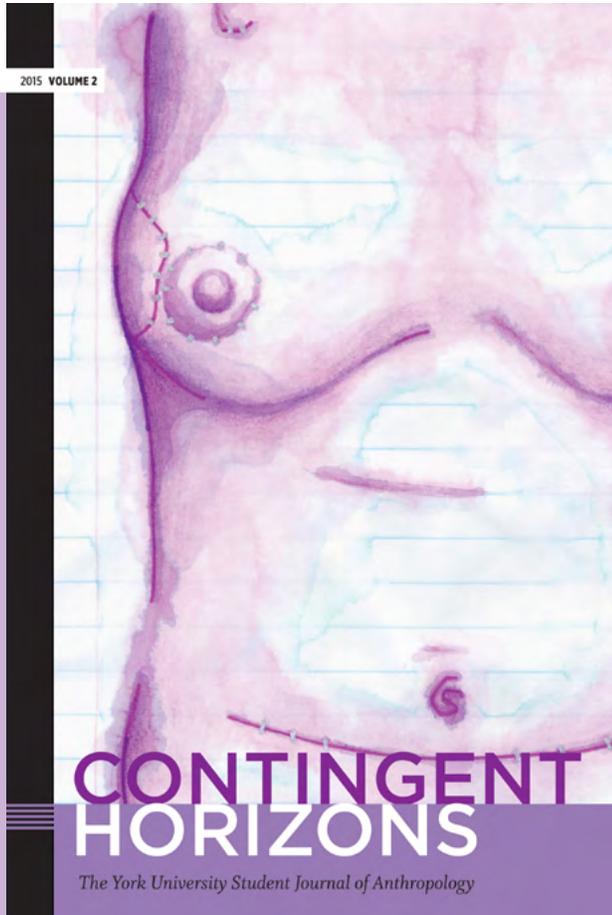


The Landscape Imagination: Intersecting historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism

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Intersecting historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism

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This article considers how the research programmes of historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism may be combined and intersected to better describe the cultural understandings, agencies, and intentionalities that underlie the processes of landscape transformation in Amazonia. These research programmes will be discussed and interrelated towards points of contiguity and conjuncture. Historical-ecological research investigates the changing relationships between human beings and their landscapes across time. In particular, it considers historical examples of landscape transformations, which are anthropogenically derived environmental changes. Amerindian-perspectivist research investigates the relationships between human beings and other species within the cosmologies of Amerindian societies in the Amazon and elsewhere. The combination of these currently regnant approaches to ethnographic research among Amerindian societies provides new opportunities to better theorize the cultural contexts for the anthropogenic actions that lead to landscape transformations in the past and present. It also provides new opportunities to better describe how cosmological understandings are grounded in the processes that articulate human beings with their broader ecological contexts. This article considers these intersections and calls for further research with Amerindian societies that combines historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism.

KEY WORDS Amazonia, Amerindian perspectivism, historical ecology, imagination

Historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism are both regnant theoretical approaches in the contemporary anthropology of Amazonia. These two approaches have developed from distinct intellectual origins and constitute different orientations to the field. However, they are neither mutually exclusive nor unrelated.¹ The intersection of these theoretical approaches constitutes an open area for future research. Although tentative efforts have been made to bridge the theoretical divide, scholars have remained primarily rooted in one or the other theoretical approach. An intersectional approach to historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism that focuses on cultural understandings of the ecological, social, and cosmological relations between ontological entities is proposed in this article. These relations articulate, that is, interconnect and weave together, the landscape with the cultural ideas and practices of a particular society. The goal of research using this intersectional approach is to elucidate the contemporary

structural frameworks of what I refer to as *landscape imagination* in a society. The landscape imagination consists of the categorical relations and ideational content, that is, the structure,² that inform a society's intervention into its landscape; both the agency and the intentionality of the society may be expressed, although not determined, in and through the landscape imagination.

