

2007 SALSA CONFERENCE
PANEL AND PAPER ABSTRACTS
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Miguel N. Alexiades (University of Kent)

“Headwaters of the past: Ethnoecology, memory, and the struggle for nature in a western Amazonian landscape”

Dwelled in, travelled, utilized, remembered and evoked in many and continuously changing ways, the Ese Eja landscape is filled with living objects, topographical features, place names and stories. Together, these different elements speak of a complex history involving a continuous transformation of social and ecological relations. This paper examines how these transformations unfold within a booming environmental service economy, in which the meanings, access and history of this landscape are contested in new ways.

Giovanna Bacchiddu (University of St. Andrews)

From mouse to lion: Jokes and their counter-value in Apiao society

This paper explores issues of communication through jokes and lies. In Apiao, a small island of southern Chile with 700 inhabitants, joking is a typical communicational feature between close relatives, neighbors, and friends; sexual jokes, nicknames and teasing are commonly heard as a device to build up and display social relations. Jokes are based on partial alteration of the truth, with the explicit purpose of laughing. However, the boundaries between jokes and lies are often blurred. “From a mouse, they make a lion,” as they say in the island. A lie – the deliberately harmful transformation of events – entails invention of calumnies and false stories to expressively hurt people. Where does the joke end, and the lie begin? The paper will describe the genesis of several jokes and lies, putting them in their ethnographic context, and will examine the implications of this common social practice for those involved in it. Following Nancy Munn’s notion of value transformation (1986), lies are viewed as the “counter-value” of jokes – the transformation and subversion of a positive value necessary to the well-being of the community.

Laura Bathurst (University of the Pacific, Stockton)

“Being a good person: Give and take among the Tacana of Northern Bolivia”

In this paper, I explore the social value of theft as a leveling mechanism in the assertively egalitarian Tacana community of Santa Rosa, Bolivia. First, I examine the material basis for Santa Rosan egalitarianism. Then I turn to the social enforcement of egalitarianism by both overt and covert means, including theft. Third, I look at egalitarianism as a value, tied to Santa Rosan ideas of what makes someone a good person. Finally, I link this material, social, and moral

order to the conflicted relationships between Santa Rosans and outsiders with whom they interact, outsiders whom, in the eyes of Santa Rosans, often act like bad people. The actions and reactions of Santa Rosans and their neighbors to governmental and humanitarian aid are rooted in this interrelated social, cultural, and material universe, which provides a basis for their understanding of these interventions.

Robert L. Carneiro (American Museum of Natural History)

“Cannibalism, a palatable/unpalatable reality of Amazonian ethnology”

Because of William Arens’ book, *The Man-Eating Myth*, many people – including even some anthropologists – came to doubt that cannibalism had ever existed. But the evidence in favor of its occurrence is overwhelming, especially that from such Amazonian tribes as the Tupinamba and the Callinago. I will describe these as well as other more recent instances of cannibalism in Amazonia, and will discuss the motivations and other features of the practice.

Michael L. Cepek (University of Chicago)

“Of worlds and their creators: Difference and power in Cofán politics”

In this paper, I explore the ethnically ambiguous leadership of lowland South American messianic movements. Many of the prophets, shamans, and headmen who directed these episodes of indigenous political action have been identified as mestizo colonists, Andean religious assistants, European missionaries, and Afro-Peruvian guerrillas, to name just a few of the examples. I focus on the contemporary case of Randy Borman, the trilingual, genealogically Euro-American, and indigenous-identifying “gringo chief” who has become the most important leader of the Cofán people of Amazonian Ecuador. Through an ethnographic analysis of Borman’s socio-political position, I make a case for reconceptualizing the relationship between myth, history, cosmology, agency and identity in indigenous Amazonian political movements.

Beth A. Conklin (Vanderbilt University)

“Lessons from the Amazon?”

If we lowland South Americanists were asked to pinpoint our work’s relevance to “big” questions about the future of humanity and the planet, what would we say? Amazonia has long held a privileged place in western imaginations and intellectual thought about nature and culture. In the 1980s-90s, cultural ecology, ethnobiology, and ethnographies of indigenous resource management, consumption, labor, and leisure became powerful factors in environmental policy debates and quality of life discussions. Today, new research on anthropogenesis challenges conservation orthodoxies, while ethnographers grappling with how to interpret and support native communities’ responses to modernity challenge orthodox primitivisms that underlie the romance with the

indigenous in popular critiques of capitalism and globalization. Taking the often maddeningly unromantic story of the Wari of western Brazil as its ethnographic orientation, this paper invites reflection on what Amazonian ethnology has to contribute to critical thought about alternatives in environmentalism and global consumer culture.

