INTRODUCTION

Theorizing Relations in Indigenous South America

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Whether invented, discovered, implicit, directly addressed, or hiding in plain sight, relations remain the main focus of anthropological inquiry. The centrality of relations to the discipline was recognized early in its history, as soon as society came to be conceptualized as a system of consanguinity and affinity. Later, during the heyday of structural functionalism, the notion of relations was recognized as the main 'object' of anthropological analysis, understood as "association between individual organisms" (Radcliffe-Brown 1965: 189). Relations were relevant because they helped in the establishment of social positions: individuals were more or less equivalent to units of a bigger system (Strathern 2018). Structural functionalism was not alone in maintaining an approach to relations as if they were self-evident. For much of the history of the discipline, the ethnographic categorization of social relations remained a key goal. Yet despite the richness of empirical attention to relations, the notion of relations

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itself remained largely unproblematized as a device helpful to social analysis. With the advent of structuralism, however, came the first sense of dissatisfaction with the overly empirical nature of relations in anthropological thinking. Lévi-Strauss ([1958] 1987: 301–304) understood relations as operating necessarily upon a distinction between 'reality' and a theoretical model employed to grasp that reality (see also Leach [1954] 1970: 5). The gap between irreducible, constantly fluctuating social phenomena and their theorization was thus made visible, highlighting that relations do not exist as empirically observed practices that can be transposed into self-contained relational systems.

Following this critique, more recent anthropological theorizations of relations have moved away from an emphasis on connectivity between pre-existing units and toward a focus on the constitutive potentials of relations. This shift is part of a broader critique against 'society thinking', the disciplinary tradition of framing human experience as the set of relations connecting society on a large scale with individuals on a small scale (Lebner 2017: 9). By challenging the coherence of social systems as a set of ordered relations, critiques of modern anthropological theory have invited us to reflect on how relations are comprehended, both by anthropologists and by the people with whom anthropologists work. As posited by Strathern (2001), one of the key critical voices against 'society thinking' in the discipline, relations are fundamental articulators of anthropological thinking. To hear a person "call someone a 'relation' tells you there is some other reason for the connection than simply acknowledging it" (ibid.: 73).

Approaches to relations founded not on their empirical discovery but on their abstraction (Holbraad and Pedersen 2017: 131) have relied on the deconstruction of *a priori* distinctions between part and whole (Strathern 1992) and between interior and exterior (Bateson [1972] 2000; Ingold 2011: 69–71). This deconstruction is central, for instance, to Roy Wagner's (1991: 163) idea of the "fractal person," which consists of "an entity with relationship integrally implied." Particularly relevant additions to the conceptual shift in relations from ethnographic data to theoretical notions have included anthropological works in Melanesia (Strathern 1988; Wagner 1991) and lowland South America (Overing 1975; Rivière 1984; Seeger et al. 1979), as well as contemporary analyses of kinship and reproductive technologies (Carsten 2004; Strathern 2005). One important lesson emerging from these apparently unrelated bodies of literature is that once relations have been conceptualized as more than metonyms for sociality, they can make us think about the social by reflecting upon proportions and scales in the connections among entities (Corsín Jiménez 2004: 14).

A movement toward an anthropological theorization of relations is now in full swing. Yet we believe that some space remains within this movement. In fact, most of anthropology's theoretical engagements with relations tend to focus on particular instantiations of them, such as local forms of kinship in specific ethnographic contexts. In this volume, we propose that a way forward

in this debate is to engage with a comparative regional theorization of relation notions by addressing different instances of relations analyzed ethnographically. Two analytical strategies are at play here. The first is to draw on the tradition of regional comparative theory in anthropology, taking into account the risks of cultural reductionism implicit in this particular heuristic. The second is to abstract general principles about the condition of existence and the generative potentials of relations through the empirical observation of what emerges as relations from the field. Regional thinking in anthropology has a long, problematic history, given a certain tendency to reduce local complexities by reinforcing key notions as defining cultural traits, such as hierarchy in India or dividuals in Melanesia, which contributes to the reiteration of often unquestioned definitions of cultural areas (Candea 2018: 336). However, despite its origin as an arbitrary artifact of anthropological practice, regional comparison can still be helpful for thinking laterally while keeping in mind the historical production of spatial boundaries for ideas and practices. Regionalism reminds us that notions emerge not only through analytical connections drawn by anthropologists, but also due to deep-rooted connections across multiple, linked places throughout the ethnographic locality (see Englund and Yarrow 2013).

In articulating a comparative analysis of indigenous South America, we are aware that we are bringing together different forms of social belonging and, thus, that we are implicitly contributing to a purification (*sensu* Latour 1993: 11) of indigenous notions and practices, which—observed in everyday life—are often highly hybridized with Western values imposed through colonial rule and/or globalization. Nevertheless, we believe that framing an analysis of concepts of relations in indigenous South America can reveal commonalities across historically connected social contexts, including the Chaco, Amazonia, central Brazil, the Southern Andes, and the Andean highlands, as discussed in the various contributions to this volume. Taken together, these contributions also suggest that rigid boundaries cannot be established between cultural areas in indigenous South America, unlike the customary division between lowland and highland ethnographic literature. Ultimately, a comparative analysis can shed light not simply on what types of relations take place in a given social milieu, but also on how relations could take place as instantiations as well as contradictions of local conceptions of how the world and the self are constituted ontologically. In any ethnographic setting, the abstraction of relations is necessarily produced by an encounter between existing theoretical frameworks and empirical observations that necessarily disturbs both "the expectations of a naive positivism and those of a theoretically omnipotent free play of ideas" (Venkatesan et al. 2012: 45).

