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O uso ritual da ayahuasca

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systems. These systems are then judged to differ from one another largely in unessential matters of form ... they are evaluated not in social terms, but by reference to abstract models which are felt to be of prior logical importance (1942:7).

I quote Sweezy because the mindset he criticizes is evident in the present work. For Godoy, sophisticated quantitative rigor is paramount because measuring what an Indian does once he possesses cash must reveal the effects of the market. The implicit reasoning holds that once the money form of value is introduced (money itself being an apparently universal category), markets assume shape. When departing from the ideal form of logical models, markets may be “distorted.” But, as an economic universal, markets emerge from a variety of social forms, inexorably bubbling to the surface when not repressed, whereupon they are held to be “causes.” For example, Godoy (p. 6) asserts that

the most rigorous method for studying the effects of markets on welfare and on conservation consists of giving gifts of cash to [indigenous] villagers selected at random, measuring changes in outcomes before and after the transfer, and comparing changes in outcomes between those who received the transfer (treatment samples) and those who did not (control sample).

Contemplating this statement, I am struck by the troubling combination of unreality and optimism that is matched only by the disturbing realization that the worldview of the neoclassical economist, in which supply magically appears to meet demand, is the ruling view of our age. The gulf between anthropology and this view yawns as a dizzying abyss.

So, there is good news and bad news here for *Tipiti* readers. On the one hand, Godoy has labored to craft an empirical account of indigenous rural life to measure the effects of markets in areas that matter to conservationists and development specialists. In the process, he shows how tricky this enterprise is to accomplish. The bad news is that the econometric orientation itself makes indigenous sociopolitical organization, history, and social relations disappear. We are left with no clue as to how markets arise and how indigenous peoples persist and adapt in the real world.

O uso ritual da ayahuasca. Beatriz Caiuby Labate & Wladimir Sena Araújo (editors). Campinas (São Paulo, Brazil): Mercado das Letras / FAPESP, 2002. 686 pp. R\$68.00 (paper). ISBN 85 85725-91-5.
[www.mercado-de-letras.com.br]

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Ayahuasca, a drink with psychoactive properties generally prepared by combining the vine of *Banisteriopsis caapi* with the leaves of *Psychotria viridis*, has spread considerably in the last three decades within the Brazilian, European and North American urban contexts. Traditionally used in shamanic rituals by Panoan, Tukanoan and Arawakan indigenous groups of western Amazonia, it was adopted by the folk healers (*vegetalistas*) of the rainforest areas of Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia, becoming central to their therapeutic rituals. Later, the rubber tappers, who worked in the Brazilian region of Acre during the rubber boom in the first quarter of the twentieth century, learned its usage from the Indian and *caboclo* populations and appropriated it for their own purposes.

With ayahuasca as a thematic axis that moves beyond cultural and academic frontiers, *O uso ritual da ayahuasca*, edited by Beatriz Caiuby Labate and Wladimir Sena Araújo, provides an overall view of the usages of the psychotropic brew in different cultural contexts: indigenous groups, *mestizo* and *caboclo* rituals, Brazilian *ayahuasca* religions and the expansion of these in Europe. This book is the result of the First Congress of the Ritual Usage of Ayahuasca (I CURA), held in 1997 in Campinas (São Paulo, Brazil), and represents an attempt of interdisciplinary dialogue. Although most of the chapters are written by anthropologists, other authors are specialists from medicine, cognitive psychology, psychiatry, chemistry, pharmacology, law and theology. The purpose of going beyond usual boundaries is reflected in other characteristics of the book. On the one hand, its authors belong to institutions of American and European countries. On the other hand, the book gives space not only to academic researchers, but also to members of the Brazilian *ayahuasca* religions and to therapeutic practitioners. In this way, it offers an academic point of view as well as that of the users of *ayahuasca*. The result is a polyphonic book, where the voices of researchers and natives coexist. In fact, they are sometimes indistinguishable, since some researchers are themselves members of *ayahuasca* religions and/or use their own personal experience with *ayahuasca* as the basis of their analysis.

