

gion always guides her theoretical demonstration. The voices of the marginalised Aborigines she has been working with are heard and given prominence. As Merlan rightly points out, they do not form an undifferentiated and unified whole. Although not specific to that local setting – for instance, it is also the case of the Aborigines Noongars whom I work with in the South West of Australia – , it is crucial to note that their experiences, interests, and objectives are diverse, sometimes even contradictory, and their relations to White people differ.

Another major strength is precisely Merlan's treatment of indigenous and nonindigenous mutual but asymmetrical engagements. The book never indulges in a binary and sterile opposition between the dominated and the dominant, the Aborigines on one side and the colonial or state actors on the other. Most importantly, Merlan insists on the need to adopt a relational and flexible definition of the concept of culture that takes continuity, but also change, into account. As such, she advocates the sedimentation of culture, an approach that "[considers] culture as a spectrum of action and disposition of which actors are more and less aware" (29). This would allow to do away with discourses that still characterise indigenous Australians in terms of "authenticity" or "acculturation."

Merlan's analysis is a valuable contribution to the comprehension of the present state of indigenous-non-indigenous relations and public policy relating to indigenous people in Australia. It reveals that racialisation is a process of history that has bounded indigenous-non-indigenous differences. Thus, to go beyond recognising indigenous Australians solely in terms of "cultural" difference, a reconciliatory process of recognition would have to acknowledge their ways of being.

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Moreno Yáñez, Segundo E.: *Religiones aborígenes en Andinoamérica Ecuatorial*. Baden-Baden: Academia Verlag Sankt Augustin in der Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2018. 339 pp. ISBN 978-3-89665-743-5. (Studia Instituti Anthropos, 57) Precio: € 45,00

In this book Segundo Moreno Yáñez advances his prolific scholarship with a unique, comprehensive discussion of indigenous religious beliefs and practices, with a focus on Ecuador. The study traces evidence from the earliest human settlements through the Inca occupation, with some references to modern rituals. Moreno Yáñez uses general theories from scholars of religion, especially Mircea Eliade, to analyze religious practices based on evidence from archaeological studies and colonial era chronicles. Although the author includes information on the history of indigenous religion in Peru, the main focus is on Ecuador, making the work a significant contribution to studies of "Andean religion," which are heavily focused on Peru. There is not one overall argument about indigenous religion; such a task would be difficult given the depth and breadth of

the study. However, the author identifies several common themes that can be traced through time, and within each chapter he provides analyses and hypotheses about the significance of archaeological findings. The overall aim of the book is to unify contributions from archaeology, ethnohistory, and comparative religion in order to understand the history of indigenous religion, which is necessary to understand the development of Ecuadorian colonial Christianity. Before giving an overview of the chapters, I should state that my background is in Andean cultural anthropology, so I will not discuss the author's interpretations in relation to debates within the field of Ecuadorian archaeology. However, Moreno Yáñez provides well-documented evidence for his analysis, which makes the book fascinating, very informative, and encyclopedic in its content.

The book begins with a good overview of hunter-gatherer religion and the Paleoindian Period, followed by a focus on the transition to food production, and how the domestication of plants led to transformations in religion. Using Eliade's approach to study religion during the transition from hunting to food production, the author carefully examines how this process unfolded in Ecuador. With plant domestication came the need to measure time, the development of calendars, a focus on the sacredness of plants and the mysteries of cycles of rebirth and renewal, the rise of shamans, and a transition from feminine divinities to masculine ones. Much of the evidence presented for agricultural developments in coastal Ecuador is limited to studies from the 1970s and 80s. After discussing the spondylus shell trade, the author turns to archaeology and colonial chroniclers to present evidence for a pan-Andean cosmology, including myths of the gods moving from the northwest (coastal Ecuador), to the southeast (coastal Peru). He ends the chapter by emphasizing pan-Andean elements of religion around the god Con and his relationship to water.

In chapter three the author discusses approaches from comparative religion on paths to ecstasy. This chapter includes a thorough discussion of hallucinogenic plants and their role in religion in the Old World as well as the Americas, before turning to specific archaeological evidence from Ecuador. This leads to an analysis of symbolism of spiritually-powerful animals, giving due attention to the well-known feline and serpent symbolism in South America but also revealing the importance of animals represented in pre-Columbian artifacts that have received less scholarly attention, such as the opossum, various birds, and bats. In his discussion of archaeological findings, he backs up his interpretations with information from myths and archaeological sites in Peru, thereby placing the Ecuadorian evidence within an overall South American cosmology. Much of the symbolism relates back to the enduring themes of fertility, death, and rebirth. The analysis includes some detailed discussions of Quechua terms and concepts, broken down into multiple associations. At times, the author's discussion of the multiple concepts expressed by sym-

bols seems to diffuse the meaning; something can represent femininity, but also masculinity, life, but also death, and the analysis becomes a sequence of associations. However, such is the nature of symbols; they condense and express multiple, sometimes polar, meanings.

