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Personal Truths, Shared Equivocations

Otherness, Uniqueness, and Social Life among the
Mapuche of Southern Chile

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Declaration

This thesis has been entirely composed by me, Marcelo Ignacio González Gálvez. All work is entirely my own, and it has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification, unless otherwise specified.

Signature
Date:

Abstract

Based upon thirteen months of ethnographic fieldwork among indigenous Mapuche people of southern Chile, this thesis explores two relational oppositions which are central concerns of both Mapuche people and the discipline of anthropology. The first opposition explored is that between self and other, focusing on how it is conceived differently from different positions within rural Mapuche life. Through this exploration, I emphasise an understanding of otherness as a relational category, which is more connected to ascertaining and describing what the self is not, rather than to the depiction of an embodied alterity. The second opposition I investigate is that between individual and society. More specifically, I look at the possibilities of constructing social relationships despite the strong emphasis Mapuche people put on persons as unique, unrepeatable, and often incommensurable, singularities. I demonstrate how and why these two oppositions are closely connected for the Mapuche. Such a connection lies in the fact that Mapuche philosophy proposes a radical singularism according to which the conception of everything is rooted in the individual person. As a result, the pluralisation of such conceptions is always, necessarily, a particularly personal extrapolation.

The thesis is divided in three sections. In the first I explore the ontological foundations of Mapuche lived worlds, discussing the pillars upon which Mapuche people conceive their experiences and setting the scene for my overall argument. In the second section, through both ethnographical and historical sources, I attempt to explore how perceived differences and similarities are managed in order to create a sense of plurality. In the final section I elaborate an argument centred upon how Mapuche people conceive "the social". Here, by discussing different ideas of what it means to be Mapuche, I conclude that Mapuche notions of sociality are in the antipodes of Western ones. Put simply, if in the latter sociality is based upon interactions embedded on given shared semantic fields, the Mapuche seem to maintain that shared semantic fields do not exist, and that they should, at best, be consciously created.

"Autant de têtes, autant d'avis"

(So many heads, so many opinions)

French proverb

To my Grandparents

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Acknowledgments

During the last four years I have been totally immersed in the very lonely experience of carrying out a doctoral/ethnographical research. I could not have accomplished it, however, if it were not for the help that many people have granted me over these years, and before. In these few lines I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all of them.

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Introduction

This thesis finds its origin in some events that took place six years ago. Having spent a few days in Huentelolén, a Mapuche area in the province of Arauco, I had a revealing conversation that, I realise now, shook the foundations of my beliefs. While discussing with a friend her ideas about the different "ethnic groups" the Chilean State recognises as indigenous,[1] I found that she was intent on calling them all the name of her own "ethnic group": "Mapuche" (Mp. approx. "people of the land"). Noticing this, I continued the conversation especially worried about highlighting in my allocutions each group's respective ethnonym. My friend, however, remained reluctant to employ these terms, and insisted on calling all of these diverse indigenous peoples "Mapuche"… Despite my suggestions, she persisted in giving the term a wide sense, even though, I then believed, it was meant only to refer to one specific human group and its particular culture…

Being somewhat puzzled by my friend's insistence, at first I supposed that her attitude was a mistake produced by her "ignorance". Thus, I reproduced the type of assumption made by most *Winka* (Mp. "non-Mapuche") people who work on a daily-basis with Mapuche populations in rural southern Chile. As an alternative, I thought she was probably using the term "Mapuche" as an empathetic metaphor, including all indigenous peoples within one same cause, in order to underline some kind of "subaltern ethnic consciousness". Trying to discern which was the right explanation, I asked my friend why she called these peoples "Mapuche" if they had their own names. "Because they're Mapuche!" was her categorical reply. "How's that?" I went on, "Why do they have their own names then?" "Because those are names they put on them, but they're Mapuche", she answered.

More intrigued each time, I continued to ask questions to understand what my friend understood as "Mapuche". This was how she touched upon two particular

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[1] The Chilean *Ley indígena* (Indigenous law) N°19.253 from 1993 defines "indigenous" as the "descendents of human groups existent in national territory since pre-Columbus times" (art. 1). According to it, current "ethnic groups" with this status in Chile are: Mapuche, Aymara, Rapa Nui, Atacameño, Quechua, Colla, Diaguita, Kawashkar, and Yamana.

subjects that proved my initial hypotheses were totally inaccurate. First, there was an unsettling irrelevance my friend granted to "cultural elements" when linking them to the concept of "Mapuche". Although she openly recognised "cultural diversity", she believed it to be a worthless contribution to the topics we were discussing. In her words, "There are Mapuche people in every country of the world, but one doesn't know what they are like, what their customs are… and one will never know…"[2] Second, trying to find the subaltern consciousness I initially surmised, I began to talk about some nearby Mapuche communities who were then involved in highly-publicised conflicts against a variety of logging and ranching interests. Nothing I obtained, however, resembled such a consciousness. On the contrary, my friend denied every connection I had envisioned. As she simply put it, "I don't care about those peoples! Those guys are nothing but a bunch of *awinkados* (Winka-like)! I've nothing to do with them!"

* * *

I have taken part in innumerable conversations with various Mapuche people since the discussion outlined above. Each time I had in mind the same aim as I had then: to comprehend what it means to be "Mapuche" for the people who claim to be it. In doing this, I have come across countless accounts, almost as many as the number of Mapuche people I have met. To name but a few, I have listened to versions resemble the one I have just mentioned, stressing a concept of "Mapuche" outside of the "ethnic" framework within which it is usually understood in Chilean society. On the other hand, I have encountered accounts that emphasise an idea of "Mapuche" as a "way of life", as a notion that rather than being an abstract category, seems to point out one rooted way of "being-in-the-world". Lastly, I have often heard versions stating a concept of "Mapuche" as a bounded ethnic identity, defined by a reified and specific "cultural content".

Such a massive diversity of viewpoints about one single topic has hindered my enquiries beyond my expectations. Only after several months of ethnographic fieldwork was I really able to understand why this was. There was something

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[2] This universality claim has been also noted by other ethnographers in several Mapuche areas (i.e. Course 2011; Faron 1962; Foerster 2004; Isla nd).

peculiar about the way in which the diversity of perspectives played out within Mapuche social worlds. They were not simply different opinions about a single issue. Instead, they were claims that, despite seeming to superficially agree or disagree with other claims, were always necessarily referring to different things. What is more, Mapuche people seem to be aware of this referential incongruity, understanding it as the key foundation upon which social life is established. This thesis' central aim will be to understand why this is so.

In order to accomplish this, this thesis will move around two main focuses. The first, as may be expected, is centred on exploring what it means, for Mapuche people, to be Mapuche and to be non-Mapuche ("Winka" in the Mapuche language). As I see it, the Mapuche/Winka distinction (which can loosely be conceptualised in the same way as distinctions we might make between *self* and *other*) is central to both my research and to Mapuche lived worlds. Indeed, my interest in it stems from the relevance it has for Mapuche people themselves. It is primarily through this distinction that Mapuche people comprehend their position in the world. Furthermore, it is also the distinction through which people understand the place occupied by the rest of people with whom they establish different connections during their lives.

The second focus of this research derives from my own ethnographic experience. It comes from how, researching the Mapuche/Winka distinction, I had to deal with the extreme heterogeneity such a distinction presented in Mapuche social life. It derives from how, to understand what is to be a Mapuche, I first had to cope with the vast multiplicity of ways in which Mapuche people thought the concept itself. Trying to deal with this situation, I realised there was a problem with fundamental salience for approaching my initial interest. This problem went along with the extended absence (or mere instrumentality) of social groups I could notice in my field site beyond the boundaries of homesteads, and with how Mapuche people usually spoke about themselves as autonomous individuals rather than as members of pre-existent social formations (Course 2011). Thus I realised I should pay attention to another focus in order to explore what I had initially intended: first I should look at how Mapuche people conceive of the relationship between an individual and a social collective.

This realisation was essential both to how I conducted my fieldwork and to the argument I would like to put forward in this thesis. This argument, which I conceive of as a key to thinking about social life from a Mapuche point of view, can be summarised in three points. Firstly, we need to accept that Mapuche people conceive of every experience and/or comprehension of a phenomenon as a deeply personal affair. Secondly, we need to comprehend this premise as symbiotically related to a conception of persons as autonomous and independent beings, which leads us to an overall notion of persons as entities *a priori* disconnected in terms of knowledge, understanding, and experience, from other equally autonomous and independent entities. Thirdly, in light of the differences and discontinuities Mapuche people see as existing between singular persons, we must assume that each time personal understandings are socialised they should be understood as mere symbols (Cohen 1993), that is, as shared in terms of signifiers but not in terms of what is signified. In other words, I see the Mapuche philosophy as fundamentally characterised by a *radical singularism*, which is maintained to the point of denying the existence of almost any given principle of continuity between persons. This does not reject, however, the actual existence of shared semantic fields, or of social connections ascertaining different degrees of similarity between particular persons. In fact, Mapuche people acknowledge a wide range of degrees of similarity between themselves and others, as they also affirm to share meanings with many of them. Nevertheless, this is never the result of a structural principle beyond persons, but on the contrary, it is an effect of many deliberated processes autonomously carried out by persons themselves. Put another way, there is not a transcendental principle that *a priori* gives a sense of continuity between persons; rather, to exist, this continuity should be necessarily created.

Overall, this thesis endeavours to comprehend how two oppositions – self/other and individual/society– which are central concerns both among Mapuche people and to the discipline of Social Anthropology, are connected. I believe that by exploring their connections in view of what Mapuche people propose, we might achieve at least two worthwhile outcomes. First, we will have a clearer idea about

what may be referred to as Mapuche ontology,[3] and how it may shed some light on broader Amerindian and anthropological debates. Second, we might experience how not only the foundations of my own beliefs, but also the foundations of the beliefs that we share, can be shaken up together.

1. Field Site and Methods

This thesis is based on 13 months of ethnographic fieldwork carried out in Elicura, a rural area in the province of Arauco, in Southern Chile.[4] Elicura is an enclosed valley located 5 miles northwards of the town of Contulmo, and 118 miles southwards of Concepción, the capital of the Bio-Bio region and the second largest metropolitan area in Chile after Santiago, the capital of the country. Once inhabited only by Mapuche-speaking peoples, the area where Elicura is located has historically been an attractive destination to both Chilean and European settlers. According to the last Chilean Census (2002), just 1384 people live in Elicura Valley, of which half (684) are declared to be Mapuche (Lavanchy 2007:21). Regardless of the small population, it is surprising that most of people claim to know every other person living in the Valley. Indeed, although over a year I was not able to meet the majority of inhabitants face-to-face, I learned many things about them from their appearances in my friends' stories.

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[3] I use the term "ontology" often in this thesis. When I do so, I bear in mind its widest etymological sense, and thus I understand it as "what is said about being". My selection of such a term was encouraged by my fieldwork experience, and how I witnessed a great diversity of incommensurable (Povinelli 2001) "sayings about the being" of everything. In line with this observed multiplicity, I understand my work as an "ontographic" effort (Holbraad 2003, 2009; see Chapter 1). This is an approach that instead of being fixed in one ontology attempts to dialogically inhabit the spaces between ontologies: those between the ontologies maintained by each Mapuche person (following the *radical singularism* premise); and those between these ontologies and my own.

[4] From September 2009 to Octuber 2010. It has been also benefited from previous short-term fieldwork experiences in both coastal and Andean Mapuche communities, carried out in May-June 2006, January 2007, and May 2008.
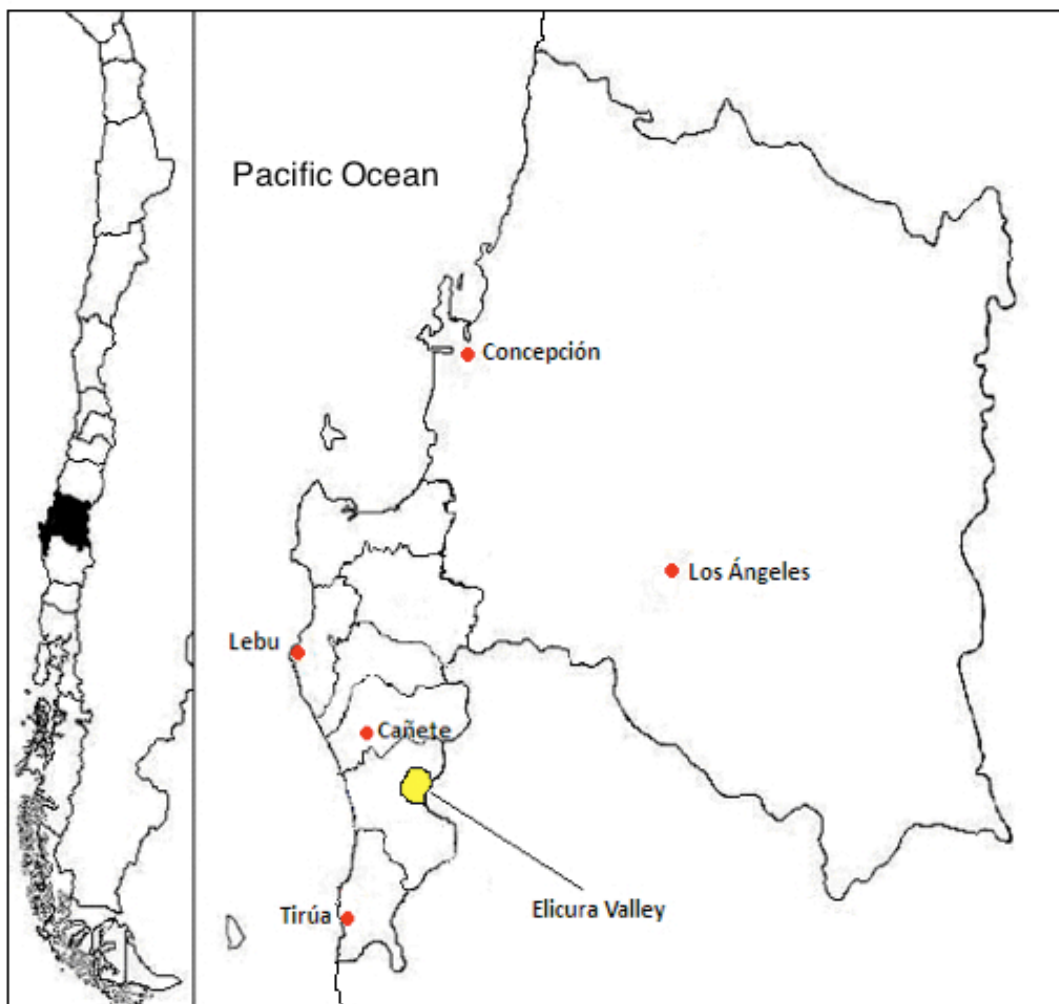
Figure I.1: Field Site location

Figure I.2: Elicura Valley aerial view

Figure I.3: Elicura Valley from Ngoll-Ngoll

Mapuche people currently living in Elicura are mostly the descendants of the populations included in the six *Títulos de Merced* the Chilean State granted in the area by the beginnings of the 20th century (Table I.1).[5] Many of these people understand *Chedungun*, the Mapuche language (approx. the "language of the people"). And yet, only a few could be said to be totally bilingual in Spanish and *Chedungun*, and most of this number belong to the elder generations. Many people however, employ some *Chedungun* terms on a daily basis.

Título de Merced (reducción)	Place	Est.	Population	Size (hectares)
Juan Antil	Cuyincahuin	1909	10	5.5
Juan Caniuman	Elicura	1909	28	8
Mateo Coliman	Provoque and Elicura	1913	43	86.3
Lorenzo Huaiquivil	Provoque	1909	28	14
Antonio Leviqueo	Calebu	1909	49	36
Ignacio Meliman	Elicura	1912	37	134
Total			195	283.8

Table I.1: Títulos de Merced granted in Elicura[6]

The non-Mapuche population settled in the Valley during the 19th century, both as small settlers and big landholders (see Bengoa 2004; Leiva 1984). Through this arrival people explain the establishment of Villa Elicura and Calebu, two small clusters of homesteads at the heart of the Valley. Mapuche houses, in contrast, are usually located as far apart from each other as is possible. This pattern has often been interpreted as a manifestation of the strong emphasis Mapuche people place upon defending their independence and their autonomy (Faron 1964; Foerster 2004; Melville 1976). This ideal of living apart is still maintained in Elicura today. Nevertheless, the massive demographic pressure exerted over the scarce available lands means it is often impracticable.[7]

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[5] About the *Títulos de Merced*, see below.
[6] Population and Size data correspond to the date of *Títulos de Merced* establishment.
[7] When younger people decide to initiate their own families they have two options: to migrate to live elsewhere, or to build a new house within the boundaries of his/her parents' plot.

Most of the former *Títulos de Merced* gave origin to current legally recognised *comunidades indígenas* (Juan Antil being the exception). Additionally, there are four further communities: Epu Mahuida, Leviqueo Calebu, Mateo Coliman II, and Meliman II. All nine, however, are not communities properly speaking, but rather organizations established to channelize State benefits. These range from school grants to new terrains with which to enlarge the productive capacity of specific communities' members.

These days, timber plantations cover most of the hills that enclose Elicura. A significant number of people in the Valley make a living from the low-wage jobs they find in them. The rest find subsistence from different State-promoted minimum-wage employment plans, participating in the flourishing "ethnotourism" businesses, or, in the case of elderly or disabled people, receiving welfare pensions. Most families complement their incomes with what they produce in the small gardens they maintain, and with the few animals and fowl they can keep within their small plots of land. Hardly anyone can currently expect to obtain his or her living solely from agriculture.

I selected Elicura as the place to do my fieldwork for two reasons. First, because it appeared as a clearly bounded territorial unit, known widely for having concentrated since long ago an intense interethnic contact. Second, because, perhaps due to this intense contact, people tend to perceive Elicura as an area that is "less Mapuche" than others in the Province of Arauco. At first I was greatly intrigued by such a proposal. How, being Mapuche, could people present different degrees of "Mapucheness"? Was there a dual conception of Mapucheness, seeing it as an undeniable essence (racial perhaps) presenting different degrees of "cultural" content?

I first heard of this "less Mapuche" claim from non-Mapuche people working at the local CONADI[8] office, located at Cañete. Then I thought they made it from a position assumed to be "objective", which I could possibly argue against thanks to my ethnographic enterprise. I was pretty much convinced there was a "hidden Mapucheness" CONADI people were unable to perceive. However, once in Elicura I

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[8] Spanish acronym for "National Corporation for Indigenous Development", a Chilean State agency for indigenous affairs.

realised that the same claim was maintained by many of my Mapuche friends. Indeed, in their view, they were "less Mapuche" than people elsewhere.

Soon I noticed, nevertheless, that when they claimed they were "less Mapuche", they were not assuming the "objectivity" framework inherent to CONADI officials' claim. Rather, they often made this claim in the awareness that, like any other personal claim, it was necessarily partial and relative. As I expect to show in this thesis, if there is something we can really label as "Mapuche" in a conclusive way, it is exactly this awareness. As I see it, this awareness is the essential pillar upon which Mapuche sociality is constructed. And it is precisely the lack of it that makes CONADI officials' claim problematic from a Mapuche point of view. For the Mapuche, although the "less Mapuche" claim could be perfectly put forward, this should be done in the awareness that it does not depict an objective reality, and that it cannot be anything but a partial and personal truth.

1.1. Methodological Notes

Conceived as an ethnographic project, this research was fundamentally founded upon participant observation. Although I carried out a few recorded interviews in order to clarify some specific issues, I tried to avoid them because people often found them extremely awkward. I also performed a small historical survey based upon some of the best-known chronicles written on the Mapuche. However, my analysis of these materials was strongly influenced by my process of ethnographic learning, and I now see it as trusting somehow in an *ad hoc* analogical interpretation (Dillehay 2007).

Accordingly, most of what I have learned about the people among whom I did my research comes simply from having lived with them. It was a long-term process of creating bonds of trust and friendship, an issue Mapuche people maintain as a key life concern (cf. Course 2011). Most of what I know comes, thus, from having shared their lives, their routines, and innumerable recreational talks. Indeed, this thesis is largely based upon information generously shared with me thanks to the relationships I was able to construct during my stay in Elicura. Honouring the trust

my friends placed on me, I have modified all their names throughout this thesis, aiming to protect their privacy and anonymity.

During my fieldwork I stayed at three homesteads from different areas in the north of Elicura. Most of the closest friends I made in the Valley lived in this area, whereas towards the south of Calebu (Fig. I.2) I just was able to establish sporadic relationships. When I chose Elicura as my field site I was confident of being able to include the whole Valley in my exploration. Experience, however, proved I was wrong. If I did that, it was going to be extremely difficult to construct the close relationships I was looking for. For this reason, I decided to concentrate my efforts on the north, keeping Calebu as my flexible southern border.

To create my own relationships I often trusted in being included within the ones already established by my different hosts. This proved to be the most fruitful choice in view of the reservations many people felt towards establishing new social relations. Regardless of the fact that people initially seemed enthusiastic to get to know me, and to know what I was doing there, they often surmised I was hiding secondary intentions. In part, this was due to the huge number of people who have arrived to Mapuche lands with scholarly motives in the last few years, especially since the promulgation twenty years ago of the *Ley Indígena* (Nº19.253). It is commonplace in Elicura, as elsewhere, to maintain that these scholars do their research and "make millions" thanks to the Mapuche, but that Mapuche people do not obtain anything in exchange. Additionally, it was extremely difficult for some to understand that I was being paid to learn how Mapuche people lived. As a friend told me, "I don't know why you're getting paid for living in the countryside… I wish I could have your job". If we know too that after the reestablishment of democracy in Chile, most of the Mapuche movement looking to recover their ancestral lands has been criminalised through an anti-terrorist law inherited from Pinochet's dictatorship, we can surmise one of the reasons why my position was suspicious.

Following the aims of my research, I especially focused my explorations on the meaning of being Mapuche and not to being it. I placed special attention upon how and why other people were included in these notions, and on the extent to which these conceptions were socially shared. Furthermore, I observed the ideas people had about the relationships they and others established within and outside Elicura. This

emphasis was constantly broadened by paying attention to everyday problems and practices. In doing so, I attempted to apprehend the ontological assumptions behind people's conceptions and activities (cf. Scott 2007). Now it is up to the reader to judge, by the end of this thesis, whether I have accomplished what I intended.

2. The Mapuche

> "As far as I know the Mapuche have no idea about their origin, but they affirm that they have always lived in the same place"

> E. R. Smith[9]

As previously stated, elaborating a conclusive definition of the term "Mapuche" would not only be a titanic task, but almost an impossible one. This is essentially due to the vast diversity of ways in which people who self-define as Mapuche envision this concept, and to how these personal conceptions present an enormous contextual flexibility. Thus, by highlighting the difficulty of defining "The Mapuche" I am not simply appealing to their huge cultural and geographical diversity (e.g. Dillehay 1990). Rather, I am stressing that any definition of what it is to be Mapuche, among Mapuche people, should always appear partial, subjective, and open-ended.

In spite of this, however, as I need to contextualise the population among whom I carried out my research, in this section I will simply address the "Mapuche people" as most scholars have done so. This is, as a discrete indigenous population sharing a history and culture, factors that allow them to be considered and to consider themselves a differentiated "ethnic group". Therefore, I will briefly address the historical, ethnographic and contemporary image scholars have constructed of this entity labelled as "the Mapuche". Nevertheless, when I do this I am totally aware of the bias it implies, in the same way I am each time I use expressions such as "the Mapuche" or "Mapuche people" throughout this thesis. This conception, although accurately defining what Mapucheness is about not only for most scholars but for

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[9] 1914:163.

many people I met during my fieldwork, embodies just one of the many ways in which Mapucheness is and might be thought of. It is biased notion, then, because it looks for a finitude where that is ontologically impossible. As it will be evident later, in people's practices "Mapuche" is not simply a discrete ethnic identity, but something that may be many things more, less, and none simultaneously or at different times.

2.1. History

Scholars generally agree about the pre-Hispanic presence of Mapuche-speaking groups, within the territory of what nowadays is Chile, from Copiapó valley (27º lat. S.) to the gulf of Reloncaví (41º lat. S.), totalling approximately one million people (Bengoa 2000, 2004; Foerster 1996, 2004; Mariman et al 2006).[10] These populations would have provided a cultural stability going back to the 2500 BP, and during the 16th century, upon Spaniard arrival, they would have constituted a "society" living in dispersed but densely inhabited settlements, based upon a diversified mode of production comprising of agriculture, horticulture, hunting and gathering (Bengoa 2003; Melville 1976).

The first recorded attempt to conquer these populations was performed by the Inka Empire during the 15th century (Cooper 1946). Most Mapuche-speaking groups would have resisted this invasion, but remnants of it would remain until today through different Andean-inspired cultural patterns (Dillehay 2007). Besides them, perhaps the most pervasive legacy obtained from this invasion is a term used to refer these "others" coming from the north, which would be the same currently employed to refer to every person considered as non-Mapuche. This term is *Winka*, which is often thought to be derived from the expression "*pu Inka*" (Mp. "the Inka") (Bengoa 2003; Dillehay 2007; Febrés 1765; Lenz 1897).

Despite the general agreement regarding how these populations referred to otherness, there are different positions concerning how these populations named

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[10] Others limit northern dispersion to Choapa valley (31 º lat. S) (Cooper 1946; Villalobos 1992; Zapater 1998).

themselves, although it is assumed that they "like other non-literate peoples, had group consciousness" (Zapater 1998:72).[11] Among these supposed collective names we may find *reche*, whose approximate translation ("real" or "pure" people) was at an early point employed to propose a Mapuche version of ethnocentric universality (cf. Lévi-Strauss 1977): "They believe they are the only ones who deserve the name of people on earth" (Molina 1788:110). We also have the name most frequently used by historical sources: *Araucanos* (Sp. "Araucarians"). Nowadays, it is assumed it was a particular denomination spread over most indigenous populations thanks to the title of Ercilla's epic poem, *La Araucana* (2006), describing the fierce Mapuche resistance against Spaniard conquest (Bengoa 2003:53). The contemporary term "Mapuche" appeared later, being mentioned for the first time in an account dated in 1775 (Boccara 1999). According to Boccara (2007), its emergence shows the materialization of an ethnic consciousness among the indigenous populations, forged in the interactions and atrocities of Spanish conquest and colonial establishment (cf. Dillehay 2007).[12]

The Mapuche/Araucarians are famous for having resisted European invasion for more than three centuries, keeping their independence. To explain such a fierce resistance, scholars emphasise that, in contrast with other societies, the Mapuche did not have a clear hierarchical structure (e.g. Latcham 1924). There was only a contingent connection between different partialities, which were alternatively and autonomously rising against the Spaniards (cf. Bengoa 1999). Several years of successful resistance, however, had a strong impact upon the natives. Half a century after the arrival of the Spanish, and as a result of epidemics and deaths in battle, the initial population had decreased by almost 80% (Bengoa 2003; Foerster 2004).

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[11] Zapater supports this observation in several chronicles. However, in my view the fact that some people appear in them naming themselves as *reche* is not necessarily connected to how they named themselves collectively (if they did that), but to how Spaniards thought they did it (see Chapters 5 and 6).

[12] Scholarly debates on denominations extended to these populations' internal differentiations, and to how we may find names such as Lafkenche (Mp. "people of the coast"); Williche (Mp. "people of the south"); or Puelche (Mp. "people of the east"). Although a few scholars maintain these terms designated (and designate) "territorial identities" (e.g. Hernández 2003), it seems clear they were in fact deictics (Boccara 2007; Course 2011; Isla nd). As Faron puts it: "The word Mapuche means 'people of the land', and all indians classified as Araucanian call themselves Mapuche, standing as each does in the centre of his own little World... some writers have taken these geographico-directional classifications to mean that fixed political and ethnic divisions existed among the pre-reservation Mapuche... Rather, these are clearly relative terms by which all Mapuche are able to orient themselves and sort out blocks of other Mapuche if necessary" (1962:1162-3).

Having proven to be extremely difficult, and after being defeated appallingly by the indigenous population in 1598, the Spanish authorities decided to change their conquest strategy, turning to one labelled as "Defensive war". Rebels, since then, have been the objects of colonisation through education and evangelization rather than through warfare. As part of this strategy, the Spanish crown recognised the autonomy of the indigenous populations in 1641, in what is known as "*Paces de Quilín*". According to this, the Bio-Bio River (36 º lat. S) was recognised as the frontier between the General Captaincy of Chile and the "Indian nation".

During the course of the two centuries following Quilín agreement, the Mapuche developed a successful economic system based upon obtaining cattle from non-Mapuche *estancias* and *haciendas* through *malones* ("raids"). This process allowed a territorial expansion known historically as *Araucanización de las Pampas*. Through it, Mapuche populations contacted indigenous peoples from the eastern part of the South Cone, establishing a bi-oceanic territorial control, and reaching as far as the south of Buenos Aires in what is currently Argentina (Bengoa 2004; Foerster 2004; Mariman et al 2006).

Later, during the 19th century, and after the independence insurgency in Latin America, indigenous peoples' situations began to change. The need to give territorial integrity to the newly formed Nation-States of Chile and Argentina resulted in two interconnected warfare processes against the Mapuche, respectively known as *Pacificación de la Araucanía* and *Conquista del Desierto*. At the same time, the Chilean State had started the economic occupation of Mapuche lands (Foerster 2004, 2008). A process known as *Radicación*, carried out from 1884 to 1927, crowned this course of action. Its final aim was twofold. First, it intended to enlarge Chilean agricultural capacity by integrating new lands into the productive system. Second, it aimed to introduce Mapuche populations into Chilean national culture, leaving behind their "primitiveness" (Bengoa 2004; Pinto 2000). The *Radicación* process meant that indigenous populations were placed in reservations (Sp. *reducciones*), by granting collective land titles (the already mentioned *Títulos de Merced*) in a rather arbitrary way. Following it, the native population kept only 500,000 of the 5,000,000 hectares they had previously controlled (González 1986). Furthermore, a significant proportion of the population was excluded from the process, having no legal

recognition of their lands (Foerster 2004). A key dimension to understanding the Mapuche's situation during the 20th century is the *reducciones*, formed as a result of the *radicación* process.[13] Mapuche people have managed to restructure their conceptions of society (e.g. Stuchlick 1976) around them. Furthermore, living in them, they have even advanced towards claims that focus on recovering ancient territories, autonomy, and recognition, as another nation within Chilean territory (Foerster and Montecino 1988; Foerster 1999).

2.2. Ethnography

Within "Mapuche studies", it is possible to find just a handful of researches based upon extended ethnographic fieldwork. Although the beginnings of scientific enquiries among the Mapuche date back to Guevara (1908, 1911, 1913), Latcham (1924), and Lenz (1897), the first substantial modern ethnography was only carried out in the 1940s, by Mischa Titiev (1951). In it, Titiev observed that the process of *radicación* had led to a transition in Mapuche culture, which became virtually indistinguishable from the one their Chilean neighbours presented. In his view, the impact of the *reduccional* system was big enough to destabilise the Mapuche way of life, which, he believed to be doomed.

A few years later, and also centred on the impact of *radicación* process, the most relevant debate in Mapuche ethnography began, centring on the explanation of how the so-called "Mapuche society" was articulated. Its first exponent was Louis Faron (1961a, 1964). In his view, the establishment of the *reducciones* implied, contrary to what Titiev argued, not just a strengthening in Mapuche structural evolution, but the development of corporate patrilineages and an Omaha kinship system (Faron 1956, 1961b). Besides this thesis, we also owe to Faron accurate descriptions of Mapuche social organization, characterizing it as preferring matrilateral alliance, privileging patrilineal descent, and tending to a virilocal residential pattern.

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[13] Despite of several attempts to suppress them, which finally happened by the decree 2.568, promulgated by Pinochet's dictatorship in 1978.

In contrast with Faron, Milan Stuchlik observes that the establishment of *reducciones* led to the disarticulation of kinship as the ruling organizational principle, giving priority instead to an ego-centred web of relationships, based upon individuals' practical capabilities. In his words, "the reintegration emerging after the reservations were created results not from the strengthening and development of the traditional forms of organization, but rather from the creation of new networks of interpersonal relationships" (Stuchlik 1976:18). In his view, Mapuche society can be understood as formed from different nodal points the location of which may be given in terms of kinship, but kinship's function should always be comprehended as to restrict the positions of those creating social links, and not giving the relationships *per se*.

Going beyond social structure, Thomas Melville's ethnography (1976) focuses on analyzing how Mapuche people conceive social power. In doing so, he proposes a notion of Mapucheness as a way of being characterised by a strong defence of freedom and individualism, which he understands as reproduced through socialization. Melville concludes that this ideological characteristic is related to the way in which Mapuche infrastructure reproduces a superstructure, creating free individuals able to move unrestrained and according to their own will (and willing to struggle to defend their right to do so).

After these studies, and perhaps as a side effect of Pinochet's regime, the Mapuche disappeared as an object of ethnographic interest. Everything concerning them was related to a remote past –and thus was a matter for historical rather than ethnographic research– or else, it appeared as connected to their problematic inclusion to Chilean society, and thus it was sociologically assumed as an issue of civil rights and claims. Consequently, recent studies have fundamentally revolved around historical analyses of intercultural relationships (Bengoa, 2000, 2003, 2004; Boccara 2007; Correa et al 2005; Foerster 2004; Foerster and Montecino 1988; Mallon 2004; Pinto 2000; Villalobos 1995; Zavala 2008); or they have focused on indigenous rights and political mobilization (Marcareño 2007; Programa de Derechos Indígenas 2003; Saavedra 2002). Nevertheless, during recent years one can observe a rebirth of ethnographic research about the Mapuche, exemplified in the work of Bacigalupo (2007), Bonelli (nd), Course (2011), Di Giminiani (2011), Isla

(nd) and Lavanchy (2007). Dealing with a vast diversity of issues, what these explorations share is a common interest in what Mapuche people can tell us both in terms of their philosophical specificity and concerning broader anthropological debates. It is in this context that I locate my own research.

2.3. Contemporary Situation

To answer what or whom the Mapuche are in contemporary Chilean society is not an easy task. It often seems to entail racial criteria, based upon an ideology that sees Chile as a European-descent white country. However, such a view hides the country's huge unrecognised mixed-blood population (cf. Villalobos 1995). Whereas most Chileans keenly affirm that they have at least one European ascendant, very few would recognise they have one or more Mapuche ancestor(s) with such enthusiasm. This probably comes from the way in which Mapuche people "represent the lower stratum of Chilean society… they are considered as inferiors by the members of society" (Stuchlik 1971b:2). This characterization does not just stem from their current situation, but is based on an ideological separation between Chile and the Mapuche engendered by the colonial frontier (Foerster 2004), and by the Modern construction of the Chilean nation, as opposed to the barbarie of the natives peoples (Pinto 2000).

Another way of conceiving the Mapuche is as a particular cultural entity. Among the many patterns here related, two factors seem to be critical. The first factor concerns the role the Mapuche have had in the formation of Chilean national identity. Within this context, it has often been claimed that the Mapuche no longer exist as a separated cultural entity because they are currently almost totally integrated into Chilean culture (e.g. Saavedra 2002). The second factor refers to the main characteristic such a culture possesses: its indigeneity.[14] This impression even has an etymologic resonance, considering that the term Mapuche literally means "people of

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[14] Although indigeneity has proven to be a problematic political affair elsewhere, in a Chilean context it mainly refers to peoples perceived as ethnically different and composing the lower layers of the society. In this sense, "indigenous" is often taken as a synomym for "primitive" (see Kuper 2003).

the land". These assumptions must confront, however, the claims made by many Mapuche people who see themselves as indigenous but not as part of a reified ethnic culture (Chapter 5). To deal with these dissonances, the Chilean State has developed a politics of indigeneity,[15] framed in the above mentioned *Ley Indígena*, which not only "objectively" defines who are indigenous, but also declares how the Chilean State expect these indigenous peoples to be.

According to the *Ley Indígena*, which recognises the Mapuche as one of the "main indigenous ethnic groups of Chile" (Article 1), to be considered as indigenous a person, besides being a Chilean national, should fulfil at least one of the following criteria (article 2):

a) To have at least one indigenous parent, who should come from a land recognised as indigenous by one of the previous laws on this matter.

b) To descend from one indigenous group, which should be proven by having at least one indigenous surname.

c) To keep features from an indigenous culture, to have an indigenous spouse, and to self-identify as indigenous.

The State grants people who fulfil one of these criteria the "quality of indigenous", accredited by a certificate (article 3), aiming to distribute resources and privileges coming from newly established positive discrimination policies (cf. De Vos and Romanucci-Ross 1995).

Additionally, the *Ley Indígena* created CONADI, the current governmental agency for indigenous affairs. Through it, the State has attempted to impose among the indigenous populations a paradigm termed as "Development with Identity". Put simply, framed by a multiculturalist ontology, this paradigm promotes economic integration respecting a folkloric notion of culture. In this effort CONADI has been supported by other Chilean State agencies such as the National Institute for Agricultural Development (INDAP), and the IDB-funded *Programa Orígenes*. The overall policy is articulated, thus, as generating equal opportunities in order to let

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[15] For a detailed exploration of its dynamics, see Bascopé (2009).

indigenous populations compete in the market. Consequently, culture stands as a mere accessory to be turned into something valuable in terms of economic benefits.[16]

According to the last Chilean population census in 2002 there were 604,349 people who declared themselves Mapuche, approximately 4% of the total population in the country.[17] According to 2006's CASEN[18] survey, the self-declared Mapuche population would total approximately 925,000. Most of this population would live in four regions: Metropolitana Santiago 27.1%, Araucanía 23.9%, Los Lagos 14.7%, and Bio-Bio 7.3%, the region where Elicura is located. According to a document elaborated some years ago by the National Statistics Institute, 0.82% of the Chilean indigenous population had studied for a university degree and 16.07% had never been to school (INE 1997). According to 2009's CASEN survey, 19.9% of Chilean indigenous populations live in poverty, in contrast with only 14.8% of the non-indigenous population.

3. The Place of this Research

This thesis is intended to engage with several debates at different levels. On a broader scale, it engages with global anthropological concerns insofar as it deals with indigenous notions about alterity, and about the relationship between the individual and society. In doing this, this thesis aims to challenge many conceptions and understandings often maintained as monolithic and uncontested categories within anthropology. More specifically, I attempt to dialogically reconceptualise these categories, in view of their inadequacy to depict certain phenomena often thought of in an uncritical manner.[19] At a second level, this thesis contributes to contemporary debates about indigenous Lowland South America.[20] In this sense, it addresses the

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[16] For an interesting exploration on the assamblages between State policies and peoples attitudes, see Lavanchy (2007).

[17] There would be approximately 300,000 Mapuche people also in Argentina (Hernández 2003:38).

[18] National Survey for Socioeconomic Characterization.

[19] Cf. footnote 3, p. 18.

[20] Although I recognise a Pan-American inspiration (Lévi-Strauss 1970), attempting to break the radical distinction often made in South America between Andean peoples and those from the

possible extension of Amerindian perspectivism (Viveiros de Castro 1998) beyond the Amazon-basin both geographically and regarding current adaptations of it. Furthermore, it engages with ongoing discussions about the nature of social groups in Lowland South America, and the fundamental relevance people there put on personal autonomy (cf. Course 2011; Londoño Sulkin 2005; McCallum 2001; Overing and Passes 2000).

At a more local level, this thesis hopes to contribute to a growing ethnographic corpus on the Mapuche people. Although the efforts of a few ethnographers (i.e. Bacigalupo 2007; Course 2011; Di Giminiani 2011; Isla nd; Lavanchy 2007) have helped us to better understand contemporary Mapuche rural lives, I believe there are still many obscure dimensions waiting to be discovered. Finally, I see this thesis as hopefully contributing to the relationships between the Chilean State and the Mapuche people. Now, after my fieldwork, it is more than ever my belief that to a great extent the problems they have experienced since their establishment derives from the incommensurability (Povinelli 2001) of their respective understandings, not only about the world in general, but about sociality in particular. I also believe that it is by highlighting this incommensurability, and not by obliterating or reducing it, that these relationships may be improved (cf. Viveiros de Castro 2004b). Later I will explain why. At the moment, I will concentrate on delving into some of the issues I have just mentioned.

3.1. Comprehending Otherness

Being its founding motivation, alterity has historically played a central role in anthropology. Nevertheless, whereas the alterity of those defined as "others" by "the West" (Said 1978) has concentrated most of anthropologists' attention, only a few fragmentary attempts have focused on comprehending the notions of alterity that are held by the peoples whom anthropologists study. Even fewer, in this sense, are the studies performing a reverse anthropology (*sensu* Wagner 1981) of alterity, focused

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Amazonian-basin, reflecting on my overall ethnographic experience I see it as much more tuned with what has been described to the latter area rather than the first.

on indigenous notions about "white people". Although lately it is possible to find several attempts trying to fill up this lacuna (i.e. Bashkow 2006; Basso 1979; Braroe 1975; Sahlins 1983, 1985, 1995; Schieffelin and Crittenden 1991; Vilaça 2006), this subject has on many occasions been obscured by compilations of data that seem to work simply as anecdotal accounts (e.g. Blackburn 1979; Lips 1937; Rosenstiel 1983). The desire to comprehend Mapuche notions about white people was one of my main motivations for proposing this research. Although once on fieldwork I shifted my focus a little, realizing that I should address other issues before embarking on what had been my initial aim, I still see my research as contributing to this reverse anthropology of alterity. Indeed, if I moved my focus that was because I needed to do it in order to pursue my initial research question.

When we look at work on indigenous South America more generally, we can see that a great emphasis has been put on how myth reflects this reverse anthropology of alterity (e.g. Hill 1988).[21] Three foci have dominated these explorations. First, they have addressed the role alterity plays as a category of thought (Canessa 2000; Lévi-Strauss 1992). Second, they have dealt with notions around contact and conquest, and with how white men have been included within indigenous mythology (Harris 1995; Hugh-Jones 1988, 1989; Severi 2000). Finally, they have looked at how what anthropological literature classically labels as "acculturation" is conceptualised, and how indigenous peoples see it as simultaneously implying both a weakness and an improvement (Gow 1993, 2001; Kelly 2005; Turner 1988). This duality might be summarised through Ireland's formula: "the whiteman is seen as intellectually clever but morally repugnant (1988:159),[22] a statement that resembles what many of my friends in Elicura would maintain.

Amazonian ethnography has also offered us a few theoretical approaches that challenge different Western clichés about the role and construction of the idea of Otherness. In this sense, following Baumann (2004), there are three different grammars according to which it is possible to classify the self/other relationship: (1) "Orientalization", in which self and other are constituted by "negative mirror imaging"; (2) "Segmentation", where there are different levels of 'selfing' and

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[21] As similarly occured regarding Melanesia (e.g. Schieffelin and Crittenden 1991).
[22] Bashkow (2006) makes a similar observation regarding the Orokaiva from PNG.

'othering' which can be conceived of as equivalent; and (3) "Encompassment", which considers the forced introduction of different "others" to be part of an all-encompassing "us".[23] Although some Amazonian-based research may be understood as following these structural lines (e.g. Caiuby Novaes 1997), it is also possible to find a few studies that clearly exceed them. For instance, tuned with Deleuze's idea of "the other" as the expression of something possible (Deleuze 1994; Deleuze and Guattari 1993), Viveiros de Castro (1992) has illustrated how Amazonian otherness is an aim, a destiny that makes people live in a perpetual state of becoming: not a self mirrored, but the future of the self. As I see it, my ethnography may introduce new insights to this discussion, not necessarily by following any of these approaches, but by demonstrating how none of them alone is sufficient for portraying the Mapuche anthropology of alterity.

3.2. Individual and Society

Being one of the social sciences' central concerns from the reflections of their pioneers (Rousseau 1998 [1762]) and founding fathers (Durkheim 1933; Weber 2008 [1944]), the relationship between the individual and society is also a key concern of this research. However, instead of focusing on how one dimension determines or moulds the other, in this thesis I fundamentally explore how the Mapuche people think about both dimensions and their possible connections. In a sense, my research aims to explore the extent to which these concepts are useful for portraying Mapuche ideas about what it is to be a person and how persons connect or are connected to form plural social collectives.

At least during the last two decades, Lowland South American ethnography has been deeply embedded in this debate in a post-structuralist sense, leaving behind former concerns on social structure, and assuming the transition from the autonomy of individuals to the formation of collectives to be a process. This paradigmatic switch was to a great extent influenced by explorations on Melanesian "dividuals"

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[23] Instead of being the incarnation of radical alterity, here the Other appears as a close/distant figure, similar to what Simmel (1950) labels as a "stranger".

(Strathern 1988), but founded upon a perspectival ontology highlighting the relevance of ascertaining each personal point of view (Lima 1996). I perceive this influence as having two main outcomes, which I will review as follows.

The first outcome is connected to ideas concerning the formation of supra-individual entities, and to the key role in them played by indigenous conceptions about relatedness (Carsten 2000; 2004). More specifically, there is a widespread idea in Amazonia that "the self who belongs to a collective is an independent self, and that the very creation of the collective is dependent upon such autonomous selves who have the cognitive/affective skills for congenial, social interaction" (Overing and Passes 2000:2). Collectives' creation is, thus, deeply founded on the establishment of relations on a daily basis, and they cannot exist unless they are set up on such a processual formation. That is why Amazonian peoples place such an emphasis upon sharing, commensality, affection, living together, and so on. It is not simply because these actions embody several moral values, but rather because they are the means by which people can bring together those who otherwise would be only autonomous and separated beings (see Gow 1991, 2003; McCallum 2001; Oakdale 2008; Overing 2003; Overing and Passes 2000; Vilaça 2002). Summarising this premise, "in Amazonia, it is affinity that stands as the given dimension of the cosmic relational matrix, while consanguinity falls within the scope of human action and intention" (Viveiros de Castro 2001:19). In this thesis I engage with this discussion by exploring how Mapuche people propose it is possible to share their unique personal perspectives.

The second outcome is more specifically connected to a perspectival ontology, and to how what persons are depends on other people's perspectives in a very literal sense. Broadly speaking, perspectivism's key feature is the assumption that what beings share is culture instead of nature, and more specifically a "human perspective" (Viveiros de Castro 1998, 2004a). This is what hinders the nature/culture opposition among Amerindian peoples (Descola 1994), the fact that each perspective is human to itself (Viveiros de Castro 1998). This proposal has immediate implications regarding beings' constitutions, insofar what they are is dependent not only on how they perceived themselves, but also on how they are seen from the perspective of other beings. As Vilaça (2005) proposes, it is for this reason

that perspectival bodies are chronically unstable, as they are simultaneously what each and every perspective states they are. Additionally, because these statements are subjected to the contingencies of the ongoing relatedness each self develops during its life (cf. Vilaça 2002).

Despite the reality that I observed a few perspectival features among people in Elicura during my fieldwork, it is nonetheless very difficult to propose the widespread existence of a proper perspectival ontology among them. Regardless of specificities, this was fundamentally due to the absence of inter-ontological relationships. Indeed, people in Elicura themselves saw their interactional world as restricted to the presence of several different human persons, of a few animals they may encounter once in a while, and of a very scarce number of spirits remaining in the Valley. It is often stated that it has been the presence of Winka that has extinguished animals and spiritual presences in the Valley. Therefore, the only alterity Mapuche people must deal with in their lives is the one embodied by the different persons they encounter. Against the perspectival proposal Mapuche reality puts a strong mono-species argument: everybody partaking of social life in Elicura is human, both to him or herself and to others. Despite this situation, I will propose that there is a very strong perspectival quality in the way in which Mapuche philosophy reflects on sociality. Following Kirsch, a key idea regarding this is that in the Mapuche case, as "in the Melanesian version of perspectivism, what one sees is determined by social relations" (2006:74). In this thesis I will try to explain how this works, and what I see as its social implications.

3.3. Challenging Ethnicity

Trying to understand otherness and the relationship between the individual and society, since the 1940s anthropologists have used a loosely defined concept labelled as "ethnicity" (Berreby 2005). Usually comprehended as the idea a group has "of their own distinctiveness from others" (Maybury-Lewis 1997:59; see also Epstein 1978; Francis 1976; Hutchinson and Smith 1996; and Jenkins 1997), this notion goes

back to Max Weber, who did not speak about this loose idea, but more plainly about the social groups presenting it. To him there were two key features to ascertain the existence of what he called ethnic groups: (1) they should be founded upon a presumed similarity; (2) such similarity should be useful for tracing distinctions between peoples (Weber 2008:315-8).

Having a general agreement regarding the fact most of peoples across the globe draw such a similar/different distinction, the focus has moved towards the foundations of the distinction, and to the flexibility it may present. In this latter sense, the debate has been circumscribed to discuss whether ethnic identity is something rigid and undeniable, or if it is something that can be denied or affirmed at various people's conveniences (Banks 1996; Jenkins 1997; Proschan 1997; Sollors 1996). In the first sense, the debate focused on the importance of culture for asserting any given group's ethnicity. This debate seemed to find an end in Barth's suggestion that scholars should place emphasis upon the sociological classifications maintained by the groups being studied. To him, the important thing was "the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff it encloses" (Barth 1969:15; also Eriksen 1993). It is on this apparently resolved debate that I would like to focus my argument.

In this thesis I will address three problems I see as surrounding the Barthian approach to ethnicity and its uncontested predominance. First of all, Barth's proposal seems to underestimate the relevance of cultural content to ethnic adscription, which is exactly the opposite of what many of my friends in Elicura declare. Indeed, to their view there is nothing but cultural content that actually defines Mapuche ethnicity (cf. Mahmood and Armstrong 1992; Sahlins 1999). What is more, such an approach seems to be extremely extended among people in general, some scholars (e.g. Smith 2002), and indigenous leaders elsewhere (e.g. Menchú 1998). It is worth asking, then, why there is a repeated denial of a "common sense" assumption basing ethnicity on "culture" (Baumann 1999; Jenkins 1997) if people themselves are firmly intent on this connection?

Secondly, I doubt that the Barthian approach to ethnicity, as any other Western approach, dispenses with "culture" as it is often supposed it does. As I see it, although self/other distinctions may be socially more relevant than culture, there is

always a cultural core that allows them. Regardless of any emphasis on social boundaries, it is clear that they, "and the interactions across them, are intimately and indissolubly bound up with the cultural contents of ethnicity" (Jenkins 1997:121-2). This connection was so evident that Barth himself had to clarify his proposal against his most enthusiastic followers. As he put it, "it is a question of analyzing boundary processes, not of enumerating the sum of content, as in an old-fashioned trait list. But… culturally valued institutions and activities in an ethnic group may be deeply involved in its boundary maintenance" (Barth quoted by Jenkins 1997:122). Therefore, although perhaps culture is not of worth as something objectively conceived, it seems nevertheless to be critical taken as a subjective tool for boundaries' portrayal.

By highlighting this assumed link between ethnicity and culture, which I see as extended to most Western theoretical conceptions about ethnicity, I look to contrast it with what I observed during my fieldwork. Thus, the third point I will make is related to how this culture/ethnicity assemblage is not necessary for many of my friends in Elicura. By this claim I want to argue against the imposition of exogenous concepts to specific ethnographic realities, which eventually tend towards a homogenization into an overarching ontology. In this sense, I agree with Descola's observation regarding Shuar ethnic nationalisms, and how they are "effect of the contamination of past communitarian organization by modern doctrines of State hegemony" (Descola 2005:393).[24] Instead, I advocate an anthropology that is aware of the incommensurability (Povinelli 2001, 2002) between its conceptual apparatus and the ones maintained by the people it studies. For this reason, it is my belief that any ethnographic effort should necessarily look ahead to be an "ontographic exercise" (Holbraad 2003, 2009).

In this thesis I do not want to propose a general theory of ethnicity, but simply to explore the "ethnic" conceptions that are maintained by Mapuche people themselves. These are exactly the ideas challenging those often thought of as universal in anthropological literature. Amazonian ethnography has advanced many arguments in this sense, replacing a genealogical model with a relational one (Ingold 2000:132-151; e.g. Gow 2001; Overing 2003; Overing and Passes 2000; Taylor

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[24] Or more radically, with the observation an eldest Wari' put to Vilaça: "We are Wari' because you have told us that. Before we didn't know that" (Vilaça 2006:138).

1996). My intention, however, is not to replace one framework with another, but simply to depict what Mapuche people maintain despite of the extreme external pressures asking them to think through the culture/ethnic assemblage.

3.4. Anthropology and Incommensurability

From the initial Spanish conquest in 1541 to the present, relationships between the Chilean State and Mapuche people have been marked by exploitation, discrimination, and structural violence. Besides the typical dynamics every colonial process implies, it is my belief this violence has been to a great extent engendered by the unreflexive assumption of mutual translatability between what actually are incommensurate understandings (Blaser 2009; Kirsch 2006). In this thesis I intend to explore this incommensurability, to inhabit the hidden space of equivocation (Viveiros de Castro 2004b), by exploring Mapuche ontological conceptions in their own terms.

Following Žižek (2006), I conceive my exploration as a continual *parallax view* between the traditions I partake of, and the ones embodied by my friends in Elicura. In doing this I follow a key tenet of Mapuche philosophy: everybody sees the world differently. The only way of dealing with all of these different perspectives would be then to be in continual movement between perspectives, highlighting and noticing the difference between them, and never assuming we share one univocal way of seeing the world. To adopt such a stance, profoundly aware of the dissonances and against the assumption of a universal truth, might provoke a virtuous change not only regarding current research on the Mapuche people, but by being adopted by Chilean society in general it might produce fruitful improvements for intercultural relationships.

Last but not least, one final clarification. As I mentioned, in this thesis I continually employ the term "ontology", instead of "culture" or "cosmology", when I refer to the Mapuche conceptions about the world giving sense to their epistemological assumptions. In doing this, I attempt to locate my reflection outside

the nature/culture distinction (Descola 1994; Latour 1993), denying the necessary predominance of any discourse about the ultimate nature of things. I prefer the term "ontology" to "culture", because the ideas about the world my friends shared with me are not a competing interpretation about a univocal reality. On the contrary, as my friends keenly insisted, they are nothing but one of the many possible exegeses of everything in this world.

4. The Organization of this Thesis

Although I see the chapters composing this thesis as being interconnected in several different ways, in an attempt to clarify my argument I have organised them into three sections. The order in which I present these sections constitutes, in turn, a metaphor for how I think Mapuche people envision the pass from isolated individuals to plural social entities.

In the first section, entitled "Ontological foundations", I discuss a few aspects I see as essential for comprehending the ways in which Mapuche people conceive of their own experience of the world. In Chapter 1, I develop the connection established between personal experience and reality, which could be understood through what I call *the uniqueness of personal experience principle*. Exploring how this principle leads to the social assertion of a "doctrine of opacity of other minds", I propose that among the Mapuche this does not necessarily imply the denial of the possibilities of knowing other minds, but rather the possession of a fundamental doubt about any possibility of knowing them. Amid the uniqueness principle and the opacity doctrine, I propose the mediation of a *truth distance-assessment*, which is key to understanding how it is thought personal truths may eventually be shared.

In Chapter 2, I focus my exploration on understanding what persons are according to the Mapuche. In doing this, I stress the necessity of considering two methodological standpoints: exploring the issue from a first person perspective, how persons see themselves, but also looking at how they are seen from a third person perspective. This separation permits us to notice how each personal notion of

Mapucheness often corresponds with each individual own perception as a person. Furthermore, in this chapter I show how persons are generally conceived of as mixtures of fluid elements, related to established social relationships and perceived behaviour, but also to sets of substances that are considered to be essential. This composition is what gives persons the unique constitutions that allow the uniqueness of experiences addressed in the first chapter.

In the second part of this thesis, entitled "To share and to differ", I discuss the different ways in which Mapuche people think it is possible to share experiential worlds. In Chapter 3, by exploring how some historical materials may inform us regarding the Mapuche/Winka distinction, I propose the creation of similarity was thought of as a deliberate process founded upon the possible existence of a dual cannibalism, literal and metaphorical. Observing the past occurrence of a phenomenon we may label as *Mapuchization* (becoming Mapuche-like), I suggest Mapuche people ascribed then as now a key role to the establishment and enhancement of social relationships in order to create social collectives. In Chapter 4, I come back to my ethnographic materials in order to observe how, considering the premises explored in the first two chapters, the emergence of shared narratives is possible among the Mapuche. To do this I present two widely known stories, assuming a stance that sees them as shared at the level of signifiers, but not necessarily shared at the level of the signified.

The final section of this thesis is called "The multi/equi-vocality of sociality". In it, I develop an argument regarding how, according to the Mapuche, any collective, even those formed upon close relatedness, is always a holographic projection made from a unique singularity. Furthermore, I discuss the implications of such a claim among the Mapuche, and consequently in how they conceive social life. In Chapter 5, I abstract a free classification of three different ways of understanding the Mapuche/Winka distinction, exploring their dissonances and similarities. This chapter aims to show the heterogeneity of personal perceptions interacting within Mapuche rural life, and how they may coexist harmoniously in the awareness of their differences. Lastly, in Chapter 6 I discuss how we may comprehend concepts such as understanding, collectiveness, and sociality according to a Mapuche ontology. In

doing this I explain how the lack of univocality is not contradictory to these ideas but is, on the contrary, their key constitutive pillar.