Landscape imagination does not determine landscape intervention. Rather it provides a set of relations and ideas from which the society takes influence. Furthermore, the structural frameworks that constitute it, that is, the relations and ideas, change over time in dialectic accord with continuing landscape interventions and the landscape transformations that result from the latter. Although these frameworks are mutable, they may still prove useful at times in interpreting the motivations and cultural intentions underlying anthropogenic landscape transformations in the past.

Further research is needed to understand how landscape imagination informs the practices that result in landscape transformation; further research is also needed to understand how previous landscape transformations, which involve the replacement of one set of beings by another set of beings (Balée 2006:85–87), influence structural frameworks. Balée (2006:82) has explained that historical ecology does not synthesize nature and culture; rather, it studies the reiterative dialectic interface between the two sets of domains. Towards this end, theoretical bridges are needed between historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism. The goal of this article is to create a bridge to connect this theoretical divide and to ascertain the contour of an inductive research programme that is concerned with elucidating the structural frameworks of landscape imagination.³

Organization of the argument

This article will begin with a description of the theoretical approaches known as historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism; this will be followed by an attempt to show how these approaches can be fruitfully combined. The subsequent section consists of an exploration of the concept of *landscape imagination* and how it fits into an intersectional approach that attempts to bridge the theoretical divide. The term *structure* will then be discussed in relation to its use in the sense that the landscape imagination is constituted by *structural frameworks*. Finally, this article will consider how the landscape imagination can be inductively uncovered and how this kind of research may further our understanding of the intentionality underpinning previous landscape transformations.

Historical ecology

Historical ecology goes beyond the “standard model” of Amazonian anthropology (Viveiros de Castro 1996:180–192) by viewing human societies as agents within their ecological milieu (Balée 1998, 2006; Erickson 2008). The adaptationist view of the *standard model* posited a “determining action of the environment” on Amazonian cultures and societies (Viveiros de Castro 1996:180). Julian Steward (1946–1950) and Betty Meggers (1954) are most associated with the cultural ecological position that Amazonian societies are environmentally limited and characterized by cultural adaptation to a static environment. Viveiros

de Castro (1996:186) refers to this position as the Steward–Meggers model. Meggers (1954:806) describes Steward’s (1946–1950) analytical division of South American societies (such as Tropical Forest Tribes and Andean Civilizations) as being “one of the most remarkable demonstrations available of the limiting effect of environment on culture.” The emergence of historical ecology as a theoretical approach to Amazonian anthropology is positioned in the history of ideas in the context of the (environmentally) deterministic views of cultural ecology. Historical ecology represents a radical break with this determinism.

Historical ecology emphasizes the *relationship* between human societies and the landscapes with which they interact (Balée 1994:1). This relationship is “manifest” in the anthropogenic landscape (Crumley 1994:9), which provides historical ecology with a “holistic unit of study and analysis” (Balée and Erickson 2006:3). The holism derives from the intersections of nature and culture and from the realization that much of “nature” has been formed and reformed through cultural processes. Clark Erickson (2008:158) writes that “[h]istorical ecology focuses on *landscape* as the medium created by human agents through their interaction with the environment.” This concept of landscape can be understood as the register of human effects on the environment or as a cultural representation of the environment. The concept of landscape is polysemous; my understanding of it is derived from both Kant and Hegel. I treat the concept of landscape in Kantian fashion as a domain of empirical reality that is cognized as a mental synthesis of the sensory awareness of the observer and the categories that structure these empirical sensations (Kant 2003). I treat it in Hegelian fashion as a dialectically changing domain of culture, which Hegel discussed in the terminology of spirit or *geist* (Hegel 1977, 1989).

