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Fluent Selves

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Fluent Selves

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Autobiography, Person, and History in Lowland South America

Edited by SUZANNE OAKDALE
and MAGNUS COURSE

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In memory of Steve Rubenstein, our dear friend

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Acknowledgments

This volume grew out of a Wenner-Gren, British Academy, and University of Edinburgh (School of Social and Political Science) funded workshop, titled "Autobiographical and Biographical Narratives in Lowland South America: Unexpected Relations between Persons, Language, and History," held at the University of Edinburgh, September 16–17, 2010. We wish to thank each of these institutions for their support. Magnus Course, who had the idea of having such an event, was an untiring and gracious host in Edinburgh along with Maya Mayblin. Our intent was to bring scholars together from Europe and North and South America who work on this cluster of topics in one way or another in their lowland research. We succeeded in attracting anthropologists and linguists trained in many different traditions, and the discussion was much richer for this diversity. The essays in this volume do not, therefore, have a uniformity with respect to their theoretical orientations. We were also joined by three other colleagues in this workshop, whose work does not appear here: Ana Mariella Bacigalupo (State University of New York, Buffalo), Pierre Déléage (Laboratoire d'anthropologie sociale), and the late Steve Rubenstein (formerly of the University of Liverpool). All our chapters profited from Mariella's, Pierre's, and Steve's comments, and the workshop from their sociability and goodwill.

The title of this work—*Fluent Selves*—is drawn from Kenneth Rexroth's famous poem "Lute Music," a work that focuses on the transience and fluidity of selves as they move into, through, and out of language. It is precisely this movement

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of selves and persons through the medium of language that is our focus in this volume.

The volume benefited greatly from the careful reviews given by the readers enlisted by the University of Nebraska Press. We also thank the School of Social and Political Science at the University of Edinburgh for the funding it provided for the volume's indexing. Finally, we are very grateful to Bill Mayblin for creating the map in the volume's introduction.

Fluent Selves

Introduction

Suzanne Oakdale and Magnus Course

Much of the recent research in lowland South America fore-
grounds history—a significant departure in a literature long
marked by a commitment to a structural functional emphasis
on integrated systems (Fausto and Heckenberger 2007; Hill
1988; Whitehead 2003). Yet despite the attention to historical
consciousness and "historicity" in this literature, remarkably few
studies have explicitly focused on autobiographical or biograph-
ical narrative.[1] In this volume we set out to address this lacuna
through the exploration of narrative practices in a wide variety
of lowland communities. We explore how they illuminate the
social and cultural processes that make the past meaningful for
indigenous peoples in lowland South America and what these
narrative practices show us about the contemporary enactment
of persons in these locales.[2] In brief this volume concerns the
relationships between personhood and the ways people relate
to the past as these come together in narrative practices.

The authors represented in *Fluent Selves* focus on a variety of
autobiographical and biographical narrative forms and employ
a range of different theoretical approaches. Chapters explore
both oral and written genres, in rural and urban settings in
such countries as Ecuador, Brazil, Peru, and Chile, active in
a range of contexts from highly ritualized performances to
ethnographic interviews and moments of self-presentation in
large public events. This volume unites scholars from Europe,

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North America, and Latin America, trained in several different intellectual traditions of social, cultural, and linguistic anthropology as well as linguistics. Some authors are more interested in culturally distinct models of personhood and historical consciousness, others in how actors draw simultaneously on multiple models or invoke social personae from a wide range of social fields. Authors also focus on different aspects of these narratives, from thematic content, to form, to the role they play in social life. Despite these differences, all the contributors consider these narrative practices primarily in terms of how the construction of history and personhood are in some way interlinked.

We have divided this volume into four sections. The first section, "Neither Myth nor History," is concerned with how modes of engagement with temporality—frequently dichotomized into "myth" and "history"—are often transformed and reconciled in lowland autobiographical and biographical narrative forms. The second section, "Persons within Persons," unites chapters that together offer a refinement of the "perspectivist" model of personhood. The third, "Creating Sociality across Divides," encompasses chapters that speak to the social life of these kinds of narratives in lowland societies. Here we focus on the sorts of effects they have, how their performance can, for example, be a means of structuring engagement between very different types of people who are working to create allies, forging interethnic networks, or enlarging a moral community. The fourth section, "Hybridity, Dissonance, and Reflection," concentrates on the accounts of several lowland leaders who tell about becoming intermediaries, working between multiple social spheres, simultaneously inhabiting conflicting roles and identities. Here the psychological stress and the creative potential of this sort of hybridity are apparent. Before we introduce the four sections of this book in more detail, let us review the insights of the small but growing body of research on lowland autobiographical and biographical narrative practices.

