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Visions and Divisions in Pehuenche Life

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PhD in Social Anthropology
The University of Edinburgh
2012

Declaration

This thesis has been entirely composed by me, Cristobal Bonelli Iglesias.

All work is entirely my own, and it has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification, unless otherwise specified.

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Abstract

This work is based upon fieldwork carried out among indigenous Pehuenche people living in the Andes in Southern Chile. It is an ethnographic investigation of the relations between Pehuenche vision and healing practices in different local settings. The first part of this thesis focuses on Pehuenche vision from a cosmo-political angle. In order to set the scene for my overall argument, I explore the constitutive relation between mutual vision among real people (Ch. *che*) and the emergence of the Pehuenche person, which I call the ‘dynamic personal composition.’ With mutual vision between people being a precondition for the emergence of social relations, I examine the experience of particular witchcraft actions in which mutual vision is not possible. This leads to the conceptualization of ‘unilateral vision’ as a key phenomenon associated with the emergence of illnesses and the alteration of the shared plane of Pehuenche visibility. I also explore how mutual vision can be restored only through the assemblage of particular visual capacities known in the vernacular as ‘the gift of vision.’ In the second part of the thesis, I analyze the ways in which public health services respond to particular illnesses not detectable or treatable by medical technicians. In particular, I focus on the implications of ‘the visualization of traditional healers,’ inherent in the State’s approach to intercultural health. Through the examination of both particular intercultural health projects, as well as local expressions of discontent and animosity towards the State, this thesis seeks to create awareness about the ontological relevance of mutual vision in relations among real people. By pointing out the equivocal understandings of the visible and the invisible domains within intercultural relations, the analysis as a whole seeks to explain why Pehuenche vision must be understood through ontological examination rather than through a multicultural approach.

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Acknowledgments

Around fifty years ago, Jorge Luis Borges wrote a story about an ethnographer who, after having finished his fieldwork, decided to give up academia, leaving his ethnography unwritten: what the man had learned out in the field could not be expressed with academic language whatsoever. During his fieldwork, Borges' ethnographer had actually discovered the secret of the people he lived with, however he believed that this was not nearly as important as the paths that led him to it. In my own story as ethnographer there is no secret to be told, since for the Pehuenche themselves the mysteries of life are huge and by definition not knowable in their entirety. Many times during these last four years I have found myself doubting whether or not I should write up my ethnography. Like a troublesome spiritual visitor, this hesitation appeared every time I came to realize the huge gap existing between the world of academia and its language games, and the daily life of the Pehuenche people. If it were not for the caring insistence of friends and colleagues who encouraged me and convinced me that my story with the Pehuenche was worthwhile to be told, this dissertation would never have been written.

This entire doctoral project was only possible thanks to the economic support of the Chilean Government, through its *Beca Chile* scholarship.

It goes without saying that without all the people I met in Bío Bío, this project would also not have been possible. In Pitril, I would like to offer special thanks to Narciso Vita Gallina. Most of what I learned about Pehuenche life I learned from Narciso. Special thanks to Maria Luisa Vita Gallina, Narciso Gallina Sepúlveda, Gloria Vita Vita, Jorge Gallina Llaulen, Fernando Llaulen Rapi, Lorenzo Llaulen Rapi, Fermín Vita Curriao, Eduardo Vita Gallina, Guillermo Llaulen Vita, Sandra Vita Vita, Luis Vita Vita, Carlita

Vita Cifuentes, Corina Llaulen Vita and Silvia Urrutia Vita. I am infinitely grateful to my host family in Pitril, who still evokes in me feelings of love and care. I give my thanks to every single member of that family for those unforgettable days and nights spent in Pitril.

I am also immensely grateful to Nolfá Pavián Montre, since without her strength, support, and wisdom, this experience would not have made any sense.

I am equally grateful to many friends in other parts of Alto Bío Bío. In particular, I am in debt with Angel Ancanao Quintana, Manuel Pichinao Beltrán, María Suarez Huincaman, Rupertina Huincaman Milla, Juana Beltrán Pellao, José Felidor Tranimil Manquepi, Laura Porteño Maripil, Donata Pavián Montre, Corina Pavián Almendras, José Milla Maripil, Jonathan Burgos Pavián, Francisco Quepil Naupa and Felipe Curriao Campos.

All of the *kimun* -wisdom- Pehuenche people shared with me is invaluable, however as a sign of thanks I must mention here what has been for me a simple and true, but significant revelation. For the Pehuenche it is an ethical imperative to pay careful attention to the ways we speak, the words we use, and the tone of our utterances in order to avoid causing harm to other people with our speech. On many different occasions I was taught that rashly spoken words could actually punish both the speaker and others. *Pewmagnen tubachi kudaw kümeke dugu piay ka welu dugulayan*. Language became a very prominent aspect of my research in fact, and I am especially grateful to Jaqueline Kaniwan and Jose Carihuentro Millaleo, Alicia Llaulen Gallina and Lien Carihuentro Llaulen for their help in teaching me Chedungun.

Pilar Ramirez Enriquez helped me greatly and fostered this research on many levels. Our friendship now knows no borders. Furthermore, the whole team at the rural clinic in Ralco was always open and collaborative throughout my ethnography, especially Alvaro Basualto, Ricardo Hernandez, Mario Muñoz, Luisa Alegria Beltrán, and Juan Canio Larenas. To them I offer my sincere thanks. In Santa Bárbara, I am particularly thankful to Angélica Hermosilla Levi, Jose Catrileo Solar, Antonio Caro and Gonzalo Brito.

In Edinburgh, the unbeatable generosity, humility, and intellectual clarity of my supervisor Magnus Course warrants considerable recognition, admiration and respect. My supervisor Stefan Ecks must also be thanked for helping me find my own voice. Without the freedom and confidence Stefan gave me, this thesis would have simply been a surrealist exercise.

Amongst all my colleagues, I am especially grateful to my friend Marcelo González Gálvez, who boosted my confidence in my own work every time I needed it. Angela Riviere has been continually supportive, even beyond the borders of the UK. Furthermore, Ian Harper, A.F. Robertson, Francesca Bray, Janet Carsten, László Lajtai, Sarah Walker and Lucy Lowe deserve mention for their enthusiasm and their generosity in sharing both stories and ideas.

I offer great thanks to Patricio Silva and Willem Adelaar for inviting me to teach a course at Leiden University, as well as Eithne Carlin, whose energetic enthusiasm has extended my journey in the Linguistics Department in Leiden, hopefully for many years to come. Many thanks also go out to all my students in the course ‘Healing networks and intercultural communication,’ which was fully based on my ethnography and provided me with much input for the improvement of the final structure of this thesis.

A few years ago in Amsterdam, I was lucky enough to have engaged in a long-term academic conversation (and walking) with Annemarie Mol. I am truly grateful for her humility, enthusiasm, and unlimited passion regarding knowledge construction *in practice*. I look forward to starting a new academic adventure with her and her wonderful team at the University of Amsterdam very soon.

Among my friends, I am infinitely grateful to Marcelo Pakman, whose friendship and wisdom have strongly influenced the world I live in, as well as Rosemarie Blake, Michele Capararo, Pietro Barbeta, Benedetto Saraceno, Ilaria Turba, Camilla Notarbartolo, Silvia Landra, Marzia Ravazzini, Silvano D'Aprile, Giorgina Saccone, Bárbara San Martín, Edmundo Kronmuller, Alfredo Gaete, Laura Luna, Francisco Saffie, Elisa Walker, Rosalind Cavaghan, Simon Susen, Rosario Concha, Macarena

Dominguez, Franka Reitze, Monica Valenzuela, Alberto Botto, and Pablo Briceño, among many others. These people have all offered wonderfully good company at different moments in this project.

I am also particularly grateful to Laetitia Smoll, who not only improved the English of this work, but also provided excellent advice on how to make the whole thesis clearer.

Carola, Paulo, Felipe and Sebastián have always been the home of my soul. I miss them all the time, wherever I am. Mamá y Papá se merecen todas mis gracias inifinitas por haberme dado la vida y el placer de recorrerla en libertad.

Last but not least, the most invaluable gift of strength, encouragement, and enthusiasm that enabled me to finish this work was provided by Daniela Vicherat Mattar, who mysteriously appeared in my life while walking the enchanting streets of Edinburgh more than three years ago. Gracias por lo bello: que nuestro amor siempre nos sorprende, llevándonos una y otra vez a ese lugar en el que nunca somos los mismos Daniela. Gracias por estar conmigo en esto de inventarse el mundo juntos, aunque a veces duela exorcizar fantasmas. Gracias por inventar conmigo un lenguaje que nunca antes existió, y por los juegos al atardecer en cualquier calle del mundo, y por la exquisitez de la vida de Mariana, y por Lia y su risa transparente y luminosa.

For Mariana

Introduction

'Sometimes you have a headache in the back part of your brain, and that is because you think too much! Your brain works too hard and it gets tired easily. Your 'neurono' moves too much because you think too much. Even if there is nothing to be worried about, I cannot help you, those problems of the 'neurono' are not Pehuenche at all.'

I will never forget these words an old Pehuenche healer said to me during the cold winter of 2009. After having seen my urine sample in her house in Callaqui, she told me bluntly that the health problem I was going through had to do with an excess of what she understood as a non-Pehuenche cognitive activity. She was right: during the very first days of my fieldwork I spent much time alone (which is very uncommon for the Pehuenche) *thinking* about how to get access to Pehuenche communities. I did not yet know anyone in Alto Bío Bío, so those first days in the field proved to be a difficult beginning. However, even if I had the opportunity to visit that healer again today, I am sure she would tell me the same thing.

The vernacular distinction between 'Pehuenche problems' and 'non-Pehuenche problems' was ubiquitous throughout my fieldwork. Yet, my understanding of that distinction has changed radically now that I am at the end of this project. Today, and without having to put into question the whole anthropological endeavor, I must confess that the intellectual exercise of trying to understand the Pehuenche world - to write about it, to think about it and with it - would not be considered a genuine Pehuenche concern by that healer in Callaqui. I am afraid that for my Pehuenche friends, this thesis cannot help being the result of an overdose of non-Pehuenche thinking. Nevertheless, I hope the pages that follow will be a contribution to not only what most of my friends in Alto Bío Bío used to call *winka rakiduam*, simply translated as 'the thought of non-Pehuenche people,' but also to the wider realm of intercultural relations.

The healer's words express with simplicity one of the main concerns of this thesis, namely the radical difference between Pehuenche and non-Pehuenche worlds, and the ontological gap that can emerge between these worlds when they meet. The healer

considered my particular way of thinking *of* the world – as an individual thinker thinking of the world – to be non-Pehuenche. This indirectly points out the contradiction between one of the fundamental premises of modern Western philosophy and Pehuenche ontology. By the former, I am referring to the well known Cartesian distinction between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*: *res cogitans* understood as the mind or the ‘thinking thing,’ *res extensa*, ‘the extended thing,’ understood as external matter. For the Cartesian division of reality, anything that exists must be of one kind or the other, both categories being essentially contradictory and *opposite* properties. This does not occur in Pehuenche reality. My ethnographic experience among the Pehuenche indeed challenges this modern Cartesian premise in a very specific way - that is, by taking seriously Pehuenche conceptualizations of vision within the intra- and inter-cultural realm of health and illness.

Hence, this thesis is an attempt to consider a world in which the distinction between *res cogitans* and *res extensa* does not make any sense. However, if one was forced to use this distinction in regards to Pehuenche ontology, it would be possible to state the following: whereas *res cogitans*, understood as the individual subjectivity of a thinker, exceeds the bounded, liberal modern subject as its unique loci of existence, *res extensa*, or the ‘extended thing,’ appears very often as being-a-subject. Thus, we can say that at the beginning of my fieldwork I was suffering from the Cartesian split, from an overdose of *res cogitans* or an excess of the individual activity of my own ‘neuro-no.’ The healer was therefore not able to help me, since my discomfort was inherent to a modern reality of independent and determined entities, resulting in the objectification of the object/subject dualism.¹

In the following pages I aim to expose Pehuenche ontologies as being radically relational in a world configured by, to put it in a very reductive way, a multiplicity of *res cogitans*. The main question I intend to answer is ‘How can one think about *vision* in a world in which the subject is multiple and eyes are spread all around the Pehuenche *res*?’

¹ For a deeper analysis of this dualism see Blattner 2007 and Thomas 2004.

My whole ethnography has inspired me to think of human vision as strongly relational, only emerging from the mutual encounter of real people (Ch. *che*) in interaction. In a nutshell, there is more to Pehuenche vision than meets the individualistic, liberal eye. In this thesis, I seek to explain why this is so.

1. Field site and methods

This thesis is based on sixteen months of fieldwork carried out in areas surrounding the historically and geographically most significant river in Chile, the Bío Bío River. From October 2009 to January 2011, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in the Alto Bío Bío district, in the province of Alto Bío Bío, which is part of the 8th Chilean region, also called 'Bío Bío.'

In the Alto Bío Bío district, more than 80% of the population are Pehuenche, who, to simplify somewhat (see historical section below), can be considered Mapuche people residing in the mountains. The population of this district is currently about seven thousand inhabitants and its area is 2124.5km². According to sex distribution, 38.3% are women (2676 people) while men (4320 people) correspond to the 61.7% (Censo 2002). There are 1031 families in the area, with an average family size of 5.3 people. According to the Chilean National Socio-Economic Survey (Casen 2009), Alto Bío Bío is the poorest district in Chile. It also has the second-highest level of alcohol consumption in the nation (Encuesta de Calidad de Vida del Año 2006). The Chilean 'Indigenous Law' n°19.253, enacted during the first democratic government after Pinochet's dictatorship, defined Alto Bío Bío as an Area of Indigenous Development (ADI) in 1997; the borders of the latter coinciding with the newborn district area.²

² In Article 26 of the Ley Indígena, the 19,253 ADIs are conceived as 'territorial spaces in which the organisms of the state administration will focus their actions for the benefit of the harmonious development of the Indigenous communities.'

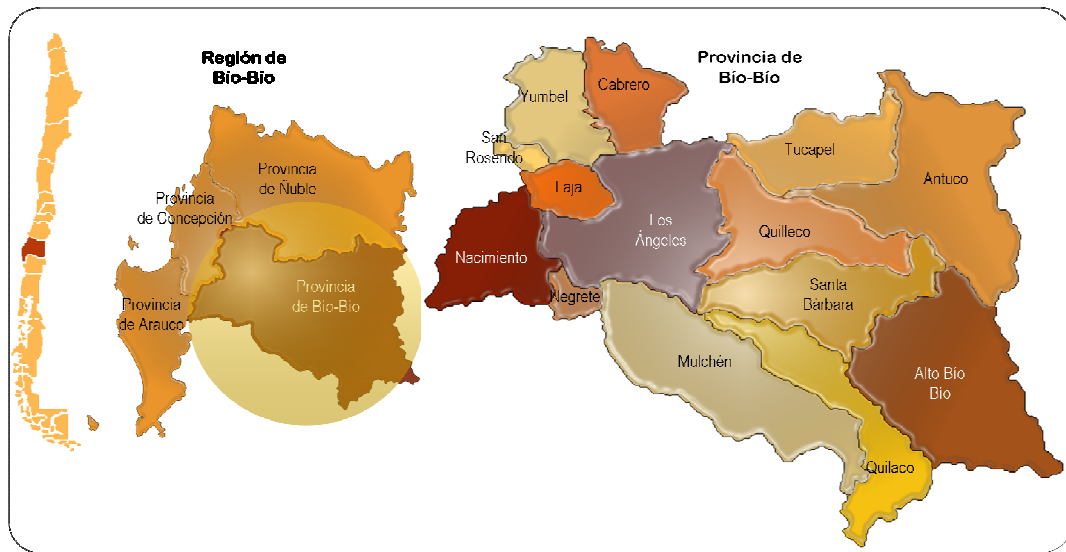


Figure 1. Map of the Bío Bío region, Bío Bío province and the district of Bío Bío

The Alto Bío Bío district is situated at the eastern-most part of the province of Bío Bío, and was created at the beginning of 2004. The creation of this district was a result of the multidimensional problems the construction of dams along the Bío Bío River caused for Pehuenche people. The construction of these dams was led by ENDESA (*National Energy Enterprise*), the largest multinational electric company in Chile and a former state enterprise that was privatized during the military dictatorship (1989) and is currently owned by a Spanish-Italian corporation. Due to the national and international consensus about the need to protect Indigenous rights already strongly violated, some of the affected Pehuenche families and the Chilean State signed an agreement with the Commission for Human Rights of the OEA (Organization of American States) in 2003 (Norero 2007). This agreement implied the creation of the new district. In those days, while the whole Pehuenche/Endesa controversy was prominent in both the national and international media, several academic and non-academic documents about the construction of the dams and its implications for Pehuenche people, were published (Nesti 1999; Molina 1998; Morales et al. 1998; Namuncura 1999). However, after the dams were built, there was very little interest on the part of scholars in understanding the daily life of Pehuenche people. My thesis can be situated in this scenario of forgetfulness.

Within this district, there are 13 Indigenous communities situated along the Queuco and Bío Bío rivers. Along the Bío Bío are located the following communities: El Avellano, Quepuca Ralco, Los Guindos, Ralco Lepoy, El Barco, and Guayalí. Callaqui, Pitril, Cauñikú, Malla Malla, Trapa Trapa and Butalelbún are communities near the Queuco River.

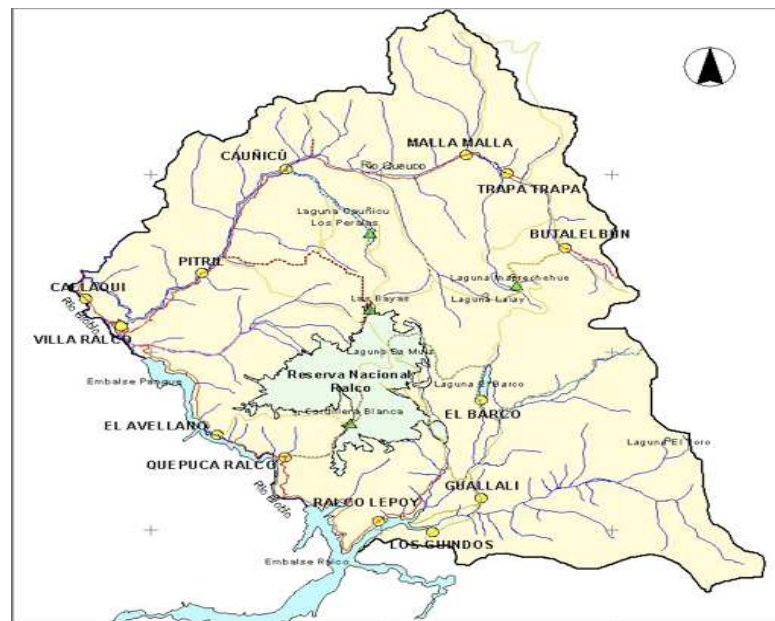


Figure 2. Map of the district of Alto Bío Bío

Pehuenche communities are not organized into proper villages. Large distances between houses are the rule and there is generally no place that can be considered the centre of the community. This tendency has often been understood as an expression of the importance Mapuche people place upon protecting their autonomy and independence (Faron 1964; Foerster 2004; Melville 1976). Moreover, this pattern can also be explained by the fact that Pehuenche people, like many other Amerindian societies, do not perceive their environment as a space of peace and quiet, since ‘hostility between local group is endemic’ (Surrals 2003:779). To give an example, during my fieldwork,

conflicts between people from Trapa Trapa and Malla Malla were always a delicate issue in the Queco valley.

Most Pehuenche people are bilingual in Spanish and Chedungun, which is a mutually intelligible dialect of Mapundugun. Chedungun, is spoken less in the communities situated near Ralco, such as Pitril or Callaqui, however, whereas in the communities situated near the Argentinean border (Butalelbun, Trapa Trapa, Malla Malla and even Cauñikú), Chedungun is spoken on a daily basis.

Ralco is the village where the Municipality and general public services such as the district health centre (the Center for Family Health, or Cesfam) are located, and this is why it is considered to be *el pueblo* - the town. The Cesfam coordinates the work of the eight other rural clinics in the valleys of the Queco and Bío Bío rivers. For more specialized medical inquiries, people have to go to the Santa Bárbara Hospital. Even though the Santa Bárbara Hospital has belonged to a different district since 2004, being the closest hospital, it has great importance for the population of Alto Bío Bío.

