

INTRODUCTION

Altering Ownership in Amazonia

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What if there were other possible forms of rights between people concerning things ... besides the ones we have built in the last three centuries? What if there is no boolean logic to be expected here, not just a yes or no possibility?
—Carneiro da Cunha, *'Culture' and Culture*

This book revolves around two concepts: ownership and nurture. The objective is twofold. On one hand, it is an attempt to bring these concepts, as they appear in the anthropological literature and as they are expressed in indigenous practices and concepts, into dialogue (and into tension). On the other hand, it is to articulate them, investigating the practical and emotional nexus that exists between ownership and nurture in native Amazonia. Since the end of the 1980s, certain aspects of what is expressed by the idea of nurture have been explored in the regional ethnography in processual studies of kinship, especially with regard to intimate relations within the so-called 'domestic sphere'. A rich literature has grown around notions such as care, feeding and commensality, focusing on the processes through which identity and kinship are constituted (e.g. Gow 1991; McCallum 2001; Vilaça 2002). However, such notions do not reveal the full sociological implications of processes of nurture in Amazonia, which frequently also articulate asymmetrical relations of ownership or mastery.

Until recently indigenous Amazonia appeared refractory to the idea of ownership. This image results as much from the theoretical options available as from empirical phenomena with their own historicity. A substantial part of the ethnographic record of Amazonia coincides with the indigenous peoples' demographic nadir since the beginning of the Conquest. This was reached between the 1940s and the 1960s. Only in the 1970s did the downward trend begin to reverse itself. A large number of the studies written towards the end of the twentieth century strongly reflect this historical moment, during which indigenous Amazonia was characterized by small, mutually isolated populations in the wake of the breakdown of native social networks through the process of colonization

(Fausto and Heckenberger 2007). At the time, this historical situation was seen as corresponding to an original state expressing an essential characteristic of Amazonian societies: their aversion to power, to hierarchy and, of course, to property.¹ It was this conjuncture between a historical situation and an anthropological imaginary that made Amazonia seem a *terra nullius* for the concepts of ownership and mastery.

Towards the end of the 1980s, this imaginary began to change. The first impulses came from the ‘historical turn’ in anthropology (Ortner 1984) and from the criticisms of ‘ethnographic projection’ in archaeology (Roosevelt 1989). The past came knocking on the door once again, and the comfortable illusion that we were studying something like an essence of indigenous sociality was progressively abandoned.² To a large extent, the historicist wave that heated up anthropological temporality was the product of a global sociohistorical warming that was also felt in the indigenous realities of the time. For those who began their research in Amazonia in the 1980s (as one of us did), the comparison with the present is surprising. Not only have indigenous populations grown since then, but they have extended their networks of interconnection at broadband-like speed (literally, given that the Internet has reached some Amazonian villages in the twenty-first century). A new rhythm of transformation has been imposed upon, and at the same time actively sought by, native Amazonians, giving rise to what some Amerindians call the ‘time of projects’, which has succeeded the ‘time of slavery’, the ‘time of rubber’ and the ‘time of FUNAI’.³ In this new time, ‘project’ and ‘culture’ have become keywords.

The ‘time of projects’ is linked to the virtualization of value and knowledge in postindustrial capitalism – that is, to the growing predominance of intangible goods over manufactured items – and to its correlative tendency, the ‘becoming-property’ of the immaterial. In the wake of this process, the Western notion of ownership came to have growing practical impact in the villages, especially in the guise of ‘intangible heritage’ or ‘cultural property’.⁴ Many projects of NGOs and anthropologists today revolve around these concepts, which are the object of negotiation, tension and invention, as we shall see in some chapters of this book (Coelho de Souza, Fausto). More broadly, property became a theme of the most acute importance for indigenous peoples in general. Whether it be a matter of *de jure* ownership or *de facto* possession of objects tangible (e.g. land) or intangible (e.g. knowledge), indigenous peoples are almost by definition engaged in a struggle for ownership and control of resources. Many claims to indigenous identity themselves are claims to prior habitation and, by implication, prior possession of territory in relation to colonizing peoples and states. Moreover, claims to property are in this context also often highly emotive claims to identity (Harrison 1999; Rowlands

2004), perhaps because of Western legal frameworks' 'tendency to flatten difference in the interests of procedural uniformity' (Brown 2004: 60).⁵

In this book, we aim not only to understand these contemporary negotiations around the notion of heritage and property, but also to analyse the indigenous concepts and practices that pre-date (and predate upon) them and form the basis from which new translational and creative processes are established. If the notion of ownership gained visibility in Amazonia largely through this new interethnic dynamic, our hypothesis is that it was always fundamental in the constitution of these societies, and that it is bound up with processes of nurture (Brightman 2010; Fausto 2008, 2012a). Ethnographic accounts of Amazonia have often bypassed or ignored the question of property or ownership, appearing to confirm early anthropologists' and early modern political theorists' assumptions that property was absent in 'primitive' societies. But what do we make of native social systems in which a different relation of ownership is pervasive and plays a structuring role?

Ownership in Perspective

Western regimes of ownership have specific and well-documented histories. What Maine presents as a universal progression from 'status' to 'contract' stands as a rough guide to the Western history of property relations. His critical narrative begins with the Roman legal theory of 'natural modes of acquisition', focusing on one of these, *Occupatio* (occupancy), which he defines as 'the advisedly taking possession of that which at the moment is the property of no man, with the view ... of acquiring property in it for yourself' (1912 [1861]: 259). He further notes that this informs the theory of the Origin of Property, which is at once a popular theory and the one most accepted by jurists. According to such ideas, occupancy would be 'the process by which the "no man's goods" of the primitive world became the private property of individuals in the world of history' (264), a definition that illustrates well the assumption on which the colonial (and postcolonial) acquisition of indigenous land was based. However, as Maine argues, occupancy is grounded on two assumptions: first, that it must have been a 'growth of a refined jurisprudence and of a settled condition of the laws', because it is based on an established assumption that 'all things are presumed to be somebody's property' (269); and second, that the actors involved are individuals. In fact, he asserts, 'there is a strong *à priori* [*sic*] improbability of our obtaining any clue to the early history of property, if we confine our notice to the proprietary rights of individuals' (271).