The book is divided into three parts, which in some sense reproduce the expansion process of *ayahuasca* use from indigenous societies to its current spread in developed countries. Part one, entitled "Ayahuasca among People of the Forest," includes articles examining the ritual uses of *ayahuasca* among indigenous populations, folk healers and Acrean rubber tappers. In her analysis of the Kaxinawa use of *ayahuasca*, Keifenheim suggests that its consumption is not restricted to specialists and that, on the contrary, it is an essential practice beneficial to daily activities. With increased dependence on agriculture and less hunting and gathering as a result of contact, these practices are changing and women have ceased to consume it. Jean Langdon examines a Siona man's narrative, which describes his personal process of acquisition and loss of shamanic power. She employs this narrative as a means to explore the relationship between the subjectivity of personal experience and the orientation

given by the culture for its interpretation, a question rarely discussed in ethnology.

The second part of the book, the largest, contains papers describing and analyzing the three Brazilian *ayahuasca* religions: Santo Daime, Barquinha and União do Vegetal (UDV). Some authors (Goulart, Monteiro, Couto) are concerned with the process of the emergence of these religions. They analyze the historic, social and economic aspects of *ayahuasca* religions, connecting their development to the wider national context. They also attempt to discern the specific roles played in this emergence by the existing Brazilian religious traditions: folk Catholicism, indigenous shamanism, Afro-Brazilian cults (mainly Umbanda) and Kardecism. In addition, western ideologies arising from liberation movements of the 1960s reached the remote lands of Acre through the backpackers from Brazilian, European and North American cities traveling there in order to experience *ayahuasca*.

The latter stage of this historic process is the diffusion of *ayahuasca* religions, first to Brazilian urban settings, and from these to North American and European cities. This movement is an effect of the eagerness for religious and spiritual alternatives in modern society. Nevertheless, its transposition to developed countries is not without problems. Carsten Balzer's article describes the failure of a Santo Daime ritual performed in Germany. Most of its participants had a disagreeable experience with *ayahuasca*, which is interpreted by the author as the consequence of the incongruity between Daime's ritual symbolic expression and the Germans' expectations, inspired primarily by the New Age movement. They anticipated an esoteric shamanic ritual providing the chance for individual experience, but they experienced instead a ritual inspired by a doctrine that emphasizes collectiveness and is impregnated with catholic principles and images, which caused deep rejection on their part.

Apart from the social implications of *ayahuasca* use, some authors also tackle the study of symbolic elements in *ayahuasca* religions. They describe the rituals and explore some of their doctrine's central concepts, such as the relationship between soul and body (Goulart); the concepts of sickness and cure (Sena Araújo, Peláez); the category of "person" (Peláez); and the notions of shamanic flight and possession (Monteiro, Brissac, Couto). Some of these chapters look at the origins of the elements constituting *ayahuasca* religions and reflect on the way of dealing with their eclectic and heterogeneous nature. The fact that *ayahuasca* religions are composed through the confluence of different traditions has caused them to be characterized as syncretic. However, the pertinence of this concept is refuted by some researchers (McRae, Sena Araújo, Labate), who consider it inappropriate since it implies the idea of an inarticulate amalgamation of elements.

The connection between *ayahuasca* religions and shamanism is another issue discussed in several papers. Most regard certain aspects of *ayahuasca* religions as shamanistic. Their opinion is grounded on restricted interpretations of the essence of shamanism. For example, Couto reduces his definition of

shamanism to Eliade's "technique of ecstasy" and claims that the visionary experience in *ayahuasca* religions is analogous to the shamanic flight. Monteiro equates the experiences of the Santo Daime founder to those of shamanic initiation. However, these arguments reproduce a commonsense understanding of shamanism. In contrast, the studies that describe the indigenous shamanic systems, such as those by Keifenheim and Langdon, allow the reader to realize that there are substantial differences between indigenous cosmologies and the doctrines of the *ayahuasca* religions. Consequently, the characterization of *ayahuasca* religions as shamanic systems requires more careful considerations. However, despite the fact that some authors utilize anthropological analytical tools in a simplistic way (Bandeira, Couto), they still have the merit of providing first-hand and pioneering descriptions of these little-known religions.