Map 1. Map of South America indicating locations of groups mentioned in this book. (Courtesy of Bill Mayblin)

Autobiographical and Biographical Narratives
in Lowland Ethnography

While there have always been a few exceptions, autobiographical and biographical narrative practices have been overlooked in most lowland research, especially in contrast with their prominence in the anthropology of other regions such as that of Native North America (e.g., Radin 1999[1926]; DeMallie 1984, among many others; see Sáez 2006). Lowland societies were often typecast as the inverse of so-called modern societies, celebrated primarily as "still enchanted," integrated systems, societies in which communal cohesion was intact (Sáez 2006). Collective institutions therefore seemed a much more fitting focus for ethnography than material about distinctive, individualized, or personal experiences, individuation being considered a mark of disenchantment. Oscar Calavia Sáez (2006), in the context of discussing the absence of this material in Brazilian ethnographic literature, suggestively contrasts the creation of a coherent native "I" through published nineteenth-century Native North American autobiographies and photo portraits with the equally constructed "collective indigenous subject" produced in mid-twentieth-century Brazilian ethnography and ethnographic photography.

Lowland peoples are also usually characterized as living in societies in which there is an absence of the idea of "the individual," with its classic "Western" connotations, including autonomy, will, uniqueness, interiority, and indivisible unity—a term that has an illusory air of coherence (see Lukes 1973; also La Fontaine 1985 and Strathern 1988). While we would agree with the need to question the applicability of this "Western individual" for lowland peoples, we wonder if the fear of ethnocentric projection may also have led to an unnecessary avoidance of first-person narrative forms. In shifting our attention to these forms, we would also like to return to thinking about how kinds of individuality may in fact be emphasized

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in some lowland societies, albeit an individuality distinct from that associated with the "Western individual." We do not wish, however, to automatically yoke autobiographical narrative practices to the expression of individuality or processes of self-actualization, much less the whole conceptual package of the "Western individual," unless, of course, narrators themselves are in social domains where this idea is at play.

Research by Greg Urban (1989) and Ellen Basso (1995) has been some of the first to creatively disengage lowland first-person narration from introspection and the expression of unique individuality. They show that the social power and transformative potential of some of these narrative practices in lowland societies can rest on their use of quoted speech. These narrative forms work to subjectively connect persons in the present to persons from the past or from alternate modes of existence such as mythical time or the position of enmity. These insights have led others to examine these processes elsewhere in the lowlands, especially in the more highly ritualized practices of the Wanano, Mapuche, Sharanawa, Xavante, and Kawaiwete (Kayabi) (Bacigalupo 2007; Chernela 2011; Course 2007, 2009; Déléage 2007; Graham 1995; Oakdale 2002, 2005, 2009).

In the body of research focusing squarely on history in the lowlands, biographical and autobiographical narratives have been valuable for understanding structural shifts and continuities in the contexts of colonization, missionization, guerrilla struggle, and urbanization (Bacigalupo 2001; Brown and Fernández 1993; Crocker 2007; Fausto 2012; Fernández 1986; Langdon 2007; Muratorio 1991; Rubenstein 2002; Veber 2009; Vilaça 2010; Watson 1968, 1970; Wright 2005). *La chute du ciel* (2010) stands out for the evocative way it presents the experiences of Davi Kopenawa, a Yanomami shaman and leader living with and fighting against the environmental destruction his people have faced over the course of his life. It also pres-

ents his experiences with missions and working within government institutions.

Those who have understood autobiographical and biographical forms in terms of their distinctive cultural saliency have found that in many societies these narratives are in fact central to the construction of historical consciousness. Ellen Basso, for example, has observed that for the Kalapalo of central Brazil, "history is first and foremost biographical" and "emerges from particular intelligences and insights, decisions and choices, that together constitute enactments of specific persons" (Basso 1995:295; Basso 2003:89). Likewise, Anne-Christine Taylor writes that for the Ecuadorian Shuar autobiographical forms play an important part in building up a "regime of history" (2007:147). Both observations show that the growing interest in these forms is not simply a symptom of "the new 'subjectology'" in anthropology (Sahlins 2004:140; Fausto and Heckenberger 2007:4) but is, in part at least, also driven by the importance of these narrative forms in lowland traditions themselves.

Those interested in historical narrative have also pointed out the importance of the absence of these forms in certain domains. Nádia Farage (2003) observes that Wapishana avoid speaking about certain past events because of their association with the dead. Only when the dead have reached a certain remoteness, when, in Wapishana terms, their individualized faces have been forgotten and they can less easily affect the living, can they be featured in narratives by those who knew them (see also Taylor 1993, 2007).

In addition to these veins of research, there are other seemingly incongruous areas where attention to autobiographical and biographical narrative practices in one form or another have consistently appeared: research on lowland dreams and visions, shamanism, and leadership. While much of the research on dreams has centered on beliefs about the nature and efficacy of dreaming, Waud Kracke (1979), drawing on psycho-

logical anthropology, has explored Kagwahiv dream accounts as they relate to the social-psychological dynamics between headmen and their followers. Ellen Basso (1992) has examined how Kalapalo dreams are interpreted as being about "self becoming." Likewise, Steve Rubenstein (2012) has focused on the centrality of the vision quest in the narrative formation of the Shuar subject. In the northwest Amazon, Robin Wright (2013) has written extensively on shamanic apprenticeship by focusing on the autobiographical account of Mandu da Silva, a Baniwa jaguar shaman. Davi Kopenawa's (2010) account of his life centers on his shamanic training and how he has drawn upon this body of knowledge to critique the destruction and greed of industrial society.

