

INTRODUCTION

Creation and Creativity in Indigenous Lowland South America

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The question of creation and creativity is linked to major theoretical positions and thematic issues in Lowland South American scholarship and hints at the highly selective if not rudimentary reception of the broader anthropological theorizations of these issues to date. Recent contributions on creativity (Hallam and Ingold 2007; Svašek 2016; Wilf 2014) have provided an overview of the topic in Western intellectual history. From medieval times, the concept's history has been shaped by early Judeo-Christian (a divine creator), Renaissance (a human creator of timeless beauty), Romantic (the individual's creative imagination), industrial (the creation of capitalizable products), and post-industrial (neoliberal creative industries) understandings of creativity. All of these have contributed to the prevalent notion of "creativity as the solitary, ex nihilo creation of products of self-evident and universal value . . . by highly exceptional individuals" (Wilf 2014: 397).

This dominant notion of exceptional individual creators, who create innovative and highly valued products out of their genius or intellect, has also impacted anthropological engagements with creativity. Yet, anthropology has developed alternative approaches that locate creativity not only in the realms of god, genius, or economic intellect but in human everyday practice (cf. McLean 2009: 215). Thus, anthropology has slowly begun to expand the narrow understanding of creativity. Efforts range from Claude Lévi-Strauss's (1966) notion of the engineer and the bricoleur as two types of creators, to Victor Turner's (1967) notion of the creativity of liminality (cf. Lavie, Narayan, and Rosaldo 1993), Edmund Leach's (1977) notion of creativity against current systems (cf. Rapport 2000), Roy Wagner's (1975) concept of the invention of culture (cf. Murray and Robbins 2002; Pitarch and Kelly 2019), and to Ulf Hannerz (1987) creolization and creativity approach (cf. Eriksen 2003). Although not all of these works specifically explore the topic of creativity, they—and their reception—have contributed to the current anthropological discourses on creativity.

This introduction aims to provide a basis for the local processes of creation and creativity in Indigenous Lowland South America presented in this

book. To do so, it first takes a look at the notion of creation and creativity in Lowland South American anthropology, then outlines recent shifts within the anthropology of creation and creativity, and finally introduces this book's contributions.

Lowland South American Anthropology and Notions of Creation and Creativity

In Lowland South American anthropology,¹ creation and creativity were never a core issue of theoretical reflection. Traditionally associated with the study of myth and notions of creation and transformation,² the topic has, since the 1990s, become associated with specific styles of analyzing Amazonian sociality, such as the symbolic economy of alterity (Viveiros de Castro 1996), the moral economy of intimacy (Overing and Passes 2000), or the more recently proposed Amerindian economy of life (Santos-Granero 2010). Moreover, aspects of creativity played a role in discussions on the creative and life-giving forces of music and associated rituals (Brabec de Mori and Seeger 2013; Brabec de Mori, Lewy, and Garcia 2015; Hill and Chaumeil 2011); the fabrication of (proper human) bodies (Conklin 1996; Londoño Sulkin 2005; Rival 2005; Santos-Granero 2012; Seeger, DaMatta, and Viveiros de Castro 1979; Vilaça 2005); kinship (Costa 2018; Vilaça 2002); and objects (Santos-Granero 2009, 2012); as well as in debates on verbal art, speech acts, and song composition (Graham 1994; Münzel 1992); shamanic practices (Cesarino 2016); or, more recently, on property, mastery, and ownership (Brightman 2010; Brightman, Fausto, and Grotti 2016; Fausto 2012).

Authors of the “symbolic economy of alterity school” link the notion of creation first of all with classical Christian-technological understandings of an almighty god, creation *ex nihilo*, and the separation of humans and an objectified nature (Descola 2013: 66). Viveiros de Castro considers the notion of production, that is, “the imposition of mental design on inert, formless matter” as a “model” for the dominant Western notion of creation (2004: 477). Creation as production is contrasted to notions found in Amerindian mythology, where, according to Viveiros de Castro, creation *ex nihilo* is inexistent. Instead, “the origin of cultural implements or institutions is canonically explained as a borrowing—a transfer (violent or friendly, by stealing or by learning, as a trophy or as a gift) of prototypes already possessed by animals, spirits, or enemies” (2004: 477). The logic of transfer, he argues, “belongs to the paradigm of exchange” and constitutes a relation without an absolute beginning, in which each exchange is “always the transformation of a prior exchange event” (2004: 477). Viveiros de Castro therefore reinforces a key distinction between the dominant