Loretta A. Cormier (University of Alabama, Birmingham)
“Ethnoprimateology and the neo-tropical Malarías”

The importance of human cultural behavior in the disease ecology of malaria has been clear at least since Livingstone’s (1958) groundbreaking study describing the interrelationships among iron tools, swidden horticulture, vector proliferation, and increased frequency of sickle cell trait in tropical Africa. In tropical South America, little attention has been given to cultural behaviors among indigenous peoples that may affect the disease ecology of malaria. One area of potential significance for malaria involves the relationship between human groups and Neo-tropical monkeys that may be both hunted as food and kept as pets. Such close interactions set up an environment where diseases can be shared. Neo-tropical monkeys have long been suspected to serve as reservoirs for malaria in lowland South America, serving as amplifying agents in a forest enzootic cycle. This paper will focus on the relationship between human *Plasmodium malariae* and Neo-tropical monkey *P. brasiliense* in Amazonia.

William H. Crocker (Smithsonian Institution)
“The nature and uses of the Canela diary program: An invitation to use archived personal documents”

In 1966, three Canela Indians of Brazil started writing diaries about their lives and tribal events for me. Since then, I have collected about 150,000 manuscript pages and 80,000 hours on tape. About 22 diarists have contributed through the years, though never more than 12 at a time. Since 1995, almost all diaries have been spoken on tape and are in Portuguese. Earlier, they were mostly written in Canela, but some authors translated their work into Portuguese. Excerpts from the diaries will be included in the paper. One set provides different points of view on a recent murder. Other sets show how I have used diarists’ statements to supplement points made in my publications. I will outline collection procedures, storage characteristics, and access possibilities. The principal purpose of this paper is to inform colleagues such as you as well as any interested people about the existence and nature of this collection. I want to interest a few qualified individuals in using these primary materials.

Carmen da Silva (Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso)
“The trauma of losing one’s society: Xetá women who survived the genocide”

When the genocide of the Xetá Indians was brought to an end around 1964, three young girls were among the eight survivors. Each of the three developed her own form of resistance against the impact of the traumas suffered after the sudden and violent separation from her society. Their memories of their tragic past remained dormant, or forgotten, until the beginning of the anthropological research opened a space for their speech. Then they could tell their stories, and were reunited with their fellow survivors, which enabled them to reawaken these memories, with the help of the different strategies employed during the course of the ethnographic work. This paper will present a brief history of the life of one Xetá woman who survived the extermination of her society. Brought up by a non-indigenous family, unable to share the codes of her culture with others, isolated and victimized by the tragedies and dramas that touched her life, this girl still identified herself and recognized herself as a member of a society socio-culturally distinct from the one she had lived in since the age of 7.

Warren R. DeBoer (Queens College, CUNY)

“Palladia, prisoners, and parole: Units of cultural transmission in Ucayali deep history”

The culture history of the Ucayali Basin, Peru, is characterized by long periods of continuity punctuated by brief episodes of seeming disjuncture. In Donald Lathrap’s vision, disjuncture was to be explained in terms of wholesale demographic shifts in genes, cognates, and potsherds, while continuity could be seen as ordinary “descent with modification” resulting from frail human memories, mutable practices, and an unspecified dose of selection. This paper attempts to problematize both continuity and disjuncture in terms of three factors relevant to the transmission and replication of cultural information: the role of material objects of variable longevity (including culturally marked features of landscape) in canalizing culture change; the movement of human bodies across cultural boundaries and the belated enculturation programs designed to convert such migrants into loyal culture-bearers; and the extent to which language promotes or impedes these material flows.

