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## Viviendo Bien: Genero y Fertilidad entre los Airo-Pai de la Amazonia Peruana

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with Brazilian anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro, and Mexican anthropologist Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, both now deceased—was one of the signers of the radical document, the Declaration of Barbados, “for the liberation of the Indians.” All of this took place just as the world was learning about the genocidal atrocities perpetrated by Brazil’s Indian Protection Service. My own advocacy document on the Campa appeared in 1972. This new English edition also fills in more of Asháninka history since 1970 up to the present, during which they resisted the Maoist Shining Path guerrillas as well as the drug trade. Today Asháninka indigenous political leaders are prominent at national and international levels.

Varese’s historical narrative does not deal with the messianic elements in the Asháninka response to the arrival of Seventh-Day Adventist missionaries in the early 1920s, nor to the partially successful armed rebellion in the Pichis region that preceded the Adventists. Apparently there were Asháninka “missionaries” who made their own interpretation of the Advent message of a returning messiah and world renewal that must have resembled the Juan Santos Atahualpa episode. Varese’s interpretations of the Asháninka cosmology and their overall response to invasion wonderfully illuminates all of these events in the history of the Asháninka people.

*Viviendo Bien: Genero y Fertilidad entre los Airo-Pai de la Amazonia Peruana* [*Living Well: Gender and Fertility among the Airo-Pai of the Peruvian Amazon*]. Luisa Elva Belaunde. Lima: Centro Amazónico de Antropología y Aplicación Práctica and Banco Central de Reserva del Perú, Fondo Editorial, 2001. 268 pp. \$25.00 (paper). ISBN: 9972-608-13-1. [www.caaap.org.pe]

*Ver, Saber, Poder: Chamanismo de los Yagua de la Amazonía Peruana* [*Vision, Knowledge, Power: Shamanism of the Yagua of the Peruvian Amazon*]. Jean-Pierre Chaumeil. Lima, Peru: Centro Amazónico de Antropología y Aplicación Práctica; Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos (IFEA); Centro Argentino de Etnología Americana (CAEA-CONIDET), 1998. 361pp. \$35.00 (paper). ISBN: 9972-608-05-0. [www.caaap.org.pe]

*Guerra de Sombras; La Lucha por la Utopía en la Amazonía Peruana* [*War of Shadows: The Struggle for Utopia in the Peruvian Amazon*]. Eduardo Fernandez and Michael F. Brown. Lima, Peru: Centro Amazónico de Antropología y Aplicación Práctica; Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos (IFEA); Centro Argentino de Etnología Americana (CAEA-

CONIDET) [also published by University of California as *War of Shadows*], 2001. 265 pp. \$30.00 (paper). ISBN: 9972-608-12-3. [www.caaap.org.pe]

*Relaciones de Género en la Amzonía Peruana* [*Gender Relations in the Peruvian Amazon*]. María Hiese, Liliam Landeo and Astrid Bant. Lima, Peru: Centro Amazónico de Antropología y Aplicación Práctica, 1999. 148pp. \$20.00 (paper). ISBN: 9972-608-09-3. [www.caaap.org.pe]

*Nimúbe: Tradición de los Bora de la Amazonía Peruana* [*Nimúbe: Oral Traditions of the Bora of the Peruvian Amazon*]. Nancy Ochoa Siguas. Lima, Peru: Centro Amazónico de Antropología y Aplicación Práctica and Banco Central de Reserva del Perú, 1999. 309 pp. \$25.00 (paper). ISBN: 9972-608-06-9. [www.caaap.org.pe]

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*Development Alternatives, Inc.*

The Centro Amazónico de Antropología y Aplicación Práctica (CAAAP) of Lima has been publishing the journal *Amazonía Peruana* for more than 25 years, and during that period CAAAP has also brought out many monographs about the Peruvian Amazon. They include several by anthropologists, as well as reprints of historical works and other volumes with ethnographic content. The books are in Spanish. Some are original works, and others are translations. Authors may be Peruvian or from other countries. While some CAAAP publications reflect its origin as an institution of the Catholic bishops of the Peruvian Amazon region, most authors are not affiliated with the Church.