The presence of the individual as the basic unit of property relations becomes more thoroughly embedded with the rise of capitalism, and much writing about ownership, both legal and sociological, continues to take this for granted. To facilitate our comparative aim, let us take the image of property in capitalism suggested by MacPherson, who coined one of the most influential expressions to refer to this regime: ‘possessive individualism’. MacPherson (1962: 3) argues that the central difficulty of modern liberal-democratic theory is its ‘possessive quality’, which ‘is found in its conception of the individual as essentially the proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to society for them’.⁶

In liberal states, something approaching this view of the individual is at the heart of common-sense and modern legal assumptions about the nature of ownership, with reference to both material and immaterial objects. It underlies the concepts of authorship and creativity expressed in intellectual property law (Cesarino this volume), and through the Lockean process of ‘mixing’ part of oneself with the land through labour, it underpins property law – particularly in those regimes in which land is appropriated through enclosure and cultivation (Viegas this volume). When Locke, in his second Treatise (1988 [1689]), laid out his definition of the ownership and individuation of property, he was giving lucid expression to a practice that existed in both the wave of land enclosures taking place in England at the time, and the creation of colonial plantations.⁷ Indeed, the conquest of the Americas played a significant role in the emergence of modern European modes of thought on the subject of ownership and appropriation. Tully (1993: 166) argues that ‘Locke’s concepts of political society and property are, among other things, a sophisticated theoretical expression of the basic arguments of early colonial writers.’ Sixteenth-century intellectuals tried hard to fit the native American peoples into their existing cosmological categories. This story is less simple than usually depicted. Sometimes Amerindians were characterized as nonhumans or ‘natural’ slaves (both of which were unfit to own property; see Pagden 1982), but at other times they were granted fully human status (though not the same rights).⁸

When Locke (1988: II, 5, §49) wrote that ‘in the beginning all the world was *America*’, Amerindian humanity was not at stake any more, but the relation to property was. Amerindians were taken as living in the state of nature, before the individuation of property through labour. God gave the world to men in common, but, says Locke, ‘it cannot be supposed that He meant it should always remain common and uncultivated. He gave it to the use of the *Industrious* and *Rational* (and *Labour* was to be his *Title* to it) ...’ (II, 5, §34). If Amerindians do not labour on individual parcels, they own nothing – the land remains vacant and can rightfully be appropriated. The denial of different forms of ownership over land was

necessary to impose the idea of property as private and exclusive. This idea would have a long-term consequence for indigenous people and is still today a matter of intense conflict in Latin America.⁹

Among all types of property, immovable, 'real' property is what has been paradigmatic in Western thought, the transformation and enclosure of land being foundational events for Locke's and Rousseau's accounts of inequality and the State. Territorial rights are fiercely contested in the Amazon and elsewhere. Such disputes are fought on the terms of mainstream notions of ownership of land. Indeed, the very notion of land ownership and the need for it are held to arise only through the consequences of a market economy. From the point of view of monetized, market society, land that falls under a different regime of ownership is not owned at all, but wasted. The kinds of disputes that affect indigenous peoples in Amazonia hinge on the encounter between, on one hand, the imperatives of market society (whether they take the form of small-scale peasant, agro-industrial frontier, logging or mining interests), and on the other hand, something else more heterogeneous and less easy to define: a way of inhabiting a place that cannot be simply defined as an extension of land, for it is constituted by multiple relations of ownership between humans and nonhumans.

What Hann (1998: 1) calls the 'dominant liberal paradigm', which emphasizes 'free individuals, competitive markets, pluralistic civil societies and the "rule of law"', has been actively promoted through international diplomacy and development aid, and exported from the United States and Europe with something approaching missionary zeal (Rist 2008). In many disciplines discussions of property are limited in application to 'mature Western societies and in particular to the United States', and emphasize 'control, privacy and individuality ... pos[ing] hazards for cross-cultural application' (Munzer 1990: 8). But private property and liberal ideology remain less widely accepted than it would appear from the debates between their proponents and detractors (Hann 1998: 2). The discipline of legal pluralism, for instance, has produced an important body of work on the differences and relationships between property regimes in established national legal systems. Beyond this, it has brought recognition that property rights are dynamic rather than stable, and that they cannot always be neatly separated into categories such as public and private, collective and individual (Geisler and Daneker 2000).¹⁰

Recent approaches to property have explored systemic interdependencies through empirical studies that show the role of kinship, document and examine concrete examples of legal pluralism, and problematize the State as the holder of privileged rights in all property.¹¹ Building on this work, von Benda Beckmann, von Benda Beckmann and Wiber (2006: 14) provide the following definition of property: 'Property in the most general

sense concerns the ways in which the relations between society's members with respect to valuables are given form and significance'.¹² In these terms, property should be understood as a 'general analytical category', like 'economy, marriage, religion, household and law' (32, fn. 14). These authors regard it as having three main elements: social units that can hold property rights and obligations (individuals, groups, lineages, corporations, states); the construction of valuables as property objects; and sets of rights and obligations that social units can have with respect to such objects (15). Thus property serves as a cover term for different arrangements in diverse social and historical settings. They argue that property's nature differs at distinct 'layers of social organisation': the 'legal/institutional', the 'concrete' (social relationships), and the 'ideological', and that these layers must be kept analytically separate. While we agree that their methodology improves on the dominant view of property-by-numbers and believe it can provide a comparative framework, the ethnographic material presented in this volume exposes its limitations, for it shows that 'layers of social organisation' cannot always be separated out and undermines any claims of the universal validity of categories such as property, economy or law. In lowland South America, as in Melanesia for example (Leach 2011), it may be preferable to distinguish between 'ownership' as a general area of inquiry implying the investigation of conceptions of (and) rights in things, persons and so forth, and 'private property' as a specific mode of ownership with implications of possessive individualism and a particular construction of the subject/object distinction.¹³

If the heyday of globalization theory saw some anthropologists get caught up in the seductive imagery of capital flows arising from the consequences of neoliberal deregulation, other strands of anthropology offered a way of attaining the conceptual friction needed to understand concrete changes. Strathern's (1996) work on property did precisely this: she advocated trying to understand social networks through the ways in which they were 'cut' by property relations, which give them form and definition. Ownership emerges from the anthropological analysis as above all a relational phenomenon. On one level property rights are relations between persons with regard to things (or other persons), but on another level they are produced and transformed by relationships between indigenous groups and the State, and between property regimes, even as they play an important role in articulating intercultural relations themselves. As Hirsch and Strathern (2004: 7) put it, at this juncture 'for the social scientist, property has become a dangerously interesting term to use'.

It has likewise become 'dangerously interesting' for Amerindians in the wake of new uses (and abuses) introduced by intellectual property rights and cultural heritage policies. In relation to states and nonindigenous society, 'indigenous culture' itself has been transformed into a form of

property as ‘heritage’ (Brown 1998), leading to its commodification and to states picking and choosing aspects of ‘heritage’ they consider worth protecting (Engle 2010: 141ff.).¹⁴ Carneiro da Cunha’s (2009) essay on culture and ‘culture’ illustrates some of the perils of such a relational strategy. As she notes, the Convention for Biological Diversity in 1992 marked a decisive moment in the history of the emergence of indigenous claims to ownership over traditional knowledge. Although it referred to ‘holders’ rather than ‘proprietors’ of traditional knowledge, ‘transactions over traditional knowledge, whether they involve informed consent for research or contracts for benefit sharing, actually produce a relation approaching ownership’ (Carneiro da Cunha 2009: 9). The terms of subsequent debates and political and legal struggles remained set by Euro-American conceptual frameworks and ‘metropolitan ideas’, which greatly influenced the notion of indigenous rights; thus, ‘[s]imply put, indigenous knowledge is conceptualized as the negative of mainstream prevailing ideas. As such, indigenous people seem inextricably destined to impersonate the obverse of capitalism’s possessive individualistic assumptions’ (27). Reasoning as if ‘the obverse of the individual were everywhere the collective’, the mainstream conceptualization of indigenous knowledge offers indigenous peoples ‘one of two choices: collective intellectual property rights or a commons regime’, leading indigenous peoples to argue pragmatically for the former (28).