Meredith Dudley (Tulane University)

“Intermediation, ethnogenesis, and the enigmatic Apolistas: Interpreting Arawak influence in the Bolivian piedmont”

The Apolistas are often referenced as an example of the westward expansion of Arawak peoples and involvement with Andean-Amazonian intermediation routes. Yet who are the enigmatic Apolistas? Although treated by D’Orbigny as a distinct ethnic group, the term “Apolista” derives from the name for the Franciscan mission center of Apolo, founded in 1696 with Lecos, Aguachile, and Pamainos peoples. The term appears in the documentary record at the same time as other “chunchos” tribes disappear. Apolistas were associated with the Lapacho language, which appears to have an Arawak substrate. Although

Apolistas are considered extinct, descendants of Lapacho-speakers form an important component of the contemporary indigenous movement to recuperate Lecos heritage. This paper will examine historical processes of ethnogenesis that occurred in this dynamic region of Andean-Amazonian interaction, and discuss Arawak cultural affinities exhibited by the contemporary Lecos of Apolo.

Love Eriksen and Alf Hornborg (Lund University)

“Places and paths: An attempt to assess and map the archaeological and historical evidence of long-distance exchange relations in pre-colonial Amazonia”

In *A Phenomenology of Landscape*, Christopher Tilley mentions two fundamental components in the archaeological understanding of landscapes: (1) the significance of place names as constitutive of the very existence of “places,” and (2) the role of “paths” connecting places as codifications of social processes. In reconstructing pre-colonial landscapes in Amazonia, we can assemble various kinds of evidence for the existence of both “places” and “paths.” Places can be inferred from e.g. archaeological sites, petroglyphs, and oral history. In contrast to areas with ancient road networks, such as the Andes, the closest thing to “paths” in Amazonia is the system of rivers that served as the main arteries of travel and trade. This paper is a work-in-progress report from a project hoping to reconstruct the nature, extent, and time-depth of trade routes in greater Amazonia 500 BC to AD 1500. Using GIS cartography, the ambition is to plot various long-distance connections inferred from archaeology and ethnohistory and their distribution in time and space.

Michael Heckenberger (University of Florida)

“Amazonian natures: The body, the land, and the spaces in between”

This paper explores the dynamic relations between native peoples and their lands in ancient Amazonia. First, it examines broad patterns in material culture and built environment in several well-known areas along the Amazon (Marajó, Santarém, Manaus) to reveal aspects of dwelling and anthropogenic landscapes. Second, it compares these to patterns in the southern Amazon, particularly among related Arawakan speaking groups (Baure, Pareci, and Xinguano). Third, the Xinguano case is highlighted to briefly elucidate the environmental history of this one region from late pre-Columbian times to the present and explore the importance of human agency in creating anthropogenic landscapes and the historical conditions of their change and changes in how they are analyzed and portrayed by Western commentators. Finally, it asks the questions: what constitutes social complexity and are there things about it that are uniquely produced by or produce what is commonly construed as Amazonian “nature.”

H. Dieter Heinen and Rafael Gassón (Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas, Caracas)

“Levantamiento de los caños y asentamientos de los indígenas”

En el Delta del Orinoco hay por los menos cuatro idiomas que influenciaron la toponimia: el Warao (en sus dos acepciones Waraowitu y Siawani o Chaguanes); Aruaca (Lokono); Caribe (Kar’iña, Ye’kwana y Pemon); y Criolla (Jotaroo; vernáculo Venezolano). Los Criollos de Tucupita tratan de implementar los conceptos geográficos europeos de cursos hidrográficos largos. Así, la mayoría de los caños grandes tienen una sola denominación mientras que los nombres Warao son típicamente puntuales. Sin embargo, este esfuerzo es parcial y, además lleva a graves distorsiones, como se ve en los caños (mal llamado) Jobure, Wina Morena, Capure, etc. demuestra. El propósito de la presente ponencia-proyecto es definir, y en casos recuperar, la toponimia indígena. En lo siguiente presentamos algunos casos que justifican esta tarea e indicamos los procedimientos previstos, así que apuntamos las diferencias elementales entre los conceptos hidrográficos Warao y Criollo.

Stephen Hugh-Jones (Cambridge University)

Keynote Address:

“DIY Anthropology: Some reflections on self-reflection in northwest Amazonia”

In this talk I will consider the series Colecao Narradores Indigenas do Rio Negro, eight volumes of mythology and other materials published by ISA/FOIRN, from several standpoints. I will consider the processes and the material from the differing perspectives of Tukanoans and Baniwa (looking at both contemporary issues and traditional systems of rank and prestige), as well as the perspectives and the implications for those of us who work in lowland South America. What does it mean to us when indigenous peoples are the producers of their own anthropology?