Part One

Ontological Foundations

Chapter 1

Towards a Mapuche Theory of Truth

It was 1977. Numerous Mapuche communities in Chile were suffering what many people within them perceived as a "second *reducción*" (Foerster 2004). Centre and left-leaning governments had coordinated efforts to reform agrarian property laws in Chile, but now the military regime headed by General Augusto Pinochet, who had taken power in 1973, was in the process of reversing these reforms. Executing a plan usually referred to as the *Contrarreforma* (Sp. "Counter-reform"), the State was, besides stopping the policy of compulsory purchase, returning to its old owners an important part of the lands waiting to be redistributed among peasants. These circumstances manifestly impacted Elicura Valley. Although the majority of "reformed" lands there had been granted to non-Mapuche peasants (who mostly kept them despite the *Contrarreforma*), the overall Agrarian Reform process had produced further expectations among people. More specifically, Mapuche people envisioned it as a favourable context in which to advance their plight to recover their ancient lands: the ones they had lost due to the *radicación* process, as well as those they had lost due to additional disparate incidents.[25] Consequently, *Contrarreforma* was perceived as a setback to their claims, not just by those in the Valley but by people in most of rural southern Chile.[26]

It was at this time that Luis, a young Mapuche man from *reducción* Mateo Colimán, took a morning stroll by the hills enclosing Elicura Valley. There, the forest and its soggy environment, engendered by a ceiling of dense tree branches which did not (and indeed, do not) allow spring's sunshine to evaporate the humidity left by winter's heavy rains, provided him with an unparalleled calm and seclusion. He often used to walk unhurriedly around this area looking for these feelings. He could not have predicted, however, that this particular time something would turn

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[25] For a brief summary of Mapuche history, see this thesis' Introduction. For an example of these incidents, see Chapter 4.

[26] For detailed approach to Chilean Agrarian Reform and its connections to Mapuche people, see Correa *et al* (2005).

this ordinary habit in an astonishing experience. While he was walking, and upon reaching a clearing in the woods, he suddenly began to feel dizzy, the air got thicker, and whatever he observed appeared blurred. These circumstances lasted for a few seconds, but as he now says, they were extremely stressful and overwhelming. Afterwards, everything became clear once again. But, to his surprise, he was not alone anymore. In front of him was God: waiting and willing to talk with him. That was not all: God was dressed the same as, and looking exactly like, General Pinochet.

After the initial shock Luis suffered, God spoke to him in *Chedungun* (Mp. approx. "language of the people") for "no more than three seconds". However, Luis states that to him those seconds were actually "like fifteen minutes". During his allocution, God gave Luis several instructions that are still crystal clear to him today: he should work for the benefit of his community, and if he fulfilled his duty, God would always be there to support him. Nowadays, he recognises that God's support at that moment gave him the courage to carry out the entrusted task. Even though Chile was ruled by a strict dictatorship, and any kind of even slightly political activity was banned and could redound to a personal risk, as God offered him help and protection, he had no reason to be afraid. After the three second talk, God disappeared just as quickly as he had showed up. Luis, for his part, went back to his home, and soon began to work on what he refers to as the "reorganization" of his community.[27]

This was not, however, the only task God was preparing for Luis. A couple of months later, while sleeping, Luis saw himself in Contulmo, a small town near Elicura. Then, in his own words,

> …Once again General Pinochet presented himself to me, but this time God was in a white suit… He again spoke to me in my Mapuche language… he told me that I was going to take up a position as president of an organization… that I was going to be president… I just thanked my God

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[27] This narrative fits in an experiential context Mapuche people traditionally refer as *perimontun*. It can be approximately explained as a disruption in a reality continuum to bring on a parallel one for a determined period of time. Many Mapuche recognise that for most *Winka* (Mp. "non-Mapuche") people, and even for some Mapuche, this is something hard to "believe in". They counter the scepticism by stating that *perimontun* "just happen to Mapuche people". They also add that Mapuche people who do not believe in *perimontun* are very likely to be *awinkados* (*Winka*-like).

because he hadn't abandoned me, he was helping me to work, and that is why I was never afraid…[28]

Soon after this experience, Luis expanded the frontiers of his action, beginning a political career that saw him spend four years leading the most prominent Mapuche organization of those years within the Province of Arauco.[29]

* * *

During my fieldwork in Elicura I often heard narratives –such as the one quoted above– that puzzled me in a number of ways. However, when I reflect on this, when I ask myself what the reason was for this puzzlement, this diversity confluxes in one single and particular root. It seems to me now when confronting these narratives that I was actually dealing with "indexes of alterity" (Holbraad 2008). Simply put, these were linguistic manifestations that challenged many of the assumptions I recognised as belonging to the traditions in which I partake as a Chilean anthropologist studying in Britain.[30]

I began this chapter with Luis' narrative because I think it provides a perfect example of the continual challenge I underwent. If we look at it, we are met with a fascinating anecdote, a possible fruitful field for several different anthropological interpretations. However, the challenge to which I want to refer is not necessarily related to the narrative's symbolic facets. I was obviously surprised by the link established in it between God and Pinochet, particularly in light of Luis' Socialist militancy.[31] But approaching this connection would require a deep exploration of Mapuche understandings of politics, representation, and social power, subjects that

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[28] In his narrative Luis employed the terms God and Pinochet interchangeably. This does not imply, however, that he considers both as one entity. He was always extremely clear in pointing out that God just employed Pinochet's appearance when presenting to him, but he actually did not know why this happened.

[29] This second encounter took place in what Mapuche people refer as *pewma*, which can be roughly translated to English as "dream". Dreaming, for the Mapuche, has been historically a very relevant and meaningful way of experiencing (e.g. Menard 2007), as for other peoples across the globe (Hallowell 1967; Lévy-Bruhl 1926).

[30] Nadasdy makes a similar point proposing that, although we may advocate indigenous knowledge, "our own theories remain rooted in Euro-American ontological assumptions that are fundamentally incompatible with them" (2007:26).

[31] If the reader is not familiar with recent Chilean history, the Socialist party was not only banned during the Military dictatorship in Chile, but its clandestine organization stood as one of the fiercest opponents to Pinochet's rule.

are outside of the direct scope of my research.[32] Rather, I want to discuss the puzzling *doubt* that Luis' story, like many others, generated in me. I first met Luis five years ago. I know him and I trust him. I definitely believe him when he tells me that he experienced what he says he experienced. Nevertheless, I cannot get rid of the *doubt* his account generates in me, regarding the "real" feasibility of the experiencing context he described. No matter how much effort I make, for me the occurrence of these parallel reality disruptions, what Mapuche people call *perimontun*, is simply something that is hard to believe in.

Living in Elicura, I noticed that I was not the only one holding this kind of doubt. Some Mapuche people also maintained a sceptical stance towards the possibility of certain narratives people told. Thus, for instance, a friend from *reducción* Melimán used to state: "the problem here is that people drink a lot [of alcohol]. That's why they imagine and say weird, funny things". I also remember how a good friend, in his fifties and from *reducción* Huaiquivil, regularly laughed at other people's stories, making remarks such as: "these people… what a bunch of liars… they don't know what else to make up".

People who experienced and narrated these kinds of stories were aware of the doubt they generated in non-Mapuche people, as well as in some Mapuche people who they considered as *awinkados* (*Winka*-like). This situation produced a reluctance to narrate to them. An old man from Villa Elicura once explained this to me very clearly: "Why are we going to put effort into telling these things to Winka people? They don't believe in them, they even can't see these things because they are *Winka…*" I assumed, then, that my scepticism could be explained from a Mapuche perspective as simply due to an ontological difference. Only Mapuche people could experience such things as *perimontun*; hence, only they could believe in them and know them to be real. I, as a *Winka,* had no access to certain dimensions of reality. I was plainly condemned to wondering about and usually doubting their occurrence. The same was true for *awinkados*.

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[32] Foerster and Menard (2009) approach this experience trying to specifically unravel its political implications. Further approaches on political dimensions of Mapuche social life may be found in Di Giminiani (2011); Foerster (1999, 2004); Foerster and Montecino (1988); Hernández (2003); González Gálvez (2007, 2010); Mallon (2004); and Melville (1976).

This made sense, up to a point. I knew how Mapuche explained my apparent inability to alleviate my doubt. There was a barrier related to a certain Mapuche theory on the possibilities of perception. As time passed, however, I realised that I had mistakenly assumed that to doubt what people said was, for the Mapuche, a property of *Winkaness*. Actually, adopting a sceptical stance towards what is spoken of in narratives was rather common among the Mapuche with whom I lived. Nonetheless, what seemed doubtful for them was not the same as what was doubtful for me and for my *awinkados* friends. If, for us, doubt centred on the possibilities reality granted to experiencing those kinds of phenomena –we located the doubt in the world "out there"– for the rest of Mapuche people accepting these possibilities was not a problem at all. In contrast, they doubted whether or not any person really had experienced what he or she said he or she had experienced. They located the doubt in the person, and more specifically in the inherently deceptive nature of language (cf. Bloch 2008). To paraphrase Wagner's famous depiction of his interaction with the Daribi (1981), their doubt of recounted experiences was not the same as my doubt of them.

* * *

In this chapter, I follow recent petitions on the necessity of turning ethnography into an *ontographic* exercise (Holbraad 2003, 2009). As I see it, an *ontographic* exercise implies a challenge to anthropology because it moves the understanding of alterity from a cultural to an ontological foundation. In doing this, this chapter promotes a solid dialogic creation of new concepts, allowing us to simultaneously understand other people's worlds and to respect their own ontological foundations. In practical terms, this requires an awareness of two points: firstly, the fact that "cultures" are not necessarily commensurable (Povinelli 2001, 2002); secondly, that each particular culture responds to its own ontological premises.[33] Drawing on such a stance, it will not be my intention to construct my ethnography by bringing elements to the foreground simply because they are "indexes of alterity" (Holbraad 2008). Hence, I will not necessarily quote ethnographic facts because they are "exotic" either in my

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[33] This has extremely relevant implications to what we may understand as translation in anthropology, an issue I address in Chapter 6.

view or in what I consider to be the possible view of my readers. Rather, I will quote them simply because I think they are relevant to the process of comprehending the Mapuche ontology I am exploring, or because they are useful for illustrating a relevant point. For this reason, among the ethnographic vignettes making up this chapter and the overall thesis it is very likely that readers will find cases they judge as rather familiar,[34] and also ones they find exceptionally bizarre. This should absolutely be expected and it is not necessarily a problem. What I am attempting to do is to comprehend the Mapuche on their terms; I am not willing to show how "other" they are.

Here I intend to explore some ideas I consider critical to my overall argument, from the depth of the notions Mapuche people have of them. In my view, each one of these notions –experience, reality, knowledge, for a start– fit together and are better understood in line with what I conceive of as a Mapuche theory of truth. My argument here will be that, for many Mapuche people, truth is not a property of utterances in relation to how congruent they are when contrasted with a transcendent reality (a conception I recognise in myself as making me *doubt* Luis' experiences). Instead, from a Mapuche stance, truth is something predicated upon each particular personal experience. It emerges from each personal engagement within an environment. It is a property of each person's ongoing opening up towards what surrounds him or her, an opening I term *personal phenomenology*.

Before entering fully into the substantial part of my argument, I would like to make an initial clarification regarding the materials I will be discussing. In this chapter I will be using the terms "thought" and "experience" somewhat interchangeably. The reason for this is directly linked to the way in which Mapuche people conceive of *rakiduam*, a concept usually translated as "thought", but which to my view also encompasses what we may understand as "experience". For the Mapuche, each person has his or her own *rakiduam*, which to a certain extent is different from "the self" –with which it has something of a parallel existence (Bonelli nd; cf. Bacigalupo 2007). In this sense, it is common to hear people

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[34] In the final chapters of this thesis I will be discussing how eventually this perceived similitude is often just superficial. It actually may be traced just at signifiers' level, but when moving to a deeper consideration of meanings, we may be able to note that it hides several different, and often unnoticed, conceptions of the world (cf. Cohen 1993).

asserting phrases as "my *rakiduam* told me", or even completely in Spanish "*mi pensamiento me dijo*" (Sp. "my thought told me"). Beyond these issues, I believe one of the main sources from where *rakiduam* obtains its materials (the ones it employs to think) is from personal experience. To a certain extent, personal experience is what nourishes it. To my knowledge, Mapuche language does not trace an analytical distinction between "experience" and "thought". I think this is because they each form part of a single phenomenon. More specifically, the *rakiduam* may think and then inform us about this thought because the self that is linked to it is able to experience. Experience is, in a sense, what constitutes thought.

To develop my approach to a Mapuche theory of truth, I have divided this chapter into three sections. In the first one, I deal with the relationship between truth and personal experience, exploring how Mapuche people come to terms with the particular conception of truth directly connected to personal experiences. In the second section I deal with the social implications of this premise. As we will see, this is directly linked to what seems to be doubtful for many Mapuche people –as described previously– and it is also connected to a problem some ethnographers of Melanesia have referred to as the "doctrine of the opacity of other minds" (Robbins 2008; Robbins and Rumsey 2008). Finally, I will approach how Mapuche people more particularly interact with other people's truths. More specifically, I will explore how Mapuche people conceive truth as something that may be shared, and how they continually assess other people's truths in order to judge to what extent they are valid to them, as singular persons.

1. Personal Experience and Truth

After a couple of months in Elicura, my attention was drawn to the way in which people recurrently performed a rather simple practice. This procedure consisted of clearly stating the source of a narrative before properly recounting it.[35] It was done very simply, by a variety of different people, and regardless of the genre of the story.

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[35] An issue also noticed elsewhere in Lowland South America (e.g. Gow 1991).

Often, the narrator directly stated whose experience the narrative depicted. If this was not possible, it was at least asserted who had narrated the story to the circumstantial storyteller. This enunciation, however, did not replace the necessity of an 'original source'. This starting point was always referred to, albeit sometimes only vaguely. Despite this, people tended to narrate *their own* experiences, as was the case of Luis, outlined at the beginning of this chapter. In these situations, the narrator made himself sure that his audience had this clear before beginning the narration.

People were always very careful in this regard. Their main concern when doing this was to locate the person who actually lived each story. If the account had been narrated by certain persons but it had not happened to these persons, then that was also declared. This consideration sometimes even reached unknown people. For example, when the stories narrated had happened to "a friend, of a friend, of a friend…" But even in these cases, this information was appreciated. It seemed that all the details people had regarding the source were worth knowing. To know the starting point of the story was actually as important as to know the story itself. This was also valid for past experiences' accounts. In these cases, the recounting of empirical sources usually commenced locating the source in one's own ancestors ("My grandma said…"). When referring to a more distant experience, such as from ancient times, the source was named more vaguely: "The ancient ones said…"

Having lived in Elicura, I believe that this aspect of the Mapuche way of narrating stories is far from merely random. On the contrary, I think that when Mapuche people work out the source of a narrative, and when they attempt to place the person who originally experienced what is being told, they are actually setting out how they conceive narratives and why they visualise them as worthwhile. Simply put, they observe them as products of direct experience. They come to exist as social entities because they were –sometime, somewhere, and somehow– first-hand experiences. This is why they are worth sharing: because they inform people about other people's experiences (Course 2009). And this is also why it is important to identify a narrative's sources: to know, at least approximately, who it was who had experienced it.

Referring more specifically to experience, and understanding it as an ongoing process of engaging with, and acquiring knowledge, Mapuche people usually

emphasise the importance of approaching it as an autonomous effort. If one were to turn this into a maxim, it might look something like this: "the only way of really knowing about something, is by experiencing that something yourself". In other words, it is critical to personally experience something to really know what the implications of that thing are to oneself as a singular person. This is what I call *the uniqueness of personal experience principle*. I recognise this principle as critical to the way Mapuche people conceive society, knowledge, and, as we will see, truth. As far as I could tell, being aware of it is key to any attempt to understand the Mapuche lived worlds.

There were many instances in which people openly asserted the importance of personal experience. I remember two particular practical issues. The first regards the way in which the people I engaged with during my fieldwork generally showed a reluctant attitude towards giving advice (Mp. *ngulam*), something that appeared to be the case even in situations in which they were asked directly to give it. I experienced this reluctance myself when I asked people whether or not I should do certain things. It did not matter if my query was as trivial as asking if I should visit somebody at certain time, or if my question concerned more personal and delicate affairs, the invariable answer I found was: "I don't know, you're the only one who can know that". My own experience regarding this affair resonates with what Course has pointed out. In his view, this general avoidance of giving advice among the Mapuche finds its limits in the conceptualization of kinship. People may only freely seek advice from, and give advice to, consanguineal kin (generally their agnatic kin), for it is these people with whom they are said to be of "one kind" (Course 2011).

A second issue refers to what can be described as a deep respect towards what other people may think. I see this as closely related to a strong affirmation of personal autonomy.[36] This was clearer than ever when I had a long conversation about "Mapuche traditions" with Alberto, a respected elder renowned as one of the most knowledgeable people within Elicura. It was the evening of an especially cold day. We were in the kitchen, the room where most Mapuche daily family interactions

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[36] Stasch makes a similar point discussing an analogous case among the Korowai of West Papua (2009:38-45). I will engage with his ethnography in more detail later.

take place.[37] Seated around a stove, we were discussing one of the central topics I was interested in. This could be summed up as what it meant for him to be a Mapuche. I was exhausted and frustrated. I felt unable to grasp any of Alberto's ideas. He, on the contrary, seemed to be delighted with, and quite entertained by, my confusion. He considered most of my questions extremely weird, and he often smiled when he heard them.

I decided to clarify my questions by offering him some rather direct examples. I told him "what about if I tell you that I'm Mapuche". Alberto beamed at me and told me, "That would be ok. Then you're Mapuche". I could not believe what I was hearing –at first, I thought he was joking– so I pressed him: "How is that? If I say I'm a Mapuche, am I?" Alberto answered me "of course, what you think is what you think, and nobody can mess with that. Each person *owns* his thoughts". I continued, "how's that? Is it that simple? Then I am Mapuche, what do you think about that?" In that moment Alberto took a deep breath, and very succinctly, as if to end our conversation, said to me: "well, as I told you, each person owns his thoughts. You may think whatever you want… it is your business. But what I think is a completely different thing".

Everything that I have stated in this section might be considered related to this single premise. In Alberto's words that would be: "*Each person owns his thoughts*", his experiences. This explains why it is as important to know the original source of a narrative, as it is to know the narrative itself. What the narrative depicts is inseparable from its depicter. What a thought expresses is inseparable from its thinker. What an experience articulates is inseparable from its experiencer. This is a key aspect of the Mapuche way of comprehending what can be labelled as knowledge. It is understood as critically founded upon a personal engagement with the world, upon a personal phenomenology. It is considered embedded in the particular experience each person has as an ongoing result of this involvement. Accordingly, this conception has a significant impact on what Mapuche people perceive as truthful. Truth is conceptualised as dependent upon each person's

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[37] Even today it is possible to find a separation of environments within Mapuche homesteads. There is the kitchen, where people eat, women cook, and the family gathers to chat or watch TV. This is the space of daily interaction, and it is the environment where guests are received and allowed to stay. But there are also bedrooms, which are generally banned to visitors and usually are used only for sleeping.

singular experience. Truth is founded upon a personal phenomenology.[38] To understand this statement, however, we must first comprehend what truth is for the Mapuche, an issue I explore in the following section.

1.1. The Foundations of Truth

As stated, I would suggest that Mapuche people conceive truth as emerging from each person's experiential engagement with his or her environment. To understand such a claim, however, first we should highlight a critical distinction upon which Mapuche people place considerable emphasis. This distinction could be equated to the problem Mapuche people see when passing from a singular perspective to the abstraction of a plural one (see Chapter 6). To put it in simple terms, it is the difference between what is, on the one hand, true to oneself personally speaking, and, on the other hand, what occurs when these personal truths are socialised. To explore this distinction, I will give an account of how a friend used it during my fieldwork.

Juana is a woman in her seventies who has lived all her life in *reducción* Melimán. Like Alberto, she is renowned as one of wisest and most knowledgeable people regarding "Mapuche traditions" in the whole Valley. Additionally, she was one of the three hosts I had in Elicura, and my fieldwork benefited enormously from the months I lived at her home. Trusting her reputation, I used to ask her about many things that were constantly appearing in my interactions, especially about aspects of Mapuche life that people considered as from "the old times".

During a period of my fieldwork I was especially concerned about the efficacy and values Mapuche people ascribed to language. One of my concerns was to find out with which word truth was referred to in Chedungun. I asked everybody about this, from those who spoke fluently to those who were non-speakers. Most people stated that they did not know what the "corresponding" Mapuche word was

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[38] This proposition could be taken mistakenly as simple relativism. On the contrary, it is much more like a *relationism* (see Viveiros de Castro 2002a, 2010a). Course (2009) proposes a similar argument regarding the importance of personal experience when dealing with Mapuche songs.

for that Winka term. A few, however, stated that the approximate Chedungun word was the prefix "*re*". Nonetheless, I did not find this response wholly satisfactory on the grounds that scholars attribute a considerable range of possible pragmatic translations to this prefix, ranging from "sacred" to "real".[39]

And so it was that one day I put my question to Juana. While we were talking about some of the stories people used to tell, and about how one might judge their veracity, I asked her: "How do you say 'truth' in Chedungun?" After a few seconds of thought, she answered "I don't remember, it seems that *se me achiñurró el lonko*" (Sp. and Mp. approx. "my head turned like the one of a non-Mapuche woman"). I then asked if the word she was looking for was "*re*". She said, "one might say *re* means truth, but there is another word people employed to say whether what people were saying was truth or *koyla*" (Mp. approx. "lie"). Our conversation continued, and the topic was dismissed. Hours passed and we all went to our bedrooms to sleep. Juana, however, kept thinking about this word that she could not remember. I know this because the next morning, when I went into the kitchen, Juana greeted me and then told me, "I remembered the word, it is *mupin*" (Mp. approx. "to say the truth").[40]

To my mind, when Juana differentiated the word "*re*" from the word "*mupin*", she was in fact highlighting the critical distinction to which I was previously referring. I think that although Chedungun has contemporarily fallen into disuse, this distinction is still extremely pertinent among Mapuche people. It considers, on the one hand, that a transcendent dimension exists that is *truthful* in its *own right*. This is what Juana considers as *re*. With this term she refers to, and thinks of, the way things ontologically are. She signals things' own congruence with themselves. With this term she stresses an order that, whilst it may be related to persons' agency, it is at the same time beyond that agency. It is in this sense that I claimed truth was founded upon personal phenomenology. This is the way truth, as something *re*, is conceived. That is, as an ongoing personal search within the world.

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[39] Semantically, *re* would indicate a reference near ideas such as "purity", "genuine", or "without mixture" (see Augusta 2007 and Erize 1960).

[40] I had never heard that term, so I asked people other than Juana if they knew it, but they consistently responded negatively. I knew Juana was probably the best Chedungun speaker in Elicura. Nevertheless, as I could not find a reaffirmation of her statement, I thought that maybe she had confused the term. This until I found the term as quoted by Augusta (2007) and Erize (1960), who translate it as "to say the truth".

On the other hand and as Juana pointed out, there is also another sense in which Mapuche people think about truth. This sense is related to an awareness of what takes place when personal truths are shared, when they are introduced into the social world. Along these lines, truth (as *mupin*) is judged as dependent upon the relationship of congruence between, on the one hand, a thought/experience and, on the other, the language employed to refer to that thought/experience. This conception is related to a sphere that considers how thoughts/experiences –personal truths– are communicated, and as such are turned into social actors.

As it is stated here, the division between *re* and *mupin* could be equated to a distinction between, on the one hand, the premises involved by particular personal engagements within the world, and, on the other, the problems regarding the nature of sociality. The first term of the distinction refers to a personal phenomenology, to the personal process we have located as central to Mapuche knowledge. The second is related to how those personal truths are shared. It refers to how they are communicated among different singular persons. I will conclude this section by referring to the first term, waiting to address the latter in the next one.

From this distinction, what is truth as *re* is that *truth is founded upon personal experience*. That is why people put such an emphasis on persons figuring out for themselves what is valid for them. In this regard, we should advance towards accepting a single premise: for the Mapuche (or at least for some of them) what is true always depends on persons, rather than plainly being "true" in general.[41]

The Mapuche preoccupation with experiences' sources, with the autonomy of thinking, and with personal experiences is part of this ontology; it is part of how things are conceived, it is in the '*re*-nature of the world'. According to it, the validity of what is experienced depends on the experiencer, and on the way phenomena are presented to him or her. It does not depend on the context of events. For this reason experiences are intrinsically unquestionable by others; they cannot be subjects of doubt. Every imaginable or accounted experience is possible. That is why, in contrast to what happened to my *awinkados* friends and me, people usually did not doubt the possibility of what was being narrated at any given time. That, from this viewpoint,

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[41] It is important to note this does not imply the assumption of some sort of pragmatic approach to truth (see Blackburn and Simmons 1999), levelling truth to what is useful to the subjects. It is not simply about the usefulness of personally upheld truths, but about truth's ontological foundations.

would be absurd. Within personal experience possibilities are unlimited, at least in their appearance to others.

Therefore, truth is not a property of utterances based on how congruent they seem with the 'objective-external world'. The Mapuche emphasis on particular experiences instead makes truth a personal affair.[42] What is truthful here is each person's capacity to know, to engage, to develop his or her own views and thoughts. Truth is thus not something that transcends the subject. Quite the opposite, it is more apt to say that it is a property of a person's processes of interaction within their environment. For this reason, such a thing as a 'universal truth' cannot be claimed to exist.

I should clarify here that I am not adopting a relativist position, attempting to deny external reality priority by simply arguing that the definitive features of reality are always located in the subject, in his or her tradition of thought, and so on. The Mapuche assumption of personal experiences' truthfulness implies an ontological gap that cannot be explained *relativistically*. As a notion, it is not a 'type' classifiable within an alien ontology, but rather, a challenge to all of them. It would perhaps suggest an invitation to reconceptualise other ideas (including those one may consider as one's own) by inhabiting the space between different ontologies and noticing the gap previously hidden by ethnocentric misunderstandings (cf. Viveiros de Castro 2010a). It is an invitation to recognise the "other" as an expression (and fulfilment) of a possible world (Deleuze 1994). Moreover, it implies the avoidance of taking a multiculturalist ontology for granted. Consequently, being aware that what we recognise as culture is not just a perspective placed over one objective reality, but rather something that interplays with, is generated by, and it is also reproduced in relation to, one specific ontology (Clamer et al 2004). Eventually, it is to be aware that epistemology depends upon ontology and that the opposite is also simultaneously the case.

From looking at this section we could conclude that what is always truthful is the personal experience. Nonetheless, as Juana's distinction exemplified, a

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[42] This marks an extreme contrast with other traditions, as the expressed by the Mopan Maya. Among them, truth is independent of persons to the extent that it does not even consider speakers' intentions. If what they utter is proved false, they will be considered liars, even if they thought what they were saying was true (see Danziger 2006).

completely different dynamic occurs when considering the communication of these personal experiences. Here appears a different dimension of truth, the one labelled as *mupin* and opposed to *koyla*. It is in this dimension that we may find the ever-present Mapuche doubt I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the one regarding language's deceptive nature. It is clear that personal experience generates a pristine outcome, which is by definition truthful. However, when these outcomes are communicated they are unintentionally obscured by the problems of social life. This is the problem I will address in the following section.

2. The Social Ubiquity of Uncertainty

This section deals with a social problem Mapuche people must confront as a derivative of the premise stated in the first part of this chapter. It also addresses the ways in which Mapuche people tend, partially, to cope with it. So far in this chapter I have put forward that Mapuche people (or at least some of them) conceive truth necessarily as a personal process. One may follow from this argument that truth is not something to be found "out there", a necessarily shared dimension to which everybody might have access. Instead, for the Mapuche, although similarly universal insofar as it is something personally founded, truth is not necessarily something that is shared. When it comes to the prioritisation of the external world as the location of truth, the Mapuche respond by personalising the process. Eventually, we realise that "the truth of the matter is that the confusion is often ours: it is we who assume this image of a single, unified world, and not they" (Overing 1990:605).

Knowing this, we may move forward to comprehend the problem that Mapuche people see as inherent to sociality. To put it simply, because Mapuche people emphasise what I call "the uniqueness of personal experience principle", an idea of truth that is relative to the person, when these truths are shared they are perceived as conveying an inherent sense of uncertainty. This is because experiences narrated through speech were not experienced first-hand by the people who hear them, but by other people. And, as we already know, one can only be sure about

what one has experienced personally. When it comes to the Mapuche then, we may attest that to a certain extent language and communication present a problem of *authoritativeness* (Hill and Irvine 1993). The fact that personal experiences are always truthful and respond to a personal phenomenology does not guarantee persons' ability to relate their experiences truthfully when accounting them. Mapuche people usually refer to this situation by questioning the real meaning of the messages delivered by others. By doing this they specify their twofold ubiquitous doubt. First of all, how congruent is the relationship between a person's thought and the language he or she employs to refer to it? (cf. Course nd). Secondly, how close is this personal thought to one's own personal thought? (A question that is more directly referring to a task of assessing to what extent any narrated experience is valid to oneself).

Later, I will explore how people cope with the social ubiquity of uncertainty. Dealing with this subject we will confront a practical issue that may seem to contradict the previous scenario. Mapuche people are usually keen to recount their experiences and they also ask other people to give their own, yet communication seems a tricky affair among them. As we will see later, this is because other people's experience may *substitute* personal experience where it is lacking. This *substitution* does not contradict the primacy of personal experience, and it is only accepted in cases when people cannot experience the depicted contexts. Moreover, in a different sense, this practice of sharing narratives is linked to the assessment of similarity, an issue I will develop in this chapter's final section.

2.1. The Mapuche and the Doctrine of Opacity of Other Minds

I have proposed that Mapuche social life might be depicted as having a problem of authoritativeness at its core. I have put forward that what is true depends on a person's own experiences, which leads us to a view of "external reality" as something that is not necessarily shared. For many Mapuche people this premise appears almost as a basic credo. But such an assumption rests on two further

premises. The first premise is that such a notion of personal experience is strongly connected to the conception of persons as unique and unrepeatable entities (see Chapter 2). The second premise is that language does not have a fully congruent relationship with personal experiences, or else, that this relationship exists solely on a personal level (see Chapter 6).

For many Mapuche people, what a person experiences, what he or she knows, how he or she opens himself or herself to the world is one thing. How a person socialises what he or she experiences and knows (and what happens when he or she does so) is quite another. In this regard, one can never really know how congruent the relationship is between the *denotation* (language) and its *denotatum* (experience/thought). Each time a Mapuche person hears an utterance or a narrative, he or she cannot get rid of one fundamental doubt. He or she will wonder whether what he or she is hearing is *mupin* (something congruent with what the person thinks) or *koyla* (something which is not).

During my fieldwork I had the opportunity to note this kind of questioning several times. Frequently, when asking somebody about what he or she thought of what other people had told me, or told us, I received answers such as "I'm not sure about what he was talking about", or "I don't know what she was referring to". Most of the time, these kinds of statement were made to emphasise that there was not necessarily a falsehood located in speakers' intentions, as if they wanted to lie to or deceive other people. On the contrary, these statements inferred that the problem was located in language, as if it was an inefficient instrument for conveying thought.

As it is stated here, the problem of authoritativeness among the Mapuche may echo what various ethnographers of Melanesia have referred to as the "doctrine of the opacity of other minds."[43] In simple terms, this doctrine indicates that one can never be sure what other people actually think. Speech is thus considered mere talk (Robbins 2008), because a direct link cannot be traced between it and what is really on the mind of the person who uses it. In other terms, the former cannot be a reliable indicator of what is on the latter.

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[43] See the special issue of *Anthropological Quarterly* 2008, 81(2), especially Robbins and Rumsey (2008) introductory piece. An insightful ethnographic account of what she labels "the opacity of other's hearts" may be found in Rosaldo (1980). For a detailed philosophical approach to the problem of opacity, see Wisdom (1952).

The doctrine of opacity among the Mapuche is sometimes very extended and at other times much more limited. This is because what is *opaque* for the Mapuche goes quite beyond "minds", and indeed regards how bodies, a priori taken as unique to a certain extent, experience. Opacity, then, can be extended to a problem of ontological difference, and it is not confined solely to a perceived language inefficacy. On the other hand, we may also find the limitations Mapuche ontology puts on opacity claims. As I will address later, Mapuche people consider persons to be unique, but they also consider it possible that by sharing certain substances or by managing relatedness people may become increasingly similar (see Chapter 2). Through similarity, people may also share similar skills of perception and experience. And it is thought that people may actually assess if what similar others say is *mupin* or *koyla* by contrasting with what is *mupin* or *koyla* for themselves. The premise behind this boundary is as follows: if different people experience different things, once people are increasingly more similar, their experiences will be more alike each time. I will focus on this statement further on. What is relevant for the time being is how communication allows uncertainty. What is interesting about this is that people are totally aware of the uncertainty of social life. This is why dealing with it involves turning back, partially, to their own truths, as we will see below.

2.2. Coping with Uncertainties

The manner in which Mapuche people confront many of the problems they see as inherent to communication can be expressed through Alberto's reference to how each person *owns* his or her thoughts. No matter what sociality delivers, "external reality" supposedly shows, or other people say, in order to know what is going on, people invariably turn to their own experiential repertoire. This premise may be observed in numerous examples. Through them, we can perceive how people's different truths did not contradict one another, but instead were treated as parallel traces of experience. People usually have a strong respect for others' truths, even when those truths are different from their own.

People deal with uncertainty, therefore, by turning towards their own truths. However, to really understand this claim we need to understand its Mapuche foundations. For the Mapuche person, truths do not compete for ontological priority. Different truths are not opposed among them nor are they opposed to an overarching concept of falsehood. This implies they could be denied. But denial should rest upon each person's process of experience, and not upon those of other people. In order to support my claim, I will now refer to some exemplary cases from my ethnography.

Prediction

Something that caught my attention in Elicura was how often people stated predictive judgements about what was going to happen in the future. Such claims were usually elaborated in simple causal terms, and broadly speaking, they were uttered as warnings. On some occasions, people perceived signs that they went on to contrast with their own experience and then stated what was going to happen. In other instances, they asserted that if something occurred, a certain effect would take place. Below I detail two out of many examples of this.

* * *

My friend Hugo's cow was pregnant. He was extremely worried because her due date was supposedly very soon. Lechera, as the cow was named, was extremely lazy and so, Hugo stated, "she always needs help to calve". He observed her behaviour constantly, aiming to aid her as soon as she needed it.

At around the same time, I heard a statement possessive of a salience I was only able to judge later. Chatting about cattle with a man from the same community as Hugo, I found that he was oddly insistent on the fact that cows have only one calf. As he put it, "if they have two it's bad luck, and it means that somebody within their family is going to die soon".[44] One evening shortly after this encounter, Hugo's

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[44] It results very interesting to notice that Mapuche negative view on twins could present deep historical roots (see Guevara 1913), and it also could be related to a broader Amerindian issue (cf. Lévi-Strauss 1992).

daughter shared with me her concerns about her father's worries. He, as any old man, was not the age to be this worried about a pregnant cow. But she told me she did understand him. She knew he cared about Lechera, and also, she understood that the worry was caused by the fact that her father knew that the cow was *mellicera* (Sp. approx. "frequently has twins"). This made her susceptible to suffering difficult labours.

Sara, Hugo's daughter, knew quite well that some people thought that for a cow to have twin calves was a sign of bad luck. But her own personal view was that it was quite the opposite: a manifestation of good luck simply "because you have two calves instead of one". In any case, particular cows had had twin calves before, and nothing had happened. "People say that kind of thing because they are jealous", she concluded.

Figure 1.1: Hugo's cow's twin calves

After a while Lechera finally gave birth to two calves. Hugo and his family were all exultant. Other people's claims about bad luck were not even considered. Several months later, when I left Elicura, Hugo and his relatives were all fine. Nothing bad, in their view, had happened to any of them. Many of their neighbours, nonetheless, kept the "twin calves-bad luck" maxim as part of their repertoire. This was despite the fact that I often asserted that Hugo's case had proved the maxim wrong. They simply responded, "That it hasn't happened in this case does not mean it is false".

* * *

Weather was a favourite topic for predictions. People perceived various signs in the environment. These were contrasted with previous experiences, and once the effect could be figured out, the prediction was elaborated. I usually heard statements such as: "the ibis are flying above the valley. This means it's going to rain"; "today is going to be frosty, because the sunset is really red"; "tomorrow we're going to have good weather, because the stars aren't shining"; "the water (from the tap) is warm, tomorrow it's going to rain".

Following these predictions, it was interesting to notice what "really" occurred in the weather, and contrasting this with what people had predicted. Sometimes predictions were congruent with what had happened. In these instances, often the predictor was very likely to boast about his or her success. But there were other occasions when what was predicted did not fit with what actually took place. On these occasions I addressed the unsuccessful predictor about what I thought was his or her mistake. But whenever I did this I received a reply stating that there was no error, that simply sometimes things happened that way and sometimes not. As I later understood, predictions lacked any pretense of universality.

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From these cases, we may easily assume that predictions were not necessarily taken as wrong because they were expressing probabilities rather than certainties. This is probably right. However, there is a sense differentiating this kind of probability from one assumed from a non-Mapuche perspective. What is different is that for Mapuche people these probabilities rest upon personal engagements with the environment, and they are not simply due to the transcendence of nature, nor to the innumerable possibilities of what is "out there" beyond the agency of particular persons. In my view, the cases I put forward are related to the personal phenomenology premise. Essentially, predictions are affirmations of past phenomena and how they were experienced. Subsequent differences deny neither that they were truly experienced, nor that they were perceived truthfully. Hence they cannot be taken as false, because they cannot be proven as wrong. When the prediction is uttered, it is obvious that

alternative outcomes may arise. Anyway, its original truthfulness cannot be socially at stake.

Gossip

Other people's behaviour was quite a common topic of family discussions in Elicura. People seemed to be obsessed with knowing what everybody else was doing: When? Where? How? With whom? The sources of this information were informal conversations, and what people could see through their kitchen windows. These were panopticons from which people were able to observe a social picture of the whole Valley. This practice, which can be labelled simply as gossip, could be understood as related to simple entertainment and even to social control (cf. Lavanchy 2007). What interests me, however, is how through it we can see how people experience and find out their own personal truths.

Gossip was a common means with which to create one's own truths about other people within the Valley. A case I vividly remember regards Jorge, a man in his forties widely known for his heavy drinking problem. This reputation pervaded every judgement about his behaviour. Each time Jorge was seen heading towards Calebu, this image and its enunciation as "Jorge goes up", were implicitly understood as meaning "Jorge is going to have some drinks". Explicitly stating so would be redundant. According to many people's particular truths, there was no reason for Jorge to go to Calebu other than to drink. Although sometimes Jorge did not go for this reason, and people may be informed of this, this did not contradict the initial truth.

I also recognise myself as a "victim" of how later experiences cannot contradict what previous ones have shown. When I had just arrived in Elicura, I felt forced to adjust my daily timetable to match those of the people in the Valley. I was used to going to sleep very late, and to wake up accordingly, while my hosts were used to quite the opposite. Consequently, the first week of my fieldwork was a constant struggle to get up early in the extremely cold Elicura winter mornings. As a result, I gained the description of "good to sleep". This label accompanied me for the

rest of my fieldwork, even though I later adopted the Mapuche schedule. I never could get rid of it. It did not matter that subsequent experiences disproved that I was "good to sleep". People kept this first image, which, besides, seemed humorous.

Often an experience may in fact indicate what could be considered as the opposite of what is a person's truth. This, however, does not necessarily imply a change in what that person thinks about a specific issue. These circumstances may be recognised as extendable to several different traditions, even some Western ones. As I previously claimed, I do not see any problem with this. A problem would only emerge if Mapuche practices were to be seen as sharing an encompassing ontology with other traditions, something which is not the case. Hence, it is very likely that any similitude may be linked to a superficial resemblance which eventually may be hiding what Žižek terms as a *parallax gap*, "the confrontation of two closely linked perspectives between which no neutral common ground is possible" (2006:3). Or, if you wish, what Viveiros de Castro labels as *equivocation*, "a type of communicative disjuncture where the interlocutors are not talking about the same thing, and do not know this" (2004b:9). I will be dealing with this subject thoroughly in Chapters 5 and 6.

One of these recognizable situations may be the one that follows. Over and over again when I asked people what they thought about Winka, they replied with negative adjectives: "bad", "untrustworthy", "cheaters", "deceivers", and so on. I used to ask then what they thought of me, if I was a Winka and if they believed me to possess the characteristics they attached to Winka people. People used to say that although I was a Winka, it seemed that I was not like the other Winka, that I was good. This, however, did not necessarily mean that I would *always* be good, nor did it mean that they would change their general statements about Winka people based on their relationships with me. There were two important issues in consideration here: the fact that their experience with one Winka –me– had not been negative did not change at all the ideas they upheld about the Winka; and the fact I, in my ontological status of Winka, behaved in a manner that is not expected from a Winka, did not imply that it would always be that way. Although my behaviour indicated

something, there was a constant consideration of parallel truths likely to appear that could not be a priori denied.[45]

Other People's Experiences

People in Elicura interrogated me many times about Scotland, the country where I was living and from where, at that time, I came from. They eagerly wanted to know every aspect of life there through me. Questions such as "What do they eat?", "Is it true that Scotsmen wear skirts?", and "What are the women like?" were recurrent. Sometimes I was even asked, "Who are the Mapuche from Scotland?" an issue I will discuss more specifically later in this thesis. People were interested in the experiences that I had collected living in a country that most of them knew only by its name.

In contrast, the same people only asked me about Santiago, my real place of origin, on a handful of occasions. People were aware I was Chilean, and that I was born in Chile's capital city. However they were not as interested in what I had to tell them about this place, as in what I had to say about Scotland.

After a while I realised that this "lack of interest" was probably due to the fact that most people knew Santiago quite well thanks to several first-hand and indirect personal experiences. Most Mapuche people I met in Elicura had travelled to Santiago at least once; they have several relatives who lived there and in other urban centres across Chile at the time of my fieldwork, and, very importantly, they had daily access to Santiago-based television stations. Many even had satellite TV contracts, although they generally preferred to watch free channels. There were two kinds of preferred shows: soap operas and news.

As far as I could observe, television has obtained an extremely important position within contemporary Mapuche lives. On the one hand, it allows people to be acquainted with previously unimaginable contexts as if they were actually experiencing them. This is generated because, as Bourdieu puts it (1997), television

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[45] For an insightful approach on how the Mapuche take in consideration the possibilities that have not been realised, see Course (2005).

produces a *reality effect*. On the other hand, it also transmits many different voices, and therefore many different personal experiences.[46]

Accordingly, television was a way of experiencing what Santiago was like, and what Winka society was like more generally. Viewers created their own truths about these places and their inhabitants. Thus news about delinquency or drug problems reaffirmed widely held statements such as "the Winka are thieves", or "the Winka go around doped-up". But, at the same time, people sometimes distanced themselves from what it was stated on television. A critical case was when Mapuche were referred to on the news. The most common complaint about this was that Mapuche people were represented as a homogenous entity, resulting in a general depiction of them all as terrorists due to the actions of some so-called Mapuche organizations. Most Mapuche people I met during my fieldwork upheld that the Mapuche who acted like this (setting machinery and timberlands on fire), were only a minority and only from very specific areas of Araucanía. Furthermore, that they were *awinkados*, *politicos* (Sp. "politicians"), and that was why they performed these kinds of actions.

* * *

The examples I have quoted have one critical common element. The critical element is that they detail how personal truths come to be retained in spite of what subsequent experiences may indicate. In my impression, this is not because the first experience of something is necessarily prioritised. Instead, it is simply related to how each personal experience of anything is always particular, it cannot be denied. It is always "*re*", truthful.

This critical characteristic is essential to how Mapuche people cope with the social world's uncertainty. Because they can never be sure about the congruence between one person's thought and speech, they tend to look for shelter, for certainty,

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[46] Many friends insisted to me that television was both an effect and a tool of *awinkamiento* (becoming *Winka*-like) within the Valley. It was an effect insofar it had quickly penetrated after Elicura began to count with continual electricity supply, about a decade ago. It was a tool, because as my friend Juana pointed out, "television teaches young [Mapuche] people to act like *Winka*… all the time it shows delinquency, drug abuse… and that is why these things are now reaching Mapuche communities. In the past people didn't know these things".

in their own personal truths. These truths are built in consideration of each one of their previous personal experiences. They are cumulative lines of possibilities, of what has been known and how it has come to be known.

Among the more particular details these examples give us, I think one of the most relevant is related to why people share experiences in spite of the inherent uncertainty conveyed by other people's statements. Often, experiences are worth sharing because they fill a gap. People seem to prefer knowing something without certainty to know nothing at all. I do not want to go into detail on this subject at the moment. This is because I think we need to develop several additional lines of enquiry in order to attempt an understanding of what Mapuche people are really partaking in when sharing their experiences. For this reason I will pick up this issue in more detail in Chapter 6.

To finalise this section I would like to put forward one final example. I put it near the end because, besides the fact that it shows the determination of a personal truth, it is also directly linked to one of my central concerns. The concern in question is the difficulty of employing an ethnicity-based approach to understanding what it is to be a Mapuche. A key aspect of this is the inadequacy of using a "Western conception of culture" to consider what some Mapuche people uphold (see Chapter 5). Simply put, Mapuche people maintain that it is not necessary that "cultural" features should present certain symbolic or semantic uniformity. What is more, it would be odd if this uniformity should happen to occur.

People in Elicura used to tell me about a custom in which one poured *chicha* (Sp. and Mp. "cider") into a dead person coffin, or even to put a bottle inside the coffin for the dead to go *aperado* (Sp. "provided"). But, they maintained that this custom only existed in the Valley, and not necessarily in other parts of Araucanía. People claimed that each place has its own customs, and that was the way it should be. This was reaffirmed when a friend told me about her travels towards Mapuche Southern communities, usually referred to as Williche (Mp. "People of the South"). She told me how enthusiastic she was to look at how "these Mapuche were living, what their customs were and what their houses were like". In the same way we can explain the great variability of a major Mapuche fertility ritual, *nguillatun*, which is performed and directed in very different ways from corner to corner of Araucanía.

The explanation of this should now be obvious: what is the truth for some, even for one, it is not necessarily so for others.

Resorting to one's own truth to deal with social uncertainty could be considered, to a certain extent, as affirming what is ontologically the truth (Mp. *re*), being unsure if what people refer to corresponds to that (it is *mupin*) or if it does not (it is *koyla*). However, there is another sense in which people may confront the social world's uncertainty. This is by sharing one personal truth. At the beginning of this section we discussed how Mapuche people's doubt was twofold. On the one hand it referred to the opacity of other thoughts. On the other, it was concerned with the extent to which another person's truth is valid for oneself. I have explored the first part of this doubt. Next, I will deal with the second.

As we will see, it is possible to find some limitations Mapuche people impose upon opacity claims. To state it simply, for each person only some minds are completely opaque, whereas there are others that are in fact very clear. This argument's roots are in the way Mapuche people believe similarity is given and created. It follows from how persons seem to ordain their social worlds according to a continuum, the extremes of which could be understood as "self" and "other" (see Chapter 2). At this moment, it would be sufficient to say that through exercising diverse assessments, people may judge the plausibility of congruence established by certain speech and the thoughts of the person stating it. At the same time, regarding the self/other continuum, they may assess the validity of the truth accounted to them. This is what I will call a distance-assessment truth, a concept we will be focus on from now on.

3. Lying, Truth, and Distance-Assessment

I began this chapter by pointing out how what could be subject of doubt in a narrative was dependent upon the ontological premises of its interpreters. Hence, I showed how I hesitated about what for many Mapuche was undeniable, meanwhile many of them were concerned about language efficacy. Whereas I was pervaded by

disbelief, Mapuche people were acting in the awareness of something they know simply because they engage in social life.

This is not, however and as we already know, valid for everybody in Elicura who claims to be Mapuche. As I gave examples of earlier, there were also many people who shared my doubt. They did not question the congruence of speech-thought/experience because what was narrated was already unbelievable. The presence of such a position is a signal of the vast heterogeneity of standpoints populating Elicura Valley, and Mapuche rural life in general. Furthermore, it is in fact to be expected from an ontology emphasising personal foundations of experiences and knowledge. I will deal more deeply with this heterogeneity of positions in Mapuche social life in Chapter 5.

Having made this clarification, I would like to come back to this Mapuche "traditional" ontology, the one we have reviewed so far in this chapter. As follows, I will attempt to show how it additionally deals with social uncertainty. In this section I will explore how personal truths may be effectively shared, overcoming the ubiquitous doubt depicted above. Furthermore, I will observe how people judge the validity of other people's truths by their own assessing similarity to the person making the claims. This is another reason why it is important to know other people's experiences, for reasons aside from filling gaps in one's own knowledge. They are useful for assessing distances between one's *self* and different degrees of *otherness*. The critical element of this is that there are two ways of conceiving similarity. On the one hand, we can conceive similarity as something given, a tenet which is linked to sharing substances; on the other, we can conceive similarity as something constructed, which is achieved by conviviality (see Chapter 2). As we will see later, from a Mapuche standpoint what is shared, from the idea of family to the idea of race, is usually comprehended through the idiom of blood. That is the common fixed basis we all have as human beings. Nevertheless, people also stress that sharing substance is not alone sufficient for having a close similarity. In this sense, they stress the idea that it is necessary to share an environment, to live together, to eat

together, to share certain things, and so on.[47] Close similarity is only asserted if it is created by a careful handling of relatedness.

Here we may find the boundary I claim the opacity doctrine has among the Mapuche. It is, also, exactly why advice is usually allowed only among close kin. Close kin, besides having similar substances, often share many of the different spheres of life. As a result, their personhood is similar. There is an ancient Mapuche proverb recorded by Tomas Guevara: *Koila ngunen nieifui* (Mp. approx. "Lying is astuteness"). In Guevara's words, this sentence was employed because, "according to Mapuche moral notions, lying is judged as a skill, as an art of deceiving the ones who are not relatives" (Guevara 1911:20). As we will see, this art of lying was not restricted to non-relatives for moral reasons. More simply, it was because lying to close kin, given certain circumstances, would be impossible.

The issues I have addressed here will be thoroughly discussed in Chapter 2, when dealing with the more specific question of what a Mapuche person is. I stated them here just in order to clarify how personal truths may be shared and approximated. Nonetheless, taking advantage of having stated how Mapuche people conceive similarity, I will now attempt to introduce a notion I label as truth distance-assessment. This implies a sense in which singular persons measure how similar they are to other singular persons, in order to know how valid their personal truths are to them.

3.1. Distance Assessment

Among the many differences Mapuche people establish between themselves and the Winka, the idea that they have different kinds of blood is particularly fundamental. This distinction, for many Mapuche, is not just merely related to phenotype and physical features (e.g. hair type and colour). Rather, it is also related to perception abilities and to differential access to different spheres of experience. More simply, it

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[47] This is an aspect similarly emphasised elsewhere in Lowland South America. E.g. Gow (1991), Lagrou (2000), Oakdale (2008), Overing (2003), Overing and Passess (2000), Vilaça (2002), Viveiros de Castro (2001). For a similar more general approach, see Carsten (2004).

is often asserted that there are certain contexts of experience that are banned for Winka people just because they are Winka. We have already seen examples of this regarding *perimontun* (Mp. approx. "visions") and *pewma* (Mp. approx. "dream"). I showed that Mapuche people affirm that Winka people cannot have *perimontun,* which is actually the reason why they cannot believe these experiences are real. Similarly, although Mapuche people know that Winka people also may have *pewma* (because, as the Mapuche, they "have *püllü* [Mp. "spirit"] inside of their heads"[48]), they state that the Winka do not consider their *pewma* as they do, "often they don't notice their messages".[49]

Besides the presence of alternative spheres of experience, Mapuche people often state that there are certain spirits and beings that Winka people cannot experience. In this context, it is interesting to consider several narratives I collected in Elicura. Here I include the ones that might be considered somewhat fantastical, Mapuche people assert, from a non-Mapuche viewpoint. The most recurrent ones in these terms were the ones about *wutranalwe* and *anchimallen.*

According to general tradition, these beings would be created by witchcraft from human funerary remains. They would assume different forms, from flying fireballs to skeletons (Montecino 2003). In Elicura, when people talked about *anchimallen* and *wutranalwe*, they respected the great variation of forms that these beings where able to take. This diversity could definitely be due to the respectful attitude that the Mapuche have to each personal truth, in this case, of these beings. In people's narratives, *anchimallen* appeared variously as incandescent balls, as embers, as lights that could be seen from far away, or as something similar to "a cat's heads but very shiny". *Wutranalwe*, on its part, appeared as some kind of being with human

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[48] This "spirit" resides in our heads, and besides allowing us to dream, it is its presence what keep us alive. In fact, for some Mapuche, when one does not dream often it means that probably the spirit has abandoned the person in question, implying that person will probably fall ill and die in the near future.

[49] That would be, from a Mapuche anthropology, the key difference between Mapuche and Winka regarding dreams. Dreams are also very important for Evangelical Mapuche people, who consider them as a way of communication with God (see Chapter 5). Dreams sense is many times found contrasting them to what occurs in reality. For example, I remember how a friend connected a dream she had in which she could not cross a bridge to his grandparents later dead. But they also work sometimes as predictors. For instance, I remember how my friend José used to tell me that soon will arrive "his hour", because more than once he had dreamed about late Carmen, his first love. She died a long time ago, and in these dreams she says that she will be coming after him, while scolding him for having got married to someone else.

form but very powerful, or as some sort of a vanishing skeleton, sometimes wearing a white suit, and sometimes a black one.

Most stories I heard about these beings were first-hand, the experiences of the narrator him or herself. They commonly stated that these episodes took place long ago. Most of them also explained that they were very unlikely to be experienced at the present time. This was because most spirits previously inhabiting the Valley had left it as a result of increasing Winka presence. This is pointed out despite the fact that *wutranalwe* and *anchimallen* are usually thought of as guards for masters, who were preferably rich people (a characteristic often attached to the Winka). In Elicura, people count several former foreign landholders from the surrounding areas among the masters of these beings. They were those who needed them to take care of their belongings, and also the ones who could manage the "magic" to create them.

What seems, to my view, problematic in this case is how people maintain that these beings are empirically banned to those who supposedly created them in the past. However, the solution to this may be found in the way in which people assess similarity. In this sense, the *Winka* people who cannot experience *anchimallen* and scare off the spirits from the Valley are different from the ones who, in the past, created *wutranalwe.* The first ones embody radical alterity, while the second ones were subjects who shared spheres of life with the Mapuche. The latter were people who, being initially different, had been transformed by dwelling specific environments or being related to Mapuche people (see Chapter 2 and 3). In order to exemplify this difference, and at the same time to show the heterogeneity of Mapuche standpoints characterizing Elicura social life, I will quote a case directly linked to what we are discussing.

* * *

Among the newest residents of Elicura, it is possible to find a Winka couple that a few years ago had a crush on what they consider as the "Mapuche culture". Even before settling in the Valley, they planned several efforts in order to be accepted by people there, and to become "Mapuche-like". A Mapuche friend helped them to buy a plot near *reducción* Meliman, where they currently live. They have acquired some

traditional Mapuche clothes and wear them on a daily basis. Most Mapuche people in Elicura no longer wear these clothes, and the few who wear them usually reserve them for special occasions.

When the Winka couple first arrived, people received them without problems. Soon enough, however, this apparent obsession with *Mapucheness* became suspicious to some people. Many did not understand why they put so much effort into being Mapuche. "They are always going to be Winka, no matter what they do", someone affirmed. Others thought that they were trying to obtain some of the benefits the Chilean State grants to Mapuche people, which aim to compensate the historically bad treatment that has affected indigenous peoples in their forced inclusion in the Chilean National State (see Bengoa 2004). There were others, nevertheless, who did not see anything strange in how the Winka couple acted, and they kept establishing relationships with them.

Living in this tense environment, and strengthening their attempts for acceptance, the woman in this *Winka* couple claimed to have lived through two remarkable events. Both were told to me by several people in the Valley, carefully respecting the ways in which she had originally told the stories. The first anecdote refers to one occasion when this woman was driving to Tirúa, a town approximately 40 miles southwards Elicura. The weather was awful, and the heavy rainfall made it almost impossible to see the road properly. Struggling with these conditions, her car stopped suddenly. She tried to find out what was stopping her from making her way, and suddenly she realised what was happening. Outside there was a *wutranalwe* with his arms on car's bonnet, pushing her back. She was shocked, and as soon as she could she turned round and returned to her home in Elicura.