Within the movement to protect traditional knowledge, which emerged from the 1980s, some tried to address the fact that indigenous peoples had different concepts of property. This led to the term ‘property’ being dropped, although issues of ownership and control were still being discussed in practical terms. In the early 1990s, for example, the Global Coalition for Bio-Cultural Diversity created a Working Group on Intellectual Property Rights, but its name soon changed to the Working Group on Traditional, Cultural and Scientific Resource Rights. As Posey and Dutfield (1996: 3) explain, ‘[t]he term “property” in IPR was dropped, because property for indigenous peoples frequently has intangible, spiritual manifestations, and, although worthy of protection, is *inalienable* or can belong to no human being. Instead, the term “traditional resource rights” (TRR) was adopted to reflect the necessity of rethinking the limited and limiting concept of IPR’ (original emphasis).

Read in the light of the material presented in this book, this passage illustrates how even the most sensitive and best informed attempts to reconcile indigenous culture with the categories of international law suffer from the inescapable rigidity of these categories and their assumptions about temporality: namely, that institutions and relationships do not – or should not – change over time; or else that they should retain a particular status for a fixed period at the end of which they abruptly expire, rather

than transforming dynamically.¹⁵ It may be true that some forms of indigenous Amazonian property are indeed alienable, but this is sometimes negotiable in terms that are opaque or invisible to Euro-American observers because what is owned is not so much things themselves as relations. In other words, intangible property relations are less relations between people with regard to things than they are rights over relationships (Coelho da Souza, Cesarino, this volume).

Property in Amazonia

Before the rise of ‘modern’ ethnology in Amazonia, the *Handbook of South American Indians* included in its comparative volume a chapter on ‘Property among Tropical Forest and Marginal Tribes’, by Robert Lowie (1949: 351), organized ‘under the familiar categories of Real Estate, Chattels, Incorporeal Property, and Inheritance’. Despite using only data from the first half of the century, it shows surprising analytical sophistication. Of particular relevance is Lowie’s discussion of the third category, in which he analyses ownership relations in regard to songs, spells, names and ritual prerogatives.¹⁶

It is possible to argue that the subsequent neglect of indigenous forms of ownership in Amazonian ethnology derives, at least in part, from the low tangibility of property in the region, which led it to pass almost unnoticed until the recent dawn of global concern with intellectual and cultural property (Hann 1998: 5). This would not have been the case, however, if we had paid attention to Lowie’s much earlier article, ‘Incorporeal Property in Primitive Societies’, originally published in the *Yale Law Journal* in 1928, in which he starts by challenging Morgan’s statement that property rights were weakly developed in primitive societies, contesting the ‘dogma of general primitive communism’ by affirming the ‘wide prevalence of individually owned forms of incorporeal property’ (1960: 228). Lowie then focuses on examples of ceremonial prerogatives among North American indigenous peoples, showing how different this form of ownership is from what he calls ‘absolute ownership’. Discussing the case of the Blackfoot sacred bundles (evocative, of course, of Maine’s ‘bundles of rights’), he observes:

Only by this quasi-apostolic succession can the rapport with the supernatural world be maintained; hence an invasion of copyright would not help insure the blessings – longevity, health, and happiness – linked with authorized ownership. On the other hand, the genuine proprietor cannot lose the benefits connected with a bundle: ‘the bundle may be lost or destroyed without seriously damaging the owner, since he owns the ritual which is immaterial. (1960: 231–32)

The transference of the ‘sacred bundles’ implies a double relationship (between two persons and with a supernatural source), which authorizes ownership but does not make it absolute. In the same vein, Lowie states that ‘Dr. Malinowski demonstrates conclusively that the *tolí-waga* or ‘canoe-owner’, to use the nearest English equivalent, is not an absolute owner’ (236), since his maternal kinsmen have a strong claim on the object. The owner cannot cut his canoe from his kinship network in order to own it as her exclusive private property. Contrary to Locke’s proprietary model, the individual here does not even exclusively own her or his (own) body.

Lowie lays the groundwork for discussion on both ‘incorporeal’ and ‘corporeal’ property in Amazonia, which often cannot be clearly differentiated within a given ethnographic context. In very contemporary language, he writes in an article in the *Handbook* that ‘[t]he stock in trade of a medicine man can be classed under the head of chattels when viewed as tangible objects or as incorporeal property insofar as a vision or other supernatural sanction copyrights their use’ (1949: 360). There are thus different ‘things’ owned, but not necessarily different regimes of ownership according to each category. Fausto’s (2008, 2012a) general model of ownership relations in Amazonia is meant to apply to societies both ‘object-poor’, like the Parakanã (2001, 2012b), and ‘object-rich’, like the Wauja of the Upper Xingu (Barcelos Neto 2008).¹⁷

At this level of our investigations, then, we are not concerned with identifying or classifying different regimes of ownership (or ‘property’) in Amazonia. We agree with Hugh-Jones’s critique (2013) of the overgeneralization of a single social formation for the whole region. He is certainly correct in affirming that the characterization of Amazonia as devoid of objects mediating social relationships does not apply across space or through time. Indeed, there are areas, such as the Upper Xingu and North-West Amazonia, in which the ‘principle of substitution’ (Godelier 1982; Lemonnier 1990) between persons and things operates on many levels. In these areas, objects have transcontextual value, serving for the acquisition of other artefacts or services, and for compensation for marriage and offences, thus multiplying the modes of generating and maintaining social ties. Although these cases may seem different from the current standard model of Amazonian societies, we believe that at this point they must be treated together, so this book dedicates three chapters to them (Coelho de Souza, Fausto, Gordon).

The absence of property as a subject of Amazonian ethnology also derives from a number of theoretical choices and the feeble influence of Marxism in the region’s anthropology. A good illustration of this is the attack that Pierre Clastres launched on Maurice Godelier, in which he ar-

gued that it was absurd to analyse societies such as those of Amazonia or Melanesia through a framework deriving from the study of the history of Western industrial capitalism. In so doing he correctly criticized the Marxist assumption of a universal history, but he implicitly denied the possibility that some sort of ownership might play a key role in non-Western societies (and histories) (Clastres 1977). Clastres' main *combat* was political, aiming at the pervasive idea that 'the State is the destiny of every society' (1977: 159). He inverted the terms of evolutionary theories of State formation so that 'primitive society' could *not* be said to lack a centralized power, but to positively conjure it in order to avoid the division of society into rulers and ruled. Clastres was right to criticize the depiction of 'primitive society' in negative terms. However, his 'against-ology' was too centred upon the State and left little space for conceptualizing the kind of power relations that pervaded these societies. Property was perforce absent from Clastres' picture – rightly so, were we to limit it to a model of exclusive property rights (or 'absolute ownership', to use Lowie's expression). But once we set out to investigate alternative regimes of ownership, different ways of establishing relations between persons and things surface.¹⁸