Much like Davi Kopenawa's account, some of the most extensive presentations of autobiographical narratives are book-length accounts of leaders, such as those of the Ecuadorian Shuar warrior Tukip' (Hendricks 1993) and shaman Alejandro Tsakimp (Rubenstein 2002). Research on millenarian leaders in the northwest Amazon has also long featured biographical material (Hill and Wright 1988; Wright and Hill 1986; Wright 1998). Additionally, Alcida Ramos (1988) has focused on the autobiographical aspects of political speeches made by indigenous leaders involved in the pan-Indian movement in Brazil; Linda Rabben (2004) on the lives of Payakan and Davi Yanomami as international activists; Joanne Rappaport (2005) on the lives of Colombian indigenous intellectuals; and Hanne Veber (2007) on the narratives of a Peruvian Ashéninka activist, Mihuel Camaiteri, as well as several other Asháninka and Ashéninka leaders (Veber 2009). While not focused on leadership per se, Janis Nuckolls (2010) discusses the autobiographical narratives of a Runa "strongwoman," or woman of strength and vitality, an unofficial status that rests in part on engagement with a range of nonhuman as well as human beings. In these seemingly disconnected areas of research on dreams/visions and

on lowland leaders, autobiographical narratives appear to be linked to the display of fluency between different domains, both social and ontological.[3]

Finally, autobiographical accounts written by or coauthored by lowland individuals are also currently appearing in the context of indigenous activism, especially in those places where indigenous leaders have emerged in the last few decades as high-profile political actors. As Bruce Albert has observed, "self-representation formulae" have become "highly effective political instruments on the postmodern scene of globalization and multi-ethnicity" (1997:59). The modes in which this is done, he continues, borrow from the rhetoric of official state "indigenism," from the rhetorics of nongovernmental and church organizations, and from local discourses (1997:59; see also Rappaport 2005). Autobiographical narratives in a range of genres are effective parts of these projects. Published testimonials and autobiographies by lowland indigenous activists are beginning to appear, such as that centering on the life of Mapuche leader Rosa Isolde Reuque Paillalef (2002), Kayapo leader Raoni (Raoni and Dutilleux 2010), in addition to that of Davi Kopenawa (Kopenawa and Albert 2010).

Indigenous autobiographies are also increasingly salient in the context of global networks. Websites of institutions such as Survival International as well as those dedicated specifically to the preservation of the Amazon feature short biographies (in translation for international audiences) of leaders such as Davi Kopenawa and Kayapo leader Raoni (Survival International 2012; Raoni.com 2012). Resonating with national and international audiences, these narrative forms are becoming an important part of the way large numbers of people around the world are drawn into complex global networks of support. Davi Kopenawa's accounts of his experiences, for example, are effective pleas for readers to become involved in movements centered on both indigenous rights and environmentalism. These works show that such texts not only describe cosmopol-

itan lives (Albert 2010) but also work to engage readers situated across various sorts of boundaries.

Neither Myth nor History

The autobiographical and biographical narratives discussed here are, at least in part, embedded in and constitutive of indigenous conceptions of time, most obviously the past but also the present and the future. The precise nature of the way in which indigenous peoples in lowland South America engage with temporality has been the topic of much heated debate in recent years, a debate for which the parameters were set by Claude Lévi-Strauss's elaboration of the simple observation that different societies engage differently with the past (1966). Whereas some societies seek to obliterate the appearance of cumulative change, through "myth," other societies seek to make it the very core of the way they understand themselves, through "history." Lévi-Strauss utilized the ideal types of "cold" mythical modes and "hot" historical modes to refer to each of these tendencies respectively. Yet later critiques have suggested that through the characterization of lowland societies as predominantly "cold" in their engagement with temporality, Lévi-Strauss was denying them "history" and thus contributing to the perceived isolation of indigenous peoples from global historical and political trends. In response to these critiques, others have argued that, on the contrary, Lévi-Strauss is simply allowing for indigenous conceptions of temporality that are autonomous from Western expectations of what "history"—with its emphasis on cumulative change and flows of capital—should look like (Gow 2001; Fausto and Heckenberger 2007). Careful ethnographic studies of indigenous engagements with the past, have revealed the coexistence of multiple and heterogenous forms of understanding temporality, something that, at least if we understand "cold" and "hot" as ideal types, is precisely what Lévi-Strauss would have predicted as well as something that would logically follow

from these peoples' involvement in the larger political econo-mies of nations and transnational communities (Hugh-Jones 1988, 1989; Turner 1988).[4]

This book is situated somewhat tangentially to the debate described here since the contributors to the volume come from a variety of different disciplinary and national traditions and each has his or her own view of the relative merits of the var-ious positions in this debate. Our purpose in this introduc-tion is not to take sides on this issue but rather to point out that the autobiographical and biographical narratives that are the subject matter of this book go beyond any simple cat-egorization as either "myth" or "history." They are rather the very medium in which a variety of modes of engagement with temporality meet, are reconciled, and reemerge.

