. 196 pp. ISBN 978-1-84545-619-1. (Studies in Environmental Anthropology and Ethnobiology, 13) Price: $ 60.00

The volume "Virtualism, Governance and Practice. Vision and Execution in Environmental Conservation" might seem, at first glance at the title, to be concerned with ideas of "virtual reality" in nature, such as the faux planet of Pandora featured in the blockbuster movie "Avatar." This would be misleading, however, as the edited book actually concerns itself with the practical results that ensue when environmental projects attempt to mold the world to fit their necessarily incomplete constructions of it. This "virtualism," as defined by the editors James G. Carrier and Paige West, is a "social process by which people who are guided by a vision of the world act to try to shape that world to bring it into conformity with their vision" (7). Examples of this virtualism include conservation organizations who see biodiverse areas in only ecological terms and not as places where people also work and live. The book attempts to look at the practice of nature conservation that then results from such virtual renderings of the world.

This is a useful concept around which to organize a book, given the increasing number of conservation projects and actors around the globe. Seven case study chapters, plus an introduction and conclusion, explore the paradox between the expansive claims to knowledge of conservation projects and the failures of these projects to actually implement their visions. The case studies touch on examples from nature areas in Holland, parks in Canada, the work of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, a Caribbean environmental NGO's efforts to localize conservation, conflicts among Jamaican fishing cooperatives, and the failures of international funding for conservation in Papua New Guinea.

On one hand, the diversity of cases is a strength of the book; this is not a typical political ecology book focused only on the Third World. On the other hand, this diversity makes it difficult to draw out both theoretical and practical comparisons. Disappointingly, for example, the book's introduction does not try to construct a theoretical argument or review of existing examples and thinking about virtualism, and instead serves mainly to summarize the chapters. The book also spends less time on trying to understand *why* certain visions become so hegemonic and widespread among different actors, despite the fact that these visions continually fail to represent local reality and fail to provide a sound basis on which to construct conservation projects. Without these overarching themes, however, the chapters feel only loosely connected. Furthermore, although most of the authors are trained as anthropologists, the links to anthropology are only made explicit in a couple of the chapters, such as Colin Filer's chapter on the millennium ecosystem assessment and the lack of engagement of anthropologists with this knowledge-making enterprise.

The strongest chapters are the ones based in studies in the West. Chapter 2 starts off the case studies with a look at the creation of what is called "new nature" in Holland, the creation of literally new virtual worlds that are supposed to replicate some sort of original nature that existed before human settlement of the Netherlands. The virtuality of the Dutch proposal comes from concepts in system ecology that argue for ecosystems that require corridors and networks; therefore, these ideas were transplanted onto the Dutch landscape in the form of connected pathways of newly created and engineered "nature" areas. Sometimes the virtual rendition of the environment also goes hand in hand with the increasing commodification of nature, shown in chap. 3 on the Canadian National Park system, which looks at how new business models of visitor contentment and enjoyment were used to try to raise additional revenue. Parks Canada launched a program to create a "culture of conservation" through information, understanding, and involvement of tourists in advocating for the continued funding and protection of parks, and in this way the park management essentially *created* their ideal virtual tourist. The irony is that the type of visitor that was considered least desirable by the parks department – that is, the visitor who came to parks primarily for cultural attractions like music and bars – actually may have a less important environmental impact on parks than those who go to "appreciate nature" by hiking in the backcountry, where they can interfere with grizzly bear habitat, and cause more serious ecological harm.

The definition, representation, and compartmentalization of knowledge is the topic of chap. 4 on the millennium ecosystem assessment and the problems that the working groups in that assessment had in trying to bridge scales and epistemologies across different disciplines, peoples, and countries. This chapter makes the point that the epistemic communities that form to engage in science-based assessments must also form conceptual frameworks or visualizations of what the community is going to be doing. In the end, the metaphors and scenarios produced by these kinds of assessments all too often end up performing the service of both simplification as well as obfuscation, and a lack of clarity and lack of consensus results. The conflicting visions between development agencies and on-the-ground communities result in similar failures of consensus in chapters 5 and 6 focused on the Caribbean.

The chapters in the book amply demonstrate that knowledge always will be incomplete and that governance and practice based on these partial visions will always face considerable challenges. But it is not clear the degree to which the authors believe that misleading visions and incomplete representations are to blame for conservation's failings on the ground. For example, in

chap. 7 on the disappointments of several conservation projects in Papua New Guinea, it appears that more mundane problems like a lack of funding and the inability to compete with more lucrative economic uses of the forest were a major contributor to the demise of UN projects, not simply the poor visualization and incomplete knowledge of the funders.