Western paradigm of “creation/production/invention” and “transformation/exchange/transfer,” a logic that “suit(s) the Amerindian and other nonmodern worlds better” (2004: 477). The notion of creation thus is restricted to monotheistic versions of so-called modernity and the production of objects. In the Amerindian exchange model, by contrast, “the subject’s ‘other’ is another subject (not an object)” (2004: 477) as the focus is neither on a produced nor on an exchanged item, but on the other, with whom something is exchanged. Thus, “production creates; exchange changes” (2004: 477–78). The “emphasis on transformation/exchange (over creation/production)” is, according to Viveiros de Castro, “organically connected to the predominance of affinal relations (created by marriage alliance) over consanguineal ones (created by parenthood) in Amerindian mythology” (2004: 478).

A distinct view on creation and creativity is taken by the “moral economy of intimacy school” established by Joanna Overing. Here, creation and creativity are not associated with Western Christian notions of production but with the creation and maintenance of conviviality in Amerindian community life. Based on the quality and intimacy of personal everyday relations among those sharing the same lifeworld, the creation of conviviality leads to the creation of “the good life,” a feeling of well-being among those who are living together and the creation of a common morality of “good/beautiful” people who share a tranquil, sociable life (Lodoño Sulkin 2005; Overing 1989, 2003; Overing and Passes 2000). While “all forces for life, fertility, creativity *within* this world of the social have their origin in the dangerous, violent, potentially cannibalistic, exterior domains beyond the social” (Overing and Passes 2000: 6, emphasis in the original) in contrast to the “economy of alterity” approach, these forces “are not conducive to sociality, but destructive of it, and they cannot be generative of human social life until transformed through human will, intent and skill” (2000: 6). The principle of life therefore relies “upon the proper mixing of elements and forces, which must of necessity be different each from the next for society to exist: it is only through such ‘proper’ mixing that safety can be achieved in society and danger averted” (Overing 1983/84: 333).

Peter Rivière adds an important aspect to this argument by claiming that,

what creativity requires is the transcendence of worldly similarities and dissimilarities. Transcendence is not simply achieved through ritual, but ritual time itself is transcendence. It is the temporary transcendence, during which the divisions of the ordinary world are suppressed, that constitutes creativity, not just the differences themselves. (Rivière 2001: 42, translation by authors, emphasis added)

Transcendence is of crucial importance, as we will see, but there are forms and processes of creativity that cannot be reduced to it.

More recent studies often aim to expand the analytical axioms based on either the economy of alterity or intimacy. Starting from an understanding of Amazonian sociality based on affinal relations, Carlos Fausto proposed the concept of “familiarizing predation” as “the main schema of appropriation in Amazonian symbolic economies” (1999: 937). Starting from the intimacy perspective, Fernando Santos-Granero added a new twist to Viveiros de Castro’s distinction between an Amerindian transformation paradigm and a Western creation paradigm by framing the difference in terms of “constructional” Amerindian cosmologies that are based on notions of fabrication and “creationist” cosmologies such as the Judeo-Christian tradition (Santos-Granero 2009: 4). Like Stephen Hugh-Jones (2009), Santos-Granero argues that Amerindians may indeed conceptualize an initial creation *ex nihilo*, which may be “described as being constructional, insofar as subsequent creative acts assumed the form of creations via transformation” (Santos-Granero 2009: 4). In Santos-Granero’s view, artifacts appeared not just as prototypes borrowed or appropriated from nonhuman beings, “they are often attributed a crucial function in the creation and constitution of humans, animals, and plants” (2009: 5). Thus, for him the “creation of life is a constructional process” (2009: 6) and “it is craftsmanship rather than childbearing that provides the model for all creative acts” (2009: 8).

Elsewhere, Santos-Granero states that creativity “can assume a variety of forms” (2016: 45). He mentions the production of material things, the appearance of extraordinary things through ritual activities, things obtained through negotiations, barter, exchange, and purchase, including women and the social production of bodies, including one’s children, but also “collective initiatives originating from one’s abilities as a leader and organizer” (2016: 45). This is why “one can own pots and weapons, houses and gardens, names and spirit familiars, children and prey, ritual ceremonies and fishing expeditions, but one cannot own the land, the rivers, the forests or the wild animals—none of which are of human creation” (Santos-Granero 2016: 45–46).