The last part of the book is dedicated to pharmacological, phytochemical and psychological research linked to the active ingredients found in *ayahuasca*. Three articles report the results of one research project carried out in collaboration between members of UDV's Medical Council and researchers from European, Brazilian and North American universities. The main objective of this project was to examine the physical and psychological effects of *ayahuasca*. Although not stated explicitly, these articles—as well as several others—are concerned with showing that *ayahuasca* consumption is not harmful. Several articles emphasize that *ayahuasca* does not create chemical dependency and they argue that, on the contrary, its ingestion in controlled ritual contexts has several beneficial effects. UDV's members underline *ayahuasca's* capacity to promote psychological transformation, allowing people to overcome existential problems such as the tendency for violence, alcoholism or drug dependency. At the same time, it permits the development of some desirable virtues, like maturity, self-confidence and sociability. These religions consider that the benefits produced by *ayahuasca* are mainly psychological and spiritual, and their doctrines are highly charged with morality.

The approach to *ayahuasca* proposed by Jacques Mabit, a French doctor, is a significant departure. In the Peruvian village of Tarapoto, he directs a program for the recovery of drug addiction using *ayahuasca* as its key element. His therapeutic practices are based on the *vegetalistas'* understanding of *ayahuasca* and its ritual use. Mabit affirms that his usage of *ayahuasca* is exclusively therapeutic without moral implications.

One reason for the general concern with the physical and psychological effects of frequent *ayahuasca* ingestion is the problem of its legal status. The active ingredient (DMT) present in the beverage is prohibited by international treaties as well as national narcotics laws. Although the Brazilian government does not prohibit the religious use of *ayahuasca*, this is not true for Europe, excluding Holland, where *ayahuasca* religions were obliged to become clandestine.

Germán Zuluaga and Mabit raise another relevant question. They consider the possibility that increased search for psychedelic experiences in Western

societies—the pursuit of *ayahuasca* and shamanic rituals being one example—contains the risk of new misappropriations of indigenous wisdom and threatens indigenous peoples' intellectual property rights. The illegal and indiscriminate trade of *ayahuasca* in the face of international prohibitions could lead to its proscription among the populations that traditionally use it. By raising these ethical questions regarding *ayahuasca* usage, the book contributes to an important discussion that is especially relevant in the current process of globalization.

In its diversity of topics and viewpoints, *O uso ritual da ayahuasca* is certainly a heterogeneous book. While there is a disparity of quality in the articles, the overall presentation of the volume contains various ways of and significant perspectives for understanding *ayahuasca* in different cultural contexts. Its value as a contribution to knowledge goes beyond its unifying themes. Taken as a whole, the volume both challenges conventional frontiers of scientific knowledge and points out new issues and questions—epistemological and methodological—concerning the use of *ayahuasca* in cultural and religious practices. Finally, it is necessary to highlight the fact that this book is one of the few published works to offer a state of the art overview of this topic. The survey contained within it is, without doubt, the most extensive up to now. Among its main achievements are the articulation between the ethnographic and analytic richness provided by case studies and the provision of an overall view through its more synthetic chapters, which serve as a guide to readers unfamiliar with the topic.

Gender and Sociality in Amazonia: How Real People Are Made. Cecilia McCallum. Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2001. xii + 208 pp., figures, table, references, glossary, index. \$70.00 (cloth); \$23.00 (paper). ISBN 1-85973-449-9; ISBN 1-85973-454-5-NPB. [www.bergpublishers.com]

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Cecilia McCallum's *Gender and Sociality in Amazonia* is a bold and novel theoretical statement on the issue of gender and inequality in Amazonia. Pulling no punches, McCallum criticizes the view that oppression of women is a social universal in indigenous Amazonia. She points out flaws in the prevailing anthropological epistemologies used to address this topic and lays out a contrary argument for gender complementarity, drawing on ethnographic data on the Cashinahua of Acre, Brazil, for support. The book's main strengths are its thought-provoking theoretical frameworks and proposals, its strong critiques of previous work on gender in Amazonia, and particularly its application of the latest developments in gender theory to the field of