

this is very practical and helpful indeed. By contrast, a glossary of the used abbreviations and linguistic symbols, which would be equally helpful, is unfortunately missing altogether.

The teaching and exercise part of the book, however, is again arranged in a very clear and, what counts here most, in a very workable manner too. All characters of the alphabets are introduced step by step and good explanations of how to write them are given.

The book is completed by an ample bibliography which surely will serve to help many researchers in current and future studies. It has already done so for the author of these lines. “From the book(s) comes all our knowledge” – “Ухаан далай номоос эхтэй” (153). Of the one reviewed here this can be said for sure.

Stefan Krist

Cipolletti, María Susana, y Fernando Payaguaje:

La fascinación del mal. Historia de la vida de un shaman secoya de la Amazonía ecuatoriana. Quito: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 2008. 266 pp. ISBN 978-9978-22-725-1. Price \$ 17.70

The book is an autobiography of Fernando Payaguaje, a Secoya shaman of Ecuadorian Amazonia, as seen through the lenses of an anthropologist. It consists of an extensive introduction, five autobiographical chapters, in which Payaguaje recounts his shamanistic experience with hallucinogenic drugs, and a conclusion.

The introductory part is a “boot section” of the book, comprising all the information – ethnographic, ethnohistorical, and methodological alike – necessary for a correct interpretation of Payaguaje’s narration. In fact, the introduction is an engaging “book” in itself. Cipolletti begins with placing her contribution within the broader context of other indigenous autobiographies, in particular those concerning peoples of the Americas. She points, for instance, to an interesting structural similarity between the autobiographies written by authors representing North American Plains Indians and those authored by indigenous intellectuals of Amazonia: both focus on adulthood that is seen as the period of complete, mature, humanity – the only time worth remembering and recounting – before which “nothing of importance happened” (14). In the case of Payaguaje, it is almost entirely the period when he exercised his function as a shaman – that is, the time between his first experience with hallucinogens, on the one hand, and the arrival of missionaries of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) in 1955, whose activities gradually dismantled the shamanistic worldview of the Secoya, on the other. This contrasts sharply with autobiographies written by individuals who were socialized into agrarian societies, and who began their accounts with childhood, or the starting point of a life that is viewed as developing gradually, in steps, each of the stages informing the one that follows next. This part of the book also contains rich ethnohistorical data on the Secoya and other indigenous groups of that part of South America – a reflection of Cipolletti’s longstanding research on the history of intercultural contacts in Ama-

zonía (see for instance: “Nostalgia del monte”. *Indigenas del oriente peruano según un manuscrito del jesuita Juan Magnin.* *Anthropos* 103/2.2008: 507–525).

Furthermore, recounting the history of her research in Fernando Payaguaje’s village and her interviews with him, Cipolletti is aware of the necessity to “bring the observer to the picture,” as the anthropologist’s own life history and academic formation conditions the outcome of the inquiry, and it is impossible for the author – as she aptly states – “to disappear behind the data” (19). Still, she successfully preserves the voice of the main protagonist by avoiding any radical editorial interventions into the text of the oral transmission, such as for instance, the imposition of linear chronology of recounted events. She also carefully marks those sections of the account that resulted from her own questions and interruptions, along with many contextual components of the narration, such as laughter and moments of silence. In this way, Cipolletti also makes a clear effort to downplay the academic distinction between literacy and orality – “academic” in the Bourdieuan sense of “consecration” of the first at the expense of the other.

What makes this part of the book particularly elucidating is Cipolletti’s comprehensive presentation of the Secoya cosmovision, including their myth of origin, which is necessary for a good understanding of Fernando Payaguaje’s shamanistic visions, described in his own words in the following chapters. Finally, in this section the reader also finds the explanation of the intriguing title of the book: “The Fascination of the Evil.” To hurt others, to produce evil deeds, says Cipolletti, quoting Payaguaje, is a big temptation only for those shamans who lack a deeper understanding of reality, and whose level of shamanistic knowledge and skills is inferior. Even more interesting is the fact that Payaguaje poses the question of evil as a moral problem, which has not been a traditional element of the shamanistic worldview. Cipolletti views this phenomenon not as a result of any direct impact of Christian teachings on Fernando’s way of thinking but rather as his creative elaboration of Christian ethic within the indigenous cultural framework (34). Although Cipolletti does not draw such conclusion, a similar synthesis of shamanistic and Christian elements could be the Secoya concept of creation through word, which she describes as a “rather rare idea in the mythology of South American Indians” (53). One tradition where the motif of the creative word is to be found in a far more elaborate form is the mythology of the Guarani Indians, who were exposed to intensive, centuries long Christianization by the Jesuits.

Chapter 1 is devoted to Secoya conceptions about death and afterlife as presented by Fernando Payaguaje in his accounts of shamanistic flights/voyages to various areas of cosmos, in particular the superior world (*ma'temo*). It is inhabited by celestial beings and by the deceased humans but resembles in many aspects the visible world of the living. Interestingly, there are no ethical or moral requirements that guarantee a dwelling in the superior world. Rather, correct funeral rituals should be observed, in the first place the rubbing of the corpse with

the *nuní* (*Cyperus*) plant. Some personal belongings of the deceased, such as a hammock, should be also put into the grave. In the past, a dog was also sacrificed and placed along the corpse.

