Gender, Nature, Culture Week 12 Questions

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1. ***Describe the environmental conflict between indigenous peoples and state and corporatist actors. What is the problem with framing indigenous approaches and knowledge as culture and/ or beliefs?***Whist the president of Peru decrees facilitating the concession of indigenous territories to oil, timber and hydroelectric corporations in order to boost their economy (using nature as resources), indigenous people are defending not simply access and control over nature as resources; they are defending complex webs of relations between humans and nonhumans (kinship) (p. 14). The problem with framing indigenous approaches and knowledge as culture/beliefs is based on the prevailing notion that indigenous peoples as “not first class citizens” to enforce economic power. (p. 16) The state draws a line of ontology; cultural beliefs that indigenous people have and ‘rational’ scientific knowledge and they do not try to grasp the issue from the ontology of indigenous people.

***How is respect and tolerance of other cultures denying ontological difference?***

When state deal with ontological difference, they deny other culture by multicultural tolerance; “(…) means to suspend the application of the most rational understanding of reality in deference to those who do not now best” (p. 21) this is again a postcolonial discourse of ‘teaching’ and ‘enlightening’ to those ‘uncivilized’ people.

***3***.      ***What does it mean to address environmental conflict as political ontology?***

Addressing environmental conflict as political ontology means to make the different ontology “other”. (p.19) Indigenous people have their own rationality as culture and it is reasonable politics for them, but the rationality from the point of the modern ontology is based on scientific epistemological knowledge and makes a clear border between nature and culture. Environmental conflict is caused by ontological multiplicity, but more importantly, people (government or state) use the modern ontology to their own benefits by using scientific knowledge, because spirits, ancestors or kinship are totally alien ideologies.

***How does this facilitate a pluriverse (a world of many worlds) rather than a universe?***

The entanglement of each ontology, constitutes, the grounding for the political o ntology project facilitate a pluriverse. There are multiple ontologies, thus there are multiple interpretations and practices such as subjective or disciplinary perspectives. Those ontological multiplicity makes conflicts because each ontological approach has a different configuration of a reality. Therefore, there is not such a clue that solves those issues with h different ontological approaches.

Reference

Blaser, Mario (2013) ‘Notes towards a political ontology of environmental conflict’, in Lesley Green (ed.) Contested Ecologies: Dialogues in the South in Nature and Knowledge, pp. 13-27, Cape Town: HSRC Press.