In this volume, we ask what a theory of relations might look like by exploring differences and similarities in the ways in which relations are conceptualized across different settings in indigenous South America. The chapters

that comprise this collection are diverse in their analytical focus and social settings, but they share a common question: how can relations be conceptualized through ethnographic engagement with empirically observed connections between different peoples and entities in indigenous South America? In answering this question, we engage with native reflections on relations in order to expose some of "the kinds of connections these concepts make possible" (Strathern [1991] 2004: 51). In approaching local understandings of how relations constitute—and are constituted by—different entities, we propose that in indigenous South America the generative power of relations lies at the intersection between a particular ontological configuration of alterity, which we call 'dependence on otherness', and a set of norms and practices, which we refer to as an 'ethics of autonomy'. As argued by Overing (2003: 306), in indigenous South America, autonomy—rather than its impossibility—tends to figure as both the starting point and the product of the social. In this context, autonomy is not linked to individuality, a term that designates a sociological status and ideal whereby subjects are able to carry out separate existences. Rather, autonomy exists within a general asymmetrical social form responsible for shaping groups, formed by "subject[s] who [are] such only according to specific contexts of relations whose conditions (borrowing an expression of Guattari) are never given once and for all" (Lima 2005: 115).

Building on ethnographic insights on the centrality of autonomy as the guiding principle of social relations in the region, we approach the ideal of autonomy as an inherent feature of social and cosmological understandings whereby entities are constituted as the result of relations with others. In light of the constitutive potential in ideas about self and the world, we argue that autonomy, rather than a starting point in the field of social and cosmological relations, consists of an unstable achievement attained in the course of articulating relations with human and non-human others. On the one hand, beings exist as the result of their relational constitution; on the other, relations should be led by different beings in ways so as not to hinder the autonomy of both human and non-human constituents of the relation. The tension between autonomy and dependence on otherness therefore revolves around the recognition that engagement with others is not only a constitutive process for each being, but also an ethical stance toward autonomy, whereby each entity ideally needs to be freed from the control of others.

The contributions to this book ethnographically explore the tension between dependence on otherness and the ethics of autonomy by focusing on one particular process, which we label the 'taming of relations'. We propose this expression in reference to the precarious control over the relational constitution of beings in the quest for preserving the autonomy of each being. A focus on how relations are tamed in indigenous South America provides insight into how relations are understood as constitutive of entities, as well as how these

entities struggle to remain themselves while simultaneously being transformed by these relations (see Di Giminiani and González Gálvez 2018). An analysis of the ethics of autonomy, advanced ethnographically in the different contributions to this book, ultimately concentrates on the volatile project of taming relations as a way to ensure the autonomy and/or the stability of most entities inhabiting the cosmos.

This volume is certainly not the first attempt to reveal the entanglement of autonomy and dependence in indigenous South America. Several ethnographic works have already shown how moral principles of autonomy co-exist with conceptualizations of the constitution of beings whereby the constant reproduction of society and the cosmos depends on the incorporation of otherness (e.g., see Bonelli 2014; Course 2011; González Gálvez 2015; Lagrou 2000; Rivière 1984; Surrallés 2009; Vanzolini 2016; Vilaça 2010; Viveiros de Castro 2001; Walker 2013). However, this collection pushes these ethnographic insights further in two ways. First, it aims to situate the relation between autonomy and dependence on otherness not as an overall principle of indigenous South American society, but rather as an open question with multiple possible responses in different social contexts within the region. Its chapters explore this tension by going beyond the classic fields of inquiry (kinship, the body, warfare, and so on), while simultaneously trying to dismantle the geographical frontiers drawn by classical comparative ethnography in the region (i.e., between the Andean highlands and the tropical lowland regions). Second, we argue that the constitutive power of relations in indigenous South America is maintained by the moral and ontological imperative of being related in order to constitute oneself, but only up to the point of not losing oneself in the force of relations (cf. Course 2011). This is what we call the taming of relations—willfully engaging in and withdrawing from relations to take advantage of their force, but avoiding the homogenization of beings that might result from that force through outlining autonomy.

