

Inalienable possession and personhood in a Q'eqchi'-Mayan community

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ABSTRACT

This essay interprets the relation between inalienable possessions and personhood among speakers of Q'eqchi'-Maya living in the cloud forests of Guatemala. In the broadest sense, inalienable possessions are things that are inherently possessed by human beings, such as arms and legs, mothers and fathers, hearts and names. The relation between inalienable possessions and human possessors is analyzed across a variety of domains, ranging from grammatical categories and discursive practices to illness cures and life-cycle rituals. While this relation is figured differently in each domain, a strong resonance between such relations is shown to exist across such domains. For example, the gain and loss of inalienable possessions is related to the expansion and contraction of personhood. This resonance is used as a means to interpret Q'eqchi' understandings of personhood in relation to classic ideas from William James and Marcel Mauss: on the one hand, a role-enabled and role-enabling nexus of value-directed reflexive capabilities; and on the other hand, the material, social, and semiotic site in which this nexus is revealed. (Inalienable possession, moral personhood, empathy, intentionality, Marcel Mauss, value, circulation, Q'eqchi'-Maya.)*

INTRODUCTION

This essay interprets the relation between inalienable possessions and personhood among speakers of Q'eqchi'-Maya living in the cloud forests of Guatemala. In the broadest sense, inalienable possessions are things that are inherently possessed by human beings and other highly animate entities, such as arms and legs, mothers and fathers, hearts and names. The relation between inalienable possessions and human possessors is analyzed across a variety of domains, ranging from grammatical categories and discursive practices to illness cures and life-cycle rituals. While this relation is figured differently in each domain, a strong resonance between such relations is shown to exist across such domains. For example, the gain and loss of inalienable possessions is related to the expansion and contraction of personhood. This resonance is

used as a means to interpret Q'eqchi' understandings of personhood in relation to classic ideas from William James and Marcel Mauss: on the one hand, a role-enabled and role-enabling nexus of value-directed reflexive capabilities; and on the other hand, the material, social, and semiotic site in which this nexus is revealed.

The data for this article are drawn from almost two years of ethnographic and linguistic fieldwork among speakers of Q'eqchi', most of which was spent in Ch'inahab, a village of some 80 families (around 650 people) in the municipality of San Juan Chamelco, in the department of Alta Verapaz, Guatemala. The majority of villagers in Ch'inahab are monolingual speakers of Q'eqchi', but some men who have served time in the army or worked as itinerant traders speak some Spanish. All the villagers are Roman Catholic. The village is divided by a large peak with dwellings on both its sides and in the surrounding valleys. It takes about 45 minutes to hike across the village. At one end there is a biological station kept by an ecotourism project and used sporadically by European ecologists. On the other end there is a Catholic church and a cemetery. In the center there is a small store, a school for primary and secondary grades, and a soccer field. The surrounding landscape is cloud forest giving way to scattered housing sites, agricultural parcels, pasture, and fields now fallow. Although all villagers engage in corn-based agriculture, very few of them have enough land to meet all their subsistence needs. For this reason, many women in the village are dedicated to chicken husbandry, most men in the village engage in seasonal labor on plantations (up to five months a year in some cases), and many families engage in itinerant trade (women weaving baskets and sewing textiles for the men to sell).¹

In the rest of this essay, the complex relation between inalienable possessions and human possessors is discussed in the context of Ch'inahab. The first three sections focus on linguistic domains, moving from grammatical encoding to discourse patterning. The next three sections show how inalienable possessions allow one to account for valuable objects, evaluating subjects, and the modes of evaluation (*qua* stances or "mental states") that relate them – thereby showing their intimate connection to reflexivity, as a defining characteristic of personhood. The last two sections treat inalienable possession in terms of life-cycle events such as baptism and marriage, and illness cures for *susto* ('fright'), focusing on the transformation of role-relations in relation to the circulation of inalienable possessions. While it will be argued that no one of these domains is primary, the grammatical category of inalienable possession is introduced first, and is subsequently used as an analytic lens to examine inalienable possession in other domains. In the conclusion, the relevance of this category for anthropological theory will be discussed by focusing on its relation to Mauss's notions of inalienable wealth (*immeuble*) and personage (*personnage*), as interpreted by later theorists such as Annette Weiner and Charles Taylor.

TABLE 1. *Noun classes in Q'eqchi' as a function of grammatical possession.*

Formal Features of Each Class	Examples	Notional Domain
1) No change when possessed	<i>chiin</i> (orange) <i>in-chiin</i> (my orange)	<i>Most Nouns</i>
2) Gain suffix -Vl when possessed	<i>kik'</i> (blood) <i>in-kik'el</i> (my blood)	<i>Extended Bodily Substance:</i> Blood, Bones, Nerves, Skin
3) No change when possessed by humans. Gain suffix -Vl when possessed by non-humans	<i>xe'</i> (root) <i>in-xe'</i> (my root) <i>x-xe'el</i> (its root)	<i>Metonymic Possession:</i> Road, Tortilla, Animal, Basket, Etc.
4) Lose suffix -(b)ej when possessed	<i>na'bej</i> (mother) <i>in-na'</i> (my mother)	<i>Inalienable Possession:</i> Kin-Terms, Body Parts, Clothing, Place, Name

THE GRAMMATICAL CATEGORY OF INALIENABLE POSSESSION

In Q'eqchi', four classes of nouns may be distinguished as a function of the morphological changes their members undergo when grammatically possessed.² As may be seen in Table 1, the first class of nouns is the largest and least marked. Aside from being prefixed by a possessive pronoun, its members undergo no changes when possessed. For example, if *tz'i* means 'dog,' *in-tz'i* means 'my dog', and if *maal* means 'axe', *in-maal* means 'my axe'. Given the ontological range over which members of this class may vary, there seems to be no underlying semantic domain to which it corresponds. This, then, is the unmarked class of nouns – the largest in size, and the least specified in meaning.

Members of the second class of nouns gain the suffix -Vl when possessed (where V is a vowel). For example, if *tz'uum* means 'skin', *in-tz'uunal* means 'my skin', and if *baq* means 'bone', *in-baqel* means 'my bone(s)'. There seem to be only four terms in this class: *tz'uum-al* 'skin', *baq-el* 'bone', *ich'm-ul* 'vein/artery', and *kik'-el* 'blood'. They may be semantically characterized as extended bodily substances.

Members of the third class undergo no changes when possessed by humans, but they gain the suffix -Vl when possessed by nonhumans. For example, if *chakach* means 'basket', *x-chakach* (*li wing*) means 'the man's basket', and *x-chakach-il* (*li wa*) means 'the tortilla's basket'. Semantically, members of this class are difficult to characterize, but they include words such as *chakach* 'basket', *wa* 'tortilla', *xul* 'animal', and *be* 'road'. Notice, however, that when the possessor is nonhuman, the semantic relationship is not one of juridical or legal possession per se, but rather part-to-whole, shared-locale, or means-to-end. That is to say, the basket does not belong to the tortillas; the basket is where the tortillas are kept. Similarly, we can speak of the 'town's roads' or the 'tree's arms'. For

this reason, members of this class may be semantically characterized as metonymic possessions.