Whatever the reasons for the exclusion of ownership from the majority of works relating to Amazonia, the resurgence of anthropological interest in property through the late 1990s and early 2000s spurred certain Amazonia specialists to explore the regional case more thoroughly. Fausto's interest in ownership emerged out of his study of predation as a moment in a movement of appropriation and familiarization (1999, 2007), and as is likewise true for Costa (2007) and Cesarino (this volume), out of the empirical observation of the importance of indigenous concepts of ownership as they express themselves in proliferating fractal relationships of mastery. Like these authors, Brightman (2010) approached property in Amazonia by letting go of the concept's theoretical baggage and exploring an ethnographically grounded theory of property in the manner of Rivière's (1993) seminal exhortation to 'Amerindianise' kinship concepts. He thus proposed that property is a structuring feature of these societies, but in a very different way from what we have come to expect from Euro-American practices, ideologies and norms (Brightman 2010). This difference lies partly in the relationship to time. That property relations must be constantly renewed and reiterated is arguably a feature of all property systems, but in Amazonia it is more explicitly articulated. Property itself appears as a process (Viegas this volume), that is, a way of establishing relations between persons by provisionally cutting relations between people and things. Moreover, here we cannot rely on the clear distinctions between persons and things (or places) that we might look for if we adopted one of the 'big 4' templates for theorizing property.¹⁹

In Amazonia, the transformation of space to make gardens, for example, involves cutting a network of living beings and extending networks of domesticated plants; thus, the ownership of nonhuman persons is part of the process of place-making. Creativity begets ownership, and the making of artefacts may create new persons (cf. Van Velthem 2003) who may be in turn become owners themselves. Such processes of creative appropriation are, as we shall see, very close to familiarizing processes of nurture.

The characteristic Amazonian feature of ownership as a process should be set against a longer standing theoretical interest in the ethnography of the region, in the subject of wealth and value. As the ecological evidence started to weigh against the ecofunctionalist assumption that material scarcity, particularly of high-quality protein, was the key driver of social processes, Rivière (1984), taking a political economy approach, argued that the significant scarce resource was people, implying that human beings themselves were the most highly valued economic good. He had in mind the control over people exercised through bride service but does not appear to have suspected how important more general modes of dependency are throughout the area, or what implications these have for local conceptions of ownership and mastery.

Meanwhile, various specialists in the more structurally differentiated societies of Central Brazil, the Xingu and North-West Amazonia called attention to the role of ceremonial valuables (especially body ornaments, aerophones and names) as property or prerogatives of collective and individual persons (Barcelos Neto 2008; Hugh-Jones 2009: 54; Lea 2012; Turner 2009: 156ff.). This renewed interest in artefacts did not remain restricted to the 'object-rich' societies of Amazonia, however. A growing concern with materiality opened a fresh venue of inquiry for an old anthropological question: the relation between persons and things. In Amazonia, the debates on animism and perspectivism offered an initial framework within which artefacts were reconsidered in a general way (Viveiros de Castro 2004; Santos-Granero 2009); that is, beyond the classic fields of material culture and indigenous art studies. The main issue at stake was the conceptualization of artefacts in a world in which the subject-object distinction is by definition fuzzy (and even inapplicable). What is the place of artefacts in a universe where personhood extends far beyond the human? Questions about the agency, life and subjectivity of artefacts are at the forefront of this growing literature (Fausto 2011; Fausto and Severi 2014; Lagrou 2011; Lagrou and Severi 2014).

In this book, what interests us most is the ownership of artefacts whose 'thingness' is always open to questioning. Their object-condition is an ambiguous one, since artefacts can prove to have, to use Santos-Granero's apt expression, an occult life. This fact reinforces the close link between the ownership of objects (especially ceremonial ones) and the mastery that

shamans exert over their auxiliary spirits, warriors over their captives, killers over the victim's spirit, and so on. These relations of adoptive filiation between a master and a wild pet – wild because never completely tamed (Fausto 1999: 949) – appears to be highly pertinent in regard to artefacts. A closer look at the role of objects in native Amazonian societies reveals that appropriating and nurturing acts of 'domestication' are often necessary to maintain their status – even in the case of utilitarian objects such as carrying baskets. To give one example, among the Maimandê, a carrying basket abandoned in the forest can 'become a jaguar and return to attack its owner'. Such objects 'must be constantly "domesticated" lest they turn into animals' (Miller 2009: 67). As Erikson (2009: 188) suggests, in Amazonia "things", rather than being conceived as *independent subjects*, seem to be considered as semi-autonomous *subordinates*. In other words, "things" seem to be less perceived as full subjects than as fully subjected. Apart from leading an "occult life" of their own, they are also submitted to an "overt life" of dependency as "obedient things" in much the same way as children, captives, clients and pets are.

Yet this intimate relation between people and artefacts does not imply that most 'movable property' in Amazonia is inalienable. The regimes of circulation vary widely depending on the object, its use and the people involved. Shamanic objects are rarely transmitted but can circulate between master and novice in the process of apprenticeship; ceremonial artefacts may be attached to individual persons or social segments and be the object of exclusive display; the use and production of body ornaments may be generalized or restricted to some individuals or entire groups. Within this range of variation, there seems to be a distinction between regimes of ownership in which tangible and intangible wealth is the object of collective segmentary appropriation, organizing a regime of circulation and transmission, and another kind of regime in which appropriation is open to all but is individually attained, and ownership is seldom transmissible.²⁰ The literature on trade complexifies this distinction and demonstrates that in many parts of Amazonia, objects circulated widely within more or less extensive networks articulated through individual trading partnerships or 'formal friendships' that transcended consanguineal and affinal categories (Brightman 2007; Santos-Granero 2007). In addition to these traditional interethnic forms of trade, trade with Europeans took place from the very start of the colonial period (Grotti 2013), including also the exchange of people for things (Karadimas 2001; Santos-Granero this volume).

Objects acquired through trade have more than a utilitarian value: displayed in domestic spaces, they represent narratives of 'their owner's past exploits and travels to distant spheres of alterity' (Grotti 2011; 2013: 17), thus becoming a focus of prestige and the magnification of personhood

(Hugh-Jones 2013). This display of wealth approaches paroxysm in the more recent inflationary acquisitiveness, as in the case of the Xikrin, analysed by Gordon (2006). This urge to acquire, however, should not be mistaken for the emergence of a form of possessive individualism in Amazonia; rather, it is an expression of a powerful cultural desire to engage with alterity, the *sine qua non* of Amerindian social reproduction, which is in several cases manifested in ritual celebrations of excess (Grotti 2007, forthcoming; Nahum-Claudel 2012).

In sum, the various forms of attachment of things to people in Amazonia have still to be ethnographically accounted for. As the following chapters show, these distinct cases are pervaded by a common language of ownership that defines a general mode of relation between not only persons and things, but also persons and parts of persons.