To advance this argument, we need to be somewhat clearer about exactly what we take the idealized modes of "myth" and "history" to mean. Perhaps the key point is that the dis-tance between myth and history is not simply chronologi-cal but ontological. Myth refers to a mode of being in which all entities remain incompletely differentiated, and thus ani-mals, spirits, and humans are not entirely distinct. It is the continued copresence of this ontological domain of unspeci-fied becoming that forms the basis of perspectivism, the posi-tion that there exists a widely held understanding across the indigenous Americas that all entities see themselves as human (Viveiros de Castro 1998). It is precisely within this mythic domain that shamans enter into relations with other beings and seek to manipulate the mythical correlates of the non-mythic world. Indeed, through shamanism, dreaming, and visions, the domain of myth remains accessible in a way that history, even recent history, does not. What is strange about this domain of myth, and the mythic narratives of it, is that it evades the epistemological "rules" of the everyday. For this reason Lévi-Strauss has described myths as emerging from "nowhere" (1970:18; cf. Gow, this volume). Thus ultimately

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the distinction between mythic and historical modes finds at least one of its sources in the nature of the linguistically encoded relationship between narrator and narrated. Perhaps as much as an opposition of myth and history, what we are actually observing is an unresolved tension or oscillation between lives as singular, unique, and irreducible, and lives as instantiations of a shared, collective, and enduring experience that transcends any one life. While this statement might be more or less true for people in general, it is given a particular inflection through both epistemologies that set firsthand experience apart from knowledge gained in other ways and ontologies in which what is shared extends far beyond the realms of the human as usually understood.

The implications of this point are addressed in detail in Peter Gow's chapter on exemplary personal experience narratives among the Piro. In this case, the figure-ground relationship of the generic and the particular is framed as a relationship between multiplicity and individuality. As Gow notes, "the Piro person is a precipitate out of an a priori multiplicity." The autobiographical narratives mark a transition outward from multiplicity to individual experience, from myth to history, from the generic to the singular, or "a special case of self-singularization," to use Gow's phrase. Yet just as autobiography marks a transition out of the generic into the particular, out of myth and into history, it can equally mark the reverse, for as Gow points out, myths themselves are neither more nor less than the biographies of ancestral beings shorn of the evidential and epistemic markers that would otherwise make them "historical." It is their strange quality as originating from "nowhere" that allows them to reside alongside lived experience and thus provide a generic form that can subsequently be "inhabited" in personal experience. This is more than just saying that myths serve as a "template" for biographies, for we could equally say that biographies serve as a template for myths.

The essays collected here, but especially those in the first section, lead us to argue strongly for the absolute centrality of personal experience in indigenous lowland engagements with temporality. From the "biographies" of ancestral beings that constitute the realm of myth to the biographies and autobiographies of contemporary people that constitute the realm of "history," the world and its transformations are accessible through individual experience rather than generic collective templates (see also Basso 1995; Urban 1989). Yet as Casey High's chapter suggests, the transformation of such an understanding into the kind of collective histories required by contemporary claims to indigeneity has necessarily involved the adoption of new narrative forms, new sites of narration, and new kinds of audiences (Course 2010; Turner 1988; Veber, this volume). For what High's chapter demonstrates is that invention of new and heterogeneous narrative forms is always rooted in and emergent from very particular social positions. This leads to a striking contrast between senior peoples' autobiographical accounts of spear fighting in which they celebrate Waorani past openness to SIL missionaries and their nature as "real persons," and young activists' nonverbal, staged performances of "wildness" in urban centers that enact a firm boundary between Waorani and non-Waorani. High shows not only that these two genres of self-presentation work very differently with respect to how they model sociality but also that they correspond to different generational experiences of both past and future.

Hanne Veber's chapter describes the challenges and difficulties of a similar process in the movement towards the development of Asháninka "historical consciousness." It is precisely the rootedness of experience in autobiographical narratives, with their fundamentally "self-singularizing" qualities, that stand in the way of narratives about "the Asháninka." A common task that both historians and historically minded anthropologists take upon themselves is the production of a

collective history out of the cumulation of autobiographical narratives, yet this act is as much an act of destruction as it is of creation. For the transformation of autobiographical narratives into "history" is primarily achieved through the process of "contextualization," a process that we often assume adds something to a narrative but, as Gow points out in his chapter in this volume, can equally be seen as stripping something away. Or as Silverstein and Urban (1996) have phrased the point, any act of "contextualization" is premised upon a prior "decontextualization." It is precisely the immediacy and singularity of personal experience that is lost as indigenous autobiographies become placed in their "historical context." Ironically, in creating "history" historians end up with "myth" as narratives become stripped of their anaphoric correlate. What is clear is that the understandings of time, both implicit and explicit in these autobiographical and biographical narratives, cannot be disassociated from understandings of what it means to be a person. Much as Raymond Williams (1977) has argued that theories of language are ultimately always theories of the nature of persons, we argue that theories of personhood are equally and necessarily at the foundation of theories of temporality, and it is to this topic that we now turn.