There was another experience she used to narrate. As she declared to several of my friends in the Valley, during the nights she was usually able to see how different *anchimallen* appeared. They were poised over the Valley's surrounding hills, a place visible to everybody and from everywhere in Elicura. However, she was the only one who could see them. No one else could. What interests me from these stories are not the narratives themselves, but how they were received by the Mapuche people. By knowing this, I think, we can perceive the various doubts narratives

generate in different people, and more importantly, how distance is also assessed from different personal standpoints.

Although everybody initially showed a respectful attitude towards the anecdotes, many maintained concerns about them. In one group, we could count people who disbelieved the experiential context. These were pretty much the same as those who, like me, doubted the feasibility of the stories narrated by Mapuche people. Their laughter at this woman's anecdotes were the loudest. In second place we have a group of people who attributed their disbelief to the ontological situation of the narrator. The problem for them was that she was a non-Mapuche woman. These people usually stated that these spirits had abandoned the valley due to Winka intrusion (mostly in the form of timber companies) a long time ago. At the same time, they claimed that if these spirits were there, they would obviously not show up in front of a *chiñurra* (the female for *Winka*, Mp. approx "non-Mapuche woman"), but instead in front of a Mapuche. The doubt, here, was in the difficulty of one *chiñurra* experiencing the things she told us she had experienced. But there was also a third group of people. In contrast with the rest, they neither questioned the experience nor the experiencer. Quite the opposite, they accepted her truth. I remember my friend Juana put this in the following terms: "people here in Elicura are quite *awinkada* (*Winka*-like). Maybe that's why they say it's a lie [What the *chiñurra* stated]. But she seems to be much more Mapuche than many people who have Mapuche blood. Perhaps that's why she can see those spirits".

What Mapuche reactions symbolise, to my view, is exactly what I want to propose in closing this section. First of all, it is clear that the possibilities of experience are directly linked to the body one has. We superficially know that bodies have a given component, but they are also created through conviviality and by inhabiting certain environments. Secondly, people value differently the relevance of substance in one's singularity. While for some it is a determinant component, for others it could be moulded and overcome by people's social engagement. From there, thirdly, through sharing spheres of life, people may begin to share similar perspectives. People, indeed, may develop increasing similarities in the way they perceive reality by getting together, by nurturing social relationships (see Chapter 2 and 3). It is from this premise, that people can judge the distance between themselves

and others. By doing this they can know better the extent to which other people's truths are valid to them. In other terms, it is by assessing how distant from one's own personhood other people's personhoods are. Assessing that, we can also assess how close to us their truths are.

4. Conclusions

The major conclusion we should have from this chapter is rather simple: for the Mapuche, truth is a personal affair. This is what I have wanted to label as *the uniqueness of personal experience principle*. It implies that when it comes down to practice, each singular Mapuche person must find her or his own truth about everything. Such a conception also suggests a wider context in which truth is not something to be found "out-there", but instead depends on each person's personal engagement within the environment. Truth is not something external to persons, and it is not something that when it is found appears as necessarily and transcendently shared. In a different way, truth is conceived as formed by multiple lines of personal ongoing experience. Importantly, these lines are not necessarily expected to meet. If that occurs it is result of experiences and/or experiencers overlapping (similitude of being). Not necessarily because there is something "out-there" allowing this to be the case.

To properly understand this, we must comprehend a Mapuche distinction between two senses of truth. On the one hand, we have an ontological truth (Mp. *re*), the one considering how things intrinsically are. Things that are *re* cannot be questioned or denied. On the other, we have what can be called "social truth" (Mp. *mupin*). This truth appears as opposed to a lie (Mp. *koyla*), and it is key to understanding why the Mapuche social world is characterised by a ubiquitous uncertainty. In terms of what I have put forward, the ontological truth would refer to singular persons' experience, and how from it each person extracts his or her own truth. The second would refer to how it is, most of the time, impossible to really know the extent to which there is congruence between what other people say and

what they think. This second conception of truth is linked to speech, and to how it is considered a tool that is unable to properly and accurately convey personal truths.

In my view, in order to understand Mapuche concerns we must question our own premises. Recalling the story that opened this chapter, this implies, for instance, assuming Luis' experiences as ontologically truthful, instead of simply depicting them as beliefs and then attempting to explain their roots. This question requires awareness that our own ontology is not mandatory, but simply one possibility among many. If we do not assume such a stance, this chapter's argument might be taken as an ode to a relativistic approach to "reality". In other words, the overall argument may be disqualified as supporting an extremely simplistic viewpoint in which reality is not objective but subjective. Nevertheless, as Viveiros de Castro (1998) would say, it is not simply about how we see the same world differently. The Mapuche ontology I attempt to introduce in this chapter is different to others not because it is another solution for the same old problem. Instead, it is because it refers outright to a different problem. Personal experience for the Mapuche is a defining process far from subjectivisms and objectivism. It is an outcome of a conception of life that, with its own foundations, is extremely respectful of personal autonomy.

As stated before, among the Mapuche truth is not something necessarily shared, but a personal affair. As we will see throughout this thesis, this emphasis on the uniqueness of any personal experience is critical to any comprehension of the Mapuche ontology. To better comprehend why this is, in the next chapter I will devote my efforts to unravelling what seems to be at the centre of such an ontology. Simply put, I will explore what a person is for the Mapuche, and how they are socially defined. My motivations for doing this are twofold. Firstly, I want to close many of the possible gaps left by this introduction to a Mapuche theory of truth. I think that it is possible to do this by exploring the ontology of persons, of these entities who should confront a constant singular task of creating their own truths. Secondly, I hope to pull together my depiction of the ontological foundations of the Mapuche lived worlds. Further on, this will be crucial for understanding the argument I make about the different Mapuche perspectives on self, other, and pluralisation.

Chapter 2

Essential Notions and Ongoing Definitions:
Mapuche Notes on the Uniqueness of Persons

Unlike Spanish, English, and other *Winkadungun* (Mp. "languages of the non-Mapuche"), the Mapuche language does not trace a semantic distinction between humans, individuals, and persons, all being simply referred to by the term *che* (Course 2011). As such, this word simultaneously encompasses being part of a "biological" species, being a singular manifestation of it, and the social dimensions of these singular manifestations.[50] In my experience, this semantic inclusiveness finds echoes amid what people in Elicura believe. Indeed, whereas most of them would agree on the existence of these different dimensions, they would simultaneously stress the impossibility of conceiving of them independently of one another. In their view, it is the convergence of these dimensions what constitutes a *che*.

In this chapter I will describe what persons are for the Mapuche people with whom I lived. In doing this, I will draw extensively on Course's recent explorations (2007, 2011), which depict the Mapuche person as an open-ended individual process of centrifugal sociality. This implies that beginning life as a set of substances, individuals must engage in mutual and reciprocal social relationships, beyond the ones "given" at birth, in order to become "true persons".

In this chapter I will look at personhood fundamentally as an attributed social status, instead of focusing on persons' internal composition. In doing this, I follow what I perceived as the primary concern people in Elicura showed about the subject. Indeed, as a result of this emphasis most of data I could obtain about personhood regarded this first dimension, whereas, regarding the second, the little I know came

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[50] A discussion on the Western categories of Individual, Person and Self is beyond the scope of my research. If the reader is interested, a detailed account may be found in Mauss' seminal work (1985). For an overall discussion see also Burkitt (2008), Carrithers *et al* (1985), Cohen (1994), and Harris (1989).

exclusively from infrequent and fragmentary comments. Other ethnographers have approached the internal composition of persons among Mapuche people from other geographical areas. They have concluded, for example, that personhood is seen as the correspondence of a human body, a human subjectivity, and a triad of elements often used interchangeably: *alwe* (wandering soul), *püllü* (living beings' spirit) and *am* (soul, specific to humans) (Course 2011). Bacigalupo asserts that besides a human body, "to be a person, a Mapuche must have a *piuke* (heart)", conceived of as the locus of emotion, and *rakiduam*, which encompasses "thought, knowledge, and wisdom" (2007:99). Lastly, Bonelli (nd) has recently proposed that a Mapuche person is an assemblage of a corporeal support, a *püllü* (vital spirit), and an *am* or *ina mongen*, which he understands as "human subjectivity".

One of my central aims here is to address why Mapuche personhood is necessarily connected to an idea of *uniqueness*. In this sense, I will propose that if Mapuche personhood is a centrifugal process of sociality, as Course puts it, the result of this process will always be an unrepeatable singularity.[51] Indeed, although all persons are thought of as composed by both given and created elements, it is the particular mixture of these elements each person develops that makes him or her unique.

My second aim is to look at how Mapuche personhood is crossed by a continual assessment of similarity/difference. As I will suggest, by getting involved in sociality, Mapuche people are continually evaluating other people's features, behaviours, and social relationships. Through this evaluation they locate these people on a scale of similarity/difference, which, for example, is useful for judging the commensurability of other people's experiences with their own (Chapter 1). These assessments include *every single person* with whom they come into contact, and they are executed through a continuum produced by an opposition I deem to be fundamental to Mapuche social life. This is the one each person draws between his or her own conceptions of Mapuche and Winka, of *self* and *other*. To fully understand this proposal, however, we must consider a critical capacity Mapuche people ascribe to social relationships. Indeed, although there is a sense in which

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[51] I thank Cristóbal Bonelli for helping me notice how the term 'individual' was not appropriated to describe the Mapuche person, and for sharing with me the concept of 'singularity', which does justice to Mapuche persons' unique nature.

people differ according to the relationships they establish with others, Mapuche people also emphasise that social relationships are a productive force for constructing similarity with other persons. Accordingly, each person's particular singularity may be increasingly shared by managing the intensities and directions of social relationships. Persons, in this sense, are thought of as becoming similar or remaining different in view of the social connections they establish (or the lack of them).

This chapter is divided into two main sections. In the first I will describe three elements people in Elicura consider as critical when defining humanity. These correspond, in a sense, to the given essences from which Mapuche people commence their social processes of personhood. In the subsequent section I will explore how social relationships are connected to person's ongoing creation, and how they are perceived and employed by other people to define how/what other persons are. Here, by stressing an essential/relational duality, I show that, eventually, what really defines a person is the perception of how he or she behaves, the relationships he or she establishes, and the way he or she acts. The substantial composition, on the contrary, seems to work just as an *a priori* classification framework, or to later contrast what was perceived relationally. As we will see, it is primarily for this reason that people who are essentially Mapuche may turn Winka-like, and vice versa.

1. Human Essences and Differences

My friends in Elicura considered there to be three elements one may find in every single human being across the globe, the convergence of which could stand to propose a Mapuche concept of humanity. However, because of their perceived variability, they were not simply invoked to unify, but they were fundamentally useful for distinguishing between different types of human beings. These elements are: (1) human physicality and how it is literally conveyed together with other personal characteristics through *blood*; (2) to be, in some way or another, related to *land*; and (3) something loosely referred to by the term *culture*, encompassing the

social and moral patterns people present differently (cf. Stuchlik 1976:19-22). In this section I explore how these three elements are conceived in Elicura. Such an exploration is relevant to my argument for two reasons. Firstly, because these elements are widely considered the "given" components of the person. Secondly, since they are critical for drawing distinctions between the poles of humanity (summarised by the Mapuche/Winka opposition).

Although the three elements I am going to observe may appear to be objective, I will attempt to show that such objectivity is often illusory. This is because the way these particular elements are understood is always rooted in the singularity of each personal experience of the world. These elements, thus, should be comprehended as open-ended dialogical terms (Bakhtin 1981), which are conceptualised uniquely by each person. For this reason, they cannot be claimed to be simply univocal. Instead they must be socially understood as inherently multivocal.

Accordingly, I propose that what people share when it comes to these elements is merely what permits them the general claim of unity (perhaps the illusion). If one wants, it is their "materiality", or their *signifiers*. More accurately, it is *what allows them to be perceived*. Only considering this dimension one may claim certain objectivity. Conversely, when addressing how the elements are employed to differentiate, the focus should be moved towards how these elements particularly signify, towards *how the elements are perceived personally*. Thus, for example, my friends in Elicura may find it absolutely admissible to claim a person is Mapuche because of the "objective" relationship he or she has with land (which some would label as "indigeneity"). However, the transcendence of this claim would hide a more subjective sense regarding how the term Mapuche is personally understood. Indeed, such a term habitually refers to a measurable distance between any person and what any other person thinks is a (his or her) proper self (see Chapter 5). Such claims of objectivity would hide, then, how Mapucheness is commonly not a characteristic people possess, but a concept employed relationally to assess similitude. It is not simply about whether a person is Mapuche or not, but about how Mapuche a person is from the perspective of the person assessing Mapucheness. Therefore, every sign of objectivity should be set aside in favour of an overarching subjectivity. To put it

simply, if we claim objectivity regarding signifiers, we should dismiss it and claim a complete subjectivity towards what is signified (see Chapter 6).

1.1. Blood

Once while having lunch with a group of people, I raised one of my favourite fieldwork questions. Considering I had already spent several months in Elicura, and that I expected to spend some more time there, I wondered whether at some point I could be considered to be Mapuche. After I asked this, people looked at me, smiling and outright denying any such possibility. A few seconds later, however, and continuing the conversation one of my friends asked me: "why would you want to be Mapuche?" I replied that I was not necessarily suggesting that I would want to be, and that my question was principally related to the fact I certainly have at least one Mapuche ascendant, as do most Chilean people.[52] Having one or more supposedly Mapuche ancestor(s), plus spending a considerable amount of time with Mapuche people, I thought that maybe someday I could be considered at least "a little bit Mapuche". My interlocutor responded: "to what I'm seeing, you've not a drop of Mapuche blood… you even have the face of a *gringo*… perhaps you're *mestizo* (Sp. "of mixed blood") but *muy lejano*" (Sp. "very distant"). In these cases, he stressed, "What happens is that blood is lost as generations pass". He went on to illustrate his point. "Let's imagine we have a Chilean mare and an English horse and we mate them. Then we will have a *mestiza* filly, with half and a half of each blood, Chilean and English. Later, if we mate this new mixed mare to an English horse, we will have a newborn with a quarter of Chilean blood [her mother gives half of its blood, being half of it Chilean and half English]. And so and so forth until the eventual baby will be made up of only English blood".

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[52] It is in literature commonplace to uphold a massive historical race-mixing process between Spanish and Mapuche, which would have lead to contemporary Chileans. Such blood-mixing consistently appears as associated with a strong process of acculturation (Guevara 1913; Villalobos 1982, 1992; Villalobos et al 1982; Villalobos and Pinto 1985). For an anthropological critique, see Boccara (2007), Foerster (2004), Foerster and Vergara (1996).

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In recent years, blood (Mp. "*mollvün*") has been a key concern in various scholarly approaches to Mapuche people.[53] It often appears connected to descent, and is referred to through the Mapuche concept of *küpal* (also *küpalme*), roughly translatable as "*descendence*". According to Course (2011), *küpal* influences persons' characteristics, their ability to fulfil certain roles, and it dominates their moral behaviour (cf. Aukiñ Wallmapu Ngulam 1997; Millalén 2006). *Küpal* is also linked to substances' transmission and, as such, it may be found among Patrikin, who are commonly considered as collective entities sharing "*kiñe küpal*" (Mp. "*one descendence*") (Course 2011).

I never heard of terms such as *küpal* or *küpalme* in Elicura. Moreover, whenever I mentioned them, people consistently affirmed they did not know them either. However, quite often they employed the idiom of *sangre* or *mollvün* (Sp. and Mp. "blood"), as conveying similar senses ascribed to *küpal* elsewhere. Many of my friends understood blood as a critical component of human beings. More than once they literally asserted this by outlining our common composition: "We're all made up of blood", claimed my eldest friends in the Valley, over and over again. Indeed, they widely considered blood as the key element corporeally constituting and determining us. Every aspect of human physicality, from appearance of face to height, and from hair-type to body-type, is considered to be engraved in it. Each particular capacity people presented was usually explained as linked to the blood they had. In fact, even personality and morals were considered strongly influenced by it.

For the Mapuche, a person's blood is transmitted through descent. Every person was composed by two halves of blood, each one symmetrically granted for each one of his or her parents (cf. Course 2011). Genealogically extending this connection, and as with *küpal* elsewhere, consanguineal ties were generally referred to by the idea of being "*de la misma sangre*" (Sp. "of the same blood"). By this

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[53] Also Amerindian societies in general, linked to ethnic demarcations (e.g. Gow 1991, 2003), and as a constitutive part of persons, but flexible enough to be consciously modified (Conklin 2001; Kelly 2005; McCallum 2001; Oakdale 2008; Overing 2003; Overing and Passes 2000; Taylor 1996; Vilaça 2002, 2005, 2008; Viveiros de Castro 2001).

claim, it was understood that consanguineal relatives share, under proper circumstances, many of the features that characterise them as persons. These connections, however, were commonly traced with a paternal bias. Thus, commonly only Patrikin were referred to as being "of the same blood". This "sameness" was asserted by their collective denomination through their common surnames. It was also asserted through the perceived recurrence of specific features along these consanguineal lines, allowing people to make generalizations such as "the Fernandez family are thieves" or "the Llanquileos family are tall".

On the other hand and extending this proposal, Mapuche people also perceive a connection between blood and an idea they express as "*raza*" (Sp. "race"). Accordingly, sometimes the claim of being "of the same blood" is traced beyond kinship lines, to collectively differentiate between two kinds of people: Mapuche and Winka. Indeed, people often employ the concept "*otra sangre*" or "*ka mollvün*" (Sp. and Mp. "other blood"), as a metonym for referring to people they do not see *a priori* as Mapuche.

As a result, the way people in Elicura conceptualise blood might be separated into two levels. Firstly, constituting and connecting persons through substance transmission. Secondly, as an extrapolation of how some meaningful perceived patterns are distributed among people. Whereas in the first level people emphasise the continuities along lines of substance inheritance (Patrikin), in the second, blood makes possible a classification of different and delimitated types: Chilean and English among the horses, Mapuche and Winka among human beings.

This last classification results in (and/or is founded upon) several contrasting defining characteristics people affirm Winka and Mapuche *races* possess. Difference in skin colour and body hair is a common distinction (Lavanchy 2007). It was usually asserted that Mapuche people were of darker skin, while Winka people were fairer-skinned. The reason for this difference was blood, but not necessarily in the code it would engrave. As one of my friends explained: "Mapuche blood is darker than Winka blood… that's why Mapuche people have darker skin, because skin takes the colour blood has". Mapuche and Winka bloods were also considered to differ in their consistency. My friends commonly depicted Mapuche blood as "thick" and "strong", as "*sangre de toro*" (Sp. "blood of bull"), whereas they always

described Winka blood as "weak" and "*aguachenta*" (Sp. "watered-down"). When it came to body hair, Mapuche people were characterised as hairless. It was often affirmed, for instance, that Winka men had beards, while Mapuche men were beardless. In another instance, some female friends joked that one of the good things about being Mapuche was that "you don't have to epilate your body" (as non-Mapuche women were perceived to constantly have to do).

In spite of these signs, people often found it difficult to ascertain the kind of blood a person had by observing his or her physical characteristics alone. The reason for this was that people believed that a lot of people had "mixed blood". Consequently, many times instead of observing what a person looks like, a more accurate way of asserting which kind of blood a person has is learning his or her surnames. A Mapuche surname such as Millabur or Coliqueo[54] often works as an indicator of Mapuche blood. It denotes at least a partial belonging to one specific kinship group. But, because of blood mixing, a Mapuche surname is not immediately an index of "Mapucheness". It was often stressed that one would have to observe a person's behaviour over a long period of time in order to ascertain the man or the woman in question's "leading" or "real" kind of blood with any sort of precision. At other times knowing a person's blood was simply deemed as virtually impossible. As a friend told me, "we would have to carry out a blood test to actually see a person's blood's real colour".

As follows, perhaps the most important blood-engraved features for differentiating between the two races are those regarding behaviour. It is commonly thought that the Winka follow a different moral code to the Mapuche. Mapuche people tend to associate Winka blood with a set of negative characteristics. Usually these are linked to the widely held belief that most Winka people coming to America were imprisoned criminals in their homeland, and also to a shared history of colonial abuses Mapuche populations have suffered. Hence, Winka people are often

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[54] In contrast to what happens elsewhere in indigenous South America, most Mapuche people have surnames elaborated in their own language. Only a few Mapuche families have Spanish surnames without necessarily having established alliances with non-Mapuche people. This is explained by two rationales. First, due to the negligence of the officials who first recorded the indigenous population's names, assigning them any surname without consideration. Second, because some families would have chosen to change their indigenous surnames in order to avoid being discriminated against by Winka people. In Elicura there are three Mapuche families with Winka patronyms. Everybody, however, recognises them as having Mapuche blood.

characterised as deceitful, liars, traitors, and thieves, among others similar adjectives. In contrast, these qualities would not just be absent from the way Mapucheness is theoretically conceptualised, but such a notion would be defined by exactly the opposite characteristics. Being Mapuche is, thus, linked to traits such as rectitude, kindness, reliability, honesty, and so on.

In social practice, however, surnames are usually granted priority as signalling Mapuche blood. In my view, this is because, lacking of experiential possibilities, surnames actually indicate the undeniable presence of one kind of blood. Here we may come back to the racial conception of Mapucheness, and to the overarching rhetorical employment of the idiom of being "of the same blood". In practice, such a conception is metaphorised by the utilization of the terms *peñi* and *lamuen* to address other people considered as *racially* Mapuche. These are kinship terms used to refer to, from the position of a male ego, male and female real and classificatory siblings among agnates, and parallel cousins in the same generation among Matrikin.[55] In their contemporary usage, however, they appear more often as demarcations of ethnicity linked to this idea of "common descent" or racial unity. Indeed, in Elicura, it is quite common to hear the phrase "that guy is a *peñi*", implying "he is Mapuche" (because he has Mapuche blood).

During my fieldwork there were some persons who invariably refused to call me *peñi* or *lamuen*, whereas others did so from the very beginning of our relationships. In my view, this indicates that whilst some emphasised a reified concept of blood when using the terms, for others it was sufficient that I lived in Elicura, or that I was interested in Mapuche people, to be considered a "sibling". When looking at the pragmatic employment of these terms, it is also relevant to note that people are aware of one common situation in which blood's essences cannot be fully developed. As we will see later in this chapter, this is often rooted in the relevance located in the social expression of persons. This is why people paid a great deal of attention to other people's behaviours and relationships, constantly assessing what they indicated. Accordingly, there were people who called me *peñi* only when they were sure that I acted as a *peñi*. Although I was neither a *peñi* "physically" speaking nor by my surnames, I was one, for them, in terms of how I behaved. I see

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[55] From a female ego the term is always *lamuen*.

two main reasons for this. Firstly, although people recognise a blood essence, which is individually fixed and undeniable, there is always the possibility of overcoming it or of hiding it through the social involvement of persons. Secondly, Mapuche people assert that, currently, most people are comprised of a mixture of Winka blood and Mapuche blood. Thus, they are aware that if descent still works somehow through surnames as proof of one's blood, alliance works by mixing blood and making its signals imprecise.

One final theme I think is relevant to understanding what blood means to Mapuche people is its mixing. As with horses, if a Mapuche person has a child with a Winka or a *Chiñurra* (Mp. "non-Mapuche woman"), that baby will have half Mapuche blood and half Winka blood. Mapuche people refer to this kind of 'mixed blood' person as a *champurriado* or a *champurria*. These terms were once explained to me using an alcoholic metaphor: "a *champurriado* is neither a Mapuche nor a Winka, he is *chicha con vino*" (Sp. "cider with wine"). Because they are both at once, they are neither one nor the other.

Champurriado persons could possess any characteristics linked either to Winka or Mapuche blood. For this reason, they cannot be located *a priori* within either of these categories. As a Mapuche political leader once told me, they are "with one foot on each side of the Bio-Bio", referring to the historical frontier separating the Spanish crown from the Mapuche independent territory (see Introduction). Nor do they constitute their own, separate category. This is because although they are inevitably going to be considered *champurriados*, through careful observation of their behaviour, it is possible to assert which of the two kinds of blood, Mapuche or Winka, "leads" in them. In practice, *champurriado* people who live in the Valley, being part of a family recognised as Mapuche, are usually considered as "more Mapuche".[56] On the other hand, *champurriado* people who have migrated to a city, or who live in the Valley with a family considered to be *Winka* or 'Winka-like' are likely to be considered as "more Winka". However, the perceptions that lead to these judgements are always person-relative, and they cannot be claimed to be objective. The categories of Mapucheness and Winkaness are always dependent upon individuals' experiences and definitions of them. This could also be explained by

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[56] Bacigalupo (2010) shows how *champurriado* people may even become shamans, a role classically considered essential to culture affirmation and transmission (also 2007).

two of the points I made in Chapter 1. Firstly, by the presence of what I call the uniqueness of personal experience principle, which refers to how the experience of something or somebody is always variable and totally dependent upon the person who is experiencing that something or somebody. Secondly, and as a result of this principle, because a person's experiential possibilities are necessarily multiple and unrestricted. We have learned that the occurrence of certain past and current behaviours imply neither that these behaviours will be reproduced in the future, nor that others perceive these behaviours in the same way as we do. If a *Champurriado* acts as a Mapuche for me today, it should not be assumed that he will do the same tomorrow, or to put it differently, that I will perceive him to do the same tomorrow. Further, it cannot be assumed that other people would assess his behaviour in the same manner as I do.

1.2. Land

Regarding kinship, and inspired by his experience among the Mapuche, Titiev claimed a long time ago that in certain groups "considerations of physical distances are more important than genetic relationships" (1956:855). Such a powerful statement may find echoes in many contemporary approaches. These often emphasise how different peoples conceive kinship not simply as something given, but fundamentally as something consciously created. This does not simply refer to the classical distinction between consanguinity and alliance, but to an open-ended ethnographical reconsideration of both. Examples along these lines may be found in the work of Janet Carsten (2004), who shows how, in many societies, kinship is a deliberate process accomplished through managing relatedness. A more particular case may be displayed, for instance, by the Amazonian Wari' and how they consider White people might be *consanguinised* through an aware handling of social proximities (Vilaça 2006).

Similarly to what Titiev put forward, my friends in Elicura often expressed a similar concern about physical distances, implying that they were the tangible

expression of social distances.[57] As I argue, there is a sense in which every Mapuche person traces a radical distinction between his or her own self, and his or her own ideal radical alterity, which often correspond to each personal conception of what is to be Mapuche and to be Winka respectively. In practice, these two concepts form a sort of gradation where everybody is located according to their defining personal perspective. In a sense, each continuum is an egocentred (Stuchlik 1976) assessment of how multiple others are located regarding ego's personal conceptions. People see others, judge their actions, and situate them in the continuum formed by each person's personal conceptions of self and other. What is interesting about this gradation is that it is often expressed through the idiom of physical distance. This is a key factor, overlapping with other key factors such as morals or physical appearance, when judging degrees of similarity and difference.

According to people in Elicura, there is a twofold sense in which personal assessment of similarities and land, the setting where social distances are physically arranged, are connected. The first sense regards personal roots, and refers to the bond between people and the land they are from. The second refers to the more flexible and ongoing relationship established between persons and the lands in which they dwell. This second point is strongly pervaded by a notion that when people inhabit the same environment, they may increasingly share similar experiential worlds and capacities (cf. Ingold 2000:172-188). Such a statement was strongly emphasised, for instance, when people talked about their neighbours with Winka blood who had always lived in Elicura. As my friend Roberto stressed, "they've lived here all of their lives… they're almost as Mapuche as we are".[58] Similarly, people claimed that dwelling in different environments keeps experiential worlds apart, and may also fracture the similarities between people who resemble one another at *blood* level. Thus, many of my friends complained about their relatives who had migrated to live in diverse Chilean urban centres, declaring that they could not be considered to be

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[57] Jose Isla's (nd) still unpublished work is an insightful approach to the study of this connection among the Cordilleran Mapuche Pewenche. A classical study on the subject, grasping physical distances emphasis and blood ties dismissal as part of a structural reorganization, may be found in Stuchlik (1976).

[58] Similarly, Stuchlik pointed out that when he asked people about what they thought of their non-Mapuche neighbours, the answer many gave him was: "This people live here, they work with us, they are born and raised here, and some of them even speak *Mapudungun* (Mp. "Language of the land"). They are not Chileans, they are almost Mapuche" (1971b:8).

Mapuche. Indeed, one hears frequent claims in the same vein as "they're nothing but a bunch of *awinkados* (Winka-like)… they are no longer Mapuche." Below, I will look at these two senses of the people/land connection. First, as a constitutive element of persons allowing an ontological classification; second, as shared or unshared environments.

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When talking about the critical elements defining "being Mapuche", my friends in Elicura often stressed the special relationship they alleged to have with the land they are from, often the only land on which they have lived. This relationship is fundamental to what it means to be Mapuche. As such, it can neither be experienced nor understood by Winka people. Simply put, it signifies that Mapuche people are truly from the *mapu* (Mp. "land"). Being Mapuche, here, means to be native to one place. In this way, Mapucheness is often comprehended as a universal "objective" category, encompassing every indigenous people across the globe.

Beyond this universal conception, however, Mapuche people assert there is a more specific personal sense through which the relationship between person and land acquires a stronger and more particular meaning. This is referred in *Chedungun* through the concept of *tuwün* (Mp. approx. "place of origin"), which signals the connection a person has with the specific place he *is from*, which ideally, and in respect of traditional virilocality, is the same place as where he *lives*.[59]

The Mapuche concept of *tuwün* has recently received a great deal of attention from both scholars and Mapuche political organizations, often being considered one of the two pillars (the other is *küpalme*) upon which Mapuche persons' identity rests[60] (Aukiñ Wallmapu Ngulam 1997; Mariman *et al* 2006). Early chroniclers of Mapuche life also noted its importance, and Guevara's pioneering work went so far as to state that Mapuche people "worship the soil where they born" (1911:29).

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[59] Historically, this connection would have being more complicated in the case of women, because their *tuwün* was usually no longer the place where they lived after they got married. Post-reservation extreme lack of lands, however, has contributed to flexibilize virilocality rule, introducing an extended parallel uxorilocality.

[60] An insightful exploration on these points, as on the political turn of rural Mapuche identity, may be found in Di Giminiani (2011).

Indeed, *tuwün* refers to a fundamental characteristic of Mapuche people: their *rootedness* (Di Giminiani 2011). It refers to the relationship Mapuche people have with land, and how they experience it personally.

As I was able to observe, one of Mapuche people's central concerns when meeting a new person was to find out his or her provenance. This was usually asked as soon as possible when engaging in a conversation, as happened to me on several occasions. At first, I thought this was a simple formality, an accepted method of starting a conversation. However, I soon realised that this was not the case. Rather, this 'greeting' was embedded within a form of Mapuche etiquette, and indeed social logic, that considered it crucial to locate newcomers spatially. Comparably, newcomers were also asked questions about relatives so as to locate them within kinship networks (cf. Course 2011).

Some people understood the link they have with their *tuwün* as a processual bond, which begins at birth. They, thus, perceived the relationship by using idioms of familiarity or custom. Others, however, whilst not disagreeing with this line of thought, maintained that the connection had a material foundation. This was explained several times to me in the following way: In the past, people did not go to hospitals to give birth, asking instead for the help of several *parteras* (Sp. "midwives") who lived nearby.[61] The *partera* was in charge of almost everything during labour, an event that always took place in the house of the pregnant woman. Once the newborn had exited his or her mother's body, the *partera* cut the umbilical cord, handed the baby to his or her mother, and waited for the *küdin* (Mp. "placenta"). When the *partera* finally received the *küdin*, she handled it to the baby's father, who was in charge of burying it. This could be performed in one corner of the *ruka* (Mp. "house"), outside in the *iratuwe* (Mp. approx. "place where firewood is chopped"), or anywhere else within the homestead. Many people, particularly those in their forties or older, use this burial to explain their relationship with Elicura. Part of them is *in* the Valley.[62] I asked many times what the placenta's burial meant, and if it had any definite, explicitly stated significance. While most people did not know

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[61] People maintain that this trade is currently banned, making this custom no longer practicable.

[62] A similar observation was made by Faron, although he saw placenta burial as principally linked to fear of witchcraft (1961a:137). Bloch (1995) and Carsten (2004), more generally, show how peoples in Madagascar and Malaysia similarly create a relation between persons and places by burying the afterbirth.

if it had any special meaning, they agreed that the placenta's burial generated a metaphysical link between a person and his or her birthplace.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

Although *tuwün* is a concept principally referring to people and their own relationship to land, it is also a useful principle with which to classify people from other perspectives. Hence, it may be considered as important as descent for ascertaining people's characteristics. It can be used to predict what a newcomer is like through the use of prior knowledge, or at least assumptions, about what their place of origin is like. When, for instance, I mentioned the other "Mapuche places" I had visited, I was often answered with affirmations such as "Huentelolén people are very *bochincheros*" (Sp. approx. "mischievous"), or "Alto Bio Bio people are more Mapuche [than us]".

In my view, these judgements illustrate the importance of the place in which one dwells in the formation of one's personhood. In this sense, *tuwün* is conceived as a "place of people", and not simply as a place where people live. If a birthplace may be relevant regarding personal attachment or direct indigeneity, it is interesting to see how places of dwelling are observed as a social mesh influencing and being influenced by personal behaviours. As we saw previously and will see again later, people usually emphasised this common dwelling as creating similarity, even among bodies that were seen as composed of different kinds of blood. This is exactly what was meant when it was stated that many Winkas who live in Elicura "are almost Mapuche…"

Something slightly different seems to happen in the case of encounters with Winka people from outside of the Valley. Here *tuwün* seems to be extrapolated in connection to an underlined indigeneity. If between Mapuche people the difference may be traced by opposing respective *tuwün*, between a Mapuche and a Winka the distinction seems to revolve around the broader term *mapu* (Mp. "land"). Indeed, it is the lack of a clear relationship to land that often paradigmatically defines "Winkaness". Winka are the people who are not from the *mapu* in which they live. They are the descendants of peoples whose origins are far away. Accordingly,

Winkaness commonly appears linked to the metaphor of "*navegantes*" (Sp. "navigator"), referring to how the first Spanish conquerors arrived in America. Winka people are generally conceived of as *rootless*, as people without land. This is upheld as a certainty, because definitive migration without this reason seems inexplicable for most Mapuche people I know. As with blood, otherness in this sense is referred to by adding the differential particle *ka*, composing the Mapuche term "*ka mapu*" (Mp. "other land").[63] When talking in these terms, people usually trace lines far back to their first supposed ascendants and their surmised provenance. This is why I very often found myself discussing my Chilean nationality with Mapuche friends who denied its veracity. Whereas I maintained a right of having been born in Chilean territory, my counterparts alleged a very particular *ius sanguinis* argument that took me back to "Spain, France or elsewhere".

Just later I comprehended something very important which I now think must play a key role in any discussion of land regarding Mapuche philosophy. I was playing with a group of children when after a while one came directly telling me "I'm Mapuche, what are you?" I answered her "I'm Mapuche too!" Then she simply said, "That isn't true; you aren't Mapuche, because you aren't from here". After that I realised that even though Mapucheness is commonly asserted as an essential relation between persons and land, it is much more a matter of social distances and of how they are arranged in the *mapu*. Although there seems to be an objective sense in Mapucheness, linked to indigeneity, there is another sense in which it is linked to personal understandings: to the ways in which people are separated by various distances; to how each person judges others as close or as far away from himself or herself.

1.3. Culture

Unlike with blood and land, there is not a term in *Chedungun* one could propose as homologous to the Western concept of "culture". The term *admapu* (usually

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[63] This expression, however, may be also used to refer Mapuche people from other *tuwün*, differently to what happened with "*ka mollvün*", which worked almost as a synonym of Winka.

translated as "the customs of the land") may be stated as such, and that would be correct so far as it alludes to what is thought of as the right ways of acting and being (as opposed to the ways of Winka). However, in my view this concept is not totally equivalent to western "culture" because it is not conceived as a reified, bounded and apprehensible entity, employable for drawing ethnic differentiations. In a sense, one may properly talk about a Mapuche conception of culture as a moral predicament (always personally defined), but not necessarily as an artefact of ethnic identity. Moreover, unlike *mollvün* and *mapu*, the term *admapu* could not be being prefixed with the particle *ka* (Mp. "other"). Drawing such a difference with it was senseless, because although the phrase *ka admapu* could be formed grammatically, it lacks semantic logic. Perhaps the reasoning behind this may be found in what a friend told me: "as *admapu* are the laws of the earth, and there is just one earth, there cannot be another *admapu*".

Contemporarily, nevertheless, the concept of culture is an extremely relevant idiom for most Mapuche people I know. Indeed, most of them consider it the final key given element in defining universal humanity and the particular status of being Mapuche, together with blood and land. Many people use the term culture referring to the moral predicament I recently mentioned. Many others, in contrast, think of it as something critical for defining a discrete indigenous group (and then a people and a nation).[64] They see cultures, in plural, as diverse reified entities including every single person across the globe. In their view, these entities' definition would be based upon a shared past and a set of common inherited customs and cultural artefacts, such as language, territory, and race. One of these so-defined entities would be "the Mapuche".

This stance, in practice, often assumes a viewpoint whereby cultural difference no longer stands as epistemological diversity, but merely as a superficial cover. Culture becomes almost an empty signifier, which can be objectified and detached from its dynamicity, and fixed as *heritage*. *Ethnotourism* is an example of this. As one friend told me "what (Mapuche) people should understand is that we have to take advantage of the '*plus*' we have. We have to show the tourist how the Mapuche people live, our culture, our way of seeing the world". In Elicura practices,

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[64] I deal with these differences thoroughly in Chapter 5.

this tourism-related Mapuche premise was exteriorised through several patterns that were taught by the leaders of the local cultural organizations, ranging from how they believed houses should be ornamented (avoiding "Chinese trinkets", using Mapuche handicrafts), to the cosmology Mapuche people should have, termed as "the ancient one". This demonstrated the discursive avoidance of anything liable to be labelled as Winka, from Roman Catholic and Evangelical religions, to even on certain occasions, what was considered as a "non-sustainable way of relating to the environment".

As I see it, Mapuche employment of the term "culture", and why some of them uphold it in its reified variation, is attributable to the way in which the Chilean State has colonised the indigenous populations living within its territory. Scholars have clearly shown how this process has worked in the last years (Bascopé 2009; Mascareño 2007). I can at count at least three things that convince me of this idea. Firstly, the lack of a Mapuche term to refer to a reified culture. Secondly, the *acultural* way of conceiving Mapucheness one may still observe among many Mapuche elders (see Chapter 5). Thirdly, that "the idea that humans inhabit culturally constructed worlds is part of a specifically western discourse" (Ingold 1993:229).

In any case, beyond any cause we could see externally for Mapuche people speaking about culture –or for the reified version of it that many maintain– the anthropological fact is that they actually do it. It is not up to us to disqualify the concepts of culture people have, but simply to depict them. This was something I ethnographically understood from a friend when I reproached his cultural essentialism. He then simply claimed: "well, the fact is that we are subjugated to Winka society, so it's obvious that we have to use those terms to state our points".

In reified terms, Mapucheness was conceived of as a list of patterns that should be *clarified*, *purified*, *defended* and *recovered*. It often involved an explicit desire for decolonization. This does not simply suggest the need to extract anything that moderately could appear as related to the Winka (anything non-Mapuche), but also to re-establish anything deemed properly and anciently Mapuche. Any cultural dynamicity and permeability was denied. It was all about establishing the elements constituting Mapucheness, attempting to extract any element suspicious of being

exogenous, defending this reconstructed purity, and struggling to recover what may have been lost through colonialism.

Mapuche culture appears here as an inventory including any element likely to be considered as Mapuche. Reproducing this list seems unnecessary because, as could be expected, there is no consensus about what to include within it (the list always varies at personal level). Anyway, I would like to point out that it generally considered language, different religious rituals, and different roles to be fulfilled within the society. It also took into account food, landscape, cosmology, and other factors too.

When I talk about *purifying*, I refer to an attitude many people had, expecting to divest real Mapuche elements from any ingredients considered as non-Mapuche. Here the discursive struggle that many carry out against the increasing presence of Evangelical Protestantism within communities seems quintessential. In terms of *recovering*, or of being aware of what has been lost, many people asserted that Winka intrusion had led to a radical change in Mapuche customs, and that it was their obligation to return to how they originally were.[65] For instance, people often pointed out that in the past there were several very important Mapuche institutions that contemporarily had fallen into disuse. Two of these were mentioned most often: the *trafkin*, a term referring to the formalised exchange of particular goods between two persons; and the major Mapuche fertility ritual, *nguillatun*, which many believe has not been carried out properly "for almost forty years".

1.4. Summary

In this section, I have attempted to explore three elements Mapuche people consider to be fundamental components of the person. In doing so, I have stressed how people think of these factors not as achieving personhood per se, but as constituting the

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[65] This idea was also extended to how, it is perceived, the environment has been modified. In this way, many of my friends continually complained about timber companies' vast presence in the hills enclosing Elicura. As one of them stressed, the main problem they posited regarded how "everything is totally changed… the animals are gone, the entire flora is dead… all because *las forestales* [Sp. "timber companies"]".

starting point of the social process implied by it. I have shown how these elements serve to elaborate a general idea of humanity, as far as Mapuche people consider that every single human being presents them. However, I have also put forward that people are much more concerned with how these elements serve to differentiate between persons than in how they unify them. Correspondingly, they often appear with a key distinction related to how these essences are different among Winka and Mapuche people.

I have addressed how these personal components may vary, and how the way in which these variations are personally perceived is useful for classifying closeness and distance through differentiating between types of persons. Furthermore, I have observed that what these elements *a priori* designate needs to be continuously reaffirmed and revaluated at a social level. Indeed, it is extensively assumed that what they signal may be misleading, especially if one does not take into account how personhood is ultimately moulded by an open-ended establishment of social relationships (Course 2011). Additionally, the definition of these essences is always subject to the diversity of personal standpoints. It should always consider the contextual differences and connections traced between each one of the essences and the role they play, according to each particular person and in each particular person.

Finally, we have learned that figuring out kinds of essences is always a good way of identifying where a particular person may be located in one's own continuum of alterity. Nonetheless, it is only by paying attention to social practices and relationships, and to what they express morally, that one could evaluate how distant other people are from one's own self. The essential components of a person are, thus, not enough to assert what a person is like. A clear evaluation could only be accomplished by considering persons' social dimensions. This is what confirms or denies what essential substances are supposedly showing. All in all, the only way to see persons is to consider how they engage into sociality. This is the discussion I will develop below.

2. Going beyond what is "Given": the Sociality of Mapuche Personhood

As I noted previously, Course (2011) has recently proposed that the Mapuche personhood must be understood as a centrifugal process of going beyond what is "given" (descent, residence), by establishing productive social relationships. Having explored persons' essential components, in this section I will attempt to extend such a claim to my own ethnography. Thus, drawing on Course's proposal, I will try to show how Mapuche personhood can only be accomplished through individuals' social involvement.

Knowing the essences composing human beings, and how each person singularly has them in different kinds and combinations, one could a priori claim that each Mapuche person possesses certain unique properties which define them. However, this assertion is revealed to be too limited when we observe that Mapuche people affirm they share an essential similarity with their Patrikin. Consequently, it is only through open-ended social engagement that persons achieve the complete singularity I previously claimed as inherent to the Mapuche person. Only by freely establishing social relations can persons properly differentiate themselves from their Patrikin. The uniqueness of persons appears, then, as connected to how they are fundamentally conceived: as autonomous and independent beings (Melville 1976). Indeed, because of persons' independence and autonomy, they can engage without restraint in social relationships. And, at the same time, because they freely engage in social relationships, they can enhance their personal uniqueness. Persons, according to the Mapuche, are not simply determined by essences, but are primordially autonomous social beings, able to reproduce their autonomy due to how they interact socially.

In the following section I will engage critically with a duality I see as emerging from the social nature of personhood, which is decisive for the theme of this chapter: the question of how persons go about assessing other persons. This duality consists of, on the one hand, how a social tie/expression is perceived by the person who executes it, and, on the other, how it is perceived from a third person perspective. I will explore this difference through a couple of ethnographic

examples, which will clarify for us the importance Mapuche people place on *relatedness* (Carsten 2004). As we will see, this refers to how social relations may be used to strengthen given similarities, whilst also, or instead, creating similarity among human beings who are different from one another.

2.1. "*A Man is Known by the Company He Keeps…*"

The very first time I arrived in Elicura I expected to stay in a tourist cabana. A friend of mine who worked at the Chilean State agency for indigenous affairs had recommended I do this, saying that I must try to give something back to the community where I was about to carry out my fieldwork. The easiest way of doing this, my friend told me, would be to stay long-term in one of the local people's tourist cabanas. That is how I came to know Victor, the first host I had during my fieldwork.

On meeting me, Victor did not hide his surprise that I was from Santiago. "Not too many Chileans tourists come to our cabanas. We're accustomed to hosting *gringos*", he explained. That was the first of many times I was judged to be a *gringo* in Elicura, a term which encompasses there not only North Americans, but Europeans (Lavanchy 2007), German settlers and their descendants, and even a Brazilian celebrity (see Chapter 4). When we arrived at his homestead, we went inside one of his cabanas to discuss the terms of my stay, and I explained Victor the purposes of my visit to Elicura in detail. Then he finally understood: I was not a Chilean tourist, I was a Chilean researcher. As he told me, Chilean researchers like me actually came to Elicura more often than tourists did, yet these researchers rarely stayed or planned to stay for such an extended period of time.

It took me a long time to explain to him how the research I was planning differed from those of (in his words) "the thousands of researchers who make millions thanks to the Mapuche". But eventually I convinced him of my sincerity and he even offered to help by introducing me to "the people who know" (who, I later discerned, he thought were not more than three or four persons in the whole Valley).

Among them, probably the most salient name was Bernardo, who Victor continually referred to not by his name but as "the *Lonko* of the Valley".[66] Victor told me that before commencing my research I should ask for Bernardo's permission. "Tomorrow I'm going to introduce you to the *Lonko*. If I don't do it, and you go by yourself, he'll think you're a Winka", he concluded.

The next day we set off to Bernardo's house. He came out to greet us, wearing a *manta* (poncho) and a *trarilonko* (head scarf), clothes widely considered in Chile as "traditionally" Mapuche. After greeting us, he immediately invited us to pass to the *ruka* (Mp. "house"). The terrain where Bernardo's house is located is too small to carry out any agricultural enterprise, as is the case with most plots in Elicura. It surprised me, however, that beside his house there were one big and three small thatched huts (which was how the traditional Mapuche *ruka* were made), rather than the *chacra* (Sp. "garden") one customarily finds in most peasant homesteads within the Province of Arauco. Additionally, towards one side of the backyard stood what seemed to be a Mapuche ceremonial post (Mp. *rewe*). I had seen different *rewe* before, mostly within the boundaries of a *machi's* (Mp. "shaman") parcel or in a ceremonial field, but never in a "secular" homestead.

We entered the bigger *ruka*. Passing through the doorway, we were taken back by the heat a big central fire generated. Bernardo told us: "Let's sit around the *fogón* (Sp. "bonfire"), as the ancient Mapuche used to". We each selected one of the chairs and benches surrounding the fire. I still remember the scene vividly. Everything seemed to be prepared to make me feel that I had been granted an invaluable opportunity to have an audience with the most important authority in the Valley. One could literally breathe in the smoke-filled atmosphere of ceremony. Victor started introducing me, being ceaselessly extremely respectful to Bernardo. He then beckoned me to explain to Bernardo what my intensions were. Impulsively, I got straight to the point. I clumsily told Bernardo "what I want is to do research about what it means to be Mapuche and Winka here in Elicura". Bernardo's facial expression suddenly changed. Because I had arrived with Victor, he supposed I was somebody other than who I actually was. He saw me as a tourist, but I was a researcher. The interested and receptive eyes he had shown so far became less

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[66] Mp. "head". This term was and is usually used to refer to people in "leadership" positions, and it is, even today, usually translated into Spanish as *Cacique*.

significant when they came to be accompanied by knitted brows. In something of a snub he told us after a deep breath: "I am tired of Winka people who come to research us. We don't want any more researchers. You come, you want our help, you occupy our time, and what do we get? Nothing! Meanwhile you sell the information we give you and you earn lots of money. I have no interest in that".

Figure 2.1 and 2.2: One of Elicura's "traditional" *ruka***; Bernardo's** *rewe* **post**

Although it was awkward, Bernardo's reaction did not worry me too much. Previous fieldwork experiences had indicated to me that the *Lonko* position was not translatable to any common Spanish term, and it was similar to what in anthropological literature is known as a "powerless chief" (Clastres 2001). Nonetheless, as I did not want to have enemies as soon as I arrived in Elicura, I tried to emend the situation. I told Bernardo that perhaps I could help "them" (the Mapuche of the Valley) if he told me how. I went on to tell him that, for instance, I had found some 19th century documents in the National Archives that could be interesting for seeing how Mapuche people lost their lands in Elicura. Bernardo changed his attitude very quickly yet again, stating that if I could show them these documents my research would be different, because I "would be giving something back to the people". Victor and I left Bernardo's house soon afterwards. As we were going back to Victor's house and as soon as Bernardo was out of earshot, Victor told

me: "you almost screwed it up there *huevón*,[67] you shouldn't have told him the truth".

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Beyond what it could teach us about sociality in general, or about my specific fieldwork transactions in particular, this story is an important illustration of who I was for some people in Elicura before they actually met me. Further, it exemplifies how the perceptions of social relations are useful for evaluating the kinds of persons involved in them from particular personal standpoints. Bernardo was only the first of many persons in Elicura who thought I was a *gringo* simply because I was staying with Victor (even Victor thought so). In the same way, others often assumed that I shared several opinions with Victor because I was living with him. As I will explore more deeply in the following two examples, the social manifestation of persons should always consider the intensities and directions of how persons establish social relations. Perceiving any person's social engagement is critical to the assessment of the position he or she occupies in relation to oneself. This is what truly defines a person, the reason for this being that it is often assumed that each personal standpoint is strongly influenced by the relationships established by the person occupying it. That is why I was "a gringo": because I was staying at Victor's; that is why I shared his opinions: because I was his friend.

Ethnotourism

Elicura Valley has not only become one of the most prominent centres for Mapuche "Ethnotourism" in the local area, but arguably, in the whole Mapuche territory. Several families had tried their luck by applying to public funds to build cabanas, taking advantage of their proximity to several natural attractions including Lanalhue Lake and Nahuelbuta National Park. Alongside this, various cultural organizations

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[67] Chilean expression. Depending upon context and intonation it may have several senses, ranging from a synonym of friend to an insult. In this context, such ambiguity suited perfectly for what Victor intended to express.

have struggled to add to Valley tourism an element they call "*pertenencia cultural*" (Sp. "cultural belonging").[68] This would involve presenting tourists with a reified Mapuche way of life. Visiting the Valley would be thus an end in and of itself rather than a corollary of searches for the surrounding area's natural beauty. More simply, these organizations wished to establish an understanding of "culture" as a valuable and tradable commodity (Stronza 2001; Wood 1998). One of these organizations has even successfully organised Elicura Local Customs Fair, an annual event in which one summer weekend is dedicated to the promotion of Mapuche culture through the display and sale of artisans handicrafts (mainly textiles and pottery), the delivery of historical and cultural talks, *palin* games,[69] small traditional *rogativas* (Sp. "prayers, rogations"), and musical performances.

Figure 2.3: A poster for the 2010 Elicura local customs fair

A few years ago, Sahlins (1999) called our attention to the huge difference between how anthropological theory and human groups regard culture. Whereas the former increasingly perceives culture as dynamic and fluid, the latter searches for a

[68] Some people used to refer this as "*pertenencia cultural*", which could be translated as "cultural belonging", while others talked of "*pertinencia cultural*" as meaning something like "*cultural pertinence*". This difference was, however, never questioned, and people acted as if they were talking about the same thing.
[69] A Mapuche sport, similar to field hockey. For a general description see Coña (2002), Course (2008, 2011), and Mankilef (1914).

progressively more and more bounded, reified and essentialised definition. Such a statement is extremely pertinent to ethnotourism in Elicura. There, it is sometimes understood that tourists are looking for exoticism, and that offering the "purest" native culture should satisfy such a demand. Similar situations have been observed elsewhere, redounding many times in what anthropologists have recognised as an overall process leading to cultural revitalization and a renewed ethnic pride (Adams 1997; Duggan 1997; Smith 1977; Stronza 2001; Wood 1998). If reified culture has been a tool for the development of tourism, then the development of tourism has been a tool in processes of cultural revaluation, as the case of Elicura shows (Lavanchy 2007). Tourism is used to reconstruct, reframe or reinterpret the looser, quotidian understanding of the word "ethnicity" (see Chapter 5).

In focusing on social practices, ethnotourism is one of many fields in which persons are created and defined. It has allowed the establishment of innumerable relationships and of personal perspectives to comprehend them. Indeed, because of my relationships, this was the context in which most Mapuche people I was able to meet in Elicura located me before they actually met me. Although I could be considered at first sight as another "Chilean" Winka, which is in fact the case, most of people saw me instead as a *gringo*. Indeed, when they finally knew I was Chilean, more than once I heard: "I thought you were *gringo*, because as you are friends with Victor".

* * *

Victor often affirmed that it was really difficult to be an "*emprendedor*" (Sp. "entrepreneur") in a Mapuche community, because "people are envious". Such a statement was repeated every time we discussed his business. Victor claimed that most relationships promoting tourism in Elicura were due to his own work, and that he invited other people to participate in these enterprises in spite of the fact that he could handle them on his own.

Victor's claims corroborated what I was able to observe. Indeed, it was he who undertook a great deal of the promotional and logistical aspects of the business, while the rest of the participants just waited to what they had to do. I often heard

Victor, especially during important visits, complaining about these people's lack of initiative and about how they saw him as a boss who had to decree their labour. He, however, kept this thought silent, not mentioning it to those he was referring. Victor recognised that he needed these people on his side in order to balance out Valley people's perceptions of him that were based on his business and on the relationships he had because of it. The rest of the locals quite often denied Victor the status of Mapuche, usually depicting him as the quintessential *awinkado* (Winka-like). This was because he was perceived as having unscrupulously sold Mapuche culture, something he alleged to be sacred. The relationships he established with the people he involved in his business were therefore crucial if he were to avoid being totally outcast. Often people made up histories about how he kept money which the Chilean State granted to the Valley as a whole, or about how he commonly took advantage of a non-granted Valley representation to make money just for him, not sharing it. His support network was not necessarily there to deny this accusation, but to present a bigger range of information coming from their own personal truths about Victor.

Politicians

The domain referred to as *política* (Sp. "politics") is another good example of how persons are defined by social relationships. Complaints about *politicos* (Sp. "politicians"), and how they are not Mapuche but rather Winka-like are ubiquitous in Elicura. Indeed, by means of the terms "*la politica*" or "*los politicos*" what people often signal are perceptions of *awinkamiento* (turning Winka-like). These perceptions encompass leftist and rightist thinkers alike, people involved in community committees, both those linked to Mapuche or non-Mapuche political organizations, and even those connected to other kind of organizations from outside of the Valley. For many people, being a *politico* is critically connected to the idea of "*se mandan las partes*", meaning that they generally act as if they were representing a collective (a community, Elicura Valley, Mapuche people), but without permission. Quite the opposite, *politicos* themselves usually express to be fed up by people who do not recognise their work and throw groundless accusations at them.

In my view, the tension expressed by leadership positions and external relationships may be seen as embedded in the relational manner in which persons are socially defined. Elsewhere, I proposed that this tension could be understood through a combination of two classical anthropological concepts (González Gálvez 2007, 2010). First, we must consider that within Mapuche communities political representation is conceived as a *limited good* (Foster 1987), and people are generally reluctant to accept it. It has even been proposed that Mapuche people do not admit a metonymical relationship where one person may take the symbolic position of the whole, because in fact among them *each part is the whole* (Foerster 2004). The only reason why they grant representation is then because they need representatives to interact with Winka society. As awarded by obligation, representation is conceptualised as a gift (Mauss 2002) that goes from the ones who are represented to the one who is in charge of representation (cf. Clastres 2001). Therefore, the debt located in the heart of this donation is conceived of as directed from the representative to the represented. As a result, representatives do not have authority, and the community would always be concerned with avoiding any misuse of the representation.

I still think this image accurately describes political dynamics among rural Mapuche populations. Nevertheless, what I did not see before was that this situation was not just related to political representation, but more generally to standpoint relativity. Indeed, the way persons are experienced is always dependent upon the personal position from where they are experienced. Thus, personal experiences are always partial, and a conclusive definition of something appears as a utopia, something that could only be accomplished by considering all the perspectives from which that something is experienced. An example of this may be found in a traditional Mapuche leadership role.