Nurture and Relations of Dependence

This book also explores how notions of ownership articulate with kinship, particularly with two relational modes that are normally deemed to characterize consanguine relations: commensality and feeding – or, more broadly, nurture. This move became possible thanks to new approaches in kinship studies that stem from a critique advanced in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Needham 1971; Schneider 1968). This critique represented a turning point in anthropology, largely anticipating the destabilization of the nature/culture dichotomy that marked subsequent decades. Having initially impacted on gender studies, this destabilization spread until it reached the ontological foundations of naturalism, putting into question the opposition between the given and the made. Concurrent with the appearance of Marilyn Strathern's (1980) 'No Nature, No Culture: The Hagen Case', there began in Amazonian studies a period whose slogan could be 'No nature, all nurture: the Amazonian case'. The 'alimentary forms of social life', to paraphrase Viveiros de Castro (1992), came to be seen as the fundamental operators of Amerindian sociality. Based neither on an idiom of substance nor on the membership of stable social groups, the ties of kinship were produced ('constructed', 'fabricated') by means of alimentary relations (e.g. Gow 1991; Vilaça 1992; McCallum 2001). Beyond this, relations of dependence were held to be created through practices and discourses of care and teaching; here, there is a form of metaphysical nurture that transforms and appropriates the other via the performance of knowledge transmission (Grotti 2007).

The phrase 'alimentary relations' must here be understood broadly, for it includes not only feeding or sharing *with* someone, but also eating or being eaten *by* someone (Fausto 2007). In other words, it includes both

the idiom of cannibalism and that of commensality. These idioms marked the difference between two schools of Amazonian studies in the 1980s and 1990s, whose leading figures were Viveiros de Castro (1993) and Joanna Overing (1989). Both schools focused on ‘eating’, although in different ways: the approach privileging the idiom of predation looks at the Amerindian social world from the outside in, taking relations independently of any ethico-moral content (Taylor 1985; Vilaça 2000; Viveiros de Castro 1993), whereas the approach privileging the idiom of sharing took as its object everyday relations founded on an ethic of care, which constituted an ideal of peaceful sociability (Overing 1989, 2003; Overing and Passes 2000).²¹

If both lines of study took ‘eating’ as the fundamental idiom of social relations, it was because this is indeed an Amazonian fact, and only secondarily an anthropological artefact. Despite the epistemological hypochondria that we inherited from postmodernism, the truth is that acts of ethnographic fabrication frequently allow themselves to be contaminated by native acts of creativity. Yet the boundary between these lines of study proved more porous in the subsequent decades as new ethnographic studies explored aspects of the alimentary relations of social life, experimenting with both structurally and phenomenologically oriented approaches (Gow 2001; Lima 2005).

In this book, we take a fresh look at the subject of appropriation, not only by articulating the idiom of nurture and ownership, but also by revisiting both through more recent ethnography. Although Amazonianist literature has concentrated on ‘eating with’ as a mechanism for the production of identity, some authors (especially McCallum 2001), have devoted attention to acts of ‘giving food’, especially in relations between mothers and daughters. In some cases, the act of giving food may imply asymmetrical relations between non-kin or between ‘becoming-kin’: Vilaça (2002) observed that Wari’ parental feeding is an act of ‘making kin out of others’, in such a way that feeding a baby is also a case of ‘nurturing the Other’ (Grotti 2007, 2010). More recently, Fausto and Costa (2013) proposed an articulation between feeding and ownership, maintaining that if this alimentary form is a hallmark of parent-child relations constituting consanguine kinship, then it is also a key operator in the constitution of relations of meta-consanguinity, that is, relations of adoptive filiation characteristic of relations of mastery and idioms of dependence in Amazonia. Luiz Costa comes back to this argument in his chapter here, offering a detailed description of pet-keeping among the Kanamari, showing how nurturance – the provision of love and care, especially in the form of food – is the central mechanism for producing mastery relations. While the ‘other’ in Costa’s text is an animal captured young and transformed into a pet, it is not unusual for Amazonian pets to be addressed as ‘my son’

or 'my daughter', or for child-rearing to be described as a process of 'undoing' animality (Grotti 2007; Gow 1997). Costa thus brings his understanding into line with Grotti's broader concept of nurture as a process of control and appropriation through a heterogeneous set of caring actions.

These approaches may help us come closer to understanding the viewpoint of the 'victim' or 'subjected subject', who may actively seek relations of dependence. How should we conceptualize this agency of the patient? This question is the focus of Bonilla's chapter. She describes an 'alimentary form' hitherto little explored in the study of mastery: parasitism. Rival (1998) was probably the first to put 'the prey at the center' in her study of the Huaorani. She suggested that the position of prey was not entirely negative and could be actively sought in some historical circumstances. Bonilla developed this argument in a series of texts on the Paumari, an Arawá-speaking people of the Western Amazonia region (Bonilla 2005, 2007), where evidence of the cosmopolitical centrality of dependent relations abounds (e.g. Walker (2012, 2013)).²² This phenomenon appears to be historically related to debt peonage, and thus particularly associated with Western Amazonia; yet it is consistent with the broader pattern in which ownership and dynamic asymmetry are at the heart of Amerindian social relations.

Despite the overall predominance of predation as a relational structure mediating Self and Other in Amazonia, new ethnographic data indicates that in certain societies of the region (especially the Juruá-Purus river system), parasitism can also serve as a model for social relations both among humans and between humans and nonhumans.²³ In her chapter, Bonilla argues that the Paumari of the middle Purus construct their relationship with their nonindigenous bosses from the perspective of the parasite, thus inverting the sense of capture and mastery: in accepting the condition of prey they seek to convert themselves into parasites, making their bosses into unwitting providers. For Bonilla, this is not merely a case of the general instability of relations between master and pet, but rather an outcome of a specific positive perspective of the subjected subject.

Bonilla connects this idea to the fact that, from a parasitical point of view, the directional ideal is not to live among one's own, as the safe conviviality of kinship would not ensure well-being: a parasite among parasites would die of starvation. This critique is directed towards authors such as Overing and Passes (2000) and Belaunde (2001), who unambiguously associate the Amerindian horizon of well-being with domestic sociality, kinship and identity, that is, the pleasures of the daily round.

Gordon's discussion of well-being among the Xikrin-Kayapó resonates with Bonilla's critique and carries it forward. As he shows in his contribution, the very definition of well-being among this Ge-speaking people necessarily implies continuous production of a certain 'coefficient of

differentiation', without which society would fall into a state of indifferenciation, a sort of generalized incest. It is not without reason that Ge people expend so much energy on the production of superimposed differences in the form of moieties, age classes, hierarchies of 'beauty' and so on. This is above all about producing an interior Other, an external interiority, whereas in the Paumari case well-being depends on an exterior Other, an exteriority to be internalized in the form of a parasitic relation. Difference, rather than sameness, is at the heart of Xikrin and Paumari notions of well-being. The weight of evidence in this book, as elsewhere, tells us that even the least formally structured societies of the region, such as those of the Guianas and of Western Amazonia, share – though in different proportions and modalities – the idea that a world of sameness is sterile, and that life cannot thrive without the risky desire for difference, a proposition originally articulated by Overing Kaplan (1981; also Overing 1983–84), that would be developed in different directions in the following decades.