Rather than relying on cultural ecology’s dualistic view of nature/culture, historical ecology views this relationship as being dialectical (Balée 1995:97, 1998:4, 1999:25, Crumley 1994:9). This implies that, whilst landscapes affect cultures, landscapes are also affected by cultures. Neither determines the other. Campbell et al. (2006:21) claim that “human culture and the environment mutually influence each other.” Whilst the primary focus of cultural ecology was the influence of the environment on societies, the primary focus of historical ecology has been the influence of societies and cultures on the environment and the production of landscapes.

A fully dialectical approach is needed. Balée and Erickson (2006:9) have written of a “historical ecology of knowledge” that “reveals the means by which changes in the environment induced by humans actually condition subsequent generations in terms of language, technology, and culture.” In transforming the landscape, societies transform their own cultural frameworks. The influence of human societies on the landscape will dialectically result in the influence of the landscape on these societies. Balée and Erickson claim that societies that have historically transformed their landscapes possess:

a distinctive and historically defined way of knowing the environment that has its origins in the particular relationship it [the society] has had over time to local landscapes and to their metamorphosis at human hands. In other words, environmental knowledge is contingent on interactions people experience over time with their landscape. [2006:9]

Balée (2003, 2009, 2010) has explored landscape histories and how contemporary cultural knowledge indexes historical transformations and trajectories. He writes that:

The current state of landscape knowledge possessed by folk (caboclo) and indigenous peoples of Amazonia is, in part, a product of history. As the landscapes have changed through time, and continue to change, that knowledge, too, shows increments in some domains, losses in others. Such losses and increments of landscape knowledge are reflected in vocabulary changes, just as vocabulary can be used as an index, however crude, to knowledge of the past state of Amazonian landscapes. [Balée 2009:33]

Cultural knowledge of the landscape emerges and reemerges from landscape transformation. Since the vocabulary of landscape knowledge refers to the entities of the landscape, this cultural knowledge is shown to be contingent upon the ontological entities that are presented within the landscape.⁴ Thus, the structural frameworks of landscape-imagination are reiteratively reformulated partially through the successions of organisms that result from landscape transformations (Balée 2006:83).

Although historical ecology provides conceptual tools for the holistic study of the relationships between humans, their landscapes, and their knowledges, the position of this theoretical approach within the history of ideas has resulted in an emphasis on disproving the previous thesis of the “standard model” that culture is environmentally determined or limited. Thus, historical ecologists have been particularly concerned with evidence for anthropogenic transformations, such as Amazonian Dark Earth (ADE), mounds and other earthworks, and forest management (Erickson 2008). These findings signify that Amazonian societies were not limited by environmental conditions; rather, these societies were able to act upon the environment to transform the landscape and its composition — with regard to species, topography, carrying capacity, hydrology, et cetera (Erickson 2008). The success of historical-ecological researchers is made evident in Viveiros de Castro’s (1996:180) description of the “standard model” as obsolete. Even Donald Lathrap’s (1968; Pärssinen et al. 2009) more nuanced position on cultural ecology has now been largely superseded.

Now that the “standard model” has been surpassed, there is great need to direct research to the other side of the dialectic, which is the place where landscape-influenced knowledges are dialectically sublated and become part of the structural frameworks of landscape imagination that inform further landscape transformations. This requires the study of these knowledges in the midst of ongoing landscape transformations. There is also a need to understand how cultural knowledges and ontologies inform the activities that occur in relation to the environment. There have been steps in this direction. Loretta Cormier (2006:356) writes that, for the Guajá, “subsistence strategy is intricately integrated with their social and cosmological orders.” Laura Rival (2002:xx) has noted the influence of culture on societal movements within the landscape; she claims that a society’s relationship to the landscape can be a “social relation” through time. Beyond this, the dialectical relationships between societies and landscapes are embedded within a series of ontological relations between a multitude of entities; these ontological relations articulate diverging domains (cosmological worlds, societies, and landscapes) and the entities which

inhabit them (spirits, humans, and plants/animals). Amerindian perspectivism provides the necessary conceptual tools for understanding these ontological relations.