1.1 Methodological notes

In terms of data collection, this ethnography is mostly based on participant observation. I filled several hand-written notebooks during my fieldwork, in which I used to write every night after my encounters, activities, and conversations. Moreover, whereas carrying out interviews with public health workers did not involve any problems in terms of using my recorder, to record conversations with Pehuenche people was not possible as they clearly experienced discomfort in the presence of a recorder. Towards the end of my fieldwork however, after having spent more than a year in Alto Bío Bío, I did ask a few particular people if I could conduct interviews with them, in order to have some recordings about the topics I was investigating. I interviewed not only public health workers such as doctors, psychologists, nurses, and midwives, among others, but I also audio-documented some of the conversations I had with my closest Pehuenche

friends in Ralco, Pitril and Cauñikú. The final month of my fieldwork was therefore spent conducting interviews that I later transcribed. In order to protect the privacy and anonymity of the people I interviewed, all of their names have been modified. Last but not least, after having finished my fieldwork I was kindly invited to teach a master level course in the linguistics department at Leiden University in the Netherlands. This course, entitled 'Healing Networks and Intercultural Communication: the Pehuenche case' was fully based on my ethnography. The preparation of the course, as well as the vivid discussions with students about the main subjects of this thesis, were an invaluable contribution to the further analysis and organization of my ethnographical data.

I decided to undertake my research in this area after a pre-fieldwork trip in January 2009. During that journey, I visited four different places in Southern Chile that were pertinent to the main topic of my research at the time: the implementation of state intercultural health programs concerning Mapuche people post-Pinochet (1973-1989). I chose to carry out my fieldwork in the Bío Bío district due to several considerations. Firstly, the state workers there were willing to collaborate with my research and showed a warm enthusiasm for my project. Secondly, Alto Bío Bio is a place in the Andes where most of the population is Pehuenche, and many are speakers of Chedungun. Thirdly, the particular approach the State was developing with regards to the Indigenous populations in this area caught my interest and curiosity. In my preliminary meetings I was told that public health activities in 'intercultural health' were based on the idea that they should not interfere with traditional practices of healing. In contrast to other areas, for instance, traditional healers here were not required to work within hospitals or clinics but instead worked in locations of their own choosing. Finally, during my first visit I was immediately struck by the beauty of the landscape. After having completed my research however, I can now say that only the last consideration was completely true in the end.

I began my fieldwork in October 2009. I spent more than six months living in the village of Ralco, where I was focused on the work in intercultural health. For some reason, what was called 'intercultural health,' and responded to wider national policies in 'intercultural health,' did not involve the whole team of public health workers, as I was

expecting, but rather was mainly focused on the work of a group of mental health workers. My first degree in psychology was therefore very helpful in introducing myself to this team, particularly because anthropologists were not very well regarded due to negative experiences in the past.

My presence in town was immediately the subject of controversy. The fact that I was doing research on health but did not belong to the professional team resulted in rejection by some of the professionals, who in the beginning saw me as a spy (Sp. *soplón*) for the State. I was only able to shake this label when I started to attend informal and friendly gatherings with these professionals. Eventually, I was able to move freely within the medical institutions however. This was because I had built good relationships with people whose work involved the practical aspects of everyday life and who were not directly involved in more political activities.

During this period, I came to understand that ‘intercultural’ activities mainly involved the occasional referral of patients to traditional healers (see Chapter Four and Chapter Five). These referrals were to two different types of traditional healers: herbalists (Ch. *lawentuncheve*) and shamans (Ch. *machi*). In order to collaborate with these healers, the public health clinic provided people with transportation to a *machi* near Temuco, four hours away from Ralco (see Chapter Five). The work of a *lawentuncheve* was sometimes also required, and public health workers made referrals to them in certain situations (Chapter Four). My own fieldwork and ethnography aimed at following the paths of referral travelled by patients with the aid of the Cesfam and its intercultural health program. I therefore focused my interest on getting to know these traditional healers, particularly Juana, a *machi* in Temuco, and a *lawentuncheve* named Flora from the Pehuenche community of Cauñikú.³ I spent some time living with *machi* Juana and her patients, and I was living there when the Chilean earthquake (*Nüyün* in Chedungun) occurred in February 2010 (Chapter Five).

³ According to the health team, this healer was consulted because there are no shamans left in Alto Bío Bío.

During my first six months in the field, I also assessed the possibility of living with Flora in Cauñikú. I spent many days with her having informal conversations about my research topics. All Pehuenche communities in Alto Bío Bío have experienced much intervention by the State and ENDESA during the last few decades. For this reason, there is a general discontentment about Chilean people coming to live in their communities. I therefore found it rather difficult to have access to these communities. My attempts at living with Flora failed in the end. Having agreed at first, she later changed her mind, as some other women had expressed their concerns about having another *colono* (a word used by the Pehuenche people to refer to inhabitants that are not Pehuenche) in the community. Furthermore, my professional health contacts were not helpful in creating direct links with people from these communities. I had to distance myself from the health workers in order to spend some time living among the Pehuenche.

Throughout my fieldwork, I focused on the work that the Cesfam undertook in collaboration with the nearest hospital in Santa Bárbara. Both of these institutions worked with *machi* Juana, and oftentimes the hospital was a compulsory stop for patients before seeing her. I established a good relation with the hospital's psychologist, who told me straightforwardly that the work in intercultural health was strongly related to mental health (see Chapter Four). Several times, I went with the health team and their patients to see the *machi*, and I eventually got permission to live with *machi* Juana and her patients for a time (Chapter Five). I also followed some of the professional activities held by the Cesfam team for Pehuenche patients. One of these was group therapy session organized once a month by the psychologists for Pehuenche women coming from the Queuco Valley. Besides this, I also took part in the Cesfam health team's annual preventive health visit to *veranadas* in the mountains (Chapter Five).

Besides my relationships with the health workers, I also met people working in tourism projects, which have recently become one of the most important economic activities in the area. In nearly all the communities in the Queuco Valley there are Pehuenche people dedicated to this activity, which mainly consists in taking national and international

tourists into the mountains for short periods of time during the summer. I met some of the people working in this field, and I started to attend some of the informal gatherings these people had after working hours in Ralco. There I met Teresa, who was originally from the Pitril community, and her friends. I spoke to her about my intention of living within a community, and she kindly invited me to her house to spend a few weekends with her family in Pitril.

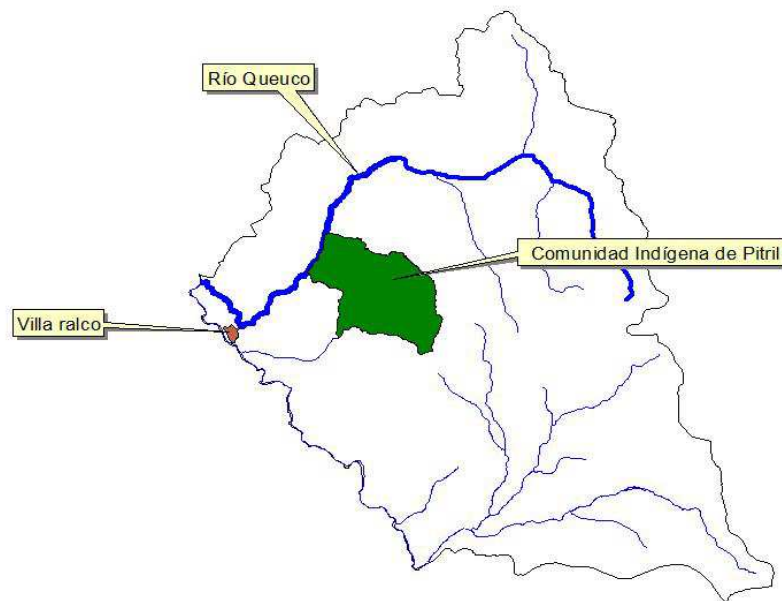


Figure 3. Map of Pitril within the Alto Bío Bío district

Her family wanted to have me as a guest because Pedro, Teresa's father, was very lonely during the week and they saw me as a good companion for him. Thus, in April 2010 I went to live with Pedro, a man in his eighties and one of the oldest Pehuenche in Pitril (thirteen kilometers from Ralco). Whilst living with him, I quickly got to know most of the *'Pitrilanos,'* and during the ten months I lived in Pitril I got involved in many different daily activities such as helping Pedro's son build his house, helping with the sheep and lambs and the caring for small animals, planting potatoes, and so on. I also

spent time going around with him on his visits to friends' homes, as well as to the Evangelical church Pedro attended every Sunday (Chapter Three).

During this time I also spent many days with Flora's family in the community of Cauñikú. Every time I went to visit I helped her collect wood nearby, and this became a kind of natural exchange between us. During the summer I helped her with the demanding work of cutting grass for the horses, and other activities of this kind. The ten-month period I spent in Pehuenche communities was therefore divided between Pitril (where I slept) and Cauñikú.

There are some important issues about the Chedungun language I should mention here. During my initial days in the field, I met a Mapuche man from Temuco who had been a teacher of Mapudungun. He agreed to teach me only if I managed to involve more people. After having found a couple of interested people (none of them from the medical institutions) we started lessons that were very helpful in getting a general idea about the language. However, since I was based in Ralco and was mainly focusing on state actions, I could not really improve my competence in Chedungun. Moreover, I think being Chilean did not help me in learning the language. Most of the times I tried to speak in Chedungun, even if Pehuenche people were clearly happy about my attempts, they always replied to me in Spanish. I was expecting to improve my Chedungun while living in Pitril, but unfortunately I discovered that most of the people there use Spanish in their daily life. The only place where I could really improve and learn a little bit more was in Cauñikú, during my visits with Flora. As a result, I achieved a very basic level of competence in the language, which allowed me to understand some concepts and the general gist of Chedungun interactions. However, my permanent interest in the language did help enormously with regards to the way people perceived my daily participation in Pitril. After a couple of months in the field, people started to say that I did not really *look like* a Chilean person. I became known as the foreigner that could understand a little Chedungun, so they were no longer able to talk negatively about me when I was present. Pedro always introduced me by saying: 'He likes to be among the Pehuenche. He speaks a little and he eats everything we eat.' By the end of my fieldwork, some friends were

calling me *katripache*, which in Chedungun means a person who comes from another place. Or to say it with more perspectival vocabulary, I had acquired another point of view:

‘By modifying the body through alimentation, change in habits, and the establishment of social relations with other subjects, another point of view is acquired: the world is now seen in the same way as the new companions, that is, the members of other species’ (Vilaça 2002:351).

2. Historical background

2.1 Some historical considerations of Mapuche people

Although it is a highly complex matter to determine whether or not Mapuche people, better known as *Araucanos* (Araucanians) during colonial times, constituted a homogenous cultural group, it is believed that they were divided into groups of people living in different areas.⁴ Thus, there are names for different groups depending on which part of the land was involved: the *Lafkenche*, ‘people of the coast,’ the *Williche*, ‘people of the South,’ the *Pikunche*, ‘people of the North,’ the *Puelche*, ‘people of the East,’ and last but not least, the *Pehuenche*, ‘people of the *Pewen*’ (*araucaria araucana*). Originally however, *Pehuenche* people did not belong to the Mapuche ethnic group (Bengoa 1999). For this reason, and because most of my fieldwork was carried out among the Pehuenche, I reserve a separate section for a discussion of their specific history.

It has been estimated that the Mapuche population numbered around one million persons at the time of the arrival of the Spanish (Bengoa 2003; Foerster 2004; Mariman et al. 2006). They used to live between the Copiapo Valley (27S Lat.) and the Gulf of Reloncavi (41S Lat.). Between 1541 and 1641, during a period known as the *Guerra de Arauco*, which was characterized by bloody warfare and where, without doubt, extreme violence against Indigenous peoples was exercised, it is believed their population

⁴ This particular denomination *araucanos* encompassing certain Indigenous populations comes from Ercilla’s (1981) epic poem, *La Araucana*. See Bengoa 2003.

decreased by almost 80% (Bengoa 2003). However, the Spanish did not succeed in their colonizing attempts and were rather surprised by the capacity of Mapuche people to adapt in issues of warfare. To explain such a strong resistance, scholars stress that the Mapuche did not have a clear hierarchical structure (Latcham 1924). In the famous 1598 'Battle of Curalaba' the Spaniards were defeated by the Mapuche people. This year is known as a marker or turning point in the conquest period, as the Spanish decided to change their strategy, giving up their attempts to colonize Mapuche through the use of force. This change resulted in a sort of 'defensive' war using non-violent mechanisms of colonization such as evangelization and education. Thus, in 1641 the Spanish conceded defeat and peace was declared with a parliament known as the 'Peace of Quilin,' and the Bío Bío River (36S Lat.) was established as the northern frontier of Mapuche territory.

For about two centuries from the signing of the Peace of Quilin treaty, relations between Mapuche people and the Spanish were marked by processes of missionizing mainly carried out by Jesuits who also had the support of Franciscan and Dominican priests on the one hand, and the parliaments, on the other. The latter were the predominant social space for social relations and negotiations between Mapuche people and the Spanish, including the trade of cattle and horses. This trade played a central role in the process known as the *Araucanizacion de la pampas* (Araucanization of the pampas), namely, the significant economic and territorial spread of Mapuche people throughout the southern cone, and the creation of a very strong regional economic network (Boccaro 1999; Bengoa 2004; Foerster 2004; Marimán et al. 2006).

In the 19th century, the spread of independence struggles and the creation of new nations all around the southern cone of Chile changed the stable coexistence Mapuche people had established with the Spanish during the previous two hundred years. Mapuche people became an admirable symbol of strength and bravery for citizens of the newly independent Chilean State, given their apparent capacity for fighting against the Spaniards demonstrated during the colonial period. However, the new Chilean nationalists and their new state sharply influenced the Mapuche way of life and their social organization. At the start of the 19th century, the resistance against the new

Chilean State was not equally distributed among the Mapuche and some of them even supported the Chileans. These people reactivated the previous Spanish ways of negotiation within this area, such as the parliament and the *misiones*, at least during the first half of the century (Pinto 2000). This situation changed as Mapuche lands started to be seen as a significant priority for the Chilean economy, especially within the context of a threatening global economic crisis that took place around the fifties. Even if none of the Chilean constitutions during that century had referred explicitly to the Mapuche people and their lands, the need to govern and exploit natural resources in the Araucanía region led the government to create a new legal province named the Arauco province in 1852 (Foerster 2004; Pinto 2000). This resulted in Chilean jurisdiction being applied to Mapuche people - probably the most important effort in expanding the State's normative power over Mapuche territory (Foerster 2004 & 2008). The creation of the Arauco province was a way of placing territories between the Bío Bío River and the Valdivia province in the South under Chilean jurisdiction. Until this date, almost all Mapuche territory had been outside Chilean jurisdiction. Around the eighteen sixties, Chile had to cope with the first true export crisis in the grain market, and at the same time faced the impact of a European economic crisis. Within this context, territories such as Araucanía took on significant value and were thought to be a solution to the economic problems Chile was going through (Pinto 2000). Araucanía represented a new market with plenty of new opportunities, not only because of its natural resources but also because of the labour force the Mapuche might become. The Mapuche revolution in the South (in 1859), which had its strongest and most active expression from within the Pehuenche population, was also a factor in the government decision to intervene in Araucanía (Bengoa 2003). This process ironically became known as the 'pacification of Araucanía,' and this period was dramatically marked by the process of *radicación*, which consisted in placing the Mapuche population into bounded areas of land called *reducciones*. These were legally supported by a law passed in 1866, and so Mapuche lands were in a sense transformed into land titles, *titulos de merced*. In the words of the contemporary Mapuche poet Elicura Chihuailaf, the *reducciones* meant

that most of our people were not only assaulted in their houses but also punished, tortured and taken to places far away from their communities. Most of them were also killed. *Reducción* or 'privatization', another name for the same processes, is a concept that was formulated in the middle of the 19th century, and which was put into practice by the end of that period. It points out the fact that our People were reduced, 're-localized' in lands that were generally much less productive than the Mapuche ones' (Chihuilaf 1999:53, my own translation).

Thus it seems to be undeniable that *reducciones* implied a significant change in Mapuche social, economic, and cultural organization. This is clear from the fact that just five hundred thousand hectares of a traditional territory of ten million hectares was assigned to the Mapuche during the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century (Aylwin 2002).

For Mapuche people, the 20th century was marked by the effects of *radicación*, as it involved a sharply different way of living, changing daily interactions, as well as the collective Mapuche demand for rights and lands. Legally speaking, a significant change occurred in the seventies, during the disastrous dictatorship of General Pinochet. In 1978, the *reducciones* were abolished, and although the new law did not allow the Mapuche to sell their lands, they could be leased for almost 100 years. This was another gesture of sovereignty, in line with a growing neoliberal spirit that attempted to bring lands into a neoliberal economic logic by encouraging market liberalization.

In the nineties, with the first democratic government after Pinochet (led by President Patricio Aylwin), a sentiment of hope predominated among Mapuche people. A spirit of political collaboration was proclaimed at the famous Parliament of *Nueva Imperial* in 1989. Nevertheless, neoliberal forces have constantly involved the Mapuche in controversial and devastating political decisions supported by the State, such as the development of the forest industry, the construction of highways and hydroelectric dams, and so on.

2.2 Some historical considerations of Pehuenche people

Pehuenche means the 'people of *Pehuen*' in Chedungun (monkey puzzle tree, or

araucania araucana). Their current territory extends from Trapa Trapa to the Icalma Lagoon and includes the valleys that feed the tributaries of the Bío Bío River. Topographically, the region consists of valleys, mountain ranges and high volcanic peaks (such as Antuco, Copahue, Callaqui, and Lonquimay). The original Pehuenche settlement spread far beyond the Andean mountain range, covering regions on either side between Talca and Lonquimay and between the Diamante River and the southern part of the Neuquén river in the trans-Andean region. The presence of Pehuenche people between Maule and Chillán was sporadic and consisted of groups that spread from the eastern region of the mountain range. Some of the very early Spanish settlers provided accounts of the Pehuenche. In 1550, Jerónimo de Vivar (1989) said of the Pehuenche:

These people come down the mountains to make contact with other peoples at a certain time of year because it is at that time, around February until the end of March, when the snow has melted, that they can move freely. This is the end of summer in this land because winter starts in April, and that is why they leave again at the end of March (De Vivar 1989:132, my own translation).

Moreover, the Jesuit Juan Ignacio Molina (1978:65) said in 1776 that:

The Pehuenche are a large tribe that live in that part of the Chilean mountain range between the latitude limits 34° and 37°S, in other words, to the East of the Spanish provinces of Colchagua, Maule, Chilean and Huilquilemu (Molina 1978:65, my own translation).

As already mentioned, originally the Pehuenche people did not belong to the Mapuche ethnic group (Bengoa 1999). They were a nomadic hunter-gatherer mountain tribe that spoke a now-extinct language that was different to the Mapuche Mapudungun, and of which there is no record (Adelaar 2004). According to Bengoa (2000):

Before the arrival of the Spanish in Chile, the Argentine Pampas were inhabited by small Indigenous groups that were not Mapuche. They were nomadic groups that hunted *ñandúes* (ostriches), camelids and llamas. The Mapuches had no ties with the Pampa and their region was circumscribed to Chilean territory. The same went for the inhabitants of the mountains, the people of the *Pehueneras*. They spoke another language and were probably ethnically related to the Patagonians and, in general, to the non-Mapuche inhabitants of the Pampas and Patagonia (Bengoa 2000:54, my own translation).

As a consequence of the wars following the arrival of the Spanish, the Mapuche fled to the Andean region and settled in the pine forests of the mountains. It appears that rather than waging war or creating conflict with the existing inhabitants, they merged with

these tribes. According to Bengoa (2000), the anthropologist Canals Frau states that the Pehuenche were:

araucanized in the mid or late 17th century (from 1650 onwards). In other words, a hundred years after the arrival of the Spanish [...]. From then on, the Pehuenches merged with the Mapuche and started to speak Mapudungun (Bengoa 2000:55, my own translation).

This fusion led to linguistic territorialism and triggered certain social, cultural and economic changes among the Pehuenche. These changes were only to further the *araucanization of the Pampas* by allowing the mountainous region to open up to groups that transported cattle towards the vast prairies of the ultra-cordillera. At the beginning of the 18th century the Pehuenche had become *araucanized* as a result of a process that began with the practice of exogamy and economic exchange and which continued owing to the migratory flow that passed through their mountainous regions on the way to the Argentine region. However, this Mapuche presence did not eradicate the Pehuenche people's own cultural characteristics. They continued to harvest pine nuts as their main source of food and their subsistence continued to rely on hunting and harvesting as well as the seasonal migration of livestock between the mountain valley regions and the araucaria forests (Correa & Molina 1998).