This review considers five of the volumes offered by CAAAP. They illustrate a diversity of ethnographic styles. Most at least mention the traditional topics of ethnology, including population, location, subsistence technology, history, production for market, kinship, social organization, values, cosmology, et cetera. But the amount of detail, observational methods, analysis and focus vary considerably.

In *Viviendo Bien*, Luisa Elva Belaunde aims for a community study that integrates anecdotes from her field experience, elements of culture and observations of social relations, with a focus on gender, social relations and cosmology. The volume describes an Airo-Pai (Secoya) settlement on a tributary of the Río Napo in Peru. The author made field trips between 1988 and 2000, and she has published several articles over that period. Belaunde sets herself the task of sketching the daily life of the people of the settlement, showing how men and women do their daily work, control fertility and rear

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children. She presents elements of cosmology, myth, shamanistic practice, and cultural values. In particular, as the title indicates, she is interested in Airo-Pai concepts of “living well,” which involves different tasks for men and women, collaboration to raise children, and avoiding anger.

Belaunde presents many of the topics of a traditional ethnography, but she does so in a way that weaves together elements from what people told her, what she saw herself, her recordings of songs or myths, and other elements. For example, in order to present ideas and behaviors about menstruation near the outset of the book, she notes seeing women retire to their hammocks during menstruation. She recounts how the women advised her to act during menstruation; how concepts of menstruation fit with ideas about impurities, illness, and gender; how a man takes on cooking and domestic tasks when his wife retires; what people say if a woman does not retire during menstruation; how customs have changed over time; and more, all in just several pages. Readers who savored Janet Siskind’s *To Hunt in the Morning* (1973) are likely to find this volume enjoyable as well.

Pierre Chaumeil records a wealth of ethnographic detail on shamanism in *Ver, saber, poder*. This monograph describes the Yagua, a group living along the Amazon River near the Colombian border. It is a “corrected and enlarged” version of *Voir, savoir, pouvoir: le chamanisme chez les Yagua du nord-est péruvien* (1983). Chapters cover the practice of shamanism; the world of spirits and an invisible reality that the shaman sees with or without hallucinogens; the integration of shamanism in Yagua life, including migration, hunting and other activities; and concepts of illness and curing. The central theme is the status and role of the shaman, who can control nature, cure, and cause damage. Shamanism is shown to be part of curing and ceremony, as well as the attempt to control nature, social life and other aspects of Yagua life.

The text is rich in ethnographic and visual detail of the kinds that give verisimilitude to the account, such as photos, many songs, bilingual texts, sketches of the artifacts used by the shaman, a list of medicinal plants (in Yagua, Spanish and Latin), drawings by shamans of the beings that they envision, names of the informants consulted, and much more. The introduction to this edition reports modern developments of Yagua shamanistic surgery for outsiders using a healing material supposed to be obtained on long underwater trips up the Ucayali, or how a shaman incorporates telephone calls in his ceremony to improve a business deal. If you are interested in shamanism, this might be your cup of tea, or pot of *ayahuasca*, as it were.

Eduardo Fernandez and Michael Brown, in *Guerra de Sombras*, report their ethnohistorical investigation into Asháninka relations with outsiders, in both the recent and more distant past. This volume, filled with illuminating anecdotes of recent experiences in Peru, recounts an episode in the mid-1960s when the guerillas of the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA)

gained some acceptance among some Asháninka (formerly known as Campa) people. The authors hypothesize that some Asháninka saw guerrilla leaders as related to a mythic “son of the sun.” The guerilla column was hunted down by soldiers, but the experience was shocking enough for the Peruvian army that it may have contributed to the events leading to the later installation of a left-wing military government.

The authors hypothesize that the short-lived ability of the MRTA guerrillas to work with some Asháninka is a modern instance of a long-standing pattern of Asháninka acceptance of a charismatic, armed outsider as the mythological son of the sun, who is able to rally the usually atomistic Asháninka for violent activities.

