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Ralph Bolton, Tom Greaves and Florencia Zapata (eds.), *50 años de antropología aplicada en el Perú: Vicos y otras experiencias* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2010), pp. 485, pb.

Akira Kurosawa's 1950 masterpiece *Rashomon* involves the rape of a woman and the apparent murder of her husband, a samurai, retold by four witnesses in four contradictory accounts which leave the viewer guessing as to where the truth of the incident lies. Similarly, *50 años de antropología aplicada en el Perú* presents a number of contradictory accounts of the nature, motives, actions and consequences of the intervention by Cornell University anthropologists in the peasant community of Vicos in Peru from 1952 to 1966. Located some 450 kilometres from Lima on the western slopes of the Cordillera Blanca at altitudes between 2,800 and 5,000 metres above sea level, Vicos was the site of the Peru–Cornell Project that included agriculture, education, health, the transfer of power to the local population and the social integration of that population at the regional and national levels. Above all, it was a controversial and pioneering experiment in applied anthropology.

After a chapter by Greaves in which he identifies the defining elements of the project designed by Alan Holmberg and explores their possible origins in Holmberg's previous work with the Sirionó in Bolivia and in Virú on the Peruvian coast, three chapters, by William Mangin, Clifford R. Barnett and Paul L. Doughty, present favourable accounts of the project. Mangin recounts his personal experiences, detailing some of the most important conflicts and events and what he sees as the project's failures and achievements. Barnett presents what he perceives as the four main lessons: the introduction of the 'green revolution' package first on communal plots and then amongst the *comuneros*; the importance of the protection provided by the Peru–Cornell Project as benevolent patron to enabling experiments and change to occur; the need to plan for the consequences of the dismantling of pre-existing power and authority structures; and the importance of a long-term commitment.

For his part, Doughty presents a reasoned defence of the contributions of the project both to the development of Vicos and to applied anthropology, placing it in its historical and disciplinary contexts, arguing that the project was the first attempt at agrarian reform and indigenous community development in the country, and attributing some of the criticisms by fellow anthropologists to the concept of cultural relativity and the strong conservative bias in the discipline, reflecting 'a conviction that people do not have the right to get involved in the culture of another people' (p. 89). He concludes that 'The Vicos case provides an example of a project that achieved its original goals in a reasonable length of time, given the circumstances, and one in which the community, persevering in the face of difficulties, managed to increase its income' (p. 115).

More critical accounts are presented by William P. Mitchell, Jason Pribilsky, Eric B. Ross and Enrique Mayer. Mitchell claims that the project underestimated the capacities of the *vicosinos* and ignored the significant social forces that motivated changes by rural people, thus exaggerating the isolation of the vicosinos and the power of the social sciences in producing change in Vicos. He concludes that it is improbable that the Vicos project was the cause of the changes observed. To facilitate is one thing; to be the cause or independent variable, as Holmberg argued, is another. What the Vicos project did was make North American anthropologists feel good, convincing themselves that they had the power to create a better world.

Pribilsky argues that the defects of the Vicos project lay in the disconnect between a modernisation project founded on an excessively optimistic concept of 'science' and the political context in Peru during the Cold War. He claims that the project promoted a model of acculturation through planned interventions and had a vested interest in demonstrating a conservative agrarian reform model as an alternative to the Soviet model. Although the 'scientific' focus of the Vicos modernisation project sought to differentiate it from the development focus of the *indigenistas* in Lima, events in Vicos took on a life of their own, making the principled scientific focus untenable. Similarly, according to Ross, the real value of the Vicos model during the Cold War was that it offered an apparently benign form with which to counteract the opposition to the incorporation of the third world into the Western capitalist system.

Mayer concludes that, in an important way, the Vicos project represented a model or plan for agrarian reform once a hacienda was expropriated and, in this sense, was forward-looking in that it was concerned about the practical problems of implementation (p. 249), but that it was also a top-down model that favoured Spanish over Quechua and improved varieties of potatoes over native varieties (p. 251).

