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Neil L. Whitehead and Robin Wright (eds.), *In Darkness and Secrecy: The Anthropology of Assault Sorcery and Witchcraft in Amazonia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), pp. 327, £17.50, pb.

Shamanism continues to reflect modernity's fascination with tradition most visibly epitomised through post-colonial 'new age' spiritual religions and adventure tourism. This edited volume by Whitehead and Wright sets the record straight by emphasising negative and dark features of shamanism – such as predation, violence, killing and sorcery-related illness – aspects that are increasingly purified, erased or ignored by the neo-shamanistic movement and its increasingly significant presence in supra-local political economies. However, the real contribution made by the authors of this volume, is in providing historical and ethnographic support for the sometimes-malevolent ontological basis for society among Lowland South American peoples.

Shamanism is certainly a worthy locus for the contemplation of malevolence whereby practitioners who are considered to have the power to heal also have the power to harm. The idea is elemental to most aspects of human power and how one sets off to employ it. Several authors in this volume, such as Heckenberger and Teixeira-Pinto, emphasise the coercive aspects of such power. Still, such coercion is never straightforward. With dark shamanism and related practices, it is not merely what one does but what others say one does, particularly among peoples who have complex understandings of aggression and causality.

Yet this volume, in its treatise of the murkiest sides of the ambiguity of shamanism reinforces a good/evil dualism that, much to Foucault's lament, is itself responsible for imposing measures to judge and protect one over the other. Herein lies the greatest challenge in discussing the real and imaginary poetics of the negative for situating shamanism. Mentore's evocative essay stands out in confronting this challenge by contemplating intellectuality that does not reduce murder to 'moral wickedness' (p. 132). He elucidates how the 'light' aspects of WaiWai healing and social harmony are effectively achieved through the invocation of the dark shaman (p. 141) whose image is imperative for the decentering of power. As such, he unveils how the covert, secret, dark, and black domain is not *entirely* evil and hence cannot serve as a singular dichotomous bookend.

It is questionable as to whether or not Amazonianist scholars have actually downplayed the more negative sides of shamanism. Studies of how shamanism has been situated politically within and outside of communities have shown that shamanism has been both an object and weapon of fear: see, for example, Taussig's *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man* (Chicago, 1987) or Nicholas Thomas and Caroline Humphrey's *Shamanism, History, and the State* (Michigan, 1994). Certainly in terms of understanding the etiology of illness and mortality, anthropologists have long been discussing shamanism and sorcery extensively. Rather there are other issues at stake when social scientists veer away from presenting the most negative aspects of social life. There is an inevitable complicity in the ethical tensions that underlie the choices we make when we represent others; on the one hand, we potentially expose the possibility of sensationalism and on the other hand, we risk simplifying the complexity of people's lives. In his courageous essay, Santo-Granero chooses to break the 'conspiracy of silence' about child sorcery among the Ashaninka for the sake of understanding its existence and the securing the civil rights of individuals who have been politically caught in-between guerilla and counterinsurgency forces.

It isn't possible to discuss shamanism without invoking what David Parkin, in a 2007 article in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, calls 'a semantic cluster' which here recognises the intentionality of transformative tangible and intangible human and non-human forms as manifest in the healing-harming complex. Perhaps what we need is a new means of talking about harm and affliction in ways that don't reflect dominant language structures. In a 2007 essay in *Cultural Anthropology* ('Versions of the Dead: *Kalunga*, Cuuban-Kongo Materiality and ethnography', vol. 22, no. 4, pp. 473–500), Todd Ramón Ochoa creates such a language, one that is 'for' the dead and their deeds of sorcery rather than a representation of them (p. 492). He achieves this mostly through the epistemological referents of Marx, Deleuze and Kojève's re-reading of Hegel, bringing desire and negativity into the forefront. As such, morality is not the issue as much as historical contextualisation and the significance of multi-sensory visceral expressiveness so that no matter how different such realities are from our own they can be discussed coherently without being ring tailed into moral dualisms.

The diverse set of thirteen chapters in this volume each accomplish substantially more than just balancing the literature or signaling the ambiguity of shamanism with the more negative aspects that have suffered avoidance, erasure or purification by providing detailed descriptions of the epistemological and practical workings of the histories and daily experiences of darker shamanism.

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Lawrence Ziegler-Otero, *Resistance in an Amazonian Community: Huaorani Organizing Against the Global Economy* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007), pp. vii + 176, \$25.00, pb.

The formation and growth of indigenous organisations and their operation in the spheres of local, national and international politics has been an important trend in recent decades, up to and including the recent adoption by the United Nations of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The history and background of these organisations is as diverse as the people that they represent, but their central significance remains in providing a voice for people who face ongoing threats to their territories, resources and ways of life. As such, studies of the history and workings of such organisations are of vital importance for understanding the internal and external obstacles that they face. This is of particular interest in the case of those Amazonian societies that have previously lacked explicit hierarchies and who must now find ways of electing leaders who will speak and make decisions on their behalf, as is the case with the Huaorani of Ecuador who are the focus of Ziegler-Otero's book.

Ziegler-Otero's monograph focuses on the *Organización de las Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana* (ONHAE), a nongovernmental organisation set up by the Huaorani people of eastern Ecuador in 1990. Ziegler-Otero's stated aim is to evaluate the achievements and relative effectiveness of ONHAE. While this explicit appraisal of the organisation can become a little heavy-handed at times, the monograph offers a fascinating analysis of the individual personalities and relationships involved in the organisation as well as the leadership's wider connection to the Huaorani group as a whole.