Members of the fourth class of nouns lose the suffix *-(b)ej* when possessed. For example, if *ko'bej* means ‘daughter (of woman),’ *in-ko'* means ‘my daughter’, and if *ch'oolej* means ‘heart’, *in-ch'ool* means ‘my heart’. These words are pragmatically odd when not possessed, insofar as they have generic reference. That is, if you use these words in their unpossessed form, they rarely refer to specific hands or daughters – but rather to hands or daughters in general. Think, for example, of sentences like ‘arms are for hugging’. Because these nouns usually appear in possessed form, and because they are morphologically marked and pragmatically odd when nonpossessed, they have been referred to as INALIENABLE POSSESSIONS. As will be discussed in the next section, this class includes most kin terms, many frequently used body-part terms, and the words for name, place, family, and clothing.³

THE SEMANTIC EXTENSION OF INALIENABLE POSSESSION

Table 2 lists all the inalienable possessions in Q’eqchi’. As may be seen, there are five different subclasses. First, listed under (1) as *Body Parts (Adpositions)* are those inalienable possessions that have a grammatical role as not only a noun denoting a body part but also a preposition denoting a spatial, temporal, or grammatical relation. There are five such terms. *Ix-(b)ej* ‘back’ is also used in the preposition *chi rix* ‘in back of, after’. It is also used to refer to the shells and fur of animals, as well as the bark of trees. *U-hej* ‘face’ is also used in the preposition *chi ru* ‘in front of, before’. *E-hej* ‘mouth’ is also used in the preposition *chi re* ‘at the edge of, during’, as well as marking dative case. *Sa'-ej* ‘stomach’ is also used in the preposition *chi sa'* ‘inside of’. And *yii-bej* ‘waist’ is also used in the preposition *sa' xyii* ‘in the center of’. In short, words for certain body parts provide a handy domain for the grammatical encoding of spatial and temporal relations.

Second, listed under (2) as *Body Parts (Appendages)* are those inalienable possessions that refer to relatively discrete body parts. There are five such terms: *uq'-ej* ‘hand’, *oq-ej* ‘foot’, *jolom-ej* ‘head, hair’, *tz'ejwal-ej* ‘body’ (or more vulgarly, ‘penis’), and *ch'ool-ej* ‘heart’. Notice that these terms pick out the whole person (body), the five pieces farthest from the center (limbs and head), and the innermost part of the person (heart). As will be discussed in detail below, the heart enters into a large number of frequently used grammatical constructions that denote intentional states such as memory, jealousy, estrangement, desire, worry, and belief. Thus, constructions involving this inalienable possession provide a handy domain for the metaphorical elaboration of Mind.

Third, listed under (3) as *Non-Body Parts* are those four inalienable possessions that denote neither body parts nor kinship relations. The term *aq'-ej* ‘clothing’ may refer both to any particular article of clothing and to the general class

TABLE 2. *Grammatical category of inalienable possessions.*

Q'eqchi' Word	English Gloss
1) Body Parts (Spatial Relations)	
yii-bej	waist (in the center of)
u-hej	face (in front of)
e-hej	mouth (at the edge of)
sa'-ej	stomach (inside of)
ix-ej	back (in back of)
2) Body Parts (Appendages)	
uq'-ej	hand
oq-ej	foot
jolom-ej	head (hair)
tz'ejwal-ej	body (penis)
ch'ool-ej	heart
3) Non-Body Parts	
aq'-ej	clothing
na'aj-ej	place (of body, home, field)
k'aba'-ej	name
komun-ej	family (community, class)
4) Marginal Members	
[ketomj]	domestic animals
[awimj]	seedlings
[anum-ej]	spirit [Spanish <i>anima</i>]
[tibel-ej]	body
[muh(el)-ej]	shadow, spirit
[musiq'-ej]	spirit-breath
5) Kinship Terms	
yuwa'-bej	father
na'-bej	mother
alal-bej	son (of male)
rabin-ej	daughter (of male)
yum-bej	son (of female)
ko'-bej	daughter (of female)
yuwa'chin-bej	grandfather (either side), godfather
na'chin-bej	grandmother (either side), godmother
ii-bej	grandchild, great-grandchild
as-bej	elder brother
anab-ej	elder sister (of male)
chaq'na'-bej	elder sister (of female)
iitz'in-bej	younger sibling
ikan-bej	uncle (FBr, MBr, FSiHu, MSiHu)
ikanna'-bej	aunt (FSi, MSi, FBrWi, MBrWi)
beelom-ej	husband
ixaqil-bej	wife
hi'-bej	son-in-law (DHu)
alib-ej	daughter-in-law (SWi)
balk-ej	brother-in-law (SiHu of male)
echalal-bej	brother-in-law (SiHu of female), sister-in-law (BrWi)

of clothing, including both the locally made *traje* worn by women and the second-hand American clothing worn by men. The term *na'aj-ej* 'place' has three standard referents: the space of an individual's body or a group's bodies; the homestead (including house, garden, latrine, chicken coop, pigpen, and surrounding grounds); and the cornfield (usually limited to one's current *milpa*, but at times extended to include the extent of one's agricultural property). The term *k'aba'-ej* 'name' refers not only to first and family names, but also to basic-level terms such as 'dog', 'tree', and 'house' – that is, the names of things. Last, the term *komun-ej* 'family' is a loanword, coming from Spanish *comunidad* 'community', which is now grammatically assimilated to Q'eqchi'. It usually refers to consanguineal kin (as a class), but it may be extended to include affinal and ritual kin, as well as all village members.

Listed under (4) as *Marginal Members* are quasi-inalienable possessions. Included are the words *ketomj* 'domestic animals', *awimj* 'seedlings', *anumej* 'evil spirit' (from Spanish *anima* 'soul'), *tibeleyj* 'body', *muh(el)ej* 'shadow, soul', and *musiq'ej* 'breath, soul'. The first two of these words are phonetically odd (the combination /mj/ is rare), so that it looks like these used to be inalienable possessions but are not any longer, yet still bear a morphophonemic trace; and the last three are inalienable possessions for only some speakers (or perhaps in some dialects). In this way, just as certain inalienable possessions are coming into Q'eqchi', others are falling out of Q'eqchi'. This is in no way, then, a fixed or stable category.

Last, listed under (5) as *Kinship Terms* are those inalienable possessions that make reference to particular social relations. Such terms are unique insofar as their referents are simultaneously inalienable possessions and inalienable possessors. They are ordered, from top to bottom, according to the following feature hierarchy: consanguineal before affinal, lineal before collateral, ascending before descending, first-generation before second-generation, elder before younger, and male before female (cf. Greenberg 1980). All these terms are underived, or simple roots, with the following exceptions. The terms for grandparents are derived from those for parents: compare *yuwa'bej* 'father' and *yuwa'chinbej* 'grandfather'. The term for 'wife' (*ixaqilbej*) is derived from the term for 'woman' (*ixq*). The term for 'elder sister' (*chaq'na'bej*) is derived from the terms for 'mother' (*na'bej*) and 'equal/companion' (*chaq*). It may be loosely translated as 'mother equivalent'. The term for aunt (*ikanna'bej*) is derived from the terms for uncle (*ikanbej*) and mother (*na'bej*). And a term for 'in-laws' (*echalalbej*) is derived from the term for 'son' (*alalbej*) and the bound form *ech-*, which marks relations. As may be seen, the majority of these terms take the suffix *-bej* when nonpossessed. Ritual kinship relations (godparents) are referred to using either the terms for grandparents, or the Spanish loan words *kompaal* 'compadre' and *komaal* 'comadre', which are not themselves inalienable possessions.⁴

It should be stressed that although members of the grammatical category of inalienable possession have a suffix in common, -(b)ej, so that they could be

identified merely by hearing them, practically speaking they almost always appear in possessed form. Indeed, it is partly for this reason that native speakers cannot enumerate the members of this category; and published grammars, if they discuss this class at all, usually account only for kinship terms and some body parts (cf. Stewart 1980). Quite importantly, then, inalienable possession – be it as a form-class in the language, or as a set of object tokens in the world – is NOT a category that speakers will thematize, characterize, or reason about (Kockelman 2007a). For this reason, much of this essay will be at pains to motivate its local salience in terms of nonlinguistic practices.