Amerindian perspectivism

Amerindian perspectivism is centred on the set of cosmological belief systems belonging to indigenous societies in the Amazon. Although there are claims that the perspectivist worldview is shared across the New World societies, as well as parts of Siberia and elsewhere (Fausto 2007:498, 500; Viveiros de Castro 1998:471; Willerslev 2004), the main locus of research within this framework has been Amazonia. The central tenet of Amerindian perspectivism is that one's viewpoint, i.e., one's "perspective," is either affected, conditioned, or determined by the type of body within which one resides (Viveiros de Castro 1998:470–471, 478).⁵ This argument has led to the development of a literature concerned with the nature of the relationship between the body and the soul in Amazonian cosmologies. Much of this literature, which is heavily centred on the body as a frame of reference, is concerned with how ontological entities (spirits, humans, and plants/animals) relate to one another and the ideas that have developed about these interrelations (Fausto 1997; Vilaça 2002, 2005).

There is considerable debate as to the relationship between the body and the soul in Amazonia. This is reflected in the different (sometimes mutually contradicting) positions that are taken regarding the issue (Fausto 1997; Lima 1999, 2000; Rival 2005; Rivière 1974, 1994, 1997; Taylor 1996; Vilaça 2002, 2005; Viveiros de Castro 1998).⁶ Elsewhere, I have attempted to analytically divide these positions on the body and soul into the following categories: (1) the duality of body and soul; (2) the soul as a body; (3) the soul as a perspective; and (4) the soul as a bodily capacity (Whitaker forthcoming). In addition to these, there seems to be another position present in the literature; this could perhaps be termed "the soul as a social mirror" (Whitaker forthcoming). It is best associated with the work of Anne Christine Taylor (1996) and Laura Rival (2005). Needless to say, the literature on the ontology of the soul in Amazonian cosmologies is quite multifaceted. For the discussion at hand, the significance of the status of the soul in Amazonian cosmologies relates to the need to theoretically comprehend the ontological entities of Amazonian cosmology, their relations with other entities, and the ideational content that attaches to these entities and their relations. Research into Amazonian pneumatologies and ontologies uncovers the relationships that are culturally posited between entities vis-à-vis the soul, which I have noted has several meanings in the Amazonian literature, and the characteristics of such entities. For historical ecology, Amazonian pneumatologies and ontologies help to elucidate the unpredictable cultural connections that are drawn between entities in the landscape and those in the domains of society and cosmology.

Between historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism

Whilst historical ecology in Amazonia is primarily concerned with how these societies have transformed their immediate physical worlds in a variety of ways and in response to a variety of stimuli, Amerindian perspectivism is primarily concerned with how these societies understand the spiritual and ontological relationships between entities existing

in this physical world. Undoubtedly, these understandings affect their actions in the physical world and must be influenced by the physical world as it exists and as they have made it. Furthermore, there must be links between the domains of landscape and cosmology.

Aparecida Vilaça (2002) has expanded analysis of the “production of kinship” to connect the domestic with the cosmological, which implies an extension of social relations to the ontological entities of cosmology. Laura Rival (2002:xx) has expanded the analysis of landscape–society interaction to incorporate the concept of “social relations” as a mediation of such interactions. The expansion of the kinship domain to include the zoological entities of the landscape was previously achieved by Loretta Cormier (2003; 2006). Theresa Miller (2010:74) has explored perspectival interactions between humans and plants; unlike perspectival interactions between humans and animals, those between humans and plants are generally thought to be non-predatory. This implies that the structure of ontological relations between different domains of entities may be discontinuous. Categorical relations exist between societies and the ontological entities of cosmology and the landscape. Analyses of landscape transformation should be expanded to explore how the categorical relations and ideational content of the structural frameworks that constitute the landscape imagination are applied and subsequently reformulated in the contexts of such transformations. This involves a dialectical relationship between the application (thesis) of cultural knowledges to landscapes, the alteration (antithesis or negation) of the categories and schemata of these knowledges by the changes evidenced in the differential presencing of beings — for example, the succession of organisms (Balée 2006:83) — in the landscape, and the reformulation (synthesis) of cultural knowledge to account for the changes made by transformation.