Persons within Persons

Recent decades have seen a genuine paradigm shift in anthropological approaches to the conceptualization of personhood. While several important studies have followed Marcel Mauss's famous demonstration of the cultural, historical, and religious particularities of the "Western individual" (Mauss 1985[1938]; Dumont 1985), others have turned toward alternative conceptualizations of personhood in non-Western societies (Dumont 1970[1966]; Strathern 1988, 1992; Wagner 1991). These two approaches are of course interlinked, and several writers have demonstrated that deep-rooted culturally specific assumptions about personhood have led anthropologists to systematically

overlook and misinterpret alternative understandings of personhood elsewhere (for example, Strathern 1992).

This rethinking of what personhood might mean at the conceptual level has perhaps been nowhere more revolutionary than in the anthropology of indigenous lowland South America. Seminal writings by Anthony Seeger and his colleagues (Seeger, Da Matta, and Viveiros de Castro 1979), Joanna Overing Kaplan (1977), and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (1998) have turned upside down previous anthropological models of both "individuals" being recruited into "society" and of the place of humanity within a "multicultural" framework. Through detailed ethnographic investigation of the contingent nature of what constitutes the "human," a new "perspectival" and "multinaturalist" understanding of the person was established and has become the dominant paradigm for many analyses of lowland South American personhood.

Put simply, perspectivism is the observation that in many indigenous American ontologies different kinds of beings see different worlds in the same way. For example, in an Amazonian context, it is common to hear that peccaries see one another as human and that they see humans as jaguars. Jaguars, on the other hand, see one another as human but see humans as peccaries. Viveiros de Castro has described this phenomenon of Amerindian perspectivism in terms of deixis (1998). In a conventional use of the term, deixis refers to the referential meaning of an utterance being dependent on the spatial, temporal, or personal position from which it is emitted. Yet in the deixis characteristic of perspectivism, it is the world itself that is dependent on the position from which its perception emanates, hence Viveiros de Castro's label of "cosmological deixis." A key point is that in perspectival ontologies not only do all beings appear human to themselves, but they act toward one another as humans would—in other words they all possess human "culture." For example, peccaries see themselves as living in villages, having shamans, and frequently holding

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manioc beer parties (although what constitutes manioc beer for peccaries appears to humans as mud, while what constitutes manioc beer for jaguars appears to humans as human blood). The crucial point is that "Amerindian ontological perspectivism proceeds along the lines that the *point of view creates the subject*; whatever is activated or 'agented' by the point of view will be a subject" (Viveiros de Castro 1998:476, emphasis in original). And it is the occupation of this subject position, rather than any "natural" essence, that defines one as "culturally" human.

While such a model offers a penetrating analytical framework for a wide variety of indigenous social practices—and indeed its influence is evident in many of the chapters in this volume—it nevertheless leaves certain questions unanswered. First, although derived from close ethnographic observation, the theory is formulated at an abstract and generic level. In fact the level of abstraction is so great that "the Amerindian person" frequently seems only tangentially connected to actual indigenous people. A second, related problem is that the creation of a "model of the Amerindian person" tends to homogenize the multiplicity of actually quite different ideas about sociality and personhood across lowland societies. Key questions such as why some societies, such as the Mapuche, the Asháninka, or the Achuar, insist on "living apart" while others, such as the Piro, the Piaroa, or numerous Gê-speaking groups, insist on "living together" remain unanswered or outside the paradigm.[5] Finally, although contemporary anthropological approaches influenced by this perspectival approach recognize indigenous conceptualizations of personhood, not as a fixed, enduring, and bounded essential states, but rather as a contingent processes of becoming through engagement with others, relatively little attention has been paid to the role of discursive interaction in this process. Thus despite the centrality of biographical and autobiographical narratives to the description of perspectival ontologies by anthropologists, sur-

prisingly little attention has been given to such narratives in their own right. For example, Viveiros de Castro (1992) makes extensive use of the encompassment of enemy others through specific forms of autobiographical songs in his account of the Araweté, while Anne-Christine Taylor (1993) also relies on biographical *anent* songs to describe the transformative personhood among the Achuar in Ecuador.