INALIENABLE POSSESSION AS A DISCURSIVE CATEGORY

Inalienable possession has so far been described as a grammatical category that is particular to Q'eqchi'. As is well known, however, such a language-specific category may be related to the cross-linguistic category of inalienable possession (see the edited volume by Chappel & McGregor 1996, and references therein).⁵ While such a cross-linguistic category is outside the scope of this essay, it should be briefly characterized. In particular, this category may be formally delineated as follows: inalienable possessions are relatively marked (morphosyntactically) when nonpossessed; and this contrasts with alienable possessions, which are relatively marked (morphosyntactically) when possessed (cf. Haiman 1985, Nichols 1992). Attempts to fix the semantic scope of this category – say, via implicational universals – have been inconclusive (*ibid.*). Suffice it to say that it often includes body parts and kin relations, part–whole or spatial relations, and culturally important possessed items (names, domestic animals, shadows, soul, etc.). Other frequent items include exuviae, speech, footprints, domestic animals, mental and physiological states, and pets.

Inalienable possession may be considered a discursive category as much as a grammatical one. Indeed, if one examines inalienable possession from the standpoint of discourse patterning instead of grammatical encoding, its cross-linguistic existence becomes more obvious and its cognitive relevance becomes more transparent. DuBois 1980, looking at the use of definite and indefinite articles in English discourse (that is, the difference between THE boy and A boy), noticed that once a person has been introduced in a narrative, that person's body parts and clothing may be immediately referred to without first having to introduce them using an indefinite article. That is, body parts, hair, and clothing form part of a FRAME, whose discursive reactance is the fact that its members are able to be formally marked as definite on initial mention. One might say that the speaker assumes that the addressee assumes that entities belonging to the category of 'person' usually come with bodies, hair, and clothing. Thus, "there was a woman who had a name/leg/mother" sounds odd, but "there was a woman whose name/leg/mother was Anne/broken/dead" sounds fine.

This discursive category, itself probably the reactance of a putative cognitive and/or cultural frame, may be extended from body parts, hair, and clothing to include kinship relations, homes, and names (and whatever else a particular speech community discursively presupposes as necessarily belonging to a person). More generally, as long as one understands the reactance of this category to be about discourse patterning (rather than grammatical encoding), and as long as one takes into account the various formal means by which the identifiability of referents may be marked (extending well beyond the range of definite and indefinite articles), such a frame is almost certainly a widespread phenomenon.

This discursive category would require an essay in itself, but a brief examination of a Q'eqchi' text should suffice to show the relative overlap, but lack of isomorphism, between it and the grammatical category of inalienable possession. What follows is an examination of those (non-derived) noun phrases (NPs) that appear possessed on initial mention (and have human possessors) in a classic Q'eqchi' myth, recounted in 1909, which describes the elopement of the Sun and the Moon, and hence the cosmogony of the world (see Estrada Monroy 1990 for the original transcription).

In a text about 330 clauses in length, there are about 68 such nouns, and of these nouns 32 belong to the grammatical category of inalienable possession. With human possessors, they are hand (2 initial mentions, 1 subsequent mention), heart (3), body (2, 1), face (2), name (1), grandfather (1, 1), father (1), daughter (1, 1), uncle (2), husband (1), wife (2, 1), and place (1). With nonhuman possessors, they are shell/skin/covering (3, 3), foot (1), place (2), and hand (1). In such cases, the possessors are highly animate things (animals, rivers, trees), or the locations of human instruments.

The others 36 tokens involve nouns that often belong to the grammatical category of inalienable possession in other languages.⁶ There are body parts: leg (1), blood (1, 1), throat (1), chest (1), and shoulder (1). There are key instruments, often indexing male and female gender: bed (1), house (2), blowgun (2, 1), axe (1), mirror (1, 3), cargo (1, 1), huipil (a garment) (1), cooked corn (1), weaving cord (1), and thread (1). There are animal companions: deer (1), dog (1, 1). There are human attributes: strength (1), breath (1), voice (1). There are intentional states: feeling (2), belief (1), fear (2). And there are words like 'sleep' (1) and 'road' (1).⁷

Note that about half the members of the discursive category belong to the grammatical category of inalienable possession, showing the salience of members of the grammatical category in terms of relative frequency. This example also shows that while the grammatical category of inalienable possession turns on form, the discursive category of inalienable possession turns on frequency – and hence is a relatively fluid category that should vary as a function of genre, content, speaker, and so forth.

That is, there is a particularly strong resonance between three domains: first, what is assumed to be a relatively cross-cultural ontological presupposition (what

parts constitute a person as a whole, say, as a cognitive frame); second, a relatively cross-linguistic discourse pattern (what speakers frequently presuppose as necessarily belonging to any discourse topic that falls within the local category of person); and third, a relatively cross-linguistic grammatical pattern (what words are grammatically marked when nonpossessed).

Just so there is no misunderstanding, no claims are being made here about which of these domains is primary (if any) – and nothing in this essay turns on such a claim. (I would hypothesize, however, that the grammatical category is ultimately the result of the discursive category; and the discursive category is ultimately the result of both relatively widespread cognitive processes and relatively localized cultural practices.) What is at issue is the resonance across disparate domains (in the foregoing sections, grammatical and discursive; in subsequent sections, ritual and practical) in the ways in which the relation between inalienable possessions – as signs or objects – and human possessors is figured.

ONTOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION AND INDIVIDUATION; HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL TRACING

So, having delimited several domains in which the relation between inalienable possessions and human possessors is figured, three general theoretical points may be made – to be substantiated in subsequent sections – regarding the relationship between inalienable possessions and personhood. First, note that inalienable possessions ONTOLOGICALLY CLASSIFY: Possessing such objects (as types), be it physically or discursively, is almost a necessary and sufficient condition for being fully and prototypically human. Such ontological classification is part and parcel of emblematic signification: Possessing such objects, as a role, provides relatively incontrovertible evidence to others – in the sense of being minimally ambiguous and maximally public – that one occupies the status of person (Kockelman 2006c:53; and see Agha 1995, 1998, 2003:236–44; and Turner 1980). Loosely speaking, all of the objects are possessable only by persons; and each person possesses all of them. To be sure, some nonhuman entities possess some of these objects (for example, animals, mountains, houses, and gods), and some human entities do not possess all of them (for example, the dead, destitute, immature, and ill). Such exceptions, however, only confirm the stereotype: These liminal entities have limited social capacities. That is, the number of such objects individuals possess correlates with their degree of personhood.

Second, inalienable possessions ONTOLOGICALLY INDIVIDUATE: Such objects (as tokens) are uniquely identifiable with particular individuals during all stages of their lives. Such ontological individuation is also part and parcel of emblematic signification, but now of various sub-statuses within the status of person: man or woman, young or old, Q'eqchi' or Ladino, Hermelina or José. To be sure, the same inalienable possessions may be possessed simultaneously by several

individuals (for example, a married couple has a house, field, and children in common). In such cases, however, these co-possessing individuals are often treated as a single social person. To be sure, individuals gain or lose particular inalienable possessions during their lives (for example, in baptism one acquires a name, and with illness one loses one's heart). In such cases, however, the acquisition, loss, or retrieval of these objects – in, for example, life-cycle events and illness cures – is the site of elaborate ritual. In other words, if there is a notion of the essence, permanence, or continuity of a person (say, a self, soul, personality, or *daemon*), inalienable possessions provide its ground.⁸

Third, and intimately related to classification and individuation, inalienable possessions HISTORICALLY AND BIOGRAPHICALLY TRACE. On the one hand, the history of a group may be seen through the types of inalienable possessions that it holds. Note, for example, how colonialism affects indigenous styles of dress, choices of names, arrangements of houses, techniques of body, and organizations of kin. Inalienable possessions, then, reveal a palimpsest of historical change. On the other hand, the biography of individuals may be seen through the particular inalienable possessions that they hold. Notice, for example, that such possessions form a site for the accrual of experience – scars of wounds, memories of events, storage of possessions, displays of wealth, habits of body, and genealogies of kin. In sum, if types of inalienable possessions are a condition for being human and the palimpsest of group history, their tokens are a condition for personality and the armature of individual biography.