William Balée’s (2010:169) use of the Greek terms *physis* (φύσις) and *nomos* (νόμος) is insightful for an intersectional approach that seeks to bridge historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism. He differentiates “the emic perception of *physis* (“what exists and grows itself”)” from “the presumed *nomos* (what human societies create, infer, and envision to underlie things).” He writes further that “[t]hose spiritual dimensions of traditional Amazonian knowledge systems, however, limited in number, are always cloaked in the skins, or envelopes, of more or less familiar animals and plants” (Balée 2010:169). In addition to souls and spirits, the cosmological systems of Amazonian societies make references to the entities empirically observed in the physical world — the “bodies” that influence (to whatever degree specified) “perspectives” mostly possess referents in the physical world, such as animals, plants, and humans.⁷ An intersectional approach that bridges historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism must strive to consider both *physis* and *nomos* in its research programme. For such an approach, the emics of *physis* are informed by the interpretations stemming from *nomos*.

Rival (2002:180) argues that historical ecologists should consider “religious ideas about life and death. For it is with such ideas in their minds that they have become ecological and historical agents of change.” This claim certainly suggests the possibility of bridging historical-ecological concern with landscape transformation and Amerindian-perspectivist concern with cosmology and ontology in the manner that I have described. However, I would hedge slightly with regard to Rival’s claim. Whilst it is likely that cosmological ideas generally have influenced landscape-transforming practices, it cannot be taken for granted that they always have done so. Balée (2010:168, emphasis added) writes that “[i]ndigenous

societies of the past had altered (that is, transformed) environments without *necessarily* regarding the spiritual and intellectual contents found in them.” Historical ecologists working in historic or pre-historic contexts may not have enough data to ascertain what influence cosmology had on indigenous actions. Such influence, as Balée notes, cannot be assumed *a priori*. Nevertheless, it may be possible to discern such influence when dealing with more shallow time depths. Ascertaining structural frameworks as interpretive models is necessary in this regard; the extent of subsequent interpretive possibilities remains an open-ended question at present.

Historical ecology, Amerindian perspectivism, and the structure of landscape imagination

In the literature on imagination there is a dual treatment of the term as an activity of the analyst’s gaze and as a process underpinning societal and individual activity; in both cases, imagination implies a Kantian faculty for “manifesting the inchoate” (Whitaker 2011).⁸ According to Crumley (1994:9), the dialectical landscape/society relationship, which is inchoate inasmuch as it is continuously being holistically resynthesized, is manifest in the landscape through time. The landscape, as an Hegelian domain of culture (knowledge) (Hegel 1977, 1989) and a Kantian synthesis of category and sensation (Kant 2003), is both mediated through the structural frameworks of the imagination, that is the categorical relations between ontological entities and attached ideational contents, and exists as an empirical reality that constrains the cultural constructions to which it is fit. Sneath et al. (2009:11–12) provide a Kantian definition of imagination as “the ability to bring to mind that which is not entirely present to the senses.” This is the basis of my definition of the concept. I prefer my definition because it provides for a more dialectical (and historical-ecological) application of the concept; in other words, it potentially combines the mental registration of phenomena with the activity of externalizing categorical relations into empirical reality through societal or individual action and intervention. As a faculty for interpolating and re-assorting inchoate things, the concept of imagination is being used in the Kantian sense that Collingwood (1946) and Sneath et al. (2009) have earlier adopted. Kant (2003:60; Sneath et al. 2009:12) describes imagination as “a blind but indispensable function of the soul, without which we should have no cognition whatever, but of the working of which we are seldom even conscious.” This cognitive and process-oriented manner of treating imagination (Sneath et al. 2009) contrasts with the usage of several anthropologists, such as Arjun Appadurai (1996) and Vincent Crapanzano (2004), who have taken to treating the imagination as synonymous with culture (Sneath et al. 2009:5–7). The approach taken here, which is both Kantian and Hegelian, combines the two tendencies mentioned.