While many anthropologists of lowland South America based in Europe and Brazil have greatly advanced understandings of indigenous conceptualizations of personhood from both within and without this perspectival paradigm, a parallel tradition of U.S.-based linguistic and cultural anthropology advanced greatly our understandings of socially situated discourse as it relates to the enactment of personhood. Participants in the workshop from which this volume has emerged were drawn from both (or in some cases neither) of these approaches, but all agree to some extent on taking these sorts of narrative practices more fully into account in the exploration of personhood. The chapters in this second section speak to some of the issues surrounding the conceptualization of personhood according to this perspectival paradigm. For some authors who have contributed to this volume, a focus on autobiographical narratives is important because they are precisely the medium in which the connection between the abstract "Amerindian person" and actual people becomes visible. Yet these same authors insist that a focus on autobiographical narratives offers more than just an exemplification or instantiation of broader structural features of "Amerindian thought"; it also provides a refining perspective on the model itself. Other authors (especially in parts 3 and 4) represented here maintain that without attention to the discursive practices within which personhood is enacted, it is hard to understand how individual persons draw on several different models of personhood simultaneously or how they invoke a range of "voices" or linguistically constructing social personae through drawing

on the different ways of speaking associated with "different character types, professions, genders, social statuses, kinship roles, moral stances, ideological systems, age groups, ethnicities" (Keane 2001:269).[6]

For those more interested in a lowland "model of personhood," the ethnographic accounts of autobiographical and biographical narratives presented in the volume's second section suggest that this model needs to be complicated by attention to two distinct sets of processes. Borrowing a pair of spatial metaphors from Mikhail Bakhtin, we call the first set "centrifugal" and the second "centripetal." Centrifugal processes involve an engagement with and incorporation of aspects of others, while centripetal processes involve a condensation of those aspects into a singular person. The incorporation of aspects of others has long been recognized as a defining feature of personhood in lowland societies. From symbolic appropriations, such as the emphasis on utilizing the clothing or body ornaments of other groups, to the literal incorporation of others through cannibalism, the idea that the self is premised on the incorporation of others is recognized throughout the region. In the most highly ritualized events, the wide-ranging invocation of ways of speaking associated with exotic or "otherworldly" social personae is also often directly linked to the production of subjective transformations (Chernela 2003; Graham 1995; Londoño-Sulkin 2012; Oakdale 2005; Urban 1989). Such a process is seen in the autobiography of the Marubo shaman Robson Venãpa described by Pedro de Niemeyer Cesarino in this volume. Venãpa's journey as a shaman involves an incorporation of spirit beings into the "longhouse" of his body and the continual engagement of his "double" with these same spirit beings. It is precisely through these relations that both spiritual power is acquired and the self transformed and reconstituted to the extent that Venãpa asserts, "I am another person."

What we call centripetal processes, in contrast, refers to the

way in which singular, encapsulated identities emerge at points in time, from the continual flow of perspectives and invoked social positions how, to use Marilyn Strathern's phrase, the network is cut, and a recognizable entity, a named person, emerges. While this aspect of personal narratives has received perhaps less attention than the centrifugal engagement with others, it nevertheless seems to be present in many of the ethnographic case studies included in this volume. This centripetal process of singularization appears to be at stake in the emphasis, described by Magnus Course, that rural Mapuche place on each individual's unique and singular destiny, an emphasis at first glance at odds with a copresent model of personhood predicated on an outward expansion toward others through exchange. Yet these two aspects are, of course, two sides of the same coin. The centripetally created named persons are premised on the conjunction of a multiplicity of relationships, while this processual plane of relationships only becomes tangible through these fixed "voices." Strathern has made a similar point with regard to kinship, that processes of extending networks of relationships necessarily go hand in hand with processes of limiting them; "one kind of reckoning never operates alone" (1996:530). Likewise, the invocation of "voices" allows for the expansion of the person across a multiplicity of others while simultaneously cutting that network through the anchoring of specific words to a specific person and thereby producing singular persons. Chapters in this second section argue that the copresence of models of the person as multiple, relational, and "dividual" and models of the person as singular, unique, and "individual" are not, contrary to what we might expect, necessarily contradictory or opposed but rather can also be mutually constitutive.

Creating Sociality across Divides

The third section of this volume diverges from the previous two in that authors focus on the "social life" or the effects of

autobiographical and biographical narratives. The two contributions in this section suggest that not only do these narrative practices have the potential to bridge ontological domains and bring disparate "voices" into conjunction, but that their performances can also be a powerful means of structuring interpersonal relationships across large social divides. By focusing on the social life of narratives, the chapters in this section offer insight on some of the ways that interethnic relationships are created through these types of narrative performances. A number of recent archeological, ethnographic, and linguistic works have been concerned with the extent to which lowland peoples are and have been involved in wide-ranging networks beyond regional, ethnic, or language groups. This research has been insightful in illuminating the way a shared lingua franca, the trade in objects, pottery styles, or joint participation in music, ritual, or indigenous movements has linked peoples together across vast expanses (see especially Hill 1996; Hill and Santos-Granero 2002; Hornborg and Hill 2011). In archeology, Alf Hornborg has called for moving away from the "billiard-ball model" of migration according to which reified "peoples" "push each other across the Amazon basin" and toward looking at "communicative processes within a system of exchange relations in the lowlands" (2005:602). Through this sort of archeological work, the lowlands are coming into view as a place marked for centuries by wide-ranging relationships, as a place of partnerships and networks rather than a terrain marked by small villages, separated from one another by vast expanses of jungle, that have only just recently been "contacted" by outsiders. In linguistic anthropology, Christopher Ball, intentionally moving away from depicting the Wauja of the Upper Xingu in Brazil as a bounded whole, focuses instead on the "cultural structures that guide Wauja ideas about relation making" and how they are "picked up and circulated, applied and transformed in ever widening spaces" (2007:5, 8). Ellen Basso's earlier work on Kalapalo warrior biographies