Initially the divergence took the form of an opposition between theoretical styles and analytic emphasis on either internal peaceful sociability or external predatory relations, which corresponded to different conceptions of what constitutes the ontological foundations of Amerindian socialities: identity or alterity. However, both approaches tended to agree on one aspect: the privileging of symmetrical relations, with a correspondingly low thematization of power and dependence. This book explores Amerindian asymmetrical relations, in particular those constituted through a practice of care and protection. As Grotti (2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2012, forthcoming) has pointed out, the ethics of care are by no means confined to the domestic or the everyday; nor are they necessarily instruments of egalitarianism – on the contrary, care is closely connected to control and is the means by which relations of dependence are created.

Some studies of pets and adoption of enemies have also drawn attention to the fundamental point that to nurture and domesticate others is also to assert a form of ownership over them. Pets and children, like captured enemies, are dependents that need looking after. The asymmetrical nature of, for example, parent-child and captor-captive relations of dependence is sometimes more clearly apparent in contexts of contact and change, when cross-cultural encounters reveal the creative use of words or projects that can be relevant to all parties involved. Anthropological studies from the past twenty years document an eagerness to extend 'civilization', education, and above all Evangelical Christianity to neighbouring groups (Howard 2001). It is time to address the role of recent historical changes in articulating commensality and nurture as expressions of egalitarianism and brotherhood in Amazonia (Vilaça 1997; Xavier 2013) to the same extent that ethnohistory has effectively addressed the impact of European

conquest and slavery on the instigation of indigenous practices of warfare and capture (Ferguson and Whitehead 1992). We do not want to imply that the centrality of care and nurture results directly from exposure to Christianity, or that Amazonian warfare is a product of the Conquest, as Brian Ferguson (1995) has argued; instead we contend that there is an 'equivocal compatibility' (Pina-Cabral 2001) between indigenous and nonindigenous understandings of these alimentary forms that generates a number of working misunderstandings deserving closer attention. For instance, as Grotti (forthcoming) argues, the expansion of intertribal and interethnic relations of Christian brotherhood may represent a creative form of strategic regional expansion reminiscent of sixteenth-century Amerindian capturing societies.

The literature on the indigenous slave trade in South America previously focused upon European slaving and its moral justification based on the distinction between '*caribes*', cannibal/Carib Indians that were captured for the Europeans by the *guatianos* or *aruacas* (Whitehead 2011: 14). Amerindians were thus portrayed mostly as victims of slavery, which was assumed to be an originally European phenomenon (Overing Kaplan 1975: 20). Santos-Granero's (2009) history of native forms of captive slavery, which he summarizes and develops in his contribution to this volume, assembled evidence that the appropriation of human Others was in fact a widespread practice in Amazonia for centuries and had an influential cosmopolitical role, one that is compatible with our understanding of indigenous forms of social and ritual production.

Brightman (2007) and Grotti (2007) have both documented the recent history of the capture and incorporation of a group of Akuriyo hunter-gatherers by Trio horticulturalists, and the continued subjection of the former by the latter. As these authors show in this volume, although the events took place at the instigation of Protestant missionaries, indigenous categories shared by both Trio and Akuriyo provided the cultural conditions for the appropriation of human persons. Indeed, ideals of human equality, together with individualism, were part of the cultural package that the missionaries sought – and in this respect failed – to transmit to the Amerindians.²⁴

By situating these different cases historically, we can better understand the ways in which the incorporation of human persons within an asymmetric relational scheme can oscillate between forms of visible inequality and weaker expressions, such as bride service. Full-fledged egalitarianism seems to be restricted mainly to very mobile, small groups, but even in these cases the cultural categories for relations of dependence tend to be present. Like the Akuriyo, the Western Parakanã studied by Fausto (2001) are quite egalitarian, despite highly operative relations of mastery. Here it is important to distinguish between asymmetry and inequality. The con-

flation of these two ideas has resulted in a widespread failure to recognize asymmetric relations that do not express themselves in terms of social inequality. Thus, though the Western Parakanã are a striking example of an egalitarian society, Fausto developed his ideas on mastery and familiarizing predation from data on shamanism and warfare among this people. In other words, an asymmetric relational mode that Santos-Granero finds operative in highly unequal sociopolitical contexts of the past is remarkably productive among an overall egalitarian society in the present. This shows that a structure of long duration, allowing connection between the past and the present, is being actualized independent of the degree of violence and inequality, which varies according to the peoples involved and the historical circumstances. Unlike Santos-Granero, though, we prefer to privilege the cosmopolitical lenses of Amerindian mastery over the juridico-economic categories of Western slavery as a way of understanding the relational structure of dependency in Amazonia.²⁵

In harbouring relatively different views on the subject of asymmetric relations in Amazonia, this volume aims to instigate both theoretical debate and new empirical analysis on the subject. On the one hand, one cannot simply project the present onto the past, ignoring the profound historical changes due to the European conquest and colonization. On the other, indigenous systems of dependence are not extinct phenomena. In some cases, like that of the Arawak-speaking Kinikinau presently living among the Kadiwéu, it remains to be documented ethnographically whether this is effectively a case of collective servitude similar to that described for other Chané (Arawak) people in the past (and one might also mention the Akuriyo or the Makú). It is interesting to note that the Kadiwéu (Mbaya-Guaykuru) are among the few indigenous peoples to have effectively adopted horses and cattle, whose hides today are marked with the same graphic signs used to mark their captives in the past.²⁶ In any case, the study of ‘declarations of dependence’ from beyond Amazonia suggests that it may in fact be the liberal ideals of equality and self-ownership that are the exception to the general rule (Cohen 1995; Dumont 1977). As James Ferguson (2013: 237) puts it, such declarations ‘are a challenge to liberal common sense’, presenting as they do ‘the theoretical and political challenge of a form of agency that seeks its own submission’. As Bonilla (2013: 247) comments, such cases show ‘that subjection, far from being only the result of the domination of the state, constitutes its own logic, founded on kinship and a relational conception of the person that is at the base of a social and cosmopolitical dynamic which exceeds our ideals of social well-being and autonomy’. How this image of care and protection binding people in asymmetric relationships in Amazonia relates to the literature on contemporary moral theory, in which care is a key virtue in articulating an alternative to the liberal justice-oriented

ethics (Baier 1994; Held 2006), remains an open question. This literature was highly inspirational for Overing, particularly in its initial focus on intimate relations and its articulation with feminist theory (Gilligan 1982; Larrabee 1993). We can only hope that this book will help keep the conversation going by opening a new area for debate.

Ownership, Authorship and the Self

Earlier assumptions about Amazonia, whether of a Hobbesian or a Rousseauian hue, were brought into question by the political economy style of analysis epitomized by Rivière and Terence Turner. Rivière posits an Amerindian social contract based on kinship, noting that '[t]he advantages that can be obtained from living with others can only be obtained if individuals are willing to give up some of their personal freedom ... the people of Guiana are no freer from the general constraints of social life than anyone else' (1984: 95). Yet, self-ownership and equality could not be said to be at the heart of social systems that were organized around the control of persons. Focusing on consanguine ties, Joanna Overing and Alan Passes challenged this view by emphasizing their affective nature, thus suggesting that, to put it in terms of property relations, this was if anything a case of mutual belonging (Overing and Passes 2000).

