
Over the last years, a growing number of scholarly works from different disciplines has focused on the indigenous peoples of Latin America. This academic interest has been fueled by the recent wave of indigenous mobilization that, since the 1990s, has spread throughout the region and the resulting relevant role that indigenous movements have come to play in contemporary politics. Mario Blaser joins this discussion with a sophisticated book that, focused on the Yshiro people of the Paraguayan Chaco, opens interesting empirical and theoretical perspectives.

Organized in nine chapters divided into three sections plus an introduction and conclusion, the book can be read on two different levels. At the basic empirical level, it certainly provides an excellent comparative perspective to other experiences of indigenous mobilization in Latin America. Blaser thus provides a narrative that shows the changing historical contexts of the Yshiro people in their relation to the external world as well as regarding their own traditions, establishing a dialog with works on other indigenous peoples in Latin America. For example, the Yshiro experienced historical processes similar to those described by George Collier and Elizabeth Quarantiello for the Mayan communities of Chiapas and José Antonio Lucero and Deborah Yashar for the Andean world regarding the shifting relationship of indigenous peoples to the state, economic development, and mobilization possibilities, strategies, and contexts. In this manner, the Yshiro moved from their relative isolation to the first disruptions caused by the arrival of extractive industries and missionaries in the 1930s, which were then replaced in the 1950s by a new developmentalist, state-driven, and indigenista agenda that emphasized the assimilation of indigenous peoples within a program of economic development and progress. This period, which solidified patronage networks between Yshiro people, the state, and non-indigenous individuals and groups, was then followed by another that, beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s, led to the emergence of a more active indigenous movement in Paraguay in response to national and international changes. Consequently the Yshiro were drawn into debates around the nature and rights of indigenous peoples, land distribution, and a sustainable environment. Ultimately, the process of organization and mobilization led to the creation of a pan-Yshiro organization in 1999 that could unite internally divided communities as well as engage in different ways with projects originating from the state as well as other national and international organizations.

However, this basic narrative is not actually the main focus of the book, which has a second, more complex and provocative theoretical level that engages with...
debates within the anthropological field as well as with broader epistemological issues. Blaser argues that both academic work and state and non-state projects on the Yshiro have been traditionally based on a dualistic ontology, a “modern regime of truth”, that sees those people belonging to a reality “out there” that can be studied or transformed. This approach, he claims, is wrong on several counts. It not only fails to capture the pluriverse of the Yshiro *yrmo* (world/reality), ontologically formed by multiple dimensions that cannot be reduced to Cartesian dualism; it also contributes to the reproduction of colonial and hierarchical difference towards the indigenous peoples. Moreover, this modern regime of truth has been a pervasive influence, despite historical changes in how the indigenous peoples and their environment have been imagined, and have informed both traditional as well as more recent anthropological work on indigenous peoples.

Searching for an anthropology not based on the modern ontology and that can adequately capture the Yshiro experience, Blaser theoretically roots his analysis in Actor Network Theory, Modernity/Coloniality and Decolonial thinking, and feminist theorizing. This theoretical framework allows him to engage with the particular relational ontology that informs the Yshiro experience, making it possible to understand what would be otherwise perceived, from a modernist perspective, as mythical, non-relevant elements of their culture. Second, it makes evident the limitations of the economic and social projects aimed at the Yshiro over the years from the Paraguayan state, NGOs, international actors, and anthropologists that failed to take into account that dimension. Finally, and more importantly, it highlights how the relatively recent and ongoing revival of Yshiro’s *yrmo*, in which storytelling occupies a prominent role as a way of practising knowledge, is intrinsically connected to ongoing struggles to enact a pluriverse that challenges the idea of globalization as the mere and logical consequence of modernity.

The book’s dense and rich theoretical apparatus makes it highly recommended reading for scholars interested in these topics—it is not oriented towards a more general audience. In fact, the book is a long theoretical reflection on the limits and possibilities of knowledge in general and applied anthropology in particular, following debates generated by scholars such as Gayatri Spivak. In this sense, there is an intrinsic tension emerging from Blaser’s efforts to dissociate himself from the “ventriloquist trick”, which would also involve re-enacting the modern ontology, while at the same time applying a sophisticated academic theoretical framework to study the Yshiro. Moreover, while the book certainly offers many interesting comparative perspectives as mentioned above, its tight focus on the Yshiro results in a relatively isolated case study. For example, some more
consideration of how the Yshiro’s experience compares with that of the much larger Guaraní groups in Paraguay would have helped contextualize this analysis.

These observations notwithstanding, Blaser has given us an empirically grounded, theoretically informed study that represents a significant contribution to several fields. It is not only relevant for the comparative study of indigenous peoples in Latin America and elsewhere, or for the field of anthropology. His penetrating analysis of processes and concepts such as modernity, globalization, multiculturalism, and ontologies makes this book appealing to scholars across a wide range of disciplines.

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Fruto de un trabajo colectivo que reunió a investigadores de procedencias institucionales y formaciones disciplinares diversas, *Ese Ardiente Jardín de la República* analiza el proceso de formación, apogeo y desarticulación del campo cultural de la provincia de Tucumán (Argentina) entre 1880 y los prolegómenos del golpe de Estado de 1976. En ese sentido, la compilación de Fabiola Orquera se propone explorar, a partir de una confluencia de miradas que abarcan desde la historia y la crítica literaria hasta la estética, la sociología y las ciencias de la educación, algunos de los múltiples actores que compusieron el entramado cultural tucumano durante el lapso de un siglo.

La obra se compone de dieciséis capítulos, divididos en dos secciones. En el prólogo, Orquera presenta la estructura general del libro y reflexiona en torno a las particularidades del campo cultural tucumano, a la par que subraya su influencia en el zigzagueante derrotero seguido por la Argentina durante el siglo pasado. Abre la primera sección el artículo de María Celia Bravo y Daniel Campi, cuyo objetivo es contextualizar la problemática cultural desarrollada a lo largo de la compilación en el marco del proceso de transformaciones socioeconómicas que atravesó Tucumán durante el siglo XX. Con ese fin exploran los vaivenes de la industria azucarera, principal actividad económica de la provincia, y sus imbricaciones en las representaciones sociales e identidades de los actores que animaron su convulsionada trayectoria durante los años en cuestión. La formación y consolidación de la Sociedad Sarmiento, institución forjada al calor del florecimiento asociativo visible entre fines del siglo XIX y principios del XX, es analizado por Marcela Vignoli. Según la autora, esa Sociedad tuvo un rol central