Sara Jamieson (University of New Mexico)

“Wayuu girls’ initiation rituals in an urban context”

This paper examines the changes in form and meaning that the Wayuu girls’ puberty ritual is undergoing in the urban context of Maracaibo, Venezuela. As Wayuu migrate to the city from the rural peninsula, they continue to emphasize that this rite is about the appropriate moral and physical formation of girls. The rite should produce a person who is *alaula sain* (has the spirit of an old woman), who is *koojutsu* (socially respected) and will remain chaste until marriage. Using narratives of mothers and daughters, I show how mothers’ motivations to perform the puberty rite for their daughters reflect redefinitions of what it means to be *alaula sain* in an urban context and draw attention to differences in the way that mothers as opposed to daughters describe the importance of this rite.

Evan Killick (London School of Economics)

“The role of compadrazgo (co-parenthood) in inter-ethnic relations in Peruvian Amazonia”

This paper examines social relationships between indigenous people and mestizos in the Ucayali region of eastern Peru. It starts from the observation that where mestizos build relationships with indigenous peoples they prefer to do so through the institution of compadrazgo (co-parenthood). The paper analyses why mestizos choose to construe what are essentially economic relations in terms of shared god-parenthood rather than through other idioms such as kinship, friendship, or hierarchical difference. Through an examination of how compadrazgo relates to other local relationship idioms, and its apparent similarities to indigenous ceremonial and trading partnerships, the paper engages with ongoing academic debates over the relative importance of difference and similarity in Lowland South American societies and seeks to extend and assess the pertinence of theoretical concepts derived from Amazonian anthropology to societies normally considered ‘non-indigenous.’

Waud Kracke (University of Illinois)

“Agency in a Tupí culture: Ergativity, shamanism and the visual representation of myths”

Like many, perhaps a majority of languages in Lowland South America, and like the other languages of the Tupí family, the Kagwahiv language is partially ergative (or “split ergative”) in form. In this paper, I will set out some of the grammatical characteristics of the Kagwahiv language that make it ergative in some constructions, and nominative-accusative in others. Then I will go on to talk about certain domains of the Kagwahiv-speaking Parintintin culture – the conception of shamanism, the mechanism of food taboos, relations with animal species and with enemies, and myth – and how thinking about these domains reflects the mode of thinking implicit in ergativity. The eldest of my Parintintin informants, Paulinho, proved unexpectedly to be a talented artist. Using pads of drawing paper and colored pencils I provided, he made drawings that illustrated (or rather, represented) a series of traditional stories and myths. These drawings themselves provide insights into the significance of the myths, and examples of the kind of treatment of agency that reflects the presuppositions of the ergative structure.

E. Jean Langdon (UFSC, Brazil)

“Dialogicality, conflict and memory in Siona historical narratives”

Two themes, native versions of contact and the performative approach as revealing individual and collective identity, form the background of this paper, which focuses on conflict, memory and identity in Siona oral history. Previously I have demonstrated that the Siona Indians of the Colombian Amazon reconstruct

past events in the context of the larger cosmological scheme which accords their shamans the key role in defending them from the invaders. The focus in this paper is upon narrative strategies, such as quoted speech and dialogic conversation, used by a particular narrator, in order to highlight previously ignored aspects of the nature of conflict and its place in the construction of their past and present identities. Analysis of his narratives, biography, and relation with my research demonstrates the unfolding of history and identity through the presentation of different voices and conflicting dialogues.

Carlos David Londoño Sulkin (University of Regina)

“Evaluations of the morality of gendered persons among People of the Center (Colombian Amazon)”

A Muinane man (People of the Center, Colombian Amazon) once explained to me that when a man asked a prospective father-in-law properly for his daughter, by providing a “wedding basket” full of tobacco paste, coca, starch, vegetable salt, and game, he could protect his wife better. Should she get sick, he could say (ritually), “I did not steal her! I gave good tobacco for her, so who can protest, and make her sick?” His matter-of-fact tone alluded to the obviousness of the workings of a certain kind of cosmos, and to the nature of gendered kinds of beings in that cosmos. I analyze how discursive and non-discursive practices concerning these “payments,” of which the man’s statement was an example, construct gendered personhood.