HEARTS

In Q'eqchi', the word for heart (*ch'oolej*) refers to the central part, or source of life, of animate entities. In this capacity, not only people have hearts, but most living things – including plants (referring to the root or bulb) and guns (referring to the charge mechanism). Indeed, the expression ‘to extract someone's heart’ (*isink ch'oolej*) means ‘to kill’. And the derived verb *ch'oolanink* – literally ‘to heart someone’ – refers to caring for, maintaining, or feeding another living entity. This last predicate may be used in the context of animal husbandry or nurses’ work in hospitals, but it is most often used in the context of parents caring for young children, women caring for chickens or people caring for domestic animals more generally, or mature children caring for elderly parents – that is, social reproduction or maintenance in its most basic sense: CARING FOR THOSE INALIENABLE POSSESSIONS WHO ARE ALSO INALIENABLE POSSESSORS. The heart, then, is the source of life, and ‘to heart something’ is to care for its life.

But besides being the source of life, hearts are also the site of intentional states. For example, just as other body parts may have the adjectives *sa* ‘delicious, rich’ and *ra* ‘bitter, spicy’ predicated of them to mean ‘pleasureful’ and ‘painful,’ respectively, so may the heart. For example, *mas ra li woq*’ may be glossed as ‘my foot is in great pain’. However, in the case of the heart, such

constructions are best glossed as ‘happy’ and ‘sad’. That is, pains and pleasures of the heart indicate basic positive and negative emotions or moods. But whereas most body part terms are predicationally restricted to pleasure and pain (that is, they can have only *sa* or *ra* predicated of them), the heart is implicated in a further set of grammatical constructions, which mark intentional states such as desire, memory, belief, and jealousy (see Table 3).

Although a detailed linguistic account of these constructions – and Mind, intentionality, or stance more generally – is beyond the scope of this essay (see Kockelman 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2006a for such an account), a number of basic characteristics may be enumerated. As a function of these grammatical constructions, the heart is explicitly marked as having physical qualities such as color, size, position, and shape; that is, as a semantic role, the heart is treated as a theme that is subject to various states. Thus, under (4a), to have a red heart is to be jealous; to have a foreign heart is to be estranged; to have a tame or soft heart is to be humble; to have a fast heart is to be smart; to have a straight heart is to be honest or loyal; to have a hard or soft heart is to be brave or timid; to have a two-sided heart is to be insincere; to have a unified heart (when engaging in some activity) is to do that activity in a concerted fashion; to have a seated or leveled heart is to be content; and to have a standing heart is to be animated or excited.

Moreover, as a semantic role, the heart is now treated as being the agent of actions, the experiencer of events, the undergoer of changes in state, and the locale of movements. Thus, under (2b) for something to drop into, or remain inside, one’s heart – as a place – is to remember (something); to have something become lost inside one’s heart is to forget (something); to have something come into one’s heart is to agree (to do something); and to have something be born inside one’s heart is to decide (to do something). Under (1a) for one’s heart to undertake an activity – as an instigator or agent – is to desire to do that activity without actually doing it. Under (1b), for one to have, or not have, a heart (i.e. to predicate explicitly of someone what normally is presupposed) is to stress his interest or lack of interest in something. Under (1c), for one’s heart to become doubled – as a patient – is to grow conflicted; to have one’s heart break down is to become dissuaded; and to have one’s heart shrink is to become regretful. And under (3a), to think inside one’s heart – as a hidden place – is to plan or intend to do something; to say something inside one’s heart is to have certain thoughts; and to characterize a proposition as having ‘been in one’s heart’ is to indicate that one believed its contents erroneously.

In this way, possessed-heart constructions mark seemingly abstract mental entities in terms of concrete physical processes. That is, such constructions provide a metalanguage for interpreting Mind, and modes of evaluation more generally, that is itself grounded in everyday physical intuitions.

This marking of intentional states via possessed-heart constructions also has important pragmatic consequences. As will be seen below, such constructions

TABLE 3. *Possessed-heart constructions in Q'eqchi'-Maya.*

Construction Class	Q'eqchi' Predicate (Plus English Gloss)	English Gloss of Entire Construction
1) Subject of Intransitive Verb		
a) Activity	yook (to be doing) poqnak (...)	'to want (CF)' 'to worry'
b) State	wank (to exist) maak'a' (not to exist)	'to be interested' 'not to be interested'
c) State Change	ch'inank (to become small) kiibank (to become doubled) po'k (to become broken)	'to regret' 'to be conflicted' 'to be disuaded'
2) Adjunct of Intransitive Verb		
a) State	wank (to exist) kanak (to remain)	'to remember' 'to remember'
b) State Change	naqk (to drop) sachk/sachok (to become lost) chalk (to come) alaak (to be born)	'to remember' 'to forget' 'to agree' 'to decide'
3) Adjunct of Transitive Verb		
a) Activity	k'a'uxlank (to think) yehok (to say) chank (to say/go) ...Ø... (elided verb)	'to plan, intend' 'to think' 'to think' 'to think (incorrectly)'
4) Theme of Adjective		
a) Simple Adjective (state)	sa (tasty, painless) ra (bitter, painful) kaq (red) lab (malicious) abl (foreign)	'happy' 'sad' 'jealous' 'malicious' 'estranged'
b) Simple Adjective (trait)	tuulan (tame) seeb (fast) tiik (direct/straight) q'un (soft/malleable) kaw (hard/strong) kach'in (small)	'humble' 'smart' 'honest/loyal' 'humble' 'brave' 'timid'
c) Derived Adjective	kiib pak'aal (two-sided) junaqik (unitary)	'insincere' 'concerted'
d) Positional Adjective	k'ojk'o (seated) tuqtu (leveled) xaqxo (standing)	'content' 'content' 'animated'

provide a semiotic resource for reflection (attributing intentional states to oneself, for example, 'I believe that ...'), transposition (attributing intentional states to others: 'Susan believes that ...'), and embedding (taking first-order intentional states as objects of second-order intentional states: 'I believe that Susan

believes that . . .'). This is quite important: Such an ability to reflect, transpose, and embed putative intentional states is a condition of possibility for the reflexive modalities of personhood that often fall under the headings of introspection, empathy, and choice (Taylor 1985a, Tomasello 1999). That is, not only may speakers use them to predicate properties of intentional states, but they may also use them to predicate intentional states of people. They are thereby a condition for speakers to thematize, characterize, and reason with that domain of abstract entities we like to refer to as Mind (Kockelman 2006a:104–14, 2007a).

Concomitantly, just as inalienable possessions function as relatively emblematic roles of social statuses (such as person), possessed-heart constructions function as relatively emblematic roles of intentional states: They may be used to make relatively unambiguous and public our stances toward states of affairs, and thereby secure relatively intersubjective recognition of them (Kockelman 2006a:86–90; Brandom 1994; and see Austin 1955 and Silverstein 1995 for related arguments regarding speech act verbs). Possessed-heart constructions therefore provide a resource whereby speakers may make relatively good inferences about others' intentional states, and provide relatively good evidence for their own. It is only somewhat paradoxical, then, that the most private of inalienable possessions is the most semiotically elaborated for public discussion.

One example should suffice to show the ways in which such possessed-heart constructions figure in everyday discourse, and hence the ways in which speakers disclose their own and each other's intentional states. In the case of *ch'inank ch'ookej* (class 1c), the adjective *ch'ina* means 'small', and the derived intransitive verb *ch'inank* means 'to become small'. When the grammatical subject of this predicate is a possessed-heart (i.e. 'MY HEART has become small'), the construction may be glossed as either 'to regret' or 'to change one's mind', depending on whether the event at issue has already occurred or not. Let me offer three examples of its usage.

First, after I had been living with one man's family for a while, the man's older brother suggested that I could move in with his family if my heart ever shrank about living in his younger brother's home. When I asked him what he meant, he explained that if his brother were ever to mistreat me (*tatixhob*), such that I 'regretted' being there (*entons aran xch'inank laa ch'ool chi wank*), I could move in with him. When I asked him what it meant for a heart to shrink, he said that it was when one was no longer happy – literally, 'one's heart is no longer pleasurable' (*ink'a' chik mas sa saa ch'ool chi hilank*). Notice, then, this man's use of this possessed-heart construction to evince empathy, to try to persuade me, to disclose a potential route my motivations could take, and to offer a reflexive gloss on the nature of this motivation.