During colonial times, the Pehuenche had maintained the sovereignty and independence of their lands from the Spanish, but were engaged in disputes with other Mapuche groups. This explains why, during the 17th and 18th centuries, alliances were established between the Pehuenche and the Spanish, rather than between Pehuenche and Mapuche people (Latcham 1924). Accordingly, in 1774 the Parliament of Tapihue was held between the Pehuenche and the Spanish in order to reach peace and mutual defense treaties. It was agreed that the mountain settlements in Alto Bío Bío should be reduced. For the most part, the Pehuenche territory had remained stable until the creation of the Chilean and Argentinean nation states at the start of the 18th century.

At the beginning of the Republic, Pehuenche territory spread along both sides of the Andean mountain range, and included permanent settlements from Antuco to

Lonquimay. Some Pehuenche groups were involved in the War of Independence. Although there is no written record, their involvement is attested to by the many stories passed down from generation to generation, especially in stories referring to their participation in the battle of *Cancha Rayada* between the Chileans and the Spanish, in Talca in 1818. These and other stories also reflect a demand by Pehuenche people for the Chilean authorities to respect Indigenous jurisdiction, property and territory.

As the *pacification of Araucanía* took its first steps, the Mapuche looked to establish alliances with the Pehuenche. The Chilean army took steps to keep Pehuenche communities out of the conflict however. In 1865, numerous *loncos* (Ch. chiefs) from Alto Bío Bío were summoned by the Chilean captain Domingo Salvo to make sure they remained neutral and did not create an alliance with the Mapuche further south (Correa & Molina 1998)

As previously mentioned, in the mid 19th century the Chilean government decided to create the province of Arauco as a first step towards the absorption of Mapuche territories. The cordilleran territories inhabited by the Pehuenche communities were also included in the plan. This new administrative division would be important as the Chilean acquisition of Indigenous lands would be overseen from Los Angeles and Mulchén, and notaries and registrars would give legal support to the establishment of large private landholdings based on deceitful and fraudulent purchases of the shares and rights (*Sp. acciones y derechos*) of Indigenous lands. The western side of Pehuenche territory (Chile), which stretched across both sides of the Andean Cordillera, had gradually been converted into private property. On the eastern side (Argentina) however, the Pehuenche territory remained intact from the Negro River up to Limay and the Andean Cordillera, an area known as Neuquén. The Argentinean government enacted a law that moved its southern border to the Negro and Neuquén rivers, ruling out the conquest of the Mapuche territory. In order to move their frontline, the Argentinean government sent numerous troops of soldiers that repeatedly attacked the *pampeanos*, with complete success (Curruhuinca-Roux 1984). Having defeated the *pampeanos*, the Argentines now had to face the Pehuenche in the frontier behind the Negro River, a problem that would

be taken care of by the so-called *Campaña del Desierto* (Conquest of the Desert). The first campaign ended in 1880, but as a consequence of the first phase of the campaigns, about 14000 Indians were either lost, imprisoned or killed (Ibid.). In the same year, the army forced Indigenous people to flee and take refuge in the Cordillera and in the valleys of Alto Bío Bío and Antuco. The last stage of the Conquest of the Desert involved a series of raids by the Argentinean army against the Pehuenche and Huilliche, and concluded with the *Campaña de los Andes* (Andes Campaign) between November 1882 and March 1883, which sealed the occupation of the Neuquén region. Many Pehuenche people took refuge in the valleys of Trapa Trapa, Queuco, Guallaly and Lonquimay, entering various border valleys that were already under Chilean jurisdiction and where they were taken in by the Pehuenche inhabitants already living there.

The Chilean military occupation of the Queuco Valley and Alto Bío Bío took place in the first few years of the 1880s, in the closing stages of the incorporation of Araucanía. The first advancement of the border had taken place in 1862, when Angol was founded and the Malleco frontier was strengthened, leaving the old border of Bío Bío obsolete. Chilean colonists and usurpers of Indigenous land consequently occupied the lands around it. In 1869 the Chilean army undertook an offensive. Although the Mapuche initially resisted, they ended up fleeing from the region and taking refuge in the Cordilleran valleys. In 1881 the Chilean border reached the Cautín River and the last large-scale Mapuche uprising took place, though it was squashed by the Chilean army. Towards the end of the process called the *Pacification of Araucanía*, the Expedition to the Araucanian Cordillera was carried out under the command of Martín Drouilly. This expedition sought to strengthen the borders of Alto Bío Bío and establish Chilean jurisdiction in the region of the cordillera, to put a stop to the constant incursions by Argentinean soldiers that came in search of Pehuenche people (Correa & Molina 1998). A second expedition into the Bío Bío cordillera took place in 1883, this time with the objective of reinforcing military posts and forging new ones. The establishment of several forts in 1883 satisfied the goal of the Chilean State to carry out a military occupation of Alto Bío Bío and to include the regions occupied by Indigenous people

under the jurisdiction of the Chilean government.

The loss of Pehuenche territory occurred in a context of conflict and persecution that made it easy for speculators to carve up the land for themselves. Through the purchase of *acciones y derechos* from Indigenous people, they acquired large expanses of land. The land obtained from Indigenous people through under-the-table transactions was then legalized by notaries and deeds (Sp. *titulos de tierra*) registered in the Land Registry (Sp. *Conservador de Bienes Raíces*). The rapid accumulation of land and the establishment of farming estates by powerful local Chileans had begun around 1860. Their efforts to accumulate land were furthered through diverse methods of appropriation. Two decades later these Chilean men, along with others, carried out raids in Alto Bío Bío and established large private landholdings from their *purchase* of Pehuenche lands. But it would be in the early 1880s, when the military incursion into Bío Bío was in full swing, that all the other great private landholdings would be established.⁵ With these appropriations, the entire Pehuenche territory between Trapa Trapa, the Queuco River, the Bío Bío River, Guallaly, and the Andean Cordillera was converted into private landholdings in less than a decade. The appropriation of land achieved through deliberate mistranslation is a mechanism described in 1856 in the following way:

The speculators bring educated bilinguals with them who mistranslate the words of the Indians to the public officials and only convey ideas in accordance with what the untrustworthy speculators want (Donoso & Velazco 1971:112, my own translation).

The result was that Indigenous people lost control over their lands. The purchase of Indigenous lands was legalized by notaries who were knowingly involved in these fraudulent transactions. However, the new owners did not actually physically occupy the land, and Indigenous people continued to inhabit the region.

The Pehuenche communities therefore found themselves in a precarious situation of

⁵ In 1880 José Miguel Brito and Pedro Arias took control of territories in the Callaqui community. In 1881 Rafael Anguita took control of lands in the Pehuenche community of Ralco, establishing an estate of the same name. That same year Martín Bunster took control of Guallaly, adjoining Ralco, and Mariano Palacios and Luis Parada took over Trapa Trapa (Correa & Molina 1998).

occupation towards the end of the 19th century, despite being able to make use of their ancestral land. This was due to attempts by landowners to block any form of legal settlement and the pressure they exerted to expel the Pehuenche from their land. The Indigenous Settlement Commission (Sp. *Comisión Radicadora de Indígenas*) that awarded *titulos de merced* only managed to operate in the Queuco Valley, where the communities demanded its presence in order to settle definitively. Between 1919 and 1920, settlements (Sp. *radicaciones*) were established in Cauñiku, Malla Malla and Trapa Trapa, situated inland of the Queuco Valley. Although the settlement commission (Sp. *comisión radicadora*) marked out an area of land located near the confluence of the Queuco River and the Bío Bío River that was still in the hands of the Indigenous people, it never granted *titulos de merced*. In Pitril, the lands could be found in the public land registry records under the name of the Indigenous people, but in 1920 a part of these lands remained under the power of private individuals and the other was used as communal land by the Gallina Indigenous group. The private property established on Indigenous land was protected to a large extent and the total amount of territory occupied and claimed by the communities was not taken into account by the Chilean administration (Correa & Molina 1998).

The Chilean agrarian reform initiated in 1967 had a *campesinista* (peasant-like) bias to it in Alto Bío Bío. Despite Indigenous people holding a claim over the large expropriated private landholdings, the agrarian reform in Alto Bío Bío benefited mainly the Chilean colonial occupants rather than the Pehuenche communities, and moreover frustrated the Indigenous people's expectations of recovering their ancestral lands. During this time, the private estates established out of Indigenous lands were occupied by tenants, leaseholders and Chilean sharecroppers. These new inhabitants (called *colonos* by the locals) imitated the Pehuenche economy and way of life, which was the only way of surviving in the cordillera environment of Alto Bío Bío. In this way, the use of the summer and winter pastures and the pastoral economy derived from the harvest of pine nuts and small crops consolidated the territorial occupation of these private premises and redefined the territory occupied by the Pehuenche. However, the new inhabitants denied

Pehuenche people access to the traditional land that was essential to their economy. Pehuenche attempts to regain their ancestral lands met with opposition, not only from those landowners who actually lived on their own estates, but also from the tenant farmers. At one point, the Trapa Trapa community demanded the devolution of the pastures of Cochico. This triggered numerous incidents with the *colonos* on the estate who were against the Pehuenche entering the pastures. The dispute over the use of the land was to culminate tragically in the murder of three Pehuenche men who were living in the area of Cochico, at the hands of Chilean colonists (Correa & Molina 1998).

During the Pinochet dictatorship (1973-1989), processes of land transfer were not exempt from disagreements between the fiscal entities that favoured private ownership and the groups that fought for the lands to be distributed amongst the different communities. This led to disagreements between Indigenous community members whose opinions were divided, some for and some against the divisory policy regulating the partition of land executed by Pinochet's dictatorship during the 1980s. When the redistribution of land was complete, the old Pehuenche territories ended up being divided into Indigenous property, private property belonging to the country workers, and private property belonging to large landowners. The communities with *titulos de merced* managed to retain communal possession of their land however, and are among the few present-day communities that have not been fragmented.

2.3 The current situation of Pehuenche people

The history of the Pehuenche during the last forty years has been no less controversial. Being the biggest river in the country, the Bío Bío is considered an attractive place for energy resource industries, and studies of its productivity have been carried out since the 1960s. During the last twenty years, the multinational company ENDESA (National Energy Enterprise), a former state enterprise that was privatized during the military dictatorship and is currently owned by a Spanish-Italian corporation, has built two hydroelectric dams on the Bío Bío River, both supported by government approval.

Pangue was the first of the dams built in the area and was finished in 1994, although its construction was initially planned during the last years of the Chilean dictatorship. The International Finance Corporation (IFC), a branch of the World Bank, gave a US\$ 170 million loan to ENDESA for the Pangue dam. US\$ 28 million were provided by the Swedish Board for Industrial and Technical Co-operation, US\$ 14 million by the Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation, and US\$ 100 million by 10 European banks (Nesti 1999).

Until 1993 there was no legal protection for Indigenous land rights, nor for the environment threatened by these kinds of projects. Pangue was built without consultation with Pehuenche communities and with no serious concern for its social and environmental impact (Aylwin 2002). During the first years of the current century, Ralco, a bigger dam, was also built. The construction of this second dam was much more controversial than Pangue, as it involved not only the violation of the new Chilean Indigenous law, but also because concern had been raised by several studies in relation to the violation of World Bank directives on environmental and social policies and dam and reservoir projects, including operational directives 4.20 on Indigenous Peoples and 4.01 on Environmental Assessment (Downing 1996 & Hair 1997, in Aylwin 2002). Furthermore, Ralco was built with the approval of CONAMA (*Comisión Nacional del Medio Ambiente*, the State Environmental Agency), without considering the opinion of more than twenty public agencies that had analyzed the project (Moraga 2001). The construction also involved the controversial displacement and resettlement of nearly 100 families from their ancestral lands, people who now live in conditions of extreme vulnerability and social exclusion (González Parra & Simon 2008). Moreover, Ralco was built over ancestral cemeteries, which implied other kinds of social problems for Pehuenche people. In a sense, all these recent political and economical developments involving the Pehuenche population are not surprising or 'new,' but are just the icing on the cake when located within a wider historical framework.

In this context, several local informants have pointed out that Pehuenche suicide is a main area of concern due to its significant rise during the past five years. National data

provided by the CEPAL (*Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe*, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) in collaboration with the Ministry of Health suggests that the suicide rate is higher among Indigenous people than non-Indigenous people. Furthermore, data provided by the local health clinic in Ralco (Inzulza & Basualto 2007) offer clues about a phenomenon that has not yet been studied: suicide by hanging from trees was the primary cause of death in 2008 in the Pehuenche district. While conducting my fieldwork, I considered focusing my entire research on understandings of Pehuenche suicide. Nevertheless, I quickly dismissed this idea when I realized that most of the people generally avoid speaking about suicide.

In 2008, after almost twenty years of negotiations in the Chilean Parliament, Convention No.169 of the International Labour Organization (OLI/ONU) was finally approved, Chile being the last country to sign it. This document is the most significant international legal tool in relation to acknowledging the rights and protection of Indigenous and Tribal peoples in independent countries. This convention is of particular importance to my thesis, as it requires governments to ensure that adequate health services are made available to Indigenous peoples, or to provide them with resources to allow them to design and deliver such services under their own responsibility and control. In line with this convention, the Chilean government has established clear aims and political priorities relating to the *Política Indígena* (Indigenous Policy) through the document *Reconocer: Pacto Social por la Multiculturalidad* (Re-cognizing: Social Pact for a Multicultural Country). Amongst the central points of this pact, the government has declared the improvement of the 'Indigenous Health Program' to be a necessity. Generally speaking, this document points to a strengthening of multicultural sensitivity within health programs all over the country, but without defining what is actually meant by 'multicultural.'⁶ However, what does it really mean for an institutional health project - in practical and epistemological terms - to be engaged in a dialogue framed by different ontologies? Furthermore, what are the consequences for the (Indigenous) people directly involved in this project? These are some of the questions this thesis intends to answer.

⁶ In the theoretical framework section of this project I will develop a wider critical analysis with regards to the concept of 'multicultural,' which is associated with a 'multiculturalist approach' in anthropology.

3. The place of this research

3.1 The sick body in Mapuche literature

Whilst much research has been conducted in the field of Mapuche ethnohistory (Bengoa 1999, 2000, 2003 & 2004; Boccara 1998 & 1999; Dillehay 1990 & 2007; Foerster 2004; Mallon 2004; Pinto 2000; Vergara 2005; Villalobos 1982 & 1995; Zavala 2000) and Indigenous rights (Saavedra 2002; Berglund 1977; Richards 2004), very few studies have focused on health and healing within Mapuche communities (Oyarce 1998; Bacigalupo 2001, 2003, 2004 & 2007; Citarella et al. 2000). This thesis aims to make a contribution to the body of literature on Mapuche people by focusing on two different points.

First, previous scholars (Ibid.) have suggested that the processes related to health and illness are, for Mapuche people, predominantly related to their conceptualization of different planes through which their cosmology is organized. This spatial explanation conceives of the Mapuche world as made up of three different vertical planes. In this context, illnesses (Ch. *kutran*) emerge as a result of a disruption to the general balance between these planes (Bacigalupo 2007). Most importantly, it has been stated that humans, animals, and natural phenomena all possess a body and a spiritual essence that is separate from that body (Ibid.). Illnesses, in this context, are the result of the capture of the one's spiritual essence by witches or other spirits (Ibid.). The body, however, has not been properly defined. Thus, the very likely specificities of the Mapuche body have remained obscured by the vague dualist definitions of the 'soul and body'. Illnesses, in this context, are the result of the capture of the spiritual essence by witches or other spirits (Ibid.). Moreover, Oyarce (1989) and Bacigalupo (2007) have described some 'natural' Mapuche illnesses as being localized *in the body*, the body remaining inside an unquestioned black box. Having said this, this thesis can be seen as a rethinking of conceptualizations of the body, which have in the past been made in an uncritical manner and been framed by a general assumption that conceives of the body as a

universal entity.

Secondly, one of the important analytical efforts in Mapuche studies regarding illnesses has been to create a taxonomical categorization according to their cause, intensity, duration and location (Grebe 1975; Oyarce 1988; Citarella 2000; Bacigalupo 2007). These authors classify illnesses in the following way: Causes can be natural (Ch. *rekutran*), spiritual (Ch. *wenumapukutran*), or mental (Ch. *wesalongko*). In terms of intensity, illnesses can be minor (Ch. *wichukutran*) or major (Ch. *futakutran*). According to duration, these authors mention recent ailments (Ch. *lefkutran*) and illnesses of a longer duration (Ch. *kufikutran*). Finally, as far as the location of illness is concerned, they can be localized in the head (Ch. *kutranlongko*), heart (Ch. *kutranpiuke*), tooth and bone (Ch. *kutran forro*), stomach (Ch. *kutranputra*), and foot (Ch. *kutrannamun*). This strong interest in classification was not a real concern for the laypeople I met in the field however. For them, the sensory experience of illnesses was far more important than their categorization and the creation of a taxological order. In this sense, my ethnography may introduce new insights to this discussion, mainly by exploring Pehuenche visual experiences of illness, framed by ontological conceptions of personhood and vision. In general terms, I hope to contribute to the dialogue by seriously considering Pehuenche conceptualizations of personhood without having to refer to an a priori universal liberal body. Without denying the illuminating insights previous scholars have provided regarding Mapuche health issues, this thesis points out a territory that has not been accurately addressed, namely the role of visibility, invisibility and visual practices within intra- and inter-cultural contexts.

Moreover, the relationship between the Chilean State and Pehuenche people within the realm of the Chilean public health system is also a key concern of this research. No information is currently available regarding conceptualizations of the body within intercultural networks involving public health services and Pehuenche people. Therefore, I also hope to contribute to anthropological approaches that have strongly criticized ideological aspects of intercultural health, of which Boccara's (2004, 2007 & 2008) is the paradigmatic position in an Indigenous and Chilean context. Boccara's

reflections are a clear contribution to the analysis of ideological aspects and power relations within Chilean policies on intercultural health, and can certainly be seen as a wider contextual frame for the current work. However, this thesis does not prioritize global capitalism and neoliberal forces (as Boccara does) as the key analytical elements to be considered when analyzing intercultural health issues (see Chapter Two). In contrast, this research attempts to analyze the theoretical and practical aspects of intercultural healing networks, which have remained totally unexamined by scholars working within Mapuche contexts. By considering Pehuenche people's experiences of illness within intra- and inter-cultural contexts, this research attempts to analyze notions of personal agency, personhood, and sociality. In order to do so, rather than keeping neoliberal forces in the foreground, my work places a greater emphasis on local idioms of health and illness related to visual practices within Indigenous socio-cosmo-politics.

3.2 Mapuche literature in context

Historically speaking, anthropological literature on Mapuche people has not considered theoretical reflections coming from the study of other Amerindian groups. The work of Course (2011) however, can be considered a turning point for this trend. By engaging Mapuche ontologies within a wider perspectival theoretical framework, Course has emphasized the relevance of understandings of personhood as prerequisite to discussing wider inter-personal relations. By analyzing the Mapuche concept of the true person (*Ch. che*), understood as the non-essentialistic construction of different types of socialities (Ibid.), Course has interfered in the classic debate on Mapuche group formation and social structure, seen as unavoidable points of departure for understandings of Mapuche people (Titiev 1951; Faron 1964 & Stuchlik 1976).

Taking into account Course's (2011) illuminations on Mapuche personhood and sociality, my thesis offers a deeper and more specific reflection on the sensory experience of vision within intercultural health devices. More particularly, by considering the central ontological dilemma of Mapuche life, which according to Course

(2011:161) is the idea that ‘to be a person one must enter into social relations and it is through the perspective of the ‘Other’ that one is attributed the status of *che*,’ this thesis offers a deeper theoretical reflection of illness processes as a result of persons’ non-stable subjectivities. This dissertation deals with this ontological dilemma not only by considering illnesses related to witchcraft, but also by focusing on how intercultural relations themselves are premised on different understandings of personhood, sociality and more particularly, visual experience. Furthermore, having noticed a gap in theories of intercultural relations within health devices, this study explores how ontological contrasts (Latour 2009a) within networks of healing are related to particular conceptualizations of visibility and invisibility. Moreover, in considering Amerindian reflections on the body and vision, this research seeks to overcome arbitrary geographical divisions in ethnographic research in South America (Course 2011; Gonzalez Galvez 2012).

3.3 Global anthropological concerns and the place of this thesis

Broadly speaking, this thesis also contributes to contemporary debates about Indigenous conceptualizations of the body. More specifically, this thesis engages with reflections about the body coming from both medical anthropology and Amerindian perspectivism. Even though this thesis considers theoretical differences between these disciplines as configuring a positive tension with which to reflect, I believe they cannot be fully commensurable, since their very understandings of nature and culture differ strongly.