I view the imagination as both a faculty of cognition and a dialectic of culture. It is partially structured through both culture and cognition whilst being constituted by domains of categorical relations and ideational content. Thus, the landscape imagination is both Kantian (synthetic) and Hegelian (dialectical) (Kant 2003; Hegel 1977, 1989). Although its cognitive nature as a faculty transcends culture, its appearance within a context of action is dialectically informed by a given culture in the context within which it exhibits effects. I argue that landscape interventions (and the transformations that emerge from them)

are examples of “imaginative effects” (Sneath et al. 2009:19). They are the visible actions (and effects), that is, the manifestations that have sensory perceptability, of a human society’s structured interventions within a world of inchoate things and ontological registries. Through dialectical sublation, the landscape imagination informs the actions that produce these effects and is subsequently reformulated.

The imagination is not determined by the effects that are wrought from its application through action, that is, “imaginative effects.” Following Castoriadis (1987), Sneath et al. (2009:6, 24) write that “the imagination can be defined in terms of its irreducibly indeterminate relationship to the processes that precipitate it.” In the context of this paper, I understand this to mean that the imagination, in this case the landscape imagination, is not determined, but rather influenced, by the transformed landscapes that it has acted upon. Furthermore, the structural frameworks that constitute the landscape imagination do not determine, but rather inform, the activities that participate⁹ in the landscape imagination, as a set of relations and ideas. As was noted, it cannot be claimed that all activities in the landscape necessarily participate in the landscape imagination (Balée 2010:168). I argue that this concept of *landscape imagination* provides a means of bridging historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism. It provides a way of conceptualizing how cultural knowledge may pattern landscape transformation by informing the activities that lead to intervention and that are inscribed on the landscape as “imaginative effects.”

The concept of structure

I have repeatedly used the terms *structure* and *structural* in referring to an organization of the landscape imagination. The structural frameworks of the landscape imagination can only be accessed through language and are posited as discursively asserted relations between entities in deictic worlds.¹⁰ Thus, as with other writers who have used the term *structure* in various ways, I am influenced by linguistics.¹¹ However, my usage of the term gives ample room for agency, practice, and discourse. My use of the term implies neither cultural nor material determinism. It also does not imply a static semantic field. Rather, the structural frameworks of the landscape imagination are discursively presented through deixis. They are reiteratively changed through agentive landscape transformation.¹² They may also differ between individuals in a society. The extent of the latter is unclear.

My usage of the term *structure* differs from that of Lévi-Strauss. Rather than emphasizing binary oppositions between abstract terms in the culture, I am interested in the structure of relationships that are posited between ontological entities in the domains of landscape, kinship, and cosmology. As such, my use of the term *structure* pertains more to a social anthropological emphasis on *social relations*, although in this case these are mostly cosmological social relations between human and non-human entities, and the ideas that describe them. However, these ontological relations and ideational contents are mutable and are transformed dialectically in the process of landscape transformation. As the presencing of entities in the world changes through landscape transformations, the ontological relations change and subsequently the landscape imagination changes, albeit in unpredictable and irreducible ways. Landscape imagination is a recurrently changing social product and structure is not static.

Uncovering the structure of landscape imagination: interpreting intentionality

The ultimate goal of this intersectional approach that combines historical ecology with Amerindian perspectivism is to discover the social relations and ideational contents that connect the three domains (landscape, society, and cosmology) and that constitute the structural frameworks of landscape imagination. The incorporation of non-human entities into human worlds (and vice-versa) is ubiquitous in the texts of Amerindian perspectivism (Fausto 2007; Vilaça 2002, 2005; Viveiros de Castro 1998). Both historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism reformulate the earlier division of nature and culture, albeit in different ways, and are concerned with human interactions with non-human entities. The intersectional approach understands the dialectical relationships between society and landscape as embedded within the cosmological relations that are culturally posited in ontologies. These relations, along with the ideas that accompany them, constitute the structural frameworks of the landscape imagination. The intersectional approach highlights the structure of the landscape imagination and how it both informs and is influenced by landscape interventions and transformations.