Second, in speaking to her friend about a piece of land (*xna'aj rochoch*) that her father was going to buy for his newlywed son's home, a woman described her father's heart as shrinking with regard to buying it (*xch'inank xch'ool chixlog'bal*) when he heard that the soil there was of poor quality. In

other words, this man ‘changed his mind’ about buying the land. In the same context, she used a similar construction to explain that her father ‘regretted’ having sold his land many years earlier (*xch'inak xch'ool chixk'ayinkil lix ch'ooch'*), for his family had grown large since then.

Third, now in the context of an ethnographic interview on a different subject, one man discussed how those who don’t go to community-wide labor pools regret it when their names are mentioned as not having helped out (*xch'inan inch'ool naq xwabi naq xye chaq lin k'aba' naq maa nin'okenk ta*). In such a situation, the shame that one felt before one’s community (*xinxutaanak chiru-heb lin komun*) caused one’s heart to shrink, or caused one to regret not having participated. Notice, then, that both of these last two examples turn on inalienable possessions as the object that one’s intentional states are directed toward: one’s field and home (*na'ajej*), family members (and kin more generally), and name (*k'aba'ej*). As will be discussed in the next section, this is typical: The objects of one’s intentional states very often involve one’s inalienable possessions. And this makes sense: That which causes changes in one’s intentional states is that which matters most to one, is that which inherently belongs to one, is that which is one.

ROLE-ENABLED AND ROLE-ENABLING REFLEXIVITY

Inalienable possessions, while usually difficult to price – and hence often the last stand of non-commoditized goods (Kockelman 2006b:88, 2007b) – nonetheless bear an intimate relationship to value: Flesh-and-blood bodies produce value through their labor; mature limbs measure value through their strength and size; possessed hearts register value through their changes in state; intentional states are oriented toward inalienable possessions as their valued ends; and only social persons may hold, exchange, or enforce values. Indeed, those three inalienable possessions that can be priced – homes, fields, and clothing – are not only the most expensive objects in the village, they are also the key indices of social prestige and economic wealth (and hence key causes of estrangement and jealousy, as will be seen below). In this way, if inalienable possessions may not be bought or bartered, stolen or sold, it is not because they have too little value, it is because they have too much.

But not only are inalienable possessions values in this basic sense, they are also the key means by which evaluating persons are delimited. For example, above I discussed the ways in which inalienable possessions ontologically classify and individuate, on the one hand, and biographically and historically trace, on the other. Moreover, the last section showed how intentional states – those relations between subjects and objects – were couched in terms of various properties of the heart, a particular inalienable possession. In other words, inalienable possessions may be used to delimit evaluating persons, valuable objects, and the modes of valuation (or intentional states) that relate persons to objects.

That is, inalienable possessions provide a single ontological domain wherein subjects (qua persons), objects (qua values), and the intentional states that relate them (qua possessed-heart constructions), may be delimited. Two ramifications of this fact may be illuminated: MOTIVATION, or the identification of a person with his or her inalienable possessions; and EMPATHY, or the identification of a person with another inalienable possessor.

First, insofar as people value inalienable possessions, and insofar as inalienable possessions delimit what counts as a person, inalienable possessors may identify with their inalienable possessions. That is, the intentional states that inalienable possessors, or people, have toward their inalienable possessions are inherently reflexive: A SUBJECT RELATES TO AN OBJECT THAT IS JUST THE SUBJECT AT ONE DEGREE OF REMOVE. This understanding allows us to make a first-order approximation of the motivations underlying human interaction, one philosophically inaugurated by William James 1893, and ethnographically echoed by Nancy Munn 1992: in the causal direction of social world to social person, the waxing or waning of a person's inalienable possessions register on them as positive or negative feelings – for example, as a pleasureful or painful heart. And in the causal direction of social person to social world, most intentional states underlying a person's everyday actions are directed at caring for his or her inalienable possessions.

To phrase these ideas in a more precise semiotic idiom (Kockelman 2005:278–84), motivation, as a basic kind of value-directed reflexivity, turns on fostering the expansion, and staving off the contraction, of others' attitudes (*qua* interpretants) toward one's personhood (*qua* object or status) as evinced in and/or caused by the gain or loss of one's inalienable possessions (*qua* signs or roles). (Note, then, that if we replace personal status with property rights, inalienable possessions with alienable possessions, attitudes with recognition, and ritual events with contractual agreements, we get Hegel's theory of civil society; so the basic ideas carry over, with suitable modification, to market economies.) Desire, then, is not directed at "maximizing" inalienable possessions, but rather at securing and sustaining intersubjective recognition of them (cf. Kockelman 2007b). Indeed, the HEARTINESS of one's inalienable possessions is the quintessential metric for gauging the strength and extent of one's social relations – which is all value ever was anyway.

In short, a materially, socially, and semiotically constituted category of objects allows one to assess the intentional states of individual psychology. Or, to phrase it in terms of meaning rather than mind, we may turn to Heidegger's characterization of the irreducibly reflexive nature of human-being: "Each of us is what he pursues and cares for" (1988:159).

Second, inalienable possessions are necessary conditions for empathy – one's ability to know, and even experience, the intentional states of others. For empathy is arguably most enabled when empathizer and empathizee have personhood, intentional states, and values in common. And, as seen above, inalienable

possessions provide just these resources – including the ability for people with distinct modalities of personhood, value, and intentionality to partially calibrate those differences. But such ontological equivalence is not enough. What is also needed is for people to be socially equivalent: either CLOSE (say, having social relations in common), or SIMILAR (say, having social roles in common). For example, in the case of closeness, two people have the same inalienable possessions as tokens – say, the same parents, home, and field; whereas in the case of similarity, two people have the same inalienable possessions as types – say, both have distinct parents, homes, and fields. And inalienable possessions provide the resources for just that: The closeness and similarity of any two people may be gauged by how many inalienable possessions they either mutually or comparably share. (Compare Evans-Pritchard 1969 and Sahlins 1972 on the calibration of structural distance.) This is the reason that kinship relations are unique: Kin are the only inalienable possessions that are also inalienable possessors. Indeed, the expression for compassion among the Q'eqchi' is the inalienable possession *qas qitz'in* ‘our older siblings, our younger siblings’. That is, siblings are those inalienable possessions that are closest and most similar to their inalienable possessors.

In short, one might set aside the pronoun ‘I’ as the key social and semiotic site in which a subject is both figure and ground, both referred to and indexed, and look rather at inalienable possessions as constituting both the intentional subject, or person, and intentional object, or value – as well as the intentional relations (possessed-heart constructions), and modes of comportment (care, or ‘hearting’), that unite them.

However, before one can care for one’s inalienable possessions as an irreducibly self-reflexive process, one must first either acquire them by way of life-cycle events such as baptism or marriage, or recover them by way of illness cures. As will be seen in the next two sections, all such events of acquisition and recovery involve ritual processes whereby fully social people induct socially immature people further into the role of person, or induct physically impaired people back into the role of person. These sections detail, then, the relatively circumscribed ways inalienable possessions circulate, and how such circulation is related to the expansion and contraction of personhood.

BAPTISM, MARRIAGE, AND GIFT-GIVING

Among the Q'eqchi', gifts (*maatan*) are given during the two event-contexts in which inalienable possessions are ritually acquired: baptism and marriage. I will briefly discuss each of these in turn. Children are baptized (*kubilha'*, literally ‘to water-lower’) at around age four months. To be the godparents of their child, parents choose a married couple, usually with adolescent children of their own. In most cases, this same couple will be the godparents for all the parent’s subsequent children, though, with each child, they are formally asked again. Usu-

ally the godparents reside in the same village but are not related to the parents. Indeed, it is explicitly thematized as an injunction that the godparents of one's child must be *qas qitz'in*, literally 'our siblings' but in this case meaning fellow Q'eqchi', but not *aakomun* (one's consanguineal relations) or *aawechalal* (one's affinal relations). In this way, godparents are liminal people – somewhere outside of family but within ethnicity.