Amy McLachlan (University of Regina)

“Sólo las brujas mambean!”

Among People of the Centre (Colombian Amazon), human subjectivity is the product of active, nurturing care by kin, and social life is centered on the creation of moral, properly human agents. While important work has been done on the constitution, contestation and citation of moral male subjectivity and agency, there is a paucity of research on the making, mattering and evaluation of moral feminine subjectivity. In this context, where “sameness” is created through the sharing of substances (food, tobacco), people also work to make difference through substances. While food works to unmake difference, ritual substances make and mark gender difference. It seems that an important site of difference-making is the mouth. Significant differences exist in which ritual substances enter the mouths of men and women, and in the moral evaluations people produce with reference to “orality,” in its various senses.

Thomas Moore (Centro Eori de Investigación y Promoción Regional, Puerto Maldonado)

“Perspectives of nineteenth-century explorers in the Madre de Dios Basin (Peru and Bolivia)”

The earliest ethnographic references to peoples clearly identifiable as Harakmbut- or Takana-speakers are provided by nineteenth-century explorers. This paper addresses the accounts of William Miller, José Domingo Espinar, Julián Bovo de Revello, Lardner Gibbon, Herman Göhring, and Nicolás Armentia. These authors, none of which was Peruvian or Bolivian, clearly identified their interests with efforts by highland elites to articulate highland markets with lowland areas where they perceived a potential for commercial activity. Their accounts are reviewed in the context of the political economy of the region at the time of writing, ideological paradigms of their times, and the personal biographies of the authors. With the exception of Armentia, who was an early contemporary, all of the accounts discussed here were prior to the rubber boom, which brought about a more direct and more intense encounter between these lowland Indians and Western economic interests.

Nina Muller-Schwarze (Tulane University)

“Antes and Hoy Día: Plant knowledge and categorization as adaptation to life in Panama in the twenty-first century”

A memory ethnography methodology including concepts of heteroglossia revealed that plant knowledge is tempered not only by gender and specialization, but also by age and memory. This paper will describe the Panamanian northern Cocolé peasant conceptualization of time and space, and the data about plant knowledge collected by using these emic categorizations. Northern Cocolé peasants in one village, La Martillada, classify time in a binary category (antes and hoy día) which reflects remembered changes and generational differences. Changes such as a dirt track road, easier access to manufactured goods, and a greater emphasis on national identity in the younger generation have not resulted in a loss in plant knowledge. Villagers negotiate changing realities by adapting plant use and knowledge; this is reflected in local categorization of plant names into antes and hoy día. Panamanian habitats have more microhabitats than other New World tropical environments; villagers classify plants according to their location in categorized spaces. This paper describes anthropological data (plant knowledge) in terms of emic understandings of time and space. These observations lead to a conclusion which suggests understanding cultural knowledge as it is stored in episodic and semantic memory.

Suzanne Oakdale (University of New Mexico)

“New table manners: Food and ethnic transformations”

This paper focuses on the life histories of several Tupi-speaking Kayabi men whose lives spanned the twentieth century. Their narratives offer an unusually rich picture of how Brazilian government policies such as “pacification,” the push toward “assimilation” or, more recently, the encouragement to “maintain indigenous culture” are understood from indigenous perspectives. These

autobiographical accounts give a sense for both how these men understood government officials' perspectives on these processes, but also how they interpreted them and the social relations they encouraged in Kayabi terms. Echoing research on the importance of bodily transformations among lowland peoples (Conklin 1996, 2001; Gow 1991; Seeger, Da Matta, and Viveiros de Castro; Vilaça forthcoming), there is a sense in these men's narratives that changes in food and eating practices, were key in their own and others' ethnic transformations.

Minna Opas (University of Turku)
"Piro cosmovision and modernisation"

Amazonian lived worlds have been changing in an increasing pace during the past centuries and especially during the past decades. Growth in paid labour, diversification of industrial goods available and the concomitant creation of necessities, better possibilities for basic education, introduction of clinical health care and missionary activities all have had a strong effect on the lives of indigenous people. These influences find their way also into people's cosmovision and relations with different non-human beings. In this paper, I shall examine how these modern elements come to be incorporated into the social cosmos of the Arawakan-speaking Piro people of the Peruvian Amazon. In what ways does "modernization" affect Piro relations with the non-humans belonging to their cosmos and how does it transform their views on the non-humans themselves? I shall also try to generate comprehension of why these modern elements enter into Piro relations with some beings but not with others.

