

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

of “meaningful bodies,” which comprehends the material and symbolic nature of bodies, as they are historically carriers of the hegemonic cultural signifiers and can, in turn, transform them or create new ones. On the other hand, in her analysis of the participating observation and its embodied character, Citro states that ethnography involves both a factor of distance (observation) and of closeness (participation). In order to analyze the meaningful bodies, the author chooses a methodological approach – ethnography *of* and *from* the bodies – which implies a dialectical opposition of two traditions in the study of the bodies: Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology and its incorporation to anthropology with the line that Ricoeur called “hermeneutics of suspicion” (Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud and their followers). The model of closeness-participation rooted on the first tradition describes the practices of different social actors as well as the meanings they give to them. And then she focuses on the movement of distance-observation implied in the hermeneutics of suspicion in their attempt to explain the role of prior conditions in the construction of those discourses and bodies we ethnographers encounter in our fieldwork. A final synthesis shows how those meanings and practices, in their historical context, acquire new configurations and meanings in the dynamics of social life.

This first journey contains a provocative hypothesis – namely, there is a common experience of corporality with two dimensions. One is the indivisibility of the subject from the world, stated by Merleau-Ponty in his study of body perception, and the other the recognition of the body as the *locus* of the force that drives the subject to transform the world, described by Nietzsche in his studies on the power of will. Citro finds these experiences in her ethnography of the Toba – the first in their representations and the second in their ritual dances.

The second journey takes us through the main historical processes of the Toba in order to explain their present situation. Rather than ethnohistory, it is a genealogy of the Toba bodies and imaginaries which helped in the successive formation of four imaginaries (hunters-warriors, rural workers, *evangelios*, and Peronist) identified by Citro as the foundations to understand the past and present identity disputes of these groups, and revealing the symbolic matrix on which they are based.

The hypothesis here states that the aboriginal religious movement called *Evangelio* has favored the conflictive social reproduction of the *qom*, in a pendular oscillation between integration with and autonomy from the white world.

The third journey describes and explains the role of the meaningful bodies in Toba ritual performances and everyday life. Her hypothesis is that the ancient aboriginal rituals have coalesced at present in the *evangelio* rituals, while these cults also allow the appropriation and reelaboration of different elements from mainstream society. As a complement to this hypothesis, Citro claims that the conflictive diversity of the *Evangelio* churches causes a dynamic complex of relationships and power struggles according to the ritual role of each gender and age group. Because age and gender roles are crucial in

their celebrations, this last journey moves through the adult-elders, youngsters, and women performances in the *Evangelio* rituals. Although among the Toba the elders are the natural political and religious leaders, both youths and women dispute their power. Therefore, Citro points out that while those four imaginaries are key to the self-adscription of Toba identity, they are constantly in question, producing peculiar appropriations of these meanings that are inscribed on the perception of their corporality: “powerful” elders, “interstitial” youths, or “threatening” women.

“The Comeback” is the epilogue of this journey. Just as the book starts with the words of a Toba interviewee (Pablo Vargas), it ends also with a fragment on the history of his people written by him. Citro explains why. In the Hegelian system the final synthesis is attained through a comeback on itself. In ethnography this implies a return to the fieldwork, and that is why her book ends at the point where Vargas starts. And they (not the author) are telling us here that it is time to quit *contemplation* and *do something* so that the voices of others may be heard.

This work is most relevant not only for the so called “Anthropology of the Body” but also for anyone interested in cultural dialogue and leveling social disparities. However, if this text has an impact on us, we know we must wait for the others’ synthesis. Rodolfo Puglisi

Clavandier, Gaëlle : Sociologie de la mort. Vivre et mourir dans la société contemporaine. Paris : Armand Colin, 2009. 256 pp. ISBN 978-2-20035-543-2. Prix : € 25.90

Thanatos, il y en a tant qui ont voulu l’êtreindre depuis quelques décennies, de Thomas à Baudry, d’Ariès à Déchaux, de Ziegler à Javeau ! Elle a laissé faire, sans meurtrir personne. Gaëlle Clavandier, dont la thèse de doctorat portait sur “La mort collective. Pour une sociologie des catastrophes” (Paris 2004), émerge désormais glorieusement du flux des thanatologues. Elle les examine, les synthétise, les réutilise, les critique, les pondère, les répare, les remet à leur place. L’attention se porte surtout aux regards et comportements actuels face à la mort, en saisissant leurs aspects pragmatiques et symboliques. Je prélève aléatoirement quelques matières traitées : la mort biologique, le fait social, face au cadavre, rituels funéraires et croyances, tabou et déni de la mort, la révolution des pratiques, soins palliatifs, thanatopraxie, une démographie en mouvement, du côté des opérateurs funéraires, néo-ritualité et technicisation, de la traçabilité des cendres, dialectique de l’intime et du public.

Laissant la métaphysique aux philosophes, l’auteur réfléchit aux divers critères physiques du décès, puis à la remise en ordre sociale, suivant les analyses durkheimiennes des rites piaculaires pour une recharge énergétique du groupe. Les doubles funérailles indonésiennes et malgaches reficellent aussi les liens sociaux après deuil. Certains pensent même à la symétrie des organisations au-delà et en-deçà de la mort.

Jusqu’au XVIème siècle, l’âme est l’essentiel ! Ensuite, on s’aperçoit mieux que, pas tout à fait volatil,