That “creativity begets ownership” in Amazonia is a central argument by Marc Brightman (2010: 144). Together with Vanessa Grotti’s re-examination of nurture in hierarchical interethnic contexts (2007) and Fausto’s elaborations on mastery in Amazonia (2012), a novel understanding of property in Amazonia has been developed (Brightman et al. 2016). It is based on the assumption that human creativity produces a “relation of ownership which is exceptional in Amazonia” (Brightman, Grotti, and Ulturgasheva 2012: 15; see also Brightman 2010 and Fausto 2012). It is not an exchange event that is always the transformation of a prior exchange event, but rather a hierarchical relation in which the creativity of the owner sets the initial act and brings the relationship into being. It is, however, not just familiarizing predation that transfers affinity into consanguinity (Fausto 1999); recent discussions have added the notion of

feeding (Fausto and Costa 2013; Strathern 2012). Feeding is not just “a hallmark of parent-child relations” but also of “relations of meta-consanguinity,” that is, “relations of adoptive filiation characteristic of relations of mastery and idioms of dependence in Amazonia” (Brightman et al. 2016: 14–15). The debate on creativity and ownership is ultimately framed by the axiom of alterity as the base of Amazonian sociality. “Instead of ownership, we would better qualify the Amazonian case as one of altership” (Brightman et al. 2016: 19).

In contrast to such meta-consanguinity made from affinity, Santos-Granero stresses its filiative dimension, when he reflects on the relationship between makers and their products, which “involves a transfer of soul substance from the creator to his or her creation . . . by which the ensouled objects become, as it were, an ‘extension of their owners’ bodies . . . and their products (viewed) as related in terms of filiation” (2016: 45). The fact that filiation and ancestry assume precedence over affinity is even more pronounced among the Arawak-speaking groups (Hill and Santos-Granero 2002) or in the Isthmo-Colombian Area (Halbmayer 2021, and Chapter 1) where it includes relations between deified ancestor-like beings and humans and creates a mutual dependence between humans and ancestral parents or gods.

Authors like Halbmayer (Chapter 1) argue that focusing on the great binary divergence between Western and Amerindian notions of creativity³ may obscure the different cosmological operators at work within Indigenous Lowland South America and render the gradual differences between creation *ex nihilo* and affinal appropriation/transformation invisible. As in large parts of the Amazon,⁴ creation processes among the Yukpa and the Chibchan groups outside the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta are not based on creation *ex nihilo*. Yet, these groups stand out for their detailed cosmogonic narratives in which deified creator figures play a central role. In these cosmogonic narratives, as well as in the world-sustaining everyday practices, predatory appropriation, exchange, or gift-giving are just some of the manifold possibilities of creative processes.

Recent Shifts in the Anthropology of Creation and Creativity

James Leach (2006: 152) noted more than fifteen years ago that there was relatively little written on creativity in anthropology, but the situation has significantly changed in recent years.⁵ In the context of this introduction we focus on recent shifts that align with general trends in Indigenous Lowland South American anthropology, such as the questioning of nature-culture and subject-object dichotomies, as well as with the views held by the contributors of this book. These essentially concern three shifts: from exceptional individual creators to relational creativity, from innovative products to processual creativ-

ity, and from contingent to generative creativity. These shifts were most explicitly proposed by Tim Ingold's phenomenological (Ingold and Hallam 2007; Ingold 2014) and James Leach's (2006) and Maurice Bloch's (2014) comparative approaches to creativity.⁶ What these approaches have in common is that they stand in opposition to the dominant Euro-American understanding of creativity outlined above, based on a naturalistic-, art-, economy- and individualism-bound perspective.

From Exceptional Individual Creators to Relational Creativity

While the prevailing notion of creativity emphasizes individual creators and their highly creative, imagination-driven minds, recent anthropological contributions highlight the relational dynamics of creativity. Elizabeth Hallam and Tim Ingold (2007: 3) stress that creativity is not individualistic but relational, as it does not "pit the individual against either nature or society" (2007: 3). Creativity, they argue, is "always attuned and responsive to the performance of others," not only because its recognition is dependent on social constraints and conventions (Friedman 2001: 59; Hastrup 2007: 200), but also because the creative potential lies within the entire field of relationships rather than within the individual mind and imaginative capacity (Ingold and Hallam 2007: 7). People who are attuned to one another respond to society, and they and their creative potentials (imagination, ideas, etc.) do not only grow by themselves but are also grown by society (2007: 8). This attunement is not limited to human society but also includes the energies and forces of the material world and the "world's creative transformation of itself" (Ingold 2007: 21; cf. Ingold and Hallam 2007: 7).⁷ It thus transcends the distinction between a creativity originating in the imagination of humans and a creativity contained in biogenetic substances or the so-called material world (Leach 1998; McLean 2009: 216).