Firstly, within the realm of medical anthropology, and especially within American medical anthropology, the debate about the body has been understood as a key element in the exploration of wider social and cultural processes (Csordas 1994; Good 1998; Kleinman 1999; Beihl, Good & Kliemann 2007). Broadly speaking, research in this field has proposed a key understanding of the self *as* corporeal, the body being part of technical, political, and social processes. Several ethnographic studies have tried to make apparent how the body mediates medical models, political economy, and social

networks (Csordas 1994; Good 1998; Kleinman 1999). Nevertheless, even if there have been attempts at theorizing ‘local biologies’⁷ (Lock 1993; Lock & Kaufert 2001; Worthman 1999), there is a general trend within the field to assume a biological foundation over which the subsequent theoretical discussion is built.⁸ Within this context, recent literature has mainly focused on the body as a segmented object of research (Cohen 1999; Lock 1993 & 2002; Sharp 2000). Thus, it has remained a significant foundational debate to the background, namely, that which refers to understandings about the body as a *gestalt*, as a unit (Mauss 1973; Turner, 1967; Evans-Pritchard 1963; Levy-Bruhl 1963; Leenhardt 1971). In this sense, I see my research as contributing to anthropologies of the body that have attempted to rethink the very basic concepts of reality (Strathern 1996). In order to do the same, this thesis is built on the consideration of the sensory experience of vision as a point of departure to discuss wider concepts of Pehuenche reality. If forced to situate this thesis within the medical anthropological realm, I would consider it to be a project framed by ‘Evidence-Based Medical Anthropology’ (Ecks 2008), which established a challenge to the taken-for-granted premises on which evidence-based medicine is founded.

Secondly, considering the strand of ethnographic research on the body in South America, this research is built over several anthropological reflections stemming from Amerindian perspectivism (Viveiros de Castro 1992, 1996, 1998, 2002a, 2002b & 2004a).⁹ Following a discussion held by Aparecida Vilaça (2005), Amerindian anthropological literature on the body has pointed out how medical anthropological literature itself has

⁷ This concept refers to the manner in which one’s bodily experience is mutually constituted by biology and culture (Lock 1993). In this sense, it can be said that this concept, even if it is an attempt at overcoming universalisms, is still framed within a multiculturalist approach, which this project will put into question.

⁸ The most notable exception to this trend is the work of Annemarie Mol (1999 & 2002), who has questioned the biomedical understanding of the body with reference to Western biomedical and biological practices, demonstrating that it is produced in a way that is neither holistic nor systematic, thereby bearing witness to its non-unitary character. In this vein, some authors from fields outside of medical anthropology have criticized the notion of the alleged universal natural body - the owner of health and sickness - as the gold standard of hegemonic social discourse (Haraway 1990), and the understanding of biology (and the body) as a monolithic objectivity that needs to be continually transformed from object to agent (Haraway 1991).

⁹ For a general description of Amerindian perspectivist ontologies see Viveiros de Castro 1996a, 1998 and Lima 1996.

taken for granted biological notions of the body, rendering these scholars blind to sharply different Indigenous concepts of humanity (Taylor 1996, 1998, 2000 & 2002). This difference between concepts of humanity has been clearly explained by Viveiros de Castro (1998 & 2004a), who claims that while a Western multicultural cosmology postulates a physical continuity and metaphysical discontinuity (one human nature, many cultures), Amerindian perspectivism proposes a multi-naturalism based on 'metaphysical continuity' and 'physical discontinuity.' This physical discontinuity has been conceptualized as configuring a multi-natural ontology, which entails that the fabrication of the human body 'is based on negativity: on a negation of the possibilities of the "non-human" body' (Viveiros de Castro 1987, in Vilaça 2005:450).¹⁰ Thus, Amerindian multi-naturalism provides the most radical critique of the notion of nature as used by classic medical anthropologists. In other words, this critique sharply challenges the assumption made by those medical anthropologists who have decided not to deny the material existence and physical properties of the body as a biological system that has a reality separate from human consciousness (Scheper-Hughes & Lock 1987). This thesis illustrates the potential of exploring these Amerindian statements within networks of healing existing in an ongoing ontological tension between cosmologies. Considering that 'indigenous socio-logics is based on a physio-logics' (Segger, Da Matta & Viveiros de Castro 1979:13), this work aims to analyze the possible implications of this premise in terms of practices of healing in intercultural health.

3.4 The place of this thesis within reflections on Amerindian intercultural health

Amazonian ethnography has also offered examinations of the articulation of bio-medical and Indigenous health systems. These contributions (see the volumes edited by Buchillet 1991; Santos & Coimbra Jr. 1994; Chiappino & Alès 1997; Langdon & Garnello 2004) have strongly emphasized Indigenous notions of the body, illness and healing to explain

¹⁰ For the creation of proper human bodies and how people are produced, see Basso 1996; Belaunde 2000 & 2001; Conklin 2001a & 2001b; Descola 2001; Fisher 2001; Gow 2000, 2001; Hugh Jones 2001; Lagrou 2000; McCallum 2001; Overing & Passes 2000b; Vilaça 2000 & 2002.

the reactions of native people to bio-medical systems. However, even though this thesis also analyzes these research topics (in a broad sense), its main concern is with the materiality of visual practices as a key element in understanding intra- and inter-cultural interactions within health domains. The relevance of visual practices is based on ethnographic data, which subsequently turned into an analytical anthropological effort to understand radical difference in a visual domain. I must make it clear from the outset that the focus of this thesis is not on the transformative relations between health practitioners and Indigenous peoples (Kelly 2011), but rather on the ontological relevance of the visual experiences of the many actors that configure the realm of intercultural health.¹¹ In other words, my central concern is not related to the process of ‘becoming Other,’ which has been the core of a strong anthropological reflection on Amazonian societies (Gow 1991 & 2001; Kelly 2011; Vilaça 2002 & Rival 2002). Without denying the importance of these contributions to the field of anthropology, my thesis aims to highlight intercultural spaces where processes of ‘not becoming Other,’ so to speak, are at stake.¹² However, in line with Kelly’s (2011) research motivations, even if this thesis takes medical anthropology as a general theoretical background, it is more concerned with Amazonianist literature. This is due to the simple fact that the current work seriously considers Indigenous cosmological conceptualizations and practices beyond the territory of Western medicine. This contribution examines Mapuche conceptualizations of visual experiences and illness processes with the goal of understanding them within a wider relational frame of reference related to particular understandings of personhood. By taking seriously incommensurable aspects of visual experience within intercultural health domains, my ambition is to *practice* anthropology as an ‘art of determining the problems posed by each culture, not the art of finding solutions to those problems posed by our own’ (Viveiros de Castro 2003:9).

¹¹ Kelly’s work is an ethnographic account of the relation between health workers and Yānomāmi people that makes apparent how conceptual articulations of medical systems are a matter of mutual misunderstanding. In Kelly’s work, these misunderstandings are strongly rooted on the ‘the meaning of being and becoming “Yanomami” and “napë” for Yānomāmi people and whites alike’ (Kelly 2011:2). These relational transformations, and in particular the Indigenous desire for Western medicine mentioned by Kelly (Ibid.), were not a prominent issue for the Pehuenche people I met in the field.

¹² For studies on how Amazonianist theory can account for relations with the state, see Gow 2001, Vilaça 2006 & Gordon 2006.

3.5 Incommensurability and political ontology

This thesis can also be seen as a radical critique to multiculturalist approaches as predicated on a modern ontological assumption of multiple cultures being partial perspectives on a single reality. Since the starting point of multiculturalism conceives of reality as existing ‘out there’ (Povinelli 2001), partial perspectives of a single reality might be mutually commensurable (Blaser 2009; Kirsch 2006).¹³ By considering interactions between public health practitioners and Pehuenche people, this thesis examines the ontological tensions between incommensurable worlds (Povinelli 2001). Here, this tension is seen as the convergence of cosmologies postulating, on one side, ‘physical continuity’ (and its subsequent medical practices built upon a notion of nature as a non-coded category), and cosmologies based on ‘physical discontinuity’ (and its subsequent healing practices) on the other. Thus, this thesis engages with debates about the incommensurability of the body (Vilaça 2005) in intercultural situations: What is at stake is not ‘another view of the same body, but another concept of the body, whose underlying dissonance to its ‘homonymy’ with our own is, precisely, the problem’ (Viveiros de Castro 2002:140). My ethnography may introduce new insights into this discussion, mainly by considering Pehuenche conceptualizations of personhood and visual experience in intra- and inter-cultural contexts.

By considering intercultural contexts where multi-natural ontologies coexist with multicultural ones, this thesis can be also seen as a contribution to the wider arena of political ontology (Mol 1999; Blaser 2009). This means that it considers inherent conflicts and tensions that emerge ‘as being about the continuous enactment, stabilization, and protection of different and asymmetrically connected ontologies’ (Blaser 2009:10). The not innocuous risk of one world being reduced by another has been rendered explicit by several authors working with Indigenous ontologies (Blaser

¹³ For attempts at integrating Indigenous knowledges into development agendas within a multiculturalist approach see Ellen et al. 2000; Fernando 2003; Martin & Vermeylen 2005; Spak 2005.

2009; Clammer et al. 2004; Cruikshank 2005; De la Cadena 2007; Nadasdy 2007; Poirier 2008; Povinelli 1995). I engage with this discussion by exploring how Pehuenche people conceptualize both multicultural and multi-natural ontologies, as well as by focusing on the implications of particular ontological clashes. In short, this thesis will contribute to this debate by focusing on the convergence of Pehuenche cosmopolitical visions and multicultural political divisions configuring the realm of intercultural health.

3.6 Vision

This research also engages with conceptualizations of vision and sensory experience emerging from Amerindian literature. On the one hand, both the relevance of the eye and the point of view have been crucial for perspectival analytics since their very foundation (see Viveiros de Castro 1996a, 1998 and Lima 1996). The eye has been conceptualized as the locus of perception, and the perception of the world is strongly determined by the eye (Lima 1996). On the other hand, as I have already suggested, the body has been conceived of as a radically relational position not prone to being totalized (Vilaça 2005), as well as radically instable: its reality, it has been famously stated, ‘lies in the eyes of others’ (Ibid. p.449). This implies ontological challenges regarding how to build a ‘minimally stable subjectivity’ (Taylor 1996:202), a problem that in the case of the Mapuche has been analyzed in detail by Course (2011) in terms of sociality, personhood and kinship. Here I must admit a personal inclination: during the last four years I have been seduced by these ethnographical Amerindian analytics. I want to make it clear however, that my personal proclivity was strongly fostered by my ethnography, and not the other way around. Pehuenche people are very concerned with and placed great importance on particular tensions between a visible and an invisible dimension. Being interested in doing ethnography within the field of intercultural health, I was very impressed by how significant it was for my Pehuenche friends that public health practitioners were not capable of *seeing* the causes of their suffering. Examples of the importance of the visible and the invisible among the Pehuenche are many, and they can

be found throughout the current work. I should also add, as Gonzalez Galvez (2012) has pointed out, that Pehuenche ontology can hardly be seen as perspectival *tout court*, its multi-natural dimension and the relevance of vision being its most important ontological feature. What is striking however, ethnographically speaking, is the major relevance of visual experience in the daily life of Pehuenche people.

It seems to me that there is a theoretical distinction within some Amerindian reflections that might be slightly misleading when trying to understand Pehuenche visual experience in its own terms. This distinction is implicit, for instance, in one of the most convincing papers written about vision in Lowland South America (Ewart 2008). Ewart (2008) has shown how the *social significance of sensory perception* has had little attention within the anthropological field, studies about vision in its shamanic version being more prominent (see Chaumeil 1983 & Riviere 1999). By examining visual practices among the Panará people, Elizabeth Ewart (2008:507) has convincingly argued that the '*social significance of the senses* is as much bound up with an understanding of sociality (...) as it is bound up with sensory experience itself' (emphasis added). In particular, following Taylor (1993) and Surreales (2003), she has shown how vision may be a key outstanding sensory dimension in distinguishing the human from the non-human within Amazonian cosmologies. Taking into account Ewart's suggestions as a inspirational point of departure, in this thesis I would like to push this idea a little further by suggesting that when Pehuenche ontologies are examined, 'sensory experience itself' should be considered as the materiality of sociality. I suggest that it does not make any sense to think of the *social significance of sensory perception*, simply because 'seeing refers to percepts rather than concepts' (Viveiros de Castro 2005:38). Perception *is* social as much as sociality *is* perceptual. Or, to put it differently, the very idea of 'sensory experience itself' is still embedded in a multicultural analytic for which the senses might exist 'out there' (*sensu* Povinelli).

Significant reflections on vision have also come from outside Amerindian literature. Within a debate that goes beyond Amerindian issues, Ingold (2000) has approached vision in his work on the education of attention, an activity that entails multi-sensory

experience and personal apprenticeship. For Ingold, sight and hearing should not be conceived of as separate performances, since they are experientially entangled. He has stated that the definition of the self is strongly related to these performances, vision (not hearing) being a key element for the definition of an individual self in opposition to others (Ingold 2000). More particularly, reciprocal vision entails a social relationship in a way uni-directional vision does not. This work has influenced the development of an anthropology of vision that primarily focuses on visual training and on particular practices of looking (see Grasseni 2007). Within this framework of ‘visual enskilment,’ even if vision is not considered an ‘isolated given,’ it is understood as being in interaction with the other - given - senses (Grasseni 2007:3). Thus, the grounded, ‘situated body’ (Ibid. p.8) and its given liberal senses are not fully questioned.

The many great insights these reflections have offered to the anthropology of vision cannot be denied. However, the emphasis on training, skills, or on the education of the senses does not help to understand how Pehuenche people conceive of and evince visual performances with a visual bias of their own. What I will try to demonstrate throughout this thesis is that Pehuenche vision is not simply *visual*, but rather, it refers to ontological relational differences. In my ethnography, apart from the problems related to both the concept of the ‘situated body’ and the very Ingoldian concept of the *individual* self (see Chapter one), the self as such does not appear *in opposition* to others, but rather through mutual vision, in which the self and the other emerge as mutual agents of human perception. I hope this thesis can be a contribution to all these debates on various levels.

4. The organization of this thesis

The central argument of this thesis is divided into two parts. In the first part (Chapters One, Two, and Three) entitled ‘Cosmopolitics of Pehuenche Vision,’ I explore different ethnographic moments in which the Pehuenche’s self-determined experience of the visible (Ch. *pefal*) and of the non-visible (Ch. *pefalay*) appear in their entire ontological splendour. More specifically, through the examination of different ethnographical

subjects such as the composition of a Pehuenche person, greetings, funerals, nocturnal attacks, performances by evil spirits, doubles' revenge, myths, healing practices, and so on, I show how vision, for the Pehuenche, is a precondition for the establishment of social relations between real people. This leads me to emphasize the relevance of mutual vision in the configuration of the Pehuenche person, vision being a key operator for the emergence of real people. In the second part of the thesis (Chapters Four and Five) entitled 'Political vision and divisions,' I explore what kind of vision is being conceptualized and enacted by public health practitioners. In particular, I focus on multicultural conceptualizations of the person and the body, paying particular attention to the consequences of the encounter between incommensurable worlds. This thesis therefore starts with a focus on Pehuenche intra-cultural understandings of vision then shifts to the examination of intercultural visual interactions.

In Chapter One I advance two claims which are central to my argument as a whole: firstly, that a Pehuenche person is a composition of different capacities and elements, and secondly that this personal composition can only be fully activated by mutual vision among real people. This is accomplished primarily by looking at Pehuenche conceptualizations of personal composition, focusing on three key elements: *am*, *piüllü*, and bodily matter, or corporeal support. I suggest that this personal composition can be thought of as a wider relational scheme shared by different human subjects. I also explore the relevance of touching and seeing as main operators for the distinction between *us* (human) and *them* (non-human). As I will argue throughout this thesis, mutual vision among the Pehuenche is a social action necessary for someone to appear as a real person for another real person, as well as a key activity for the definition and delineation of a Pehuenche visible world of visible real people.

In order to clarify the complex relationship between personal composition and Pehuenche vision, in Chapter Two I describe particular moments in which mutual vision between people is *not* possible. I explore a mode of vision I call 'unilateral vision,' the paradigmatic case of which is situations of *nguken*, a term which refers to nocturnal experiences during which sleeping people are the target of unknown visitors' predation. I

describe how the *nguken* concept serves as an illustration of how unilateral visual perception in situations of witchcraft entails a particular form of cannibalistic consumption. By building on the concept of equivocation proposed by Viveiros de Castro (2004) and taking into account ethnographic explorations of the ontological consequences of multicultural biomedical technologies in relation to *nguken* moments, I suggest that the reality of Pehuenche vision is incommensurable when compared to multicultural ontologies. In short, in this Chapter I show how vision performances, illness and witchcraft are strongly related within Pehuenche ontologies.

In Chapter Three, through an ethnographic account of two different healing practices, I argue that the restoration of the normal plane of Pehuenche visibility can only be achieved through particular visual performances. By exploring how different healers work, through what they call the ‘gift of vision,’ I suggest that healing practices aim to generate a relational movement within a predatory interaction. This Chapter also explores how this is accomplished through the assemblage of particular visual capacities that I call *gazes for detachment*. I conclude this Chapter by suggesting that the intense efforts of the Pehuenche to keep the potential affinity of spirits *out of sight* can be conceptualized as practices of cosmo-activism. I stress how, in Alto Bío Bío, vision plays a central role in the protection of a human relational field in a world where getting sick is always related to an alteration of the process of construction of similarity.

With this model of Pehuenche vision in mind, the second part of the thesis examines intercultural issues within the realm of the Chilean public health. In Chapter Four, I focus on one of the most important political activities performed by the Chilean State and its public health institutions in Alto Bío Bío during recent years: the act of ‘*visualizing*’ - as workers of the State called it - the existence of traditional healers within Indigenous communities. Through an ethnographic exploration of how the State’s actions in ‘intercultural health’ are implemented, this Chapter disentangles what the concept of ‘*visualizing*’ entails for the multicultural vision of public health institutions. I suggest that the visibility of public health in Pehuenche communities is constructed through a clear, bounded and a priori idea of what cultural difference is, and is based on

multicultural understandings of the body. Another key point I seek to make in this Chapter is that emergent initiatives designated as ‘intercultural health’ and characterized by a multicultural and equivocated relationship between mind and culture have quite a dramatic impact on the lives of Pehuenche people.

In Chapter Five I explore how Indigenous people both react to and conceptualize the State’s attempts at ‘visualizing’ Indigenous actors within the realm of intercultural health. I suggest that natives’ complaints against state functionaries can be thought of as a response to a certain kind of paradigmatic sociality enacted by the functionaries themselves and characterized by an *unproductive sociality*. I suggest that this paradigmatic sociality takes shape through the creation of a web of relationships that, paradoxically, do not allow the emergence of real relationships among real people through mutual vision. Taking into account the significance of the relation of mutual vision needed for the emergence of a person, I suggest that this type of sociality can be conceptualized as a particular type of *blind sociality*. I conclude the Chapter by suggesting that fleeting Indigenous contentions against the State respond to the particular transcendental way functionaries of the State visually interpellate (*sensu* Althusser) Indigenous peoples.

PART I: ‘Cosmo-politics of Pehuenche vision’

Chiwüz

*Kimpelu lle iñchiñ
tvfachi kimfal mapa mew, pefal mew
ka kimno mvlen feychi newen
ta iñchiñ mew tayiñ negvmkeetew
ka amulen peniyenofiel
inarvpvlen kiñe chiwvz mew
ñi nvlaken ka nrvyfvken
epu tropan mew ñi kiñewtuken:
ñi tuwmvm ka ñi pewtuken egu
feychi Kalfv mew*

The Circle

We are disciples
in this world of what is visible
and remain ignorant of the energy
that thrives within us
wending
its invisible
journey in a circle
that opens and closes
at two points that fuse together
its inception and reunion
in Blueness

Elicura Chihuailaf
Sueños de Luna Azul

Chapter 1

On People and Mutual Vision

It was towards the end of my fieldwork, and after having spent three whole days taking part in the most important fertility ritual for the Pehuenche of the Pitril community in Alto Bío Bío, that my host and friend Pedro surprised me with one of the most striking stories I had heard about the mythical origins of that particular fertility ritual called *ngillatun*. I am not interested in describing the ritual itself, as many anthropologists might anticipate however.¹⁴ Rather, the mythical narrative I am about to report is an excellent starting point for this thesis, since it illuminates certain mythical aspects of Pehuenche life that are expressed daily in various ways. In particular, some of the elements of this narrative introduce the central aspects of what it means to be a Pehuenche person. Strangely enough, this was one of the very few conversations I actually recorded during my fieldwork. This allows me to report this myth (Ch. *epew*) here, respecting the exact words my friend Pedro used that day, as we shared a glass of wine under the beauty of a spring night in Pitril.

