

With the Saraguos: The Blended Life in a Transnational World. By David Syring. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014. ix + 161 pp., acknowledgments, prologue, epilogue, references, index. \$19.95 paper).

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What appears to be a book about Saraguro woven-bead necklaces turns out to be a meditation on the meaning of life. This ethnography explores what it means to live a good life for Saraguos in transnational worlds. Over eight years, anthropologist David Syring visited a Saraguro family in the Ecuadorian highlands learning *la vida matizada* through the art of beading.

With the Saraguos starts with the idea of *la vida matizada*, or the blended life, introducing readers to the Saraguro context. The book then weaves the experiences of three men—Benigno Cango who stayed in his village, his brother-in-law Maximo Sarango who migrated to the United States, and the anthropologist himself—to meditate on the nature of work in today's world. The author then shifts to women's experiences of work in Saraguro by looking at the members of a bead-necklace cooperative, especially the daily work of and apprenticeship with Ana Victoria Sarango. After these ethnographies, Syring switches to storytelling with two tales that blend animals and people, one from Saraguro and the other from the Great Lakes, the author's home region. The book concludes with a discussion about the creation of an anthropological consciousness and the writing of cross-cultural experiences. Chapters are separated with "interludes" that tell experiences and stories to play with ways of seeing and saying.

Syring knows the impossibilities of translating experiences into written words, and the book is rich in photographs that invite us to witness the texture of daily life in Saraguro. But stories are better than images in enabling readers to reach the intangible; the author brings in indigenous methodologies like storytelling as a way of both knowing and telling.

This book meditates on Saraguro time and space. It dismantles myths of indigenous realities as local by showing how Saraguro traditions, economies, and social networks are embedded in global dynamics. The Saraguos are constantly adjusting the local culture to transnational opportunities, like the Santa Fe International Folk Art Market, weaving globalization within localized experiences. The people Syring talks to and works with are inventors of a culture infused with their own anthropological

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consciousness. The author meditates on different notions of time as experienced by Saraguros who stayed home and those who migrated abroad as well as on the frictions created by the unequal experiences of modern work as an act of isolation from the rest of life.

This accessible book is free from academic jargon and provides a smooth means of gaining insights into Saraguro lifeways. It is not a book that engages with Saraguro political history or that people's connections to Inka imperial expansion. Though one learns that the Saraguro necklace tradition dates back to the middle of the twentieth century, what is said about the women involved is limited to beadwork. As he refrains from engaging the literature on indigenous women, the author underplays gender dynamics in the making of indigenous experiences and transnational worlds.

In *With the Saraguros*, ethnography meets storytelling, bringing to life poetic stories that complement scientific analysis. The book's central concern is *la vida matizada*, a metaphor of all the author has learned in Saraguro: "a blend of diverse work opportunities, social embeddedness, and a satisfying sense of a person's ability to shape how" she or he lives (27). *La vida matizada* is an ongoing negotiated presence in the now, one that manifests change over time.

Syring opens and closes with the images of *kokopelli*, the humpbacked flute player common throughout the American Southwest with its back full of seeds, and *technopelli*, the researcher that travels with tools to assist communities in developing what they see as valuable. The role of the *technopelli* is to carry and exchange stories, as if they were seeds. This book of seeds, tools, and stories celebrates the Kichwa saying "makika rurakun, shimaka rimakun" (the hands make and the mouth talks), which means that one should engage with the world with one's whole being: there is no other life than this, *la vida matizada*, life paid attention to.