It is still possible to find people referred to as *lonko* in different areas of Araucanía. In Elicura, there are two persons with such a moniker. One is Bernardo, who is linked to ethnotourism and cultural organizations. The other is Alberto, a man in his mid-eighties strongly linked to one of Elicura's Evangelical churches. Interestingly, however, no one in Elicura would assert that they both are equally *lonko*. Most people have their own opinion about who is *"the real lonko"*, while

simultaneously denying such a status to the other. Additionally, others considered that neither deserved such a denomination.[70]

Both Bernardo and Alberto were totally aware of this. For example, Bernardo stated: "I'm not the Valley's *lonko* as such, I'm a cultural *lonko*. I just have a cultural group… many people here don't recognise me as *lonko*… they have another mentality". Similarly, Alberto knew that his position was not fixed but rather dependent upon the consideration of other perspectives (including his own). However, he claimed that to be a *lonko* he just needed the approval of "ten or twenty persons". He was only a leader to this rather limited number of people. As he explicitly told me "I don't care about the others, what they say, nothing. I know what I have to know, and I don't give a damn about the others".

There are people who speak badly about Alberto, while others do the same about Bernardo. Such statements are predicated in the relationships established by each one of them, as in the capacity of perceiving other people relationships from the standpoint formed by one's own social connections. These perceptions locate persons in a vastly diverse range of unstable positions. The boundaries of these positions are formed by perceptions of self, the Mapuche position, and of the radical alterity of each perspective, embodied by the ways in which individuals comprehend the term "Winka". This is why the terms are not fixed: because they are constantly dependent on how they are being constantly perceived. This instability is consubstantial to the definition of "Mapuche" in the same way, as we will now see, it is also linked to the ways in which similarity among persons is denied, strengthened or created.

2.2. Creating Similarity

Recent anthropological approaches to the study of kinship have disregarded previous functionalist-structuralist concerns, focusing instead on how relatedness is

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[70] Commonly stated arguments in this sense were: "current *lonkos* are not the same as the ones from the past", "these are not *lonkos*… these are *pura pantalla*" (Sp. approx. "just a mask"), or "now *lonkos* don't exist, these [*lonkos*] just name themselves as such".

pragmatically conceived as an ongoing process rather than as a given organization (e.g. Carsten 2000). For example, anthropologists have explored how relationships are almost universally understood as constituting people by moulding and influencing their "given" substances (Carsten 2004:109-135). Regardless of whether relationships are given or whether they are constructed, what seems to be relevant is not the way these relationships are structurally determined, but how they are signified and created through people's daily practices.

Such a proposal may easily find echoes in Elicura. Indeed, even though Mapuche people usually emphasise how a set of substances form human beings, they do not see them as conclusively constituting persons. The combination of substances produces specific human physicalities related to land, which are only the starting points for different processes of personhood. These processes, yet to be completed, must consider the social engagement of these physicalities. Although for the Mapuche it is perfectly admissible to draw similarities and differences at an essential level, an overall evaluation, considering persons as the singular entities they are, can only be asserted in light of social practices.

In my view, the importance placed on the social manifestation of persons is directly connected to how Mapuche people conceive social relationships, attributing them with a creative power. Briefly, this means that relationships strengthen similarity between people who are already similar at an essential level, but that they also create similarities between people who are essentially different from one another. Similarity is, thus, not simply something given, but something *achievable* through a special development and management of relatedness. This development and management involves creating, nurturing, and caring about the social relationships one establishes, which may be characterised by concepts such as affection, reciprocity, intimacy, and trust. Conversely, difference is outlined by the absence of relatedness, or by the establishment of non-reciprocal and asymmetrical relationships. The classic colonial struggle between indigenous peoples and Spanish conquerors is a perfect example of this. It is by being related, and by increasing the intensities and intimacies of social relationships, that people may begin to share experiential worlds and perspectives. In contrast, it is by not being socially connected that people keep their perspectives apart.

As proposed, Mapuche understanding of sociality greatly resembles what has been widely described in relation to Amazonian peoples as "conviviality" (Overing and Passes 2000; also Lagrou 2000; Overing 2003). Here, individual bodies are seen as differential factors a priori disconnected (Taylor 1996; Vilaça 1999, 2002, 2005; Viveiros de Castro 1992, 1998), but who just might establish connections by consciously drawing them socially (by becoming persons). Relatedness is, then, what brings together what is intrinsically different. In this sense, it is affirmed that in Amazonia consanguinity and kinship are "constructed, not given, because what *is* given is (potential) affinity" (Viveiros de Castro 2001:26). This "constructed consanguinity" is accomplished by different practices including living together, sharing and forming part of convivial groups, and especially, through commensality (Fausto 2007; Gow 2003; McCallum 2001; Oakdale 2008; Rival 2005; Vilaça 2002, 2006, 2008).[71]

The management of relatedness usually manifests itself intangibly, presenting itself, for example, as 'trust' or as other sentiments. It is, however, also possible to perceive two comparatively material expressions of this phenomenon. On the one hand, referring to a household's members, people tend to assume a constant reproduction of intimate relationships that is not necessary deliberate but rather a result of living together. This link of extreme intimacy is commonly expressed using the idiom of "sleeping under the same roof". It implies the sharing of daily activities, of which daily commensality, getting together to eat, would be a perfect example.[72]

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[71] Similar ethnographic insights have been recorded among Pacific societies such as the Ilongot, who assert that residential kin "share a body" (Rosaldo 1980). Although I see the Mapuche case as connected to what Amazonian ethnographers propose in terms of constructing similar persons, I cannot claim such an affinity regarding bodies, which in Amazonia appear as "chronically unstable" (Vilaça 2005). I believe this to be due to three reasons. Firstly, because although Mapuche people present some perspectivist features (in Viveiros de Castro's sense), it is not possible to claim that they openly hold a perspectivist ontology (If Mapuche people present a perspectival ontology, it is usually a version of it that is strongly influenced by multiculturalism). Secondly, because for the Mapuche the experience of concrete bodies appears as dissociated from the personhood they embody. What they express materially is completely different from what they express socially. Thirdly, the experience of anything is always dependent upon who it is who is experiencing it. This even extends to how a person experiences his own body. In this way, no matter what the others think about particular persons and bodies, the reality of what they are or express will always be related to how the self understands them. This argument will be clearer in Chapter 6, when I address how Mapuche people confront the inherent equivocality they see as intrinsic to social life.

[72] In a different way as it has been described in Amazonia (Vilaça 2002) or elsewhere (Carsten 2004), commensality among the Mapuche does not necessarily imply the creation of similarity by sharing substance. Rather, it only suggests the common recognition of personhood and a proper context to

On the other hand, we may observe what occurs with the establishment of relationships beyond the boundaries of households and Patrikin. These are the relationships properly related to being a person by deliberately creating social ties. Often, these relationships are understood as "*amistad*" (Sp. "friendship"). They are of variable intensity, and this intensity is closely related to the degree of similarity reached by the persons involved. The greater the intensity of the relationship, the greater the similarity is between the persons involved. Friendships may also be expressed materially, showing how they are created and nurtured in time. One example given by Course (2011) describes how relatedness is created and enhanced through the sharing of wine. An additional mode of creating relatedness materially that I experienced in Elicura was the sharing of food. Offering food signified the deliberate intention of creating social relationships (or of nurturing them if they existed already). Receiving food was the explicit acceptance of that relationship, just as refusing it was commonly taken as offensive, as a denial of sociality. I understood this after I rejected meals a couple of times, despite the insistence of my hosts. On one occasion, I visited a friend late in the afternoon after having spent the whole day hanging out with Bernardo. My friend was serving the last meal of the day when I arrived, so she told me: "you arrived just on time! Sit down so I can serve you". I apologised because I had just eaten in Bernardo's house, but she insisted several times. Eventually she exclaimed, "Aren't you really not going to eat? That's so ugly! I never could have expected that from you…" After that I could do nothing but eat. That was the first of many instances in which I ended up eating supper more than once in one day.

People in Elicura constantly distinguished between Winka and Mapuche food, referring to the former as artificial and highly processed, and the latter as "natural". This distinction extended to prepared meals. If Mapuche dishes are characterised as "wet" (they are often broths or soups), Winka's are consistently depicted as "dry". According to some people there is a material continuity between eating this "wet Mapuche food" and maintaining good, strong blood. As Bernardo himself used to say, "This good food is what keeps my blood strong". Similarly, it was ascertained that Winka people could not take "*remedios de campo*" (Sp.

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enhance social bonding. As Course puts it, for the Mapuche "persons eat together because they are persons, and they are persons because they eat together" (2011:30).

"countryside/herbal remedies"), because as they eat artificial food they keep their blood weak and they cannot stand the strength of Mapuche medicines. However, in my experience, these notions regarded specific ideas around individual substances, and not necessarily about the social creation of similarity. In this sense, whom you ate with was more important that what you ate. Eating together is, for the Mapuche, the material expression of intimacy or of a common desire to establish it. The equality, reciprocity and trust of the relationships established among people in this manner were, in the past, signalled by specific institutionalised exchanges. Thus, the term *koncho* referred to the action of sharing food; the label *kachü* encompassed people sharing alcohol; and *misha* labelled a relationship created by eating from the same plate (Augusta 1934, 2007). In the same vein, Guevara recorded a proverb, *Korrü meu ta weni ngelu ta che*, which he approximately translates as "friendship is made through food" (1911:33).

To support my claim I will quote another example taking us back to the duality between persons' essences and relationality. Maria is a woman in her fifties, who lives with her husband, children, and grandchildren in a small house located near Calebu. Her grandchildren, a boy who is six and a girl who is three, came from two different relationships her eldest daughter had with two Winka men from outside Elicura. Neither of the fathers had legally recognised the children. However, it was widely known they are *champurriados*. Although Maria was reluctant to talk about this subject, I knew about it thanks to several rumours. After a while, Maria and I became friends, constructing a relationship based upon the sharing of our life experiences. Just then I decided to ask her about the intriguing subject she was reluctant to talk about. I was specifically trying to comprehend whether her grandchildren were Mapuche or Winka. Her response was categorical:

> They are Mapuche! They may have Winka dads, but they don't see them. They live here with us in the country, they are always with us... they also eat Mapuche food, good food, natural food... the ones we may collect at *mawida* (Mp. approx. "woods") and the ones we make at home...

Maria's answer encompasses the two senses I have discussed. On the one hand, it establishes the relevance of the continuity between personal substances and kinds of food in order to ascertain which kind of blood "leads" in a person. In this sense, it

asserts an objective essential coherence. But, more importantly, it also affirms how the Mapucheness of her grandchildren is based upon the fact that they live with Mapuche people. They have developed affective and intimate relationships within a Mapuche household. They have developed and nurtured a similarity.

I would like to close this discussion by proposing a final point. As mentioned before, relatedness creates different degrees of similarity, which depend upon the intensity of the relationship in question. In this sense, it is possible to be involuntarily related, and the generation of relatedness is not only based upon consciously created social relationships. Relatedness is simply produced by being involved in the same spheres of sociality as other persons, or by *dwelling* with them in a shared environment (cf. Ingold 2000:172-188). In this way, people who are not necessarily socially connected are nonetheless thought of as similar if they live near to one another. I can recall innumerable examples of instances in which this was pointed out to me. Indeed, as I put it previously, this is why the Winka people from Elicura were often considered "almost Mapuche". As Molina claimed more than two centuries ago, Mapuche people "name themselves as *peñi*, which means brothers. So they also call those born in the land of foreign parents" (1788:111). Furthermore, it was usually stated that people, no matter if they were Mapuche, *Champurriados*, or even Winka, were going to be "more Mapuche" if they lived in the "*campo*" (Sp. "countryside") than if they lived in a city. In fact, many of my friends even claimed that urban Mapuche people "are not really Mapuche" (cf. Briones 2007). Alongside this, some people upheld that because I was living in Elicura "I was becoming like one of them", while others thought I deserved to be referred to as *peñi* (Mp. "brother").

Mapuche consider social relationships, whether deliberate or involuntary, to increase the similitude between people and their perspectives. If their establishment is critical to the formation of persons, then the facets of the social relationship, its characteristics, its level of intensity and the emotions with which it is endowed (intimacy, affection, trust, and so on) are all key to how a person comes to be considered similar to or different from others. The management of intensities of relatedness is how people begin to be more alike or how they continue being different (Chapter 3). However, people maintain that this creation of similarity is

necessarily limited. Such a limitation is related to the affirmation of the singularity and autonomy of persons. As Course proposed, Mapuche life considers "the maintenance of a delicate balance, the careful judging of social relationships, a fulfilment of the need to enter into sociality enough to be a true person but not so much that one's self disappears in the process" (2011:161-2). In my experience, it would be difficult to find a claim people in Elicura would agree with more.

3. Conclusions

In this chapter I have attempted to show why the Mapuche perceive persons as unique entities, stressing the role sociality plays in the construction of their singularity. In my view, this uniqueness is critical to the way in which Mapuche people conceive sociality, a subject I will address thoroughly in the last two chapters of this thesis. For this reason, I would like to conclude what I have explored here by simply relating a relevant remark. Such a remark revolves around what the definition of what and how a person is in Elicura, and how this definition has two levels. On the one hand, it must consider the conception of personhood as a singular process of social engagement, along with the way in which this process is confronted from each unique personal perspective. On the other hand, it must also include the way persons are perceived from other personal standpoints. How they are experienced and located along each personal open-ended assessment of social distances. Together, both levels result in a social scenario characterised by a multiplicity of perspectives that are in tension with one another, but intertwined, pointing to an eternally contingent definition of persons. This contingency rests on, firstly, how truth for the Mapuche is always a personal affair (Chapter 1); and secondly, on the implicit equivalency Mapuche people trace between the self and what they personally understand as "being Mapuche". As discussed, in a sense, it rests on the fact *everybody is Mapuche to himself or herself.*

3.1. Mapuche Evaluation from a Singularity

In a recent ethnography, Stasch (2009) shows how Papuan Korowai people think of their "society" as founded upon otherness rather than upon similarity, seeing it as composed by large numbers of anonymous others. Such a depiction bears a huge resemblance to what I experienced during my own fieldwork. Indeed, and connected to the fact that conceiving personhood was a personal undertaking, my friends in Elicura perceived the world as inhabited by a huge plurality of singular unique persons.[73] Despite the fact that they recognised increasing similarities among people –and thus they saw a smaller gap between Patrikin than between Mapuche non-kin from Elicura, and at the same time smaller than between people of different blood who live in Elicura, and so on– all persons were thought of as unique singularities. This is fundamentally because they are conceived of as autonomous beings free to engage in social relationships beyond the ones they have as given by birth.

People engage in this "society of others" (Stasch 2009) being these singularities, which are equivalent to the ones they interact with. Each one of these singularities, however, has his or her own idea of what it is to be a proper person. This conception is always a personal affair, based upon one's own experience, and it usually corresponds to one's own conception of one's own moral behaviour. This is the sense in which I claim *everybody is Mapuche to himself or herself*. The evaluation one makes about other persons is founded each time upon these personal conceptions.

From what I propose, an obvious claim one may put forward regards how the ongoing evaluation of persons is actually an assessment of morality, which is actually, as we observed, one of the main concerns behind the Mapuche/Winka distinction (Cf. Londoño Sulkin 2005). This is also why the term "Winka" usually refers to one's self-related perception, and not necessarily to an essential composition. In this sense, every action or behaviour other people perform would be morally assessed and then located along the continuum formed by the distinction (Chapter 5). One of the radical ways in which people did this in Elicura was by

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[73] I have restricted my exploration to how *human* persons are classified. Although elsewhere Mapuche people talk about "other" social beings, not necessarily humans (cf. Bonelli nd; Course 2011), in the social life of Elicura these "other" social beings hardly appeared.

denying the status of person through the expression *chengelan* (Mp. approx. "does not act as a person"), which many of my friends uphold as a synonym for Winka. Course (2011) affirms that such personhood denial affects people who are not able to engage in productive sociality, drunks and babies being the most common examples. In Elicura, people infrequently denied the personhood of others. When doing so, they generally did not imply a literal sense of not being a person, but rather a moral one. It involved a radical criticism regarding moral behaviour, correctness, or the ability to engage in reciprocal exchange. Also, it was not a transcendental claim, but always a subjective one, based on particular personal experiences.

In this chapter I have tried to illustrate how personhood among the Mapuche is an individualised affair. It produces unique singularities interacting in social life. Substances, behaviour, actions, relationships and intensities are assessed from these different singularities, and this is what allows them to know how to act socially. Nevertheless, Mapuche people are always aware of the incompleteness and partiality of their own conceptions. They are aware of how they are just one self among myriads of others.

3.2. Personhood Seen from a Plurality

One might accurately depict the Mapuche Person as a mixture of a set of substances and an open-ended process of social engagement. Moreover, one could state that this process of social engagement, the centrifugality of Mapuche persons (Course 2007, 2011), is the dominant element leading to an overall idea of them as unique singularities. As Strathern (1988) has taught us by describing the Melanesian dividual, we should understand the Mapuche person not as a fixed category, whose inner elements are to be unfolded later, in social interaction, but, rather, the other way round. We must, then, go on depicting persons as composed of the social relationships they engage in, and by the ways in which these social relationships are perceived from other perspectives. A person can be described as a node, a standpoint, a position which allows to see and to be seen.

Nevertheless, such a depiction would only be partially correct. This is because it lacks the emphasis that Mapuche ontology puts on conceiving truth and knowledge as a personal affair, and how those personal affairs socially interact. Accordingly, it is not just about how persons are composed by a mixture of substances and social relationships. Neither is it simply about how these substances and social relationships are seen from different personal standpoints. In a radically different manner, it is about how the final form of what is defined is linked to the several different ways in which that is being constantly defined –substances, persons, actions, and all that is what it is because of the plurality of different experiences of them. They are, therefore, in a perpetual state of becoming (Latour 2005).

To properly understand how definition should work at social level I resort to two interrelated concepts proposed by Bakhtin (1981). The first one is *dialogism*, which deprives words of any fixity, thus emphasising their practical use. As such, they are better understood as interrelated nodes enriched by both consonances and dissonances generated by words' introduction into dialogues. The second is *heteroglossia*, the ontology in which dialogism stands as epistemology, which implies an understanding of elements according to their discernable relationships and interactions with others. Subsequently, because the conception of any particular substance, behaviour or even person is a personal task, when these conceptions come into sociality they get into a dynamic of dialogism characterised by a radical *heterogolossia*. Elements, then, can never be conclusively defined. Because they are subordinated to the primacy of each personal phenomenology, they are socially in a default open-ended state.

In my impression, Mapuche people confront the definition not only of persons but of everything, in a manner which resembles the way in which Deleuze and Guattari (1993) proposed philosophical concepts are not found but created, owing everything to their creators. But because there is an extreme plurality of others simultaneously performing the same acts of discovery, particular definitions are always affected by contextual multiplicity. Indeed, it is this plurality of perspectives that makes it impossible to perform a conclusive fixed definition, making them still more unfixed, difficult to grasp, and fluid. In simple terms, if each person is a word, and for this illustration we may even consider its essential elements to be in a

symmetric relation as signifier is to sign, then each definition of that word lies in the multiple voices enunciating it and in the multiple perspectives dialogically engaging in its apprehension. One may only be sure about what is truth to oneself, but not if that truth is extendable to others. One cannot know if his or her own truth is the same as another person's truth.

Persons are therefore subjected to perpetual redefinition because of how they are constantly substantially and dynamically perceived. At the same time, the way in which persons are defined modifies how persons define the forces defining them, and so on. Eventually we have a constant intertwined redefinition consubstantial to the way the world is conceived, which just finalises when the person dies, cutting the flux of definition, perspectives, and/or sociality (Course 2007). It is through this flux of perpetual redefinition that I see the relationship between truth and personhood, which I deem as essential to comprehending the Mapuche ontology. In the first chapter I devoted my efforts to showing how Mapuche people conceive of truth as a personal affair. Now we may better understand this by knowing how the Mapuche person is a unique singularity. But as if we were dealing with a self-fulfilling prophecy, the person could be comprehended as a unique singularity just because truth is a personal affair. And so on ad infinitum.

Having somehow cleared the ground, from now on I will explore how the comprehension of otherness is invariably crossed by the pass from being a singular person to the way those persons became part of an enclosed plurality, if any. We have already signalled how this can be accomplished though conviviality (Overing and Passes 2000). In the next chapter, I will attempt to show more explicitly how there were several Mapuche techniques for doing this, which are vividly shown by several historical sources. This exploration will support one of the main claims I want to put forward in this thesis. This regards how, for the Mapuche, it is impossible to conceive of a collective perspective as a point of convergence, but the collective is only accomplished so far as persons may share relational similarity, sharing (always to the extent they do not lose their precious autonomy and particularity) one singular perspective.

Part Two

To Share and to Differ

Chapter 3

Stressing Alterity / Reducing Distances:
Otherness and Similitude among Historical Mapuche

Many of my friends in Elicura declare it is impossible for a Winka to become Mapuche, in the same way a Mapuche can never fully turn out to be Winka. They accept that persons modify their substantial composition throughout life, and as a result they may become increasingly similar to their "others" (Chapter 2). This way, a Winka person may become *amapuchada* (Mapuche-like) by living in the countryside, sharing Mapuche lives, and so on. Likewise, a Mapuche person may become *awinkada* (Winka-like) by living in Winka cities, hanging out with Winka people, acting according to Winka morals, etcetera. However, it is widely asserted that deep in each person there is always an undeniable essence making a total transformation impossible. As seen previously, this essence is often referred to as *blood*, and many of my friends defend it as the last bastion of an ethnic Mapuche identity. As one of them once told me, "Winka people have snatched away everything we [Mapuche] had… our land, our culture… blood is the only thing we have left". Indeed, current references to the impossibility of accomplishing a total transformation from one kind of personhood to another (from Mapuche to Winka or vice versa) are strongly linked to a conception of blood (and thence bodies and race) as the last resort to ascertain ethnic boundaries (Barth 1969). This is the main reason why full transformation cannot be admitted: accepting it, in some people's view, would be equivalent to losing the last material expression of Mapucheness.

I suspect such an emphasis on ethnic differentiation was not present among Mapuche peoples from the past, or at least not in the same way it currently is. To my view, ethnic reasoning among the Mapuche is the result of an extended process of cognitive colonization pointing towards the imposition of a multicultural/mononatural ontology. I will mention just two of the many things that make me think this way. Firstly, I perceive an "ethnic absence" from the way many

of my eldest friends in Elicura, even today, depict what it means to be a Mapuche. They do not think about it in terms of cultural/ethnical identity, but simply as a way of being-in-the-world (Chapter 5). Secondly, I also infer this from how, in Elicura's daily-life, the Mapuche/Winka distinction seems to be much more concerned with tracing an ontological and moral division than with differentiating among different cultures or ethnic groups (Chapter 2).

In this chapter I will attempt to support this claim by addressing how several historical sources inform us about everyday self/other interactions among past Mapuche populations. In doing this, I will be drawing on what I have already stated about the necessary singularity of Mapuche personhood, experience and truth. Accordingly, I will be focusing on how people conceived alterity, and how they employed it to outline differences and to construct similitude. In this sense, I will also be exploring the ways Mapuche people disciplined and constructed similar bodies, which aimed to reduce ontological differences between different personal singularities.

It will not be my purpose here to reconstruct a history of Mapuche contact with the Spanish Crown and the Chilean State. In recent years there have been numerous approaches aiming to do that, covering a gap which existed for decades since Guevara's pioneer attempt (1902).[74] Instead, what I will intend here is simply to employ historical materials, attempting to extrapolate an ethnographic image from them. As such, I will be trying to grasp how Mapuche people understood and dealt with otherness, and how they comprehended sameness, from what the historical sources display.

The most pervasive feeling emerging from my study of the historical materials regards how the relationships between Mapuche and Spaniards/Chileans are presented using two contrasting images. On the one hand, they seem to be stigmatised by violence and warfare, showing the encounter of two positions without any possible points of commonality. On the other, they look peaceful and open, even wishing and encouraging the presence of the "other". I have decided to develop this

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[74] Among many others, we may consider works by Bengoa (1999, 2000, 2003, 2004), Boccara (1999, 2007), Dillehay (1990), Foerster (1996, 2004), Foerster and Montecino (1988), Leiva (1977), Mallon (2004), Mariman et al (2006), Pinto (2000), Villalobos (1992, 1995), Villalobos et al (1982), Villalobos and Pinto (1985), Zapater (1998), and Zavala (2008).

chapter following these two descriptions, which as we will see, could be grasped as part of one overall movement of understanding from a Mapuche perspective. Such a movement implies a technology of dealing with Otherness that can be stylistically termed as *cannibal* (Boccara 2007), which among the Mapuche necessarily acquires two senses equivalent to the images I have mentioned.

In the first part of this chapter I will be exploring what I call *literal cannibalism*, this is the past Mapuche consumption of selected human body parts as a technology aimed to dwell and/or introduce other non-own standpoints.[75] In doing so, I will be recalling the almost dogmatic hypothesis that explains Mapuche exocannibalism as a way of introducing the admired characteristics of other people (Campos Menchaca 1972b; Gunckel 1943; Latcham 1924; Montecino 2003; Zapater 1998). Furthermore, I will be exploring the ways sacrificial victims were selected, treated and consumed, and also the possible roles these sacrifices accomplished in the past.

In the second part I will explore what I call *metaphorical cannibalism*, which is fundamentally related to a general technology aimed to create similarity, although it also considered different ways of appropriating other standpoints without consuming human flesh. Here I will address how the utilisation of selected garments may be explained as accomplishing the same aim intended by literal cannibalism. Furthermore, I will explore how Mapuche people introduced people conceived as different in their own social milieu, attempting to obliterate this perceived difference by carefully disciplining their bodies. Such a possibility implied a transformation based upon a presumed *inessential* definition of persons as processes, and outlining the relevance of conviviality in their ongoing determination, as previously discussed. In my opinion, this conception allowed a process of *becoming Mapuche*, some sort of *Mapuchization* (cf. Boccara 2007) that currently, for many people and for many reasons, is no longer possible.

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[75] Literal cannibalism corresponds to what Fausto (2007) has termed as proper cannibalism, which implies the consumption of human flesh as an act of consuming an active part of the other.

1. Literal Cannibalism: Dealing with the Other in its Otherness

One of the most popular examples used to depict and explain sacrificial killings and anthropophagy among historical Mapuche populations regards the capture, assassination and corporeal treatment to which Pedro de Valdivia, the conqueror and first governor of the Kingdom of Chile, was allegedly victim. Occurring in 1553, the events are described in detail by several chroniclers, although none of them actually witnessed them. Consequently, the different narratives present a great variability, which I will attempt to summarise as follows.

In first place, Valdivia was captured after a Mapuche victory over the Spaniards in Tucapel, slightly north of the current town of Cañete. Once apprehended, he was brought to Caupolican, who the chronicles depict as the "Mapuche Governor". Next, there was a great disturbance among the Mapuche gathered in Valdivia's presence, some asking for him to be killed immediately, while others wanted his life spared. When allowed to speak, Valdivia pitifully asked for forgiveness. He went on to state that if they granted him life, he and his soldiers would abandon their lands and he would never come back to bother them (Carvallo y Goyeneche 1875; Mariño de Lobera 1865; Núñez de Pineda 2001; Vivar 1966). Subsequently, the most common version states that an Indian, seeing an inclination in Caupolican to forgive Valdivia, took the decision upon himself and approached Valdivia, giving him a huge blow to the head with his club, which left him immediately immobile (Carvallo y Goyeneche 1875; Ercilla 2006; Mariño de Lobera 1865; Ovalle 1969; Rosales 1989). Other versions maintain that before giving him the lethal strike, the Indians decided to submit him to a long martyrdom. According to this version, they would have lit a fire in front of him, and with knives made of shellfish, they would have slowly torn off pieces of Valdivia's arms, cooking and eating them in his own presence (Góngora Marmolejo 1862). One final version, reproduced thanks to second-hand narratives, maintains that Valdivia's death was caused because the Indians, wanting to punish his greed (cf. Hernández 2003), made

him eat crushed (Núñez de Pineda 2001), or melted gold[76] (Bartolomé de Escobar in Mariño de Lobera 1865; Ovalle 1969).

The references go on to describe the treatment Mapuche people gave to Valdivia's corpse. According to one of the most exhaustive historians of Conquer and Colonial times in Chile, the Jesuit Priest Diego de Rosales, after the general delight of having Valdivia dead, the Indians celebrated loudly…

> Then came one, and cutting him [Valdivia] from the throat to chest with a knife introduced his hand, and took out his still beating heart, and like it was, beating and gushing blood out, he showed it to everybody. And smearing with the blood the *toquis* [axes] and the arrows, he made very little pieces of it, that each of the *caciques* ate… and *all the partialities that touch a part of the dead put under oath to unify weapons, and to have one heart against the Spanish*. Then he ripped the head off and they made flutes with the shinbones, and putting the head over a pike they sang victory with it, spending a long time celebrating… (Rosales 1989:437-8, my emphasis)

This version, which is in agreement with other chroniclers' proposals, is also ubiquitous in Chilean imaginary, and is reproduced by educational curriculum and classical historical texts. In this context, it is explained that Mapuche people ate Valdivia's heart in order to absorb the qualities they perceived and admired in him (Montecino 2003; Pancorbo 2008). To support this argument, it is also pointed out that cannibalism was not an extended practice. Thus, just a few hearts were eaten, only the ones from the most outstanding enemies (Campos Menchaca 1972b).

During my fieldwork, I had the opportunity to speak about this specific topic with different people, who shared their own theories with me. All of them knew who Pedro de Valdivia was, depicting him often as Winkaness' quintessence, asserting he was blinded by his greed and that he was only willing to deceive the Mapuche in order to steal their lands. It was also widely agreed that because of this he found death in the hands of courageous Mapuche warriors. But just a minority claimed to know exactly how this occurred. Among these people it was possible to find several variations ranging from the shellfish martyrdom to the swallowing of melted gold, which were narrated in largely the same way they were put forward in the chronicles.

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[76] This is a salient Andean version of the assassination of the most notorious Spanish Conqueror, Francisco Pizarro. This was also one of the versions of Valdivia's that I gathered among people in Elicura.

Nevertheless, most people tended to deny any act of anthropophagy, discarding it as something alien to ancient Mapuche customs.

However, I occasionally came across statements that were in the direct opposition. In one instance, for example, a friend who had denied any consumption of human flesh among the Mapuche when I asked previously, told me the story of how women cut pieces of Pedro de Valdivia's body with *macha* (*mesodesma donacium*) shells, and ate those pieces in his presence. When I reminded him that he had told me that the Mapuche never ate human flesh, he stated that this was the only time this had occurred, and that it was caused by an unbearable anger. These women were full of rage, which had resulted in them acting like this, cutting and eating Valdivia while he was still alive. Likewise, in another occasion, it was late at night and we were gathered with a couple of friends watching television. By chance a TV show was screening the story of Pedro de Valdivia's death, stating that he was killed with a club and that later the Mapuche ate his heart to incorporate his good qualities. Then my friend unexpectedly told me "Do you know why the Mapuche ate his heart? Because it has always been said that when you fight you rapidly have to make your enemy bleed, and then you have to suck your enemy's blood in order to weaken him. That's why they did that with Pedro de Valdivia, to weaken the forces following him".

The classical hypothesis of cannibalism as incorporation is one of the most widely accepted, comprehending the rationality behind the practice (Pancorbo 2008; Sanday 1986). In many cases it has an undeniable pertinence and may still find ethnographic support. For example, among the Amazonian Ya'gua, who state men eat the hearts of the jaguars they kill in order to acquire their strength and courage (Fausto 2007). However, as seen above, it may find alternatives among the numerous and varying perceptions held by people. Cannibalism, can be explained as guttural actions ruled by anger. Furthermore, it may also have meaning as a warfare strategy, when eating part of the other appears as an action aimed to debilitate the entire enemy army.

In the following pages I will explore what other similar possibilities we can extract from the historical materials related to ritual sacrifice and cannibalism among the Mapuche. By doing this, I will attempt to address the way Mapuche populations

coped with otherness in the past, while also attempting to show how Mapuche *literal cannibalism* was embedded in a general dynamic of experiencing other points of view, and also of creating a sense of collectiveness by creating corporeal similarity. Simply put, it was a practice that aimed to bring together a group of different personal singularities so that they would eventually have just "one heart" (Rosales 1989:438).

1.1. Sacrificial Treatment

> …And eventually everybody was killing each other, to eat the killer the flesh of whom he had killed; this lasted for a few months with such a ferocity that caused both pity and horror… The Indians were so accustomed to eat human flesh that they even had butcher shops of it, and they bought pieces of men as if it was lamb. In many places the *caciques* had encaged Indians, and they were fattening them up to eat them… (Mariño de Lobera 1865:177)

Extracted from a 16th century chronicle, but corrected and edited years after by Bartolomé de Escobar, this paragraph depicts an extreme famine period and how it was solved through the supposedly widespread resort to a former ritual practice (also Góngora y Marmolejo 1862). However, this is the only chronicle where it is possible to find the incidence of such high levels of anthropophagy among the historical Mapuche, which suggests that it was rhetorically employed here to suggest barbarism (cf. Arens 1979; Brown and Tuzin 1983). Although we can doubt these levels of anthropophagy, because until today there is no archaeological evidence clearly suggesting human flesh consumption among past Mapuche populations,[77] it does appear in most chronicles circumscribed to ritual contexts (Cooper 1946:732), and it should be treated accordingly.

Taking the historical materials as a whole, it is possible to state that the Mapuche practiced ritual sacrifices (Gunckel 1946; Latcham 1924) that involved several patterns seen by the Spaniards as consubstantial to the primitive state in which they were. "Their savagery is almost irrational and it is like beasts ferocity,

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[77] Tom Dillehay, personal communication, September 2009.

exceeding them in the brutality of their customs" (Carvallo y Goveneche 1876:136). Dillehay (2007) points out that in the past, public feasts and political gatherings carried out by the Araucarians often involved human sacrifices. The victims to be sacrificed should fulfil one key requirement: they should not be part of the local group.[78] Beyond that, there were no further rules or racial priorities. As Rosales suggested, "[they] killed captives taken in warfare in cold blood, Spanish and Indians of their own blood alike" (1989:126).

Referring to victims, Rosales goes on stating that when they were going to be killed they were named as *Guequeche*, a term he translates as "man who is going to be killed as a lamb", explaining that they kill these men "in the same way they kill the lambs of the land" (Rosales 1989:126-7). It is worth noting that although a literal translation of *Guequeche* (*Wekeche*) can be "*weke*: a kind of American camelid;[79] *che*: people, person", another common translation people currently make of this term is "new people". This sense was probably also conveyed in the past, underlining the sacrificial victim's foreignness.

Properly talking about rituals, it is possible to visualise certain continuity between the sacrifice of animals (even contemporarily),[80] and past descriptions of human sacrifices. An example may be found in how most chronicles, and many secondary sources such as Guevara (1908) and Zapater (1998), affirm that sacrifices were carried out in the presence of an "assembly" of people gathered. Furthermore, that the victim was carried and placed under a tree, possible a *foye* (Mp. "cinnamon tree"). As noted by González de Nájera: "for these celebrations the Indians employ the tree of *canela* [Sp. "cinnamon"], on which they put the heads and tie the naked captives" (1889:56). This *foye* probably stood as a *rewe*, or the climbing poles *machi* (shamans) currently occupy to perform rituals and to communicate with *Wenu Mapu*, something like an "above world" in Mapuche cosmology (see Bacigalupo 2007; Dillehay 2007; Grebe et al 1972).

While everybody was asking for the victim's doom to be fulfilled, the victim had to bury several little pieces of wood, naming a person who preceded him in his

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[78] As happened elsewhere in South America (Fausto 2007; Sanday 1986) or among the Wari' in their intergroup vengeance dynamics (Conklin 2001).
[79] Named by the Spaniards as "lamb of the land".
[80] Diverse descriptions may be found in Coña (2002), Latcham (1924), and Rosales (1989).

destiny each time he buried one. According to Carvallo y Goyeneche (1876), this was only the case when the victim was Spanish, but if he was Indian he had to name the ones he had killed, in a similar way to what has been described in Amazonia for inter-group cycles of vengeance (Conklin 2001; Viveiros de Castro 1992). When burying the last one, the victim had to name himself, and the executioner approached his back, hitting him in his head (Molina 1788; Núñez de Pineda 2001; Rosales 1989). Carvallo y Goyeneche also mentions that executions were sometimes performed by four individuals who lifted the victim by running through him with their pikes, letting him down as he died in order to cut his head off, and later elevate the head on one pike. The sacrifice, called *pruloncon*[81] according to Molina (1788), was followed by extracting the victim's heart and cutting his head off, if this was not done before.

Rosales (1989) states that the victim's chest was opened, and the still beating heart was extracted, meanwhile others were occupied with cutting off the head and legs, discarding the rest of the body which was thrown out of the area where the meeting was taking place, and served as food for dogs and birds. Then, the one who extracted the heart passed it to somebody, and it began to circle among those present, who acted as if they were intending to eat it. This is also pointed out by Molina (1788), when saying that the extracted beating heart was presented to the "General", who sucked a little of its blood and then handed it to his "Officials" to do hand by hand the same ceremony. While the heart was circulating, the "General" threw the smoke he obtained from a pipe in the four cardinal directions. The head was cut off and placed on a pike, and the bones were also extracted, and employed to make flutes whose music added to the ambience of the ceremony.[82] Everything finished when a lamb's head was placed on the corpse instead of its original head, while the skull was kept to form a receptacle called "*ralilonco*" (approx. "head receptacle"),[83] which was used on important occasions.

Núñez de Pineda (2001), who lived several months captive among the Mapuche in the 16th century, narrates an extremely similar version of the sacrifice.

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[81] Presumably from *purrun*: "dance, to dance", and *lonko*: "head". Perhaps approximately something like "head dance", "head ceremony".
[82] This was similarly performed by different Amazonian groups (see Fausto 2007).
[83] According to Augusta (2007), *rali* is a wooden plate used for eating. *Lonco* (*lonko*) means "head".

However, his account adds the fact that after the heart's circulation, it came back to the first one who had sucked its blood, who proceeded to cut the heart into pieces and to distribute them among those present. According to Carvallo y Goyeneche (1876), the heart's blood was sucked by the most prominent people, who also drenched their pikes with it. Then the heart was divided into four pieces to wet the rest of the attendee's pikes. At the same time, the accustomed body dismemberment and decapitation was performed. Interestingly, writing centuries after the first sources, Carvallo y Goyeneche states that the process of killing the victim was almost the same as before, placing a white lamb instead of the victim's head if the sacrificed was Spanish, and a black lamb if the sacrificed was an Indian. They cut off the lamb's head and placed it on the beheaded body, which was by then almost completely destroyed, and left it for the birds to feed on (cf. Ovalle 1969).

It may be observed that one of the central aspects of the sacrifice seems to be the extraction and sharing of the victim's heart, a topic also present in some "mythical" accounts (see Koessler-ilg 2007). This, from a Spanish viewpoint, seemed to be the climax of alliance establishment, even serving to fix political unities (Rosales 1989; also Boccara 2007). Indeed, as it can be extracted from chronicles, in functional terms ritual anthropophagy among the ancient Mapuche seems to be much more linked to social bonding and alliance institutionalization than to otherness attraction. What seems to be implied by ritual sacrifices is the relevance of being part of a communal entity, to unify diverse wills under common concerns. This is also noted by the fact that they looked for victims beyond the boundaries of the local group. As noted among different Amazonian peoples, cannibalism traces a distinction of affinity (Vilaça 1992; Conklin 2001; Viveiros de Castro 1992), but simultaneously a consanguineal community. I will deal with these issues below. At the moment, what seems absolutely clear is that human sacrifice was not based upon what we can now term as "ethnical considerations", as its victims were Winka and Mapuche alike. I will now attempt to prove this superficial impression.

1.2. Sacrifice and Selection

According to the sources, ancient Mapuche did not make a great distinction in the means they employed to select and to sacrifice their victims, once they fulfilled the fundamental criteria of having a foreign victim, not a member of the local group. This apparent lack of selectivity, however, does not necessarily convey that they were not interested in the differences they might perceive in different human beings/bodies. Thus, for example, it is observed that Indians perceived the flutes they made with Spanish bones as having a "clearer voice" than others (Mariño de Lobera 1865:322), and that the first time they saw "Black people" with the Spaniards, they "believed" that the Spanish extracted gunpowder from their bodies: "taking one of them they scraped him from head to feet, and then with fire they made coal from his body to see if with it, reduced to little pieces, they could find the desired secret" (Molina 1788:72).

Regarding sacrifices, if we observe what happened when the victim was Spanish, it was approximately the same as when the victim was a "fellow Indian". Although some Chilean scholars have stated that Mapuche populations performed Spanish sacrifices as a reaction to the abuses they suffered as part of the general Colonial process (i.e. Bengoa 2003, Guevara 1908), that argument seems to have two problems. Firstly, as already stated, that human sacrifice did not seem to have been racially selective. Secondly, that argument seems to be much more of a justification of past Mapuche actions, framed in an empathetic claim characteristic of a Multiculturalist ontology ("every culture would do the same [equivalently], subdued to similar situations"), rather than an explanation considering a proper Mapuche ontology. In spite of the fact that it is possible to find chroniclers opinions fitting perfectly with this revenge argument, they obviously should be understood as written in a warfare context and from a partial view of the incidents.

Something that is worth noticing, however, is the apparent preference for prominent Spaniards. Rosales (1989) points out that many times these important heads, after having being cut off and used to celebrate, were also sent to other groups, obligating them to behead a similar one in order to return the gift. In this way, for instance after Governor Oñez de Loyola's death in 1598, his head and the

ones of other Captains were "taken as trophies, to celebrate with them, and to distribute them among the rest of the Provinces in order to raise the ones which were still peaceful, and they all took their weapons, to finish the Spanish and to restore their home country and freedom" (Rosales 1989:686). Interestingly, Winka sacrifices continued until the 19th century, when in the context of the last general rise against outsider invasion, in 1881, some leaders captured Chilean spies, and

> …They were happy saying, "we have captured the bulls (victims), today we will celebrate nguillatúnn" [Mapuche major ritual]. According to what is told, these Chileans were tied and they extracted their hearts while still alive… (Coña 2002:291-2).

Turning to the sacrifice of those whom chroniclers perceived "racially" or "culturally" as "Indians", it is difficult to find major differences. González de Nájera (1889), renowned for his proposal of total extermination to finish warfare, states that anthropophagy was a widespread custom among the native populations, and applied to any foreign Indian who had the foolish idea to pass through somebody else's lands (cf. Guevara 1908). Perhaps this and Mariño de Lobera's chronicle are the ones Gunckel employed in his study of Araucarian anthropophagy, to state that during a big famine "indigenous peoples forming little groups went to carry out what were true hunting sessions of their own countrymen, capturing and then eating them" (1946:65).

According to Rosales (1989), and now circumscribed to rituals, it was accustomed to buy Indians "from their same race" when they did not have a victim to sacrifice in their celebrations. This "Mapuche-sacrifice" also finds support in the treatment that "friend Indians", the name given to Indians who were on the Spanish side during Colonial times, conferred to the captured belligerent Indians. As stated, for example in a letter quoted by Alonso de Ovalle:

> In a *maloca* [raid] the Spanish caught a very bellicose Indian who was also a famous captain. Then the friends [Indians on the Spanish side] asked for him to drink the Indian's blood and perform their ceremonies on him, lifting him with pikes… He was surrounded by Indians and thrusting their pikes into him he was lifted, and extracting his beating heart they passed their arrows through it, and the leaders ate it bit by bit, and stripping the body from its

> bones and head, they distributed them among the principals to swirl their cider with them… lifting the head on a pike… (1969:395-6)

Poepping observes a similar case in 1828, when a party succeeded in capturing a hated Southern "cacique". His sacrifice was carried out in the usual way, making him recite the names of the people who had fallen because of him. "When the last piece of stick fell, and with it the last and more important among all the names, a hundred throats together sang an awful shouting and twenty spears perforated the prisoner, who after being elevated fell down dead" (Poepping quoted by Gunckel 1943:58-9). The last human sacrifice that has been recorded among the Mapuche took place in the surrounding areas of Puerto Saavedra in 1960, after a huge, devastating earthquake. An abandoned small child was sacrificed in order to "calm down deities" and to bring an end to the destruction (Dillehay 2007; Tierney 1989). In this case, though, anthropophagy did not take place.

Another interesting point regards how different body parts were treated during sacrifices. As seen above, although hearts and/or blood seem to have been the central focus, the chronicles also show the utilization of some bones and heads. Particular attention was paid to legs, where they extracted the shinbones that they turned into flutes. Ovalle (1969) mentions that these flutes were made from animal bones, not human ones, but most chronicles state the opposite.

> Finally, each squad came back on their own, staying some Indians dead and one Spaniard among them, whose shinbones they extracted afterwards to make flutes they use to play in battles… (Mariño de Lobera 1865:354)

> They are not fond of pleasure instruments, but of warfare, ill-fated and treacherous, which are croaky drums and cornets made with Spanish shinbones and from other Indians, their enemies… (González de Nájera 1889:265)

Yet if there was something as important as hearts, it was heads. They were employed commonly as a sign of victory, being inserted on a pike as soon as the sacrificial victim or enemy was dead. After its initial display, the head was very likely to be transformed in a *ralilonko*, a "head receptacle" commonly employed to drink during important reunions (Campos Menchaca 1972b; Guevara 1908; Gunckel 1946; Mariño de Lobera 1865; Molina 1788; Núñez de Pineda 2001). According to

Rosales, among others, just the *caciques* and other eminent people could drink from the "head-trophy", which were then kept, becoming symbols of their victories, and being subject to a primogeniture inheritance scheme.

> And the head is cooked and it is detached from flesh and brain, and then the most principal *caciques* drink from it. Sometimes they are so inhuman and carnivorous that they drink from the skull before extracting its flesh and cooking the brain, being proud of this barbarism (Rosales 1989:129)

Having described some practices linked to ritual sacrifice, I will proceed to the discussion I would like to set up here, which has a twofold objective. First, to observe what people intended via cannibalism; and secondly, to uphold that Mapuche cannibalism should be understood as a practice immersed in a specific ontology alien to any cultural/ethnical reasoning.

1.3. Winka Criticism of Cannibal Reason

As previously noted, the most common hypothesis used to comprehend Mapuche cannibalism states that it was a mechanism to incorporate a series of qualities that, being recognised in the "Other", were admired and desired. Seen this way, cannibalism appears to be a metaphor for a performative metonym: the Indians consumed selected human body parts –especially hearts– because they "believed" that by doing this they were acquiring desired qualities they saw in the Other. Likewise, they "gave" blood to their weapons to *animically* accomplish the same.

Although in partial agreement with this general hypothesis, I think it fails to explain the way cannibalism was linked to ritual cycles. Indeed, it does not consider sacrifices' social aims and results. Additionally, I think this classical view is more concerned with making sense of cannibalism from a multiculturalist ontology, than with attempting to comprehend it from a Mapuche angle (where cannibalism and ritual sacrifice have not necessarily the same value judgments attached). Thus, to see cannibalism as absorption tries to struggle against the position for which anthropophagy stands as a proof of being,

…People who do not deserve to be called rational, because they are strange to any virtue, sorcerers, superstitious, ominous, without justice, without reason, without consciousness and without any mercy, more than cruel beasts… this is because they do not have to serve other than their stomachs (González de Nájera 1889:45)

This premise has also been used to explain cannibalism on a wider scale, competing with other alternatives including the consideration of cannibalism as the act of highest humiliation that an enemy may suffer in certain cultures, or the materialist proposals situating cannibalism as a practice related to resources maximization (see Pancorbo 2008 and Sanday 1986). An alternative to these explanations has recently emerged from Amazonian ethnography, which could be considered as a variant of cannibalism as absorption but resting on the assumption of a perspectival ontology. Briefly, here cannibalism enters into a dynamic interplay of perspectives, where the enemy's perspective is incorporated through the consumption of the bodily substance (Viveiros de Castro 1992).

Regarding Mapuche studies, Guillaume Boccara has somewhat adopted this perspective, understanding cannibalism as a metaphor for the kind of interaction indigenous populations established with Otherness. Following Viveiros de Castro, he states Mapuche society was a whole oriented towards the exterior rather than the interior, that it was an entity concerned with otherness attraction rather than with self-ascertaining. "Relational affinity, and not substantial identity, was the value to be reaffirmed" (Viveiros de Castro 2002b:207). This tendency is summed up by labelling this society as "cannibal". This way, the Mapuche would have included everything that was alien, reconceptualising it, and "then reducing it to a 'We' in perpetual redefinition" (Boccara 2007:187).

In my view, this sense of redefinition is critical to understanding historical and current Mapuche sociality. It is a permanent state of *becoming*, a process which does not lead anywhere else different than to the process itself. Here I distance myself from Boccara's approach, which claims that the cannibal process led to a Mapuche ethnogenesis.[84] In my opinion, the employment of a different societal orientation does not imply a different way of accomplishing the same: that is, another

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[84] A similar criticism has been put forward by Menard (2007) and Pavez (2008).

variation for same end, or cannibal sociality for ethnic consolidation.[85] In a sense, the "We" is not always being redefined, but by its own constitution it cannot be defined at all. Any attempt to define would be an inaccurate abstraction of a partial and fleeting picture of it.

One easy example to clarify the difference between assuming cannibalism as mere absorption versus its perspectival variation could be stated regarding the inclusion of Spanish goods into the Mapuche "society". Within Mapuche studies this has been traditionally understood as simple acculturation: intergroup dynamic contact supposedly implied the transformation of one culture into the other (i.e. Villalobos 1992, 1995). The argument provided by Boccara allows us to comprehend this dynamic upside-down (cf. Zavala 2008). Nevertheless, this reconceptualization probably was not necessary, simply because foreign goods inclusion did not imply any alteration in the native community (e.g. Gow 1991; Oakdale 2008). Such an inclusion probably did not stand as something meaningful to think *self* and *other* from a native perspective. It is likely that the indigenous populations were not worried about whether or not their ontological status was going to be affected by this dynamic. Any questioning about this had no sense for them.

Another interesting point Boccara mentions regards how, in the Mapuche case, the idea of cannibalism as attraction of otherness "is confirmed by the fact that if a long term captive is not consumed, it is because he has already suffered a process of *recheizacion* [to become Mapuche], which makes his consumption impossible" (Boccara 2007:188). Contrary to what happened in some Amazonian cases, where the enemy was subdued through a process of conviviality to ascertain his personhood (e.g. Viveiros de Castro 2002b), in the Mapuche case, a victim's suitability was assessed according to his foreignness. For example, if Tupinamba peoples carefully ascertained their captives' personhood through conviviality before sacrificing and eating them, the Mapuche opted by dismissing the sacrifice once conviviality was established.[86] As Boccara noted, in the Mapuche case, what sacrificial performance seemed to be underlining was not the fact they were similar to the local group and

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[85] This seems to be a replication of the theoretical argument between Descola and Viveiros de Castro (see Latour 2009). What Boccara suggests, like Descola, is a unified reality and different ways of approaching it (Descola 1994). What Viveiros de Castro puts forward, conversely, is that reality is always dependent on the perspective (Viveiros de Castro 1998).

[86] Personhood was not at stake, but kinds of personhood and social distances (see Chapter 2).

therefore worth sacrificing, but actually that they were *different*. Regarding all captives, for the Mapuche it appears to be the case that they were actually scapegoats (Girard 1977), individuals without connections within the entity performing the sacrifice.

With this in mind, I believe that Mapuche cannibalism may be comprehended as a process that, without implying a final transformation but staying in a perpetual becoming, involved a twofold dynamic. Firstly, one related to ascertaining a sense of collectiveness by partaking in the commensal ritual. Such participation might be linked to the creation of similarity in order to share a perspective on the world (Chapter 1). Secondly, one related to a conception of personal selves characterised by their instability. In my view, eating selected body parts may be connected to the way Mapuche people also changed their dress in order to acquire different standpoints. "They painted their faces and adorned themselves with bird's feathers or animal's tails, to acquire their properties through magical contact" (Guevara 1911:172; also Góngora y Marmolejo 1862; González de Nájera 1889; Mariño de Lobera 1865; Vivar 1966). Literal cannibalism, therefore, could be overall understood as a manifestation of a broader technology aimed to trace differences and to ascertaining similitude by dwelling other perspectives.

1.4. A Mapuche Sociality of Predation

Following Fausto's recent distinction (2007), it is easy to deduce that Mapuche human flesh consumption was actually very far from *anthropophagy* (eating human flesh objectified), but extremely close to *cannibalism* (consuming an active part of the other). According to the chronicles, it appears to be embedded in a dynamic of devouring agency, where consumed body parts conveyed victims' personal characteristic, being never deprived of them. Considering this, I will now begin to explore how Mapuche cannibalism may be likewise understood along the lines Fausto himself proposes for creating people and sociality in Amazonia. On the one hand, in this section I will address how Mapuche cannibalism could be

comprehended as embedded in a *sociality of predation* (i.e. Århem 1996; also Lagrou 2002; Vilaça 2000; Viveiros de Castro 1998). On the other, in this chapter's second half, I will be reviewing how cannibalism was consciously employed, as a *commensal* performance, in the creation of similarity and thus of a collectiveness of shared singularities.

As previously discussed, Mapuche people seem to keep among their most important concerns the way they are seen and how they see others.[87] Such a concern seems to go beyond any matter of social impressions. Having examined how Mapuche persons are defined (Chapter 2), I retain the impression that "seen" is problematic because it can produce asymmetric connections. Daily life among the Mapuche appears to be an open-ended struggle to ascertain the symmetry of social relationships. This is connected, in a particular way, to what Amazonian ethnography calls as *sociality of predation*, which considers persons as,

> An amalgamation of activity and passivity… someone who contains two possible perspectives in a relation of predation… This double potency is internal to the person and constitutive of the person's specific condition: a person is thus an amalgam of predator and prey (Fausto 2007:513).

Accordingly, Mapuche persons seem to be in a constant struggle to not assume the preys' point of view, but the predators', both always being possible. I strongly believe this scheme provides a very accurate depiction of general Mapuche social life. I will try to stress this claim with an encounter a friend told me about during my fieldwork.

During the beginning of winter 2010, I was talking with Ricardo, who lives close to San Ernesto, the Winka village where Elicura valley ends and Nahuelbuta mountain range begins. He began to share something that was worrying him; people were warning each other about the presence of a lioness[88] with two cubs prowling in the forest. That constituted a problem because often when lions are around they come down from the hills to the Valley's floor, killing people's animals.

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[87] An insightful approach to the ontological importance of seeing and being seen among the Mapuche is developed by Bonelli (nd).
[88] Colloquial name used in Southern Chile to refer Andean puma.

Ricardo went on claiming "a few years ago I lost almost ten sheep because of her [lioness]". He then had to find a solution; otherwise the lioness would kill all the animals he had left. Thus, he decided to go up to the hills in order to confront the lioness and hunt her. That was an extremely hard decision though, as he confessed that, since early childhood he had a terrible fear of lions and what they could do. But, as he now affirms, "I had no other choice… I had to do something about it".

Fearfully wandering in the forest, after a few hours looking, he finally encountered her. To my surprise, however, although he continually stressed how much lions scared him, he claimed that in that very moment all his fears were dissipated. In his words, "I saw her [lioness] but I wasn't afraid. When I was a kid I was told about the lions and they scared me a lot… but this time, when I saw her, I wasn't afraid because I saw her first. Perhaps if she would have seen me first I would be scared, but as I saw her first I wasn't". He kept telling me about this experience, and after a while I asked him what the puma was called in Chedungun. Once again to my surprise, he told me something that did not match with what I had bibliographically learnt before. He simply answered "[fu]*cha lamuen*" (Mp. approx. "big sibling").

Following this, and because I was interested in cannibalism, I asked him if this "*cha lamuen*" could be eaten. Ricardo replied, "obviously! Puma meat is even better than pork". We then talked about how different kinds of meats were all edible, and how there were different people known for being addicted to cat or dog meat. He went further, telling me stories he knew about an event that supposedly occurred in Huape, a close coastal area. There, a foreign Winka was doing business and a group of local people, Winka and Mapuche alike, killed and ate him. He told me that he was informed that human flesh explodes when it is on the fire. He said that was because "human flesh is too salty". He knew that because "human blood is salty, so is the flesh". When he concluded his anecdote I asked him what his opinion of the event was. He awkwardly concluded, "well, some things happen because of alcohol… but in the end all people have the right to have their own customs…"

In my view, this narrative expresses at least two things worth noting regarding the discussion we are involved in. Firstly, as debated throughout this thesis, Mapuche people always seem to keep an extremely respectful attitude towards

other people's customs, no matter what those customs are. Secondly, and most importantly, that lioness' "power", that scared my friend, lay in the possibility that she had to relationally situate her perspective in the predator's position, leaving my friend in the position of the prey.[89] In the story, that "power" was related to *being the first one to see the other*. Indeed, as Ricardo explained, it was because he saw the puma first that he was not afraid. It was because he was not in the position of the prey, of being observed, but in the position of the predator, observing the other first, imposing his perspective.