Daniela Peluso (University of Kent)
"When names become faces: Inter-community video-messaging among the Ese Eja of Bolivia and Peru"

This paper is based on over a decade of video messages sent between Ese Eja individuals living in distant communities. When in 1995 an Ese Eja friend in Bolivia asked to send a message to his relatives in Peru, he initiated a series of recorded messages – what I call video-messaging – between individuals and families in distant communities. Despite many of the sequences being filmed and elicited by Ese Eja individuals, these videotexts are not part of the "indigenous media" genre in its strict sense, rather, they offer alternatives to how theorists have depicted Amazonian's motivations for using video technology. What I would like to examine in this paper is the confrontational character, so unusual for Ese Eja public dialogues, of these messages. Here, I would like to explore how and why video seems to accommodate the communication of conflict and tensions allowing for a novel opportunity for the expression of controversy.

Laura Rival (University of Oxford)

“Warfare and human sacrifice in the Americas”

This paper attempts to develop a renewed understanding of body/soul dualism in Amerindian thought systems and ritual practices, and asks the following question: How valid and insightful would it be to rethink Amazonian warfare in the light of anthropological theories of sacrifice?

Juan Luis Rodriguez (Southern Illinois University, Carbondale)

“The translation of poverty and the poverty of translation in the Orinoco Delta”

This paper will discuss contending language ideologies in the early twentieth century efforts at translating Warao into Spanish. It will analyze the linguistic and semiotic collision between the Warao and the emerging Venezuelan nation-state. Its main focus will be on the Catholic missionaries’ production of dictionaries, grammars and other forms of linguistic descriptions, and the Warao’s own interpretation of the language encounter. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Warao language was regarded by the missionaries as incompatible with modernity and the political developments of the new century. It was considered too underdeveloped and illogical to be the language of Venezuelan citizens. Hence, the goal of the missionaries was to give the Warao the tools for interpreting modernity, and paramount among these tools was Spanish. At the same time, the Warao interpreted the encounter with the nation-state as a mistranslation. This lack of communication with the new nation state was expressed in Warao narratives and general discursive topics. From their standpoint, the encounter with missionaries and modernity was full of confusion and misunderstandings. This paper will argue that a rising consciousness of subordination among the Warao parallels the naturalization of semiotic misunderstandings at the moment of the encounter with the state. The analysis of the linguistic ideologies that this situation produced will be useful to illustrate how the Warao internalized their subordinate position.

Allyn MacLean Stearman (University of Central Florida) and Eugenio Stierlin (Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia)

“Traditional knowledge and uses of beeswax among the Yuquí of the Bolivian Amazon”

The Yuquí of lowland Bolivia use beeswax as a natural cement in several traditional technologies, especially arrow-making. The beeswax is collected from various species of native stingless bees of the family Apidae, subfamily Meliponinae, and has a high resin content. This resin turns the wax dark or “black” in color, which explains the origin of the name “black beeswax” (cera negra). Each species of Meliponinae is identified by name by the Yuquí, who select beeswax from particular species during the fabrication of arrows based on the properties of that wax. Thus, although all wax on an arrow appears to be simply “black beeswax,” each component of the arrow receives a different

treatment. Mass spectrometer analyses were run on several samples of this wax to determine its resin composition and also the variation in wax properties among species that would explain the chemical basis for distinct uses in arrow-making. Finally, this study looks at how acculturation is affecting the perpetuation of traditional uses of beeswax and other products derived from native bees such as honey.

Astrid Steverlynck (Brandeis University)

“The women of Matininó: Amazons, exchange and the origins of society”

The myth of the Women of Matininó collected by Fray Ramón Pané in 1494 leads us to explore the exchange of ciba and guanín and other symbolic objects described in other myths of amazon-like women in lowland South America. These myths provide a metaphysical commentary on the world of Amerindians, and in particular they refer to the role and meaning of exchange in this world. Two propositions can be worked out from an analysis of these myths. First, the myths support, at the symbolic level, a widespread network of exchange of valuables in lowland South America (Boomert 1987). Second, the stories refer to the exchange between men and women as the general model of human social relationships. In this context, exchange is no longer defined by the relationships between men through women, as with Lévi-Strauss (1949), but by the relationships between men and women through symbolic objects which then reproduce this creative moment at other levels of exchange involving different entities.