By shifting creativity from an individual to a relational endeavor, Ingold's phenomenological notion breaks with the nature-culture, mind-matter, and subject-object dichotomies. Yet, it highlights forms of human and nonhuman agency that are decoupled from personhood. Hardly any of the contributions that follow the shift to relational forms of creativity address personalized creative potentials of nonhuman forces that would do justice to our empirical findings from Lowland South America. A notable exception is James Leach's (2006) contribution on a mode of creativity he found among the Rai Coast People of Papua New Guinea and called "distributed creativity." Distributed creativity is not characterized by creative (mindful) subjects and created (material) objects but by relations between kin, spirits, and the "intersubjectively constituted landscape" (Leach 2006: 170). Through collective work these (human and other-than-human) social relations create, or rather combine, dif-

ferent kinds of subjectified creations, namely, persons or person-like objects. Creativity is thus a “socially distributed phenomenon” (Leach 2012: 29) that blurs the contours of creative (human) subjects and created (material) objects. This finding led Leach (2006) and other anthropologists (e.g., Brightman et al. 2016; Coelho de Souza 2016; Hirsch and Strathern 2006) to question the universal applicability of Western notions of ownership and property right rules. Furthermore, Maurice Bloch’s (2014) study on creativity among Malagasy carvers in Madagascar highlights the involvement of the ancestors in the collective creative work.

Roger Lohmann (2010) most explicitly points to the central role of other-than-human beings in creative processes in Oceania. These other-than-human beings might be sources of inspiration for human creators or even the original creators of a specific song, design, or the like. However, Lohmann discredits their role as creative agents as “folk theories” (2010: 222) and cultural world-views that do not inform his “etic”—and apparently exclusively scientifically correct—understanding of creativity as human imagination. His discreditation is at odds with the approach to Lowland South American forms of creativity we contribute to, that assumes that there are different, equally valid understandings of creativity based on plural epistemologies and ontologies (Brabec de Mori 2016: 48–50; Kelly and Pitarch 2019: 8). In some notions of creativity, including those we identify for Lowland South America, interaction with other-than-human beings represents a central component of creative work.

From Innovative Creative Products to Processual Creativity

While the prevailing notion of creativity emphasizes innovative and highly valued products, many recent anthropological contributions point to the processual quality of creativity. Ingold and Hallam (2007: 2) challenge Liep’s (2001a: 2) distinction between true novelty-enhancing creativity (innovation) and more conventional everyday creativity (improvisation). For Ingold and Hallam, Liep’s distinction does not represent a matter of true or conventional creativity, but a matter of perspective. While the focus on innovation is a backward-reading of creativity “symptomatic for modernity” (Ingold and Hallam 2007: 2) and entangled with commodity capitalism’s obsession with created objects (Ingold 2014: 128–29; cf. Hirsch and Macdonald 2007: 190), improvisation is a forward-reading that focuses on creative processes. Ingold and Hallam, as well as Svašek (2016), focus on the forward-reading creative (or improvisational) process that is able to capture the “growth, becoming, the actual forming or making of things, or in a word, *ontogenesis*” (Ingold 2014: 128, emphasis in the original). They further argue that creativity is not just about the supposedly new, but that there is also creativity in copying, imitating, and the maintenance

of traditions (Ingold and Hallam 2007: 5; cf. Wilf 2012). In the Heraclitean sense, the reason is that one can never reproduce, repeat, or imitate something in the same way as it already exists or has existed at some point (Ingold 2014: 130). Moreover, even continuing established tradition in an everchanging world requires active regeneration and improvisation in order to adjust to changed conditions (Ingold and Hallam 2007: 5; cf. Lohmann 2010: 216). Thus, Ingold and Hallam (2007: 7) challenge the opposition between continuity and change and the assumption that creativity is about change rather than tradition (Rosaldo, Lavie, and Narayan 1993: 5).