According to Ian Hodder (1982:7) there has been a division between those who view culture normatively, as something that patterns and perhaps constrains observed behaviour, and those who view culture processually, as something that emerges from material processes. Hodder (1982:12) argues that “symbols do not ‘reflect’ but... [rather] they play an active part in forming and giving meaning to social behaviour.” The intersectional approach that I have put forward is less concerned with “symbols,” *per se*, and more concerned with social relations between ontological entities. However, I share with Hodder the view that social behaviour is informed by cultural understandings. Within the present context, this implies that the interaction between societies and landscapes in Amazonia is mediated through the kinds of ontological and cosmological relations that Amerindian perspectivism posits.

The combination of historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism, through the elucidation of structural frameworks, may come to facilitate interpretations of the intentionality and agency that underpinned (pre)historic landscape transformations. Carlos Fausto (2002) has used research on ontological beliefs among the Parakanã to interpret their earlier history of contact with Europeans. Much earlier, Claude Lévi-Strauss (1973:384) wrote that:

[W]hilst the Spanish were dispatching inquisitional commissions to investigate whether the natives had a soul or not, these very natives were busy drowning the white people they had captured in order to find out, after lengthy observation, whether or not the corpses were subject to putrefaction. [Quoted in Viveiros de Castro 1998:475]¹³

Understanding the cultural knowledges that informed such actions requires comprehension of indigenous ontologies and cosmologies. Although it must be remembered that structure is not static, an intersectional approach that combines historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism may facilitate a greater comprehension of the cultural knowledges that informed actions in the past. As such, synchronic research may provide the structural frameworks for interpreting diachronic data, whether ethnohistorical or archaeological.¹⁴

Notes

- 1 Historical ecology has emerged from a critique of the earlier theoretical framework of cultural ecology and emphasizes the agency of human beings in transforming, rather than merely adapting to, their ecological milieus. Amerindian perspectivism has emerged from the Lévi-Straussian theoretical framework of structuralism and seeks to understand the relationships between human beings and other entities (both natural and supernatural) within the cosmologies of Amerindian cultures.
- 2 This is not structure in the sense of Lévi-Strauss. The phrase “categorical relations” does not signify abstract relations between terms. Rather, it signifies “social relations” between entities in the domains of landscape, society, and cosmology. I have included a section below that further explains my use of the term structure.
- 3 Early indications of the possibility of connecting landscapes with the cultural knowledges that inform their anthropogenic emergence and that they subsequently reshape were implicitly present in the stated possibility of an “historical ecology of knowledge” (Balée and Erickson 2006:9).
- 4 In terms of human encounters with culturally differentiated ontological entities in the landscape, that is, plants and animals, the experience of the landscape is phenomenological in the sense of Martin Heidegger (2010).
- 5 It is important to note that the theory of Amerindian perspectivism is a theoretical model of indigenous belief systems. It is not a philosophy that argues that the world is epistemologically or ontologically one certain way versus another. Rather, it is a theory that certain indigenous groups possess belief systems that have philosophical attributes that relate to what Western philosophy has termed a perspectivist framework. It is a theory about indigenous philosophies and cosmologies.
- 6 Not all of the authors listed in this regard should be assumed to adhere to the perspectivist theoretical framework. Peter Rivière is almost certainly not a perspectivist and Laura Rival’s adherence to the framework seems to be less than total. Rivière and Viveiros de Castro hold opposing views in the literature. Viveiros de Castro (1998:482) openly contradicts Rivière in his major publication on perspectivist theory. In a later publication, Rivière (2000:264) calls into question Viveiros de Castro’s emphasis on predation.
- 7 However, the referential character of these systems is not necessarily wholly one of representing physical entities. Viveiros de Castro (1998:481) has argued that “[a] bundles of affects and sites of perspective, rather than material organisms, bodies ‘are’ souls, just, incidentally, as souls and spirits ‘are’ bodies.” If Viveiros de Castro’s claim is to be accepted — it is far from certain that it is agreed upon by other scholars — there are several consequences. First, it implies that the mechanism of influence between the body and the perspective is not necessarily material or physical. Secondly, it implies that the referential character of the cosmological system relates to both one or more sets of physical categories (such as animals, plants, and humans) and to at least one set of categories present within the cosmological system — that is, the domain of the soul. Thus, cosmological categories in Amazonian thought may refer to either or both physical and/or non-physical cultural phenomena.
- 8 The exact extent to which landscape imagination is a part of culture and the extent to which it is a mental faculty, as per Kant, is unclear. I accept the notion that it is not cultural insofar as culture is understood as holistic (Sneath et al. 2009) and inasmuch as imagination, as a faculty, precedes the cultural categories that come to shape it; positing a non-holistic imagination as axiomatic facilitates an understanding that it has been reiteratively influenced and partially reshaped through landscape transformation. However, although imagination is not necessary holistic, it is partially submerged in the holism of the relationship between a society and its landscape. Thus, it is at least partially cultural.