The contributions that make up this collection share an analytical focus on the tension between dependence on otherness and an ethics of autonomy, exemplifying the taming of relations throughout several fields. These fields include aesthetics, which Lagrou explores through a focus on the emergence of forms and patterns in the asymmetrical relations between spirit masters and humans in the context of shamanic practices among the Huni Kuin people (Brazil); pastoralism, the broader human-animal relation in which Pazzarelli situates his analysis of the treatment of animal body parts and herd-marking rituals in the articulation of human-animal relations in the Argentinean Andean highlands; greeting and perceiving, practices fundamental to the establishment of intersubjective relations balancing autonomy and dependence, as Bonelli illustrates in his analysis of the Pehuenche people (Chile); revenge, which Tola explores with particular attention to the unmaking of relations through sorcery

in Toba communities of the Argentinean Chaco; naming, a phenomenon that Vanzolini approaches by asking how the endowment and redistribution of names among the Aweti in central Brazil work to pluralize subjectivities rather than stabilize identities; and hospitality, which, as shown by Bacchiddu in the archipelago of Chiloé (Chile), offers a framework for reciprocal sociality that entails obligations exacerbated by unspoken rules of avoidance and silence. While this selection of case studies is not intended as a comprehensive list of relational fields in indigenous South America, it provides us with a comparative framework to examine how specific manifestations of local notions and practices of relations respond to general ontological questions on the nature of relations themselves.

In what follows, we will elaborate further on the idea of the taming of relations by situating this process within existing debates on dependence on otherness and the ethics of autonomy in indigenous South America. We will illustrate how contributions to this collection reflect and expand on existing debates on these two ethnographic phenomena. In concluding this introduction, we will consider the political implications of thinking about concepts of relations in indigenous South America, a social context impacted by the historical effects of colonialism.

Relations and Dependence on Otherness

The highly transformational ontologies found across indigenous South America have been generally described as constituted through ascertaining difference rather than sameness (Viveiros de Castro 2001). Similarity, thus, is a constant endeavor that can be partially achieved through actions that take place within porous boundaries (see Londoño Sulkin 2012; Tola 2012; Vilaça 2002; Viveiros de Castro 2014); identity, therefore, can only ever be a provisional and reversible state (Fausto and Heckenberger 2007: 4). Myths provide one of the most compelling illustrations of the ontological priority of difference over sameness in Amerindian worlds. As first noted by Lévi-Strauss ([1964] 1970), Amerindian myths tend to focus on the process by which all beings, who initially share the condition of humanity, become differentiated. Amerindian myths in fact reveal "an ontological regime ordered by a fluent intensive difference bearing on each of the points of a heterogeneous continuum, where transformation is anterior to form, relations superior to terms, and intervals interior to being" (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 67). In anthropological accounts of Amerindian cosmologies, otherness figures as a generative force in its own right. Otherness, in this case, refers to fluid and uncertain difference, which is framed by particular perspectives emerging from contingent relations. This is the reason why, for instance, beings that are generally considered consubstantial can be treated as potential

others in particular contexts. Among many Amerindian groups, death presents a quandary about the nature of loved ones as either entities whose essences continue to be reiterated in their predecessors or others with qualities hardly comparable to those of humans. As argued by Claudio Millacura Salas in his epilogue, the dead remain in the world of the living thanks to multiple processes of intergenerational consubstantialization. While in some indigenous contexts such a reiteration is desired also for its potential to protect indigenous knowledge and memory against colonial assimilation, it might be a source of concern in others. Among some indigenous groups, one of the main objectives of mortuary rituals is to disremember deceased relatives and friends and, in turn, to make them ontologically distinct entities (Taylor 1993: 665), in some cases harvesting their power (see Harris 2000: 27–50). Relations therefore allow the self to recognize any entity as an 'other' embodying the constitutive potential of otherness, essential to the ongoing renewal of both the subject and the cosmos.

Dependence on the other does not imply a mere intersubjective necessity, whereby the other is useful in framing dialogically what or who the subject is. Rather, it implies a predisposition to capture alterity in order to continue in the process of becoming something else, which is unique to each entity. Otherness is thus incorporated through relations, triggering their productive and transformational force. This idea was first advanced by Lévi-Strauss (1995) himself with the theory of 'opening to the other', which asserts that opposition does not result in a dialectical synthesis but rather in a dynamic disequilibrium, a transformational dyad where those related do not become indistinguishable from one another. In Lévi-Strauss's terms, the sustainment of the Amerindian cosmos "depends on this dynamic disequilibrium, for without it this system [of oppositions] would at all times be in danger of falling into a state of inertia" (ibid.: 63).

Anthropological accounts of South American cosmologies have drawn attention to three related principles: first, that humanity is a not a stable condition attached to a discrete category of being (e.g., Lima 1999; Viveiros de Castro 1998); second, that humans share an underlying sameness with non-human others (e.g., Kopenawa and Albert 2013; Lévi-Strauss [1964] 1970); and, third, that human practices are necessarily concerned with both the need for incorporating otherness and the necessity to differ from potential 'sames', such as non-humans (e.g., Ewart 2013; Londoño Sulkin 2012). One of the scenarios in which these three principles appear most noticeably is relations with animals. In many indigenous groups in the regions, animals are endowed with characteristics similar to those found in human social life, such as living in communities and farming. As indicated by Descola (2013: 9), "most of the entities that people the world are interconnected in a vast continuum inspired by unitary principles and governed by an identical regime of sociability" (see also Århem 1996). This precept is pivotal to the definition of animism also advanced by Descola (2013: 129), for whom this phenomenon consists of an ontological

regime characterized by an interiority—a field that includes the ability to feel and think, which is potentially shared across all beings—and an exteriority, the body in particular, which is the site of difference for each individual entity.