In chapter four the author returns to the earlier discussion of the god Con, and traces the origins of the name “Con Tiçi Viracocha Pachayacháchic,” the supreme Andean deity. He delves into the etymology of the name, which seems to reappear in different forms through myths in various South American languages, breaking it down into linguistic parts and discussing its multiple associations. The analysis is very detailed but will interest those who specialize in Andean origin myths. By tracing the transformations of the god Con from early coastal Ecuador to the early Incas, he connects divinities of the Inca Empire to earlier myths from coastal Ecuador. This chapter focuses on the pantheon of aboriginal Ecuador and includes a thorough review of the sacred geography of different ethnic groups. The author analyzes the evidence of flood myths, human sacrifice, the spectacled bear cult, chthonic symbolism (death, seeds, and rebirth), and funeral rites of the coast, sierra, and Amazonian region. All this is necessary for the “hermeneutic key,” the author argues, to understanding the later juxtaposition, and syncretism, of indigenous religion with Christianity, leading to modern day practices. This chapter will be especially interesting to those who study mortuary rituals.

The final chapter analyzes cults to the ancestors, social reproduction, and the ceremonial cycle tied to agriculture. Moreno Yáñez reminds us to read the chronicles about official ceremonial cycles with caution, as calendrical rites varied with latitude and social position. Since Ecuadorian communities are at different latitudes than those in Cuzco, celestial seasons had a different time period. Drawing on René Girard’s scholarship on sacrifice, he suggests that rites of the modern ceremonial-agricultural cycle involving the killing of animals, and the ritual battles that still occur in some indigenous communities, could represent a continuation of earlier practices of sacrifice and propitiation of the forces of the natural world. A review of modern folkloric practices connects festive rituals to the history of pre-Columbian rituals, with the themes of fertility, death/sacrifice, and rebirth recurring through a multitude of symbols and rituals. Here the author points out a significant trend in the ritual calendar: throughout Ecuador’s history, indigenous subversive activities tend to occur during certain months, possibly reflecting seasonal associations with ritual battles. The final comment on the ritual calendar is that it is regenerated and has survived to the present precisely because it has adapted to historical changes, incorporating new myths and elements through history. Yet the rites reproduce the same “primordial archetypes” (300) of Andean thought.

I highly recommend the book; readers will find a wealth of information brought together in a thoughtful discussion of world religions, with a focus on the

Ecuadorian case. It is a must-read for understanding indigenous culture in Ecuador, but will also be of interest to South Americanists in general, and scholars of religion, as the author situates his analysis within a comparative perspective on native South American religion. Moreno Yáñez brings together information from a multitude of sources and puts them in order so that they unfold chronologically and thematically. He tells an intriguing story, through meticulous research, of the history of indigenous religion in Ecuador, and it was a pleasure to read.

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Munro, Jenny: *Dreams Made Small. The Education of Papuan Highlanders in Indonesia*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2018. 206 pp. ISBN 978-1-78533-684-3. (ASAO Studies in Pacific Anthropology, 9) Price: € 59,00

Jenny Munro’s “*Dreams Made Small. The Education of Papuan Highlanders in Indonesia*” is one of the finest pieces of anthropology about West Papua by a foreign scholar in recent years. Munro analyses the educational experiences of Dani students from the central highlands of Papua at universities in the province of North Sulawesi. Although it is a detailed study of one segment of Papua’s complex society, Munro’s study provides critical insights into Papuan cultural identity, political aspirations, Papuans’ relations with Indonesians and the nature of Indonesian governance in Papua. Munro demonstrates the students saw education offering the prospect of transforming their own society and fulfilling dreams of acquiring skills in a peaceful cosmopolitan society, but found their dreams were made small by oppressive racism and political constraints.

The research is based on extensive fieldwork conducted in 2005–2006 and 2009, followed by brief subsequent visits. Munro shared accommodation in the students’ dormitories, participated in their everyday activities, attended Church services, and monitored their studies. She also observed the Dani students’ interactions with the host society in North Sulawesi, particularly with the Indonesian academic staff and university administrators as well as fellow Indonesian and coastal Papuan students. In 2009, she went to Wamena to see what of the students’ dreams they had fulfilled after they returned home after their studies.

The highlands of Papua are an increasingly influential part of Papuan society. Demographically, highlanders constitute a majority of the indigenous Papuan population and it is in the highlands where Papuans still constitute a substantial majority of the population, in contrast to the large urban and some other coastal areas where Indonesian settlers constitute a majority and dominate the economy. The highlands are also the poorest regions of Papua.

The demographic predominance of highlanders is also reflected in political representation in the provincial parliament. Lukas Enembe was the first highlander