(1995) is seminal for showing that at least in the case of the Kalapalo of the Upper Xingu these sorts of narratives function as exactly one of these structures. They move people in the Upper Xingu to consider the expansion of their moral community and to accept outsiders as consociates.

The chapters by Ellen Basso and Oscar Calavia Sáez each show how biographical and autobiographical narrative practices are, in fact, communicative processes that are employed, sometimes successfully, sometimes not, to structure interethnic relationships (see also High's chapter). Basso's chapter examines Kalapalo biographies as "repositories of speech heard in extraordinary contexts" that are useful for other situations in which strangers are engaged. Focusing on the contrast between verbal and nonverbal channels, she considers how the aesthetics of the performances of these accounts enable the further development of multilingual networks. Yet such attempts to cross ethnic divides do not always meet with success. Thus Sáez's chapter, about an urban Tukanoan leader's attempt to publish his sexually explicit autobiography, is in some sense an account of a thwarted attempt to communicate across boundaries. According to Sáez, Gabriel Gentil drew on both the idea of an anonymous reading public and images of a kind of "public" sexuality found in Tukanoan origin stories to creatively stake his claim to a type of shamanic empowerment while living in Manaus. His autobiography was, however, repeatedly rejected by publishers, effectively thwarting his attempt to communicate it to a larger reading public.

One way that autobiographical and biographical narrative practices work to structure social relations is by translating the experiences of distinct kinds of people for each other, between both people in the present and people from distant times and places. In some of these cases, such as those described by Basso (and also High in this volume), language barriers are clearly a problem to be overcome. In other cases, such as Basso's previous work (1995), these narrative forms oper-

ate on only a portion of those involved, in this case, Kalapalo speakers, encouraging in them a receptivity to the enlargement of their community. Chapters in this section keep open the possibility as well that while these narrative practices have the potential to bring new connections, they also carry the possibility of structuring new kinds of boundaries or of simply falling upon deaf ears, as Sáez describes.

The very act of recording experiences of any kind for a researcher, such as an anthropologist or linguist, as well as performing or publishing them for a national or international audience is also, of course, to be involved in structuring some sort of interethnic relationship in and of itself. All the contributions to this volume are, therefore, in some sense fundamentally part of these processes. Bruna Franchetto's chapter is particularly interesting with respect to considering how narrative performances structure relations between narrators and social science researchers, highlighting the power dynamics inherent in these relationships as well as how interchangeable these roles are at present. These sorts of relations between researchers and "research subjects" are not trivial, for the lowlands are a terrain in which the practice of research, particularly social science research, is a significant framework for structuring indigenous peoples' place in national societies. As Antonio Carlos de Souza Lima has noted about Brazil, anthropology has been bound to processes of nation-building from its outset (2005:199).

Hybridity, Dissonance, and Reflection

In the final section, we move from a focus on how these forms of discourse might work to structure social relations, to consider what these narrative forms express about the experience of entering into interethnic networks, a situation that can mean simultaneously participating in social spheres that require conflicting allegiances or that promote opposed values and models of personhood. These accounts give a sense

for how larger political economic structures such as those connected to the extraction of resources, missionization, regimes of media, or academic production are partially entered into by narrators and how they become meaningfully integrated with (or work in opposition to) other, more local ideas and relationships.

Much as in the previous chapters, narrators here are also remarkable for the way they articulate images, discourses, and ideas from these "outside" institutions, in many cases circulating at a global level, with those that are more locally specific. Also notable are their skill and bravery with respect to these mixtures. The most successful blend resources in a way that is mutually intelligible, even if in different ways, for audience members who are situated across significant social divides.

These last chapters all concern the narratives of men who are or were, at one point, political leaders, individuals who played a significant role in spearheading the first sustained relationship or reshaping existing relations with "the whites" sent out from institutions such as the state or church. These narrators (as well as some authors) describe the dissonant, often jarring manner in which hybrid identities have taken shape over their lifetimes. In some sense, these texts allow a glimpse of the "processes of hybridization" taking place at a subjective level (Canclini 2005:43; see also Santos-Granero 2009 on the "hybrid bodyscape" in Amazonia).[7] These particular leaders appear as skillful interethnic negotiators and transculturites in these chapters, in contrast to the stereotypical media image of isolated, "uncontacted" warriors raising their bows at "the modern world."