In anthropology, animism has generally been approached as the basis for Amerindian environmental understandings, especially with regard to many lowland societies for which hunting is the key articulator of interactions with non-human others (Descola 1996; Fausto 2012; Viveiros de Castro 1998). Yet it would certainly be misleading to think of animism as a definitive trait of all Amerindian societies. In some social contexts, for instance, pastoralism emerges as a key articulator for more stable human-animal hierarchies (see Allen 2016). Yet modes of engagement with non-humans that do not fit into common definitions of animism, as is the case in Andean societies, also tend to be characterized by the lack of clear-cut boundaries between humanity and animality, a point made by Pazzarelli in this book. In the Andes, animals and topographical features actively engage in relations of mutuality with humans (Allen 2015: 28–29). Mutual acts of rearing and growing are essential to the co-constitution of humans and non-humans such as plants and domestic animals (Cadena 2015: 103). While modes of engagement with animals, such as animism and pastoralism, could articulate different notions of non-human alterity, in indigenous South America this particular form of relations reflects an overall dependence on otherness, a phenomenon central to the understanding of concepts of relations in this region.

Anthropological observations of the dependence on otherness in indigenous South America not only have considered interactions with non-humans, but also have permeated the analysis of conflictive relations with human others, particularly colonizers and enemies in warfare. In many of the region's indigenous societies, the rationale behind warfare is not annihilation or colonial conquest, but rather incorporation, especially of the enemies' intrinsic power and vitality (see Fausto 2012). As indicated, for instance, in Bacchiddu's chapter, incorporation of hostile others—always a temporary and uncertain solution—can occur only through hospitality, a form of inducement involving offers of food and drink in a domestic context, with the goal of forging alliances. In some indigenous groups, enemies are incorporated more radically, so that customary rituals prescribing the isolation of warriors from society are performed to avoid the dangerous effects of the enemies' blood on the warriors' bodies (Conklin 2001: 142). Shamanism is also understood in terms of both predation and vengeance (Fausto 2012; Whitehead 2002).[1] The idea that the continuity of society depends, among many things, on the consumption of enemies is further reflected in the fact that in some societies, the very term 'enemy' applies both to war captives and hunted animals (Santos-Granero 2009).[2]

Ethnographic accounts of engagement with alterity in indigenous South America have tended to characterize other-becoming as a fluid, transformative

process (Gow 1991; Kelly 2011; Vilaça 2010) extending to inter-ethnic relations and colonial politics, highlighting Amerindian societies' ability to cosmologically adopt and incorporate foreign elements regarded as powerful and necessary (Bacchiddu 2017; Hugh-Jones 1992). The theme of other-becoming figures consistently in ethnographic works about lowland societies, which are characterized by highly transformative ontologies. This theme is less present in literature on Andean societies, where subjectivities correspond to more stable categories. While other-becoming in indigenous South America has largely been represented anthropologically through a denial of assimilation logics (see González Gálvez 2016; Gow 2001), irreversible transformation into canonical others is often recognized as a possibility (Course 2013; High 2015). In some cases, engagement with colonial culture appears at once as a means to resist assimilation through the adoption of legal and political strategies and as a source of further assimilation (Di Giminiani 2018).

The ambivalent nature of other-becoming in indigenous South America as a process that can be both open-ended and irreversible, depending on the different contexts where it unfolds, reflects a general concern over the need for otherness. Although it is an ontological imperative for the reproduction of the cosmos, the incorporation of otherness remains a latent threat to the ethics of autonomy observed in the region, as will be shown in the next section. The ethnographic insights offered by this collection suggest that the need for otherness requires an ideal balance between autonomy and dependence on otherness, an effort that we refer to in this volume as the taming of relations. A balance between autonomy and dependence on otherness is built around a dual notion of relations observed in many social contexts across indigenous South America: on the one hand, beings exist as the result of their relational constitution; on the other, relations are performed by different beings in ways so as not to hinder the autonomy of both humans and non-human constituents of the relation. The ethnographic cases offered in this book highlight how the generative power of relations rests on the possibility of their taming, which is necessarily partial given the recognized constitutive power of relations. The taming of relations is ultimately necessary in order to avoid the obliteration of the singularity of each being, given the potential of relations to constantly constitute and reconstitute beings beyond their intentions.

Relations and the Ethics of Autonomy

In anthropological accounts of indigenous South America, autonomy figures as a central theme (see Lima 2005; Overing 2003; Rivière 1984). The relevance given to autonomy in the anthropology of the region has developed as a reaction against communitarian misrepresentation of indigenous societies.