Historical materials also display these predation dynamics, although perhaps not as explicitly stated. An example may be found in Pascual Coña's biography, recorded and translated by the Missionary Wilhelm de Moesbach. There he states some *caciques*,

> …Sometimes had captives, people that they take in *malones* [raids]. They used to trade them for animals. The buyer then said: "I have a slave" [Mp. "*nillanche nien*"], but they called captive women *chinas* (2002:139).

This slavery reference seems extremely odd when confronted to the common egalitarian image historically projected by Mapuche people (cf. Melville 1976). Being knowledgeable of Mapuche social life, Moesbach was probably aware of that. Why, then, does he proposes the translation "I have a slave" for the original phrase "*nillanche nien*"?

Perhaps the most accurate way of translating *nillanche* would be "in-law". The relationship the term *nillan* depicts, contrary to what Moesbach suggests, is the quintessence of social symmetry (Course 2005, 2011). This increases the paradox. *Nillan* and slave not only are not synonyms, but they are actually antonyms. But what about *nien*? Does it simply mean "to have"?

In my view, there is a clear connection between the term *nien*, usually translated as "to have", and the term *ngen*, commonly translated as "owner" or "master", "preceding the names of things or people" (Augusta 2007:55). Indeed, within Mapuche communities one usually hears expressions such as *ngen ruka* (Mp. approx. "House owner") or *ngen kure* (Mp. approx. "wife's owner"), which are

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[89] That is perhaps why the puma is a "big sibling", able to impose his/her perspective over the ones of his/her "little" kin.

referring to particular persons through relationships of "ownership", of "having". However, anthropologists have commonly depicted *ngen* as simply protector spirits extended all over the landscape, such as *ngenko* (Mp. approx "water master"), or *ngen mawida* (Mp. approx. "forest master"). Accordingly, *ngen* phenomenon has often been treated as a Mapuche animistic feature (e.g. Foerster 1993; Grebe 1993).

Despite this, following Bonelli's (nd) ongoing reflection, I think the term *ngen* must be understood in terms of predation, as a perspectival imposition. As such, it is probably related to the Mapuche term for eye, *nge*. Hence, *ngen* could be better translated as "the one who sees", "the one who watches over". Therefore, one could be a master, owner, to have something (all meanings attached to the Chedungun particles *nge-* and *nie-*), because one imposes his/her own perspective on that something. "To have", then, would be to be in the predator's position. That is what Coña means when saying "*nillanche nien*", and that is what Moesbach attempts to depict through slavery. The only way to turn a symmetric relationship asymmetric is by moving one's perspective to the position of predator, and the one from my *nillanche* to the position of prey.

A similar situation may be found with another kinship metaphor, but in a more literal sense. Interestingly, there is a Chedungun term, *wekuve*, very often translated as "evil" and "devil". If we deconstruct it, we have the suffix *ve* (also *fe*), which denotes the execution of a determined action; and *weku*, MB within Mapuche matrilateral alliance structure, and a deictic usually employed to depict an asymmetrical relationship par excellence (Faron 1956, 1961b). Hence, simply put, *wekuve* would be to execute the actions of MB, of being "father-in-law", or more specifically, "executing the action of putting me in debt". By moving this to perspectival terms, things may become clearer. Mapuche people usually claim *wekuve* cannot be seen, and every time one has the opportunity to catch him, he escapes. *Wekuve*, beyond any moral depiction of it made through mistranslations, is the predator's perspective by antonomasia. He always "looks at you first" and he does not allow himself to be seen (cf. Bonelli nd).

1.5. Cannibalism as a Way of Dwelling Other Perspectives

If, as I propose, Mapuche people were as aware of being immersed in such perspectival multiplicity, it would be perfectly expectable that they felt curiosity towards experiencing how other perspectives observed. In this way, personal singularities did not necessarily stay circumscribed to ascertaining their own perspectival priority over others, but probably also sought the possibility of employing certain materials attempting at least momentary visits to other viewpoints. This was most likely what was intended, as seen before, by using animal skins or bird feathers. Furthermore, as chroniclers observed,

> …These barbarians used to wear masks made with the dry and moulded skin of Spanish people, esteeming highly the ones with moustache and beard… Some have gloves made of dry and hard Spanish hand skin, tied by the wrist with a stick, sounding within some stones that make their rhythm according to their dance… (González de Nájera 1889:56)

Past utilization of these masks resembles current use of wooden masks representing Winka people, called *kollong* towards the South of Arauco, or simply *Payasos* (Sp. Clowns) in Elicura and other areas within the Province.[90] Nowadays, these masks are employed symbolically, but in the past they could have been used literally. In my impression, it is very likely that they were not Winka representations but transitory incarnations. What I want to propose here is that, through the employment of selected materials, Mapuche people considered that they could actually experience other perspectives. As such, what I call literal cannibalism could be better understood as a manifestation of an overall technology focused on dwelling other points of view. This proposal finds ethnographical support, for example, in how, according to Guevara (1911), the Mapuche shamanic role embodied the ability to inhabit different viewpoints, an issue also outlined by Bacigalupo (2007). Similarly, Course (2009) has explored how singing among the Mapuche is fundamentally about inhabiting other people's experiences (cf. Oakdale 2002). In order to historically explore how this was cannibalistically accomplished, I will proceed to highlight how people

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[90] A full discussion on Mapuche *kollong* may be found in Course (nd2).

probably saw, beyond what is evident, the body parts they selected for ritual consumption.

In the first place, we have already seen how hearts (Mp. *piuke*) had a key place in sacrificial rituals. Interestingly, this was perhaps because those, for the Mapuche, seemed to have been linked to personal intentions, referred to by the term *duam* (Augusta 2007). Jesuit missionary Febrés recorded two Mapuche proverbs supporting this position: *kalku ngelu nie ta epu piuke feimeu newenngekei*, which he approximately translates as "don't be an undetermined man, of two hearts";[91] and *elu gañi duam* or *elu gañi piuque* (*piuke*), which he translates as "I already decide" "I already determine" ("I already took my heart") (1765:97). If we took this seriously, in addition to how hearts were the focus of attention in different ritual assassinations, it is possible to propose that by eating hearts, what was sought was related to acquiring those peoples' intentions. In a sense they were attempting to seize how they "thought", or their ways of perceiving.

A second widely employed element was blood (Mp. *mollvün*), which is even now a very important offering within the biggest Mapuche fertility ritual, *nguillatun* (see Dillehay 2007). Blood is frequently perceived to relate to vitality, and that is probably why in the past warriors fed their pikes with it, and in the present it is often given to the land during *nguillatun*. This clearly and apologetically appears in a narrative collected during the first half of the 20th century: "even though my heart always loved you [Land], many times I deprived you of the warm blood or the sacrifices of defeated enemies…" (Koessler-Ilg 2007 I:51). Recalling this chapter's previous discussion, this may also be supported by how my friend explained blood consumption in the case of Pedro de Valdivia, as linked to weakening the entire Spanish army.[92]

Another relevant human body part was the head. We know, for example, that "they made skull-cups to drink, painted of several colours, having them in great glory, especially if the head was from a famous Spaniard" (González de Nájera

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[91] This proverb means: "witches are powerful because they have two hearts", according to Guevara's translation (1911:80).

[92] Anyway, blood excess was apparently seen as not desirable, as noted by Rosales: "To the young people, to be agile, and to go with promptness to their commissions, they cut open their legs and their feet. And the Indians when they go to warfare cut open their legs and their knees, with stone lancets, because they say that blood makes them heavy, and that the salt they have eaten has going down to their knees and their legs" (1989:122)

1889:56). We have also seen how many times they cut off enemies' heads, posting them on spikes looking northwards, towards Winka land. If *ralilonkos* (skull-cups) could be considered to be prestigious goods, the act of placing beheaded heads in this way is perhaps telling us something regarding the conception of heads. In my impression, as intention was almost certainly located in the heart, what Mapuche people probably located in heads was perspective, in a very literal sense. This is closely related to the previous discussion I made regarding the link between the concept of *ngen* and what "to see" implies within a sociality of predation.

In the first part of this chapter, we saw how Mapuche cannibalism victims were people from outside the local convivial unit. We discussed how this predicament did not imply any further consideration, such as ethnicity, race, and other categories alien to past Mapuche practices. What, to our eyes, are different Winka and Mapuche individuals were both equally sacrificed.

By suggesting this I am not stating that Mapuche people did not distinguish between "other" Winka and "other" Mapuche, which is obviously not the case. Instead, I am simply proposing that the otherness of sacrificial victims, what made them worth sacrificing, was not assessed in ethnical or racial terms, but according to social distance. This is related to why, different to what happened elsewhere in indigenous South America, Mapuche people were not worried about ascertaining their captives' humanity through conviviality in order to see if they really were worth sacrificing. For the Mapuche, their victim's humanity was never at stake. What seemed interesting to them were exactly the different perspectives these victims, as humans, could afford them. If victims penetrated the realm of conviviality, as we will see in the following section, they would lose this desired otherness. By constructing relatedness they would have become increasingly similar to the local group, and accordingly they would have become less and less suitable as sacrificial victims. I previously mentioned how the sacrificial stage and cannibalism generated a collective through sharing the consumption and by the act of consumption itself. Having discussed this last dimension, I will now turn to the first. Here we will deal with how Otherness was always given, and similarity had to be and could be created, as will be evident in what I call the process of *Mapuchization*.

2. Metaphorical Cannibalism: Dealing with the Other as a Mapuche-to-be

In the first part of this chapter we saw how and why cannibal performances among the Mapuche were concerned with highlighting differences. In this section we will explore the opposite side of the coin: how Mapuche people dealt with "foreign" people when differences could no longer be asserted. In my opinion, in the past, unlike what happens today, it was admissible a process we can call *Mapuchization*. Through this process, based upon conviviality, persons who were not similar to the local group could begin to become so. In my view, such a process is contemporarily seen as impossible because of the imposition of a foreign framework to think about Mapucheness as an "ethnic identity" (cf. Ingold 1993, 2000), which is founded upon a multiculturalist ontology (see Chapters 5 and 6).

Considering this, in this section I will address how past Mapuche populations dealt with Otherness –Spaniards and/or strangers in general– beyond sacrifice. I will explore how they and their materiality were successfully included within Mapuche collectives, which were constructed through an idea of similarity founded upon familiarity. First, I will look at how this generally happened, through what anthropologists classically have seen in terms of acculturation. Later, I will visualise the ways Mapuche people dealt with other bodies, and how they were included within these collectives.

2.1. Mapuche / Winka Historical Relations

According to the available materials, the ancient Mapuche seem to have adopted what could superficially be considered as a dual attitude towards Spaniards upon their arrival and later. Firstly, they were seen as ferocious and greedy conquerors that only wanted what the Mapuche had. It is worth noting that the expression used many

times to refer to Spaniards was Winka. This expression derived from *pu inka*, "the Inka", the first empire which attempted to conquer Araucarians (Febrés 1765).[93] This view of the Spanish reflects a process of conquest, implying capturing and selling indigenous peoples as slaves, or cruel customs such as punishing them by cutting off their ears and noses (Núñez de Pineda 2001).

On the other hand, there were also many Winka aspects that proved to be extremely interesting for the native populations. The Mapuche attitude towards Winka, then, was not one of complete rejection, a total ethnocentric confinement, but as Boccara (2007) noted, one of opening to the other. This could even be grasped currently, through the popular perception that Mapuche people have been civilised thanks to Winka presence. As a friend used to tell me "we would still be savages [if Winka people had never arrived]". Or as Coña affirms in his biography, one should be thankful for having had the opportunity to know the church and its teachings, because if not one "would have lived as the Mapuche from the past" (2002:56).

This double attitude could be observed in different spheres upon Winka arrival and during later contact. For instance, regarding Evangelization, missionaries were rejected because "they are not evil, but they are of ill-omen, behind them the Winka come" (Guevara and Mañkelef 2002:88); yet they were also desired for baptism and its supposedly magical properties[94] (Foerster 1993, 1996; cf. Leiva 1977). Being confused by this, Spaniards tended to characterise indigenous attitudes as "inconstant" (cf. Viveiros de Castro 2002b):

> …These naturals have always been disloyal, having little faith and no stability in their words and proposals… (Núñez de Pineda 2001:80).

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[93] See also Campos Menchaca (1972b) and Zavala (2008). In its use, this noun-adjective has been verbalized as *winkan*, meaning "to steal". According to Molina, *winka* came from *huincun* (*winkun*), which he translates as "to assassinate" (Molina 1788:110-1). According to Koessler-Ilg (2007), who states that the term *winka* designates any "non-indian", the term could derive from the verb *weñen*, "to steal", or from *winkün*, "to steal cattle". Augusta, for his part, states that *winka* would be anyone who does not belong to the "Araucarian race", also pointing out some derivations such as *Winkañma* (*wentru*): "Spanish-like indian", *Winkapülku*: *aguardiente*, a kind of "spirit", *Winkaukülen*: "wanting to be like a *Winka*", *Winkawn*: "to become Spanish-like", *Winkawn ngen*: "to be Spanish-like", "to be like a Spanish", "not to speak indigenous language" (Augusta 2007:261). By the end of the 19th century, Verniory suggests that *Winka* means both "foreign and thief" (2001:432).

[94] Also sometimes considered to be a poisonous venom.

Even though we could put them in peace (which is extremely difficult)… the Indians will never hold it secure and fixed, and it could be warfare until the end of the world (González de Nájera 1889:142).

They are arrogant and haughty, agile and daring, cautious, mistrustful, and inconstant, that is why we never found fidelity in them (Carvallo y Goveneche 1876:136).

As Chilean historian José Bengoa affirms, "the Conquest broke the equilibriums and its continuation continues breaking them until today, and it is perceived as the origin of each one of the calamities that [Mapuche] people suffer" (2003:19). This fact is undeniable. As we will see later, Spanish arrival pervades contemporary oral memory through a very specific praxis (Chapter 4). Following this, we can understand why the accusation of *awinkamiento* (to become *winka*-like) conveys a sense similar to treachery. This occurs because of the way Winka people are perceived to have acted in the past, and in the eyes of many Mapuche, how they still act in the present. One of the most salient sources to observe this is, again, Coña's autobiography:

Ancient Mapuche abhorred foreign people [*Winka* in original Chedungun]. They said "we don't want anything to do with those strange people, they are from a different race" [*ká mollfün tëfá yen*, approx. "They are from other blood"]. Sometimes *caciques* [*lonko*] who lived nearby Winka people set up *malones* [raids] against them: they fought and they were defeated. As a result their hatred against foreign people [Winka] was increasingly growing (2002:287).

It is also interesting to see what, according to Núñez de Pineda, similarly said two centuries before a "cacique" called Quilalebo:

I have not been able to talk with any of the many captives who have been among us. I could not see them face-to-face either, because of the ill-actions and humiliations I experienced from the first Spaniards. I have been unable to tolerate them and being repeated and brought them back to my memory they still offend me… (2001:637)

From here emerges the obvious image of an unleashed warfare, which seemed to be a necessary response to invasion.[95] While observing this, Spanish chroniclers added the difficulties war against these populations implied, fundamentally due to the absence of any institutional authority. This made it almost impossible to win the war: if they succeeded in defeating one group, soon another appeared to continue the conflict (Ercilla 2006; Tesillo 1647). According to Rosales (1989), we must also add that warfare was desired by the Spaniards, who benefited from the number of indigenous people they could take as prisoners.

Such a view continued until the 19th century, when Chile became independent from Spain and the Mapuche people began their struggle against Chilean assimilation attempts. In this context, Coña mentions how many *lonko* were concerned about the results of Winka invasion:

> …the poor Mapuche did not have houses anymore, they were reduced to ashes… we also heard Chileans were not tired of organizing raids against the unfortunate Mapuche…
> I also heard one man… saying that there was one *Winka* called Patricio... That monster took Mapuche as prisoners and locked them in a *ruka* [house]. Then he set the *ruka* on fire exterminating them all… (2002:304-5)[96]

Mapuche people attempted to organise resistance, rising against Winka for last time in 1881; however, they did not obtain the expected results. Although conflict seems to have left marks on both sides, these marks have not impeded the establishment of close relations. As Guevara states, "deep at the bottom of relationships between the indigenous and the Chilean there is a remainder of racial hate, of past resentment, which does not obstruct the establishment of friendship" (1913:220). It is to this fact that we will now turn our attention. Violence, indeed, did not hinder the establishment of relationships between Winka and Mapuche.

As previously mentioned, historical sources show how Mapuche people manifested interest towards Winka affairs and material culture on many occasions. This interest and its results have been argued by a number of scholars to be proof of acculturation (e.g. Villalobos and Pinto 1985). On the contrary, it is my intention to

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[95] The best way to depict the overall interaction would be a mainly untroubled contact with sporadic conflicts (Villalobos 1992).
[96] See Guevara and Mañkelef (2002) for similar accounts.

show that any understanding based on this is misstated in its foundations. The reason is that, as Gow has illustrated among the Piro of Peruvian Amazon (2003), it could not be acculturation if the people who "suffer" it do not think in reified cultural terms. As I intend to show, what historical Mapuche defined as collectiveness, was fundamentally a matter of conviviality (cf. Course 2011). This approach has reached almost unanimous agreement among Amazonian specialists, who depict the creation of similarity as basically a result of living together (e.g. Fausto 2007; Gow 1991, 2003; McCallum 2001; Oakdale 2008; Overing 2003; Overing and Passes 2000; Vilaça 2000, 2002; Viveiros de Castro 2001). Consequently, the question is not how the Mapuche were pervaded by Spanish institutions (Villalobos 1982, 1992, 1995), or how they meaningfully "colonised" Spanish institutions with their own cultural content (Boccara 2007; Zavala 2008). Rather, it is how they alternatively comprehended what surrounded them in practice, as intrinsic processes and not as fixed and stigmatised essences.

Proposing this does not deny Mapuche establishment or recognition of differences. As already pointed out, they recognised several incompatibilities between how Spaniards lived and wanted Mapuche people to live, and what they considered to be the proper way to live. A clear example of this was their rejection of residing in villages. However, they adopted some Spanish elements without too much trouble, such as wheat and horses, not perceiving it as any sort of cultural corruption. They also engaged in a continued commercial exchange with Winka people (Leiva 1977). Boccara (2007) has proposed that it is through these links that the Mapuche finally appeared as a unified cultural entity, the result of an overall ethnogenesis process. I agree with this proposition, as far as this so-called "ethnogenesis" could imply a first process of *culturization* of Mapucheness, of thinking about Mapucheness in reified cultural terms. We can draw this distinction between two moments (not necessarily diachronic) illustrating a collective sense of Mapucheness, non-cultural and cultural, through Evangelization examples and the interest Mapuche people showed in them. During the 17th century, Núñez de Pineda states that he had been talking about God to a group of young indigenous people, when one of them keenly asked him "if God was like us, and if he had hands, body and the rest of the members which compose it" (2001:389). By the beginning of the

20th century, in contrast, Augusta highlights how an elder was interested in the arrival of missionaries because he thought they would be useful for teaching younger generations, although he expressed wariness because of the priests' intention "to turn [older generations] Spanish-like" (1934:48). The first experience shows a kind of doubt implied in being completely ignorant of what Spanish people thought, trying to grasp more concretely the subject of the story. The second case, in contrast, shows a concern with what is good about the Winka, but also reservations about the hidden intentions of their labour.

As time went on, Mapuche people began to show a growing concern about turning into Winka, and what that implied. During my fieldwork, people frequently told me about how Winka people had introduced wine among Mapuche communities, making themselves rich while ruining Mapuche lives (cf. Verniory 2001). In fact, relationships with Winka sometimes radically transformed Mapuche lived worlds: "in those times there were not *huincas* (Winka) in this region and nowhere could one purchase the necessary stuff" (Coña 2002:60). As already noted, the commercial links with Winka are extremely relevant when comprehending Mapuche society in past times. These relationships can also be used to explain the ulterior Mapuche expansion into Argentinean Pampas, and its transformation into a society whose economy was supposedly founded on stealing, raising and selling cattle (Bengoa 2000).

I want to now focus on a specific Mapuche incorporation of Winka aspects, because it can help us to explain how the Mapuche adoption of alien elements was not a passive acculturation, but a process immersed in an unstable ontology. These elements are clothes, whose relevance has already been highlighted elsewhere in Lowland South America (Gow 1993, 2003; Vilaça 2005). As Leiva interestingly notes, "if there is an aspect of 16th-17th centuries Spanish culture which attracted most intensely Araucarians, that was clothes" (1977:130). These were appropriated, mainly by men, and employed principally in exceptional contexts.

According to some sources, the adoption of Spanish clothes was sometimes seen as a symbol of prestige. "We Mapuche like to wear Spanish clothes to be respected among our comrades, and so the Spanish see that we like civilisation" (Guevara and Mañkelef 2002:52). Coña also narrates the positive impression he

caused when returning to his homeland wearing foreign dress: "my beautiful suit caused them a pleasant surprise: how he has changed! They said" (2002:87). In fact, most prominent personages had and carefully maintained a Spanish-like suit, or at least some items of Spanish clothing (Guevara and Mañkelef 2002). I think, however, this argument does not explain the phenomena completely. One of my reasons rests in the observation made by Núñez de Pineda (2001), regarding how indigenous peoples used to save these garments for special occasions. Also, because, as Leiva notes regarding warfare, after a while "the traditional combat dress is abandoned, turning the warfare garments completely 'Spanish-like'" (1977:124). As Ercilla puts it:

> The general wore the suit that Valdivia wore when he was presented to him: it was green and purple woven, with silver and gold included… All captains were dressed in the Spanish style: common people and soldiers were dressed from their remains; breeches, doublets, tear leathers were highly esteemed and valuated: the one who did not carry Spanish remains was judged as useless… (2006:76)

Fig. 3.1 and 3.2: Manuel Namuncura and Juan Huaraman using Winka armies' uniforms[97]

Considering once again what Amazonian ethnography has taught us, and what I was proposing in the first part of this chapter, Mapuche usage of Spanish clothes was probably linked to a perspectival thought conveying an interest in Otherness and in

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[97] Images extracted from Foerster and Menard (2009).

experiencing their standpoint. This is not denying the prestige that wearing these Spanish clothes generated in the ones who owned them. Nevertheless, it seems that this prestige was more a result of wearing Spanish clothes, rather than what made people wearing them in first place.[98] If, within a culturalist framework, the Spanish clothes usage could be explained as claiming particular cultural conceptions, we are asking for some attention to go beyond those conceptions and to see the issue as ontologically relative. Dress, in this way, was probably one of the ways through which standpoint/perspective could be disciplined, modified, being in its non-essential perpetual becoming. This idea is central to my argument, as much as in this way it was possible, in a non-colonised and non-culturalist framework, to turn people Mapuche-like, as occurs even today in the contrary direction.

2.2. *Becoming* Mapuche: About the Social Transformation of Bodies

One aspect Chilean historiography has thoroughly treated, and which stands as one form of "proof" given from a positivist approach to deny the current existence of Mapuche people, is the vast mixing involved in relationships between Spaniards (later Chileans) and Mapuche (e.g. Villalobos 1992). This idea, emerging by the beginning of the 20th century, was ubiquitous within a framework equating race to culture, seeing in racial mixture a concomitant and inherent mixing of cultures, and granting priority to "civilisation" while dooming Mapuche "primitive" culture to its demise (Lenz 1897; Verniory 2001). Such a suggestion reached its climax with Guevara's publication of a book entitled "*The last Araucarians families and Customs*" in 1913, and later with Titiev's ethnographical reaffirmation (1951).

Nonetheless, contrary to what was expected, the Mapuche survived their ill-fate. In my view, the problem with some scholars' assumptions is associated with assuming and applying certain premises without really understanding the realm in which those were situated. Culture (and race) was taken as an essence, totally stable,

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[98] This was probably the case for *ralilonko* skull-cups as well (see above).

which as such could be lost or gained. This was far removed from Mapuche conceptions, which were predicated in processes more than essences.

Scholars were not totally wrong, though. It is also right to maintain that, because of interaction, Mapuche people began to show, in many spheres, a reified cultural reasoning. For instance, on most occasions during my fieldwork, people denied that ancient Mapuche married Winka women, *chiñurra*.[99] It was stated that they would never do that, because they wanted to preserve racial purity. However, this way of thinking seems to be far removed from the one presented by the chronicles. According to them, past Mapuche people thought of Mapucheness as a matter of "becomings". As such, it was thought to allow transformation, fluidity, and transportation. Currently, most Mapuche people state that it is impossible for a Winka to become Mapuche. There is an invincible essence within each person, and although it is possible to shift and relocate on a continuum that goes from "more Winka" to "more Mapuche", this essence does not allow people to deny what they really are. Nevertheless, this was apparently not what happened in the past.

As previously mentioned, it was extremely common among past Mapuche people to capture people in order to provide themselves with sacrificial victims. Yet also, there were occasions when these people were included within local groups. The paradigmatic case for this was indeed the *chiñurra*

> The greatest glory for a Mapuche warrior will be to possess Spanish women, and later Chileans. To have "*chiñurra*", as named in Mapuche language, denotes the importance of the institution. The *chiñurra* is Mapuche by adoption… they dress indigenous usage; they practice the language and they participate in the culture (Bengoa 2003:377).

A fact that has always attracted the attention of scholars of Mapuche history has been that, contrary to what happened in most of indigenous America, in Chile there was a race-mixing not just considering Spanish males and indigenous females, but also the other way around (Foerster 2004). This was possible because of the overall relations of captivity. One of the most famous cases of capture was experienced by Núñez de Pineda, who characterises the period of his stay among the Mapuche as a "Happy"

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[99] This term came from a deformation of the Spanish word "*señora*", madam.

one. He describes in detail how this process worked, its extension and what it implied for some captives:

> There is no nation in this world that esteems and love so much its homeland, like this from Chile, because even in occasions it has been seen some Indians from the older generations captured, and, as they do not want to leave their lands, they allow themselves to be exterminated before having a life beyond their limits and boundaries… (2001:335).

This technology of capture seemed to have lasted until the end of the 19th century. According to Verniory, there was a vast amount of captives that lived among the indigenous populations, and "they kidnapped children and taught them their language and customs" (2001:301). Although the practice seemed to imply the capture of women and men alike, there could have been a slight female bias: "they forgive lives only of women, because they take advantage and serve them", although there were also male "traitors" who "from our side go to theirs helping them in warfare" (González de Nájera 1889:54). Furthermore, as Rosales tells of one specific situation "[they] tried that all the rest of the captive Spanish died, and that just the women stayed to serve them" (1989:707).

> They were capturing many people, and important madams… And what we all regretted most was seeing captive within the castle, a nun called Mrs. Gregoria Ramirez… who was respectfully treated by the barbarian who captive her, a cacique named Guentemoya, even though at first he wanted to have her as his wife, as was usual with the rest of the Spanish women (Rosales 1989:752).

As similarly stated by Leiva, "several nuns who were captive were transformed into Indians' wives and they had mixed-blood children" (1977:43). Indeed, Rosales states that many times these Spanish wives were preferred to the indigenous ones within the polygyny rules (1989; cf. Guevara 1908). The episodes of female captivity were continual during colonial times, even reaching the 19th century with the renowned case of *Joven Daniel* brig which ran aground on the Araucanía's coasts, after which the women aboard were supposedly taken by the surrounding populations (Coña 2002; Guevara 1902). Once among them, these women were included in homestead daily labours and assimilated (González de Nájera 1889; Leiva 1977; cf. Bengoa

2000). As noted by Ovalle, these women were "obligated later to dress like Indians… having to walk barefoot, using a poor animal pelt as a bed, and having everything else concerning food and accommodation poor and miserable at most" (1969:281).

As could be expected, the main reason stated for this *chiñurra* institution is the social prestige it implied (Bengoa 2000, 2003; Boccara 2007; Leiva 1977). This is supposedly reaffirmed by the great number of *lonkos* who had a Spanish/Chilean woman throughout history (Coña 2002; Guevara and Mañkelef 2002). Such a statement is probably right, no matter if it was an aim in itself or a result of a different process. But what seems interesting to me is how they valued the difference, which sometimes had very concrete manifestations, as in: "Chilean women are not as submissive as Mapuche women" (Guevara and Mañkelef 2002:45). This valorisation was so important that it even led to one of the most recorded episodes in Mapuche colonial history that, merely by coincidence, happened in Elicura. It was during the beginning of the 17th century when a group of women, *chiñurras* and *champurriadas* (of mixed-blood), escaped to the Jesuit mission of Paicaví, a coastal area of the current Province of Arauco. Anganamón, the *lonko* from whom the women had escaped, demanded their return immediately to the missionary in charge, Luis de Valdivia. He, on his part, claimed the women did not want to come back, that they wanted to stay among Spanish people. It remained this way until three missionaries were passing through Elicura and Anganamón unleashed his revenge, killing them all in a historical episode known as "Elicura Martyrdom" (Campos Menchaca 1972b; Foerster 1996:140-154; Ovalle 1969; Rosales 1989).

Having stated their presence, now it is my intention to turn our attention towards the effects of their stay. As noted by chroniclers and historians, the presence of these *chiñurras* in certain areas of Araucanía resulted in the production of "white and blonde creatures", or that due to the ancient presence of *chiñurras* among the Mapuche, "there is a *sorrel* descendence" (Guevara and Mañkelef 2002:154-5). This fact is ubiquitous in literature. However, literature does not state as clearly something that I strongly believe, and that it is contrary to what many current culturalist

approaches declare: that *chiñurras* and mixed-blood people could actually become Mapuche. It will be Ovalle who will give us a closer approach:

> [They] have had so many mixed-blood children that they can already constitute a generation of their own, and what hurts the heart most is to see these half Spanish people appearing completely Indian in their customs, having of Christians just the baptism which some captive Spaniards or their mothers gave them when they were born (1969:284).

This situation contrasts with the later assumption of a general mistrust towards people of mixed-blood, *champurriado*, among the Mapuche (see Chapter 2). In my impression, it was related to a Mapuche ontology that probably put much more attention on variables such as living together than in blood or race to ascertain the fact of being similar. The salience of elements linked to conviviality, such as eating together, was reaffirmed by the so-called cultural elements that Mapuche populations displayed, which are still present today. Alongside this, bodies were probably submitted to specific treatments, consciously looking to construct similarity. For example, in the fact that they "do not have a beard, because they are beardless by nature, and the few hairs they do grow, they carefully remove, because they do not want to have them on their faces" (Ovalle 1969:112). Or as observed centuries later, "besides a proto-moustache, they do not have beards. They do not shave themselves, but they rip their hair off with special tweezers; often you can see them giving each other this service" (Verniory 2001:61).[100]

As with their own bodies, the Mapuche also submitted the bodies of the captives they did not sacrifice to specific treatments. Again, one of the elements that seem to have been central is clothes. If warriors often used animal elements to obtain their properties, and also wore Spanish garments, as has been suggested, in the same sense the captives were frequently made to wear Mapuche dress, allowing a first introduction to a shared standpoint/perspective. Alongside this, they were obligated to stay barefoot, to shave their beards, and they even gave them Mapuche names (González de Nájera 1889; cf. Bengoa 2003). As observed by Molina, "When a foreigner stays among them, they obliged him to abandon his own name and to take

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[100] See also Guevara (1908:40-1, 1911:50), Latcham (1924:225), and Molina (1788:382). Núñez de Pineda (2001:109) and Rosales (1989:1135) mention that they also used to grow beards and moustaches when they were renowned as brave warriors.

another from the Chilean language [*Chedungun*]" (1788:101). Overall, living together implied much more than a cultural assimilation, but an ontological transformation, a process of *Mapuchization*, of becoming similar to the ones who were part of the local group. This could explain why, contrary to what is sometimes stated, many captives wanted to stay among the Mapuche, enjoying privileges that from a Winka point of view could not be termed as such (Smith 1914).

According to my exploration, it seems that Mapuche historical populations appear to have been receptive to otherness, transforming it through a careful process of conviviality. Besides trying to experience a Winka perspective, through the selective and specific employment of certain material elements especially apt to that aim, they considered it possible to include the "other" within their own milieu. Indeed, what seems to be the more important outcome to consider in this respect is that, instead of a cultural attraction technology, what seems to be implied in the introduction of strangers to the local group is a transformational technology founded upon the relevance of social relationships in order to create similitude.

3. Conclusion

The central aim of this chapter has been to show how past Mapuche populations dealt with Otherness, outlining it in order to experience it, and reducing it by creating similarity. Through a review of historical materials I have proposed a twofold cannibal treatment of the other implied in a relational and rhizome-like model, tuned with my ethnographical experience. In this twofold cannibal treatment there is an explicit tension between literally eating the other in order to dwell his intentions (eating their hearts) and his perspective (using their heads), and to metaphorically introduce the Other, submitting him/her to a treatment in order to obliterate anything which is alien in him/her, allowing him/her to be of the same kind of the self. The first case quintessence is the ritual victim. The second one is the *chiñurra*.

This perceived tension recovers its unity again, observing the ontology behind both treatments, which grants priority to processes instead of essences.

Through it, we can be aware of how it was possible to reach *Mapuchization*, as a process implied in the very unstable, relational and unessential task of experiencing the surrounding world. As we will see, it is not until a vast colonization of thought through *culturization*, where the process of *Mapuchization* is denied in terms of essential definitions. If there is something that the historical materials teach us about the past Mapuche, it is that their possibilities, dealing with otherness, were not a priori restricted, but opened enough to suggest a proper Mapuche way, detached from any ethnical reasoning.

Chapter 4

Sharing Personal Experiences:
The Case of Two Narratives about Otherness

In previous chapters, I explored the relationship Mapuche people establish between personal experience and truth, summarizing it in what I called the *uniqueness of personal experience principle*. Through it, I emphasised that truth is always seen as a personal affair, as I also showed that such a conception redounded in an immanent notion of reality, anti-objective and allowing a myriad of different parallel possibilities. Following from this, I described how my friends in Elicura envision persons as a combination of essential substances and dynamic relationships, underlining how such composition leads to an idea stressing the uniqueness and singularity of persons. Finally, I looked at several historical sources attempting to unravel former Mapuche ontological concerns about Otherness. In doing this, I tried to show that alterity was conceived as a default state that could be contingently and contextually stressed, meanwhile similarity was thought of as something to be created and continually strengthened.

Summing up my proposals so far, we have a picture of a Mapuche ontology that is strongly characterised by a *radical singularism*. Put simply, because persons are unique and reality is person-relative, reality depends on how persons experience it, and therefore it could never be fully shared. I strongly believe this depiction does justice to what many of my Mapuche friends think. However, I also believe that such a claim should confront a practical issue that may appear to contradict it. Indeed, even though Mapuche people openly affirm this *radical singularism*, they simultaneously display several features one may easily interpret as breaking it, insofar as they seem to be collectively shared. This apparent paradox will be the focus of this chapter. My aim here will be to explore how the Mapuche ontology may pass from this myriad of autonomous personal experiences, to displaying what seems to be a set of widespread and sometimes highly standardised narratives. Furthermore,

I will observe how and to what extent they are shared, introducing a debate I will fully address in Chapter 6, which is linked to how Mapuche people deal with the overarching *equivocality* (Viveiros de Castro 2004b) they think of as intrinsic to sociality (as far as it always involves the interaction of unique and singular persons/realities).

I will focus on two specific narratives people consistently mentioned while I was doing my fieldwork. As we will see, they may be classified as belonging to different Mapuche genres devoted to accounting past events. The first story is an *epew*, a narrative genre Mapuche people usually translated as "tales from the past", and anthropologists have generally considered as equivalent to "myth".[101] The second is a *nütram*, a genre my friends translated as "*contar historias*" (Sp. "to tell stories"), and that scholars have usually considered as equivalent to "history", as far as it would embody the oral account of "objective" past events (e.g. Koessler-ilg 2007).

Exploring these narratives, I will emphasise how they appear to be connected to the subject of morality (cf. High 2009). Indeed, one of my main intentions will be to reveal how both stories are consistently coupled with a key Mapuche concern: the self/other distinction as a device of moral evaluation, which is performed as a personal distance assessment. The first account I will review is the story of *Kai-Kai* and *Treng-Treng*, which I propose is, in this sense, principally related to the subject of what it implies *to become the Other*. The second narrative I display refers to how Mapuche people lost their lands against the Winka in Elicura. In this case, I think its salience is due to how it is primordially concerned with the topic of *knowing the Other*.

Alongside this, I will inevitably be engaging in a longstanding debate regarding the relationship/distinction between myth and history, which has been particularly relevant among anthropologists interested in indigenous South America. Based on my ethnography, I will propose a way out from what, from a Mapuche standpoint, would be a non-sense opposition. Accordingly, I will not necessarily be following or arguing against approaches that see myth as obliterating historical time (Hugh-Jones 1988, 1989; Lévi-Strauss 1966, 1970, 1979, 1981, 1992), as a specific

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[101] Golluscio (2006) mentions another genre one could comprehend as myth, *Kwifike dungu* (approx. "ancient words"). Nevertheless, in my fieldwork all "ancient stories" were classified as *epew*.

form of historical analysis (Fausto and Heckenberger 2007; Hill 1988; Turner 1988), or as symbiotically related to historical events (Gow 2001). Rather, I will be simply proposing that, from a Mapuche viewpoint, the difference between what we understand as myth and history is simply one of *experiential distance*. By doing this, I am following a claim differentiating them insofar as one often refers to an unreachable past, whereas the other often occurred to known and traceable people from ascending generations (cf. High 2009). Thus, I will argue that among the Mapuche, the difference between myth and history is not necessarily ontological, but fundamentally epistemological. *Epew* and *nütram* are different only by contrasting the distance the self interpreting the narratives has with the original person who experienced what is accounted in them.[102] They differ in degree, not in nature. They both depict experiential scenarios, which as I hope to show, one could possibly live contemporarily.

In the first two sections of this chapter I will focus on describing the narratives I have mentioned. I chose these two narratives instead of others because they both appeared most often during my fieldwork, when people decided that the context required them. Later, in this chapter's third section, I will address more directly the place of these narratives within people's interactions. Here I will discuss how, although both accounts could be practically distinguished, fundamentally in terms of how distant was perceived the truth conveyed by each one of them (Chapter 1), both are simultaneously considered to be equivalent insofar as they were founded upon personal experiences. Thus, they stand somehow as shared schemes, which are constantly rethought and adapted according to each singular personal experience.

As I hope to show, the stories that form this chapter stand as *a priori* categories to understanding many circumstances Elicura people came across simply by living. But, at the same time, they are constantly created, re-created, interpreted, re-interpreted and reinforced by practical facts when they appear. This is why, beyond how they are shared, I would like to draw attention to the process of perpetual becoming which ontologically characterises these shared narratives. Therefore, I will focus on how they must be *dialogically* understood (*sensu* Bakhtin 1981), considering how they are differentially assessed and comprehended by

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[102] As Course has showed (2010), and I argued in Chapter 1, for the Mapuche accounts are meaningful because they always depict something experienced by somebody.

particular persons. In this sense, and setting aside an ontological distinction between myth and history, I will eventually address how accounts founded in an equivalent empirical basis may stand as allowing, at the same time, a supra-individual sense of sharing (regarding the sphere of signifiers) and a singular lens reproduced by personal experience.

1. The Story of Kai-Kai and Treng-Treng

It was Saturday 27th of February 2010 in the early morning, and a vast extent of Chilean territory was shaken by one of the biggest Earthquakes ever recorded. The epicentre was located just a couple of hundred miles to the north of Elicura. Several roads were destroyed, the communications interrupted, and the basic services supply failed during the following weeks. Fortunately, and despite its magnitude, there was no human loss to regret in the Valley, and material damages were minimal.

This episode was critical to my fieldwork. Subsequently, the earthquake was a main topic of conversation, keeping its primacy for a long time, and being constantly remembered by the continual aftershocks we felt during the following months. People were always keen to talk about it, and to converse about what TV news reported regarding the persons and places most affected. Under these circumstances, such an interest appeared to me to be obvious. Nevertheless, I was not expecting the kind of exegesis the earthquake generated. What particularly called my attention was how people frequently connected it to a famous Mapuche narrative, known as the story of *Kai-Kai* and *Treng-Treng*. I was familiarised with this story because scholars have commonly considered it to be the Mapuche "myth of origin" (Bengoa 2000, 2003; Dillehay 1990, 2007; Faron 1964; Golluscio 2006; Hernández 2003; Latcham 1924). More accurately, however, what it usually describes is what can be better understood as the origin of a Mapuche "morality".

The connection I witnessed between that story and the massive earthquake was not a novelty. Several observers of Mapuche life have noticed similar links over centuries. Perhaps thanks to this, the story of *Kai-Kai* and *Treng-Treng*, since Diego

de Rosales first recorded it in the 17th century, has been depicted as having an empirical basis in the seismic nature of Chilean territory (e.g. Foerster 1993; Latcham 1924; Lenz 1897, 1912; Tierney 1989). Indeed, there is an implicit consensus locating earthquakes as a recurrent and meaningful experience for Mapuche people. Stressing this, Rudolph Lenz noted that, differently to other languages, Mapuche language has a specific word for land motions: *neyen* (1912:7).

The most common way in which people connected this story to the earthquake was through the phrase "*estaba predicho*" (Sp. "it was predicted"). Only when I asked how or why this was so, the story of *Kai-Kai* and *Treng-Treng* explicitly appeared. As it is similarly reproduced by several bibliographical sources, I expected most people to share a highly uniform version of the narrative. Indeed, when I asked people to tell me the story, this standard version was the one that most frequently appeared.[103] However, to my surprise, many elderly people told me quite dissimilar versions, yet always referred to by the name of *Kai-Kai* and *Treng-Treng*. To my view, this is because, for them, such a label did not imply one particular story, but an event with different experiential outcomes. In the following I will reproduce the story. In doing so I will first present the most common version, and later I will introduce the different dissonances I found in the Valley. I will not, however, put special emphasis on these differences. They were absolutely expectable according to the *radical singularism* many of my Mapuche friends uphold. Instead, I will focus on how, besides the differences and always mediated by personal experiences, the story refers to how Otherness is not an essence, but a moral possibility for the self.

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The most frequent version I heard of the story of *Kai-Kai* and *Treng-Treng* in Elicura was the following. In an ancient time, there were two powerful *vilu* (Mp. "snake") fighting. One of them was from the sea, and it was called Kai-Kai *vilu*, while the other was from the land, and its name was Treng-Treng *vilu*. While fighting, Kai-Kai attempted to raise the waters in order to flood the lands. In response, Treng-Treng

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[103] Perhaps this homogeneity was encouraged by the scholarly reproduction of one version, dismissing others. Also because this is the version of the story taught in most Chilean schools, as part of the "official Educational curriculum".

tried to raise the lands, in order to let them rise above the waters. As they fought there was complete chaos. The waters pervaded everything, and the land was in constant motion. What Kai-Kai aimed to do by flooding the land was to kill everybody on the surface of the earth, and as it was extremely powerful, it was about to accomplish its aim. What Treng-Treng attempted by raising the lands was to keep people alive. Thus, seeing the power of its rival, and trying to avoid being defeated, Treng-Treng told people to climb up some hills, which it would make grow in order to keep them safe. In a friend's words, "then Treng-Treng made the sacred hills grow, where the enlightened Mapuche were going to be saved". After a long time the struggle finally stopped, leaving land and waters as they are now. Only two human beings could survive the battle, a man and a woman, and thanks to them the land could once again be repopulated.[104]

Nevertheless, as stated earlier, there were several different versions of the narrative, especially articulated by the eldest generations. Some of these, for example, linked the story of Kai-Kai to the biblical deluge. Thus, the battle between the snakes was seen as commanded by God, who was annoyed by how people were behaving. In a similar way, a few, such as my friend Alberto, going back to the story of Adam and Eve, even declared that Kai-Kai "is a snake which is affirmed in the big trees, there's where it lives". In a similar vein, it was also stated that across Araucanía there were several hills called Treng-Treng, which had been pointed by God as salvation places. However, as the water rage was so heavy, just a few hills were able to stay above the massive floods, and only one man and one woman could survive to repopulate the earth. They were both from Elicura.

In a different sense, there were several people who explained current Valley geomorphology and toponymy through this past event (cf. Mallon 2004). I was told that many mountains, for example, emerged as a result of the struggle, including Treng-Treng (Ten-Ten) hill, Ngoll-Ngoll hill, where according to a friend "a bull bellowed, announcing the fight between the two snakes", and a hill corresponding to

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[104] As mentioned earlier, this version greatly resembles the one scholars have frequently reproduced. However, it is possible to observe some minor differences. Among these, for instance, we may note how Kai-Kai sometimes appears as a horned monster without a specific form (Lenz 1912:20), or as a mixed-being, half horse and half snake (Koessler-ilg 2007 II:49-50). There are also differences regarding the survivors. Sometimes it is similarly just a couple (Tierney 1989), in others there are two couples (Latcham 1924; Lévi-Strauss 1978), and in others there are even more people (Febrés 1765).

Kai-Kai, which is normally referred to as Kirke or Chang Mawida.[105] Interestingly, this could be connected to how, according to some versions, Kai-Kai does not necessarily belong to the sea. As Juana's husband told me, as Kai-Kai is in the sea, "it could also be in this lake, or up in a hill… they are *virtudes* (Sp. "virtues") from the hills, from the sea, or from any place… they are everywhere, but one cannot know exactly where". Some say that it is sometimes possible to hear Kai-Kai crying like a turkey up from Kirke Mawida. Although nobody I know has ever seen it, many have heard it is a mixed-being, composed by parts of a turkey, a bull, and a snake.

Lastly, I would like to quote another version of the myth I collected. An elderly person from Calebu narrated it during October 2009, before the last earthquake occurred. I think it is relevant for two reasons. First, because it vividly expresses the heterogeneity of events that might be personally experienced during a general earthquake. Second, because it clearly states that the story of Kai-Kai does not necessarily belong to a remote past, but to a possible, and perfectly contemporary, experiential context.

> Treng-Treng is with the world, and Kai-Kai belonged to the demon… in 1960, when there was an earthquake here in Chile, then in Peleco [north of Lanalhue Lake], *Kai-Kai vilu* spoke at midnight in Peleco hill, and it said: "*Avay Mapu*!"[106] People clearly understood, "*Avay Mapu*!" it said, that the world would end. Then towards Cayucupil [North of Peleco], there spoke Treng-Treng and it said "no, a*vlay ay Mapu*!"[107] Treng-Treng said that the world would not end. As Treng-Treng had more power, it didn't give freedom to Kai-Kai *vilu*… and then that earthquake in the 1960s lasted for three years for the earth to be set on its place once again… for three years the earthquakes lasted…

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From the versions I quote, the link between the story of Kai-Kai and the earthquake-tsunami I observed could easily be surmised. In the narrative, it is the struggle between Kai-Kai and Treng-Treng that produces the catastrophes. Some people see this causal relationship as literal and cyclical, while for others it is just metaphorical.

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[105] See figure I.2 (page 20).
[106] Mp. approx. "the world is ending".
[107] Mp. approx. "the world would never end".

These dissonances are always dependant on the different ontological assumptions people uphold. Beyond these differences, however, the story is generally portrayed as describing a past experience, and at the same time, founding a specific order. This order is a moral one, and it is invariably related to how it is perceived that people should behave in order to be a Mapuche and not a Winka (see Chapter 2 and 5).

The ontological duality of humanity, summarised by the Mapuche/Winka distinction, is not established by the story of Kai-Kai though, but simply assessed in their practical consequences. As seen, the way many Mapuche people drew their difference between what is broadly considered to be Winka was often extremely literal. On several occasions during my fieldwork, I asked Mapuche people where the Mapuche come from. Whenever I posed this question I invariably received, at first, a puzzled gaze –as if I was asking something extremely ridiculous, or guessing if I really was asking what I was asking. Secondly, I often received an adamant statement: "we don't come from anywhere, we've always been here!" Soon I understood that asking that question was somewhat redundant. The concept of Mapuche already contained the answer. To be Mapuche inherently implied to be *from* the land. A friend once put this very clearly to me, as her grandmother had similarly put it to her:

> Mapuche people were born here, as trees, the ancient ones always said. They just pop up from the land, as sprouts. They don't come from other countries; they grow up from the land when there was no Winka yet… they were therefore like savages, naked, without any clothes…

If there is a way in which Mapuche people conceive their origin, it could simply be put as such. Similarly, in a narrative collected southwards of my field site, God appeared to the first human creation and stated clearly: "I made you, you are from the land which is called *mapu* and you are going to be called *Mapuche*. Land is going to raise you and in the land you are going to end, because you are from the land" (Schindler 2006:28-9; see also Chihuailaf 1999:34). This recalls how symmetrically Winka people are conceived as coming from another place, often using the metaphor of "navigators" to depict them as rootless (Chapter 2). For Mapuche people, this is a critical difference defining two ontological categories of being. Knowing this, we can go further in establishing the connection. If the story of Kai-Kai and Treng-

Treng is perceived as founding an order, that is because it speaks about an original event of punishment and redemption. It refers to a cyclical occurrence of treason committed against the ontological order of the world, against its original organization.

1.1. A Story about Becoming the Other

As previously proposed, in my opinion, the story of Kai-Kai and Treng-Treng is fundamentally a story about *becoming the Other*. This was not merely a simple feeling that I had, but something that people in Elicura frequently stated. *Awinkamiento*, to act Winka-like, or simply Winka presence, were often pointed out as factors triggering catastrophes such as the recent earthquake. Generally, people perceive them as punishment for mankind's debauched behaviour (Augusta 1934; Bengoa 2003; Foerster and Montecino 1990; Lévi-Strauss 1978; Tierney 1989). As we have seen, among the Mapuche what is personally perceived as debauched is usually located within the realm of what is non-Mapuche. In this way, ideally, non-Mapucheness appears quite simply as what people consider to be not part of the self, as a theoretical expression of further possibilities. In practical terms, then, radical alterity is located experientially, and a priori according to previous experiences, in Winka bodies. Thus, both conceptions are merged towards a single referent: Winkaness, which is useful to form the practical continuum of self/other distinction (see Chapter 2 and 5). And as this distinction corresponds in moral terms to the one that can be drawn between what is proper behaviour and what is debauched behaviour, we can conclude that: self is to other, as Mapuche is to Winka, as proper behaviour is to debauched behaviour.

An interesting characteristic of the connection people establish between this perceived self/other distinction and seismic movements regard its cyclical nature, which could eventually make otherness appear to be ontologically necessary (cf. Lévi-Strauss 1992). In my impression, given the seismic character of the Mapuche geographical location, it was expectable that people would show a further concern

with earthquakes, such as conceptualizing their experience of them. In this sense, we may understand, for example, the affirmations related to how the earthquake "was predicted". These were not simply linked to the recurrence of earthquakes. Rather, they were connected to the reasons people saw behind this recurrence. Indeed, the catastrophes were always coming because of how people were acting. As my friend Bernardo stated:

> …The sun is going to come down to earth… we'll have torrential rains… many diseases are going to arrive, and the land won't give us food anymore… that's what the ancient ones said, when I was a kid they said… they also predicted huge earthquakes, that the sea was going to end part of the world… all of that because the Mapuche is going to end, he is not going to exist anymore (because they all will become Winka-like)…

More specifically, it was pointed out that *Chao Ngenechen* (Mp. aprox. "Father God") was angry because of people's ill-behaviour, and he was judging the adequate moment to punish them all. On two occasions I was told about specific situations predicting the earthquake. Once I was told how, during a *nguillatun* (fertility ritual) carried out in a neighbouring area, the *machi* (Shaman) in charge, during her trance, had announced that several calamities were about to reach earth. I was also enthusiastically informed about how something similar had happened in an Evangelical church, this time through a prophet possessed by God.

To better comprehend how the cyclical nature of seismic movements appears as linked to the ontological presence of Winkaness, we have to understand that what this represents (radical otherness), is not as much a quality predicated on what is the other, as it is a characterization of what is not the self. As such, Winkaness is a concept that does not necessarily depend on the existence of the so-called Winka people (cf. Levi-Strauss 1992). On the contrary, it finds its roots in the conception of Mapucheness. Just by defining this, one can think of the other. To find Winkaness is not necessary the actual presence of the ones who are considered to be Winka, but simply to judge something as non-Mapuche. The ontological ubiquity of Winkaness, then, lies exactly in the existence of this concept as detached from specific human kinds. To exist, the concept of Winka does not need Winka people, but simply a Mapuche conception of what it means to be a proper self. Just by personally

perceiving distance from this proper-self concept, the notion of Winka –of Other– begins to emerge.[108]

In practical terms, the existence of things different to what is considered to be a proper self is causally connected to the earthquake, tracing a meaningful relationship. Therefore, it is possible to explain the catastrophe as a result of Winka presence, as an otherness embodied by "white people" (e.g. Augusta 1934; Koessler-ilg 2007). But also, as Winkaness is something not necessarily embodied, it is possible to perceive the catastrophe as a manifestation of divine rage occasioned by Mapuche people not acting as they should. Not acting like a Mapuche means acting like a dislocated self, acting *chengelan* (Mp. "not as a person", see Chapter 2). Contemporarily, some pointed out that Mapuche people have always known that they do not have to *awinkarse*, but sadly they are forced to do it, living as they do within Chilean society. Sometimes it was even stated that there would be a future time when everybody on the face of earth is going to be Winka, "nobody is going to speak *Chedungun*, nor perform a ceremony". When that moment arrives, and just then, all the ruins are going to be really and finally unleashed.

Following what has been stated, the story of Kai-Kai can also be conceived as the story of the origin of *nguillatun*, the major fertility ritual performed by Mapuche people. It is frequently explicitly stated that in order to deal with the constant earthquakes and sea rising, Mapuche people must return to their proper selves, which can only be accomplished ritually (Augusta 1934; Bengoa 2000; Foerster 1993; Koessler-ilg 2007; Lenz 1912). Indeed, in Elicura some people gathered to perform a small ceremony with this aim after February 2010's earthquake, but previously this was supposed to be a more widespread and relevant affair.

When going deeply into people's perceptions regarding the earthquake, while considering what I have illustrated above, I believe one can really understand how the story of Kai-Kai and Treng-Treng is essentially a story about what happens when one strays from what one essentially is, and becomes an Other. This transit towards an otherness depends on the personal perspectives defining Mapucheness, but it can

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[108] In the past, and as it does not depend on specific bodies, otherness was probably not simply expressed by Winkaness. However, perhaps because of the colonial history Mapuche people have suffered, such a conception contemporarily stands as the preferred idiom to refer to alterity.

also reach a more collective agreement, at least superficially, as we will see in the next chapter.

What the story of Kai-Kai and Treng-Treng describes, in the end, is a dislocation of the proper Mapuche self. What it demonstrates is what happens when people do not act as they should, when Winkaness pervades everything, when moral corruption is ubiquitous. Thus, it is a warning, as it is a depiction of the ontological duality of human beings. It is a clear manifestation that self and other are moral categories, not fixed but instable. The struggle between the snakes begins because a general Winka-like behaviour is divinely perceived. The term Winka here appears as an abstract category, encompassing what Mapuche people are not. As such, it is only later ascribed to the ones described as physically others, in terms of a non-Mapuche perceived behaviour.

Otherness, for the Mapuche, is not a category whose apprehension was developed in the interaction with alterity, but a category implicit to the self. It describes an assessed difference to what is personally seen as a correct way of being (the definition of being Mapuche). Only once people perceived as a collective of others are consistently seen as acting against what this morally implies, can the category used to depict them be used to refer to this dislocated self. That is why otherness is often perceived as embodied in the people who represent radical alterity to the Mapuche, by race, by colonialism, or by a mixture of both. That is why, in practical terms, events such as the earthquake on the 27th of February can be linked to a specific category of people and their customs. But as I have tried to argue, this kind of causal reasoning is only possible because there is a perception of the consequences of losing the self, implicitly stated in the story, and experientially lived through new catastrophes understood in relation to the story. For this reason, Mapuche people find it troublesome to lose the self, to become other.

2. How 'People of the Land' Became People without Land

We have seen how the story of Kai-Kai and Treng-Treng displays a Mapuche concern with Otherness, and how it is fundamentally linked to a moral conception of what is considered to be a proper self. However, we have also expressed that, in practice, the conception of Otherness is seen as embodied in persons representing radical alterity. These are the people racially considered as Winka. Interestingly, narratives in Elicura show how it is produced a symbiotic relation between accounts and experiences. Often, particular personal experiences are seen as strengthening the connection between a racial non-Mapucheness and a Winka-like behaviour. In this sense, if there are some people who embody what is considered to be Winka, that is because there have been experiences allowing that perception and, later, the connection. Winkaness appears, then, as a totally apprehensible category, which can be properly described and characterised. In this section I will attempt to show how this works through a widely shared narrative within Elicura, which is mainly concerned with the subject of *knowing the Other*.