Once upon a time, an old man (Ch. koiviche) was walking around in the mountains when he suddenly fainted. Sometimes there are many clouds and it is not easy at all to be there, you are always lost in the clouds. This old man fell down, losing consciousness. His 'ina mongen' or 'am' was captured, and it was taken to the volcano. He later reported that while he was there, two elderly people, a couple, greeted him and asked if he was well. They told him to look around, but he did not see anything. But then, the old person, the master (Ch. ngen) of the volcano, moved his hands, inviting him to look around again. The man then saw the whole universe, the earth, as well as all the people on the earth. He could see how their ritual, ngillatun, was organized and performed, paying special attention to those who were taking part in the ritual with real faith. 'We are watching you all the time,' he was told. This couple then gave the old man some advice (Ch. ngulam) saying that people should never ever forget the ngillatun. 'We

¹⁴ Since the sixteenth century, *ngillatun* has been a focal point of ethnographic research. For a summary of historical accounts of *ngillatun*, see Zúñiga 1976 and Zapater 1998. For current accounts see Casamiquela 1964; Hassler 1979; Dillehay 1990 & 2007; Pereda & Perrotta 1994; and Bacigalupo 2007. For a recent analysis of *ngillatun* as a key ritual affording the construction of similarity, see Course 2011.

are going to be watching you,' he was told.

After that revelatory dream (Ch. perimontun), that old man became a very wise person (ch. kimche) because of all the important advice he had gotten in that place. There, the volcano's masters had 'visualized him.'¹⁵ They prepared him by warning him about possible dangers to be found on his way back down to the earth. He was told: 'I have a son who is a messenger (Ch. werken), he is going to be around while you are travelling back. Please, take care of him. You must not greet anyone until the fourth greeting. Just answer at the fourth greeting! If someone greets you with 'mari mari,' do not answer!¹⁶ If you do so, you will be stuck here and your soul-'am,' will not be able to go back.'

The old man said that suddenly, he started hearing some noises, and the earth suddenly trembled. At his right side, he could see many male heads passing by, whereas at his left side, they were many female heads. He knew them. He recognized some relatives and some friends. Some of them greeted him loudly 'mari mari!' and shouted his name out. Yet, only when the fourth greeting was uttered did he answer, reciprocating the greeting by saying 'mari mari.' He was really prepared!

Immediately after this, his 'am' came back. He could awaken and stand up. He was able to look around again, without really knowing what had happened. Yet, he remembered everything. He had been told to speak to all the people about the importance of ngillatun, so he did. He started telling people about his dream, while advising them not to forget about that ritual. Some people told him he was crazy, turning against him. However, after a year or so, all of those people died, because their souls had been captured and taken away. That man was a wise man, a kimche. He learnt all the norms of the ritual, and he taught them to his people. I think this is why we do the ngillatun in the way we do.

In this Chapter, I would like to analyze three essential aspects of this myth that are visibly connected to the central topic of this thesis, namely, Pehuenche vision. Firstly, I will focus on the components considered necessary for a person to be a person, and examine the essential aspects of the Pehuenche people's complex conceptualizations of personhood in a world inhabited by different versions of humanity. Secondly, I will describe how this personal composition can be thought of as a relational scheme shared by different human subjects. I will illustrate how different types of humans can see each other *only* under particular conditions, and how Pehuenche people need to engage in relations with personal compositions in order to inhabit their normal plane of visibility. Finally, I will briefly point out the ontological relevance of the perceptual experience of greetings for the Pehuenche. By referring to my previous elaboration on the personal

¹⁵ This is a literal translation of the Spanish words Pedro used: 'A ese hombre ahí lo visualizaron.' This expression may appear, to be a very odd grammatical construction for a native speaker of Spanish, since a person, in spoken Spanish, is never the object of the verb 'to visualize.'

¹⁶ The expression *mari mari* is the most common greeting among Pehuenche people.

composition, I will argue that not only can these acts be thought of as crucial operators discriminating between different human worlds, but they are also a precondition for the establishment of social relations. Thus, by prioritizing a particular aspect of the affective dimension of greetings, namely, their visual dimension, I deviate from the analytical focus of previous ethnographers in southern Chile who have not considered the importance of the visual interactions inherent in greetings for the emergence of social interactions.

In short, in this Chapter I advance two claims which are central to my argument as a whole: firstly, that a Pehuenche person is a composition of different capacities and elements, and secondly, that this personal composition can only be fully activated by mutual vision among real people. Thus, in the first part of this Chapter I introduce Pehuenche conceptualizations of personal composition, mainly by focusing on three key elements: *am*, *püllü*, and bodily matter or corporeal support. Such a step is a necessary prerequisite to exploring the ways in which such persons see each other as real persons and the ontological shifting that might occur when subjects are seen by different expressions of being. In the final part of the Chapter I examine the importance of touching and seeing as main operators for the distinction between *us* (human) and *them* (non-human). As I shall argue throughout this thesis, mutual vision among the Pehuenche is a social action necessary in order for someone to appear as a real person for another real person. I hope to demonstrate how mutual vision is a key activity for the definition and delineation of a Pehuenche visible world of visible real people.

1.1 Pehuenche personal composition

Before beginning, it must be rendered explicit that in order to substantiate the whole argument of my thesis, I am initially obligated to inhabit an epistemological paradox, at least temporarily. Given my intent to describe Pehuenche personhood as a composition of capacities linked to particular personal elements, I will need to characterize Pehuenche ideas about personhood and vision in a way that may seem to reduce them to

univocal definitions. Mindful of that danger, and aware of the partial and equivocal nature of my own understanding, I will do my best to only gesture towards a Pehuenche territory, rather than trying to control it through a series of conceptual definitions (cf. Pakman 2011).

Having said that, most of the Pehuenche conceptualize themselves as having two spirits, and their self-understanding is mostly expressed through idioms of ‘having’ rather than ‘being’ (Viveiros de Castro 2003; Candea 2010; Vargas 2010). In the vernacular, the model of relations always implies a constitutive multiplicity. Let us begin by thinking about the spirit that my friend Francisco described to me as ‘the little crazy one’ or *am*. Francisco was an evangelical pastor in his sixties who lived in Pitril. While we were talking around the fire he once told me:

People have two spirits, one that is capable of going away, the little crazy one called am, and the other one which always stays close to people and which is a spirit of life: the pillü.

This *am* was also described to me by my friend Pablo as *ina mongen*. Pablo was a young Pehuenche in his thirties from the Callaqui community, with whom I discussed many different topics while I lived in Ralco. He told me that *the ina mongen* is

[...] one's spirit, their ina that walks behind them, that comes behind. Their mongen is what is alive, too, but is invisible. That's their ina mongen.

These kinds of descriptions caught my attention throughout my fieldwork, since I found it difficult to conceptualize personal life as a non-unitary territory. This seemed to me, at least at the very beginning of my fieldwork, to be a contradictory claim. I was puzzled by the fact that the Pehuenche soul was *part* of the self, but not totally, and also by the fact that it was described to me as the invisible side of a visible person. As I will demonstrate, the concept of an invisible world is highly relevant to the daily lives of Pehuenche people on every level.

For a person initially trained as a psychologist, and more recently as an anthropologist, it was hard to imagine a person that does not coincide with a single ‘someone’: ‘one walks behind the other,’ my friend Pablo used to say. Moreover, the *ina mongen* has been

described to me as the invisible *image* of the visible person. How could I imagine an image that was not visible? It was only once I had left the field, and after several months of reflecting upon these seemingly paradoxical issues, that I finally understood that my difficulty in understanding such descriptions of personhood was at least in part the product of a certain liberal individualist tradition to which I belonged. The latter pushed me to conceptualize the *am* as a paradoxical concept since, for that tradition, the sameness of what it means to be oneself cannot be another self. This alleged contradiction, of course, was not at all problematic for my friends in Alto Bío Bío. My thinking was being shaped by particular ideas about the self, property, and the body that are associated with liberal premises founded the arguments of John Locke.¹⁷ In his *Two Treatises of Government* (1689), Locke proposed the foundations of individual freedom, basing private property on natural law. The concept of self-ownership, which implied a theory of personal identity, became a key solution for his philosophical problems:

Though the Earth, and all inferior Creatures be common to all Men, yet every Man has a *Property* in his own *Person*. This no Body has any Right to but himself (Locke 1988:287. Book II, Chapter V, § 27).

Thus, within this tradition, a person was a ‘thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places’ (Locke 1987:xxx; Bk.II, Ch.XXVII, § 9). Considering these liberal premises, it is plausible that my thinking was being governed by the mode of identity (rather than difference) inherent to that tradition, or in other words, by the mode of *being* rather than *having*. As Fausto (2008:237) has convincingly argued, ‘without reducing difference to zero, sociability cannot be founded on appropriative individuals who are free because they own themselves.’ Liberal premises are thus grounded on identity rather than difference. Yet, in Alto Bío Bío, the two main attributes for Locke’s (1988) subjects, namely, self-identity maintained over time on the one hand, and personal ownership of their acts as owners of their bodies on the other, were not adequate conceptual tools with which to understand Pehuenche conceptualizations of personhood. In fact, Pehuenche cosmologies activate very different premises. So again, coming back to my

¹⁷ For a similar point see Fausto 2008.

ethnographical material, how could I imagine a self that was an image that was not visible? How could I conceptualize this spiritual part of personal composition without having to remain trapped within a logical liberal paradox? One possible way to think about this, offered by Viveiros de Castro (2007) when considering *xapiripë* spirits, is to think of an image in an indexical way, rather than through its iconic nature.¹⁸

And to complete the picture, we can note the somewhat paradoxical nature of an *image* that is at once non-iconic and non-visible. What defines spirits, in a certain sense, is the fact that they index characteristic affects of the species of which they are the image [...] without, for this very reason, appearing like the species of which they are the image: they are indexes, not icons. By the same token, what defines an 'image' in general is its eminent visibility: an image is something-to-be-seen, it is the necessary objective correlative of a gaze, an exteriority which posits itself as the target of an intentionally aimed look; but the *xapiripë* are interior images, 'internal moulds,' inaccessible to the empirical exercise of vision (Viveiros de Castro 2007:159-160).

In my Pehuenche ethnography, which is a conscious invention of Pehuenche culture (cf. Wagner 1981), a person appears to be a dialogical composition within a complex ontology.¹⁹ As can also be seen from ethnographies of other South American indigenous groups, this ontology is characterised by an affirmation of the two rather than the negation of the one (Clastres 1974a & 1974b; Lima 1996). In fact, some of my Pehuenche friends often greeted me with a phrase that clearly reflects this principle: 'You have already arrived, you were already here!' The self-evoked in that sentence was in fact the 'little crazy' *am*, as Francisco called it. Over time, I realised that the 'I' of my ethnographic relation to the Pehuenche was not simply located where my physical body seemed to be. The sameness of my bodily presence was seen as a multiple presence - a presence unregulated by the categories of space and time to which my Lockean tradition had disciplined (*sensu* Foucault) my thought. At the risk of offering a univocal definition, it can be said that in Alto Bío Bío, visible persons (and animals) are always conceived of relationally, along with their invisible doubles, their *am*. This conception of personhood is always defined, to a certain extent, by a duality: as the law of each being

¹⁸ For Peirce's classic discussion about classes of sign, see Peirce 1998. In dealing with the possible relations between sign and representation, Peirce proposed that a sign might stand for its object by virtue of likeness to it (*icon*), by virtue of an existential connection to it (*index*), or by virtue of a habit or a law (*symbol*) (Ibid.).

¹⁹ For a similar idea regarding relational modes of having rather than being, see Holquist's (1990) book *Dialogism*, about Bakhtin's idiom of *co-being*.

as well as each event (Lima 1996).²⁰

I want to suggest that the presence of this invisible aspect of a person is needed to establish social relations with other persons who share similar physicalities. This will become apparent in Chapter two when I describe the capacities and incapacities of a person whose personal composition is not fully achieved. Yet, in daily life and under normal conditions, what a person is capable of seeing is not the indexical *am* of another person, but rather their visible corporeal support (Ch. *kalül*). I will return to this concept later on in this Chapter. The *kalül* is capable of being seen by others through the social capacities of the *am* in relation to their particular corporeal supports. I suggest that seeing, therefore, is always a relational capacity implying the presence of different dynamic capacities. Thus, the relational, visible ground between Pehuenche people requires the convergence of at least an *am* and its corporeal support within a dynamic space that I will call a *singular dynamic composition*. Moreover, as I will elaborate further below, Pehuenche humanity refers to a generic ground shared by different species. In this sense, even if the *am* is always explicitly defined as the invisible part of a human, animals are also often described as having an *am*. One of the outstanding capacities of this particular ‘soul,’ if you will, is that it is capable of dislocating from its corporeal support. That is, the *ina mongen* can be seen in one place when the person's physical body is in another, sharply challenging Lockes’s liberal premises about what a person should be. These appearances are known in Chedungun as *amche* (Ch. *am*, ‘soul,’ Ch. *che*, ‘person’). In other words, it is possible to be in two places at the same time. For example, Pablo once told me that he had been seen in the community of Callaqui while he was working in another place.

As far as animals’ souls are concerned, there are many stories of people seeing animals appear somewhere in the mountains, but suddenly disappearing without leaving any visible sign behind. The community of Cauñiku was the setting for one of these animal apparitions (Sp. *apariencia animal*). Specifically, a horse (Ch. *kawell*) was briefly seen

²⁰ See Viveiros de Castro (2001:33): ‘One's own soul is never really one's own, being the other side of the person, it is also the side of the Other.’

near the water (Ch. *ko*) of a lake before quickly disappearing. These apparitions are often seen in the areas of high altitude where people take their animals during the summer (Sp. *veranadas*). Marcelo told me that when he was a child, he and some other children once saw a little calf near the river while they were looking for their cow, which was eating grass somewhere in the area. After having found their cow, they came back to the place where the little calf had been. Surprisingly, they could not find it, and there were no visible traces of the animal at all. On another occasion, and again in that same place, they heard the loud roaring of a bull. When they looked for the bull, ready to catch it with a rope, there was no sign of it anywhere. These animals that appear and disappear are called enchanted animals (Sp. *animales encantados*), or they are referred to as the animal's *am* (Ch. *am kullin*). In other words, every time someone who is awake sees the invisible form of another person or animal, they refer to this as *am*: an invisible double that manifests itself as a fleeting visible appearance, able to be seen but not touched. I will come back to the relation between seeing and touching at the end of this Chapter.

What I am interested in emphasizing here is that while a person is awake, their *am* typically (though not always) coincides spatially with their corporeal support. In other words, although in normal situations the *ina mongen* is always a little 'behind' (Ch. *ina*), its invisibility allows the person to be seen by other persons as a non-multiple sameness. Yet, any illusion of a personal unity that exists during waking hours is dispelled during the night. While a person is sleeping, the set of personal relations contained within their dynamic singularity tends -in Candea's (2010a) vocabulary- toward detachment.²¹ This should not be understood as the opposite of connection, but rather as a particular mode of non-relating. A person's *ina mongen* goes away, at which time the composition of the

²¹ The apparent fissure between the *am* and the body renders inadequate any attempt to call Pehuenche personal multiplicity an 'internal multiplicity,' as has been suggested recently for the Marubo (Cesarino 2010). Nor does Radcliffe-Brown's (1922 & 1966) classic description of Andaman islanders and their 'body doubles' fit here, since he insists on using the spatial metaphors of 'internal' and 'external' in his descriptions of their dreaming. For example, in his scheme, *Mateeah* corresponds to the external body, which is visible and concrete and responds to time and to surrounding situations. *Enteeah*, on the other hand, corresponds to the inner body, which is invisible and abstract. Neither the dichotomy between internal and external, nor any concept of 'dream doubles' are sufficient to describe the Pehuenche's conception of the person. To be more precise, the *am* cannot be described as detachable, since it never corresponds exactly to the location of the sensible body in the first place. Rather, the *am* is always already detached.

dynamic personal singularity takes a particular shape, or rather it loses its composition in a particular way. When a Pehuenche person goes to sleep, one of the essential capacities that constitutes them when they are awake detaches itself from their corporeal support and goes out, in the words of an herbalist friend of mine, ‘to travel around its life.’²² In other words, it goes out to explore or circumnavigate the life of the sleeping person, which is, of course, its own life too. While the Pehuenche sleep, they can be in different places at the same time, because of the capacity of the *ina mongen* ‘to travel around.’ Conversely, the waking up of a person is possible because another person engages in a relation with the one who was dislocated while sleeping. An *am* in relation to its corporeal support needs another *am* in relation to its corporeal support in order for a person to be enacted as real person.

Following Course’s (2011) illumination of Mapuche sociality, these personal conjunctions can be seen as the sum of human physicality inherent to the corporeal support, or *kaliül*, plus the capacity for productive sociality inherent to the *am*. In some way, these ideas can be seen as an analytical cosmological extension of Course’s (2011) work on personhood and sociality. Whereas he has suggested that the attribution of personhood by the Mapuche is based upon the correct conjunction of human physicality and the capacity for productive sociality, I will develop a similar argument from another angle, that is, by considering the different components of the person that are only fully enacted through mutual vision among real people (or personal compositions). I argue that it is through mutual vision among people that all these relations are objectified (Strathern 1988) as persons.

It might provisionally be said that the multiple person composed of a singular *ina mongen*—their supernatural or virtual dimension—and a visible corporeal support—their sensible natural dimension—never ‘walks’ about the earth alone. Many Pehuenche

²² I prefer the phrase ‘corporeal support’ to ‘body,’ given that the latter has clear and distinct uses in different traditions such as the perspectivist tradition in anthropology or the biomedical tradition in the sciences. By ‘corporeal support’ I mean that material structure which is related to the other essences described here as belonging to Pehuenche cosmology.

told me that the *ina mongen* is always accompanied by a spirit called *püllü*.²³ Although the word *püllü* is strongly polysemic, it often refers to the spirit of the earth, the *mapu*, which does not belong to the person. The *püllü* that accompanies a person literally ‘rises up’ from the earth to protect and accompany them.

This is how, in reality, a person's ‘identity’ is never identical with itself: the multiple person contradicts the presumption of identity and appears as a point of convergence for the alterities suspended in the virtual (Cesarino 2010).²⁴ In other words, in Alto Bío Bío, personhood seems to be a personal composition multiply constructed. The philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy (2008), in his attempt to define a *corpus* as an ‘open space’ or ‘a space of existence,’ helps express the concept of personhood I am interested in here:

Bodies aren't some kind of fullness or filled space, they are *open* space, implying, in some sense, a space more *spacious* than spatial, what could also be called a *place*. Bodies are places of existence, and nothing exists without a place (Nancy 2008:15).

The place of existence co-inhabited by a person's visible corporeal support and their invisible image, or double (Ch. *am*) seems to always be dislocated (Ch. *ina* ‘behind’) in the person's life (Ch. *mongen*): singularity appears as dislocation and multiplicity. Having said this, the main purpose of this thesis will be an attempt to conceptualize vision and seeing without having to refer to liberal conceptual premises of identity, but rather by trying to conceptualize Pehuenche vision in the terms of Pehuenche people themselves. The description of the personal composition is therefore essential to the overall purpose of this thesis.

1.1.1 Personal dislocation and grammar

The dislocation of a personal composition is expressed in different ways in Alto Bío Bío, and it can be revealing to examine the cognitive idioms people use to refer to the moral

²³ For a detailed analysis of *püllü* and shamanism, see Montencinos 1997 and Chapter Three of the current work.

²⁴ Many ethnographers working in South America have described this multiple personhood in different ways - see Kelly 2001; Viveiros de Castro 2002; Oakdale 2005 and Course 2007.

relational particularities of personal compositions. The Pehuenche cognitive experience of thinking is called *rakiduam*, and is generally translated by laypeople and scholars as ‘thought.’ This word is always related to the moral particularity of a specific personal singularity. For instance, *küme rakiduam* corresponds to the positive person's moral intentionality, to the moral intentionality of the personal composition with regard to other people or other personal compositions.