As indicated by Overing and Passes (2000b: 2), the creation of any collectivity requires a moral gaze that is always other-directed, as "the autonomous I is ever implicated within and joined with an intersubjectivity." We have previously seen that relations in Amerindian cosmologies are typically characterized by their constitutive power, which is the motive behind engagement with otherness as an ontological imperative. However, such a power should not be left unrestrained, as it may result in the submission of one of the entities connected to the other. The singularity of each being depends both on the generative potential engagement with otherness and the autonomy carved out in the midst of relational fields through practices aimed at partially removing the individual from these fields and curtailing dependence on otherness. Ethnographically, the taming of relations takes different forms, such as defending personal actions and intentions (Course 2011; Londoño Sulkin 2012), rejecting and avoiding commands and direct instruction (McCallum 1996; Walker 2013), and taking special care when relating to beings beyond the convivial unit of co-resident kin (Gow 1991; Vilaça 2005).

We consider these different attempts to reinforce autonomy as part of an ethics that revolves around human concerns and doubts about the effects that dependence on otherness has on personal autonomy. A focus on autonomy through the lens of ethics means that the taming of relations cannot be reduced to a stable ontological configuration, but rather unfolds as an ongoing ethical context characterized by human uncertainties and indeterminacies (see Di Gimininiani and González Gálvez 2018). Highlighted ethnographically by the contributors to this volume, the ethics of autonomy resemble the general features of what Das (2012: 134) has defined as ordinary ethics, namely, a "dimension of everyday life in which we are not aspiring to escape the ordinary but rather to descend into it as a way of becoming moral subjects."

The analysis of the ethics of autonomy necessarily requires a focus on domestic life, a relational context that has been at the core of anthropological research in indigenous South America over the last four decades (see, e.g., Ewart 2013; González Gálvez 2016; McCallum 2001; Overing 1975, 1989, 2003; Tola 2012; Vilaça 2002). Research has shown that the carving out of autonomy unfolds in a general context where human collectivities are fabricated substantially rather than symbolically in the form of group membership. The fabrication of human collectivities depends on actions directed toward the body, which, as first noted by Seeger et al. (1979: 14), constitutes the locus of substance and essence in many indigenous contexts in the region (see also Brightman et al. 2014; Vilaça 2005; Viveiros de Castro 1998). As Rivière (1984: 84) poignantly reminds us, the reproduction of society is not conceptualized in these groups as independent from the bodily reproduction of persons put in motion by multiple forms of relations. Among the different ways in which human collectivities can be momentarily established is conviviality, a

morally praised sociability to which cooperative relations are usually ascribed (see Overing and Passes 2000b). Similarly, commensality—the act of sharing food and affect—is endowed with the potential for consubstantialization, the process by which similar substances are shared among different individuals (see Harvey 1998; Viegas 2003; Weismantel 1995).[3] Consubstantialization is particularly relevant to the distinction between affinity and consanguinity. As claimed by Viveiros de Castro (2001: 19), in indigenous South America affinity appears "as the given dimension of the cosmic relational matrix, while consanguinity falls within the scope of human action and intention." Commensality and co-residence are the necessary conditions for affines to turn into consanguineal kin (see Canessa 1999; Gow 1991; McCallum 2001).

The existence of any collectivity depends on social practices through which bodies become similar. Within a general scenario where human collectivities are temporarily constituted through bodily practices among individuals, autonomy consists of an unfinished individual achievement that takes place through an intentional withdrawal from these relations, a process that we have referred to as the taming of relations. The particular ethics of autonomy that can be ethnographically observed in indigenous South America center on a form of contingent engagement with otherness that ideally seeks to preserve the autonomy of oneself and others. The constitution of human collectivities made possible by conviviality, co-residence, and other practices potentially contributing to consubstantiality exemplifies the unstable balance between the need to incorporate otherness and to be transformed by it, both of which are necessary for the ongoing constitution of oneself and the world, on the one hand, and the need to ensure autonomy so that individualities can be partially stabilized, on the other. In the rest of this book, the taming of relations will be represented mostly as a project falling within the realm of human intentionality, particularly those attempts to mediate between a necessary dependence on otherness and the moral need for ensuring autonomy. The chapters following this introduction will reflect and expand on this theme by ethnographically examining practices through which the generative power of relations is tamed and entities are stabilized.

Writing about Relations: The Organization of This Book

The chapters composing this book vary considerably in their regional focus and organization. The six ethnographic cases presented in the following pages offer the readers a comparative overview of how relations can be objectified, represented, and conceptually transformed in indigenous South American contexts. The last three chapters consist of theoretical and reflexive engagements with the potentials of thinking through relations in general as well as specific

relations, such as in Millacura's epilogue on death and past, in forging new sensibilities toward representative practices of Western and indigenous alterity in anthropology and beyond. The six ethnographic cases delve into the ethical and ontological tension between the productive potentials of relations and concerns over autonomy. In dealing with uncertainties concerning the representation of this tension, each chapter inevitably tends to lean more toward one pole of the model we have in mind in this book. This is the case for three chapters (those by Tola, Vanzolini, and Bonelli).