The fact that similar hybrid identities are described in many of the narratives throughout this volume suggests that these multiple affiliations are integral to local cultural participation for many and have likely been so for a long time, certainly over the course of the last century and probably well before. This is of course what one would expect from lowland insti-

tutions promoting a "centrifugal model" of personhood and nations working to integrate "remote" or culturally distinct peoples through a variety of social and economic means. The narratives presented here give some account of what it feels like to engage with radically different social personae such as that of "pacification" expedition leader, urban media star, or "Owner of the Whites" as well as what it might feel like to step back and "cut the network" at certain points.

While the pleasure of successful engagement with new people, values, discourses, and ideas is not absent, narrators in this section focus more on the stress and cognitive dissonance caused by the simultaneous involvement in multiple worlds. In each of these three chapters the personal strain caused by entering simultaneously into disparate social institutions or positions in which social fields collide is apparent. In Suzanne Oakdale's chapter, a Kawaiwete leader, Sabino, describes being rushed into a hybrid leadership role, working as an organizer of rubber tappers and a "pacification" team leader, before he had an established family of his own, feeling as though he was forced to grow up too soon without gaining the culturally appropriate knowledge or maturity for such authority. Laura Graham focuses on the account of Xavante leader and activist Hiparidi Top'tiro, who grew up partially in a Xavante village and partially in urban Brazil, a leader torn between his fame as an urban media sensation and the effacement of ego required from Xavante leaders. Bruna Franchetto's chapter is a biographical sketch of a twentieth-century Kuikuro intercultural mediator, an "Owner of the Whites," Nahu. This portrait, woven together from his autobiographical narratives, accounts of other anthropologists, her own field notes, and an account from his grandson, is remarkable for the way it shows her own conflicting emotions with respect to her friendship with Nahu over a thirty-year period, one in which she and he struggled to define the terms of their relationship.

For each of the narrators in this section, the stress and disso-

nance of participating in conflicting social worlds also brings a self-reflexivity about (and at times, a critique of) aspects of "culture," social life, or "tradition"—both their own and that of other peoples. Participation in multiple social worlds allows these leaders to hold several ideas and ways of life at arm's length and critically examine them all. The stress of the dissonance in each is linked ultimately to innovations and creativity as well as sometimes a romantic return to an imagined past, but always to visions of better ways to live. In these chapters, this critical examination seems to come with the passage of time. In Franchetto's contribution this is most poignantly depicted in her own autobiographical narrative portions. The guilt and interest, repulsion and attraction she felt toward Nahu in the earlier years of her research in the Xingu are resolved in the present by Mutua, who is both a student in Franchetto's anthropology department and Nahu's grandson, someone who feels himself to be an embodiment of his grandfather.

Conclusion

To conclude, contributors to this volume argue for the centrality of autobiographical and biographical narrative genres in lowland constructions of history and personhood. They are forms that allow for an appreciation of indigenous understandings of myth and history (and their relationship to each other) and provide both a grounding and a reevaluation of the "perspectivist" model of the person. Furthermore, understanding how the performance of these narratives is tied to social life also provides a purchase on one of the mechanisms that subjects employ to form relationships across social divides, offering a more experiential perspective on such networks. Finally, they suggest that participation in multiple social worlds has been taking place for quite some time in the lowlands and that the resulting hybrid identities do not signal the end of these societies but rather demonstrate the very openness at the core of their existence.

Notes

1. Neil Whitehead defines historicity as "cultural schema and subjective attitudes that make the past meaningful" (Whitehead 2003:xi).

2. We take "lowland" to stem from neither a simply geographical nor a cultural area, but rather from an arbitrary academic division of labor that has traditionally segregated "highlands" from "lowlands" and "Andes" from "Amazonia." The Mapuche have usually been treated by scholars as neither "highland" or "lowland," but given the striking social and cultural continuities with many "lowland" peoples, they have been incorporated here.

3. Michael Brown (1987), in fact, has observed that lowland leaders are often required to demonstrate through an account of their dreams that they are able to cross ontological boundaries. The vast literature on lowland shamanism also offers insights on the degree to which these sorts of leaders engage with a wide variety of others across ontological divides.

4. This is no more than a cursory description of a complex debate. See Fausto and Heckenberger 2007 for a comprehensive overview.

5. See Viveiros de Castro 2001 for an attempt to account for diversity within a perspectival paradigm.

6. "Voice" here refers to types of "role inhabitance in discursive practices" (Silverstein and Urban 1996:8; see also Dinwoodie 1998) or the "linguistic construction of social personae" by virtue of the fact that ways of speaking are associated with these different statuses, roles, stances, groups, and so on (Keane 2001:269). See also Hastings and Manning 2004 on alterity in language as well.

7. Fernando Santos-Granero (2009) looks at the correlation between identity shifts and shifts in dress over the lifetimes of several Yanesha people, including new ways of being Yanesha and the hybridity of dress that results.

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