The single expectation of godparents is that they will give a child his or her first set of clothing and provide meat for the Q'eqchi' party that follows the Catholic baptism. This set of clothing is worn by the child the first time it is publicly revealed, during the church ceremony in which it also acquires its name. (Until then, babies are swaddled if brought to church.) This first set of clothing is new, store-bought, distinctly nontypical (i.e., not indigenous), and highly impractical. For boys, the outfit involves a hat (*punit*), shoes (*xaab*), socks (*kal-sitiin*), a shirt (*kamiis*), pants (*wex*), and even a tie (*korbaat*). For girls, the outfit involves a Ladina dress (*bestiiy*), rather than a huipil (*po'ot*) and skirt (*uuq*). In most cases the child quickly outgrows the outfit and never has another opportunity to wear it. In sum, the child is no longer just a physical body possessing limbs and consanguineal kin: Parents provide a child with godparents; a church service provides a child with a name; and godparents provide a child with clothing. Beside birth, then, baptism is the first life-cycle event wherein the ritual accrual of inalienable possessions allows the child to be presented to the community as a social person.

Let me now turn to marriage (*sumlaak*). Spouses are usually chosen from among Q'eqchi' living nearby, either from the same village or from villages that buy and sell in the same intervillage markets. Among such people, the key restriction on choice of spouse is that the young man and woman not have the same first family name. In other words, couples must consist of individuals who have no ascending male relatives in common. (In this way, inalienable possessions – names – are used to delimit the field of potential spouses.) After the church ceremony, in which the exchange of wedding vows is officiated by a Catholic priest, there is a wedding celebration at the home of the groom's parents. At this celebration, there are two types of gifts given. First, wives are metaphorically understood to be gifts given to the groom by his father-in-law and brothers-in-law. And second, elaborately wrapped ceramic bowls (*sek'*) are given to the couple by newly created in-laws, godparents, and ascending consanguineal kin (especially married siblings). Such bowls are not to be used for the couple's everyday eating. Rather, they will be used only to serve food to family, affines, and ritual kin on subsequent ceremonial occasions. In this way, while a church service, officiated by a Catholic priest, provides a couple with in-laws (and each other with a spouse) and a full family name for their children, in-laws and family members provide a man with his wife, and godparents, in-laws, and siblings provide a couple with serving bowls. In addition, marriage sets the stage for a couple to have children of their own, as well as a

homestead and milpa-field. No longer just two passive social people, a married couple becomes an active social person in its own right, able to provide for itself in the domestic economy, and able to host other social people on ceremonial occasions.

Notice, then, the intimate relationship between life-cycle events and inalienable possessions (compare Conklin & Morgan 1996, Lamb 1997). At birth, an individual arrives in the world with body parts and consanguineal kin, and his or her social presence is limited to household interactions. At baptism, an individual acquires a name, clothing, and ritual kin, and is now able to be hosted as an individual social person by more than his or her immediate kin. Simultaneously, fictive kinship relations are articulated (between godchild and godparents, and between parents and godparents). In short, with the accrual of inalienable possessions attendant on baptism, a child can be object of inter-household sociality, but not subject. At marriage, two individuals acquire affinal kin and serving bowls – as well as the immediate promise of a home, field, and family of their own. And they are now able to host others as a “dindividual” social person. Simultaneously, affinal relations are articulated. That is, a married couple can finally host others as social persons (i.e., can be subject of inter-household sociality). Last, arriving full circle, once a house, field, and children are acquired, a married couple may be both elected to the civil religious hierarchy and selected to be godparents of another couple’s children, thereby able to engage in the key ritual that inducts others into the role of person. In other words, they can be active participants in two key sites for the disclosure of village-wide values.

Inalienable possessions are thus uniquely involved in the giving of gifts, the articulation of social relations, the disclosure of value, and the expansion of personhood. In this way, life-cycle events turn on the accrual of inalienable possessions and, simultaneously, the accrual of new roles and hence new capacities to act as a social person, ranging from an infant’s baptismal ability to be talked about by, and paraded before, other villagers, to a couple’s parental ability to disclose village-wide values in public discussion. In this way, inalienable possessions are a key site for the transition from bare life to political life (in the sense of Aristotle 2001, not Agamben 1995); and thereby a key lens through which such transitions should be theorized.

ILLNESS CURES AND FRIGHT

Among the Q’eqchi’, *xiwajenaq* refers to a locally recognized illness that arises from being frightened by unexpected entities or events. In broad outline, this illness is pervasive throughout Latin America and is often called *susto* ‘fright’ (cf. Adams & Rubel 1967, Gillen 1948, O’Nell & Selby 1968, and Wilson 1995, *inter alia*). Depending on the severity of the fright and how quickly one undertakes actions to get well, both the symptoms and the cures can be very different.

Despite this heterogeneity of pathology, all versions of this illness fall under the local term of *xiwajenaq*, and all involve inalienable possessions in their cause, symptoms, and cure; and all turn on the contraction and reexpansion of the victim's personhood.

The mildest cases of *xiwajenaq* involve unexpected encounters, either with ferocious animals, such as dogs or bulls, or with angry, drunk, or sick people (usually strangers). In particular, one may be frightened by a person's movements while riding the bus into town, or while walking through other villages to nearby markets. One may be frightened by an animal while walking alone through the forest, away from one's home. If a particular cure is not undertaken (to be described below), one may succumb to an illness with one or more of the following symptoms: a loss of strength in the limbs (*maak'a'chik lix metz'ewil laa woq laa wuq'*); a loss of consciousness, or 'thoughts' (*maak'a'chik laa k'a'uxl*); nausea (*chalk raj laa xa'ow*); and a fever (*tiiq laa jolom*). In particular, one is said 'to lose one's heart'. Given that the heart is the locus of intentional states, to lose one's heart is tantamount to losing one's ability to relate intentionally to the world. Thus, a key symptom of *susto* in this village may be phenomenologically characterized as a general listlessness – a slowing down of thought processes, a dampening of desires, a blunting of feelings, a detexturization of personality traits. (In this way, not only does one's personhood contract, but also one's ability to feel, be conscious of, or purposely stave off this very contraction.) In most cases, the severity of these symptoms slowly increases, such that in its most progressed state this sickness results in the total incapacitation of the victim: fever, nausea, unconsciousness, immobility, and non-intentionality. One's ability to think or move, to eat or talk, to feel or want, is impaired. If left uncured, such an illness results in death.

In order not to succumb to this illness, the victim or the victim's family must cut a swatch of fur (*rix*, literally 'back') from the animal, or clothing (*raq'*) from the person. Having obtained this inalienable possession (fur, *ixej*, or clothing, *aq'ej*) from its owner, the victim must burn it, usually over his or her own hearth, in order to inhale the smoke. In most cases, the truly tricky part of this cure is first finding the owner of the offending animal, or the family of the offending person, and then enlisting their help in catching the animal or convincing the person. In other words, the crux of the cure involves securing the swatch of fur or clothing in question by requesting (*tz'amank*) it from its owner, or its owner's owner. In the least severe cases of *xiwajenaq*, one addresses the owner of an inalienable possession – a form of interpellation – thereby securing both an inalienable possession and the owner's acceptance of responsibility. In short, besides being necessary combustibles for the inhalation cure, inalienable possessions are also pledges of their owner's responsibility for scaring the victim.