Shifting the focus from the product of creativity to the creative process, Ingold's and similar process-focused notions of creativity highlight the continuity between and the interdependence of innovation and copying (Svašek 2016: 2–3), invention and repetition (Rosaldo et al. 1993: 5), improvisation and imitation (Wilf 2012), and change and tradition (Lohmann 2010: 216). The processuality inherent to these approaches, however, remains a linear one (cf. Ingold and Hallam 2007: 10), without reflecting on the possibility of other notions of temporality than that of moving from a past to a present that extends further into the future.⁸ A possible understanding of time, in which the time of mythical beings and ancestors do not only belong to a distant past but is copresent and accessible through interventions and practices of human and other-than-human beings (cf. McLean 2009: 216–23), is not systematically considered.

From Contingent to Generative Creativity

While the prevailing notion of creativity emphasizes its contingency, that is, its potential possibility, but non-necessity (cf. Leach 2006: 154), several recent anthropological studies (Bloch 2014; Ingold 2007, 2014; Ingold and Hallam 2007; Leach 2006; McLean 2009) point to its generative quality, an aspect that is closely entangled with its relational and processual character. It has been argued that creativity cannot be reduced to the genius of particular individuals, such as in the dominant art-focused understanding of creativity, nor to a capacity evoked or facilitated by particular conditions, such as in the dominant economy-focused understanding of creativity (cf. Leach 2006: 154). Instead, creativity should be understood as a potential underlying society and the world itself. Therefore, it does not depend on the judgment about its novelty or value (Ingold and Hallam 2007: 3). Creativity thus is not only “a cultural imperative,” as Ingold and Hallam cite Edward Bruner (1993: 322), to maintain traditions, but is a generative capacity of people and other living organisms to “continually surpass themselves” (Ingold 2014: 128) in the “never-ending and non-specific project of *keeping life going*” (Ingold 2007: 48, emphasis in the original). This

generative form of creativity is bound to the notion of a world always in the making (Ingold and Hallam 2007: 3). Ingold's focus on generative creativity is probably most clearly elaborated in his article on the "creativity of undergoing" (2014).

By shifting the focus from contingent to generative creativity, Ingold foregrounds the intrinsic creativity of the world and puts the agency of humans or other personalized life forms in a secondary position. Leach and Bloch, by contrast, combine the notion of generativity with personalized agency. Leach (2006) argues that distributed creativity is not dependent on an exogenous incentive such as property relations, because what is created in the collective work of creative relations (e.g., spirit and their songs, people, land) has itself an intrinsic reproductive potential, whose constant regeneration is a necessary aspect of its personhood. Distributed creativity is not a possibility, nor is it merely generative, but a necessity "to keep the world in human form" (Leach 2006: 165). Bloch (2014) also stresses people's responsibility for maintaining the generative creativity of life, but without using the term generative. He states that human reproduction, feeding, planting, tending and harvesting crops, cooking, eating, educating and similar activities that "are about the business of growing life and moving it forward" (2014: 116) constitute creativity in the Malagasy sense. Malagasy creativity is thus an omnipresent notion shared with the living family and also with the past generation and the future generations, and there is a "continual effort to ensure that this forward process is not halted" (2014: 116). Lowland Amerindian notions, as we will see, focus less on the intrinsic creativity of the world (but see Rival 2012) than on specific and necessary forms of creativity imbued with value, and even morality.

The Book's Contributions

The book's contributions focus on specific characteristics of Indigenous Lowland South American notions of creativity such as the crucial role of other-than-human beings as creative agents, the need to maintain relationships with these agents in order to sustain creativity, and the relevance of creative processes that transcend different genres, worlds, and times. Before discussing these specific characteristics in more detail in the conclusion, we offer a brief introduction to the contributions.