While this work is likely to be of interests for academics already working in the field of the political ecology of conservation, it is hard to see a broader audience for it. For work that is about description and representation, too often the ethnographic descriptions and details of ecological visions are fairly thin, and not enough connections are drawn between the chapters. Some of the chapters also fall victim to a standard critique of political ecology, and that is there is too much politics and not enough ecology; the ways in which the actually existing environment serves to shape visions and concepts of management for it are not explained in much depth. Nonetheless, those already in this field are likely to find some stimulating visions throughout the work, and for them, it is definitely recommended. Pamela McElwee

Combès, Isabelle: Diccionario étnico. Santa Cruz la Vieja y su entorno en el siglo XVI. Cochabamba: Instituto de Misionología; Editorial Itinerarios; Misiones Franciscanas Conventuales, 2010. 406 pp. ISBN 978-99905-946-8. (Colección Scripta Autochtona, 4) Precio: $ 51.60

Cualquier entusiasta de la tumultuosa historia del Oriente boliviano sabe más sobre las hazañas legendarias de Ñuflo de Chaves y sus abnegadas huestes que sobre las poblaciones indígenas a las que éstas sometieron. Sobre un telón de fondo saturado de riquezas fantásticas, de expediciones truncas, de revueltas sangrientas e intrigas políticas, la historiografía oficial se complace evocando las hazañas de Alejo García, de Juan de Ayolas, de Domingo Martínez de Irala, de Andrés Manso; sin embargo, como señala Isabelle Combès, al mismo tiempo, o tal vez debido a ello, los "naturales" son ignorados, encomendados o aun esclavizados sin que se les preste mayor atención, como si fueran un componente más del tupido monte cruceño.

Sin embargo, las fuentes sobre la primera Santa Cruz también revelan con claridad fenómenos contemporáneos a las gestas de los próceres como el reparto de mano de obra bajo la forma de encomiendas, la cacería de indígenas por parte de los esclavistas cruceños, las epidemias que diezmaron a las poblaciones autóctonas, las huidas de los indios para escapar del sometimiento español o del acoso de indígenas belicosos como los chiriguano. Combès reconstruye el mapa étnico con el cual se toparon los primeros colonizadores analizando de forma crítica las informaciones historiográficas existentes sobre los indígenas de Santa Cruz y su periferia en un marco cronológico estricto, que va desde 1542 – fecha del primer informe de Domingo de Irala sobre la zona – hasta inicios del siglo XVII, cuando Santa Cruz se traslada hacia los llamados llanos de Grigotá. Para ello compiló y ordenó alfabéticamente los diversos gentilicios que surgen de los documentos: debido a la fragmentación de los datos algunas de las entradas son naturalmente breves; otras, en cambio, constituyen pequeños tratados etnohistóricos como "Candire", "Chiriguana", "Gorgotoqui", "Orejones", "Tamacoci" o "Xaray".

Hace más de dos siglos, el jesuita Joaquín Camaño era perfectamente consciente de las aporías implícitas en semejante empresa: "Sucede también que a una misma Nación le dieron los Españoles antiguos un nombre, y los más modernos otro; o los de una Provincia la llamaron con uno, y los de otra con otro nombre; o las Naciones confinantes que la conocen, le dan cada una un nombre distinto según su lengua; el historiador o geógrafo poco práctico de esas tierras, recoge todos esos nombres contando bajo cada uno una Nación distinta". Con la misma lucidez hermenéutica que el jesuita Combès reflexiona sobre las dificultades que implicó la síntesis de una copiosa cantidad de documentos publicados e inéditos. Cuestiona por ejemplo la fusión de informaciones cronológicamente dispares en los mapas étnicos de Alfred Métraux, que entremezclan datos que van desde el siglo XVI hasta el siglo XIX e incluso más allá; así, los gorgotoquis quinientistas aparecen conviviendo junto a los tsirakuas de la década de 1920. Combès también cuestiona el agrupamiento de los grupos indígenas por familias lingüísticas, ya que a su juicio el juego de las alianzas regionales privilegiaba claramente la vecindad y los contactos concretos por sobre el parentesco lingüístico; o, en otras palabras, en el eterno debate etnológico sobre las relaciones entre variables como lengua, territorio e identidad étnica reflota la idea de área cultural por sobre el enfoque tipológico.

Los historiadores conocen bien los dilemas implícitos en la interpretación de categorías como "naciones", "generaciones", "parcialidades", "casas" y "pueblos". Sin embargo, el trabajo de Combès enfatiza felizmente el componente "etno" de la "etnohistoria". Para ello abreva en la fecunda línea analítica propuesta sucesivamente por Evans-Pritchard, Dumont y Barth reflexionando sistemáticamente sobre el problema de la identidad relativa y las significaciones niveladas de las categorías étnicas. Así, analiza el papel mediador de los guías, baqueanos e intérpretes indígenas en la atribución de exónimos; es el caso, por ejemplo, de numerosos gentilicios que llevan el sufijo chiquitano *-coçi*, que no implica necesariamente que los grupos referenciados hayan hablado el chiquitano sino más bien que fueron llamados de ese modo por mediadores chiquitano-hablantes. (Lo mismo puede decirse sobre el sufijo *-ono*, un pluralizador común en las lenguas arawak meridionales.) De esta forma se comprueba cómo los "etnónimos" se destilan en un tamiz de mediaciones, traducciones y deformaciones que vuelven imposible rastrear el término original. Otro problema frecuente es la aparición de categorías genéricas aplicadas a diferentes grupos en diferentes épocas y lugares, origen de procesos de homonimia que no implican en modo alguno la existencia de "parcialidades" de una misma "nación": aquí los ejemplos más resonantes son "guarayo" o "chiriguano", pero también son interesantes los términos "timbú" (término guaraní aplicable a cualquier grupo con la cos-