Paul Valentine (University of East London)

“Gender politics: A re-analysis of the Kuai myth”

The Curripaco are an Arawak-speaking people located in the Northwest Amazon. Their mythology was collected in Curripaco. Their key myth, the Kuai myth, is a variant of the Yurupari myth common throughout the region. It recounts the birth of Kuai, his death at the hands of the trickster-hero, and the war between the genders to control his shadow-self, the sacred trumpets. The myth is enacted in ritual and serves ideological functions. This paper addresses the issues that Levi-Strauss and Chris Knight would raise. Does the myth exhibit fundamental structural features, expressed in terms of oppositions and lunar cycles, concerning the control of women's menstrual and procreative powers?

Hanne Veber (University of Copenhagen)

“‘Let's go and ...!’ Notions of leadership as reflected in autobiographical chronicles by Asháninka leaders”

On the basis of a series of life-history interviews in Peru's Selva Central the author discusses contemporary Asháninka notions of leadership and political agency. Interpretation of the narratives draws on observation of Asháninka

political activism over an extended period of time and on experiences from previous long-term fieldwork in the area combining phenomenological and hermeneutical approaches to the data.

Julie Velásquez Runk (School for Advanced Research, Santa Fe; Instituto de Ecología, Mexico)

“Wounaan cosmology and landscape: From Colombia to Panama”

In spite of the growing interest in indigenous knowledge, less attention has been given to symbolic, rather than material, knowledge. Here I link the two by illustrating how Wounaan cosmology is translated to the lived landscape. Based on two and a half years of multi-sited fieldwork, I used oral and written histories, participant observation, participatory mapping, and semi-structured interviews to explore Wounaan cosmology and resource use. My results illustrate river-based Wounaan cosmology and how it extends from their homelands in Colombia to modern residence in Panama. Using a frame of political ecology I indicate how the dynamic political and cultural landscape of Panama underscores Wounaan ties to forest, in spite of cosmology.

POSTER ABSTRACTS, SALSA 2007, SANTA FE

Jeffrey D. Ehrenreich (University of New Orleans) & Luise Margolies (University of Central Venezuela)

“Life after the time of cholera: A photo essay on the Warao Indians of the Orinoco Delta of Venezuela”

More than a decade has passed since a cholera epidemic swept through the Orinoco Delta of Venezuela and decimated the local population. In January, 2006, on a field trip to document the history of missionary activities in the region, we took extensive photos documenting daily life as it now occurs. This poster documents the Warao way-of-life in the Orinoco Delta today, including portraits, subsistence activities, shamanic rituals, architecture, missionary activities, and social relations.

Philippe Erikson (University of Paris, Nanterre)

“From Alma Mater to Green Hell (and back): Doctoral dissertations about lowland South American peoples 1905-2005”

This poster intends to present, by means of charts and graphs, an overview of the research among indigenous (and mestizo) populations of Amazonia (*lato sensu*) done in doctoral programs world-wide in the course of the past century. All fields (ethnology, archaeology, linguistics, physical anthropology, and, to a lesser extent, geography, economics, political science, and history) have been taken into consideration. The corpus consists of several hundred entries, whose distribution by year, ethnic group, linguistic family, country, citizenship of author, topic, etc. is analyzed as synthetically and presented as graphically as possible.

Pirjo Kristiina Virtanen (University of Helsinki)

“Modernizations and transformations of adolescence among the Manchineri”

The poster presents the current transition to adolescence among the Manchineri, an Arawakan-speaking group in the Brazilian Amazon. Today, especially for the youth of the reserve, studying in the city can be seen as a new rite of passage during which they learn new skills and take on new responsibilities. Studying in the city is a temporary renunciation and sacrifice. Thus, one is separated from the community, similar to the stages of separation in other rites of passage when one has to live temporarily in anonymity, without any social position. Ultimately, studying brings special prestige for a person. Meanwhile, the traditional puberty ritual has not lost its meaning, but offers a sense of community, both in the city and the reserve. Many traditional practices can also be compared to modern initiation rituals. Especially in the city, getting familiarized with some traditional practices – such as shamanism – is fundamental when a young person is looking for answers regarding one’s identity and personal development.