The book aims to highlight the diversity of Lowland South America Indigenous practices and their underlying logics in relation to creation and creativity.⁹ Two of the contributions apply a comparative perspective (Mattéi Muller, Chapter 8; Halbmayer, Chapter 1) while the others present ethnographically rich case studies. The book covers Indigenous groups living in the Guiana

shield (Pemon—Lewy, Chapter 7; Panare, Yekuana, Yanomami and Warao—Mattéi Muller, Chapter 8), Northwestern Amazonia (Wakuénai—Hill, Chapter 6; Tukano-speaking groups—Castrillón Vallejo, Chapter 9), the Isthmo-Colombian Area (Chibcha- and Carib-speaking groups—Halbmayer, Chapter 1; Yukpa—Goletz, Chapter 2), and the Venezuelan Llanos in-between these first three areas (Pume—Saturno, Chapter 3). Otaegui (Chapter 5) deals with the Ayoreo of the Paraguayan Gran Chaco and Brabec de Mori (Chapter 4) with the Shibipo-Konibo of the Peruvian Ucayali River. Thus, the book's ethnographic scope focuses on the western and northern parts of Amazonia and reaches out beyond the isthmus in the north and to the Gran Chaco. This focus on circumjacent regional examples is a strength, which allows highlighting the diversity of Lowland South American Indigenous creative logics beyond unified notions of Amazonian sociality and focuses on the aural, acoustic, musical, verbal, gestural, and iconographic dimensions of creativity.

The book is organized in three parts. The first part deals with the (re)creation of the original conditions of being in terms of mythical narratives as well as ritual practices aimed to secure sociocosmological reproduction (Halbmayer, Chapter 1), food supply (Goletz, Chapter 2), and sociability (Saturno, Chapter 3).

Ernst Halbmayer's chapter explores the different ontological principles underlying the creative processes of Carib-speaking groups in Amazonia and Chibcha-speaking groups in the Isthmo-Colombian region. His points of departure are mythical processes and the creation of the original conditions of being as reflected in and sustained by contemporary practices. Taking a comparative perspective, the chapter highlights the multiplicity of creative processes, which may manifest themselves in creation *ex nihilo* as among Chibchan groups of the Sierra Nevada and some groups in the Northwestern Amazon, appropriative transformation of existing prototypes as prevailing in much of Amazonia, and transcreation, a term that encompasses all those creative processes that are neither reducible to transformation nor to a creation from nothing. Halbmayer associates transcreation with the Chibcha-speaking groups. Distinguishing it from Amazonian creativity that is based on alterity, appropriation, and transformation, he identifies key ontological principles like homologous continuities with original beings, the prevalence of agricultural logics of care, and a symbiotic hierarchical relation with deified beings. These ontological principles are illustrated by four dimensions of transcreation: the materialization of thought, the adjustment of the world, the shift from sterility to fertility and reproduction, and the notion of morality and associated forms of temporality.

Anne Goletz's chapter focuses on the maize bringer *Unano* and the creative processes between *Unano* and people in Sokorpa, a Yukpa territory in Northern Colombia, which aim to ensure the continuous existence of maize that is

considered vital not only for physical but also for cultural continuity. *Unano* is not only the main protagonist of the narration about the origin of maize and maize-related agricultural and ritual activities but also an agent in the present whose creative potentials are essential for the handling of the highly valued maize. Goletz starts her analysis from the narration about the origin of maize that she juxtaposes with three ethnographic vignettes of practices aimed at mobilizing *Unano's* creative potentials: nourishing *Unano* and encouraging his reproductive potential; dancing for *Unano* and activating his rewarding potential; and transmitting knowledge to maize specialists, thus stimulating the latter's and *Unano's* instructive potentials. Goletz notes that the creative process of ensuring the existence of maize is dependent on the creative potential of people and *Unano* alike, subject to "mimetic co-activity" (Pitrou 2016) and coordinated not only by human ritual activity but also by *Unano* himself.

Silvana Saturno's chapter explores the learning process through which men among the Pume of the Venezuelan Llanos become singers and thus (re)create the essential condition of sociability. The learning process is based on the *tôhe* ritual, in which singers improvise verses and experience liminal states through dreams and illnesses. Saturno argues that the interwoven experiences of singing, dreaming, and being ill are crucial for gaining creative power and knowledge. She shows how the acquisition of creative power necessarily involves the interaction with spiritual beings whose mythical past is only superficially alluded to in Pume myths, yet experienced in close relationship. One of these spiritual beings and the quintessential singer is the trickster-like *Içiai*, who is one of the creator gods while at the same time resembling neighboring cattle ranchers. It is he who contacts young men to initiate them as *tôhe* singers and punishes singers with feelings of illness and powerlessness when they have failed to sing for some time. The interaction with *Içiai* causes suffering but, as Saturno notes, is necessary for the (re)creation of sociability and thus, for the condition of being.