Chapters by Karsten Praerregard, Ralph Bolton and Jorge Flores Ochoa describe the experiences of other communities in the Peruvian Andes where endogenous or exogenous interventions promoted social change. Praerregard observes that transnational emigration and the many relations and activities that it generated left the two communities that he studied more unequal in economic terms and more socially divided than other forms of intervention carried out in both communities during the last 30 years by external change agents (p. 296). In comparing the experiences with Vicos and the Chijnaya project (where he was involved successively as a Peace Corps volunteer, researcher and private foundation representative), Bolton concludes: 'In each case the empowerment and democratic participation of the peasantry, education and improvement in the material standard of living through technological innovation and the access to productive resources was emphasised. Each served as an example of rural modernisation for the surrounding communities and those further away' (p. 362). Flores Ochoa describes an applied anthropology project in Kuyo Chico after the Second World War led by Peruvian anthropologist Oscar Núñez del Prado.

Billie Jean Isbell describes the project to construct a 'house of the grandparents' in Vicos in order to repatriate copies of all the documentation concerning the Vicos project and of all the publications arising from it. For her part, she concludes that 'the PPC teaches us that what may appear to be successful in the short run (ten years) may not be sustainable in the long run' (p. 404).

Finally, Florencia Zapata describes the Living Memory Project, a joint project between Cornell University, the Mountain Institute and the Urpichallay Association NGO that used collective memory to strengthen the self-esteem and consolidate the sense of identity of the vicosinos (p. 445). She surveys the original project's origins and context, its weaknesses and its positive and negative impacts, and observes that the principal concerns of vicosinos today 'are in the present and the future and [they] ask themselves if there are clues in their past that can help them construct the future that they are concerned about' (p. 445).

Just as Kurosawa's movie leaves the viewer with a deep sense of the relativity of human perceptions and of the impossibility of ever achieving final, absolute and unambiguous understanding, so also the debate presented in this book presents conflicting accounts not only of a particular project but also of the role of anthropology and

the social sciences in general as intervening agents in social change. Though today there is little agreement on the nature, beneficence or impact of the project either on the discipline or even on the community itself (where it is only a vague local memory), it continues to be a singular milestone in the fertile history of applied anthropology in the Andes.

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John Charles, *Allies at Odds: The Andean Church and its Indigenous Agents, 1583–1671* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2010), pp. xii + 283, $27.95, pb.

In any study of a church or a political movement, the obvious subjects of interest are the charismatic leaders and the movers and shakers who make things happen. In this work on the colonial Andean Church, however, the intermediaries and subordinates are the centre of attention. The Indians were sacristans, secretaries and translators, but as author John Charles argues, they were much more: they worked closely with the priests, but at times they cleverly used their knowledge of the conqueror's language and legal system to advance their own interests and those of the local community.

As Charles shows in this well-documented portrayal of the colonial world, the Indians were not the passive and silent victims of an imposed order, as they were sometimes portrayed in older historiography. They acted as conscious intermediaries between the two worlds, and in so doing regained much of the power over their lives and their communities that they had lost after the conquest. Thanks to Spanish paternalism, the Indians used the legal system to their fullest advantage, often overwhelming the courts with unending litigation, much to the chagrin of colonial officials. Other studies have focused on Indian revolutions or outbreaks of idolatry, but in the long run, it was in their manipulation of the system itself – their mastery of Christian doctrine, the language, and Spanish legal procedures – that the Indians were most successful in resisting the system and maintaining their identity.

In the multifaceted colonial world, the Indians were both allies and potential subversives. What most concerned officials were the Indian catechists who, preaching in Quechua or Aymara, presumed that they knew as much or more than the priests. The chronicler Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, who depicted life in early colonial Peru, is a case in point: he drew pictures in which he both praised priests and ridiculed those who, in his opinion, fell short of the mark. Charles aptly describes the ongoing warfare between priests who accused their Indian wards of idolatry, but they frequently did so in retaliation because the Indians had first denounced them for their abusive ways. Even the *quipus*, the apparently innocent cords the Incas used for accounting purposes, were potentially subversive. The Indians used the cords in confession to give account of their sins – or were they mocking the priest by introducing pre-Christian accounting methods in the context of a sacrament?

Charles draws upon a wealth of colonial documents – legal papers produced in court proceedings, testimonies used in the idolatry campaigns and petitions drawn up by the native assistants themselves – to reconstruct this insightful portrait of colonial Andean society. The documents strengthen the argument that Guamán Poma and other well-known Indian or *mestizo* chroniclers were not the exception: they were but the more famous among a great number of native scribes, translators and local caciques