Although mutual belonging appears to characterize a number of relations among Amerindian peoples, we conceive of it as neither necessarily symmetrical nor reciprocal. That is why we prefer to focus, as does Strathern (1988, 2005), on the claims that persons can make on other persons. As we saw in the quotation of Lowie on the Trobriand canoe: the owner is not an 'absolute owner', because people have claims on him. He does not own himself. Self-ownership is an absent concept, one that Locke had to affirm explicitly against the religious understanding of God's (and by extension the King's) ownership of people.²⁷ In Amazonia, however, the owner is neither an individual self nor a unitary god but a magnified person composed of multiple relationships. The crucial distinction, as Fausto (2012a: 36) suggests, is that here 'the founding relation is not self-identity: the Self and the Same do not merge in the construction of the Amerindian person. The multiplicity and fractality of ownership relations imply internally composite subjects, "self-different" persons (Viveiros de Castro 2002: 377)'. Instead of ownership, we would better qualify the Amazonian case as one of *altership*, since what connects a person to an object is not exclusive of what connects that person to other human and non-human persons. Actually, in some cases, objects are precisely what make such connections possible, as is the case of the Nambikwara Mamaindê personal adornments studied by Miller (2009), which are, as she argues,

a sort of ‘alterity card’ permitting the passage between different relational contexts (Miller 2012, 2015).

This is not merely a play on words, as becomes clear in contexts where Western conceptions of ownership and Amazonian conceptions of alterity come into contact. Music provides a case in point. Anthony Seeger, after explaining how different actors (composer, author, performer, music publisher, record label, etc.) own different rights to songs and performances in Western ownership regimes, refers to the Ge-speaking Suyá (Kĩsêdjê) of Mato Grosso, among whom he carried out fieldwork. For them,

there is no such thing as a human ‘composer.’ All songs are either ‘revealed’ through direct contact between human spirits and animals, from whom the human spirits learn new songs, or through appropriation from another human ... community. One of the songs they sing today was originally sung by a jaguar. It was overheard and remembered by a man whose spirit was living with the jaguars, and he taught it to the rest of the community.

And this is not all, for in historical time, he continues,

the ‘master’ (*kandé*, which I have also translated as ‘owner/controller’) of the song is the moiety whose members sang it for the first time. The other moiety must ask the controlling moiety’s permission in order for the whole community to sing it.

These convoluted ownership rights over the ‘jaguar song’ become even more complex nowadays

when you add a researcher with a tape recorder, an archive, an ethnographic recording, and requests to license songs from that recording for feature films. By Brazilian law this song was ‘traditional’ and difficult to protect. How does one defend the rights of a collectivity? How does one define a jaguar as an individual author? What is the lifetime of a jaguar (does it matter)? [US law for example protects creative works for the author’s lifetime plus 70 years] And since a song is revealed and ultimately religious, what is the lifetime of a God? (Seeger 2004: 75–76).

The Tupi-speaking Parakanã provide another example: they employ a language of mastery to talk about the chain of asymmetric relations through which songs are appropriated from the outside and executed inside. Songs are given by enemies in dreams to men and are generically called ‘jaguar’. A dreamer is said to be a ‘master of jaguar’ (*jawajara*), meaning that he is the owner of both songs and the dreamt enemy, conceived as his pet. Owners never kill their pets, so the ritual act of dancing and singing is considered a killing: the dreamer cannot perform his own song in the ritual but must give it to a third person who will be the jaguar-song executioner (Fausto 1999, 2012b). Who, in this case, would then be the author of the song? The most probable answer is the dreamt enemy,

whereas the dreamer would be its owner-controller. However, even the dreamt enemy is not conceived as a composer, since song is his person qua music. It is a sort of quantum of predatory capacity that circulates among the living – a jaguar-part of an enemy that becomes part of the dreamer's and the executioner's person (Fausto 2004, 2007). Tainted by altership, humans do not themselves become authors, but *alterers* capable of othering themselves and switching perspectives in order to appropriate new songs and new names.

In the Parakanã case, in contrast to the Kĩsêdjê one, the owner/controller is an individual, not a group. He has no right to sing the jaguar-song and has to alienate it to another person who will ritually execute it. Once dead, this jaguar-song cannot be sung again in a ritual, nor can it be inherited. The contrast outlined here marks different sociocosmic regimes in Amazonia, the ones described above as centripetal and centrifugal. Songs among Kĩsêdjê, once appropriated from the outside, become part of a lore owned by and transmitted within a social group; among the Parakanã, songs must on the contrary be continuously appropriated to move the ritual machinery. There is no lore or tradition to be remembered and transmitted. One has to learn a generative scheme, not a more or less fixed repertoire as occurs among Ge-speaking people or in the Upper Xingu (Fausto, Franchetto and Montagnani 2011; Fausto this volume).

In his chapter, Cesarino addresses some of these issues from the perspective of the Marubo, a Panoan people from the Javari Valley, particularly with regard to shamanic verbal arts. As he points out, a common thread runs through all the different regimes of 'authorship' in Amazonia: the absence of the free, autarchic, Solar author. Creativity is not the action of a sovereign individual who owns his²⁸ own ideas, but the condensation of multiple relations with alterity. What Cesarino calls 'the decentralization of the author-function' is itself a function of a different regime of personhood, one that does not resolve into a simple opposition between individual versus collective ownership.

The translation of Amazonian mastery relations into a Western proprietary language becomes even more problematic when we note that these multiple relational chains apply not only to 'intangible property' such as songs, names or spells, but also to ritual objects like masks and musical instruments. As items of material culture, musical instruments may be owned by their makers, but their music may be owned by clans or moieties, and be created by nonhuman agents. In some cases, 'sacred' flutes are kept hidden from certain members of society (i.e., women and children) and exchanged only under exceptional circumstances, if at all. Some are 'copies' of water spirits or other nonhuman beings yet maintain the agentive potential of the original (Menezes Bastos 2011). The ideas of heritage and cultural property provide at best a placeholder for the complex

sets of rights and obligations that are embedded in such objects, but they are a poor substitute. Even as copies, their sacred aspects may remain after they have been transformed into commodities (Augustat 2011).

Coelho de Souza's contribution to this volume is a theoretically challenging analysis of the (re)lease of Kĩsêdjê designs for payment to a fashion company. The designs, despite being items of material culture, are nonetheless part of the immaterial, or intangible, heritage of the Kĩsêdjê. They are produced through a particular creative process and perceived in different ways by different actors, in terms of what the author calls models of 'exchange' and 'contract'. As she writes, 'when rights are at stake – cultural or knowledge rights, for instance – these never arise as collective rights unequivocally ascribable to peoples or groups, but as a vast network of heterogeneous prerogatives, entitlements and obligations that does not fit easily in the moulds of legal representation required by the form of contracts'. Coelho de Souza argues that, in contrast to Western property forms, in Amerindian appropriations 'objects are less passive registers of a subject's capacities than personified objectifications of their relationships, appearing not as simple *things*, but as *persons*,' thus bringing our understanding of exchange in Amazonia closer to the *locus classicus* of exchange, Melanesia.