Tola's chapter aptly illustrates the configuration of beings as the embodied result of multiple connections. In Qom society, the body is a permeable, porous device that is co-constituted by a multiplicity of beings that come in contact with it, while at the same time co-constituting other porous bodies of other beings. This receptivity and openness toward the other produces a permanent relatedness, a constant movement of expansion and extension that Tola calls a "relational excess." This particular excess leaves subjects vulnerable to the malevolent manipulation of specific bodily components by sorcerers. Persons are constantly forced to create fissures within social networks in order to cut and partially interrupt this relational flow, establishing what the author defines as an "individuation" of the subject, that is, a partial or incomplete restoration of his or her singularity. In Tola's ethnography, the taming of relations finds a rather dramatic solution, as it implies murderous revenge—the only possible tool to disentangle entities from one another when they are connected through deadly acts of sorcery. When a close relative dies, the family may decide to avenge the death through practices performed on the dying body by a specialist in revenge. Yet under specific circumstances, relatives intentionally decide not to take revenge. As shown by Tola, the relation between revenge and anti-revenge is a key aspect of a broader Qom understanding of personhood in which individuation needs to be achieved to avoid the dangers of generalized indifferentiation.

Vanzolini's chapter examines the need for otherness through a focus on the practice of naming among the Aweti of central Brazil. Rather than exclusively acting as labels of identity or as noun substantives, names serve as mechanisms to produce, delineate, and activate relations between different people. As Vanzolini shows, names do not confer a "substantial identity," but rather add qualities to their recipients over the course of their lifetime. Furthermore, they make relations visible while constituting persons, thus embodying counter-identity devices. Their transmission does not fix or determine a person's identity; instead, it allows for the possibility of multiplying what a person is through time and via different name-givers. Others are needed insofar as they trigger the development of personhood for each subject. However, no person's constitution is subdued to the will of others. Hence, the uncontrolled productivity of relations needs to be tamed to guarantee a certain stability—at least

within the co-resident group—so as to allow certain degrees of sameness to appear and, through them, differentiation from the non-resident others. Family names connect people to certain kin groups and distinguish them from others, enhancing the intensity and persistence of certain relations to the detriment of others. The acquisition of names and the struggle to develop a unique self reflect a broader tension between the need for otherness and the maintenance of autonomy.

By examining practices of greeting and dying among the Pehuenche of southern Chile, Bonelli's contribution also emphasizes the need for otherness. More specifically, his chapter highlights the relevance of seeing and touching as "key ontological operators for stabilizing the tension between autonomy and dependence on otherness." Building on Viveiros de Castro's (2001) concept of 'potential affinity', Bonelli tackles the notion of perception as an entry point to explore the sensorial constitution of persons in Pehuenche contexts. Greeting and dying are two situations that clearly show the duality of autonomy and dependence on others, insofar as they are respectively linked to the mutual recognition of similarity and to the articulation of an ontological separation between different beings. The possibility that deceased persons might turn into evil spirits that cannot be perceived fully through sight and touch is central to the articulation of relations with deceased others. The analysis of greeting and touching in Pehuenche contexts allows Bonelli to contribute to Amerindian debates on the need for otherness through a specific engagement with speculative ethics and the question of alterity.

The chapters by Lagrou, Pazzarelli, and Bacchiddu place greater attention on the taming of relations through a focus on ethical concerns over autonomy. Based on extended ethnographic research among the Huni Kuin people of Western Amazonia, Lagrou's chapter explores the mythical spirit figure of Yube, to whom people relate through alternating identification and differentiation. To establish a relation with Yube and thus become a shaman, apprentices have to ingest him through a substance, which allows Yube to be part of the individual's body and in turn allows the apprentice "to see through his eyes." However, in order for the apprentice to adopt Yube's power, Yube must be willing to see and devour him or her. This particular form of other-becoming is aesthetically expressed in songs, weaving, and painting. These expressions represent fundamental and indispensable guides for a successful and safe process of other-becoming, leading people through dangerous visionary meanderings in the animal world and the world of the dead. Lagrou outlines a theory of Amerindian relational aesthetics that exposes the self as constantly involved in a process of becoming and always in a state of in-betweenness, which prevents the possibility of independence in any form. Different aesthetic expressions guide the individual in the taming of relations with powerful non-humans in the midst of ceaseless processes of other becomings that lie beyond human control.

Pazzarelli's chapter explores the mutuality of interdependent life forces in the Argentinean Andes by focusing on shepherds, their sheep, and the "folds, wraps, and relations" that are involved between them. In this particular context, relations are organized through analogies, reflections, and correspondences, known as *señas*, which inextricably connect people, animals, forces, and actions and determine knowledge about the past and the future. Butchering an animal and handling its meat and intestines in the correct manner are crucial to ensure fertility, health, and success in herding activities. This is embodied in a vital relational force, *suerte*, which has a material manifestation in the animal's intestines. *Señas* refer to possible correspondences and ontological continuities between the world of the sheep and that of the shepherds. Shepherds may manipulate *señas*—encouraging or deviating from correspondences, fabricating or hiding similarities—to trick predators and avert physical and cosmological losses. The possibility of manipulating relations through physical intervention highlights the significance of taming relations so as to momentarily connect or disconnect specific forces and thus ensure the reproduction of life. The corral works as a sort of fractal structure inasmuch as the redistribution of objects, animals' guts, and human bodies within it reproduces a general continuity of being among different entities. The manipulation of *señas* within a corral, however, never entails an erasure of difference between the human and animal world. While entities are interconnected, they also strive to maintain their personal autonomy, thus making the manipulation of *señas* an uncertain and unpredictable process.