During my fieldwork, perhaps one of the most recurrent themes that appeared in the conversations I engaged in, was the claim most people made of how their ancestors were deceived in past times, losing most of the land they inhabited to the hands of a complex apparatus aimed to divest them of it. As result of this deceit, I was told, Mapuche people currently have to live in very small parcels, metaphorically referred to as *esquinitas* (Sp. "little corners"), or *rincones* (Sp. "corners"), when comparing them to the lands surrounding them, which are considered to be their ancestral possession. Today, most Mapuche parcels are too small to carry out any productive endeavour substantial enough to sustain any familial homestead. This is in stark contrast with the huge neighbouring extensions of State-subsidised private timber exploitations, and with what, even today, are vast landholdings owned by Winka families whose presence in Elicura dates back to the 19th century.

Scholars and Mapuche organizations have referred extensively to the land plunder suffered by Mapuche people, and its current consequences (Bengoa 2000,

2004; Di Giminiani 2011; Foerster 2004, 2008; González Gálvez 2007; Guevara 1902; Identidad Mapuche Lafkenche de la Provincia de Arauco 1999; Mariman *et al* 2006; Pavez 2008; Programa de Derechos Indígenas 2003). Instead of repeating those here, I intend to explore how contemporary narratives regarding the past loss of lands stand as common and meaningful references in order *to know the Other*. The account I will reproduce below was told to me innumerable times, always asserted as absolutely truthful, which was often denoted by pointing to a direct source who experienced it (Chapter 1). The story was therefore different from the one of Kai-Kai and Treng-Treng, whose truth was more "distant", coming from an unspecific source of experience. Yet similar to that story, the main focus of this account was related to Otherness, although now to an empirical perception and depiction of how it is embodied.

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A long time ago a Mapuche man arrived in Elicura Valley. This man had spent many years of his life travelling and visiting many places. As one friend stressed, "As Winka people used to, he was going from province to province". Because of this, he learned to speak, to read and to write in fluent Spanish. When he arrived, he asked for a piece of land in order to install a small hut, because he pitifully said he did not have anywhere to live. Compassionately, an old woman granted him permission to stay in a piece of land she had left uncultivated. There the man lived quietly for a while, smoothly engaging in different relationships with other Mapuche people. However, these people did not know that he was secretly arranging deals with a Winka man from Lebu (a town located approx. 60 miles northwards of Elicura) named Quintiliano Hermosilla, in order to deceive them all. Quintiliano was the character, a friend asserted, who "took everything, everything he saw, 'everything is mine', he said, leaving the Mapuche in a corner".

Sometime later, the foreign Mapuche called all the people from the Valley and told them that he had been informed that Winka authorities in Lebu required their presence for a very important affair, and that every adult person in Elicura should attend. He worked as intermediary because at that time he was the only

Mapuche person in the Valley who really knew how to speak Spanish, and also because, as time was passing, he was proving to the rest of the Mapuche people that he was trustworthy. According to different versions, the journey to Lebu was due to an invitation the authorities extended to people in the Valley, and elsewhere in the Province, to celebrate Christmas.

People then enthusiastically began to prepare for the trip, which in those times was done by bullock cart. After a very long journey, which some people stated lasted up to one month because there was no proper road, and it therefore had to be built as they went, they finally arrived in Lebu. There they found a huge shed arranged to receive them, with lots of wine and food. People said that "they were even roasting a horse", implying that the size of the feast was enormous. According to some versions, Mapuche people stayed there for more than two weeks, eating and drinking eagerly. Trusting in their Winka hosts, who had received them generously, they were at the same time induced to sign documents that they did not understand, because they did not know how to read nor speak Spanish. As a friend's grandmother used to state, "we went to Lebu, and there they made as sign a paper, they put our fingers on the paper…" Mixing drunkenness and trust, they acceded to the request. When the food and drink finally ran out, they went back to their Valley. Soon, however, they realised Winka hospitality had not been for free. As another friend's grandfather recognised: "they gave us meat… wine as well… with that we sold our lands…" The problem is that they did not know that they were actually doing it (see Foerster 2008).

After the long trip back to Elicura, they received a shocking surprise. As they approached, they could see how everything had changed. Where the lands had been open to allow the cattle's pasture, there were now innumerable fences impeding free movement. In the places where most Mapuche people had their *ruka* (Mp. "house"), they could only see ashes. People's houses and all their belongings had been burned with complete disregard. The children, who had been left to look after the homesteads while the adults were in Lebu, were found scared and abandoned in a "corner", in the worst lands within the Valley. As Juana told me, quoting her grandmother, "When we came back all our *ruka* were burnt, and people were crowded in that part". Within the fenced terrains there were also several armed

individuals defending the new order. Seeing this, all the Mapuche powerlessness cried. They never heard from the Mapuche who had told them about the invitation again, supposing that he went southwards to do the same thing to other people. Before leaving, however, he told them that their "lands had died", implying that they will never possess them again.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

This story, narrated without major variations by different people in Elicura, is sometimes followed by a succession of key events, detached from any empirical emphasis, but intended to explain the current situation in the Valley. Strictly speaking, however, these events do not form part of the narrative, and they were accounted at my request. People affirmed that the character behind the deceit, Quintiliano Hermosilla, sold the lands he had seized from the Mapuche to one of his most trusted workers, Abdón Rivas. Rivas managed the lands carelessly, and he was more concerned with travelling to Santiago and renting the land to obtain profits. Upon his death, his son, Rómulo Rivas, inherited the property. Unlike the other characters, most of the people who were in their forties or older actually met Rómulo, which resulted in a more complex empirical depiction of him. He is commonly referred to as a despot, a tyrant, a deceiver, somebody who had no restraint in acting against the Mapuche and attempting to steal the few lands they still possessed. There are several personal accounts of how Mapuche people tried to defend themselves from these abuses, commonly depicting how Rivas always answered violently, sending parties to beat Mapuche people or simply releasing his furious dogs to attack them.

Figure 4.1: Rivas estate house

Historical documentation correlates quite well with oral narratives. Reading it, it is not difficult to follow how the disputes between the Mapuche and Rivas reached the court. For instance, it documents that, in 1952, it was recognised that Rivas illegally occupied 102.70 of the 140 hectares that the State recognised as the inalienable possession of *reducción* Meliman.[109] Moreover, regarding the original dispossession, there are some documents that I found in the historical archives of Santiago presenting a very similar scenario to the one depicted in the narrative. In Lebu's notary office, between 1876 and 1902, 38 documents were subscribed regarding lands in Elicura, only considering the ones established between a person with a Mapuche surname (or a group of them), and a Winka counterpart.[110] In 27 cases this Winka counterpart is Quintiliano Hermosilla, in two cases it is his brother, Mardoqueo Hermosilla, and in another two Quintiliano Hermosilla appears as an associate of Anastasio Hernández, who later became the owner of *fundo* Hernández, composed of Elicura Valley southern lands. At the time, the province of Arauco was still in political formation, having only been legally constituted in 1853. Accordingly, many of the individuals who appear in these contracts occupied official

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[109] The documents are in the *reducción* Meliman folder, Archivo de Asuntos Indigenas, Temuco.

[110] In these contracts, besides showing Mapuche people dispersed several times to establish contracts in Lebu, there are important concentrations of them selling lands around the 6th of December of 1890 and the 24th of July of 1893. The exploration on Lebu's notary office archives was carried out as part of a previous research project headed by Rolf Foerster. Claudia Chamorro, Rolf Foerster, Constanza Villa, and I formed part of the archival research team.

charges, such as the Hermosilla brothers who were the principal administrator of the Province's mail, and the notary substitute of Cañete subdivision (Hermosilla 2002).

These dynamics show the establishment of what was fundo Rivas, in the north side of Elicura. However, in the south of the Valley something similar was happening, headed by Anastasio Hernández. When he died, his only daughter, Violeta, inherited "Elicura Estate", an enormous property of 7,400 hectares (Hermosilla 2002), which is hard to compare with the 283.3 hectares granted to 195 indigenous inhabitants of the Valley by the *Radicación* process at the beginning of the 20th century (see Introduction). She later married Gilberto da Pereira, a Brazilian man still remembered within Elicura by his nickname, "Gringo la (da) Pereira". People currently empathise with him because he could not stand his northern landholder neighbour, Rómulo Rivas, sometimes demonstrating their hostility for each other in episodic bullet exchanges. He was also had what appeared to be a funny custom of piloting a small airplane from Calebu to San Ernesto, estates that together composed his wife's property in Elicura.

2.1. Knowing the Other through Interaction Experiences

Although the above quoted story may speak for itself in several aspects, especially because it is enormously widespread and most Mapuche people in Elicura know it, I would like to stress some features of it, which are in fact highlighted by Mapuche people themselves. These correspond to essentially perceived characteristics of Mapuche counterpart interactions, and how its emphatic expression inclines me to think of this narrative as principally concerned with the theme of *knowing the Other*. Whenever I asked Mapuche people to characterise the Winka, a number of recurrent categories appeared. Two of the most salient are particularly referred to in the narrative. On the one hand, it was the concept of *deceit*. There is a remarkable consensus that Winka actions are often infested with hidden intentions, always aiming to trick their counterparts. On the other, there is the concept of *abuse*. In this sense, Mapuche people often emphasise that Winka people always try to impose

their views and their opinions, usually going beyond what is acceptable and employing coercive means. These two categories form part of people's daily personal experiences of Winkaness, this is undoubted. But interestingly, part of this personal experience is conveyed through social channels such as the historic narrative of how Mapuche people lost their lands in Elicura. In this case, there is a common past setting allowing a similar personal experimentation, "the lost", which is remembered and personally experimented with by the new generations who inherit the narrative. The collective setting for personal experimentation, which in fact is what allows collective experience, is then conveyed through personal conduits contemporarily.

We will now go on to observe why I think this narrative is about knowing the Other on a general level, to later allow personal experimentation in daily interactions. The narrative allows a conformation of a sense of otherness to be practiced within the realm of sociality. This otherness usually appears to be located in places or bodies, but this is not necessary at all. As we previously saw, this is a critical issue comprehending otherness from a Mapuche standpoint. In the narrative, this is clearly manifested through the presence of the *awinkado* foreign Mapuche, the character triggering the subsequent incidents.

Deceit

Deceit explicitly appears, within historical narratives, as a Winka default way of relating to Mapuche people. Often, in response to my queries on this statement, people declared "Don't you see? The Winka have deceived Mapuche people for the last 500 years, and they'll continue doing so". In my impression, the attachment of this characteristic to Winkaness has its roots in how history is perceived, specifically regarding how the means employed to dispossess Mapuche people from their lands are conceptualised. In this sense, the account we are dealing with is key to the connection between Winkaness and deceit, at least in Elicura. As the narrative shows, there are several elements implied in this foundational deceit, which is also the subject of symbolic moulding by Mapuche people, locating the fact that they are

in debt to them due to deceit at the core of their relationship with Winka. I would like to explore a few related elements further.

A crucial aspect with regard to deceit is *language*. It is often explicitly upheld that, in the past, most Mapuche people could not speak Spanish, and therefore they obviously could not read or write it. Winka people took advantage of this, forcing people to sign documents they could not really understand. This issue is often pointed out across Araucanía: "my grandfather spoke a little bit of Spanish, just to tell us that because he did not know how to speak it, his land was usurped" (Chihuailaf 1999:25). Moreover, although they recognise that there were interpreters, they argue that they deceived people as well, distorting translations. For this reason, these intermediary characters are often seen as traitors or simply *awinkados*. Furthermore, it is stated that all the authorities within the province were Winka, which left all Mapuche people defenceless regarding documentary affairs.

A second acutely stressed element is *alcohol*. It commonly appears in two ways: as a gift presented by Winka people in order to create a relationship that would later be betrayed, and as a further element employed to deceive and dispossess Mapuche people. Alcohol also occasionally appears as the payment for the ill-subscribed contracts. In Elicura, there are also several smaller-scale narratives referring to how specific people lost their family lands because of their alcohol consumption. It is stated that Winka people often set up small liquor stores selling wine, in order to make people addicted to it, and to eventually take their land in payment.

Finally, there was an element of Winka behaviour that was used to both deceive and then defend what was accomplished through it: *violence*. It is a ubiquitous aspect, appearing in accounts of how Mapuche people were relocated to a corner of their former lands, in how Winka people penetrated Mapuche lands as if they were their "owners", in the denomination change suffered by traditional toponymy within the Valley upon Winka arrival, etcetera. By all accounts, the physical violence exerted by Winka people is given particular emphasis within the narratives. The deaths of several men, as well as numerous abuses committed against women, are underscored as part of the process of Chilean occupation of Mapuche lands. As a friend stressed, "Winka people arrived raping, my grandmother said.

When they saw a young *Mapuchita* (Mapuche woman), they liked her and they raped her… that's why blood began to mix, because they raped and the young women became pregnant".

An extremely accurate image of the process may be reached by the figure of the burned *ruka* (Mp. "house") mentioned in the narrative, and how it is frequently affirmed as a quintessential manifestation of colonial violence.[111] This kind of account appears extremely widespread all over Araucanía, and it is sometimes employed to compare contemporary forest and machinery burnings carried out by Mapuche political groups. As my friend Juan stated, "Winka people say that the Mapuche are terrorists because they're burning timber plantations, but they forget about how they were the ones who taught Mapuche people to do that... They forget they were the ones who did that first".

Abuse

Alongside deceit appears a theme connected in several ways to it, which we could simply label as *abuse*. In the narrative, abuse appears in how the establishment of a certain order and the forced acceptance of it are historically perceived. What is crucially maintained is a situation where, through deceit, Winka people had the power to do what they pleased. The fact that the contracts were subscribed according to certain laws, in Spanish, and that their guarantors were all Winka, or *awinkados*, was not a coincidence. On several occasions, people remarked to me that before the Spanish arrival there was no law among the Mapuche, that they governed themselves pretty well thanks to their *admapu* (Mp. approx "customs") and *lonkos'* (Mp. approx. "headmen") wisdom. It was only when the Winka were increasingly established among the Mapuche that they imposed their law on them, fundamentally thanks to the power their weapons and armies granted them. Furthermore, there are people who declare that past Mapuche could not conceive that land could be sold. Thus,

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[111] Similar narratives have been recorded by Bengoa (2000) and Mallon (2004). Comparably, Maurice Bloch (1995) shows how elsewhere, among the Zafimary of Madagascar, a mass house burning performed by the French was metaphorically perceived as expressing the destruction of the community (and houses' reconstruction as community's reconfiguration).

contrary to what Winka people still say, considering themselves owners of land (fictionalizing it as a commodity), Mapuche people thought they were part of the land, and that the land owned them (Foerster 2008). They did not have a relationship of property, but of symbiosis. That is why, on many occasions, very poor Winka people who arrived in Elicura looking for a piece of land where they could build a hut, were granted permission by Mapuche people without inconveniences. And that is also why, once this happened, Winka people believed themselves to be the owners of the land, and began to act accordingly.

In this context, the Mapuche appear to be a subaltern population, forced to accept coercively imposed rules. Many people openly state that they did not have any other choice in front of the powerful foreigners but to humiliate themselves. The climax of this humiliation was reached, for instance, through the process of forced peasantry Mapuche people suffered because of the loss of their lands. Having no land to cover their basic needs, most people had to look for work opportunities in their ancient lands, which were now ruled by Winka landholders. People sadly remember how many of them had to work "from sun to sun" in neighbouring estates in order to survive. The pay they received is described as "miserable", and although the estate owners provided food for their labourers, people commonly refer to these metaphorically as instances when they were "feeding the cattle". A huge pot, normally filled with a poorly prepared beans-based stew was provided at around noon, and people had to eat from there, as they could. Furthermore, it is asserted that the bosses often forced them to work by throwing lassos on them.

If the story of Kai-Kai shows a theoretical conception of Winkaness as a dislocation of the Mapuche self, the story of people dispossessed of their lands is intended to physically know Winkaness, as personified in particular bodies. More specifically, it is a story illustrating how the defining aspects of otherness may be found to persistently arise among specific human types. In this sense, one could understand it as somehow forming a collective history through the aggregation of a myriad of personal experiences echoing each other. This is something I believe to be critical to how the Mapuche comprehend narratives in general and this one in particular. I am referring to the fact they are actual experiential accounts. In this fact rests the value of the embodied Winkaness conception it delivers.

In my opinion, the story of how Mapuche people lost their lands is a story that, accounting personal experiences, is similar to many other accounts of interactions with Winka people. But it is also different, as far as it is widely shared. This is possible due to its very likely common setting, where several persons could experience a similar situation. This is essential in order to understand how this narrative of *knowing the Other* reached a widespread collective scale, as we will see next.

3. Mapuche, Winka, Myth and History

A great extent of the existing literature about the Mapuche is devoted to collecting traditional narratives. When one begins the adventure of reading it, what perhaps attracts most attention is the way these accounts often display an unconventional version of "actual" historical events. For example, we may find characters such as "Cristo Colón" ("Christ Colombus"), who in the past travelled to Mapuche lands because "in a book he realised that there was a *mapu* far away" (Koessler-Ilg 2007 I:278). Alternatively, we may find foreign kings sending their messengers to greet their Mapuche colleagues, and how they committed several abuses against Mapuche people without following their kings' instructions (Augusta 1934; Koessler-ilg 2007 II; Lenz 1912). During my fieldwork, I came across several situations resembling these. I heard, for instance, numerous references to how Christopher Colombus, or his local variant Pedro de Valdivia, interacted with ancient Mapuche people, which were not necessarily concerned with being "objectively-founded". What these references shared, if not objective underpinnings, was how, in all of them, their non-Mapuche protagonists were invariably negatively portrayed. This was specially emphasised because Colombus and Valdivia were ubiquitously taken as the quintessence of empirical Winkaness. Through their invasion of Mapuche lands, and the example they gave to Mapuche people, it is practically explained how ill-behaviour appeared among the Mapuche. They were the ones who triggered the emergence of debauched behaviour.

Yet, besides its symbolic role, what attracted my attention to these narratives from the very beginning was how they merged, without too much concern, what I had naively conceived of as history (past events of verifiable occurrence), with what I saw as myth (narratives that, although meaningful, were made up). As I realised later, in Elicura it seemed extremely difficult, if not impossible or perhaps even useless, to ascertain where mythology finished and history began (cf. Lévi-Strauss 1979).

The two narratives explored in this chapter might perfectly exemplify this problem. Even though we could be tempted to classify them approximately by contrasting them to a transcendent reality criterion, when we think about how they are currently employed, and how they depict a past and a perfectly possible present experiential context, the possibilities of drawing such a boundary would become increasingly blurred. Although my main focus in this chapter has revolved around how narratives inform people about Otherness and vice versa, I will now explore the extent to which it is useful (or even possible) to trace a distinction such as the one between myth and history among the Mapuche. This exploration will help us to better understand how the ontological status of narratives is not as important as the empirical distance people envisage between themselves and what the narratives describe. What is questionable from the narratives in this sense is not the truth they convey (Chapter 1), but the extent to which the truths they depict are true to different singular persons. As High (2009) has presented among the Waorani of Ecuador, past representations are never unitary, and their diversity should be comprehended as legitimate alternatives together forming a social memory, and not as competing conventions attempting to impose a singular view of it. For the Mapuche, these different narratives could not be anything else but singular alternatives experienced by particular persons. But it is for exactly this reason that they are relevant, because they express past experiences informing present ones. No narrative can claim an ontological priority; they all simply exist because they are particular experiential accounts. Then it is up to people to assess and realise to what extent the truths they convey are true to them.

3.1. History v/s Myth, or Truth Distance-Assessment

After Lévi-Strauss' (1966) famous distinction between "cold" and "hot" societies, a huge debate emerged regarding indigenous peoples' historical conceptions among Lowland South American scholars. The most frequent assumption regarding Lévi-Strauss' proposal frames it in a synchronic perspective that somehow denied the existence of history, as such, among indigenous peoples, instead granting primacy to the irrational realm of myth. As a result, scholars attempted to show the opposite, that indigenous Amazonians not only had historical consciousness, but theirs is at least as complex as the one stated in the core of "hot" societies (i.e. Hill 1988; Fausto and Heckenberger 2007). However, it has been argued several times that Lévi-Strauss was not actually suggesting what many understood (i.e. Course 2010; Gow 2001; Lévi-Strauss 1979, 1981, 1992; Sahlins 1985). Indeed, instead of proposing a radical distinction homologous to irrational versus rational, his proposal gave primacy to how different ways of thinking operated. As such, later comprehension of his suggestion does not consider the concurrence of different ways of thinking within a specific society, which makes it clear that Lévi-Strauss never actually denied "history" to indigenous peoples. Eventually, Lévi-Strauss' critics appear to occupy Obeyesekere's place in his famous discussion with Sahlins, and as such, for them, it could easily be stated that, in anti-ethnocentrism's name, it seems that Amazonians "are endowed with the highest form of Western mentality, while Western scholars slavishly repeat the irrational beliefs of their ancestors" (Sahlins 1995:9).[112]

Recalling this issue is not merely a posthumous defence of Lévi-Strauss, but simply to show how, sometimes, the history/myth distinction appears to still be extremely relevant to us in order to "measure degrees of civilisation". It often seems that a supposed denial of historicity could imply, at the same time, a denial of rationality. What I want to put forward here is simply that this assumption, or rather, the introduction of the history/myth distinction as an analytical device, lacks relevance when used to depict ontologies that do not conceive of such a classification. In this way, I do not want to simply argue against perspectives that see myth and history "as two separate and complementary modes of representing the

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[112] To follow the discussion, see Obeyesekere (1994) and Sahlins (1985, 1995).

past" (Hugh-Jones 1989:56). Instead, I want to propose that among the Mapuche the myth/history distinction is pointless, and one that stresses the experiences depicted by the narratives and how commensurable they are when interpreted by singular persons should replace it.

Anthropologists' responses to the assumed blurred distinction some societies present between history and myth are often connected to how both genres symbiotically interact (Harris 1995). It is also asserted that it is not necessary to distinguish between them, because both "are modes of social consciousness through which people construct shared interpretative frameworks" (Hill 1988:5). However, whether or not societies differentiate between both genres seems to not be as important as anthropologists' capacity to perceive them both "out there". Some years ago, Viveiros de Castro (2002a) pointed out a problem that had been suggested by a colleague, based upon a challenging indigenous statement: "the peccaries are human". His response then was that the utterance said nothing about the peccaries, but quite a lot about the people who thought that. Likewise, I think Anthropologists' concern with the history/myth distinction is not actually informing us about the indigenous peoples, but quite a lot about Anthropologists themselves.

As mentioned, it has been generally established that Mapuche people have two main genres with which to narrate the past: *epew* and *nütram*, which are respectively taken as equivalents to myth and history. In my opinion, however, to translate them as such would be extremely misleading. This is not just because there is a combination of fiction/reality in both, making them, at best, just approximately distinguishable. Instead, it is mainly because the "matter of definition" of both history and myth is of a different nature to the one concerning *epew* and *nütram*. Meanwhile, the first dyad is generally opposed by claiming a transcendent reality and an objectivity criteria, the second distinction rests fundamentally in the consideration of how distant one is to the persons who experienced what the accounts describe. *Epew* and *nütram* assimilation to myth and history is thus revealing our perspective, and perhaps not the Mapuche.

Recently, Course (2009, 2010) has shown how Mapuche genres on the past share a strong emphasis on being individually-centred. Among them, many narratives are told from a personal experience that is usually located explicitly

asserting the source which they came from. To my view, this is directly related to the absolute relevance Mapuche people grant to personal experience. As discussed previously, this results in a personally-centred conception of truth instead of an objectified one, which allows sharing it only through the deliberated creation of a similar perspective. If we move this claim to the subject we are discussing, we should be aware that in any story to be shared, there is a trace of reality whose validity is impossible to universalise. One experiential account is always one in a million of possibilities. In total awareness of this, when hearing an empirical account, Mapuche people proceed to assess how valid the truths conveyed by it are to oneself, personally. This task is carried out by assessing the similarity of the one who experienced the account to oneself. It is performed through what I called a *truth distance-assessment* (Chapter 1). I would like to bring this concept once again to the foreground. This is because, to my view, through it we could better grasp the difference I see between *epew* and *nütram.*

The main divergence many Mapuche people perceived between the story of Kai-Kai and the one of how the Mapuche lost their lands, was one of *temporality*. For many of them, the first story had occurred in ancient times, while the other was just a century and a few decades ago. In practical terms, this was pointed out when stating the source of each narrative. For the first one, this was elaborated as "*los antiguos decían*" (Sp. "the ancient ones said"), while in the second case it was stressed that the story described something experienced by a direct kin. In the first case there was some sort of imaginary relation with the original narrators, while in the second there was a directly traceable one. Beyond this difference, however, people often did not see others.[113] Both were simply accounts of a past, illuminating some specific aspects of the present. They only differed in the distance each person perceived between them and the persons who experienced the narratives.

Many Winka, government officials, and even some Mapuche people used to link this perceived practical merging of history and myth, performed by a significant amount of the rural Mapuche population, with a pervasive "ignorance" or

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[113] There were, obviously, some people who distinguished between both narratives employing an "objectivity" criterion. Following these lines, the story of the deception of Mapuche people was perceived as plausible and real, but the story of Kai-Kai was conceived as an evident fantasy. I will address this difference when dealing with the ontological heterogeneity one may find within Elicura social life, which will be the focus of Chapter 5.

"primitivism". This was often openly asserted, as it is widely assumed that "real" or "valid" knowledge can only be reached by attending Chilean institutions of formal education. In a sense these claims are right. The blurriness of the boundary between history and myth is actually due to how people, because they have not attended schools, have not been forced to think through such a distinction. But the claims are wrong in the sense that thinking without such a distinction is not necessarily worse or "less rational". What occurs is that the two ways of thinking about the narratives diverge in how they ontologically conceive them. Whereas the first upholds the existence of a transcendent reality equally apprehensible at a human scale, the second proposes a deep *immanentism* based upon a *radical personal singularism*.

Between the story of Kai-Kai and the one depicting how the Mapuche people were deceived, there is not a difference of type, but only of personal degrees. This is predicated upon how "close" the truth they convey is, as it is displayed by both narratives with regard to each particular person. This "closeness" is measured according to who the subject experiencing the events was. In the case of the story of Kai-Kai, its truth is relatively far, as it is in most of the stories coming from the "ancient ones". In the case of the story of Mapuche deception, on the contrary, its truth is often very close, as most people knew a subject who experienced it (and who was also the vehicle sharing the story). Therefore, when Mapuche people differentiate between *epew* and *nütram*, what they are doing is measuring and comparing the distance between themselves and the realities the stories express. They are not discerning a transcendent truthfulness as in the myth and history distinction, which, for the Mapuche, is a matter that could only be based upon a judgement of whether the narratives were really experienced or made up.[114] The Mapuche distinction is not radical, but is simply based on distance: on how far or close a particular person is from the person whose perspective is displayed in the narrative.

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[114] See Chapter 1 for a discussion about the possibility of falsehood among the Mapuche.

3.2. Narratives, Experience and Knowledge about the Other

The second matter of concern that will be addressed in this section is perhaps more explicitly related to the central focus of this thesis. Briefly, it regards the role played by different narratives, as the previously quoted, vis-à-vis general conceptions of Otherness. So far we have seen how the two narratives I quote refer to "different" others: the first to an ill-self, the second to its experiential embodiment. Now I want to address how these two others converge and conform to establish an integrated whole, alongside experience, allowing a proto-corpus of knowledge about Winkaness. This discussion goes beyond the interactive relationship between history and myth (cf. Lévi-Strauss 1981), and its scope principally regards the connection between personal experiences and how they can be shared among the Mapuche.

Perhaps the most influential approach on the relation between experience, myth and history proposed in anthropology is Sahlins' *mythopraxis* (1985, 1995). Briefly explained, this concept refers, first, to how myths have an empirical basis, and secondly, to how later myth may be "found" in reality. There is a cyclical interaction between reality-myth-reality, which may eventually imply a specific reading of reality through myth and vice versa. Myth is the frame employed to interpret reality, and at the same time, it is generated and reinforced by reality. This approach has found high acceptance, especially among scholars working on Melanesia (Kirsch 2006; Schieffelin and Crittenden 1991; Scott 2007). And, in my impression, it might, at least be useful to exemplify what I perceive as similarly occurring among some Mapuche people.

Having actually been experienced at some point, all the narratives are considered to be relevant because they provide information about a specific possible outcome of a given situation. They display one prospect of experimentation within a certain setting. As such, they are relevant insofar as they vividly depict possibilities of reality. As previously stated in this thesis, this is not necessarily done in order to guide personal behaviour through advice. Such a possibility is only admissible among people sharing a similar perspective, and then a similar outcome experiencing the world (Chapter 1 and 2). Rather, it is simply and merely because it depicts a

possibility, which, although it can have resemblances with different personal experiences, is interesting just as much as any perspective of the world.

Previously, I also stated how Mapuche people judged, or assessed, other people's truths and the possible application of them according to a "distance" criterion. Through it, people evaluate the degree of similarity between one reality perspective/experience with respect to their own personal perspective. Such an assessment is fundamentally predicated on the perceived similarity, in terms of personhood, of the people considered in the assessment (Chapter 2). Accordingly, it could be expected that for a given person there could be different degrees of truth. From one that is extremely close, embodied by the experiences arising from his/her convivial unit, to one that is slightly less close, embodied by the people from his/her *tuwün* (Mp. approx. "place of origin"), and further still, to one personified by the Mapuche people of the province, and so on, until reaching a Winka perspective.

It is thanks to the performance of this evaluation, I think, that the Mapuche comprehension of socialised narratives resembles *mythopraxis*. For the Mapuche, narratives exist because they account an experience. They are founded in actual people's engagement within the world. That is why they are worth being remembered and being accounted. By being socialised, as in the cases presented by the narratives analysed in this chapter, the experiential knowledge they convey can reach scales wide enough to be shared by almost the entire Elicura Valley population.

An interesting characteristic shared by the stories I quote in this chapter, is that they both represent a setting that allows a singular experience of something that is also collective. They represent an accumulation of several similar personal narratives, pointing to an analogous direction. As such, they are specially considered, recounted and remembered. This is what allows them to appear when a proper context arises, when a massive earthquake occurs, or when an anthropologist asks about the Winka. Then, the narrative also receives feedback through the link that is personally established between knowing past experiences and experiencing a reality resembling them (as specifically judged). This is what eventually allows a reconfiguration and a perpetual remembering of the narratives as meaningful units for understanding what is going on in the Mapuche lived worlds.

With this in mind, we can recall the roles I ascribed to the narratives. The story of Kai-Kai is explicitly one of a transcendent rage caused by people's debauched behaviour, for abandoning their correct self, for becoming the other. Similarly, when situations such as the ones the story depicts occur in people's experience, they are interpreted as linked to the experience delineated by the narrative. On the other hand, I stated that the story of how Mapuche people in the Valley lost their lands is a story about practically knowing the other, related to how the debauched behaviour characterizing the dislocated self may be found in specific persons. As such, it is often stated as an example to describe the Winka, how they behave, and how they establish relationships with Mapuche people. That story is also reinforced by people's personal experiences of relationships with Winka people, which often resemble this foundational one. As a result, narratives converge in people's lives. Practical awareness of otherness, embodied by Winka, is connected to a practical dislocation of the self. Thus, two others, who are not necessarily the same, are moulded to be one through the convergence of experiences, the past one of others, the present one of the self.

4. Conclusion: How Shared Can Experiential Accounts Be?

A final concern I would like to address in this chapter regards the extent to which it is possible to uphold the existence of "collective" ideas among the Mapuche. Even though Mapuche people maintain a personally-founded conception of truth, I have stated there is also a sense in which truth could be considered to be collectivised. In my impression, however, this is not due to the matching relationship that exists between the reality and the utterances regarding that reality, but because it is possible to find a resembling recurrence between several different personal experiences of one particular reality. Collectiveness, then, is reached through some sort of experiential consensus, founded upon shared experiential capacities, or, more radically, upon sharing, to a certain extent, a singular perspective (created through managing relatedness, see Chapter 2). A collective truth is possible not because there

is a univocal reality backing what an utterance states, but because there is a set of stated experiences depicting a similar reality. For this reason, perhaps, one should avoid talking about collective narratives among the Mapuche, referring instead to *plural narratives*, which, allowing a similar experiential scenario, does not necessarily suggest that each personal experience of it is the same. Good examples, in this case, are the stories around which this chapter has been erected. There is a twofold reason that allows their widespread *pluralisation.* On the one hand, a common experiential context. On the other, the actual contemporary occurrence of personal experiences that resemble other equivalent personal experiences.

My own exploration of the Mapuche conception of shared narratives echoes Course's (2010) approach to understanding how Mapuche people recount the past. Following him, my hypothesis is that Mapuche people conceive history not as structural and transcendental flow, but simply as an aggregation of particular individual lives. Within this aggregation, a shared scenario that is similarly experienced sometimes appears. This scenario is what allows *pluralisation*. Here I am not just referring to creating a plural collective through a conscious handling of relatedness, by increasing personal similarity (Chapter 2). That only works within the convivial unit, maybe among the inhabitants of a particular homestead, perhaps in a group of Patrikin. But the *pluralisation* of narratives we are exploring here seems to require a similarity beyond those boundaries. It could be argued, for example, that it is the one granted by sharing the ontological status of being Mapuche.

In this chapter I have attempted to address two widespread narratives within Elicura, focusing on how they share a common concern about Otherness. I have also stressed how they contextually appeared as relevant informing interpretative accounts for many of the people among whom I lived during my fieldwork. At this point, however, I think it is necessary to emphasise that many of the proposals I have put forward as characterizing a Mapuche ontology thus far are not necessarily valid for all the people self-recognised as Mapuche within Elicura and elsewhere. In the next chapter I will try to deal with the reasons behind this divergence. As follows, I will explore the ontological heterogeneity of Mapuche social life, clarifying the innumerable standpoints that are available within Elicura Valley from which to think about Mapucheness. This exploration will be essential to the discussion I will have

fully put forth by the end of this thesis, which regards how, immersed and aware of this ontological diversity, Mapuche people comprehend and engage in social life.

Part Three

The Multi/Equi-Vocality of Sociality

Chapter 5:

To Be or not To Be "People of the Land"
Three Different Understandings of Being Mapuche

> "It's not easy to see things in the middle, rather than looking down on them from above or up at them from below, or from left to right or right to left: try it, you'll see that everything changes"

> G. Deleuze and F. Guattari[115]

In the first pages of this thesis I introduced a statement some Mapuche people maintain, explaining how it sparked off my research interests. This statement was: "*there are Mapuche people in every country of the World*". I temporarily left it aside, while trying to address different aspects that I deemed to be critical to understanding a Mapuche ontology. Having tackled these aspects, I think it is now time to bring it back to the foreground. In this chapter I will make it the centre of attention, while attempting to explore what different people may mean, and what others may understand, by such a claim. Through this, I intend to distinguish between three different conceptions of what it is to be a Mapuche. It is worth noting that these conceptions do not simply emerge from my own analytical abstractions, but that they were distinguished and employed as part of Elicura's social life. Furthermore, they were especially relevant when drawing boundaries of difference, which were highlighted through the employment of different idioms, such as ignorant, *awinkado* (Winka-like), or *amapuchado* (Mapuche-like), which often illustrated the practical recognition of these different conceptions.

   In my experience, the clearest way to discern the dissimilarities between these three understandings was by observing how they differently conceptualised the Mapuche/Winka distinction. Accordingly, I have organised this chapter to try to unravel the ontological assumptions behind each conceptualisation of it. In first

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[115] 1988:23.

place, I will explore how the distinction was sometimes enwrapped in an *ethnical* veil, strongly centred on a reified notion of culture. Secondly, I will observe how the distinction was also perceived as tracing ontological boundaries between different kinds of human beings. In lack of a better term, I label this understanding *traditional*. Finally, I will look at how, at times, the distinction was perceived to be pointless or even surplus to requirements, and how it was thought that it should be obliterated, in light of a universal status defined by a common relationship to a third party. This understanding is fundamentally present among Mapuche people who profess an *Evangelical* faith.

Before exploring the assumptions behind each understanding, I would like to recall and clarify a few points. In this chapter, by focusing on one claim and one distinction, and attempting to perceive how they are understood according to different ontological assumptions, I am not simply evoking an old disciplinary concern with the inherent multivocality of social life (e.g. Bateson 1958; Rapport 1993). Instead, what I will deliberately attempt is to expose the parallels one may draw between what takes place in Mapuche social life and the theoretical framework granted by *Amerindian perspectivism* (Viveiros de Castro 1998, 2004a, 2010a). I am not intending to do so metaphorically, but in an extremely literal sense. The essential link that is required in order to make the connection between Mapuche social reality and such a model can be found in the multiple meanings of the term "Mapuche", and how they generally correspond to each singular comprehension of one's own self. Thus, if in *Perspectivism* the key shared feature is that every being is human to itself (Viveiros de Castro 1998), in Elicura social life one may propose the same is valid between each person and his/her self perception as Mapuche. As I previously put it, the link is in the fact that, for the Mapuche, *everybody is Mapuche to himself or herself* (Chapter 2).[116]

By exploring these different understandings, I will also deal with at least two dissimilar comprehensions of identity, which can be understood as "relational" and "attributional" (Ingold 1993). However, instead of discussing whether identity should be comprehended as formed on a process of ongoing relatedness or by tracing

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[116] Humanity is therefore never at stake. Rather, ontological instability among the Mapuche is directly connected to the different types of persons (Mapuche or Winka) inhabiting the world, and how they are differently assessed and perceived as such by each specific person.

connections to reified categories, I will attempt to show that they may coexist perfectly as parallel options, avoiding any monolithical imposition. Indeed, instead of being competing understandings of how identity works, in Elicura they perfectly coexist as equally valid alternatives of what identity may imply to particular persons (cf. Briones 2007; High 2009).

To conclude this brief introduction, I would like to state two final points. From the premise stating that everybody is Mapuche to himself or herself, one may expect the emergence of a pervasive *equivocation*. Following Viveiros de Castro (2004b, 2010a), this would be an inherent characteristic of interactions, due to the referential alterity implied by perspectival reasoning in an interspecies setting. Although I obviously cannot claim such an interspecies context in Elicura, because of the primacy Mapuche people grant to personal experience, I nevertheless see *equivocation* as an intrinsic characteristic that Mapuche people ascribe to social life. The only difference between Viveiros de Castro's proposal and what Mapuche people uphold regards an awareness of equivocation. Thus, if Viveiros de Castro refers to equivocation as "a type of communicative disjuncture where the interlocutors are not talking about the same thing, and do not know this" (2004b:9), social life among the Mapuche would imply not talking about the same thing, but always being aware that this is happening. The reason behind this is rather simple. It is located in the fact that, as each person is a unique and a priori disconnected singularity, when they first interact they do not necessarily share a semantic field. Furthermore, they do not share the illusion of talking about the same thing because, unless personal standpoints were managed to create similarity, to do so would be simply impossible.[117]

Finally, although otherness among the Mapuche may superficially appear to be personified by people broadly classified as Winka, we have explored how it could be better understood as a personal-relative conception of how people differ from one's own self. In other words, although otherness sometimes emerges as *essential*, we have explored how it is often primordially thought of as relational (Viveiros de Castro 2002a, 2010a). Thus, the "other" may appear as a superficially shared referent (Winka people), but it is always different when we compare the depth of each

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[117] I will develop this argument in Chapter 6.

personal perspective. To this duality of otherness, and how it conversely stands as a referent to consider what it is to be a Mapuche, I devote this chapter's first section.

1. The Meanings of Otherness

In this section, I will attempt to summarise what I have fragmentarily put forward throughout this thesis regarding otherness and what frequently appears as its radical embodiment: Winka people. I will do so in order to support my later exploration of how Mapucheness is thought of in Elicura. So far we have seen how, in practice, Otherness and Winkaness often merged to become one. Indeed, from this merging derives the antagonistic definition of Winka as non-Mapuche (Course 2011; Di Giminiani 2011; Faron 1961a). However, it is my claim that this does not imply that Winka and Other are always synonymous. As I have proposed, otherness for the Mapuche assumes a duality: one may find it embodied by certain people, but it is fundamentally a category defined by each particular self.[118] Therefore, if they appear to be merged it is simply because they are often perceived to overlap, this is because a connection between ideal self-conceptions of otherness and some recurrent practical manifestations perceived as linked to them are sometimes observed (Chapter 4).

Beyond this discussion, in the following I will attempt to show the aspects of this duality, overlapped or separated, which are highlighted by different understandings of what it means to be a Mapuche in Elicura. For the sake of my argument, I will divide my exploration into two parts. In the first, I will address how otherness may be experienced in daily life as derived from specific embodiments. In the second, I will deal with how otherness is reflected as relational, and thought of as opposed to what is particularly understood as a proper self.

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[118] In the gap between this duality one may find the explanation for several apparent contradictions. For instance, to why otherness is not necessarily linked to Winka bodies, and why not every Winka person is necessarily seen as corrupted. It also explains why Mapuche people frequently encourage relationships with Winka people, and the employment of Winka goods and knowledge, as similarly observed elsewhere in indigenous South America (e.g. Gow 1991, 1993; Hugh-Jones 1988, 1989; Ireland 1988; Turner 1988; Vilaça 1999, 2006). Winkaness is not negative per se, but only as much as it embodies the Mapuche slot for moral otherness.

1.1. Experiencing Otherness

I used to be intrigued by the Mapuche use of the term *gringo*. It generally stressed provenance, and through it people addressed any person who was not born in Chile. However, there were also several people who, although Chilean born, were considered to be *gringos* because their families came from a foreign country other than Spain. The descendants of German settlers, inhabiting the Contulmo surrounding areas, were the quintessential example of this. On one occasion, I was trying to clarify the meaning of *gringo* with a friend, but all I got was an even more blurred image. In his view, *gringos* were simply *Winka*. I asked him, then, why do people refer to them as *gringos*. "That's because everybody calls them that, but actually they're Winka", he reaffirmed. As I had a feeling that I did not understand what he meant, I asked him more practically: "but you say Winka people came from Spain… how can these people be Winka if they didn't come from there?" His answer was revealing: "well, the thing is they are Winka for the Mapuche of their country".

Similarly, on another occasion I was talking about the same topic with another friend who stated that *gringos* were nothing but *Winka*. He went on to tell me emphatically: "it doesn't matter if he's *gringo*, Spanish, Chilean or whatever. If he's white, he's Winka. That problem is related to the Spanish language. For example, in Spanish one can greet people in different ways, saying *buenos días* ("good morning"), *buenas tardes* ("good afternoon"), *buenas noches* ("good evening"), and so on… and it's always the same, you're always greeting. In Chedungun, instead, one always says *mari mari*,[119] no matter what time of the day it is. The same happens with Winka".

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[119] Mapuche greeting expression; It literally means "ten ten", but it supposedly implies a figurative union of "your ten and my ten" fingers as a salutation gesture.

As explored in Chapter 2, Mapuche people usually emphasise a set of substances to draw differences between what they distinguish as Mapuche and Winka. Among them, perhaps the most relevantly stressed were *blood*, and how it allows the existence of different human physicalities encompassed by the idea of race, and the relationship persons have with *land* (whether or not they are a consubstantial part of it). Based on these two substances, it was possible to claim the existence of two different kinds of people. However, considering what people confront in reality, such a perfect model usually needs to be adapted. This happened, for example, when ascertaining that there were Mapuche in every country of the world, people pointed out that there were certain circumpolar indigenous groups that they knew of through the media who were not dark-skinned (a characteristic often thought of as inherent to Mapucheness), but blonde. For this reason, the definition of the people who are Mapuche, and the ones who are not, usually had a strong land-relation bias.[120] The key ontological differentiation between Mapuche and Winka would then be given by the kind of relationship people have with land. To be a Mapuche fundamentally implied a relationship of *tuwün* (Chapter 2), to be a "person from the land". To be a Winka, conversely, was to lack such a relationship, to be rootless.

Linked to this loose definition of Mapuche/Winka, and to its universality, one may find the usual lack of specific "cultural" references regarding this opposition. In this sense, on numerous occasions I heard of experiences regarding how people met "other Mapuche" from elsewhere. Once, for instance, a friend told me how she came to know some Mapuche who called themselves Aymara. As she stated, "these Mapuche women [Aymara] wove in a different way though. And their clothes were totally different to those I'd seen before. They also spoke a very difficult Chedungun, which I couldn't understand at all". Likewise, several people ascertained that Aymara and Rapa Nui[121] were just names people gave these groups, but that they were simply Mapuche. Furthermore, one friend even told me that he had met a group of Mapuche in Brazil who called themselves Guarani, but who made very different

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[120] This kind of information has sometimes been employed to equate the term Mapuche to the term indigenous, as if they were synonyms in people's usage (e.g. Course 2011).
[121] Following the Mapuche, these are the two most significant Chilean indigenous peoples in terms of number.

things to what Chilean Mapuche made, yet still hunted with arrows and painted their faces and bodies (González Gálvez 2007).

Once this diametrical distinction is drawn, people more specifically characterise the categories of Winka and Mapuche by observing recurrent patterns that they present (cf. Stuchlik 1976:19-22). That is why, for example, skin colour appeared as a differential factor. But perhaps what more recurrently and relevantly appears in this differentiation regards the ascription of different moralities (cf. Londoño Sulkin 2005). Thus, while Mapucheness appears to embody all that is right and good in the world; Winkaness usually appears to be connected to adjectives denoting corruption. In this situation, the history of colonialism and the abuses Mapuche people have suffered play an obvious role. This way, Winka people are characterised by deceitfulness, distrust, selfishness, and so on. Furthermore, as it is widely maintained that Winka people stole the land of Mapuche people, one of the most frequent labels attached to Winka is "thief". In Elicura, *Winka trewa* and *Winka weñeve* (Mp. "Winka dog" and "Winka thief", respectively) were two frequent elaborations to refer to Winkaness explicitly manifesting this pejorative association. This connection is so established that when Mapuche people are identified as thieves, many people assert that it is because they are *awinkados* (Winka-like).

These characterisations are, however, not simply due to remembering past interethnic relationships, but they are often reaffirmed by people's daily experiences. Currently, for example, Winka people often appear to promote delinquent behaviour. In this sense, it is often claimed that rapes, drugs, or killings were unknown until very recently in Mapuche communities, and that they only existed among the Winka. If these issues have reached Mapuche lives it is only because they are depicted on television, and that is why they have been increasingly adopted by Mapuche people (as part of a general *awinkamiento*).

Another way that Mapuche people experience the differences they have to Winka people (creating, at the same time, a sense of "being the same"), is through the discrimination they suffer. I once asked one of my best friends in Elicura: "You say you're a Mapuche and I'm a Winka, but you don't make it clear why that is. What is the difference between us?" His reply was crystal clear: "the difference is that I'll be discriminated against in this society [Chilean] and you won't". The

narratives regarding being discriminated against by Winka people were innumerable during my fieldwork, involving all sorts of settings, from school to daily life interactions within the Valley. People perceive that Winka people, normally from neighbouring towns, are very likely to discriminate against Mapuche people because of their ignorance, or because, as another friend told me, "they don't want to accept that we [Mapuche] are here, that these are actually our lands". Discrimination was based on a series of preconceptions depicting Mapuche people as lazy, dirty, ignorant, and drunk. Accompanying friends to Winka towns, I frequently had the sense that they were mistreated simply because they were Mapuche. The same happened in places where there was necessarily a closer physical contact, such as in the buses that travel daily between the different towns in the Province.

1.2. *Reflecting* (on) Otherness

One day I was helping my friend Juan to plough land to plant potatoes. When we finished, he asked me to help him carrying an extra yoke he had to his neighbour. I asked who this neighbour was, and he replied, "His name is Jorge… he's a Chilean, not a Mapuche". A few weeks later I was with Juan and I asked him if his "Chilean neighbour" had returned the yoke he had lent him. He asked me "which yoke?" "The one we took to Jorge's house", I replied. Then he told me, "but Jorge isn't Chilean, he's Winka, we [Mapuche] are the real Chileans".[122] A long time afterwards, I was drinking mate tea with Juan and his wife, Maria. We remained together for a long time, taking shelter from the heavy rain outside. As is usual in Elicura, we were entertaining ourselves by chatting about several people in the Valley, among them Jorge. After telling a couple of anecdotes Maria concluded, "Well, what happens with him [Jorge] is that he has a Mapuche wife, that's why he's very *amapuchado* [Mapuche-like]".

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[122] Depending on the context, the concept of Chilean may refer to Winka as opposed to Mapuche, or it may refer to Mapuche as opposed to Winka.

Beyond the essences establishing the distinction between Mapuche and Winka, there were several aspects that were contextually highlighted to stress people's otherness or similarity. For this reason, as I have observed, the Mapuche/Winka distinction could never be definitively established in practice. Although otherness often appeared as empirically located in Winka bodies, it conceptually exceeded those manifestations by far. Indeed, it was more a sense implied in what it is to be a self, rather than something characterising those bodies. Otherness was a reference. Something ascertaining what is not a self, what a self should not be, and what a self should avoid.

In this dislocated sense, otherness (referred to by the idiom Winka), represented everything which was not perceived to be part of the self, and which was located in total opposition to it. By opposing both conceptions –Mapuche/self and Winka/other– an ideal continuum allowing personal assessments of other peoples as "closer to the self" ("more Mapuche"), or more distant to it ("more Winka") was established (see Chapter 2). These personal assessments were, however, always personal-relative. As such, they did not convey any formal institutionalization.
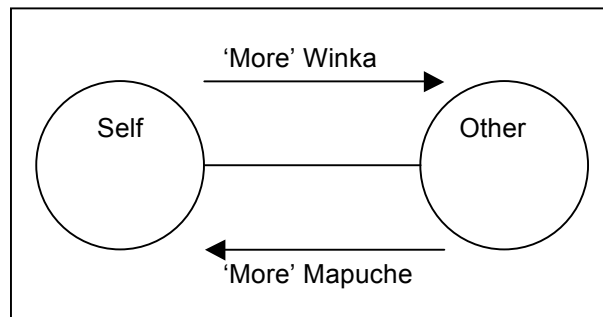
Figure 5.1: Self/Other assessment continuum

In this way, the Mapuche/Winka distinction would ideally just be a way of proposing a radical difference between what is a self and what is not (cf. Lévi-Strauss 1992; Stasch 2009). In this sense, to define otherness one should not attempt to enumerate characteristics one may find "out there". On the contrary, one should realise it is a concept located in the particular way each person sees him/herself, other persons, and the relationships they establish with them. As such, otherness is never beyond

the person, but it is in the particular way it is conceived by each singular person (cf. Caiuby Novaes 1997).

Bearing in mind the self/other continuum each person draws, we can better understand the concept of *awinkarse* (becoming Winka-like), which invariably depicts a distance assessment performed by the one who claims it. In its different verbal expressions, *awinkarse* or *awinkamiento* implies a perceived process through which the self moves away from its ideal position –Mapucheness– and begins a movement towards its opposite: Winkaness. As stated, it fundamentally works as an external way of depicting other people's locations, through the consideration of their actions, relationships and general behaviour, but it may also imply a self-reflective perspective considering a perceived self-distance from the considered Mapuche position. Although it may imply perceived Winka influence, it is much more related to self-consciousness, as a necessary awareness of what the self should be in order to not become the Other.

The avoidance of becoming the Other, of dislocating the Self, or of *awinkarse*, has frequently been depicted as a major concern among Mapuche people, from the fear of degrading oneself to a lower category, to the possibility of being the cause of cosmic catastrophes (e.g. Araya 1998; Augusta 1934; Campos Menchaca 1972a; Foerster 1993; Foerster and Montecino 1990; Hernández 2003). However, this transformative process has often only been looked at as classical acculturation (e.g. Stuchlik 1971a), as if people and groups were receptacles for cultural content which can be gained or lost as a result of cultural interaction. At most, an indigenous ability to interpret exogenous elements through their own cultural patterns has been recognised (i.e. Zavala 2008). But through supposing supra-individual levels of meaning, what often happens is that peoples' meanings are subsumed into imposed anthropological inductions.

However, sharing Mapuche daily life in Elicura, I realised that what each person stated, for example referring to *awinkamiento*, was distinct in several nuanced ways. Not only that, I also realised that people were mostly aware of these differences, being conscious of the infinite truths interacting within sociality (Chapter 1). In view of that, the definition of anything was always upheld as personal and not necessarily shared. In the case of the term Mapuche, for example, this

redounded in personal conceptions such as to be a self, as an auto-reflexive perspective, or as to what the self should-be. From there, Winka was defined by exclusion. Beyond whether or not that discussion is related to the process of dislocating the Self/becoming the "other", what we can see is that *awinkamiento* works as an idiom to perceive the social world, and to ordain it according to personal assessments and conceptions. In this sense, although there could be several nested categories depicting perceived social distance (Isla nd), Winka is usually the most relevant at the moment of understanding the world, because it suggests empirical radical alterity.

As we will see, this is why there is a considerable variation among people's perceptions, not only regarding what constitutes a Winka, but also, and perhaps even more so, what constitutes and who is an *awinkado*. If there are certain inductively perceived substances that attribute to an a priori assertion of Winka status, for *awinkados* this is primarily ascertained through personal perceptions of other people's actions, relations and behaviours, contrasted to the perception of the ideal or perceived self. Thus, people who are *awinkada* vary according to the particular person who categorises them as such, and also to the context in which they are categorised. One person can assert the *awinkamiento* on one day, and then deny it the day after. Furthermore, the person who is ascertaining the *awinkamiento* could also be considered an *awinkado* at the same time from other perspectives.

I often experienced issues related to this during my fieldwork. For instance, people scolded me because I wanted to talk with the Evangelicals, telling me that was a waste of time because they could not teach me anything because they were *awinkados*. The same thing happened with the communities' representatives, political activists, ethnotourism entrepreneurs, the Williche (Mp. "People of the South"), people linked to the school, and so on. Almost every category that could imply a difference to the self was understood through the idiom *awinkamiento*. In the following we will explore why, and how this works according to the shared perspectives I could grasp from my experience in Elicura.

2. Mapuche as a Self-to-Be. An Ethnic Understanding

There are several people in Elicura who attempt to define Mapucheness as though they were talking about a specifically composed object. Correspondingly, they enumerate features, characteristics, reified substances, and so on, in order to attempt a bounded definition. In their view, Mapuche stands as a term referring to a discrete ethnic group, with several patterns that are located as their patrimony and as diacritical signs when speaking about "identity". Maintained by many Mapuche political leaders, organizations, and intellectuals, this position is echoed in how most of Chilean society sees "the Mapuche".[123] In this line of thought one may find broadly sympathetic attitudes towards the Mapuche, yet one can also find most of the arguments trying to deny their cultural existence, treating "the Mapuche" as a mere political epiphenomenon (i.e. Villalobos 1992, 1995).

There is a widespread Western conception of human groups as collective entities constituted around similar customs, ways of thinking, and traditions (Ingold 1993; Wagner 1981). All of these aspects, embraced by the loose concept of *culture* and conceived as differentiating groups, would stand, eventually, as conforming particular worldviews. When these are thought of as different but equivalent views over a single referent (nature), the notion of cultural relativism, the essential foundation for Multiculturalism, can easily be reached. In this section, I will look at a certain understanding of Mapucheness that corresponds with such a proposal: an understanding that sees the Mapuche as one of the many equivalent manifestations of a multicultural world.

People who embraced this understanding were frequently involved in ethnotourism, cultural groups, political activism and parties, and in relationships with public and private institutions outside Elicura. Most of them belonged to a younger generation, who sometimes had the opportunity to migrate to other places, pursuing high school, or higher education. Within the Valley, people usually recognised these people as "more educated", something assumed to be socially desirable. But they were also often seen as *"awinkados"*, criticising their extra-Elicura relationships.

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[123] Bascope (2009) shows how the State has, in fact, been the key promoter of this conception of "the Mapuche".

Indeed, they were frequently labelled as *dirigentes* (Sp. "leaders"), or as *políticos* (Sp. "politicians"), terms that, as stated in Chapter 2, usually convey a pejorative sense connected to the immediate fact that they would take advantage of their positions for their own personal gain (González Gálvez 2007, 2010).

In the following pages I will try to draw an image of what could constitute Mapucheness according to this ethnic understanding. Generally speaking, it would be composed of four key shared elements: land, culture, race/blood and history (see Aukiñ Wallmapu Ngulam 1997; Identidad Mapuche Lafkenche 1999; cf. Ingold 2000:132-151). When people refer to Mapucheness using these terms, they usually speak about ideal notions, which do not necessarily correspond to the existent conditions. Mapucheness therefore appears as an ideal image. It is something most people maintaining an ethnic understanding see as something to reach, as a vital aim.

2.1. Land

One of the most important elements that people employ to assert a sense of Mapuche identity is land, whose key role is continually highlighted from an ethnic understanding. It was usually pointed out that Mapucheness emerged in one specific land, and only there could it be properly reproduced. Occasionally, I was even told that different groups of people in the world had different cultures because they lived in different environmental settings, linking cultural difference to ecological adaptation. In this sense, Mapucheness is often thought of as rooted (Di Giminiani 2011). It is an identity characterised by being "indigenous", and therefore, comparable to other equivalent identities across the globe.

