



# Shamans of the Foye Tree: Gender, Power, and Healing among Chilean Mapuche

By Ana Mariella Bacigalupo

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Drawing on anthropologist Ana Mariella Bacigalupo's fifteen years of field research, *Shamans of the Foye Tree: Gender, Power, and Healing among Chilean Mapuche* is the first study to follow shamans' gender identities and performance in a variety of ritual, social, sexual, and political contexts.

To Mapuche shamans, or *machi*, the *foye* tree is of special importance, not only for its medicinal qualities but also because of its hermaphroditic flowers, which reflect the gender-shifting components of *machi* healing practices. Framed by the cultural constructions of gender and identity, Bacigalupo's fascinating findings span the ways in which the Chilean state stigmatizes the *machi* as witches and sexual deviants; how shamans use paradoxical discourses about gender to legitimatize themselves as healers and, at the same time, as modern men and women; the tree's political use as a symbol of resistance to national ideologies; and other components of these rich traditions.

The first comprehensive study on Mapuche shamans' gendered practices, *Shamans of the Foye Tree* offers new perspectives on this crucial intersection of spiritual, social, and political power.

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#### **About the Author**

ANA MARIELLA BACIGALUPO is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University at Buffalo.

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