At this point, it is necessary to say more about the relationship between *am* as the invisible person, and its *rakiduam*, or ‘thought,’ within the personal composition. If we consider that in the personal composition, during the day the *ina mongen* always walks a little bit behind, it should not be surprising that singular utterances with the verb ‘to think’ that refer to the speaker's centre (‘I think’) are not used, but that a passive form (‘I was told by my thought’) is the usual way of referring to one’s thoughts. It is not necessary to speak Chedungun to realize the importance of this grammatical form, since even when speaking Spanish, Pehuenche people refer to thoughts as slightly separated from the person, and they never articulate sentences such as ‘I think.’²⁵ Their *rakiduam* appears separated from themselves, and the multiplicity is illustrated in utterances such as: ‘I do not know what my thought is,’ and ‘What does your thought think about this?’ This is not surprising if we conceive of a person as a composition without a centre, or, put differently, as a dialogic composition framed by an ontology of multiplicity.

It is worthwhile to note that in my entire time doing fieldwork I never heard anyone asking questions such as ‘What are you thinking about?’ which are typical among Westerners who assume that the other coincides with the subject of thought. In this way, Pehuenche cosmology seems to be indifferent to the identity, or to the understanding of the point of view as a whole. In some way, personal composition in the Pehuenche world, or the Pehuenche person's subjectivity, is, following Nancy (2008), always

²⁵ A few examples of the use of the word *rakiduam* in Mapudungum from Course (2009): *Kalifilepen nga pipingetuy ñi rakiduam nga pu peñiengun*: ‘Let me be this way,’ said my thought, my brothers. *Amuan nga, amuan nga, inantukuafin nga pilen nga ñi rakiduam* ‘I will go, yes, I’ll follow her,’ said my thought. *Femlayan nga pikunomekutun ñi rakiduam kuyfi nga kuyfi* ‘I cannot accept I,’ said my thought long, long ago. See also Cesarino (2010) for an analysis of the constituent enunciative multiplicity of the verbal *marubo* art.

configured as a withdrawal, as a dislocation in the place of existence, a *Pehuenche corpus*, if you will:

The ego-point of a body enunciating or extending (itself) also forms, identically and without contradiction, even when contrary, a point of extreme concentration where the self extending or enunciating (itself) also obscures the extension, or the body, that it is. Ego enunciated is instantly detached from ego enunciating, precisely because it's the same, and hence, ego: it's an identity withdrawn, identified as withdrawn, identical to its withdrawal. It withdraws at the point of its own contrariety: wherever *corpus* declares (itself) as 'ego' ego enters into contrariety, being countered by a self that confronts its self, with corpus becoming the matter-obstacle of this contrariety (and the very site of its declaration). (...) *corpus is never properly me* (Nancy 2008:29).

Put differently, the person who is awake, or *che*, is a convergent personal space consisting of *ina mongen* or *am, püllüi*, and an organic body (corporeal support). Even this phrase 'organic body' is inadequate however, given that there are no words in Chedungun that refer to the body as an organic entity separated from the *ina mongen*. Only once was I told that the word to describe the body as a whole was *kaliül*, but that word is no longer in common usage in Alto Bío Bío. I remember a situation in which two people were talking in Chedungun about a certain woman's health problems. Even if most of the conversation was held in Chedungun (this occurred in Cauñikú where Chedungun is still spoken in daily life), I noticed that the Spanish word 'body' (Sp. *cuerpo*) was used every time they referred to the physical deterioration the woman was being affected by. In this sense, and again following Nancy (2008), it is useful to think of the Pehuenche body not only as a place of existence but also as a *site* or *moment of organism*:

Something with a head and a tail rises up from a *site*, not a place: head and tail are placed alongside a *sense* (direction, meaning), the ensemble itself placing a setting for sense, and all the sets are included in the great head-to-tail of the Universal Animal. But something without-head-or-tail isn't a part of this organization, of this compact thickness. *Bodies don't take place in discourse or in matter*. They don't inhabit 'mind' or 'body'. They take place at the limit, *qua limit*: limit-external border, the fracture and intersection of anything foreign in a continuum of sense, a continuum of matter. An opening, discreteness. Bodies, in the end, are also that -head and tail-: *the very discreteness of the sites of sense, of the moments of an organism, of the elements of matter* (Nancy 2008:17).

In sum, a person's singularity is multiple: *ina mongen* or *am* corresponds to the particular image of a person: the person, *che*, is *and* has an image, precisely because it is

double and multiple. Human experience is double by definition: a person is a visible site and at the same time an invisible *am*. In other parts of the continent, these categories have been denominated, for lack of better terms, as ‘nature’ and ‘supernature’ (Lima 1996).²⁶ Following a Melanesian conceptual trend, in South America a living person has been described as ‘dividual’: a body and soul, internally constituted by a self/other, or consanguine/affine polarity (Taylor 2000; Viveiros de Castro 2001).

These descriptions of the relations between *am*, *püllü* and corporeal support should only be regarded as a rough outline of possible interactions however. There are many aspects of Pehuenche conceptions of personhood and seeing that remain opaque. Throughout all of my ethnographic experience I was unable to discern if the images in dreams, for instance, corresponded to the travels of the *ina mongen* or to the relationship between the *püllü* and the deity *Ngenechen*.²⁷ Or perhaps they correspond to both, or to something entirely different.

In spite of these conceptual difficulties, what stands out at this juncture is the temporal dislocation of the *ina mongen* with respect to the corporeal support, which generally occurs during sleep. In short, one possible way of conceiving of the dynamic personal singularity at night is as the detachment of the capacities of the *ina mongen*. It is during sleep that the dichotomy between physical and metaphysical domains becomes clearer and gains more significance in the Pehuenche world. In Mapuche ontologies, the *ina mongen* cannot exit social relations altogether.²⁸ The *ina mongen*, therefore, must seek out social relations elsewhere. But if the *ina mongen* never sleeps and temporarily flees from the ‘centre’ of personal singularity, what is the state of the sleeping corporeal

²⁶ ‘The double is invisible not exactly because it is immaterial, or even because its substance is different from that of the body. Soul and body are concepts which primarily designate not substances but perspectival effects. These concepts operate by means of the notion of point of view which articulates the two dimensions of human experience, just as it articulates the sensible dimension of the body with the spiritual dimension of the soul. We could designate these last two dimensions “Nature” and “Supernature” while remembering that such concepts are necessarily dependent on someone’s point of view; that is, they work as relational categories’ (Lima 1996:122).

²⁷ *Ngenechen* is the Mapuche supreme being. For an extensive ontological and historical analysis of *Ngenechen* in Mapuche ontologies, see Bacigalupo 1997, Alonqueo 1979, and Foerster 1993.

²⁸ On this pervasive centrifugal Mapuche sociality, see Course 2011.

support detached from its *am*?²⁹ This question lends itself to the possibility of thinking of the *am* not only as an image but also as a capacity: what is a corporeal support incapable of when it is separated from its *am*? I will deal with these questions in Chapter Two. For the moment, it is plausible to think of the *am* as a capacity enabling the very possibility of human interaction in general, and human vision in particular.

To sum up, the corporeal support and the *am* are divided aspects of one singularity. The *am* is the *am* of and for a corporeal support, and the visible corporeal support is of and for its invisible *am*. This singularity, together with the *püllü*, is what I call the personal composition. Moreover, the person's image (Ch. *amche*) has the possibility of 'leaving' this personal composition in certain situations, the most common of which is during sleep.

1.2 Human capacities: on *am* and *ngen*

The personal composition, or the interaction of a visible corporeal support with an invisible double spirit (Ch. *am*) plus a spiritual land caring force (Ch. *püllü*), can be thought of as part of a wider relational scheme. My contention here is that the personal composition should not be considered as an exclusive relational aspect among and between people or animals. The personal composition is part of a wider relational scheme involving other entities that can be equally conceived of as 'human,' and is shared by different species.

Framed by this dual ontological law, words such as *ngen* (usually translated as 'owner' or 'master') and *am* are often used by the Pehuenche to refer to the capacity of certain beings to understand themselves as human. Generally speaking, trees, rivers, mountains, stars, the moon and the sun, and so on, have/are their invisible double, known as *ngen*,

²⁹ It must be reiterated here that personal composition does not 'have' a 'centre' but rather is a space of convergence that constructs the multiple person.

and generally translated as ‘owner.’³⁰ Some examples of this are the *ngen* of the sun (Ch. *ngenantu*), of the moon (Ch. *ngenkullen*), of the stars (Ch. *ngenwalen*), of the araucaria tree (Ch. *ngendegi*), etc. Each time someone enters an uninhabited place, or whenever someone needs to pick medicinal plants from the mountains, it is necessary to approach the place’s or the plant’s *ngen* and ask its permission. Ignoring the authority of the *ngen* can cause trouble later on. The *ngens* are capable of avenging themselves, since they possess ‘an intentionality analogous to the human’ (Viveiros de Castro 2002:354). My friend, Bernardita, told me that she discovered that ‘the mountain was really alive’ when years ago, the *ngen* of the mountain (Ch. *ngenmawida*) punished her and her sister Silvia because they were walking through forbidden places. *Ngenmawida* caused them to be disoriented so that they no longer knew where they were. Furthermore, Grebe (1988) has provided ethnographical evidence that within the dimension of the deities (Ch. *wenumapu*), masters have lands, birds, and animals, they live in houses, and also organize rituals. In sum, they see themselves as humans. *Ngens* are also often described as having anthropomorphic features.

In a general sense, my aim here is to examine the relational similarities between *am* and *ngen*, even if I have to admit that I never clearly understood the precise differences between them. A preliminary way to think about these is to conceive of the differences as being merely perspectival: the Pehuenche see themselves as being and having an *am*, even as they acknowledge the existence of other human subjectivities and *ngen*. In the same way, the *ngen* might see themselves as being and having an *am*, even as they acknowledge the existence of other human subjectivities that could possibly be called *ngen*. Having said this, it might be worth noting that people often speak about their own *am*, as well as those of animals, in an explicit way, while I have never heard people referring to the *am* of a *ngen*, so to speak. In other words, they do not use the word *am* when speaking about *ngen* as autonomous subjects living within open spaces. When people speak about their own doubles they do so by using the word *am*, whereas the

³⁰ The concept of ‘owner’ or ‘master’ is quite common in South America. For a more detailed analysis of this topic, see Viveiros de Castro 2002; Fausto 2008; and Cesarino 2010. For a study of the *ngen*, see Grebe 1993-1994 and Course 2012.

word *ngen* is often used to refer those human entities that do not belong to the domain of people, or *che*. Thus, there might be a common aspect between animals and people that I have never fully understood, but which is probably related to the fact that both share a similar way of being visible. While *ngen*, under normal conditions, should not be seen, and live their lives within determined places, keeping some distance from the Pehuenche, animals and people coexist within the same plane of visibility, sharing their own perspective.

However, the word *ngen* can be used in different ways in Alto Bío Bío, and not only as an ontological noun or referring to a separate entity in relation to a particular visible corporeal support. While I was taking Chedungun lessons with Matías during my first months of fieldwork in Santa Bárbara, he simply translated the word *ngen* as the verb ‘to be’ (Sp. *ser*). The word *ngen* therefore usually refers to the ‘being of someone,’ namely, a subjectivity. This subjectivity, according to different ethnographic moments, can refer either to the subjectivity of a person, or to the subjectivity of another being in relation to a visible aspect of (his/her own) reality.

1.2.1 On *am*, *ngen* and residence

At this point, it is illuminating to refer to Descola’s (1986) description of nature as *domestic*, since it is always the *domus* of or for someone. Describing relationships between subjectivities and their bodily matter in terms of ‘residence’ clarifies the relation between the *ngen* and their corresponding corporeal supports. For example, water (Ch. *ko*) is composed of its sensible dimension and the owner-double that inhabits it (Ch. *ngenko*). Once, I was walking around in Callaqui with my friend Pablo when he started to recount to me some of his childhood memories. In a very sad tone, he spoke about what the places we were passing looked like when he was ten or twelve years old. He told me that at that time, about thirty years before, there were streams all over the place. These places were necessary for the cattle, as they could drink water from the streams, but also, medicinal herbs used to grow near these ‘water places’ (Ch. *menoko*)

and herbalists could collect these herbs with relative ease, without having to travel far. Nowadays, a lack of water is one of the major problems in this community, and during the last five years a special municipal truck has periodically distributed water among the inhabitants during the summer. While he was telling me this story, Pablo showed me the massive amounts of eucalyptus trees that had been introduced into Callaqui since land division was encouraged and put into practice by the Pinochet administration. This division did not affect the whole community, however, as Pablo clearly showed me:

Half of the people, half of the whole community are private owners of their lands, so they can do whatever they want with their land. In fact, their lands are dominated by the eucalyptus they have for sale, and there are no more streams around. But the other half of the people still have their shared rights over the land. If you compare both, the answer is obvious: those with private rights have lost their streams because the ngenko has left, and they do not have water, whereas in this part of the place there are still some streams, and also a few herbs.

In this quote, the continuity, caring relationship, and strong interdependence between *ngen* and its corporeal support is apparent. Moreover, the strong conceptual contrast (even opposition) between the private ownership of land on the one hand, and the relational, caring ownership between a *ngen* and its corporeal support on the other, is more than obvious. In the same way an owner (Ch. *ngen*) inhabits a house (Ch. *ruka*), which is called *ngenruka*, I suggest that doubles inhabit and take care of their corresponding corporeal supports, a relationship framed by the same caring relational scheme as *am-kaliül*. Besides the fact that the *am* also take care of their visible residence by enacting their human capacities, *am* can also exist *beyond* their temporary visible place of residence (Ch. *kaliül*). The *am* and the *ngen* appear to be characterised by the usual capacities of knowing bodies, as described in the perspectival tradition (Viveiros de Castro 1998). That is to say they are characterised by commensality, by having a unique aesthetic appearance, by blood, by being human for themselves, and so on. As such, the *am* and its corporeal support, and the *ngen* and its corporeal support, are dual aspects of the same *singularity*. This conjunction between visible and invisible domains does not imply any kind of paradox for Pehuenche people in daily life. For instance, a Pehuenche woman named Flora, when trying to answer my question about how an invisible spiritual entity can in fact engage in material relations, once told me the

following: 'Of course the *am* eats! If there is only one person eating, there can't be anyone else!' I pressed her to answer whether it was the *am* or the physical matter that was doing the eating, however this binary distinction was inexistent for her.

Let us now return to the central argument of this section: I suggest that both *ngen* and *am* can be thought of as human subjectivities characterized by a strong, yet not necessarily bilateral, relation of interdependence with their visible corporeal supports. This relation is not necessarily one of mutual constitution between corporeal supports and their doubles however. To say it simply: a double/owner can live without its corporeal support, whereas a corporeal support cannot do so without its double/owner. *Am* and *ngen* are not determined by the temporality and duration of their visible places of residence. However, both *am* and *ngen* can be thought of as constitutive parts of the space of existence of the personal dynamic singularity. Both *am* and *ngen* are capable of enacting the reflexive human capacities of different species, so they can be thought of as both separate entities and as the intrinsic reflexive capabilities of humans. In other words, *am* and *ngen* are in fact doubles, in the sense that they inhabit corporeal supports and are in a relation of continuity with them, but at the same time, they are capacities, since a corporeal support cannot *see* itself as a human and engage in human relations without the action/presence of an *am* or *ngen*. This fact is clearly evident in the mythological story reported at the beginning of this Chapter. In the supernatural encounter taking place between an *am* and a *ngen*, it is striking that in order to coexist in the same plane of interaction, the bodily matter of the person is automatically excluded (the person fainted).

The reasons behind attempting to conceptualize these entities as the symmetrical configuration of double/human capacities are threefold. Firstly, both *am* and *ngen* can live beyond their corporeal support and establish a relation with it that does not necessarily coincide with it in terms of time and space. Personal singularity is always a fluid and dynamic space of capacities that can, under normal conditions, converge or remain distinct within the place of existence of the personal singularity itself. What seems to be undeniable is that both *am* and *ngen* are eternal subjectivities whose

existences go beyond the relational field of people existing with(in) corporeal supports. Within the Pehuenche world, these entities are seen as autonomous subjectivities, and even if they make possible the existence of people, their lives do not depend on the materiality of their corporeal supports. My host Pedro used to make jokes about evangelical promises related to the salvation of the body as matter. He used to laugh and say that they were nonsensical statements, since there was no question that the *am* lives forever whereas the corporeal support will turn into soil. It is also very common to hear people complaining about *ngen* that have escaped or that have been threatened by the strong intervention of external forces (the State, Chilean schools, hydroelectric dams, the introduction of new foods, etc.), which results in the definitive withdrawal of the *ngen* (Ch. *ma lükan ngen*). *Am* and *ngen* therefore share the fact of living with some corporeal support within a particular place of existence, but without necessarily having a relation of bilateral, mutual constitution. In short: *am* and *ngen* keep on living for themselves ‘somewhere,’ even if they have left their visible places of Pehuenche residence.

Secondly, *am* and *ngen* are characterized by the establishment of a caring and non-destructive relation with their corporeal supports. In the case of humans, the *am* affords not only the capacity to see other Pehuenche singularities, but also makes possible actions such as moving around, eating, and so on. It implies, in some way or another, the possibility of acting, or of enacting the person, or *che*, within the place of existence. For instance, the definitive departure of the *am* toward another dimension, different to the plane of *mapu* where people live, implies the death of the person. It is not because people die that their *am* goes away, but rather the reverse. Generally speaking, while alive, *am* take care of their corporeal supports by inhabiting them, or to be more precise, by remaining very close to them. *Ngen* also share similar capacities.

Thirdly, *am* and *ngen* are both in a continuous relation with *püllü*, as well as having corporeal supports. *Püllü* cannot be thought of as having a singular human form (as *am* and *ngen* do), but are often described as spirits that are presences without any form and who belong to the earth, or are simply soil. In fact, among the Mapuche, *püllü* is also a word used to refer to soil (Course, personal communication). If there is any sense of

belonging involving *am* or *ngen*, it is not to the earth itself but to particular corporeal supports.

In daily life, these three features always overlap and are present in a complex way, as evidenced by the way people reflect about their own lives. For this reason, I will provide some ethnographic data without having to explicitly refer to the epistemological categorization of my argument. In a general sense, and leaving aside the many complexities of the different uses of the word *ngen*, it is evident and undeniable that the word *ngen* always refers to the existence of one thing in relation to another: *ngen* is the evocation of a relation. The common translation of *ngen* as ‘owner’ (Sp. *dueño*) makes apparent its relational nature. However, this translation is partially equivocated, since *ngen* does not imply a relation of possession as the English term ‘ownership’ does (Course 2012; Cesarino 2010; Fausto 2008).³¹ Also, the implicit emphasis the word ‘owner’ places on property rather than on relations obscures what I think is the central aspect of *ngen* relations, namely, their caring nature. Moreover, in order to be capable of taking care of their corporeal supports, the *ngen* necessarily need to be able to *see* what is happening in the surroundings of a particular environment, element, or corporeal support. The relation between *ngen* and seeing was pointed out to me by Rebecca, one of my Pehuenche friends. She told me that the word *ngen* could also be translated as ‘gift’ (Sp. *don*), in the sense of a natural or acquired power. I was very impressed with this revelation, since she told me this at a time when I was trying to discover more about the particular visual capacities that some of the traditional healers in Alto Bío Bío have (see Chapter Three). She stated that being able to see and make a diagnosis was a practice that could not be taught, since it implied having a particular *ngen* inherited from birth.

You have to be born with a ngen; the ngen of the tree, or that of the water. There is nothing that you can learn about seeing, it is a gifted capacity.

Sometime later, I had an opportunity to speak to Rebecca about this subject again, and I reminded her what she had told me. Surprisingly, she corrected herself, and told me that

³¹ I am using the word ‘equivocation’ in line with Viveiros de Castro’s (2004b) proposal, to be discussed in the next Chapter.

what she intended to say was not that there was a *ngen* involved in the capacity of seeing that some healers had, but rather that they possess the capacity of relating with a *wenu püllü* (see Chapter Three). She added that every time a healer needed to see what was happening with a sick person, it was necessary to pray and ask for the *wenu püllü*'s presence, which would afford the possibility of rendering visible that which was not. After this conversation, I started to think of the possibility that every *ngen* was in a relation with a *püllü* (among other relations), and that these words, even if used in a polysemic way, were not fully interchangeable but in fact referred to different aspects of personal singularities. Later on, this way of understanding the relation and separateness of *ngen* and *püllü* was further supported by some of Pablo's statements. While trying to tell me more about how healers can actually perform a particular way of seeing, he explained to me that this was possible since a *ngen* offered their *püllü* to a particular person who then became 'gifted.' Moreover, when Pedro was asking me for detailed information about the shaman I knew through the public health services, he said 'Have you ever seen that shaman when she is *in the püllü*?' (Sp. *Has visto a la machi cuando está en el püllü?*).