Chapter 2 concerns the “trade” of a shaman – namely, the visions that result from ingestion of hallucinogenic plants (by the way, the indigenous classification of those plants is far more complex than the “scientific” one). Highly ritualized shamanistic sessions, aimed at healing and attracting game or fish, were accompanied by strict taboos that all inhabitants of a village should observe, for instance the abstention from any other activities. The conversion to Christianity by a section of the Secoya people made the observance of those prohibitions impossible, which in turn seriously obstructed the shamanistic performances.

While the first two chapters contained “spontaneous” accounts of Fernando Payaguaje’s shamanistic activities – namely, those that emerged during interviews on other topics – Chapter 3 comprises narrations that resulted from his explicit wish to record events of his life. As mentioned above, Payaguaje begins his autobiography not with his childhood – that is, not according to the chronological order – but with the time when he started to learn how to use hallucinogens as a future *kuraka* (shaman). Here, the main protagonist recounts sessions in which he attracted animals from all parts of the world so that they can be hunted by the Secoya. He also remembers important events of Secoya history, such as their migration to Ecuador from Peru in 1942 and the arrival of SIL missionaries.

Chapter 4 may be seen as the centerpiece of Fernando Payaguaje’s autobiography as it contains his reflections on the seminal event of his shamanistic career – namely, the death of his father, himself a powerful shaman. This account also contains the main themes around which shamanistic activity revolves – that is, the notion of death that results from the envy of other shamans (never from natural causes), and the subsequent necessity to avenge it by kinsmen of the victim.

The last chapter comprises more details on the cosmivision of the Secoya, in particular the superior world which Fernando frequently visited during his shamanistic voyages. He also demonstrates his extraordinary knowledge of various plants. Besides, the reader finds here an interesting variation of the common motif of the shamanistic transformation: instead of being devoured and defecated by a jaguar, Payaguaje was swallowed and then excreted by an anaconda. The leitmotif of the book, the shamanistic fascination with performing evil deeds, returns in this chapter as Fernando explains that the power to hurt other people was taken away from him by his father and master.

In the conclusive section, Cipolletti, who revisited Fernando Payaguaje’s village one year after his death, conveys the sense of loss experienced by his relatives, exacerbated by the fact that in small-scale societies, in which human relations are highly personal, a death always means the passing away of not just somebody’s but everybody’s closest companion (227).

“La fascinación del mal,” based on unique ethnographic data collected by Cipolletti during her decade-long research conducted in the village of Fernando Payaguaje, is an erudite contribution to the study of shamanism, in general, and Amazonian mythic-ritual systems in particular. More importantly, Cipolletti not only captures the impact of Christian missionization on Secoya beliefs but also documents the attempts on the part of native intellectuals, and – undoubtedly – Fernando Payaguaje was one of them, to synthesize, more or less successfully, new ideas within the traditional worldview – the practice common to all indigenous “sacred ways.” The book is very well documented by an ample bibliography, maps, a glossary of Secoya terms, and black and white photographs. Eventual translation to English, in order to make it available to students of shamanism outside South America, is recommended.

Darius J. Piwowarczyk

Citro, Silvia: *Cuerpos significantes. Travesías de una etnografía dialéctica.* Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2009. 351 pp. ISBN 978-950-786-643-2. Price: \$ 16.00

This book is clearly inspired by a wish to blend theory and praxis, and to engage in a multidisciplinary and intercultural dialogue. The author claims that underlying these issues there is a political dimension where the dialogue attempts – not always successfully – to democratize social relations and ethnographic knowledge. And the language chosen for these dialogues is dialectics, which allows broaching contradictory terms and solve them by means of an ongoing synthesis, always unfinished. This emphasis on the dialectic movement also explains the structure of her work. Recapturing Hegelian dialectics – departure, becoming, return – the book reads like a journey where the author offers three different itineraries. The first one – theoretical and methodological – introduces her innovative proposal: a dialectic approach to the study of corporality, the result of the dialogue between anthropology, philosophy, and psychoanalysis. This model is applied to the study of the uses and representations of the body – particularly in the world of rituals – by the Toba or *qom* aborigines from eastern Formosa (Argentina). To this end, the second journey is historical and depicts the genealogy of the body for these peoples, while the last is ethnographic and takes us through their ritual performances. The syntheses achieved on each of these journeys are presented as open-ended epilogues.

The book is profusely illustrated with photographs and comparative charts that enrich the understanding of the different subjects.

On closer inspection, the first journey opens with an overview of the theoretical contributions to body and performance studies to date. Citro finds a tension between both lines – some schools underline the reproductive character of the body in social life while others emphasize its transformative and active aspects. She, therefore, attempts to create a theoretical link between these contradictory views. She thus proposes the notion