From this issue, the recurrent claim "there are Mapuche in every country of the World" acquired a particular ethnical meaning. What it highlights and establishes is this equivalent comparability based upon indigeneity, frequently conceived of as a special symbiotic connection between people and land.

Such a conceptualisation of indigeneity often results in some sort of "ecologism". Indeed, this is maintained as the environmental policy professed by the

Mapuche from the past (idealised as "the real Mapuche"). Theoretically, they would have maintained a strict respect towards the environment, never seeking to exploit it, and extracting from it only what was absolutely necessary. The same is an aim for the Mapuche in present times. Everything constituting the environment is considered as *patrimonio* (Sp. "heritage"), and it should be defended accordingly. Along these lines, I often heard complaints about how the Valley's ecosystem has changed and that people do not notice it, because they have largely lost their Mapucheness, acting and thinking Winka-like.

Because of the conception of Mapucheness as rooted, land is also thought of as a territory. Such a reference is made in two senses. Firstly in a plural sense, referring to certain specifically bounded geographical entities (*lov*, *rewe*, and so on. See Boccara 2007). Secondly, in a singular way, as the historical territory where Mapuche culture was developed (Mp. *Wall Mapu*), which, embracing the aforementioned entities, was a vast bi-oceanic territorial extension before the conquering process carried out by the Chilean and Argentinean States in the 19th century (see Bengoa 2000; Mariman et al 2006). These two conceptions grant people, first, a sense of belonging to one specific place, granting them an a priori component of specificity, and secondly, an idea of a shared common horizon. Through this notion, the idea of Mapucheness appears as practically apprehensible, and thus the imagined community becomes inherently limited (Anderson 1993).

2.2. Culture

For an ethnic understanding, *culture* appears as indispensable when considering what constitutes Mapucheness. What people include within this label in Elicura is extremely diverse, ranging from customs to morals, and from knowledge to beliefs. To make a conclusive list of these elements would be a titanic task. For this reason, and for the sake of my argument, as follows I will restrict myself to exemplify the categories I have mentioned. I will do this because, in my view, it is not as important to be conclusive regarding this list as it is to make it crystal clear that the definition

of Mapuche culture implies a process of purification (Latour 1993, 2005). Put simply, from an ethnic understanding this implies a separation of Mapuche culture from anything considered to be Winka, while trying to recover the purity lost halfway. In this task there is a critical difference that many emphasise is key when differentiating between Winka and Mapuche culture. In simple terms, this regards how, contrary to the first, the Mapuche are thought of as non-expansionist, as not interested in imposing its particular worldview on all human beings.

People believed that there were quite a few significant customs that defined Mapucheness. Among them, however, three consistently appeared of key relevance, relegating others to second place. The first was language. Indeed, one of the most important elements defining Mapucheness was usually *Mapudungun* (Mp. "Language of the Land"). Although I previously stated that the name people gave to their language in Elicura was *Chedungun* (Mp. "Language of the people"), many people that I recognised as maintaining an ethnic understanding of Mapucheness preferred the term *Mapudungun*. Such a term is widely employed in the Ninth Region of Chile, where most of the rural Mapuche population live. Accordingly, people explicitly explained their preference by tracing a connection with them, highlighting that beyond geographical variations, the language was the same.

The significance of Mapudungun to asserting identity was constantly emphasised, even though currently in Elicura just a handful of people from the older generation are bilingual in Spanish and Mapudungun, and most people only have a partial knowledge of the latter. Among them, there are some people who may understand Mapudungun but barely can speak it (or did not want to); others, on the contrary, knowing just a few words in Mapudungun, try to employ them as much as they can. My friend Rodrigo fits well in this group. Despite his reduced vocabulary, he always insisted in greeting people he considered as Mapuche in Mapudungun. Each time he received a response in Spanish, he used to call his interlocutor attention saying: "Are you or aren't you an *Indio*? Greet in Mapuche then, *huevón*!"

Rodrigo often expressed regret that he was not a fluent Mapudungun speaker, which he explained to be a result of a massive colonialist process resulting in the current scenario where the vast majority of Mapuche people were monolingual Spanish speakers. Aware of this, he and others saw language as a shelter against

assimilation. This is why he attempted to employ it in daily life. This is also why he and others organise summer schools and workshops to teach Mapudungun to children and to adults interested in learning it. Mapudungun should be spoken, then, no matter how many words one knows. It was a means towards recovering a stolen Mapucheness.

The second key custom was the *nguillatun*, the major Mapuche fertility ritual.[124] It is usually asserted that the last proper one took place in 1976. In recent years CONADI has granted funds to perform it in Elicura and elsewhere, but many consider these *nguillatun* as not "real" ones, because they are not founded on the communities' efforts. Also, many express concern regarding how people frequently look at *nguillatun* as a huge feast, which redound in heavy drinking and several riots. People said that *nguillatun* should reclaim its past essence, as something sacred uniting the community, and connecting it with *Ngenechen* (Mp. approx. "God").

The third custom defining Mapucheness is the *palin*, a traditional Mapuche sport, similar to field hockey.[125] I often heard Rodrigo telling off children for playing football, the Winka's game, when they should play *palin*. Although children barely paid him any attention, he expected the reprimand to have results at some point in the future. Taking advantage of proper contexts, people have recently been able to set up a *palin* team, reclaiming a practice that was lost a few years ago. With it, they have travelled across the Province, challenging different teams established for each special occasion.

Other customs also mentioned include traditional dress and material culture, *lakutun*, a ritual broadly understood as Mapuche baptism, *eltun*, understood as Mapuche funeral, and *trafkin*, an ancient custom implying a reciprocal dyadic treatment from an initial exchange of goods. Contemporarily, almost nobody in the Valley uses Mapuche traditional dress, except for special occasions. A few have what they consider as Mapuche material culture, but mostly for decorative non-functional purposes, and most of the rituals mentioned are not performed anymore. Nevertheless, because they are recognised as Mapuche from an ethnic understanding, the idea is to bring them back to the foreground, and consciously attempt to recover them.

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[124] For a description, see Course (2011).
[125] For a detailed description, see Course (2008).

Morally speaking, from an ethnic understanding a specific set of patterns are said to characterise proper Mapuche social behaviour. In these terms, ideal Mapucheness is linked to rectitude, honesty, kindness, hospitality, and several similar values. By exclusion, the lack of these moral values is generally linked to ideal Winkaness. Interestingly, people state that these values should characterise relations not just among people, but also among people and the environment.

There is an additional dimension linked to knowledge of what people consider to be Mapuche culture. For example, it is argued that, as a result of the special relationship that people establish with their environment by living in the countryside a specific capacity to understand nature is acquired, which people in urban areas cannot attain. As a result, people are aware of the indications nature gives them, and they are able to know, for example, what a bird means it sings in a certain way or when the wind goes in a particular direction.

From an ethnic approach, belief is usually described as a specific way through which "ancient Mapuche saw the world". The idea, from this perspective, is to recapture a sense of how ancient Mapuche understood the world and how it was composed and worked. In practical terms, this image is the one that it is possible to find in any scholarly paper about the topic (e.g. Grebe et al 1972). Interestingly, this ancient viewpoint is invariably affirmed in the context of belief, and as such, usually contrasted with how the world actually is (from a supposedly scientifically-derived ontology). For example, when I discussed the story of Kai-Kai and Treng-Treng with a friend (Chapter 4), to clarify his position regarding it, he simply told me "we both know why earthquakes are produced, because there's a movement in the earth's plates and all that stuff. So obviously Kai-Kai and Treng-Treng is an invention, a story that never happened, but it was useful to ancient people, because through it they could understand what was going on".

2.3. Race/Blood

My friend Victor used to tell me an anecdote that occurred at a party organised by some tourists in the Valley. Everybody was animatedly chatting and dancing when a *gringa* approached him, and during a conversation asked him: "I'd love to be a Mapuche, what can I do to be it?" He laughed and told her that there was nothing she could do. "It is as if I wanted to be a *gringo*, I would have to be born again!" he remarked. To conclude, he added, "Anyway, if you really want to be Mapuche, you can marry a Mapuche and have kids with him. Then you could be closer to being Mapuche".

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As I claimed in chapter 2, *blood* was a substance usually stressed when defining Mapucheness. Such a concept is seen as practically expressed in the way in which people share similar physical characteristics, and explained by being members of the same *race*. I was often told that the two most relevant components when ascertaining Mapucheness in a person were "culture and genetics". The salience of this last component was illustrated by the fact that, through it, it was possible to expand the Mapuche imagined community damaged by colonialism. Contrary to what happens with culture, recognised to be dynamic, and which can be gained and lost, blood was seen as a substance stable and undeniable. No matter what people may want to do in order to hide their Mapucheness, blood's physical expressions remain and speak for themselves. From an ethnic understanding, blood is tremendously important because it establishes a tangible and evident boundary. If Mapucheness is in blood, flesh, and bones, when people lost their cultural components they could be reintroduced through some sort of *reculturation*, responding to the acculturation first suffered.

From this understanding, it is also recognised that there are lots of people in Chile who phenotypically appear to be Mapuche. However, they are not conceptualised as such in ethnical terms. This is because the primary indicator to

affirm a Mapuche blood composition is the surname. In this sense, the purity of one person's blood (if s/he has only Mapuche blood) is not as important as the possibility of really tracing any drop of indigenous blood a person may have. If this is possible, that person could perfectly be considered to be Mapuche.

The ethnic limit perceived in bodies/surnames has its materialization/visualization in the employment of the terms *peñi* and *lamuen*, which are kinship terms traditionally denoting real and classificatory siblings from ego's same generation. In this sense, it is important to highlight that these terms may acquire two fundamental colloquial meanings. First, generally speaking and exceeding ethnical understandings, as a reference to a perceived closeness, as indicating a connection between a person and what somebody perceives as his/herself. Secondly, and in specific ethnical terms, as a synonym for Countrymen, implying a mutual recognition as members of an ethnically imagined community, constituted racially, asserted by surnames, and with the aim to recover culture and territory taken away by colonialism.

2.4. History

People emphasise that the significance of blood as an indicator of Mapucheness is a consequence of the history Mapuche people have suffered, resulting in the loss of many things that previously defined them. It is not my intention to summarise the particularities of how this occurred, but to demonstrate how this is broadly conceived.[126] Considering this, the statement "there are Mapuche in every country of the world" may be understood as once again metaphorically highlighting indigeneity, tracing lines of comparability among the Mapuche and other native peoples recognised as victims of similar stories of cultural contact/imposition. As a friend told me, "It doesn't matter what name they have, we all suffer the same, from North to South America, exactly the same. My history might be narrated by a North American Mapuche and I will identify with it". Thus, indigeneity also implies a

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[126] See the introduction of this thesis for a brief introduction to Mapuche colonial history and bibliographic references.

sense of solidarity. In this way, Mapuche may be turned into a universal category, but only metaphorically. This highlights the similarities regarding processes, leaving the specificities of each history momentarily aside.

Summing up, from an ethnical understanding, Mapucheness appears as a set of different elements. Some of them underline specificity, while others allow a broader understanding, synonymous with "being indigenous" (land-relation, having suffered colonial processes). Relevantly, this broader understanding is always metaphorical. This is because there are several factors highlighting the boundaries of a specifically imagined Mapuche community (Anderson 1993). However, despite the perceived similarities permitting the metaphors, people point out various essences highlighting the differences. These are the conception of (1) a historical *territory*, where (2) a specific *culture* could be developed, composed by several specific institutions, a proper language, a cosmological framework, etc., thanks to the presence of (3) a *race* that was able to do so. Through these elements the Mapuche are thought of as a bounded ethnic group, as a classical manifestation of an anthropological culture.

2.5. A Matter of Cultural Purity

From an ethnic understanding, people, recognising that they have lost most of what defined them as Mapuche, currently seek what can be referred to as a double dynamic of cultural purification. On the one hand, the first aim is to recover what has been lost. To teach and reclaim Mapudungun, to perform traditional rituals, to employ material culture, etc. On the other, it is expected that anything considered to be non-Mapuche will be removed from their practices. This intention includes anything one could imagine, from religion and media to food and household appliances. Through this double dynamic it is assumed that they can recover what is considered to be Mapuche culture, in its purest form, or as close as it could possibly be. This is stated despite the fact that people acknowledge that they live in a world where having no contact with other cultural frameworks would be impossible.

Nonetheless, although people claim such a will to recover their lost culture, stating it as a perfectly valid alternative perspective (to Winka) over reality (nature), they eventually tend to dismiss it as an equivalent epistemology. In this sense, it frequently appears to be more akin to a set of traits with folkloric connotations, allowing a differentiation only useful in political terms (Mascareño 2007). However, I am not claiming that this is a deliberated aim, to which culture is a means. On the contrary, it appears to be an aim in itself, from which political aspiration is an obvious result. Cultural recovery is an appealing response to colonialism, and to a shared sense of being dispossessed, discriminated, and assimilated. It is what one should do when aware that they have suffered a process that took away what they were, the lands they inhabited, and the ideas they had. It is an appeal to make those acculturated return to their Mapuche self, that was voided by colonialism. It is a conception of Mapuche as a self to recover, as a *self-to-be.*

In view of this, the "enemy" from an ethnic approach is *awinkamiento*, considered in this context as the process through which a Mapuche body has been pervaded in different senses and levels by non-Mapuche culture. In these terms, *awinkamiento* appears as a ubiquitous element in contemporary Mapuche life, which is often even self-reflexively acknowledged. Many people accordingly state that they are not "as Mapuche as they would like to be", that they are forced for several reasons to be somehow Winka, or simply that they are "*awinkados* like everybody else". Here, unlike the other understandings that I will explore below, Mapucheness works as a self-reflexive category based upon objective qualities. In the affirmation of these categories, or in the lack thereof, referred to by the idiom of *awinkamiento*, people assess other people, locating them in a continuum that goes from this ideal self, "a real Mapuche", to an ideal other, or what could be termed as a perfect embodiment of Winkaness.

Awinkamiento thus implies a certain qualitatively measurable distance from an ideal-reified Mapuche self. As the self is ideal, in practice most people in Elicura are perceived as, to some extent, *awinkada*. Broadly speaking, anything perceived as alien to the ideal self was enough to claim *awinkamiento*. Two archetypes were often mentioned as the quintessence of this transformation. On the one hand, the Evangelical Mapuche, because not only do they follow a foreign religion, but it is a

religion that states that some Mapuche customs are evil. On the other, drunk people, who are not able to renounce their ignorance and are consumed by their addiction.

If we could summarise what the term Mapuche implies for an ethnic approach, an accurate alternative would be to say that it is a *self-to-be*. From this perspective, Mapucheness is an ideal image modified in the course of history due to the dynamics of intercultural relations. For this reason, the last traces of it, observed through surnames, should be refilled once again with the contents that were lost in contact. Therefore, Mapucheness is about noticing the loss, being aware of it, and trying to leave it behind. Mapucheness is the depiction of a past ideal state, and its current performance is a conscious recovering of it.

Being Mapuche is therefore an aim. It is a struggle to be, as some people told me, what "one really is" in a wider society (Chilean) that looks for homogeneity and to obliterate differences. People do this using all the means they find available. I told a friend that, for me, it was odd to hear about a "Mapuche nation", simply because that concept was not properly Mapuche. He replied, "We know that, but we use these Winka concepts because we want you, Winka people, to understand us. If we spoke in Mapudungun no one would even listen to what we have to say".

Mapuche people have been increasingly integrated into Chilean society, not just as a cheap labour force as they were in the past, but through formal education at its different levels. They have also developed their own media, such as the nationalistic newspaper Azkintuwe (Mp. approx. "viewing point"), and they intend to launch their first ethnically-based political party, called Wallmapuwen (Mp. approx. "Mapuche countrymen"). In the process of inclusion, their comprehension of the world has been pervaded by how this is supposed to be from a particular viewpoint. This, however, does not invalidate the claims they make. In this sense, I was wrong in my own search for purity in what I understood as Mapuche culture. The means employed to think about Mapucheness are directly connected to the ontological assumptions people maintain. These issues were not as relevant to people as was the belief that by thinking about Mapucheness ethnically they engendered, as a friend told me, "a feeling that someday we are going to be free once again".

3. Mapuche as a Way of Being-in-the-World. A Traditional Understanding

I have tried innumerable times to formulate a term to label the understanding I am about to describe, but until today I cannot find one accurate enough. I have decided to label it transitorily as *Traditional*, although I am aware that this decision may convey several misunderstandings. To avoid any ill-comprehensions, I would like to ask the reader to maintain an open meaning for this term. This is, among other reasons, because the understanding I label with it is not necessarily opposed to Modernity. Indeed, it exceeds such a temporal distinction, and it does not precede nor follow other Mapuche understandings.

If I choose the word "traditional" it is simply by a process of elimination. At first I considered labelling this understanding as "native", but by doing this I would implicitly be denying this status for other Mapuche perspectives. I also considered calling it "non-ethnical", underlining the difference I perceive between this understanding and the one explored above. However, the same difference could not be traced as clearly between this understanding and the Evangelical, which I describe in the final section of this chapter. If I have chosen traditional, then, it is just because it allows me to draw a clear differentiation between understandings. Anyway, I ask you not to attach preconception to this understanding because of its designation, and to wait until the end of this section to fully grasp what it is about.

I would like to introduce this section by going back once again to the statement "there are Mapuche people in every country of the world". We have recently seen how, from an ethnic view, we could understand such a claim to consider "Mapuche" to be a metaphorical synonym for indigenous, highlighting a special link with land and a similarly suffered colonialism. The metaphorical character of the link was evident in the way people performed, at the same time, an essential delimitation of Mapucheness through other elements, such as culture. Such delimitation, at the same time, allows them a particular sense of belonging in a multi-cultural/mono-natural world. In the following lines I will explore another way of thinking about the utterance, which opens it and gives it a completely different sense.

This is what I call the traditional understanding, which I will now approach through three specific examples.

3.1. The Problem of Evo Morales' Mapucheness

It was, as usual, a cold Elicura winter evening. I was staying in the house of one friend in "la Meliman", near Lanalhue Lake, where I spent most of the 2010 winter season. The family was gathered in the warmest room of the house, which in every home in the valley is invariably the kitchen. In all of them, the stove is carefully kept burning until late at night, working as a heater. After supper, the women and children left the table, concentrating on their own issues. Jorge, the *ngen ruka* (Mp. approx. "house owner"), and I remained seated. The television was on, as usual, and we entertained ourselves by watching the news, commenting on it, while several different conversation topics arose.

There we were until Jorge suddenly stated: "There is a country, but I don't remember which one… where the Mapuche elected a Mapuche president, and because of that the country is divided, because the Winka don't want to accept him". His utterance obviously puzzled me. Attempting to hide my surprise, I asked: "seriously? Which one is that country?" Jorge answered, "I can't remember where those Mapuche are from… I can't… but the country is divided, that's for sure". We then silently returned our gazes to the television, both retaining our respective doubts.

Fifteen minutes or so later, Juana (Jorge's daughter) crossed the room to pick up something she needed for a jumper she was weaving. She is a woman in her forties, who returned to the Valley just a couple of years ago to look after her parents, having left them when she was eighteen to continue her studies in Concepción. Jorge then asked her: "Which country was it that Eduardo went to? That one with a Mapuche president…" After a couple of seconds trying to realise what her father was talking about, Juana told him: "It's Bolivia dad, and the president is Evo Morales, but he isn't Mapuche dad, he's indigenous!" While saying this, she looked

at me as though asking for forgiveness for the mistake her father had made. Her expression was not unfamiliar, and I had experienced it several times before with other people. She collected what she needed and finally left the room. Soon after, Jorge told me, "That was Evo Morales, Evo Morales… *peñi* Eduardo, who has been there, told me that the country was divided because he was the President, and the Winka don't want to accept him". I replied, "How are they Winka? Juana told that he is not Mapuche, but indigenous…" Then Jorge answered, "She doesn't know! She thinks that, but she doesn't know… He is Mapuche! He is Mapuche!"

3.2. Urine as Shampoo: the Mapuche meet the Dinka

By the end of 2009 I was with a couple of elders enjoying the warm sun Elicura has during summer. We were talking about a subject which, at that time, was vigorously calling my attention. People watched a lot of television, which suggested that an extreme change in daily lives had occurred during a very short period of time. The Valley has only had electricity for approximately a decade, and even though there were television receptors before, they were operated by car batteries, dramatically reducing their possible use. At present, however, a simple visit to Elicura is enough to notice that most houses have not only a television, but also a satellite dish.

At the time, I was dealing with a widespread suggestion that Winka people had bad habits, including stealing, killing, using and selling drugs, and so on. This was generally asserted thanks to the evidence exposed by television news, which allowed people to affirm that this kind of situation was happening everywhere in the world. My friends' major concern regarding this was that these habits could reach the Valley, because "young people always imitate what they see".

The conversation went on like this, until I asked if they considered television to be something valuable. The response was a unanimous affirmation. One of them explained:

> Thanks to television one can see things you never imagined you would see, that you only heard on the radio or in conversations, when people told you.

For instance, once on television there were some Mapuche who washed their hair with cow's urine. Those Mapuche's shampoo was cows' urine! After you knew there were Mapuche everywhere, but you didn't know their customs, how they spoke, what they wore…

I immediately asked him where those Mapuche were from, and what they looked like. He told me that he did not remember well, but "they were really black, quite darker than us. It was like their race was pure, as if they weren't mixed. Moreover, they were almost naked, as if they still weren't civilised".

My friend was unable to recall the name of the TV programme he made reference to, but I soon remembered that, about two years earlier, one of the two public television channels that can be freely received in the Valley showed a very popular TV show entitled *La Ruta del Nilo* (Sp. "The route of the Nile"). This show's premise was centred on exposing exotic features of different populations living along the Nile River. One of the most commented on episodes at the time was one that featured the Dinka of Sudan. As could be expected, the show dramatically stressed their custom of using cow's urine to dye their hair.

3.3. Race and Land Reconsidered

Let us come back to Jorge's kitchen, keeping in mind the link between skin colour and racial purity. Now the television was showing the highlights of a football game in which the Haiti national team was partaking. Jorge suddenly exclaimed: "How black are those *pals*! They should be that way because their race is still pure". As I stated in Chapter 2, according to some people, the colour of each person's skin is a result of the colour of their blood. In this sense, it was often affirmed that Mapuche blood was dark-red, while Winka blood was light red. Subsequently, if blood mixing is increased, the more fair-skinned Mapuche and darker-skinned Winka there will be. This aspect is central to grasp *awinkamiento* or the loss of Mapucheness from a traditional understanding. I often heard complaints about how currently in the Valley everybody is mixed with everybody, about how nobody wanted to respect their race by marrying their own kind, and about how almost everybody is now a

champurriado (Mp. "of mixed-blood"). This contemporary image was often compared to a past situation, which was characterised by people caring about their blood and never marrying Winka people. It is even upheld that in the past intermarriage was absolutely forbidden by the authority of elders.

The relevance of this association is related to a link of continuity, traced between the racial constitution of bodies and cultural interests. Thus, for example, it was asserted that people are no longer interested in performing Mapuche traditional rituals because of *awinkamiento*. But the reference here, unlike the understanding previously described, did not consider the cultural knowledge people had, but only their racial constitution. From a traditional understanding, people are increasingly *awinkada* not because they have lost Mapuche culture, but because their internal composition has been modified. The lack of interest in rituals, for example, is because they are no longer totally Mapuche in their composition. The loss of culture is, therefore, and radically opposed, not the cause of *awinkamiento* but its consequence.

I remember one occasion when I came across a clash between both conceptions. I was waiting for a friend, who was supposed to come back from doing some chores in Meliman *mawida*, also known by older generations as Ngoll-Ngoll.[127] I was asked to wait in the kitchen for my friend to arrive. Carmen, my friend's wife, was cooking and she shyly answered the questions I occasionally put her. After a while, one of her grandsons appeared to see what was going on. The boy was about 10 years old, and appeared to be shy, as most Mapuche children act in front of people they do not know well. He was the son of Carmen's daughter, and he had a Winka father who had disappeared as soon as he found out that his partner was pregnant. Seeing him, Carmen very quickly told him a short *Chedungun* phrase that I could not grasp, and finding no answer added: "why don't you answer me?" The boy, implying an obvious response, told her somewhat mockingly: "because I don't understand when you speak *a lo mapuche* (Sp. "like Mapuche")". Carmen replied laughing, "See, you don't understand because you're Winka!" The boy, feeling ashamed, told her: "I am not a Winka, I'm Mapuche, because if not I wouldn't have a Mapuche surname", and with that he left the room. Josefina, the child's mother,

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[127] See figure I.2 (page 20).

later appeared, telling Carmen: "mom, you don't have to bother Matías, don't you see he feels bad. If he doesn't know how to speak Mapuche that is because he has lived most of his life in Santiago, but now you'll see how he'll learn".

Another element worth considering is the relationship Mapuche people claim to have with land. Similarly to what I previously stated, from a traditional understanding, Mapuche people are native or indigenous to the place they inhabit. Nevertheless, here indigeneity seems to have much more literal connotations. This is connected to something we saw earlier, highlighting that, for some people, to be Mapuche is not just about being born in the land and to metaphorically belong to it, but to come from it, that is, to actually be born *from* the land, as happens with trees (Chapter 4). Such a relationship is practically signalled through a common description of Mapuche as the "real Chileans", distinguishing between people having roots in the country, and the descendants of migrants from elsewhere. This claim is generally accompanied by a complaint against the employment of the term *indio* (Sp. "Indian"), often used in Chile to pejoratively refer to Mapuche and other indigenous peoples. Frequently, people strongly declare that they are not *indios* (because they do not come from India), but that they are Mapuche, "real Mapuche from the Land".

3.4. Traditional Mapucheness

Reminiscent of Juana's attempt to correct her father about who Evo Morales was, I remember telling my friend Victor that a Mapuche had informed me that there were Mapuche people in every country of the world. Victor sceptically looked at me, stating: "how's that? You must have misunderstood him". I told him that I had initially thought the same, but after asking again I realised that there was no misunderstanding, but "he was literally asserting that". Victor then concluded, "That's an ignorant Mapuche!"

The idiom of ignorance is commonly employed among Mapuche people to explain utterances seeming to be outside the supposedly scientifically-founded logic granted by formal education. Among them, "there are Mapuche in every country of

the world" is a classical example, when people discern that this is not claimed simply as a metaphor. The statement is often understood to mean that people proposed the existence of Mapuche people, as a bounded ethnical culture, in every country. This interpretation even reaches many of the external officials who work with rural Mapuche people (cf. Course 2011). From this position, "ignorance" is usually thought of as a problem that should be eliminated.

If we take the examples illustrated earlier, to which we can add others stated throughout this thesis, including the one referred to as the "Aymara Chedungun" (see above) or the Williche's customs (Chapter 1), it is possible to challenge the perception of a "traditional" understanding as being inherently ignorant. Indeed, what a person from a "traditional" understanding is saying when stating "there are Mapuche in every country of the world" is not automatically what people may understand "ethnically speaking", and the gap between both conceptions is not based on a simple lack of education, as suggested. Conversely, it is on the different ontological premises supporting both acts, the one of stating and the one of understanding. Between both perspectives, instead of observing an opposition between knowledge and the lack of it, what we may actually observe is an evident "equivocation" (Viveiros de Castro 2004b).

From a traditional perspective, what seems to be referred to by the term Mapuche is quite simply a specific way of being. This may be characterised by some inductively perceived essences, but eventually exclusively refers to being what one is. With this understanding, being Mapuche is not a possibility of the self, or something which can be transformed during one's lifetime. It is not possible, then, as Josefina claimed regarding her son, to learn how to be a Mapuche. Conversely, being Mapuche is actually the *only way certain selves can be*. Mapucheness, therefore, although recognised externally through perceived indigeneity and possessing certain racial characteristics, is in the self, in the intrinsic bodily way that people exist. This is why, challenging her daughter, Carmen remarked that her grandson's mixed-blood was a sign of his lack of Mapucheness. Furthermore, this is exactly why Evo Morales, the Dinka, the Aymaras, or even the Haitian national football team are as Mapuche as "Mapuche people".

Mapucheness, from a traditional understanding, is thought of as closely related to the continuity between land and people, manifested by blood. As previously stated, Mapuche people openly assert that they are consubstantial to land. They affirm that they do not come from anywhere and that they emerged from land "as sprouts" (Chapter 4). In this sense, the relationship people have with land may be understood as one of descent. Being the first Mapuche people actually born from land, the extension of the category of Mapuche to current people is given by blood inheritance. They are the descendants of these first "sprouts", they share substance with them, and they are from their same nature. This is why it is so significant to maintain blood pure. If blood mixing is avoided, the connection people will have with the land will be stronger than if it is not.

In this understanding, the term Winka is defined by opposition, denoting the absence of such a relationship between people and land. If, for the Mapuche, land is where they live and from where they originate, for the Winka, as rootless beings, land is something they do not have but that they need in order to live. Because of this need, Winka people are continually trying to steal Mapuche lands. Having been experienced, this perceived situation is inductively universalised. Thus, wherever there is land, there are Mapuche who are consubstantial to it, and Winka who, having no land, try to steal it.

As with other understandings, although Mapucheness may be thought of as this relation of continuity, and thus universalised, there is always a fundamental sense of it referring to how it is personally experienced. This is the sense in which Mapucheness is embodied by the self, respecting the "uniqueness of the experience principle" (Chapter 1). In other words, as Mapucheness is a way of being, and because being and experience is always a singular affair, it is expected that each personal experience of what it is to be a Mapuche will be different. I will attempt to clarify this proposal as follows.

On several occasions, I asked people how the ritual of *nguillatun* should be properly carried out. After they answered me in detail, I challenged them with what Mapuche people elsewhere did differently. I remarked, for example, that there was no *machi* (Mp. shaman) in the *nguillatun* from the Andean sector of Alto Bio Bio, or the explicit reference to the sea which was made in other southern Mapuche sectors

(Course 2011). Then people invariably replied: "Well, that's their way of doing it, you asked for ours". What happened was that the ritual was judged as a general concept, not by its content. In this sense, all major fertility rituals performed by all "Mapuche peoples of the World" may be read by the idiom of *nguillatun* in terms of their symbolic position, regardless of how they are performed. As my friend Juana explained to me once, "For example, Catholic masses are the Winka's *nguillatun*. It's not exactly the same, because the Winka cannot have *nguillatun*, because they're Winka… but it is the same because they're praising God". As *nguillatun* is experienced differently at a personal level, what is socially relevant is their place and its stated function (in the way they are externally perceived), not its particular meanings or patterns.

In a similar vein, I had pointed out how a friend referred to the language of the Aymara simply as Chedungun. Indeed, as there are Mapuche in every country of the world, and they have their own *nguillatun*, they also have their own *Chedungun*. This was clearer than ever when I asked an elderly woman if the Williche (Mp. "people of the south") were Mapuche. Without doubt she claimed: "Yes they are… as there are also ones called Aymara, and others who live in Eastern Island…. Those are names with which to refer to them, in each province they call them something different, but in the end they are all Mapuche".

The world, from this perspective, is therefore crossed by a radical ontological difference. On the one hand, we have the people who are from the land; on the other, the people who are not. But, beyond that, there are no significant differences. All the Mapuche peoples in the world share a position, and the cultural content of those positions does not have any relevance. The world, for a traditional understanding, is not composed by cultures, but by two radically different ways of being.[128]

Nevertheless, in this understanding there is also a personal conception of what it means to be a Mapuche. As with other cases, this conception plays a key role when people from a traditional understanding assess the distance they have from others. Beyond any a priori premises, from a traditional understanding, people

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[128] Therefore, we should not "be surprised if the resultant analogies and 'models' seem awkward and ill-fitting, for they are born of the paradox created by imagining a culture for people who do not imagine it for themselves" (Wagner 1981:27).

similarly perceive indicators of the distance they have with other human beings, which are similarly assessed through the Mapuche/Winka distinction.

In this sense, for example, it is usually emphasised that, beyond internal composition, one should observe certain behaviours in order to be properly considered as "fully" Mapuche. Regarding this, many uphold that, despite blood composition, a Mapuche will be much more Mapuche if he lives in the countryside instead of living in urban areas. Although people may have a given relationship of continuity with land granted by descent, such a relationship is not enough per se to ascertain a total Mapucheness. As happens with social relationships (Chapter 2), the link of descent one has with land should be nurtured and enhanced by creating an ongoing relatedness with it. This can only be achieved by continually living in rural areas, and doing what one does there: observing nature, engaging with countryside labour, etcetera.

Another problematic situation may arise with regard to mixed-blood people, who are, by definition, neither Winka nor Mapuche. In this sense, many people similarly uphold that by creating relatedness with Mapuche people, *champurriados* will develop their Mapuche side, as they will develop their Winka side by relating to Winka. However, there is usually an inconstancy attached to these individuals because of their dual-blood composition. And as blood-mixing is perceived to be widespread, there is accordingly a perceived widespread inclination among Mapuche people to adopt Winka elements and to act Winka-like. This is why, as it was explained to me, Chedungun is no longer spoken, and Mapuche religion is no longer followed. This *awinkamiento* is, however, not conceived of as acculturation. As stated, it occurs because the self is intrinsically modified. There is no adoption as part of social life, but an essential transformation socially manifested.

To conclude, I would like to stress that unlike other understandings, from the perspective I have ill-labelled as "traditional", Mapucheness is simply conceived of as a way of being. And for many people, simply the way they are. Accordingly, people may judge other people's behaviour as less or more Mapuche according to their own self-definition of it, but always being respectful of people's own ways and own experiential modes of developing their Mapucheness.

4. Obliterating Differences. An Evangelical Understanding

"The Lord doesn't look at races"

Pastor Carlos[129]

The third understanding I want to address in this chapter is one maintained by a group of people often seen in Elicura as a bounded and clearly distinguishable collective: *los evangélicos* (Sp. "Evangelicals"). When I was doing my fieldwork, the Valley had eight Evangelical Pentecostal temples, or "Houses of prayer", as evangelicals prefer to call them. This vast presence highly contrasts with the Roman Catholic one, which used to be the most salient faith, and is now restricted to one old temple located in Villa Elicura. Catholic faith has historically enjoyed an important presence among the Mapuche, as a result of the extensive missionary work carried out over centuries (Foerster 1996). Nevertheless, it is more recently possible to observe an explosive change. According to the 2002 Chilean census, the 31.1% of the population who considered themselves to be Mapuche declared themselves to be Evangelical. This percentage is still growing and contrasts with the 15.9% of Evangelicals one may find among the rest of the Chilean population (Foerster 2006:388).

Each "house of prayer" has its own *Pastor*, who directs each temple's activities, and follows the predicaments of a particular Evangelical sect, such as Ejército Evangélico de Chile (Chilean Evangelical Army), Misión de Cristo (Mission of Christ), Pentecostal, Universal, and Salvation Army. My fieldwork was centred on the first, which, like others, had a *pastor* who identified himself as Mapuche. Most *Evangelistas*, as they refer to themselves, argued that this apparent myriad of Evangelical churches is not as it appears when one looks beyond the surface. People used to state that they preferred one church over another because of *el culto* (Sp. "the cult"), referring to the way the religious ceremony or *servicio* (Sp. "service") was

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[129] Mapuche Pastor of one Evangelical church in Elicura. The phrase was a common statement within his preaches.

performed. Churches differed with regard to the hymns or *alabanzas* (Sp. "praises") they sang, the way in they were performed (sometimes they were played in Mexican *ranchera* rhythm, which is very popular in Chilean countryside), the charisma of the preachers, and the different balance of preaching and prayer that each church attempted, among others. Despite the preference, however, it was often stated that they are all essentially the same, because their aim is "to worship God".

During the first months of my fieldwork, I was reluctant to engage with Evangelicals because of two fundamental reasons. First, because the people with whom I usually spent my time spoke very negatively about Evangelical Mapuche. In particular, they were often depicted as *awinkados*, because they were following a Winka religion that prohibited their followers from partaking in Mapuche culture. Second, because, while in this setting, I actually believed for a long time that these people were not relevant to my research. It was not until I visited Carlos, a preacher that many people pointed out to be *awinkado*, which I realised that there was something that I was not seeing. Carlos was evangelical, but he did not see any incompatibility between his faith and being Mapuche. Indeed, he always addressed me as a *peñi* (Mp. "brother"), and greeted me saying *mari mari*.

In this section I want to address how Mapucheness is seen from an Evangelical Mapuche understanding. In doing so, I expect to shed enough light to show that, for Evangelical Mapuche and contrary to what many non-Evangelical Mapuche think, being both Mapuche and Evangelical are not in contradistinction, but point towards different dimensions of being. More specifically, being Mapuche from an Evangelical understanding is not seen through an ethnic/cultural ontology, but much closer to a traditional perspective, emphasising Mapucheness simply as an ontological essence and a correspondent morality of being.

4.1. An Evangelical Comprehension of the Mapuche/Winka Distinction

From an Evangelical understanding, it is possible to discern several features which, in defining Mapuche/Winkaness, resemble the understandings we have reviewed so far. However, at the same time one may observe some specific particularities. For instance, some Evangelicals used to assert that Mapuche people are the ones who are indigenous to some places in general, while others affirm that they are only the people who are indigenous to Chilean Araucanía, stressing that they constitute a bounded entity with specific defining features. However, at the same time, they affirm that human differences, based on race, culture, and/or language, are totally irrelevant because, essentially, we are all "children of God". In practice, this human equality founded in the relationship we all have to a third (God) is expressed through the term *hermano/a* (Sp. "brother/sister"), which is employed by Evangelicals to refer to one another, and also to people who do not share their faith.

The equality of human beings is explained by a common origin. All of us were created from dust, to which God blew life, which I later understood was conceived literally as human souls. Thus, we all share a common vital component connecting us. Subsequently, Evangelicals maintain that the Lord does not care about the superficial specificities his children have, but fundamentally about the way they behave. For them, the distinctions that other Mapuche people drew between Mapuche and Winka were often not as meaningful as was the one pointed out by Evangelicals themselves. This divided people into those who were *mundanos* (Sp. "mundane"), suggesting that they were worried about material things in the human world, and those who acted like proper "children of God", continuously trying to accomplish God's will. The superficial specificities defining different kinds of people, in this context, were explained through the biblical story of the Tower of Babel. If people were different, it was because they wanted to be so. However, in God's eyes, they were all the same.

Regardless of this general statement, every single evangelical person who self-identified as Mapuche that I met during my fieldwork, invariably asserted that there was an essential difference between Mapuche and Winka, which was predicated upon a series of racial elements, but fundamentally upon autochthony. In this sense, people recognised that there are several indigenous populations all over the world who share with Chilean Mapuche the fact that "they have always been where they live". This is literally why they are called Mapuche, "People of the Land".[130] In their recognised specificity, they state that Winka people are the descendants of the Spanish who intended to take away all Mapuche lands, and who left Mapuche people in the "corners" where they currently live. Evangelicals are thus aware, like every Mapuche, that Winka people stole their lands, deceiving them through different stratagems. Many Evangelical Mapuche accordingly uphold that they hope to someday recover the lands God granted Mapuche people, although they are not, for the most part, in agreement with the means employed by other Mapuche to accomplish this, characterising them as *political*.

Superficially, then, it is possible to propose that Evangelical Mapuche people recognise the Mapuche/Winka distinction, although it does not seem to be as important to them in daily life as it is for other Mapuche understandings. However, it stands as a relevant opposition in order to comprehend their location in the world. Although Evangelical Mapuche assert that past Mapuche people were deceived by Winka in order to steal their lands, Winkaness is not necessarily depicted as essentially negative. On the contrary, it is actually often thought of as a necessary complement for the Mapuche people. This is essentially because Winka people brought the Evangelical faith to Elicura, or in more general terms, they brought what is understood to be "civilisation", and because of them Mapuche people know things such as how to write and read.

Although Evangelical Mapuche people perceive differences among people, they used to deny any significance of them, because of the similitude we all have regarding God. That is why they often consider issues such as being worried about the racial constitution of people to be *mundane*. One friend once told me that, for God, race was so irrelevant that she knew a *Machi* (Mp. Shaman) who was called by

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[130] See Schindler (2006) for a very interesting Evangelical Mapuche narrative regarding this.

him even though he was *champurriado* (cf. Bacigalupo 2010). In this sense it is also worth mentioning that, contrary to what most non-Evangelicals believe, Evangelicals state that God does not forbid them from partaking in Mapuche ceremonies insofar as one does so respectfully. Indeed, for them, both are often perfectly acceptable ways of worshipping God.[131]

4.2. Turning Evangelical

Before fully exploring how Evangelicals perceive Mapuche and Evangelical tradition as homologous, surmising a univocal framework that allows a free, accurate translation, I would like to address peoples' stories of how they became Evangelicals. Broadly speaking, these narratives share several elements, including a context of serious illness, a desperate search for health, and a miraculous recovery. In general terms, narratives of turning Evangelical can also be considered as narratives of looking for a cure, which is echoed in a common Evangelical statement: "only faith grants healing". Regarding this, people from an ethnical understanding used to tell me that the success of the Evangelical church was due to its insertion within rural communities in a moment when traditional religion was extremely weak. I frequently heard these great stories of how people have been healed within the church, of illnesses that nobody else could treat. Indeed, a critical moment in each religious service is the *oración de ungimiento* (Sp. "anointment prayer"), in which all the children, as well as the adults who feel that they need it, go forward in front of the altar to kneel. Then the people who stayed where they were began to feel a call and moved forward towards the kneeling subjects, placing their hands over the heads of the kneeled people to cure and protect them. The pastor once explained to me that this had been instituted by Christ, who once said that if there was a sick person, one should place his hands over that person's head, praying in God's name to cure him/her.

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[131] According to some ethnographical accounts, "being" Evangelical is often thought of as incompatible with "being" Mapuche (i.e. Lafferte 2006). However, this sort of claims were almost absent in my fieldwork experience.

* * *

Twenty years ago, my friend Cecilia began to suffer because of her small daughter. By the age of two, the girl still could not walk, and she was barely able to communicate. Worried, Cecilia began to travel from town to town, visiting different physicians in order to find out what was wrong with the girl, but nobody ever gave her an answer. By then, she was distressed and desperate, so she decided to accept her mother-in-law's invitation to a *vigilia* (Sp. "eve"), which was going to be carried out in an Evangelical church in Calebu. Once there, a woman she did not know approached her, saying: "You've suffered too much with your daughter, but you'll suffer no more". That woman took the girl in her arms and told Cecilia she had five rotten bones in her spine, while she began to anoint her. The next morning, Cecilia woke up and saw her daughter standing and walking for the very first time. From that day, she attends the religious services of that church every time she can.

There are two things that are worth considering, in order to better understand this story as well as the next one. Evangelicals declare that there are some particularly gifted people called *profetas* (Sp. "prophets") and/or *instrumentos* (Sp. "instruments"), who are chosen by God to act in the world on his behalf. Thus, for instance, it is often stated that through anointment what is actually being performed is a literal surgery, which is only visible to the eyes of God. I had the opportunity to participate a few times in the groups who joined Sister Silvia, a renowned Winka *prophet*, to carry out anointments. During them, Sister Silvia went into a trance and God occupied her body in order to interact with sick people. Most of the time God, through Silvia, told people that it was not their time yet, and that in order to stop their suffering he would perform a surgery. Then God/Silvia proceeded to narrate what s/he was doing with her/his hands, claiming to be cutting the flesh, extracting different organs, receiving new organs from heaven, putting these in the ill-body, and suturing the wounds. People affirm that "God has everything new for the people who have faith in him", talking principally about hearts, lungs, kidneys and blood. When a person is sick, God, through his instruments, changes the defective organs. It was occasionally put forward that, on some occasions, certain people are able to actually

see these divine surgeries, thanks to what is called "spiritual vision". This happens when people are more connected with God. A friend, for instance, told me that he had experienced spiritual vision twice. Once, he saw how, when a prophet was performing an anointment, there were different scalpels and bandages slowly descending from above. On another occasion, he saw how a little needle injected a liquid into the finger of one "brother".

The story of how Luisa became Evangelical is another example of the connection established between health and faith. Years ago, Luisa started to feel weak, with no strength at all, even to walk. She was always tired and did not want to do anything. One day she could barely eat, and her daughter, who had showed the same intention on other occasions, asked to go to Sister Matilde, a famous *prophet* from Peleco, 10 miles northwards of Elicura. Luisa, as usual, attempted to excuse herself from travelling, arguing different reasons. But as her daughter could see how weak she was, she took her, almost by force, to the bus. When they finally got to Sister Matilde's house, there was a tiny room filled with people waiting to see her. When it was Luisa's turn, Matilde made her kneel and, placing her hands on her head, told her: "oh, look at your body, all your bones are drying out, you have no strength at all, and you have no appetite". Diagnosing the urgent need for "surgery", she proceeded to perform it. By the end, Matilde told her that she had to come back in eight days. The following week, Luisa began to eat a little, each time feeling a little better. When she went back to see Matilde, she informed Luisa that she had stomach cancer, but that God did not want to take her yet, and that is why she could cure her. Since that day Luisa has been Evangelical, and although she can no longer attend religious services as she could in the past, she maintains that her faith is unharmed.

It is possible to find several similar narratives among Evangelicals in Elicura. In them, healing is what most often triggers conversion. People do not have to personally experience healing to turn Evangelical, but most of the time conversion is linked to experiences suffered by close kin. Although some state that people attend church *pa' puro pelar* (Sp. "just to gossip"), to spend their spare time, or to organise joint activities, most maintain that people go to church because there they can find health. Alberto, the Evangelical *lonko*, used to stress that I should note that in Elicura

there were no longer *machi* (shaman) or *lawentuncheve* (herbalist), when considering why the Evangelical churches were so successful. As follows I will attempt to address why I think, according to what Evangelical Mapuche themselves perceive, my *lonko* friend thought so.

4.3. The Mapuche Pastor

There is a prominent character in Elicura's Evangelism whose narratives I will employ in order to introduce how (from an Evangelical understanding) there is an explicit homological equivalence between Mapuche and Evangelical traditions. One afternoon, I was talking with Pastor Carlos about the relationship between being Mapuche and being Evangelical, knowing that he openly considered himself to be Mapuche, and that he knew that most non-Evangelical Mapuche people in Elicura state that Evangelicals are *awinkados'* quintessence. For him the difference was clear: "First I was Mapuche, later I was Evangelical". Saying this, Carlos was not simply suggesting that there were some objective substances that defined him ontologically as Mapuche, like the subjective agency in the later decision to become Evangelical. Instead, what he was pointing out was the difference between being and a means to accomplish something, in this case, a connection with God. In his view, Mapucheness is not about a reified specific culture, but about what one actually is. Subsequently, *awinkamiento* is only possible when attempting to deny this essential being, when trying to resist Mapucheness. Cultural terms were not relevant in that discussion, and in fact they were seen as equivalent paths leading to an identical goal.

Earlier in this thesis, we saw how, for many Mapuche people, the concept of reality as a source of experience encompasses settings such as *pewma* and *perimontun* (Chapter 1). Similarly, Evangelicals state that there are two principal ways in which God communicates with people: dreams and conversations through *profetas*. Years ago, Carlos was a member of the church he attended. One day, however, the Pastor told everybody that he could no longer accomplish his function,

and the Cañete church's central branch wanted a person from the Valley to be in charge of the temple. A few days later the Holy Spirit began to tell Carlos, through several instruments, that he should be prepared because he needed him for important affairs. Almost simultaneously, Carlos and his wife began to have dreams in which God told them both to be prepared, and most explicitly that he wanted Carlos to guide his people. At the time, he had a recurrent dream in which he had to walk an extremely long distance, and he knew that he could not give up despite the tiredness he felt. When he told this to the people in charge of the church, they immediately knew Carlos was the one, and he eventually became the Pastor, in spite of the envy some people showed.

According to Carlos, God has always communicated with Mapuche people using dreams, and it is up to people to really understand what God wants from them. He states that Mapuche people have always known this, as they know that they are just administrators of things on the earth, because the owner and creator of everything is God. According to him, this is directly related to the classical idea Mapuche people had about *ngen*, which anthropologists have *animically* depicted as master spirits of things in "Nature" (Foerster 1993; Grebe 1993). As there are different *ngen* in nature, e.g. *ngenmawida* (Mp. approx "owner of the forest"), we are *ngen* of our stuff, family, etcetera. But in the end, we are nothing but *intermediaries* (*sensu* Latour 2005) of God's will.

4.4. Evangelism as an Equivalent/Alternative to *"Mapuchism"*

As Carlos' examples show, for Evangelical Mapuche there are not contradictions in being Mapuche and being Evangelical, and what's more, there could be a total compatibility between both (Foerster 1993, 2006; Lafferte 2006). As stated, being Mapuche relates to what one ontologically is, in racial and autochthonous terms, meanwhile being Evangelical relates to a reflexive attitude concerning personal agency. Furthermore, Evangelicals usually perceive Mapucheness beyond essences, in its moral terms and linked to customs, practices and traditions, as practically

homologous to the practices, customs and settings developed by Evangelical theology. In this section, I will review the several affinities that people assert in this sense, which commonly point towards denying *awinkamiento* accusations and affirming that, instead of forbidding Mapuche practices, within Evangelism, Mapucheness finds a new context for development.

One of the fundamental homological statements between both traditions regards the unmediated relationship people have with God. Evangelical Mapuche usually affirm that, similar to what has always been the case with Mapuche religion, they are able to communicate with God without needing any intercession. By stressing this, they are emphasising the difference both religions have with Roman Catholicism, and its court of Saints and priests. Accordingly, it is pointed out that a pastor's role is merely circumstantial, which is practically expressed by the fact that daily preaches are not just his task, but are performed by different brothers and sisters following a schedule.

For Evangelical Mapuche, the similitude between Evangelism and traditional Mapuche religion is easily observable in ceremonial settings. Indeed, they consider the *nguillatun* and Evangelical religious services to be two equivalent ways of collectively gathering to praise God. A critical aspect to understanding this is that, although there is a person who fulfils a central role in both, *machi* and pastor respectively, each person present is individually recreating and enhancing a singular relationship with God. Also, both ceremonies respect the classical format of Mapuche meetings (*trawun*), according to which every person's opinion is worth considering and should be listened to. People also state other formal similarities. For example, it is pointed out that in *nguillatun* women should wear traditional dresses and act respectfully, and in church women must wear skirts and leave their hair long, thus showing their femininity and respecting what God says is the proper way to dress. A friend told me that she did not understand why she must wear skirts in church until she had a dream. In it, she was wearing trousers and for that reason she had to sit in the men's side of the church, feeling terribly awkward. Then she understood why she should wear a skirt, because she was a lady. This dream also introduces another similitude between Elicura Evangelism and *nguillatun*: the ritual separation of men and women. People affirm that in *nguillatun* women and men are

separated and only join for the final ritual dancing. Similarly, during Evangelical services, men and women sit in different sides of the temple, and only come together during the ritual climax, which takes place in front of the altar during the "anointment prayer".

A further similarity emerges from the communication between God and people, which lies in the declared analogy between Mapuche *machi* and Evangelical prophets/instruments. Among Evangelical Mapuche, both roles are thought of as a means employed by God to act within the world of humans, which is accomplished through the temporary possession of these peoples' bodies. It is frequently stated that both *machi* and prophets are people carefully chosen who are granted a very special gift. In terms of divine gifts, Evangelicals often expressed that God gave a place to everybody, and if he formerly granted gifts of *lonko*, *werken*, *machi*, he currently grants gifts of pastor, chorister, "speaking in tongues", and of interpreter (of what people speaking in tongues are saying). In the case of the latter role, the similitude it has to *nutramtumachive* (also *dungumachive*), the people who translate what the *machi* say during their trances, when they speak some sort of "holy Chedungun" (Dillehay 2007) is stressed.

It is often considered that, in order to be a *machi*, it is necessary to be the subject of a special spiritual possession by a *machi püllü* (Mp. "Shaman spirit", see Bacigalupo 2007). In this sense, the longstanding *machi* absence in Elicura was sometimes explained as a probable migration of the *don de machi* (Sp. "*machi* gift") towards Evangelicals. Furthermore, it is frequently stated that Evangelical prophets/instruments are able to predict the future. This happened, for example, with the prediction of the last earthquake affecting Chile's southern region (Chapter 4). Likewise, *machi* often experience revelations that allow them to know what is going to happen in the future. Years ago, I used to visit a *machi* elsewhere, and each time I was with her she claimed that she knew I was coming because she had dreamt about me arriving at her house the night before.

Anthropologists have usually seen *machi* as fulfilling a dual religious-medical role among the Mapuche (Bacigalupo 2007; Dillehay 2007). In the same way, Evangelical Mapuche affirmed that there is a link between Mapuche and Evangelical religion in terms of healing. Here it is stressed that it is critical "to have faith" in the

treatments in order to accomplish the final aim. I heard several stories of Evangelical healing, and I was also able to attest a few. People commonly claimed that church now fulfils a role that was previously in the hands of *machi*. Interestingly, among Evangelicals, spiritual possession is frequently pointed out as a common cause of illness. A friend, for instance, narrating his personal history of conversion, identified his specific trigger of faith to be the fact that his brother was healed of a "mocking spirit" that had taken possession of his body. This spirit made him make fun of everybody, which eventually led to a tense familial situation. The spirit finally abandoned him, thanks to the anointment of a prophet.

As can be deducted so far, from this understanding, Mapucheness is not impaired by professing an Evangelical faith, or vice versa, fundamentally because the ways in which both are perceived and practiced does not make the possibility of conflict logical. Simply put, being Mapuche is linked here to race and place, not to culture. In terms of contents, furthermore, Evangelical Mapuche affirm the total compatibility of Mapuche and Evangelical frames. For this reason, instead of being weakened, ethnical pride could be even reinforced through practicing evangelism.

4.5. Locating Culture

Other ethnographers have proposed a twofold distinction in the way Mapucheness is conceived from an Evangelical understanding. On the one hand, it appears as an ethnic identity fundamentally linked to race, and on the other, as something primordially connected to culture (Lafferte 2006). In my own fieldwork, I came across both, but I find it impossible to establish such a clear-cut distinction for two fundamental reasons. First, because, even though some people were more likely to emphasise racial elements when defining Mapucheness, everybody eventually mentioned racial specificity in some way or other in their particular definition. And second, and specifically referring to Evangelical Mapuche, because, even though most recognised a specific cultural content as linked to Mapucheness, they saw cultural elements as perfectly replaceable without major consequences. For example,

Alberto once complained in a *lonko* assembly about the use of Chedungun, stating: "We should modernise ourselves, let's give up talking like the ancient ones", despite the fact that he is the only person in the whole Valley with the ability to be *nutramtumachive* (see above). In the same way, perhaps, this also stands to explain why one of the Mapuche Pastors in the Valley is also one of its biggest ethno-tourism businessmen.

Beyond the specific links people establish between Mapuche and Evangelical religion, I would personally stress as a key connecting element, something I have previously highlighted. During my fieldwork, I frequently came across personal perspectives emphasising how irrelevant perceived formal differences were among diverse entities loosely conceived of as cultures. This irrelevance was not only implicitly asserted, but it could also be observed more practically. For instance, when I asked people about the differences between the Evangelical churches within Elicura, people emphasised that each one had its own ways, but in the end they were all the same. Accordingly, preferring one church over the others was an issue based fundamentally on personal preferences. In broader terms, credos were explained to me as follows: "There are many races, many languages, and each one worships God in his own tongue, in his own way. But Mapuche people have always had the same God, Jehovah which is the same as *Ngenechen*". In my opinion, this points in the same direction as the previously described "respect" towards different ways of performing *nguillatun*, or speaking Chedungun. Considering the emphasis Mapuche people put on personal experience, a reluctance to affirm collective identities through elements that are variable at a personal level could be expected. Instead, people confirm ontological status by a priori observation, and comparing ulterior social behaviour to it.

For an Evangelical understanding, a reified culture is not relevant when defining Mapucheness. People maintain that culture, like languages, can be studied, and as such, everybody can attempt to pass themselves off as somebody else. But what cannot be changed is what one is, the face, the skin, or the hair one has, or one's birthplace. It is my impression that this "culture contempt" is related to a more general way in which Mapuche people conceive the world as formed by an ontological opposition of being. Nevertheless, it may also be stated that Evangelism,

obliterating the Mapuche/Winka distinction by underlining humanity's common divine origin, promotes this kind of reasoning. Whichever of the alternatives one chooses, both equally allow us to observe how self/other distinctions are performed, dismissing what others take to the foreground.

To conclude, I would like to briefly review the coordinates that rule an ever-present concept in this chapter. I refer to *awinkamiento*. As mentioned, most non-Evangelical Mapuche in Elicura state that those Mapuche who are Evangelicals are *awinkados*. The substratum of this claim may vary from the mere fact of following Winka religions, to a perceived self-dislocation according to an implicit or perceived behaviour. I have stated that when these claims are confronted with Evangelical understandings, they cannot be fully comprehended. Amid confrontation emerges *equivocation* (Viveiros de Castro 2004b), which is evident when noticing the ontological dissonances among claims that we will fully explore in the next chapter. Nevertheless, I have made almost no reference to what Evangelicals themselves understand as *awinkamiento*. To them, *awinkado* is usually a person who attempts to deny s/he is Mapuche, and who do not want to be involved with Mapuche culture, but not necessarily somebody who employs Winka culture. The use they make of this concept is, however, minimal. This is because, as stated, to them the Mapuche/Winka distinction is just a starting point, and it is not as meaningful in daily life as other oppositions, such as mundane/evangelical.