The second part of the book looks at translation/transmutation processes between different creative genres like quotidian speech, myth, songs, and rituals. All contributions build on Roman Jakobson's (1959) identification of different types of translation and follow either the ethnolinguistic perspective on intralinguistic translation of William Hanks (Otaegui, Chapter 5) or an ethnomusical perspective on Carlo Severi's elaboration on intersemiotic translation/transmutation (Brabec de Mori, Chapter 4; Hill, Chapter 6; Lewy, Chapter 7).

Bernd Brabec de Mori's chapter focuses on the vocal techniques used by the Shipibo-Konibo from the Peruvian lowland forest to charge their voice with power and eventually access the creative faculties of powerful mythical beings. Brabec de Mori employs a two-layered notion of creativity in which the techniques used by human singers constitute the first layer, and the creative energy

released by the nonhuman entities, who are considered the main creators, are the second layer of creativity. He illustrates the vocal techniques of charging the voice with power in terms of three levels: speaking, getting drunk, and dieting represent the first level; singing the second; and transforming, which is reserved for well-trained singers, the third. Considering the voice as a privileged medium for interspecies communication in terms of Carlo Severi's (2014) idea of transmutation, he argues that through their transmutation into the realm of sound, mythical beings become real and perceptible and their creative energies vocally tangible for human singers. Through the release of second-layer creativity, the nonhuman beings instruct the singers on what to sing and these in turn reproduce and transmit the songs to their human listeners.

In his chapter, Alfonso Otaegui addresses the creative processes through which people of the Ayoreo community of Jesudi in the northern Paraguayan Chaco transpose everyday events into verbal art in order to ensure normativity and eventually conviviality. Based on the ethnography of domestic interactions and the study of verbal art, he describes three of these creative processes: first, the expectations and regularities in the composition of wailing songs; second, the attribution of unusual happenings to the narration of a myth; and third, the creation of name-stories on the basis of conspicuous behavior or utterances. Otaegui identifies commonalities behind these processes in terms of the recursive relationship between domestic life and verbal art, and the fact that the songs and stories are not inventions but repetitions with variations. Building upon William Hanks's (2014) take on intralingual translation he argues that Ayoreo creativity and verbal art are based on constant translations of conversations, utterances, and names into wailing and love songs and stories and vice versa.

Jonathan Hill's chapter offers a theoretical approach to the complex interrelation between music and language that is at the core of Amazonian creativity. Hill integrates the concept of intersemiotic translation/transmutation of Jakobson (1959) and Severi (2014) with his own concepts of musicalization (the translation of verbal signs into music) and lexicalization (the translation of music into verbal signs). Using two ethnographic examples, an initiation ritual and a shamanic healing ritual, from the Arawak-speaking Wakuénai of the Upper Rio Negro region of Venezuela, he shows how these processes complement each other in a meaningful way. Musicalization serves as a means of releasing creative and transformative forces by providing spaces for transition in the human life cycle and relations with human as well as nonhuman others. Lexicalization, by contrast, serves as a means of stabilizing and channeling these ambiguous forces in a constructive way to ensure the transition of people and the transmission of their verbal artistry across generations. Hill understands musicalization and lexicalization as concepts that account for the

systematics of translation across different semiotic codes as metacommunicative processes.

In his chapter, Matthias Lewy explores the creation of temporary transactive timescapes among the Pemón of southern Venezuela, southwestern Guyana, and northern Brazil through different forms of formalized sound, namely, speaking (myth), singing (ritual), and chanting (magical formulas). In his approach he complements Ernst Halbmayer's (2004) concept of coexisting timescapes, each of which is inhabited by specific human or nonhuman beings, with temporary transactive timespaces that transcend the already existing timescapes and leave room for transspecific communication and interaction. Moreover, Lewy builds on Severi's (2014) notion of intersemiotic translation/transmutation as a method to understand the interaction between auditory and visual code systems. Taking myth as a manual for the operating of songs and magic formulas, Lewy illustrates, with regard to shaman songs, *orekotón* rituals, and magic formulas (*tarén*), how shamans, ritual participants, or any trained person can create restricted and unrestricted transactive timescapes by either including or excluding and impacting specific beings through the strategic use and influence of auditory and visual code systems.

The third part of the book deals with processes of shifting the context of signification of creation and creativity, either by integrating creative processes into the national commercial market (Mattéi Muller, Chapter 8) or by using creative powers from mythical ancestors to modify societal roles of gender and work (Castrillón Vallejo, Chapter 9).