I hope to have made it clear that the concept of personal composition in relation to humanity refers to the spread capacity of different entities. I have emphasized the fact that the relations between the different elements of the personal composition are possible within what, following Nancy (2008), I have called 'a place of Pehuenche existence,' characterized by an ongoing dislocation between its parts. This dislocation is an expression of a wider conceptualization of the world, in which different inhabitants exist in relation to different corporeal supports. In the case of Pehuenche people, the dislocation between soul as capacity and bodily matter as residence, can be highly problematic in daily life. This is why I now turn to the description of evil spirits called *witranalwe*, which, as I will argue, can be thought of as souls eternally exiled from their residence: eternal and problematic dislocations of depersonalized decompositions.

1.2.2 From *am* to *witranalwe*: an impersonal dislocation

Now that, through a description of what an *am* is actually capable of doing, I have described what an *am* is, I can concentrate on describing the existence of wicked spirits known as *witranalwe* (the verb *witrán* can mean ‘to visit’ whereas *alwe* is generally translated as ‘soul’). According to Bacigalupo (2007) *witranalwe* is the personification of Spanish men on a horse who exploit Mapuche people and rape their women. Moreover, according to Citarella (2000) and Course (2011) *witranalwe* is created by witches from femurs recovered from abandoned cemeteries. The bones are attached together and brought to life in a secret ceremony. The *witranalwe* is then sold to a customer. ‘*Witranalwe* serve their owners as guardians of the sheep and cattle which make up the owner’s wealth. During the day they will live in a small jar inside the house, and only at night do they emerge and take on their full size’ (Course 2011:34).

My aim here is to be able to further explain the relationships that exist between the *am* and the corporeal support (Ch. *kaliül*), or rather, between the physical image that coincides with, or is, the person's metaphysical or indexical image. What I will try to render explicit here is that, for the Pehuenche, what is invisible should not be thought of in opposition to what is material. In my ethnography, the uniqueness of *witranalwe*, and what renders them different from other evil spirits, is that they correspond to the *am* or *ina mongen* of a person who has died (see also Citarella 2000), but who did not fully reach the place of heights (Ch. *wenu mapu*), but rather, stayed strolling ‘somewhere around.’ *Wenu mapu* corresponds to the place the living *am* inhabits after a person's death. It is, so to speak, the residence of the invisible life of deceased people on the infinite farm of social virtuality (Viveiros of Castro 2002). There, *am* continue living as humans for themselves. In more specific terms, it is said that *witranalwe* correspond to the *ex-am* of a person who was not a good person during his or her life: a person that was a *weya am* (roughly translatable as ‘bad person,’ or ‘bad human intentionality’). *Weya am* are a favourite resource of witches; a *witranalwe* is an *am* that has been *fixed* by witches. In the words of Pedro:

*And they, witches, take out spirits from the deceased, the am, the spirit, evil spirits that are fixed by those witches. There is good am, and evil am. The am is the spirit,... weya am, those are bad, those are around with witches, with the Devil. The witches (Ch. kalku) say that they are interested in having evil spirits (Ch. kalku) so they can harm other people.*³²

In a very general sense, as has been described by Course (2011), *witranalwe* can be seen as a *human non-person*.³³ However, I suggest that it is more precise to say that a *witranalwe* is a former person without corporeal support. That is, it is a form without form, so to speak³³: a former *am*, in a certain sense depersonalized, given its existence as an eternal outsider of the personal composition or the place of existence of the *che*.

There is a general consensus in Alto Bío Bío regarding the correlation between the morality of the *am* during the life of the *che*, and its later destination as pure virtuality. If a person leads a ‘clean’ life, characterized by good thoughts (Ch. *küme rakiduam*), the *am* can actually continue on its journey towards the *wenu mapu*. However, the moral particularity of *rakiduam* is always related to the moral particularity of the *am* or *ina mongen*. *Küme rakiduam* or ‘good thought’ corresponds to the person's moral intentionality in regards to other people or personal compositions.

Although my objective here is not to analyze death, but rather Pehuenche vision as it relates to Pehuenche morality, it is important to mention some aspects of the Pehuenche person's death in order to understand a little bit more about their personal (de)composition.³⁴ In general, and as other anthropologists have already demonstrated (Mosko 1983; Bloch 1988; Strathern 1988 & 1992), the moment of death is crucial in understanding a person's composition. It is interesting here to consider funeral practices that take part in cemeteries. Even if burial has recently been considered to be a ‘simple

³² It is worth noting that the word *kalku*, ‘witch’ is indistinctly used to refer to either the subject or the object of witchcraft.

³³ A similar conceptualization has been made by Pedersen (2011) by using the concept of ‘impossible form,’ regarding occult phenomena in Mongolia.

³⁴ For a detailed analysis of Mapuche death, considered as a process of synthesis carried out through the dead person's biography in ritual practices, see Course 2007. Course carries out a thorough analysis of the *amulpüllün*, the moment during the ritual that is crucial for allowing the *püllü* to go away. This analysis can be complemented by the study by Isla (unpublished) on *püllü* and kinship. My interest here, however, is to analyze the transformations of the *am* at the moment of Pehuenche death, with the aim of understanding the genealogy of the *witranalwe*.

affair' inside ritual practices (Course 2009), I consider funeral practices to be crucial in understanding the Pehuenche person's decomposition at the moment of death. I seek to contribute to the analysis of Pehuenche death in its dimension as a cosmo-political process of division, particularly by referring to what becomes of the *am*.

In all the burials that I witnessed, it was of great importance for each person, near the end of the ceremony, to throw one or two handfuls of soil over the coffin that was positioned in a hole in the ground. In Alto Bío Bío, this act is known as 'the last service' (Sp. *el último servicio*), and is intended to fully cover the corpse with soil, so people can make sure that the person is not going to become visible again. A typical mealtime joke among my herbalist friend's family was to say that 'We should take advantage of being able to eat, because later on we will just be eating soil,' referring with jocularly to the moment of the 'last service.' This ritual is clearly a way in which people protect themselves from the possibility of *seeing* the deceased (Sp. *finao*) in the form of an *amche* without corporeal support.³⁵ Additionally, the 'last service' is important because people fear that witches with bad intentions (Ch. *weya rakiduum*) can use and abuse the *am* outside of the personal composition. However, it is also possible that people fear the possible transformation of the *am* into *witranalwe* without any intervention of witches, but just as a result of the deceased's immoral behavior while alive. The fear and concern among the living with regard to the quality of the deceased's decomposition are of vital importance.

When an old *ngendumu* of the *Pitril* community died, I noticed that my friend Pedro was particularly troubled.³⁶ His concern began at the *finao*'s house, during the wake (Ch. *umatun*), when he noticed that the casket of the deceased was smaller than the corpse. 'He was one of the big ones,' he told me, 'and if no one changes the casket the deceased won't leave peacefully.' Despite his strong concern, nobody did anything to remedy the situation. Pedro's concern increased when, once in the cemetery, he noticed that the hole they had dug for the coffin was not sufficiently wide or deep. 'That hole is too small, the

³⁵ The word *amche* also means a person's shadow.

³⁶ *Ngendumu* is the name given to one of the most important organizers of the fertility ritual *nguillatún*.

deceased will not leave satisfied.’ That night, while reminiscing about the departed's life, Pedro's concern had not disappeared. Another friend, days after, explained that the concern was due to the fear of actually seeing the deceased, or *finao*, as an *am* again, outside of the personal composition:

If the deceased (Sp. finao) did not leave calmly, he is not going to rest in peace so he will reappear in his house. Somebody might see him, as an am flying around his house.

More precisely, this would be the *am* outside of the personal composition, or a former-person in a place of non-existence. This is why the separation process at cemeteries is crucial for the *am* itself. When someone dies, even as the corporeal support decomposes progressively, the *am* continues existing (for itself) as a reflexive human being - one that progressively loses its visible organic body. In this regards, Bonning (1995:112) has pointed out that the decomposition of a corpse is surely sign of the estrangement of the *am*, concluding that ‘the form of the body, the fenotype of the human body depends on the presence of the *am*.’ The author comes to the conclusion that the *am* is ‘a ‘formative principle’ that allows each thing (and not only human beings) to end up being exactly what it is’ (Bonning 1995:114). Morevoer, Citarella (2000) has defined the *alwe* as the soul (*am*) of a dead person whose duration of existence coincides with the rotting of the corpse. The *am*, however, must be aided in leaving the corpse by people who are still alive.

In this procedure, the problem is that the *am* of the dead person is going through personal decomposition, far away from its visible corporeal support, hence outside of the field of visible human relationships. To say it differently, I suggest that the *am* lacks visible corporeal support - a residence, from where it can leave in peace autonomously. This fact also makes it incapable of communicating its departure to its fellows. Following Nancy (2008), this can be expressed as the lack of a site in the place of existence. The person is not a person anymore precisely because of the lack of a visible material residence. The decomposition of the corpse does not allow the *am* to recompose with its visible material support, and as a result it is impossible for it to establish social relationships with people that would help it leave in peace. In this sense, it is particularly

interesting to note that *am* is often translated as the ‘appearance’ of a person, a double without support, an existence without a visible human support as its residence. During the night after a wake, a friend dreamt he was attending his own funeral, and he was actually able to see the proceedings from above. The great problem in this dream was that he was unable to tell the people in the funeral that he was well: ‘I dreamt my *am*’ he told me. The impossibility of communicating affects the *am* in death, leaving it as an outsider to its own personal composition. Consequently, the person is left in a position of antisocial vulnerability that might lead it to be captured by witches’ powers. Thus, the *am* outside of the personal composition appears to be extremely dependent on the assistance of the community, or more specifically, on the last service. The last service is a service of reciprocity: the *am* is helped in order for it to leave successfully, but at the same time, the community is protected against its possible reappearance. Cemeteries, however, imposed by Chilean law, create an additional risk for the Pehuenche communities since they imply the concentration of the complex processes of decomposition in a reduced space of earth. What was surely a great opportunity for the Chilean State resulted unknowingly in an equally great opportunity for witches.

The main problem the former-person entails for the Pehuenche, especially when considered from the perspective of victims of nocturnal attacks (see ChapterTwo), is that a *witranalwe* is a being that cannot be physically recognized nor touched, and a visitor that cannot be greeted is a person that cannot be fully activated. In other words, one could say that a *witranalwe* is a former-*am* without a residence, without corporeal support, that has been exiled for eternity from the relationships between kin, determined in part by the similarity of corporeal supports.³⁷ In this sense, the *witranalwe*, as eternally exiled (or purely dislocated) from the personal composition, is a very good Pehuenche concept with which to consider mutual vision and personal composition. In part, I think that these spirits can be thought of as a social capacity turned in to an antisocial one. The lack of corporeal support makes mutual vision between real people

³⁷ For relations between bodies and kinship in South America, see Seeger, Da Matta & Viveiros de Castro 1979; Turner 1995; Taylor 1996; Conklin 1996 & 2001; McCallum 1996 & 2001; Rival 1997; and Vilaça 2002 & 2005, among many others.

impossible. In fact, in order to engage in relations with real Pehuenche people, it is necessary to be able to see and touch the other. I therefore conclude this Chapter by considering the importance of greetings among the Pehuenche, understood as performances in which personal compositions are fully activated by mutual vision.

1.3 A final comment: on greetings and vision

I will begin the conclusions of this Chapter by briefly referring to another aspect of the mythological narrative presented earlier, namely, greeting performances. By rendering explicit the relation between greetings and vision, as well as the crucial relevance of being seen by others for the achievement of personhood, I hope to demonstrate that mutual vision is indeed a precondition for the emergence of a relation between personal compositions.

The extreme importance people confer on greetings in Alto Bío Bío is an ethnographical fact that any person spending a few days living in a Pehuenche community would easily notice. During my first weeks in the field, every time I explicitly declared my intention to live in a Pehuenche community, I was strongly advised to learn, as a prerequisite before doing so, how to greet people properly. This recommendation was surprising for me, and pushed me to begin thinking that the act of greeting was not conceived of as spontaneous speech, instrumental only in starting a conversation, but rather as a key ontological social transaction. In this sense, and as Course (2011) has convincingly argued, I quickly realized that among the Mapuche, to refuse a greeting is to refuse the existence of social relations and to refute the prerequisite to such relations: shared personhood.

Once, when attending the funeral of a young Pehuenche woman, the commotion and the darkness of the occasion distracted me from noticing the presence of a good friend with whom I had spent the whole day. The day after, when we met at work (we were building a house together), he was extremely offended because I had not seen him and greeted

him at the funeral. He asked me, in a very sad tone of voice, whether I really thought that he was not a proper person (Ch. *Chengelan iñche?* Sp. *Am I not a person?*).³⁸ What is important to stress regarding his statement is that it clearly points out one of the central arguments of my thesis: without mutual vision, a person can not be fully enacted, resulting in the non-establishment of proper kinship ties. In other words, a personal composition can only be fully activated through the eyes of others - relations are a prerequisite for personhood. This is a common idea among ethnographers of Amazonia, and has been extensively analyzed by Course (2011) in reference to the Mapuche.

If we consider once again the myth this Chapter began with, it is clear that the act of greeting is understood as a key ontological operator between humans. In this myth, greeting someone who is not the one that should be acknowledged in that relation entails the risk of not being enacted as a real person and being excluded from the grounds of kinship ties between real people. This relational premise is present in daily life in Alto Bío Bío, and pervades every social interaction.

As the Mapuche linguist Jaqueline Caniguan (2005) has argued, greetings are a social norm that can be expressed in more or less formal interactions. It is interesting to seriously consider Caniguan's analysis of greetings and her particular focus on a specific word used to refer to the act of greeting. This word is *pentukun*, which has usually been translated with reference to the more structured conversational transaction two people have when meeting each other. However, what is striking for my argument is that the word *pentukun* itself is a semantic composition made of different actions or verbs: the verb 'to see' (Ch. *pen*) and the verb 'to touch' (Ch. *tuku*). Semantically speaking, it is the word itself makes no reference to acts of speech as such, but rather, it refers to sensorial experiences preceding language and rendering social relations possible. Alexander Surreales (2003) has made a similar point when examining the affective foundation that precedes speech, through the perceptual interaction of the Candoshi welcoming

³⁸ Course (2011) has also pointed out the same Mapuche concern about not being acknowledged as a person. Even if his ethnography was not carried out in Alto Bío Bío, the expression in Chedungun is exactly the same.

ceremony. His proposal to incorporate into the analysis the intensity of the affective dimension, and the perceptual interaction that governs social interactions in general, and welcoming rituals, in particular, seems to be highly relevant for my analysis of *pentukun* and its relevance to mutual vision. I suggest that mutual vision also emphasizes the primacy of perception as a prerequisite for engaging in a proper social relation.

However, what is even more interesting is that Caniguan (2005) conceives of seeing (Ch. *pen*) as a collective action that can also be translated as an *encounter*, as confirmed by the Mapuche dictionary by Augusta (1991). Within my argument, this very act of encountering necessarily entails not only physical contact between people, by shaking hands or hugging, but also the visual recognition of the participants. As far as greetings are concerned, I should render it explicit that I am not interested in analyzing the structure of a more formal *pentukun* (for this, see Caniguan 2005). Rather, I am surprised at how the relation between seeing and touching has been completely left out of analyses of *pentukun* and been obscured by the focus different scholars have put on spoken communication (Quidel Lincoleo 2001; Course 2007 & 2011), and will attempt to remedy this by emphasizing perceptual interactions rather than language transactions. However, it would not be enough to argue that seeing necessarily implies mutuality, as the latter is strongly related to the acknowledgment of the very status of a person by another person. I suggest that there are clear associations of continuity (if not fully apparent ones), between the actions of seeing and touching and the capacities of the soul-*am* and its corporeal support. To put it simply, a person needs to be seen by another person or personal composition in order to *be* a person, the very operator of this recognition being mutual vision. This act of seeing is not merely visual however, in the sense that it also implies touching – physical contact between corporeal supports. Put another way, if we consider personal compositions as objectified relations in the eyes of others, made up of a spiritual capacity and a material substance, it is not surprising that the very act of greeting involves actions concerning capacities of the soul-*am* (seeing) and the corporeal support (touching).

Conversely, if we consider once again this Chapter's introductory myth, it should not be

surprising that the very encounter between a soul-*am* and a soul-*ngen* does not include the bodily matter of Pehuenche people. This dislocation, which as previously mentioned can occur while sleeping, can be understood as the dislocation of the visual human capacity beyond the realm or shared perspective of real Pehuenche people. A plausible reading of the mythological story regarding the elements of personal composition might be as follows: what the human body (understood as a material assemblage of substances to be continually created through different collective practices) does is create a ground for relations among real Pehuenche people by excluding, under normal conditions, other expressions of humanity.³⁹ In fact, a master (Ch. *ngen*) cannot be seen by the whole personal composition, but only by the visual spiritual capacity, the *am*, when it is dislocated from the very place of existence of the personal composition. In this sense, Surreales' (2003) argument about cosmological communication is illuminating for my reflection on Pehuenche vision, as will become more apparent when examining visual practices and healing (Chapter Three):

Communication between humans and not-humans is not always possible: it depends on the connections and the incompatibilities between the respective faculties of perception that the entities are believed to possess (language, will, vision, and so on) (Surreales 2003:778-779).⁴⁰

Mutual vision between real people thus implies the very presence of personal compositions as particular assemblages, having as a result a particular human faculty of perception enacted by mutual vision among real people. Yet, what happens when mutual vision is not possible? What are the risks people face in situations where personal composition is highly dislocated, for instance, while sleeping? This is the question that will lead my reflections in the following Chapter. By exploring the importance of mutual vision in situations where this capacity is, in a way, impossible, I hope to demonstrate that mutual vision and true people are in fact strongly related and communally constituted.

³⁹ For a similar point about the importance attached to the senses, and in particular to visual perception by the Jivaro, see Taylor (1993). For Taylor, visual perception is a key element in recognizing the nature of other entities (both human and non human)

⁴⁰ This point it has also been made by Taylor (1993) and Ewart (2008)

Chapter 2

On Unilateral Vision and Nocturnal Visitors

In order to clarify the complex relationship between personal composition and Pehuenche vision, in this Chapter I reflect on particular moments in which mutual vision between people is *not* possible. I explore a mode of vision I call *unilateral vision*, the paradigmatic cases of which are situations of *nguken*. This is a concept that Pehuenche people find impossible to translate into Spanish, but which refers to nocturnal experiences during which sleeping people are the target of unknown visitors' predation. I suggest that while sleeping, a person is not able to be fully recognized as a person through mutual vision, since their soul-*am*, their capacity to see themselves as human, is dislocated from the personal composition (see Chapter One). However, my purpose is not to provide a conclusive definition of *nguken*, but rather to describe how the concept serves as an illustration of how unilateral visual perception, in situations of witchcraft, entails a particular form of cannibalistic consumption as well as predation.

I begin this Chapter with an ethnographic exploration of the ontological consequences of multicultural biomedical technologies in relation to *nguken* moments. I show how these moments are not susceptible to detection or treatment by biomedical technicians, as experiences of *nguken* are considered to simply be the product of sleep disorders. I then go on to explore the reasons why according to Pehuenche people 'doctors cannot see those illnesses.' In this statement is embedded one of the central premises of this thesis: not only is the reality of witchcraft unrecognizable by the 'cannons of evidence' currently operating in the West (Siegel 2006:16), but also, the reality of Pehuenche vision is incommensurable when compared to multicultural ontologies. Here I show how performances of vision, illness, and witchcraft are strongly related, and in the final section of this Chapter, I demonstrate how unilateral vision in situations of *nguken* can be conceptualized as an act of antisocial visual perception with the destruction of

consanguinity as its goal. By building on the concept of equivocation proposed by Viveiros de Castro (2004), the following analysis aims to demonstrate that *nguken* situations, when considered not only from the point of view of the victim but also from that of the perpetrator, offer insight into the Pehuenche's self-determined experience of the visible (Ch. *pefal*) and of the non-visible (Ch. *pefalay*).