Let me offer an example that illustrates a household-internal cause, and thereby illuminates some of the tensions that arise with virilocality and the acquisition of affinal kin. A young woman moved into her husband's father's house following her marriage. Her husband had a slightly younger brother, who was ready to get

married himself. This brother, however, was the youngest son in the family, and the father, just now beginning to feel weak in his old age, would not yet give the younger brother permission to marry because he needed his help in planting. For these reasons, the younger brother was said to be envious, or ‘red hearted’ (*kaq ch’oolej*), of his older brother (indeed, of his older brother’s more extended personhood), and this jealousy caused him to be estranged, or ‘foreign hearted’ (*abl ch’oolej*), from both his older brother and his sister-in-law.

Now several months after this young woman gave birth, and while still living in her father-in-law’s house, her baby stopped breast-feeding, fell sick, and eventually died. The parents blamed the younger brother for the illness, saying that the baby had been frightened (*xiwajenaq*) by his jealousy and estrangement. They requested that the brother give them a swatch of his clothing so that they could carry out the cure. The brother, however, refused, saying that the illness was not his fault (*maak’a’ inmaak*). To this day, the younger brother denies his jealousy and estrangement; and the couple blames him for killing their child.

The ambivalence of this encounter should be stressed. On the one hand, this couple was able to use the younger brother’s jealousy and estrangement as an excuse to start building a new house of their own before they had conceived a second child (usually a couple doesn’t leave the groom’s father’s house until they have a child of their own) – that is, they could hasten the expansion of their own personhood. On the other hand, while the younger brother was jealous of and estranged from his older brother, he also wanted him to stay as long as possible, since his own workload on his father’s field was lessened with his brother’s help; that is, his brother helped him in the burden of caring for, or ‘hearting,’ his father. In this way, *xiwajenaq* can occur in familiar domestic contexts, and even the least severe of its forms are deadly if left untreated (especially with infants, whose extent of personhood is so limited, and whose hold on personhood is so tenuous).

The most frequent cause of severe forms of *xiwajenaq* is falling. This is so because one is liable to leave behind in the place (*na’ajej*) where one fell one’s name (*k’aba’ej*) and shadow (*mu* – not an inalienable possession in all dialects of Q’eqchi’ [*muhej*], but frequently found as an inalienable possession in other languages). Unless one retrieves one’s name and shadow, one will quickly succumb to a severe form of the illness described above. The retrieval of a shadow and name can be done by the victim, or by the victim’s immediate family in cases where the illness has already progressed and the victim is too weak to move. Such a cure first involves going back to the place where one fell. There, one breaks off the branch of a nearby tree or bush, and then uses this branch as a whip (*tz’uum*), first to swipe the ground (*taak’e xlob li ch’ooch*), and then to swipe one’s own back (*taarab chaq chi tz’uum chaawix naq tatchalq*), all the while calling one’s shadow back by calling out one’s own name.

For example, supposing that the victim was named Angelina, the call would go as follows: *yo’Angelina yo’o’, matkanaak* ‘live Angelina, let’s go, don’t stay’. Notice, then, that one uses one’s full first name. Notice that one’s name stays

attached to one's shadow, such that one calls one's shadow using one's own name. And notice the pun between *yo'* (an imperative form of the verb *yo'ok* 'to live') and *yo'o'* (a suppletive form of the irregular verb *xik* 'to go,' in the hortative mood). In accounts of this cure, speakers say one is both calling one's shadow (*taaboq laa mu*) and calling one's name (*taaboq laa k'aba'*). In this way, sickness or death is associated with one's name and shadow remaining in the place where one fell, and health or life is associated with these items returning with the (original) owner of the name. In a parallel fashion, just as the possessor of a name is split between the locale of a fall and the individual who fell (such that only the person to whom the name first belonged, or that person's immediate family, can use this name to call back the shadow), the lashes of the branch fall on the ground where one fell and the back of the one who fell. In sum, self-interpellation in conjunction with self-flagellation in the immediate locale where one fell ill brings back one's name, and the shadow to which it is attached, thereby effecting the cure. Unlike the less severe cases of *xiwajenaq*, in which one addresses another person in order to obtain his inalienable possessions, here one addresses one's self in order to regain one's own inalienable possessions.

There are also more severe cases of *xiwajenaq*, also often involving falls, that are interpreted as a form of retribution. In particular, the interpretation of such events is that one's shadow-name has been grabbed by the local telluridian deity (*Tzuultaq'a*, literally 'mountain-valley'), because one has failed to show the proper respect. Such sinful or disrespectful behavior usually involves forgoing some ritual action for the *Tzuultaq'a*: not lighting candles or copal, not praying or sacrificing, not making a pilgrimage to a cave or mountain, not showing enough respect for maize, engaging in jealousy or maliciousness toward kin, or being drunk or adulterous. In other words, one may suffer *xiwajenaq* as a function of poor moral decisions: Fully functioning personhood requires decision making based on shared, and easily explicable, moral grounds. Put another way, the inferences that people make to discover the causes of their illnesses uniquely disclose a number of local village values, while articulating particular ethical characteristics of themselves and other people: what moral people should and should not do (*qua* deontic modality, or mood); and what actual people have and have not done (*qua* epistemic modality, or status and evidentiality).

In sum, inalienable possessions are directly related to various conditions and entailments of personhood, such as health, responsibility, interpellation, morality, and value. Depending on the severity of an illness, relatively alienable inalienable possessions are used either to effect a cure or to pledge one's responsibility for having caused an illness (including one's own illness): hair (*jolomej, ixej*) or clothing (*aq'ej*) is either burnt to be inhaled, or formed in the shape of the victim's body (*tz'ewajej*) to be buried as a substitute. Symptoms involve losing one's basic capabilities as a person, one's most precious possessions: shadow and name, health and heart, and even life itself. In this way, one's possession of certain inalienable possessions, and/or one's exten-

sion of personhood, is tenuous, turning on one's adherence to local ethical norms. And when such possessions are alienated, such that one's personhood contracts, only a maximally explicit and self-reflexive form of interpellation, involving personal disclosure of moral violations, effects the cure.

CONCLUSION: INALIENABLE WEALTH AND PERSONAGE IN MARCEL MAUSS

We may conclude by discussing two otherwise unconnected concepts in Marcel Mauss's work: first, the notion of *immeuble*, or inalienable wealth, as discussed in his essay *The gift* ([1925] 1954), and as theorized by Annette Weiner (1985, 1992); and second, the notion of *personnage*, or personage, as discussed in his essay *A category of the human mind: The notion of person; the notion of self* ([1950] 1979), and as theorized by Charles Taylor (1985a, 1985b).

Mauss borrowed the notion of inalienable wealth (*immeuble*) from medieval French law, in which it referred to landed estates, in contrast to confiscatable objects (*meuble*) such as personal possessions (Mauss 1954, Weiner 1985). He used these notions in a number of ethnographic contexts to distinguish between everyday articles of consumption and distribution on one hand, and on the other, valuable family property that is severely constrained in its circulation (in particular, Samoan fine mats, Kwakiutl and Tsimshian coppers, and Maori cloaks). In Weiner's wonderful reinterpretation of both Mauss's text and the ethnographic context, she argues that such forms of inalienable wealth have "the power ... to define who one is in an historical sense" (1985:210). This is so because these objects act as vehicles "for bringing past time into the present, so that the histories of ancestors, titles, or mythological events become an intimate part of a person's identity" (210). Insofar, then, as such uncirculating forms of inalienable wealth are bound to a person's identity, they provide a means of creating value while minimizing exchange.