Marie Claude Mattéi Muller's chapter looks at Amerindian basketry, its relation to mythology and shamanism, as well as recent changes in its manufacture and use. She draws on classical studies on basketry (e.g., Guss 1989) and her own research among five Indigenous groups of Venezuela (Panare, Ye'kwana, Warekena, Yanomami, and Warao). In a first step, Mattéi Muller presents mythical masters of the materials and techniques that are used in basketry as well as the "mythical bestiary" depicted on the baskets and describes the range of geometric, metonymic, and figurative designs used by the different groups. In a second step, she illustrates recent changes in basketry, which initially led to a creative boom and the adoption of new techniques, materials, forms, colors, designs, and figures, which are now turning into a struggle for basketry's survival. These changes were introduced through exchange relationships with neighboring and distant Indigenous groups as well as through the use of the baskets for commercial purposes, which has been halted by Venezuela's current economic crisis.

In his chapter, Juan Carlos Castrillón Vallejo addresses the connection between Tukanoan women's involvement with *yuruparí* ancestors and their empowerment in social life and the labor market. He thus takes a novel direction

in the research of *yuruparí* instruments in Tukanoan communities across the Northwestern Amazon, which had been dominated by an exclusively male and visual perspective. Castrillón Vallejo's approach, by contrast, takes a sonic perspective that focuses on women's listening to *yuruparí* sounds. He uses sound recordings of initiation rituals and ethnographic research with women. Building on John Tresch and Emily Dolan's (2013) "new organological taxonomy" that emphasizes the ethical work of instruments, and Elizabeth Povinelli's (2006) notion of enfleshment, he argues that the agency of the ancestral *yuruparí* voices and their effect on the flesh of female listeners sets their creative forces in motion. Women use these creative powers to symbolically recover the *yuruparí* flutes that belonged to them in mythical times before having been stolen by the men, and to assume new roles in society and in the labor market.

Based on these contributions the conclusion of this book summarizes the specific forms creation and creativity assume in Indigenous Lowland South America, including the continuities of creative potentials from mythical time to the present, the crucial role played by other-than-human creative agents, and the importance of transmutation, or intersemiotic translation, between different creative genres.

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Notes

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1. Lowland South America is used here in terms of non-Andean South America, including the Chibchan- and Chochoan-speaking Amerindian groups south of the Mesoamerican linguistic area (Campbell, Kaufman, and Smith-Stark 1986), while Amazonia is used in relation to the studies and theories primarily focused on Indigenous groups in the broader Amazon-Orinoco basin, including the Guiana land mass.
2. See also the work of Dorothea and Norman Whitten (1988, 1993) on creativity and arts and aesthetics in the Americas, which also takes mythic dimensions into account.
3. To overcome classical understandings of modernity and tradition, see also Halbmayer (2018) on Indigenous modernities.
4. For exceptions, see Halbmayer, Chapter 1.
5. See, for example, the anthologies by Hallam and Ingold (2007), Hirsch and Strathern (2006), Lavie, Narayan, and Rosaldo (1993), Liep (2001b), Svašek and Meyer (2016); the monographs by Wilf (2014, 2019); the special issues by Lohmann (2010) and Hirsch and Macdonald (2005); the individual articles by Bajič (2017), Bloch (2014), Graeber (2005), Ingold (2014), Leach (1998), McLean (2009), and Wilf (2012, 2014), or the work of Haviland (2016). On collaborative work and co-creativity and the manifold contributions that deal, among other issues, with anthropological research and creativity, of both researchers and research collaborators in the field, see, e.g., Ferrari-Nunes (2015), Pandian (2015), Rival (2014), and Wagner (1977).
6. In contrast to a notion of creation that is restricted to modernity, the phenomenological and fictionalizing approaches aim to redefine a general understanding of creativity (cf. Leach 2006: 151), and the cross-cultural comparative approach aims to show different modes of creativity that may even coexist within one society.
7. The notion of an open flow of creativity has been criticized for ignoring power dynamics (Ferrari-Nunes 2015), social and economic inequalities, and political differences (Bajič 2017).
8. This also applies to the contributions in Hirsch and Macdonald (2005) that engage particularly with the issue of creativity and temporality.
9. A first discussion of arguments in a panel organized by the editors at the 12th Conference of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America (SALSA) in Vienna initiated the work of this book.

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