Land, Territory and Property

Even 'land', or in Lowie's terms, 'real estate', is no mere 'thing' for native Amazonians. With indigenous territories constantly under threat from the agro-industrial and mineral frontier, it is materially and practically urgent to find a way of talking about land in the Amazonian case. Land rights activists evoke generic images of 'mother earth', 'sacred groves' and 'ancestral lands'. Although those who are familiar with the relevant ethnographic facts may regard these as simplistic images, they can be read as placeholders for a desire to preserve a way of life, a space for traditional culture to thrive – in short, 'culture as land' (Engle 2010: 162ff.). In fact, rather than humans merely holding preferential rights over tracts of land understood as a natural object, ownership proliferates and binds places together through relations between nonhuman persons, with whom humans must interact in a variety of ways, including hunting, gardening and shamanism.

Butt Colson (2009), in her monograph on the Akawaio, has tried to translate indigenous relationships to land into terms intelligible to state or international law, on the premise that claims to land need to be based on richly detailed documentation of local indigenous practices over long time periods. In language intended for nonspecialist readers, she outlines

three basic principles underlying Akawaio and Arekuna property rights: that of collective, communal rights to land and resources; the right of families and individuals to acquire and use these resources for themselves within the community lands of their own river area or portion of river area; the obligation to share with kin and affines a generous part of that which has been acquired and made available. Abandonment of land entails its return to the community for other families and members to use in the future. Those outside a local community, wishing to use certain resources in that community's lands, have to obtain permission from the leader and his followers. (349)

In general, it seems that land is not owned as such except when it is cultivated as a swidden (Brightman 2010; Viegas this volume). As Gow (1991: 80) writes, the 'owners' of crops in gardens are the married couple who plant them. As Viegas shows in this volume, time is important here, for ownership is subject to forgetting: just as the dead may need to be forgotten so that the living may reproduce and names may circulate once again (Taylor 1993), so must places in the landscape that have been 'somebody's' garden at last return to the forest to regenerate and recirculate, eventually to be appropriated once more (Brightman 2010). The temporality of land ownership here differs from that of Western property rights, with the exception of copyrights and patents, which are 'designed to expire' (Brown 2004).

Rights over land also include territorial rights, which are translations of the spheres of influence of particular sociopolitical units. In indigenous terms these are articulated in terms of ownership, but ownership takes the form of a network of relationships: '[e]ach category of space ... has the form of a community of beings related together as owners and owned' (Gow 1991: 80). Peter Gow gives a clear description of the pervasive kind of ownership that is common to many native Amazonian societies. For the Piro, *Sachamama*, 'forest mother', the land anaconda, is the 'source' of the forest; she 'lies curled up in a hole, and from her the forest and its plants emanate'. A related spirit entity, *Sacharuna*, 'forest person', also known as the 'boss' or 'chief' of the forest, patrols the forest, protecting areas especially rich in game from hunters.²⁹ As Gow writes,

[i]n the 'high forest' live the most desirable game animals, like spider monkeys, macaws, tapirs, and white-lipped peccaries. These inhabitants of the forest are created and controlled by their *dueños*, 'owners', and by their *madres*, 'mothers'... the 'mother' is the source from which the species 'comes', and ... looks after her species. The 'owner' is often assimilated to the 'mother', but is easier to define. The 'owner' is often called the 'boss' (*patrón*) or 'chief' (*curaca*) of a territory in the forest, and the animals of that territory are his pets. (Gow 1991: 79)

Here, then, we have a hierarchy of owners or magnified persons, as described by Fausto (2008, 2012a) and Cesarino (this volume). What is

particularly significant here is that the relationship of the species to its *dueño* or *madre* is the same as that of the forest to *Sachamama* and *Sacharuna* (Gow 1991: 79). The recursive logic of master-owner relations, described in Cesarino's chapter, thus permeates the landscape, which is under the regime of a cosmopolitical economy of persons both human and nonhuman.

Unlike ritual objects and intangible possessions, land is neither inherited nor exchanged (Viegas this volume). But care and nurture play a central role in ownership of places. As Viegas writes in this volume, '[p]ossession of a garden is thus associated with looking after or having the responsibility for a given thing'. Contemporary threats to territorial rights are such that places in the landscape that are not owned by human persons must be protected by other means. For example, Tukanoan peoples have campaigned for certain locations in the Upper Negro basin in North-West Amazonia – 'geographic features, such as islands, marsh areas, creek mouths, shallows, outcrops, rocks and ridges, as well as the sites of old malocas and the "transformation houses", stopover points on the journey of the giant anaconda who brought the ancestors of the current groups to the Uaupés' – to be recognized as their intangible cultural property, as 'sacred places' (Andrello 2010). As Andrello shows, the process of plotting mythical narratives into maps of the landscape raises considerable practical and epistemological difficulties. Inevitably, something is lost in translation between property regimes. Yet this process of translation is an urgent matter of justice: as David Hume (1975) has argued, it is when competition arises and people begin to perceive a threat to their possessions that a formalization of property relations becomes necessary.

Thus, equivocal and 'dangerous' though the concepts of property and ownership may be, they are also unavoidable. When native Amazonians enter into property relationships with outsiders and engage with the market-based economy, this is not an encounter between societies without property and a world society based upon property. Such relationships raise problems of translation, not problems due to presence or lack of relevant institutions or categories. The purpose of this book is to enhance our understanding of all of these things.

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Notes

1. However, some authors took care to underline their awareness of the historical circumstances of the phenomena they described: see Rivière et al. (2007); Lévi-Strauss (1955).
2. Notice the number of edited books concerning Amazonia's history that have appeared since then: Hill's *Rethinking History and Myth* (1984) and *History, Power and Identity* (1996); Carneiro da Cunha's *História dos Índios no Brasil* (1992) and (with Viveiros de Castro), *Amazônia: Etnologia e História* (1993); Whitehead's *Histories and Historicities in Amazonia* (2003); Fausto and Heckenberger's *Time and Memory in Indigenous Amazonia* (2007), and above all the two volumes of *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas* dedicated to South America (Salomon and Schwartz 1999).
3. FUNAI is the Fundação Nacional do Índio, the Brazilian national agency for the administration, protection and tutelage of native peoples. On this conception of history as a succession of times, common in Western Amazonia, see Gow (1991), Taylor (2007) and Costa (in press).
4. This occurred later in Amazonia than in other regions of the world, as is also the case for Melanesia and Polynesia. Not by chance, specialists in these ethnographic areas have dedicated important works to the theme (Geismar 2005; Harrison 1992, 2000; Hirsch and Strathern 2004; Leach 2003; Strathern 2005).
5. But see Carpenter, Katyal and Riley's (2009) defense of the use of property laws to protect indigenous cultural heritage. See also Brown's critique (2010) and their response (Carpenter et al. 2010).
6. Macpherson may have overstated his case: Munzer (1990: 41ff.) argues that persons 'do not own their bodies but ... they do have limited property rights in them'.