Notice that while inalienable possession departs from inalienable wealth in substantial ways, it nonetheless bears a family resemblance that is worth elaborating. First, these categories only partially overlap: While homes, agricultural fields, and clothing are arguably forms of inalienable wealth, names, kinship roles, intentional states, and body parts are only tenuously so. (Yet notice that Mauss and Weiner do emphasize titles, ancestors, and memory.) Second, while the inalienability of inalienable wealth is juridical or moral, the inalienability of inalienable possessions is often physical or ontological (though one reason to relate the two categories is to elide such distinctions). Third, while inalienable wealth mainly consists of artifacts (human-made material objects in the strict sense, such as clothing), inalienable possessions include biofacts (such as body parts), sociofacts (such as kinship roles), semiofacts (such as names), and psychofacts (such as intentional states) – though clearly all of these categories overlap, and I invent them purely for making theoretical distinctions. Fourth, whereas for

Mauss inalienable wealth is primarily linked to the personification of things (via the *Hau*, often interpreted as the compulsion to return a gift), inalienable possessions may be best understood as the “thingification” of persons – in the sense of part–whole relations (assuming this is a social, semiotic, and material process). And last, while inalienable possessions do indeed have a substantive role in identity, acting as material aids for providing historical context, they also have a much larger functional role having to do with certain value-directed reflexive capabilities of persons.

By personage (*personnage*), Mauss wanted to call attention to what he considered a widespread practice wherein a finite number of roles, usually marked by names or masks, were inhabitable by members or clans of a bounded society, in the context of ritually replaying the reincarnation of ancestors (Mauss 1954, Allen 1985).⁹ In discussing this aspect of Mauss’s work, Taylor luminously explicates the relationship that names have to being an interlocutor (as a key means for recruiting individuals into the role of speaker and addressee); the relationship that interlocutorship has to disclosing values (as a shared discursive perspective for articulating significant features of the social world); and the relationship that disclosed values have to human agency – one’s ability to choose which desires one desires (and thus acts upon), relative not to instrumental values such as efficiency or cost, but to local cultural assumptions regarding what it means to be a moral person (Taylor 1985a, 1985b). Taylor, then, while noting a substantive aspect of personhood in the notion of value, also includes a functional aspect of personhood in the notion of reflexive desire, or choice. And while noting the importance of choice in being a person, he locates it in the social and semiotic context of public discourse, rather than the individual and psychological context of self-consciousness.

As captivating as this formulation is, it is incomplete. A more detailed examination of inalienable possession helps to reveal exactly what is missing. First, the condition for interlocutorship is not just being named, but also being related, housed, clothed, embodied, and enminded – that is, being a social person in all its local modalities (hence this essay’s emphasis on inalienable possessions as constitutive of personhood.)

Second, the relationship between agency and interlocutorship requires a third component, subjectivity, wherein one is simultaneously indexed ground and denoted figure of discourse, both articulating significant features (as a speaker or hearer) and articulated as a significant feature (as an object or topic) – hence the emphasis on life-cycle rituals and illness cures, in which people induct other peoples and themselves (back) into the role of person via interpellation.

Third, desire is only one of many possible intentional states toward which we may take an evaluative stance, and thereby engage in choice; for just as our desires are at issue, so are our beliefs, fears, sorrows, disgusts, hatreds, doubts, and joys – hence the emphasis on the panoply of intentional states such as estrangement, jealousy, care, fright, and so forth.

Fourth, any evaluation of our intentional states presupposes some understanding of them: We must know something about our intentional states if we are to act self-reflexively upon them (hence the emphasis on illness as a key site in which we and others become conscious of, or gain representational agency over, our intentional states; and on possessed-heart constructions as a key means by which we articulate, or make public, our intentional states).

Fifth, we are just as likely to take such an evaluative (good/bad) or epistemic (true/false) stance toward another's intentional states as we are towards our own: Empathy is surely as important a human capability as choice (hence the emphasis on closeness or similarity of inalienable possessions as condition of possibility for empathy with their inalienable possessor).

And last, just as personhood is a condition for the disclosure of value in discourse, discourse is the condition for the disclosure of what we value about persons (hence the opening sections of this essay, which tried to motivate grammatically and discursively the general category of inalienable possession).

In short, rather than overemphasizing second-order desire, or choice, we must realize that the reflexive capabilities of personhood are manifold. Building on Mauss's work, these scholars offer an account of personhood that turns on a small number of inalienable possessions: Weiner focuses on certain substantive aspects of personhood by paying attention to inalienable wealth and social roles (or identity); and Taylor focuses on certain functional aspects of personhood by paying attention to names and intentional states (or choice). But just as inalienable wealth is only one possible kind of inalienable possession, choice is only one possible reflexive capability of persons: The true extent of inalienable possession and personhood remains to be determined. Such theories thereby provide only a starting point for understanding the conditions for being substantively and functionally a person. Hence, the task of this essay has been to offer an account of various aspects of Q'eqchi' personhood through the lens of inalienable possession: on the one hand, a role-enabled and role-enabling nexus of value-directed reflexive capabilities (itself subject to expansion and contraction); and on the other hand, the material, social, and semiotic site in which this nexus is revealed (itself subject to gain and loss).

NOTES

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¹ Because of the existence of the cloud forest and the endangered avifauna that make it their home, Ch'inahab has been the site of a successful ecotourism project, the conditions and consequences of which are detailed elsewhere (Kockelman 2002, 2006b). While my focus is on personhood, one could also relate inalienable possession to ethno-linguistic identity more generally. Interested

readers should look forward to recent work and emergent publications by Christopher Ball on Wauja (Arawak) of the Brazilian Upper Xingu.

² Possession is marked on nouns by ergative prefixes. For words that begin with a consonant, these are as follows: *in-* 'my', *aa-* 'your', *x-* 'his, her, its', *qa-* 'our', *ee-* 'your pl.', *x...eb* 'their'. For words that begin with a vowel, these are as follows: *w-* 'my', *aaw-* 'your', *r-* 'his, her, its', *q-* 'our', *eer-* 'your pl.', *r...eb* 'their'.

³ And finally, two other classes of nouns interact with possession. There is one class that is (almost) never possessed, which includes words with certain unique referents such as 'sun' (*saq'e*) and 'moon' (*po'*) – though the latter can be possessed by a woman to talk about her menstrual cycle. There is another class that is (almost) always possessed, which includes the majority of body part terms such as '(his/her) navel' (*x-ch'ub*) and '(his/her) chest' (*x-maqab*) – unless they are involved in butchery.

⁴ One key kinship term is not an inalienable possession: the word for 'child' (*al*) in the most general sense, including offspring of domestic animals and, in constructions such as 'offspring of money' (*ral tumin*, or interest). Other terms that usually mark stage of life (e.g., child versus adult) but also double as kinship terms are not inalienable possessions: *k'ula'al* 'child', *ch'ip* 'youngest child'. And certain terms of address (rather than reference) for kinship relations are not grammatical inalienable possessions: *pa'* 'father' and *maam* 'mother'.

⁵ See, for example, Levy (1973:213–14), who points out in a footnote the existence of the grammatical category in Polynesian languages, but nowhere works the related notional domain into his classic account of mind and experience among the Tahitians.

⁶ Not counted are uses of inalienable possessions as adpositions (recall class 1, Table 2), nor possessed noun phrases functioning as gerund constructions (or nouns derived from verbs more generally). The focus, rather, is on simple (non-derived, non-compound) nouns.

⁷ Finally, for nonhuman possessors, there were words like 'corner (of a mirror)', 'voice/sound (of animals)', 'smell (of flowers)', 'smoke (of something burned)', 'feathers (of a bird)', 'threads (of a tree)', 'juice/pollen (of a flower)', 'leaf (of a plant)', and 'shadow (of house)'.

⁸ Compare Ewing 1990 on the illusion of wholeness.

⁹ The 19th-century British historian of law Henry Sumner Maine (2002: chapters 5 & 6; Kockelman 2007b), was the first theorist to focus on the relation between inalienable property and personhood, thereby providing the legal framework within which Mauss's ethnological theories germinated. In addition, with his classic distinction between status and contract, or socio- and individual-specific modes of personhood (qua role-inhabitance via property rights), he inaugurated the key distinction between community and society (or non-capitalist and capitalist social relations) that has proved so fruitful to scholars focused on cross-cultural and culture-specific modes of selfhood – though usually unacknowledged by them (see, for example, Holland 1992, Shweder & Bourne 1984, and Spiro 1993).

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