In this same vein, Fernandez and Brown interpret the history of the rubber merchant Fitzcarrald at the start of the twentieth century. He may have been seen as a mythological figure when he came to Asháninka territory, and he induced them to raid less fortunate groups to gather slaves for the rubber trade. The “rubber boom” of the late 1800s to 1910 or 1920 resulted in the decline and disappearance of whole settlements and peoples. In my view, any realistic treatment of Fitzcarrald is preferable to Werner Herzog’s movie interpretation of the same man as a romantic, if idiosyncratic, visionary. However, the trend may be in Fitzcarrald’s favor, if one is to judge by the acclaim for the movie or by the trendy café of the same name in Iquitos. The café is a few blocks from the street named for Julio C. Arana, whose underlings tortured and killed thousands on the Putumayo River a few years after Fitzcarrald died.

From an earlier century, Fernandez and Brown analyze the historical uprising led by charismatic Juan Santos Atahualpa as another instance of a continuing pattern. This is an important book for those interested in both ethnohistorical and current events. The patterns described are comparable to historic movements, often led by charismatic figures, among the Shuar and other peoples in eastern Peru.

In 2003, Sendero Luminoso and coca-producing outsiders are in close proximity to Asháninka communities. MRTA, Sendero and the *cocaleros* are not the same, but a comparison would illuminate the situation. The presence of armed outsiders is an issue that affects lowland populations along the Andes in Bolivia (the Yuracare, for example), and other areas of Peru and Ecuador.

Finally, this book is the story of how Fernandez and Brown looked into the still-sensitive topic of the Sendero Luminoso. The book is not heavy ethnography and it is written in a lively, almost novelistic style that is easy to read. Some might long for more ethnographic detail, but others would appreciate the flow of the story. If you do not read Spanish, there is an English version. But, if your Spanish is even so-so, the CAAAP edition is enjoyable and informative.

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María Heise, Liliam Landeo and Astrid Bant seek generalities about gender relations using a cross-cultural questionnaire and case histories from five Amazonian peoples in *Relaciones de Género en la Amazonía Peruana*. This is a comparative study of gender relations among the Asháninka, Yagua, Shipibo and Chayahuita of the Peruvian Amazon, with an annexed discussion of the Aguaruna (Awajun). The general goal of the book is to enhance knowledge of gender relations in each group and to compare the groups. The volume also raises issues about regional development, impact on indigenous peoples, and inclusion of gender in development planning. The descriptive goal of the book involves presenting a short (10 to 20 pages) ethnographic sketch of each of the four groups, focused on gender relations. The topics for each descriptive chapter are (1) reproductive activities, (2) productive activities, (3) communal activities, (4) access to and control of resources, and (5) internal and external factors that influence gender relations. The analytic goal involves a list of factors that should be taken into account in evaluating the status of women: mobility, focality (tendency toward patri- or matrilineality), cooperation, access to the market, money management, free choice of spouse, post-marital residence and use of Spanish. At the end, there is a comparative table of four groups with a brief discussion. The annex presents an argument that the high levels of suicide among the Aguaruna should be understood as threats gone too far by women seeking liberty of action in a domestic situation ruled by the father-in-law/son-in-law relationship.

Several audiences will find this volume interesting for the ethnographic sketches, and development planners will find it useful when considering how men and women might participate in projects.

Nancy Ochoa's *Nimúbe* presents 39 Bora (Miamunaa, Bora-Witoto linguistic family) myths in Spanish, recorded in Bora between 1981 and 1984, translated into the Loreto dialect of Spanish and then edited into conventional Spanish. There is less focus on the experience of the writer than in the other volumes under review here. The introduction of the book gives the names of the people who told or translated the stories, and clarified issues. The author provides an introductory ethnographic text, vocabularies of regional Spanish and Bora words used in the texts, a list of characters in the myths, and a list of toponyms. Ochoa presents this work as a fulfillment of a promise to pass the words of the old people on to future generations.

In general, these volumes are an important resource for anthropologists, as they are for Peru and for the peoples whose history they record. CAAAP lists its publications on a web site ([www.caaap.org.pe](http://www.caaap.org.pe)) with ordering information and contacts by email and telephone. Published over the last ten years, they are in stock and available for overseas orders, and well worth the effort of obtaining them.