The discussion of the tension between autonomy and dependence on others continues in Bacchiddu's analysis of hospitality in the Chiloé archipelago in southern Chile. Bacchiddu examines how hospitality and the imperative of reciprocity articulate relations in the egalitarian ethics of a remote insular community where the other is first and foremost a guest, one who must be "properly attended to." A strict code, designed to restrain the generative potential of relations, is made evident during the visits people pay one another in their households. Relations play out in dialogic acts of visiting where people alternatively take the role of host or guest, attending or being attended to, offering or receiving, granting or asking favors. This interchangeability of roles, which works to establish asymmetrical relations, weakens the continuous declaration of sameness and equality, and characterizes people's perception of their community. Through the regular alternation of reciprocal roles, asymmetry in relations is controlled. While all individuals are autonomous in choosing whether to consent to or deny such requests, attempts to break free from relational obligations always create serious social and cosmological conflict.

The tension between dependence and autonomy highlighted in the ethnographic cases presented in this volume are tackled in the two commentaries by Aparecida Vilaça and Marilyn Strathern on some of the potential implications

of thinking ethnographically about relations as local concepts rather than taken-for-granted heuristics. Vilaça's afterword focuses on kinship as a central mode of relating in indigenous South America. More specifically, it explores the key figure of the brother-in-law as a quintessential articulator of social relations, inasmuch as it contains the extremes of enmity and consanguinity, hostility and kinship. Vilaça shows how the relatively recent acquisition of the Portuguese term *parente*, roughly translatable as 'relative' in English, used by indigenous people in Amazonia only in inter-ethnic contexts to differentiate indigenous from non-indigenous interlocutors, has become a sort of generic 'twisted term', deviating from its original meaning term. *Parente* has become a generic term for 'relation' that excludes real kinspeople and corresponds to what Viveiros de Castro has indicated as the generic term for Amazonian relations: brother-in-law. Central to this reflection is the ambiguity—and richness—offered by the possibility of multiple perspectives on relations included within a single term. Strathern's commentary was initially intended as a contribution to a special issue on Amerindian aesthetics published by Maloca. However, it engages with many of the suggestions about ethnographic concepts put forward by the contributors to this volume. Strathern brings to the fore the general heuristic challenge posed by this collection: to think about relations by reflecting on them from social milieus in a way that anthropologists often do not consider, that is, as links between self-contained units or abstractions. Aesthetic registers are unequivocally part of anthropologists' analytics in their effort to make relations apparent in any context, as they are encountered always under different epistemic and ontological premises.

To think about relations as ethnographic concepts inevitably leads us to reflect back on specific relations that, more than others, highlight the effects and logics of particular forms of relating. Of these relations as phenomena, death holds a central place. Death might appear to involve the erasure of relations. However, as with other non-relations (Strathern 2020: 101), death does not signal the absence of a relational context; rather, it concerns the active construction of new relations through the denial of others. This book ends with an epilogue on death and memory among indigenous people in Chile by Claudio Millacura, based on his intervention in the seminar leading to this volume. Relations with the dead and the past are not simply constitutive of a sense of belonging, even when they contribute to the enduring efforts of indigenous people to preserve inherited knowledge vis-à-vis ongoing processes of colonial assimilation. Relations with the dead are central to a process of consubstantialization that the living do not simply experience, but need to actively engage with as part of today's indigenous struggle to endure. Cemeteries appear as metaphors of a collective 'we', the indigenous people in Chile, to which Millacura belongs, and whose contemporary experience continues to be shaped by violent deaths, both past and present.

Conclusion: Relations as Concepts and Indigenous Struggles against Colonialism

In this introduction, we have engaged with the anthropological examination of relations as both empirical connections and concepts by focusing on one question raised in ethnographic literature on indigenous South America: how can relations be entangled in ways that are constitutive of entities, yet do not obliterate the autonomy of the beings involved in them? An answer to this question lies in particular local manifestations of a process observed throughout the region, that is, the taming of relations, in which ontological and ethical concerns converge. This process appears central to an understanding of one fundamental set of relations—those with colonizers—upon which the continuity of indigenous lived worlds depends. Colonialism is in fact not only a historical factor that has contributed to the obliteration and transformation of many forms of relations and their understandings among indigenous groups in the region. It is also an ongoing structure of domination that indigenous people continuously cope with, among many ways, by reasserting and redefining concepts and practices of relations that sustain autonomous forms of world-making threatened by colonialism. As Millacura invites us to reflect upon in the epilogue, destruction and violence against indigenous people in the past are constitutive of the epistemic erasures in the present, given the active role of the dead in informing present-day senses of belonging among indigenous people. While the ethnographic cases presented in this book do not examine relations between indigenous peoples and colonizers in detail, as noted by Vilaça in her afterword, a focus on relations as concepts in indigenous contexts can help us to reflect further on some of the effects that colonialism and resistance against it hold in today's indigenous societies.