- 9 My use of the term participation here is influenced by Plato's (1888) idea that worldly things correspond to transcendental forms; this idea was critiqued by Aristotle (1960) because the method and singularity of participation is somewhat unclear in Plato's work. I am using the concept of participation to highlight a dialectical relationship between nature and culture. I am not implying a metaphysical participation in the Platonic sense. Since the landscape imagination is dialectically related to previous landscape transformations, the activities that are informed by it participate both with the imagination and with the previous iterations of the manifested relationship. The method of participation is the encoding of cultural knowledge as the landscape is transformed (Balée 2006:77; Balée 2010:163); the singularity of participation is stable because the landscape is specified. The exact role of language in the process of participation remains unclear. Whilst it is clear that participation is encoded through language, it is less clear how language may mediate the processes whereby the landscape-imagination informs action.
- 10 It is no accident that the one of the most classic texts on perspectivism is entitled "Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism" (Viveiros de Castro 1998).
- 11 Ferdinand de Saussure (1986:21) used the concepts of structure and system to define and theorize about language. My use of the term landscape imagination, as a categorical and ideational structure is influenced by de Saussure. In particular, it is influenced by his claim that "[t]he structure of a language is a social product of our language faculty" (de Saussure 1986:9). The Prague School linguistic theorists, particularly Jakobson and Trubetzkoy, refined the concept of structure and made it applicable to phonological data (D'Andrade 1995:17). These theorists were influential in the later adoption of the concept by Kenneth Pike (1967) and (also later) by the cognitive anthropologists (D'Andrade 1995:18–19). Claude Lévi-Strauss and E. E. Evans-Pritchard (1950:122) were also apparently influenced by the trajectory of linguistic research (D'Andrade 1995:19). Lévi-Strauss (1963:33) saw certain aspects of a society's culture as being structural and unconscious; he noted Trubetzkoy's shift, in phonological research, "from the study of conscious linguistic phenomena to study of their unconscious infrastructure." This emphasis on the unconscious character of structure is resonant with Kant's (2003:60) claim that the imagination's "working" is something "of which we are seldom even conscious."
- 12 Agentive landscape transformations are those anthropogenic environmental and ecological changes that are undertaken through the use of human agency.
- 13 For original context, see Levi-Strauss (1973:384).
- 14 Balée (2009:34) has pioneered historical linguistic work in this general direction; he writes that "one can utilize methods from historical linguistics in order to begin to build a model of landscape knowledge and the changes it underwent during thousands of years before the European conquest."

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