5. Conclusion

What I have attempted in this chapter is to minimally depict the diversity of understandings present in what are supposedly shared referential worlds within Mapuche rural life. By exploring how people may understand some terms according to different ontological premises, I have tried to ethnographically describe, at least partially, the inherent heterogeneity ruling Mapuche social life. In this exploration, it has been critical to see how Mapuche people may differently understand the claim "there are Mapuche people in every country of the world". Thus, we have seen how,

for some, that claim is perfectly admissible as a metaphor, while others may simultaneously maintain it literally. Although terms are supposed to have a fixed, shared meaning, which allows their employment in social life, we have demonstrated how it is perfectly possible to not expect such conventionalism among the Mapuche. To them, terms do not keep a relationship of identity with things in reality or with ideal conceptions, but they are always depicting a particular personal experience of something. Their immanence is always radical.

In this sense we have seen how Mapucheness may be understood as a self, as a self-to-be, or as a dimension of being. Also, that this difference is developed despite the fact that different understandings seem to share a common opposing referent: the overlapped dyad of Winka/Other. However, by unravelling the different premises from which persons make utterances and interpret the utterances of others, it is possible to notice a certain practical mismatching in what is supposed to be the same. We are then in front of a practical manifestation of anthropological equivocation, fundamentally because within Mapuche lives "direct comparability does not necessarily signify immediate translatability" (Viveiros de Castro 2004b:4). In the next chapter, I will attempt to address the implications that this ontological heterogeneity has when it comes to social life. By doing this, I will be exploring how Mapuche people conceive of sociality, and its possibilities if all we have when we attempt to establish links among ourselves, as unique and inimitable persons, are nothing but equivocations.

Chapter 6

The Equivocality of Social Life

In the 18th Century, the Jesuit priest Andrés Febrés recorded the following dialogue between two "cacique" Mapuche:

> Pedro Llancahuenu: "…I arrived to a **vüta mapu**, between Paraná and Uruguay Rivers: there live the **Guarani che**, in more than thirty good towns."
> Ignacio Levihueque: "What kind of **che** are they? Are they **winka** or **muru winka**?"
> P: "None of both, they are **re che**, they were born in this **mapu**."
> I: "Is that possible? Do **re che** live in towns?"
> P: "See Levihueque, I did not come to lie to you, what I saw I will tell you. You have told me big issues… but I will tell you even bigger ones, things almost incredible in this **mapu** of Chile."
> I: "Tell me, I am wishing to hear."
> P: "These **Guarani che** are there, in their beautiful towns, they have good churches, good houses… Now I will tell you how they were in the past, how they gathered in towns, and how they are now… These **Guarani che** were anciently as **veichi mapu che**; they lived in huts: they sow a little of corn to eat, they fished, they hunted… when they fought, the ones who were captured were killed, roasted, and eaten, and their heads, after eating the brains, were prepared to drink cider…" (1765:130-133)

This conversation might be appealing for several reasons, for how it describes cannibalism, or for the implicit advocacy Llancahuenu makes of life in towns. Nonetheless, here I would like to pay attention to just one aspect of it: the emergence of surprise. With this, I am referring to how one of the interlocutors explicitly claims to be puzzled by the information he is receiving. This is: there is a place where "*re che*" do not live scattered, but together in towns. The argument I will attempt in this chapter is directly linked to understanding why this information is surprising for Levihueque, but also why it might be not as surprising for others. In my opinion, by following these two paths –the emergence of surprise, and its absence– we may reach a privileged position through which to understand how Mapuche people conceive of

sociality. This is, not as interactions immersed in shared semantic fields *a priori* established, but instead, as the establishment of social connections in the awareness that those shared semantic fields do not necessarily exist.

The aims of this chapter are twofold. As proposed, it explains how I think Mapuche people understand sociality, but at the same time it addresses how I believe they deal with social life in an ontology characterised by a *radical singularism* (Chapter 4). In this sense, my argument suggests that people respond to the ever-present *homonymy* inherent to social encounters by *subsuming* other people's expressions into their own experiential frameworks. I will fully develop this proposal in the following pages. However, for now I would like to take advantage of my introductory excerpt to briefly introduce two critical concepts: *homonymy* and *subsumption*.

Reproducing Febrés' dialogue above, I wrote a few expressions in bold characters. These correspond to the original terms in which Febrés recorded the conversation. The rest of the text is my translation of the one Febrés did from the original Chedungun conversation to Spanish. The reason I left these expressions in their original terms is because I want to show how through supposedly equivalent references people may actually be denoting different referents (cf. Holbraad 2008). Understanding this is critical for appreciating how Mapuche people conceive of social life. To note this difference, I present a table below comparing the referents Febrés ascribes to the dialogue with the ones I see as being pointed out by the interlocutors.

Original	Febrés	Alternative Translation
Vüta Mapu	Big Land	Big Land
Guarani che	Guarani people	A native people
Che	People	People
Winka	Spanish people	Non-native people
Muru Winka	Foreign people	Other non-native people
Re che	Indians, Pure Indians	Real native people
Mapu	Land	Land
Veichi Mapu Che	People of this land	Natives of this land

Table 6.1: Comparison of referents

Although Febrés assumes the possibility of performing a synonymical replacement of the original dialogue, by proposing an alternative translation it is my intention to show that this is not immediately possible. This is because there seems to be an ontological dissonance between Febrés' conceptions and the ones maintained in the dialogue. Indeed, going back to my previous argument, Febrés' comprehension seems to be strongly embedded in an "ethnical" understanding, whereas I perceive dialogue's referents as framed on a "traditional" one (Chapter 5). Febrés assumes his referents are the same as the ones put forward in the dialogue, and thus he attempts to find out their equivalents in both in Mapuche and Spanish. In his view, univocal reality transcends the words used to designate it. Insofar as the translator chooses the right references, the message will be the same as the one conveyed by the original text.

However, in a Mapuche ontology such an assumption would be illusory at best. This is because, according to this position, personal referents are not necessarily shared, and each personal perspective has a particular and autonomous semantic field. This does not imply personal perspectives should always be apart of each other, but it is assumed they can be sometimes collective. Nonetheless, the only way of accomplishing this is by creating and managing relatedness. Being close, constructing and nurturing social relationships, is the only way persons may begin to share their singularity (Chapter 2).

To exemplify the difference between the perspectives, and how I think the Mapuche option proceeds, I will compare the referents Febrés ascribes to the dialogue with referents that I myself ascribe to it. If we look at Table 6.1, we see that where I propose "a native people", Febrés singled out one specific cultural group, the "Guarani". Similarly, where I recommend the term "non-native people", Febrés suggests a clear national identity, the "Spanish". Through my proposal, therefore, the text seems to lose a great deal of the specificity Febrés' version claims it to have. If Febrés asserts proper nouns, I propose common ones. If he tells us the name of the people living in towns, I assert that specificity was not as relevant as the fact they were "native". Why, then, should one choose my alternative?

The answer to this question is extremely simple. One should do so because the referents Febrés proposes are not actually the ones the interlocutors seem to be

pointing out. That is exactly why Febrés' translation appears to add information absent from the original intention of the interlocutors. To understand the text, Febrés transposed his own referential framework on to it. He assumed a shared referentiality and attempted to unravel the different equivalent references to it. As a result, he imposed his referents upon the caciques' references. In doing this, Febrés did what I call *subsumption*. Put simply, by *subsumption* I refer to a process of apprehension and subjugation of other persons' expressions into one's own terms and personal truths. It is a particular process of translating the terms of the others into one's own personal ontology. I believe this process is critical to the way in which Mapuche people cope with the multiplicity of personal truths populating social life. In this chapter I will explain why.

A key reason for the relevance of *subsumption* may be found in the way the Mapuche think of interpersonal connections as inherently *homonymic*. Contrary to what Febrés assumed, references among the Mapuche cannot be simply synonymically translated, as if they were equivalent expressions denoting the same things. Instead, although references may look similar, the referents they denote are always different insofar as they depend on each person's particular singularity. From a Mapuche stance, we should always be aware that persons use the same terms to designate different things. Therefore, it is extremely important to clarify that the difference between what different people say is not found in how they call the same things through different expressions, but in how *they call different things through the same references* (cf. Viveiros de Castro 2004b). Although denotations seem to be the same, denotatums always differ because they are intrinsically personal and unshared. This issue is central to understanding Mapuche sociality, as it is the fact Mapuche people seems to be totally aware of it.

In the first section of this chapter I will summarise the link between three elements I perceive as crucial for outlining a Mapuche conception of knowledge. This connection will help us to understand why Mapuche social life occurs between a priori disconnected personal entities. In the second section I will explain how Mapuche people deal with other people's experiences/perspectives, a process I identify as a particular task of translation by *subsumption*. Understanding this process as connected to what I recall in the first section is critical for comprehending

why I think there is something specifically Mapuche about what I describe, instead of being a universal characteristic of social interactions. This specificity rests upon the ontological foundations of Mapuche lived worlds, and how they emphasise the singularity and autonomy of persons, whilst being simultaneously aware of the *equivocation* characterizing social encounters. In the third section I will address how the issues already explored result in a very specific type of social interaction that is characterised by *homonymy*. Finally, in the last section, I will attempt to show how, beyond and despite the previously stated ontological multiplicity of Mapuche social life, Mapuche people conceive of sociality.

1. Tracing Connections: The Uniqueness of Personal Experience, The Opacity of Other Minds, and Referential Alterity

In the preceding chapter I described three different ways in which people in Elicura understand *Mapucheness*. In doing so, I observed how they pointed to different referents through what seemed to be the same references. This was especially critical taking into account the term "Mapuche". Immersed in social life, this word became a symbol, insofar as its meaning was not shared at a supra-individual level, and it was "mediated by the idiosyncratic experience of the individual(s)" (Cohen 1993:14).

As Cohen (1993) observes, there is a huge difference between sharing symbols and sharing meanings. And as I suggest, such a difference seems to be extremely clear for the Mapuche. Indeed, for them, the meaning of the terms depends on how they are personally experienced, and thus all that people might *a priori* share of them is their symbolic potential, that which allows them to be symbols. Signs, thus, only exist in the singularity of persons. The particular relationship between signifier and signified is only traced at personal level, not at a supra-individual one.

This is why when signs are socialised they necessarily became homonyms, shared references for different referents.[132]

This problem of *social homonymy* –labelled as such insofar as the *referential alterity* (Viveiros de Castro 2004b) it implies emerges from social encounters between at least two different referential worlds– finds its roots in the ontological foundations of the Mapuche lived worlds (Chapters 1 and 2). Previously, I mentioned that the Mapuche people with whom I lived emphasised the relevance of personal experience. Such an emphasis had two key practical connotations. First, in how Mapuche people put great effort into determining the provenance of the various experiences they came across. This was done by pointing out who had told them the stories they were telling; remarking on the ancient source of the narratives when necessary; or asserting that the narrator himself or herself had experienced the story. Narratives' original sources were never left to chance, because through their statement persons could assess the distance between them and the "truths" they conveyed.

Secondly, I described how people often stressed the importance of personally experiencing something in order to really know about that something. As stated before, this was implicit in people's reluctance to give advice to others outside their households or Patrikin, and it was asserted that each person was the only one able to know what was best for himself or herself. I merged both propositions in what I call the *uniqueness of personal experience principle* (Chapter 1), a premise I perceive as essential to Mapuche life.

Later we saw how this principle was connected to the way in which Mapuche people think of persons. In Chapter 2, I described how persons are seen as a mixture of substances, and of a fluid and unstable network of relationships. In the consideration of these both aspects we saw how the Mapuche person was at last conceived as a unique and unrepeatable entity.

The connection between the uniqueness of the person and the uniqueness of experience appeared, hence, as evident. Indeed, one could propose that the reason for the assertion of the latter is the radical heterogeneity of selves existent among the

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[132] This referent multiplicity is not polysemic, because terms do not signal different referents within "one world", but different referents in different worlds inhabited by disconnected singular persons (see below).

Mapuche, which only can be overcome through the conscious creation of a similar perspective by close relatedness (Chapter 2). Indeed, the only ones who can be said to share to some extent experiences with a self are those closely related to him or her, who ideally will also share "one blood" and *tuwün* (Mp. approx. "Place of origin"). However, when the intensities of relationships decrease, people's experiences become increasingly different.

This increasing difference allowed me to propose the presence of the problem of the "opacity of minds" (Chapter 1), especially documented among Pacific societies. Simply put, this problem asserts that it is impossible to actually know what is on the mind of another person. In social terms, the opacity doctrine involves a challenge to the participants of the societies maintaining it. Not only do they live in the uncertainty of being incapable of really knowing others' minds, but, for the same reason, they cannot "speculate about the intentions, motives, and internal states of others" (Schieffelin 2008:431).

The Mapuche opacity claims seem, however, to differ from the ones described as existing in the Pacific (e.g. Stasch 2009). They do not necessarily imply complete uncertainty of what is on other people minds, but rather a fundamental doubt. This doubt has two important implications. Firstly, Mapuche people can never be sure of the veracity of other people's claims, which is equivalent to questioning whether it was really experienced (Chapter 1). As experience depends on the person, there is a ubiquitous doubt predicated not necessarily upon the possibilities of experience, but rather upon whether or not persons actually experienced what they say they experienced.

The second implication derives from this one. Because Mapuche people can never be certain about what is on other people's minds, they usually attempt to guess. Guessing is possible because what is really relevant for the Mapuche is not what the others really meant, but how the self perceives the others. There are two ways of dealing with the impossibility of knowing what is on other people's minds: doubting and guessing. If doubt appears as a passive stance, respecting what is in the mind of the others, guessing is, on the contrary, a demonstration of what is, personally speaking, the point of view of more worth. Here Mapuche opacity claims are

especially different from Pacific ones. Indeed, whereas Pacific peoples choose the first option, most Mapuche people would prefer the latter.

Besides this brief summary, I would like to make two late clarifications. In this thesis I have several times implicitly connected "personal experience" with "personal point of view". This link was probably unproblematic because sight is considered a mode of experience. However, here I would like to properly unveil the ethnographic reasoning behind this connection. The issue might be summarised as follows: for many Mapuche people I met in Elicura and elsewhere, to really *experience with certitude it is best to see*. This does not necessarily imply that sight is the only sense assessed as properly providing experience, but rather that even when something is perceived through a different sense, that perception is often incorporated, or manifested, as if it had been seen. What is more, the assertion "I saw it myself", or any utterance stating sight as the source of experience, is more likely to be believed than if the source is another sense. This is clear, for instance, when we compare what I have just described with the phrase "I heard it myself". Having seen something extracts a good deal of the doubt connected to the experience (at *experiencer* level), meanwhile just hearing would reaffirm it. Sight, thus, would be the least deceitful of all senses.

The second point regards how knowledge can be shared. In this sense, it is important to stress that knowledge is a personal affair only reached through personal experience, but we should not forget what we know about persons' constitutions. Thus, although knowledge is achieved personally, there is a conception of "the knower" as a singular entity linked to a kind of people (given, i.e. Patrikin, or constructed, i.e. people from the same area) sharing certain elements such as abilities to perceive. This results, for instance, in statements such as: "only Mapuche people can experience beings such as *anchimallen* or *wutranalwe*" (Chapter 1).

Although I have addressed these issues before, I recall them now because they are important foundations for understanding the final exploration I intend to pursue. This concerns how Mapuche people understand sociality, and how they think it can be created despite the problems that the *radical singularism* standing as the key pillar of Mapuche ontology may present to such an idea. As we will see below, the connection I have briefly described here derives from an extremely complex

scenario in which the "supposed" need for a *common referentiality* (or shared semantic fields) disappears. Accordingly, any message could be fully apprehended only through dwelling in the perspective of he or she who makes the utterance, living the experience that utterance depicts. The only way of really comprehending what the other is saying is by being the other. As this is often impossible, Mapuche people choose to translate what the others say into their own personal conceptions.

Simply put, I suggest that instead of conceiving sociality as possible because people inhabit the same world, Mapuche persons construct it with awareness of the multiplicity of worlds in which they, differently and singularly, dwell. In other words, instead of supposing they speak about the same things although they do not (cf. Viveiros de Castro 2004b), Mapuche people are always aware they cannot speak about the same things unless they construct similar personal perspectives by carefully managing relatedness (Chapter 2). This premise triggers a general conception of sociality in which, rather than being underpinned by reaching common and mutual understanding, is predicated upon enhancing what persons understand on their own terms. In brief, it is not a sociality of *shared signified*, but of *shared signifier*. In Cohen's terms (1993), it is not a sociality of sharing meanings, but of sharing symbols. I will develop this idea in the following pages. For the moment, I just want you to bear in mind one idea, which is strictly extracted from the things proposed here. This refers to how, considering the nature of Mapuche experience, I see the practicalities of Mapuche social life as a permanent task of translation.

2. Coping with Homonymy

Fernando is one the best friends I made during my fieldwork. A man in his forties, he stands from the rest of people in Elicura in many ways. He is the only person I met there, self-identified as Mapuche, who holds a university degree. He spent several years living in Concepción, where he got married to a *Chiñurra* (non-Mapuche woman), had two sons, and got divorced. A decade ago, during a global economic crisis, he became unemployed. He then was forced to move back to his homeland,

where he currently lives on his own. Additionally, he is one of only a handful of people in the Valley who have travelled outside of South America, and one of the few men of his age who is perfectly fluent in Chedungun. He currently devotes his time to teaching the Mapuche language and culture to both Mapuche people and Winka government officials. In his words, he works as a "Mapuche culture consultant".

I spent a great deal of my spare time in Elicura with Fernando. We used to chat about a wide range of topics, granting special relevance to the ones related to my research. In these conversations he used to tell me an anecdote that to his view appeared as a remarkable coincidence. Each time he quoted this story, he wrapped it in an informal veil as if, besides its amazing content, it also possessed a humorous dimension that made it worth telling. The anecdote was the following: according to Fernando, a friend once told him that in North America there is an indigenous group which, like the Mapuche, call themselves "People of the Land". Obviously, they do so in their own language, and only when both names are translated to a common language can we notice that they are identical. That was all; the entire salience of the anecdote was there in the fact that elsewhere, very far away from where we were, there is an indigenous group who name themselves using exactly the same as words as the Mapuche: "People of the Land".

At first, I found the anecdote as amazing as Fernando did, albeit probably not for the same reasons. In those days I was not as close to him as I became later. We build our friendship as time passed, but he kept telling me the story. Not being a person who commonly repeats himself, I began to think that his emphasis in this particular anecdote might be due to something I was not being able to notice. By the middle of my fieldwork I judged myself to be close enough to Fernando to contradict him without creating tension. One night I was listening to his anecdote once again. This time, however, instead of asking polite questions or feigning surprise, when he finished I tried to make him see that his anecdote was not really as striking as he thought it was. Recalling Levi-Strauss' *Race and History* (1977), I told him: "but Fernando, that's actually something that happens with most ethnonyms. Many peoples in the world name themselves through expressions meaning people, real people, people of the land, and so on". After a few seconds of silence he looked at

me puzzled, rhetorically saying "really?", and he abruptly changed the subject. A few weeks later, though, he told me the anecdote once again, as if I never had told him anything.

As I expect to show, this story is related to a task Mapuche people consider to be inherent to social life. To my view, this is essentially a process of *translation*, but of a translation of a very special kind. In order to properly understand it, we should see it as underpinned by my recently recalled proposals regarding the uniqueness of personal experience and the Mapuche version of the opacity doctrine. Simply put, it is my contention that Mapuche people deal with their multi-referential social scenario by performing a translation that, insofar as it is aware of the personal determination of referents, is predicated on subsuming other people's terms into one's own. In Fernando's anecdote, that would probably be his posture towards my attempt of correcting him. But, fundamentally, it is the posture assumed in the way he conceives, as coincidence, the synonymy of two different ethnonyms. As I see it, by doing this he is simply subsuming the information he received into the ontological frame defining the way he comprehends the world, which obviously fits into an "ethnical understanding" (Chapter 5).

2.1. Translations

In my view, as in the views of some others, anthropology could be understood as a discipline of translation (e.g. Palsson 1993; Rosaldo 1980). Its practitioners are supposed to live among different groups of "natives" during an extensive period of time, and through this it is expected they will be able to understand their "cultures". But this phenomenological approach would be useless if ethnographers were not able to later recount their findings to their audiences back home, which must be done as respectfully as possible to the original source. Thus, anthropology, as translation, appears to be a task implying a moulding in translator's conceptual apparatus aiming to really express what was meant (Viveiros de Castro 2004b, 2010a). This is expected to happen at least twice: once when ethnographers set their own culture

aside in order to comprehend the one they are studying, and once when they are supposed to tell people "back home" what they experienced in the field (cf. Wagner 1981).

This oversimplified description of ethnography will probably not find disagreement. It is widely assumed that anthropology looks for a thick understanding, as it is morally inspired by the Boasian claim of cultural equivalency, finding its political expression in "Cultural Relativism". This way, it is also supposed that, to be taken seriously, other people's cultures, religions, thoughts, and utterances must be considered in their own terms. If translation were a method of making understandable what one says to others, among different languages or even within the same language (Scott-Baumann 2010), anthropology could be said to do the same, but with cultures. Both would be tasks of contrasting meanings in order to achieve understanding, of building bridges between different denotative/symbolic systems.[133]

I see translation as a critical element within Mapuche social interactions. However, by employing this term in this context I am moulding it to refer a situation that, despite resembling what I put forward above, maintains a strong referential difference. This difference is not simply related to certain polysemy, which is in fact what would make translation necessary within one language (cf. Scott-Baumann 2010). Following the teachings of my Mapuche friends, it instead displays a homonymy, which is based on the necessary incommensurability of the understandings involved.

Therefore, what I see as translation among the Mapuche is not necessarily a task of respectfully unravelling the equivalent references we have with other people. Rather, it is a process of subjugating other people's terms into one's own personal referentiality. This is strongly predicated upon the connection between the assumption of the opacity of other minds, the uniqueness of experience principle, and the resulting referential alterity. Being aware of the heterogeneity of viewpoints populating the social world, and fundamentally doubting the existence of any

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[133] Cf. this view to Viveiros de Castro's proposal, which sees translation not as task of searching for equivalent terms between equivalent epistemologies, but of installing oneself in the equivocation space emerging from the two contrasted perspectives (2010a:76). This proposal, as far as it is aware of the existence of equivocation, finds echoes among what Mapuche people maintain, as we will see below.

necessary univocal external referent, Mapuche people get involved in social interaction as if lacking a mediating supra-individual structure. This redounds, for instance and as Course puts it (2011), in the fact groups among the Mapuche are created because people engage in social relationships, and not the other way round (cf. Overing and Passes 2000). This way, through the process of social involvement, a sense of understanding develops that eventually grants primacy to one's own perspective. Therefore, it is not relevant to grasp the intended meaning of a message, because in the process of interpreting that message there is always a forceful imposition of the terms of the person receiving the message.

Dealing with a multi-faith context in Bali, and urged by her informants, Wikan (1993) proposes an understanding of translation through the notion of "resonance". Essentially, it suggests that what people say "resounds" in others in a manner that goes beyond any "rational" approach, thus allowing understanding. This would occur even between speakers of different languages. Understanding, then, as a necessary aim of social interaction, assumes an empathetic veil, being a mutual "effort at feeling-thought; a willingness to engage with another World, life or idea" (1993:190).

As I see it, Wikan's approach might be useful for understanding how translation occurs in Mapuche social interaction. If persons who do not share exact referential frameworks interact, they will understand each other beyond the differences as a result of a process of involvement that is not merely "rational". During my fieldwork I had the opportunity, not just to witness but also to partake in innumerable social situations resembling this one. However, because of my experience I tend to think that this notion of translation works perfectly in assuming one specific ontological premise, which Wikan explicitly states: people see in a different way things which are exactly the same. But it is not necessarily the case that, as I argue in relation to the Mapuche, what is seen is detached from an assumed transcendental mono-referential reality. Further, it is always connected to specific personal experiences.

By claiming this I am not denying that Mapuche people "believe" in mutual understanding and in reaching it. It would be impossible to maintain this, as it is the opposite of what Mapuche people explicitly declare. Nevertheless, I believe that

Mapuche mutual understanding is not reached through discerning equivalent references to the same referents. Nor is it achieved through a complex transposition of perspectives (to really assess each one's referents), which works theoretically but is often assumed to be practically impossible (cf. Viveiros de Castro 2010a). Mutual understanding is, rather, reached by listening to the references of others, but imposing on them the interpreter's referential frame.

2.2. Subsumption

"That's a name they gave them, but they are Mapuche"… The answer a friend gave me when in 2006 I asked her why the Aymara were called Aymara if they were –as she stated– Mapuche still wanders in my mind. In those days, as now, I was struggling to construct an ethnographic discourse about what the idea "Mapuche" implied. Then, as later during my fieldwork in Elicura, I saw myself overwhelmed by the vast diversity of conceptions people had not only on this issue, but also on many other topics about which I enquired. Although there were recurrent elements present when they were looked at as a group, by going into each of them separately and in a little bit of depth, it was possible to notice their necessary and incontestable uniqueness. Perhaps this was clearer than ever when I contrasted what people such as my friend thought about the discourses of some members of Mapuche political organizations, who aspired to locate themselves as the valid interlocutors of "*el pueblo Mapuche*" in front of the Chilean State. On the one hand, I had a discourse with a referent I found difficult to grasp, and which sometimes appeared even as a radical demand internationally orientated: "there are Mapuche in every country of the world". On the other hand, I had another that, on the contrary, increasingly demanded specificity, both cultural and historical, stressing this through discursive tools: elements such as "People", "Autonomy", and "Culture".

Then, I did not understand that there was a critical difference between what I was asking and what my friend was answering (cf. Holbraad 2008). As an anthropologist, I was trained to research how people thought, and to take this thought

as exemplary of a shared way of thinking. Furthermore, I was taught to comprehend this network of sharing as what defined the boundaries and the content of a specific social group. I was taught to see the world in terms of cultures and ethnic identities. My friend, in a different way, was portraying how she thought of a concept – "Mapuche"– without necessarily sharing my referential framework. Although we were employing the same words, we were not talking about the same thing.

Situations such as the one I have just described can often arise within Mapuche lives without a big deal being made of them. This apparent insignificance is not because Mapuche people do not perceive a difference between the diverse range of personal standpoints which interact with each other, but because it is fully expected that these standpoints will be different. A critical factor here is what I call the emergence of surprise and, more specifically, the elements that trigger it. In the case I am recounting, surprise emerges when common referents are expected and they are noticed to be distinct. This is what happened when I thought "Ah! We are not talking about the same thing", and I broke the initial illusion that in fact we were. However, that would not be the case if common referentiality were not expected. Assuming a stance in which the referents are dependant upon the personal standpoint, surprise would emerge just because the referents are the same. Therefore, a claim of surprise would be something like "Ah! You see this as I see it".

In my view, this is related to how Mapuche people conceive of understanding as a task of imposing one's own view. The above example may be useful for exemplifying how this works. When talking with my friend, I was the one who seemed interested in trying to understand the other person's references. I was the one puzzled, unravelling, and discerning. My friend, on the contrary, was not. She never thought we were necessarily talking about the same referents. What is more, she did not care whether or not we were so far as she was able to transpose my references to her own referential framework.

I have labelled this approach *subsumption*, because I see it as a process of apprehension and subjugation of other persons' expressions into one's own terms and personal truths. Subsuming involves translating other people's terms by granting primacy to one's own perspective. Recalling Wikan, *subsumption* involves a deep consideration of how words resound in the person who receives the message, but the

Mapuche are not as interested in how this resonance conveys the original message as they are in translating this messages into their own conceptions.

I perceived this *subsumption* on a regular basis during my fieldwork. It was commonly displayed through what I saw as a dismissal of what for me were critical elements, in order to define and understand what we were really talking about. In Chapter 5, I reviewed a critical example of this situation, showing how people usually stressed their own conception (underestimating others) of the term "Mapuche", despite their being aware of the multiplicity of personal senses attached to it. Other examples of *subsumption* appeared when talking about other people's ritual ceremonies, and how they were generally signalled through the term *nguillatun*. People in Elicura consider *nguillatun* the most important Mapuche ritual, despite the fact that it is no longer performed. But when they talked about it, they did not refer to a discrete referent called as such in the manner that I had expected. Rather, they seemed to be more concerned with their symbolic aspects. It was supposed that every indigenous people have their own *nguillatun*, and that "each person has their way of doing it".

I think we could find further examples of *subsumption* in this thesis. We could see as such, for example, how Evangelicals *translate* what they conceive as traditionally Mapuche as being homologically the same of what they, as Evangelicals, do. To make my point clear, I will quote two excerpts from the very few formal recorded interviews I carried out during my fieldwork. To my view, they present two clear examples of how external information is invariably understood according to the ontological premises that each person upholds.

> Look, Mapuche is what you Winka people call indigenous… There are indigenous peoples in Peru, in Bolivia… in every country there are indigenous peoples. And each has a place where they live, a language… and we are indigenous peoples from Chile, so the difference is that we are indigenous peoples nationalised as Chileans.

> There are indigenous peoples in the whole world… indigenous Cuban, Mexican, Argentineans, Peruvians, everywhere… plenty, a lot of races and dialects, and each one has their own dialect, but through them they all praise God…. The Mapuche said *Ngenechen*, but that is the same as Jehovah, Christ, Our Lord.

As it could be noted, in both cases countries, names, and traditions would give certain particularity to the different peoples inhabiting the world. But all these particularities seem to be left aside. They are not worth considering in the final ascertaining of the Mapuche status. This is clearer in the second case. It highlighted a set of elements one may understand as being present in different ways in different peoples, defining these peoples as a set "culturally". This highlighting, however, does not remove the fact that all of these groups, and the traditions they define, are equivalent to each other. It is, indeed, this equivalency that eventually matters for ascertaining the status of Mapuche.

In my impression, subsuming streamlines concepts, depriving them of all that is not personally necessary for their definition. I see this as strongly related to a conception in which the concept is shared but deprived of any conventional meaning. The translation by *subsumption*, assuming social multiplicity of referents, devotes its efforts to connecting affinal terms within the referential framework of who is making the translation. This does not suggest, however, that, as is the case with perspectivism, Mapuche people maintain a conception of the social through which we all see different worlds in the same way.[134] On the contrary, as each of us sees different worlds differently because each one of us is a unique person, we can never completely share our perspectives. As referents are person-relative, it would be illogical to assert that they are collectively upheld. Such collectiveness does not exist a priori. For this reason, others' utterances can only be approached as symbols (Cohen 1993). To put it in Structuralist language: what people share is the signifier, the terms, their material image; the signified is not, because it is always determined by the person. To put it in the terms of my ethnography, we all can employ the term "Mapuche"; nevertheless, most of the time we cannot be sure exactly what others mean when they use it.

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[134] Which would turn terms into "equivocal homonyms" (see Viveiros de Castro 1998, 2004b).

3. Homonymic Encounters

Having in mind what I have put forward so far, now I would now like to simultaneously get back to the introductory dialogue and to Fernando's story. What interests me about both of these narratives is that the emergence of surprise is a key element in their respective plots. Discussing the dialogue quoted at the beginning of this chapter, I pointed out how talk of "*re che*" who did not live scattered across the land but rather together in towns led to the emergence of surprise. In Fernando's anecdote, I observed that what surprises him is that there are two different referents (ethnic groups) which are denoted through the same reference, as "People of the Land". What I want to explore now is how these two "surprises", separated by more than two centuries, respond to a similar way of reasoning, which is exactly what makes them different from each other. As I see it, this is directly related to what involves the movement from personal understandings to social agreement among the Mapuche. Through exploring these two surprises and the contexts in which they originated, we can visualise the homonymy that characterise social encounters, and see how the Mapuche assume it to be a given element of social life.

As I stated before, I believe the two examples above are similar because the surprised persons in each situation subsume the information they receive into their own conceptions. In the dialogue, the information seems to expand personal conceptions, whilst at the same time reaffirming something already known: other *re che* customs may seem strange, but this strangeness, beyond being a manifestation of these peoples' own experience, does not affect their ontological status of *re che* (or Mapuche). In the vignette, the information Fernando receives prompts him to note a coincidence, which within his own personal standpoint adds polysemy to the concept "People of the Land" (insofar as it now points out two referents instead of one). What is more, this coincidence is even more peculiar to Fernando because, as seen in Chapter 5, it is usual that people, from an Ethnic understanding, use the term "Mapuche" metaphorically to refer indigenous peoples in general. They equate their situation with other colonial settings, making sense of the otherwise problematic

statement many others uphold: "there are Mapuche people in every country of the world".

But despite the similitude between these ways of reasoning, I perceive some differences in their respective cases of subsumption. As previously argued, I observe this as related to how the understandings people uphold are embedded in the different and specific ontological premises maintained in each case. Considering this, we might have no problems at all when following just one way of performing subsumption from one specific personal standpoint. However, something different happens when we attempt to grasp more than one subsuming process simultaneously. Let us simply consider the examples we are working with. In them, we could easily follow, as we will do next, each surprise's emergence separately. However, what does happen when we attempt to take them both together?

I think that when we do this, when we take both translation processes together, they offer us something similar to what Žižek terms as a *parallax gap* (2006). Simply put, this concept describes the gap engendered when employing a single language (or more properly what is thought as a common language) to refer to two incommensurable phenomena. Here we would have a misunderstanding one can only deal with by going beyond it. This may be attempted, according to Žižek, through what he calls a *parallax view*. This, in turn, is essentially conceived as a continual displacement between two points between which there is no possible mediation. In the problem we are dealing with, this may be understood as attempting not to stay fixed in one standpoint, which eventually would imply the prevalence of one particular subsumption. I will try to do this after going more specifically into both cases.

When considering the dialogue between the two caciques, it seems to me that surprise is generated by the fact that *Guarani che* are living in towns, a lifestyle which differs significantly from the *veichi mapu che* (approx. "*re che* from Chile") way of living. What I find interesting about this comparison is that *re che* from any land, no matter if it is *veichi* (this) or the one between Parana and Uruguay rivers, are somehow conceived as a single referent. It is because of this that surprise emerges. More specifically, it is not because these *Guarani che* have their own ways, which is to be expected, but because their ways are radically different from the ones common

in the land where the interlocutors are from. What is more, these ways are so radically different that in the land of the interlocutors they correspond to the ones presented by the Winka, by the people who are not *re che*. Although difference is to be expected, its extremity is surprising.

Nevertheless, this does not change how they are envisioned. Their "*re che-ness*" is not at stake. That is not founded on elements such as residential pattern. Rather, it is in the "objectively" perceived relationship they have with land. This relationship is what determines their status, nothing else. That is why the fact these people are called Guarani, or that they live in towns is not, beyond the surprise, considered more as more than an exotic feature. These particularities do not change the fact that what in the end is important is to trace the connection, the perceived material link. That is what eventually makes this people –just as the ones native to *veichi mapu*– *re che*.

In the case of Fernando, on the other hand, what struck him is not the radical customs difference, but the emergence of random coincidence. The surprise is generated because recurrence occurs among infinite possibilities. What he perceives to have happened is that, among many existent cultures, two have chosen the same name for themselves. This is why Fernando is surprised. Like in the dialogue, Fernando subsumes the information he receives into his conception of the world. And only when contrasted with his own framework, does the synonymy between the term "Mapuche" and the one chosen by this unspecified ethnic entity appear.

It seems to me that, in both cases, surprise emerges because of how these men subsume the information they receive. However, we should be aware that the subsumption appearing in each case is based upon different premises. It is based on the contrasting ontological positions from which each respective subsumption is performed. Let us consider more specifically how these differ. When looking at the first case, the way of proceeding leading to surprise can be described as subsumption by synonymy. In it, for the interpreter, as probably for he who gives the message, the concept *Guarani che* is homologue of *veichi mapu che*, insofar as they both refer to the ontological status of autochthony. The referent they both are signalling is the objectively perceived relation these peoples have with land. Thus, both terms are synonyms in practice: they are two ways of differently denoting what is the same for

the defining perspective. Here subsumption works along symmetrical lines, ascertaining what is similar –the common essence– and dismissing specificity, at least as something which is not differentially relevant.

On the other hand, I perceive the story of Fernando as an example of a subsumption performed by hyponymy. Indeed, he outright assumes the two human groups involved in his anecdote are "cultures". He comprehends them immediately as different but equivalent ways of approaching nature. The surprise emerges, here, because these different cultures have chose to name themselves using the same reference. What strikes him, then, is the synonymy of the two ethnonyms, the fact that there is one identical way of signalling two different but equivalent discrete entities. Comparing it to the reasoning in the dialogue, Fernando's logic assumes that two actors who denominate themselves through the same reference are included in a broader category –they are both "ethnic groups". The terms are understood, therefore, through semantic relations that are manifestly hierarchical. The terms are included as exemplar of something; and it is this something that defines the similitude of the terms.

Having clarified how each subsumption process may work separately, as proposed I would like to consider them together. Doing this, we notice the presence of a referential problem we could simply describe as homonymy. Connecting both understanding, we realise that one term –re che, che, Mapuche and so on– can have different meanings in different contexts. More specifically, we realise one reference may point to several different referents. It is often thought that people deal in daily life with this homonymy by simply knowing the repertoire of referents of a reference, and contextually choosing in each case the suitable one. Nevertheless, the case I propose would be different inasmuch as the repertoire of referents depends on who is using them, and is not shared per se. The homonymy, in these terms, would be related to the personal perspectival multiplicity of Mapuche social life. Indeed, the resulting homonymy would not be simply about how many different referential relationships may establish a single term (that would be more adequately polysemy). On the contrary, it would be about how the world to which one refers changes according to the standpoint one inhabits. Thus, if homonymy exists, it should not be related to how external referents may be pointed out differently by different people, a

setting where *sharing* the fact of living in a transcendent reality is taken for granted.[135] Instead, it must consider the *parallax gap* Mapuche people claim exists between different personal understandings.

This issue could be argued to be just a theoretical problem, as the perspectives I am comparing are not contemporaneous with one another. It could be stated, for instance, that such a comparison, at least from the birth of what we can call as "ethnic thought" among the Mapuche (Boccara 2007), does not have contemporary practical parallels (e.g. Mascareño 2007). The same could be ascertained from a more conservative approach that sees Mapuche people as completely integrated into Chilean society (and then included in its mono-naturalistic referentiality, i.e. Villalobos 1992). However, as I previously stated, what I am discussing is a practical issue inasmuch as this "parallax homonymy" is a ubiquitous ingredient of daily social interaction among Mapuche people, at least as I witnessed it in Elicura. People thinking from specific understandings (as the ones described in Chapter 5) are continually engaging in relations with people thinking from others. Indeed, this situation gets even more complex when we consider that in order to reach a more proper depiction of the different understandings one may find among the Mapuche of Elicura, one should describe each perspective as at personal level. Mapuche people themselves are totally aware of this diversity, and it is through this awareness that they conceive of sociality. According to this conception, we would not share a mono-naturalistic world, granting us a common referential framework that allows understanding through finding out which referents are "out there". Instead, we would dwell in a multi-naturalistic world (cf. Viveiros de Castro 1998), which would be based upon the unique and unrepeatable experience each person develops in the course of his or her lifetime. In this world, understanding would not be based on common referentiality (which would be always accidental), but based on locating what the others say within one's own referents. Accordingly, here sociality's founding act of faith would not be that we share a meaningful world, as is commonly uphold in "Western societies" (Žižek 2006). Instead, it would be exactly the opposite: that we do not share it.

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[135] The ability of sharing referents, in the best-case scenario, is something to be constructed (Chapter 2).

3.1. Social Agreement

"People from the 'Cultural Centre' are the only ones who are committed to recovering what it really is to be a Mapuche", members of the 'Cultural Centre' used to claim. "People from the 'Cultural Centre' are only interested in selling Mapuche traditions", people who were not part of the Centre often pointed out. "Evangelicals are completely *awinkados*", frequently affirmed people in Elicura who did not follow this faith. "We praise God in the same way the ancient Mapuche did", Evangelicals said for their part… I could spend some time contrasting points such as these. By doing so, I would be probably performing the most accurate possible description of social life Elicura. In my opinion, if there is one thing that is particularly striking about social life in a place like Elicura, it is how difficult it is to achieve consensus, a supposedly definitive component of society (Durkheim 1933). A few pages earlier, I put forward the argument I was going to defend in this chapter. This, simply put, upholds that instead of creating sociality by believing persons to inhabit the same world, Mapuche people create sociality in the awareness that persons inhabit different worlds. Now I will try to clarify what I meant with such a claim.

From my description, it might be implied that in Elicura everybody has a particular view on everything, and that those views, when contrasted to the ones of others, generally do not point in the same direction. However, such an exegesis may lead to the assumption that social life in Elicura is characterised by perpetual disagreement. This is absolutely not the case. In the Valley, as everywhere else, people diverge as often as they seem to agree. Nevertheless, I have some concerns about how this agreement is reached. Before focusing on this issue, I think it is important to differentiate what I mean by this term from what I mean by the term "understanding". As I see it, to understand in Elicura is fundamentally a matter of subjugating external terms into one's own referents. Understanding is subsuming what others claim.

As "agreement", in a different way, I term a premise implicit to social interaction, in the awareness of how understanding works. In considering any social

situation, we take it that each one of the persons involved understands what is going on according to their own perspective. We know, from what I have proposed, that this situation would produce what for us might be better comprehended as a homonymic exchange, which would generate a social misunderstanding, unless people are aware they are not talking about the same thing and they all are operating through their own personal processes of subsumption. Believe it or not, this is exactly what is *agreed upon* for the Mapuche. The social agreement, then, is to allow and to know that, as each person is a unique entity, his or her experience and comprehension of the world are also unique. It is to know that the best approach to the mind of the other we could have, it is through the way what s/he declares resounds in us, and not by sharing what is in it. The social agreement is to be aware of the existence of a "parallax homonymy". What is socially agreed is, simply put, to know that because we are different, we see things differently and we think differently, remembering also that we are always "opaque" to others, as others are to us.

In the last lines of this section, I will explore this social agreement through what I see as the scenario that exemplifies it best: the Mapuche/Winka distinction. To do this, I will recall the three understandings I described in the last chapter. When we were dealing with them, it became evident that we had two opposed terms, Mapuche and Winka, which beyond any specific consideration were pointing to a distinction between *self* and *other*. Thence, we saw how differences between understandings emerged regarding the premises each one of them maintained. Taking the distinction from an "ethnic" understanding, for instance, we had the term "Mapuche" as signalling a discrete ethnic entity, culturally defined, and "Winka" as signalling various external forces which have submitted the Mapuche to their will. In a different way, from a "traditional" understanding, we had a conception of Mapuche as an overarching ontological category highlighting autochthony, meanwhile Winka appeared as defined by the opposite. Finally, from an Evangelical understanding we had something similar to any of these two perspectives, but minimizing the significance of the distinction. This was because eventually all beings share a common link to God making them hyponymycally equals (the inclusion of God obliterates differences, ontological and ethnic alike).

Regardless of the variation in how they conceive these terms, people continually engage in interactions whilst maintaining their own conceptions. Furthermore, when they engage in conversations they are aware of the gap between different personal perspectives; it is "agreed" they are not necessarily talking about the same thing. The question here is what it is that results from this interaction. Thus, let us suppose we have a conversation involving three persons, each one thinking according to each one of the described understandings. When two of them mention the terms Mapuche and Winka, the third will understand by subsuming them into his own conceptions. But this does not necessarily require hiding or completely detaching terms from their original senses. On the contrary, it is about moulding what it is said according to the terms in which the world is conceived by each interpreter. For example, a person taking an ethnic approach may know that many, from a "traditional understanding", might sustain that there literally are Mapuche in every country of the world. Later, he will explain this claim through the idiom of ignorance. If people think this, it is because "they don't really know". An alternative explanation could be the one a friend gave me: "there're people who think there're Mapuche in other countries, but that's because they've never studied".

Nevertheless, at the same time, they will be translating this claim into their own terms. Simplifying the process, this could be summarised as such: they say there are Mapuche people in every country of the world; they say this because they do not really know; eventually, what they really want to say is that there are indigenous peoples in every country of the world. This seems reasonable insofar as Mapuche is, from an ethnic approach, an example of the broader category "indigenous peoples". What people originally stated is thus translated to the way in which the interpreter thinks of the world. This way of reasoning is what, moreover, allows the metaphorical employment of the quoted phrase as depicting a ubiquitous colonial situation.

Yet, besides the way any utterance may be apprehended, what I want to emphasise it is how an alternative social agreement emerges. People may be using the terms "Mapuche" and "Winka" to denote different referents, but eventually, and thanks to each one is subsuming the conversation into his or her own viewpoint, we will have several different, but equivalent and equally valid, perspectives about what

is just superficially the same. In the case we are using as an example, Mapuche and Winka antonymycal conception represent this surface. Thus conceived, the Mapuche case is not simply stating that the meanings of referents are obviously different from different social perspectives (cf. Cohen 1993). Neither simply that as theories change the world changes with them (Kuhn 1970). Rather, beside all of this, the Mapuche show that these different worlds, produced and reproduced by different perspectives, may engage in interaction. And that such an interaction, contrary to what may be expected, may lead to fruitful outcomes (cf. Stasch 2009).

4. A Sociality of Subsumption

So far I have centred the discussion on the problems sociality may confront in the context of the Mapuche of Elicura. Drawing on previously explored key premises of a Mapuche ontology, I propose the presence of a way of understanding predicated upon subjugating the expressions of others to one's own truths. This process is characteristically based on imposing one's own referents on to the references of others, simply because we can never can be sure about what the referents of these others are. This way of understanding, of translating other perspectives into one's own, is what I call *subsumption*.

But from dealing with how people singularly cope with the vast multiplicity of personal perspectives, another problem soon emerges. This, in simple terms, regards how sociality may emerge in such a heterogeneous context. As I advanced during this chapter, my thesis is very simple. Briefly, instead of creating sociality because they inhabit the same world, Mapuche people construct it in the awareness of the multiplicity of worlds in which they personally dwell. This is, they construct sociality not by keeping a concept of "society" founded upon shared meaning; but, instead, they found it in fundamental doubt of its existence, and as such in the awareness of the personal dependence of meaning.

This sociality, conscious of the personal processes of subsumption it brings together, works then as in the realm of signifiers, the only elements that may be

shared in a world where the signified is always a personal affair. To say it clearly, what people share are the means, the tools for denotation, but not what is denoted. Everybody uses terms such as "Winka", "politic", "mountain", and so on. But the person who uses them is the only one who knows what is really meant with them.

Nevertheless, and obviously, with this I am not proposing the existence of a free personal symbolization leading eventually to a scenario in which communication would be no longer possible. The relationships established between terms are still to some extent shared, even though signified is not. For instance, the distinction between Mapuche and Winka is always antonymic, no matter what specific meanings different persons may attach to it. Furthermore, we must recall what I proposed in Chapter 2, regarding how it could be theoretically considered that among the Mapuche everybody is Mapuche to himself of herself. This led to a continuum, each time personally defined, between self and other –Mapuche and Winka– that allowed each person to asses each person he or she came across during life, in terms of his or her similitude or difference to him or her. It is my contention that this assessment of similitude is fundamentally a judgement regarding how similar our personal self is to others, and as follows how similar our ways of experiencing and seeing are. The more similar a person is judged to be, the more similar are his or her referents. This results in a conception of referents as increasingly dissimilar with each degree of distance that between other people and the self. Therefore, referents are not different per se, but they are less and less similar each time the gap of difference between the personal perspectives performing the references is increased. A clear example of this was described when I stated that people affirm that only Mapuche people can experience beings such as *anchimallen* or *wutranalwe* (Chapter 1). In this case, although knowledge is predicated upon personal experiences, it is also recognised that there is a sense of similitude tracing some sort of boundary linked to a differential perceptual ability.

Therefore, *the sociality of subsumption* results in a conception of a social world populated by innumerable particular personal traces of knowing, experiencing and uttering. Any social collective, or supra-individual entity, which emerges from such a scenario would then be composed of innumerable different personal perspectives about what constitutes phenomena (even the collective of which each

one is part of). This way, the definition of such a collective cannot rest upon any kind of necessary transcendent characteristics, but, instead, it must simultaneously consider the ones each person separately thinks as relevant. The group each person forms part of, in terms of its definition, is different for each person. As a holographic projection made from each personal self, each collective may include or exclude people according to the conceptions each person has of it.

When one talks about social collectives with Mapuche people, one is met with an extrapolation of personal perspectives towards a figured entity comprehended as a collective solely from the perspective of the speaker. Each person subsumes in a particular way the reality he or she perceives. This does not imply, however, that the collective must correspond with what is said by each particular person. That would be simply subsuming into one perspective what social collectives are, and how they are defined. At the same time, I am not discarding the relevance of each perspective as a partial truth. This would be impossible insofar at a supra-individual level each personal truth is nothing but a biased personal perspective. In this sense, what we should have clear is that, for the Mapuche, the only way of conceiving a general truth, valid for everybody, is by symmetrically considering all personal perspectives altogether. A general truth would be, thus, a utopian "felt" (*sensu* Deleuze and Guattari 1988) tangling up every single existent personal perspective.

In the Introduction to this thesis I stressed the difficulty of giving a conclusive definition of "the Mapuche". Hopefully, after this set of chapters you will agree with me that this difficulty is not simply due to a new fashionable anthropological paradigm. Instead, according to my ethnography, the difficulty comes from the myriad of homonymic perspectives that refer to different things similarly. Each Mapuche person understands the concept of "Mapuche" differently. Knowing this, and considering that social aggregates, as Latour puts it, "are made by the various ways and manners in which they are said to exist" (2005:34), we can easily see why, in the end, finding a conclusive definition of Mapucheness would be a futile task at best.

Final Conclusions

After having spent all day in Ngoll-Ngoll, my friend Jorge and I headed back home before sunset hindered our way. Recurrent clouds and a lack of streetlights exponentially increase the common darkness that characterises Elicura winter's nights. Forty-five minutes later, and 500 yards before reaching our target, Juana (Jorge's daughter) appeared running after us. She was extremely agitated and asked if we had seen Felipe. Felipe was an eight year old boy, and he was Juana's only son. He was supposed to be home two hours earlier, after leaving school. We did not have a clue where he was.

After carrying the few animals we had with us to Jorge's homestead, I offered Juana my help looking for Felipe. It was getting dark, so we quickly went out despite Jorge's suggestion: "Where are you going? Nothing happened! He [Felipe] knows what he's doing!" We searched for Felipe until the darkness forced us to return to the house. The time was passing, Felipe was not showing up, and Juana's anguish was increasing. "Perhaps we should inform the police", she suggested. We did not do that, after I told her that more time was required to report a missing person.

Juana stayed at the kitchen doorway, looking outside during the following hours, waiting for Felipe to appear. Around ten o'clock she said: "at last, here he comes", with a sigh of relief that we all shared. Juana closed the door, went across the room, and sat down. "Now he's going to be really told off…" I thought to myself, weighing Juana's affliction, and surmising what would happen in any other "Chilean home" in a similar situation. One minute later, when Felipe entered the room, he greeted everybody as if nothing had happened. Juana, after greeting him in return, very calmly asked: "where were you?" Felipe replied: "around, with a friend". Then Juana, with a mixture of resignation and subtlety, went on, "*pucha hijo* (Sp. approx. "but son"), you could have warned me… Now it's late, so it would be good if you go to bed… you have school very early tomorrow". "Ok", Felipe said, "but first I would like to eat something". Juana served him some *tortilla* and tea, and after eating them, Felipe went to sleep. Contrary to what I expected, she did not tell

him a single word I could understand as a reprimand. Apparently, to her view and as Jorge had recalled, there was not even a small doubt that Felipe, in his eight years, knew very well "what he was doing".

* * *

In my view, Juana's attitude towards the behaviour of her son epitomises, in a particularly accurate way, some of the key proposals I have put forward in this thesis. What I found especially unfamiliar (*sensu* Holbraad 2008) in Juana's reaction was her ability to dissociate her personal concerns from what produced them, always keeping an unrestrictive respect towards her son's autonomy. Even though she seemed to be extremely worried about Felipe's welfare, she did not translate this concern into a complaint that, in a paternal authority principle, would aim to limit her son's behaviour. Rather, Juana seemed deeply aware that the feelings of worry and possessiveness she experienced were part of her own singularity. What is more, despite the fact that they were the result of another person's behaviour, she was aware there was little she could do to make this person act as she wanted. Under no circumstances could she restrict her son's singularity.

Mapuche people do not usually tell off their children for the same reason they avoid giving advice to people judged to be "not close enough". Whereas in this last case a criteria of personal difference seems to prevail, making advice worthless insofar as there is not a transcendent framework within which one may assess the validity of what a person thinks of as correct, reluctance to reprimand seems to be connected to an avoidance of imposing one's own singularity on any other. This happened to me the first time I tried to help chop firewood. Despite my poor performance, my friend did not try to correct me, and just watched, smiling. "This is harder than it looks", I told him, looking for assistance. All I got in return was: "it's alright, but be careful that it [the firewood] doesn't jump up to your head". According to the Mapuche, every person must discover on his/her own what his/her own way of doing things is, in the same way every person must know which is the best option for him/her in any case. Reality and knowledge are embedded in this singular process of personal experience, and they only may be found in it. They must

always be understood as rooted in an ontology stressing, fundamentally, a *radical singularism*.

From this *radical singularism* we may extract one key conclusion of my exploration: every claim Mapuche people put forward is always made from particular and necessarily partial personal perspectives. This premise goes together with two indispensable correlating points. First, Mapuche people are totally aware of the personal foundations of reality. Second, it is upon this awareness that they understand notions such as social agreement and sociality. Through this awareness, Mapuche people avoid living in the illusion of univocal reality. Furthermore, they may also cope with social life conscious of the referential alterity it implies, operating through what I label as *personal subsumption*. As everyone has "his own mentality", my friend Alberto stressed, what everyone really says can only be understood from that very mentality. Every other understanding should be made from the particularity of other mentalities, and thus original messages should be translated and subsumed to these mentalities' own terms. For this reason, the Mapuche is a sociality of conscious equivocation. It is a sociality where everybody is speaking about a different thing, but with the awareness that this is happening (cf. Viveiros de Castro 2004b).

Performing ethnographic research in Mapuche rural communities, we do not only have to deal with how one specific culture may be experienced in a dramatically wide range of different personal ways (Keck 1998). This is something obvious for most Mapuche people I met. More radically, we must comprehend why Mapuche people think of random agreement between disconnected persons as anomalous. This has key implications regarding how Mapuche people may conceive social collectives. Although collectives are often referred to as founded upon the extrapolation of substantial categories, creating the illusion of being objective entities, these extrapolations are always made from singular personal perspectives. When referred to, therefore, social collectives are never a proper entity, but a holographic projection produced by particular persons. Simply put, social collectives do not exist apart from the self claiming their existence.

Although this claim may easily be valid for "imagined" social collectives (Anderson 1993), something different may be argued regarding collectives founded

upon the actual establishment of social relations. Thus appears the second key proposal resulting from my exploration. Even though Mapuche people think of persons as disconnected autonomous beings, with equally autonomous personal experiential worlds, at the same time they recognise that it is possible to bring these separated experiential worlds nearer together, to narrow the gap between them, to create similarity among different persons by setting up and enhancing social relations. In this sense, one might claim that social collectives formed through relatedness are from a different nature than the ones outlined above, that they are real in a very literal sense, and that would be partially correct. People, by being socially related, begin to share experiential worlds, also sharing, to a certain extent, their personal singularity. Nevertheless, personal singularity can never be totally shared for two fundamental reasons. First, because two people can never establish the same set and intensities of social relations. Second, because one of the Mapuche people's key concerns is to not lose one's own singularity in the process of being socially related (Course 2011). Social relations bring people closer in many senses, but not close enough to reproduce only one experiential world, and one univocal exegesis about it, in every single person.

When I started this project, my key concern was to prove that the concept of ethnic group was not only inappropriate to portray what Mapuche people thought of as "Mapucheness", but that it was also a sign of the colonial violence anthropology exerts over the peoples it studies by transposing them to its Western conceptual apparatus. That is why, through my ethnographical exploration, I attempted to understand the Mapuche lived worlds in their own terms, aiming to broaden the boundaries of what is imaginable in the process. In doing so I intended nothing but to ask Mapuche people to teach us how "to *multiply our world*" (Viveiros de Castro 2010b:137). Concluding my exploration, and bearing in mind its *radical singularism*, it is my deepest belief that Mapuche ontology might do this, to multiply our world, in a very literal sense.

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