In this book, we understand colonialism as an ongoing historical process that is responsible not only for material forms of dispossession, but also for the attempted erasure of those ontological principles upon which colonized groups experience and understand the world. It is a material process, because colonialism works to rearrange relations between different groups into a "relatively secure or sedimented set of hierarchical social relations that continue to facilitate the *dispossession* of indigenous peoples of their lands and self-determining authority" (Coulthard 2014: 7; emphasis in original). Despite the introduction of multicultural policies aimed at valorizing indigenous heritage and rights over self-determination, dispossession continues to define settler-colonial relations in Latin America (see Rivera Cusicanqui 2016). This is because, from a governmental point of view, indigenous spaces, and in particular natural resources therein, continue to serve as commons necessary for economic growth and development affecting the nation as a whole. With no exception, all of the indigenous groups whose lives are ethnographically represented in

this volume are imbricated in colonial relations. Their lived worlds are part of national territories and therefore are impacted by different forms of dispossession, from more visible projects of natural resource extraction to the historical effects of land shortages and confinement in institutionalized territories. Colonialism also concerns the erasure of ontological and ethical principles due to discrimination and assimilation brought about by processes of nation building, including the spiraling effects of the educational fields, evangelization, and inclusion in the market.

The first implication of the analysis of indigenous practices and notions of relations pursued in this book is that such practices and notions inform engagement with colonizers at the same time as they are redefined by colonial relations. As noted by Vilaça in the afterword to this book, most of the chapters of this book engage only tangentially with actual relations with colonizers. This is a key issue of critiques against ethnological tendencies to emphasize the particularity of indigenous worlds and contrast them with the broader social and economic contexts in which they are embedded. The removal of indigenous social worlds from broader colonial relations is, in this case, the result of an analytical abstraction, a model of thinking that is especially concerned with the search for local principles. However, we believe that relations with colonizers are particularly relevant, as they lead to the emergence of political and ethical concerns over what is considered the right way of establishing relations. Colonizers are usually perceived as one of many others with whom one can relate productively. Nonetheless, relations with colonizers entail a severe ontological risk—that of falling victim to domination through complete dependence on powerful others and irreversible transformation into colonial others caused by assimilation pressures (see Course 2013). Rather than assuming a utopian and complete withdrawal from colonial relations, we believe that the taming of relations can serve as a cautionary tale about the search for an ideal balance between refusal and adoption of colonial practices and notions. The taming of colonial relations materializes in the frail balance between capturing what is desirable from colonizers while struggling to remain different from them. The significance of this precarious balance can be found in different settings, including mythical accounts about white people's power (Ireland 1988), trade exchanges (Grotti 2013), and religious and shamanic practices in which features of colonial culture have been resignified (Millán 2019).

The second implication of our focus on the understanding of colonialism in the region concerns the political and analytical possibilities and limitations of articulating dialogically indigenous and settler-colonial models of relations. As shown earlier, one of the key critical issues behind thinking about the political outcomes of developing an indigenous theory of relations concerns the risk of treating indigenous worlds as a 'real model'—as if they occur in isolation from the colonial contexts in which they currently exist. As posited by Hunt (2014),

the problem of abstracting indigenous notions from the colonial contexts in which they are found is that non-Western ontologies are reduced to specific nature-culture arrangements and lose their capacity to intervene in their hegemonic counterparts. Therefore, any examination of the ontological possibilities of existence of relations should consider not only how relations of domination are displayed in the scenarios where anthropologists carry out their work, but also how the theorization of these scenarios can contribute to the epistemological and practical superpositions of one reality, in particular that of liberal modernity, over others (Hage 2012: 302). Engaging with local conceptualizations—of relations, for example—can highlight the presence of "ontological disagreement" (Cadena 2015: 280), that is, the recognition of the impossibility of a permanent consensus on the plurality of how the world could be, even in contexts where the supposed imposition of modern coloniality has left little space for indigenous ontologies to thrive, a point most visible in the disparity between academic and indigenous knowledge that Millacura draws attention to in his epilogue.

This edited volume is not intended to be an examination of ethnographic diversity as an end in itself. Rather, by bringing together contributions that highlight the nature of relations as concepts in indigenous South America, it can be read as an invitation to recognize how comparative ethnographic research, despite the inevitable risks of essentialism, can help to illustrate the persistence of locally connected articulations of complex questions—such as what relations are and do—vis-à-vis the homogenizing effects of modern coloniality.

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Notes

1. In the Andes, warfare has customarily taken the form of both uncontrolled violence and ritualized opposition, reflecting a general cosmological principle of dualism that is present in many of the area's indigenous groups (Platt 2010: 317).
2. This point is closely associated with past instances of ritualistic cannibalism, such as the Tupinambá case at the time of European conquest, which constituted the ultimate form of a broader system of warfare vengeance (Viveiros de Castro 2011: 101).
3. The phenomenon of consubstantialization extends also to the constitution of gendered subjectivities. In indigenous South America, gender appears as largely performative, being acquired over time through practices that are always socially defined and constrained (Canessa 2012: 146).

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