2.1 Witchcraft and Modernity: a brief theoretical framework

First, it must be rendered explicit that this is not a Chapter about witchcraft *as such*. Yet witchcraft is considered here because it is a useful tool with which to discuss the central topic of this thesis, namely, Pehuenche vision. However, in order to clarify my position on wider debates concerning witchcraft, I find it necessary to briefly situate my reflection within current anthropological trends about occult phenomena, which have been strongly dominated by ethnographers working in Africa. Both Peter Geschiere (1997) in his well-known book *The Modernity of Witchcraft*, as well as Comaroff and Comaroff's (1990) studies on 'occult economies' have focused on analyzing witchcraft *within* the discourse of modernity in post-colonial contexts. Their analyses have attempted to demonstrate how discourses on witchcraft are intertwined with modern transformations, global capitalism, democracy, statecraft, and so on.⁴¹ Consequently, the global economy and the state appear as the most important settings to be considered by anthropologists interested in exploring occult phenomena.⁴² Furthermore, as Siegel (2006) has compellingly argued, these anthropologists have been less concerned with the violence of witchcraft than with its social functions. As Pedersen (2011:34) has already pointed out, these scholars reflect through

'symbolic-functionalist analytics in which witchcraft and shamanism are collective representations (...) and where occult phenomena is seen as symbolic language fulfilling certain

⁴¹ In this line of reasoning, see, for example, Ashforth 2005; Comaroff & Comaroff 1999; Geschiere 1997; Meje & Pels 2003; Moore & Sanders 2001; West 2005 & 2007; Whitehead & Wright 2004.

⁴² However, following Siegel (2006:16), witchcraft 'is understandable only as the subjective beliefs and fears which the liberal state can regulate *merely* in their external manifestations' (emphasis added). For an analysis of state regulations of external manifestations of witchcraft, see Chapter Four.

purposes, such as 1-. the mystifying role of concealing hegemonic structures 2-. the counter-hegemonic role of liberating oppressed subjects by exposing and subverting these structures, and 3-. an assumed universal human existential need to make sense of the increasing uncertainties brought about by capitalism, globalization, neoliberal reform, and the postcolonial predicament as a whole.⁴³

Following Siegel (2006) and Pedersen (2011), my goal here is to understand the local settings and considerations of some particular Pehuenche manifestations of witchcraft without necessarily having to refer to modern vectors, since I am convinced that ‘witchcraft precedes the state and the international community, and it has to be first examined in its local settings because it is there that the ideas of witchcraft took shape’ (Siegel 2006:3). Thus, it might be worthwhile mentioning from the outset that I am not interested in understanding the social functions of witchcraft among the Pehuenche. To do so would imply a Durkheimian tradition in anthropology characterized by its symbolic-functionalist analytics. Within this tradition (Evans Pritchard 1976; Marwick 1965; Mary Douglas 1970) witchcraft and shamanism have been considered as part of a collective representation, possible because of the existence of an underlying reality: society. Witchcraft has been seen as an idiom of conflict representing those conflicts existing in the structure of society, which would have, as a result, social integration (Marwick 1965).⁴⁴ By considering idioms of witchcraft in their local manifestations, and conceiving of them as part of a stable cosmological system pertaining to a local Pehuenche community, I will discuss the very specific and crucial role played by vision in general, and unilateral vision in particular, in the configuration of particular illnesses.

In order to substantiate my argument about the relevance of local idioms of Pehuenche witchcraft *beyond* the influence of modernity, it is necessary to start by examining ethnographical material concerned with ‘modern’ multicultural state health practices dealing with occult phenomena (even if unwittingly). As a starting point for my argument, I will show how these practices are in no way concerned with visual transactions inherent to Pehuenche ontology. Thus, I hope to demonstrate that the remarkable situations occurring while Pehuenche people sleep should not necessarily be

⁴³ For studies of Mapuche witchcraft following this approach, see Brogard Kristensen 2007.

⁴⁴ For a recent critical analysis of this tradition, see Pedersen 2011 and Siegel 2006.

analyzed from *within* the discourse of modernity, but rather through seriously considering local Pehuenche ontologies. These particular situations are not amenable to negotiation and are related to how Pehuenche people 'reflect on the consequences of modernity' (Ecks 2004:86).

2.2 Equivocal Sleep disorders

Alto Bío Bío, Southern Chile, February 2009: After another unbearably sleepless night, Pilar used a few eucalyptus branches to prepare a fire, and got ready to take the bus that connects the Pehuenche communities of the Queco Valley to the closest town, Ralco. On this morning, she had been invited along with twenty-five other Queco Valley women to a meeting for participants in the Ralco Family Health Centre's mental health programme. After arriving in Ralco, one of the centre's psychologists described to me the composition of the Pehuenche women gathered there: 'We have a little bit of everything here, really a representative variety.' I asked if she was referring to the variety of the women's backgrounds. 'No,' she said, 'I'm referring to the variety of disorders, the different mental problems. We have some with anxiety disorder, some with depression, many borderline cases, and others.' The meeting began with a short presentation in Spanish (not in the Pehuenche's native language of Chedungun). Ana, the psychologist, then gave a long introduction, explaining that the meeting would be useful because it was 'therapeutic' and would be complementary to the pharmaceuticals the women were prescribed, which she claimed were 'not enough' on their own. She then went through several relaxation techniques, including massage and listening to music, all the while emphasising the importance of taking the medicine prescribed by the centre's doctor. At the end of the meeting, Ana invited the women into her office to receive 'the pills.' She informed me afterward that she mostly gave out sleeping pills, since the majority of the women suffered from sleeping disorders.

Pilar spent many nights in her ex-husband Pedro's home in Pitril, where I was also staying. Pedro's home, as is typical for the Pehuenche, consisted of a sleeping area and a

cooking and dining area. Although the areas were close to one another, they were not physically connected. Pilar and I slept in rooms adjacent to the cooking and dining area, and Pedro slept in the actual sleeping area. It had been their shared home before their divorce, at which point Pilar went to live in a community near the Argentine border. The room where she now stayed shared a thin wooden wall with my own, which is how I learned that she always slept with the light on. I was also able to hear, whether I wanted to or not, her nocturnal movements. On many nights I awoke to the sound of her screams.

As the months went by, it became a habit for us to eat breakfast together and then drink *mate* tea. We often discussed her nightmares from the previous night, which she always described with the words ‘*as if* they were nightmares.’ She explained in detail how evil spirits attacked her during the night, although it never was completely clear who exactly was visiting her: ‘Last night the evil one came, he was a great bearded snake!’ (Sp: *Anoche llegó el malo, era un culebrón gigante con barba*). Or, ‘Satan came to see me again last night. It was *like* a nightmare, so I left the light on all night and couldn't sleep.’ Or again, ‘The *witranalwe* came again, that one always bothers me. Now there is nowhere to live in peace.’

Pedro, Pilar's ex-husband, also had trouble sleeping: ‘That one,’ he told me, ‘always comes to bother me.’ When the visits became unbearable, he would go to one of his grown children's homes where he could finally get some sleep. Avoiding sleeping alone is clearly related to the possibility of defense against witchcraft attacks, which is guaranteed by another person's presence. Indeed, several times I was told that if a person starts talking or moaning while sleeping, it is of vital urgency to wake them up. If a person moans while sleeping it is because he or she is being attacked. By waking the victim in the moment of the attack, according to my understanding, one produces a defensive situation in which the *ina mongen* is brought back to the personal composition of the sleeper through mutual vision. In other words, the sociality produced by kinship, and more precisely by mutual vision, allows the reconstruction of the personal composition. To recapture someone's capacities by means of reassembling the

convergence of his or her personal space allows this person to regain the capacity to see and to participate in the world of real people again.

Pedro's home was never empty since, he claimed, an evil spirit was always there lying in wait, ready to attack as soon as he fell sleep. Pedro's house was perceived as an attractive place for evil spirits, and on several occasions I was told that his house had been subjected to an evil spell several years previously. Pedro's son once stressed how evident it was for him that the house was loaded (Sp. *cargada*), since he remembered having 'something like nightmares' very often when he was younger, unmarried, and still living in that house. However, to stay prepared, Pedro developed a habit of sleeping with a torch and a knife at his side. Pedro, too, told me of his nocturnal problems most mornings: 'I didn't sleep well, it came to me again. I had to pray until it went away, and finally it did. Sometimes that thing waits until I am deep in sleep before it comes.'

One day in Pitril, Pilar unexpectedly told me that she had decided to stop taking the sleeping pills she had received from the health centre: 'I had visits last night and I slept very poorly. The evil one came *to see* me again and I couldn't wake up because of those pills! He almost killed me this time, so I'll never take those pills again. It's too dangerous not to be able to wake up.'

Having briefly reported these ethnographical situations, some plausible questions to be raised are the following: What is missing in the Chilean State's pharmaceutical-based approach to health? How can we understand, in Pilar's own terms, her fear of being murdered? And most importantly, how are Pehuenche visual capacities related to these nocturnal attacks? In a nutshell, I argue that for the Pehuenche dealing with these situations, the question is not so much how *to see like a state* (Scott 1998), but rather how to deal with what the state cannot, in fact, make visible. Yet, before approaching these questions fully, I analyze the capabilities of the main technology used by health workers to treat Pilar's nocturnal attacks: the sleeping pill.

In biomedical terminology, sleeping pills such as benzodiazepines are psychotropic medicines that act upon the central nervous system and are frequently used to treat

'anxiety disorders.' Etymologically, 'psychotropic' is derived from the Greek words *psyche*, 'mind,' and *tropein*, 'to change.' Psychotropics, in short, work to change a patient's *psyche*; a psychotropic is a chemical agent that provokes temporary changes in perception, mood, state of consciousness and behaviour, producing sedative and anxiolytic effects. In Alto Bío Bío, psychotropics are part of the basic stock of generic medicines used in primary health care. The most frequently prescribed psychotropics are Diazepam, Midazolam and Clonazepam, and the primary group of patients prescribed psychotropics consists of women between the ages of twenty and sixty-four who are enrolled in the mental health programme. These women are diagnosed according to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV)*, for the most part with 'sleep disorders,' 'schizoid personality disorders' and 'depressive disorders.' In the remainder of this section, I examine in detail the relationship between psychotropic drugs and Pilar's fear of being killed if she cannot wake up. In doing so, I intend to show that the central problem of this relationship is rooted in the fact that 'sleep' is a homonym that is being used unwittingly to refer to radically distinct experiences, experiences that are determined by incommensurable concepts of the body, personhood, sleeping, dreaming and seeing. As far as Pehuenche vision is concerned, this homonym points to different worlds that are perceived through different conceptualizations of what vision is all about. This disjuncture, however, which is characteristic of the interactions between the Pehuenche and the healthcare workers, is best understood through the work of the anthropologist Viveiros de Castro (2004a), who has revised the standard anthropological practice of 'comparison' using the concept of 'equivocation.'⁴⁵

Viveiros de Castro's (2004b) understanding of equivocation is inspired by an anecdote Lévi-Strauss (1973) tells about the discovery of America. According to Lévi-Strauss, in the Greater Antilles 'some years after the discovery of America, whilst the Spaniards were dispatching inquisitional commissions to investigate whether the natives had a soul

⁴⁵ For an exhaustive analysis of the concept of equivocation between state healthcare and the Yãnomãmi, see *State Healthcare and the Yanomami* by Kelly (2011). By considering an ethnographic account of the relation between health workers and Yãnomãmi people, Kelly shows how conceptual articulations of medical systems are subject to mutual misunderstandings. In this Chapter, the concept of equivocation will be used as a conceptual tool to discuss Pehuenche notions of vision.

or not, these very natives were drowning the white people they had captured in order to find out whether or not the corpses were subject to putrefaction' (Lévi-Strauss 1973:384). For Viveiros de Castro, this anecdote describes the interaction of two types of ethnocentrism. While the Europeans doubted 'whether other bodies had the same souls as they themselves (today we would call the soul 'the mind,' and the sixteenth-century theological problem would now be the philosophical 'problem of other minds'), Amerindian ethnocentrism on the other hand, consisted of doubting whether other souls had the same bodies' (Viveiros de Castro 2004b:9). Each of these modes of investigating the nature of humanity enacts a distinct reality through its comparative practice (cf. Mol 1999): the Spanish comparing 'native' bodies to their own ensouled bodies implies a reality in which bodies do or do not have souls, and the 'natives' comparing Spanish bodies to their own perishable ones enacts a reality in which bodies do or do not decompose. The collision and interaction of these realities in turn produces not only new possibilities for existence (Haraway 1997; Law & Hassard 1999; Mol 2002), but also what I call 'ontological disorders' (Bonelli, forthcoming). When faced with the same or similar issues, different actors find different practical ways to reinforce their own definitions of society (Latour 2005). When the language games (Wittgenstein 1953) involved in understanding bodies are incommensurable, comparing these understandings is not simply difficult, but actually impossible.

Viveiros de Castro (2004b) elaborates on Lévi-Strauss' Amerindian ethnographic anecdote in which different sorts of beings share a common culture but inhabit different natures: Amerindians, he argues, possess a 'perspectivist anthropology' (Viveiros de Castro 2004b:4) in which the distinct ways different beings have of viewing worlds are conceived of as constituting multiple ontologies. There are not, for Amerindians, many perspectives on a single world. Rather, the perspective of each type of being is a world in itself. Viveiros de Castro goes on to suggest that academic anthropology can learn a methodology from the perspectival Amerindian world by recasting 'comparison' as 'equivocation.' He conceives of the method of equivocation as a way of not only understanding the Amerindians' trans-species communication—in which human and

non-human persons share a single culture— but also of demonstrating the equivocated territory of intercultural translation. Hence, ‘to translate is to presume that an equivocation always exists. It is to communicate by differences, instead of silencing the Other by presuming a univocality —an essential similarity— between what the Other and We are saying’ (Viveiros de Castro 2004b:10). Viveiros de Castro concludes that the opposite of the equivocal is not certitude or ‘rightness,’ but rather the *univocal*. The univocal, according to him, involves defining situations as if they only had one sense. On the other hand, univocity, the desire to force the naming of the unnameable at any cost, is one of the elements that constitutes the problem of evil and is the beginning of disaster for Alain Badiou (2001). It is, furthermore, a constitutive element of the hegemonic ethical ideology that dominates relations between the state and Indigenous populations. This aspect of univocity will be explored in depth in Chapters Four and Five. For the moment, I only wish to emphasise that understanding *comparison* as *equivocation* can open relations to alterity when they appear to be closed by over-determined interpretations of the Other. I argue in the following that the relations between the Pehuenche and healthcare workers are rooted in equivocations that arise from their use of homonyms. This argument attends especially to the daily construction of a territory that is in ontological disorder, both in its ethical dimension, as seen in the main actors' actions, and in its aesthetic dimension, as seen in their imaginations.

In Pilar's case, equivocation is at the heart of an interaction that generates controversy: she finds herself in a liminal ontological zone, in which the effects of the ‘medical thing’ alter a world, and not just a ‘mind.’ The drug requires a unitary body—material that is morphologically discrete—which it puts to sleep. Pilar, however, needs to wake up to survive. This tense situation demands that one take a position, a position I will call ‘onto-ethical,’ in the face of the micropolitics perpetuated by the drug. The onto-ethical position however, is taken within a reality that seems to be describable in Spanish only by analogy: what is it that prompts the ‘as if’ in the expression ‘*as if* they were nightmares’? How can this vernacular expression be seriously considered within Pehuenche conceptualizations of personhood and vision? In order to face these

questions, I will first analyze how a nightmare is conceptualized by the multicultural approach of the State.

2.2.1 Multicultural nightmare

The prescription of sleeping pills presumes that nightmares are the production of a cultural reality (the *psyche*) that can be healed by biochemical substances working on nature (the body). Dualist technology *tout court*, if you will. This dualist conception, moreover, is based on the unquestioned assumption that nightmares exist for everyone, and in the same way: all the different nightmares a person has arise out of their single ‘unconscious,’ that cross-disciplinary explanatory principle (Bateson 1972) that has entered common sense. All beings that have similar bodies can suffer, and ‘see,’ nightmares. The nightmare is therefore conceived of as a mental capacity under the typical logic of multiculturalism, with its essential distinction between one nature and many cultures (Viveiros de Castro 1998)

In general terms, multiculturalism's ontological dualism deals with questions of cultural difference by inquiring into the capabilities of the mind, on the assumption ‘that even our mental powers are ultimately generated by the brain (bodily part we have in common with others)’ (Holbraad & Willerslev 2007:329). Hence, a fundamental premise of multiculturalism is that bodies do the same things regardless of their location. Not only does each body sleep under the effect of benzodiazepines, but each benzodiazepine will make anybody sleep. Nevertheless, Pilar's experience raises a question that challenges the logic of multiculturalist dualism: What does a body do and what are its capacities? (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). Or, to use idioms of vision, what does a body see, and what are its visual capacities?

The function of benzodiazepines is a good example of how multicultural practices operate by assuming similarities between bodies. The pills are not only a symbolic extension of multiculturalism, but also an inventive technology of the same (cf. Wagner

1981). This technology enacts a purportedly universal naturalism that consists, following Descola (2005, 2006 & 2009), of a conception of similar physical realities (bodies) and dissimilar interior realities (nightmares). This universal naturalism appears, moreover, to be a hegemonic language game that considers the existence of a body (a physical continuity) and many cultures (a metaphysical discontinuity) as a fundamental premise of Western cosmology (Viveiros de Castro 2004a). It is therefore not surprising that the healthcare workers never question the meaning of a nightmare, nor do they inquire into what might be hidden in the analogical way of referring to them: ‘*as if* they were nightmares.’ Ethnography, which also has a psychotropic effect inasmuch as it alters the ethnographer's own conceptualisations, can help us understand how it is that a nightmare, in reality, has nothing to do with a nightmare in the multicultural sense. By focusing on Pehuenche visual capacities and visual interactions, I hope to shed light on Pehuenche conceptualizations of nocturnal attacks in their own terms, which are incommensurable with the nature of multicultural nightmares.

As previously mentioned, in Spanish it is very common to hear the following expression in the description of *nguken* moments: ‘*as if* they were nightmares.’ The words *as if* clearly indicate equivocation, since, to be precise, they imply that these attacks are not nightmares at all. In this section, I will try to demonstrate that in the Pehuenche world, if we understand them as individual oneiric productions by an individual sleeping subject as the liberal Western psychoanalytical tradition has affirmed with vehemence, nightmares do not exist. Even if it would be absurd to deny that the ‘West’ is also marked by controversies about the definition of nightmares, it is important to keep in mind that the perspectival framework used in this thesis aims to question hegemonic Western trends in thinking. Having said this, the hegemonic naturalist approach within the psychoanalytical tradition has been strongly marked by the ever-lasting significance given to naturalism as a point of departure for dream analysis (see Lansky 1992).

Attempts at studying nightmares within Mapuche cosmology (Nakashima Degarrod 1990a, 1990b, 1998), based on the significant importance nightmares have for natives (as pointed out by classic Mapuche literature such as Farón 1964 and Titiev 1951), have

proceeded with the assumption that dreams (Ch. *peuma*) are a universal reality determined by cultural beliefs. More specifically, previous literature on Mapuche dreams has homologized nightmares with the native idiom ‘bad dreams’ (Ch. *weda pewman*), while *nguken* has been translated as *night panics* (Nakashima Degarrod 1986). Both of these concepts have been understood as premonitions of illness. However, *nguken* experiences in particular have as of yet not been seriously considered as part of real witches’ attacks. The way I conceptualize of *nguken* here is very different from Nakashima Degarrod’s work. Due to the highly problematic dilemmas and the intense suffering *nguken* experiences entail for Pehuenche people, I focus on the relational ontological aspects of these situations for the victim, rather than simply framing them, as Nakashima Degarrod does, as the victim’s individual night panics (Nakashima Degarrod 1986). As many have told me, *nguken* are not nightmares, but are *as* nightmares. My own analysis considers nightmares to be constituents of the Pehuenche world, and not only sub-products of a supposed cultural belief based on a universal nature, as is characteristic of multicultural reflections (see Chapters Four and Five). However the similarity that allows this analogy to be made is based upon shared aspects of ‘nightmares’ and ‘*as* nightmares.’ Specifically, they are both situations that produce unwanted effects and imply images or appearances whose nature cannot be accurately determined. This fact renders it impossible to speak clearly about them.

Every night my friends were bothered (Sp. *molestados*) by the ‘thing’ (Sp. *la cuestión*) while they were sleeping. But just as ‘nightmares’ are not ‘nightmares’ in the Pehuenche world, neither is Pehuenche sleeping equivalent to the Western biomedical idea of sleeping as an asocial activity that the organic body (nature) carries out while the mind (culture) imagines and dreams. At this point, it is necessary to reformulate the tradition of the comparative analysis of dreams (Tedlock 1987) as an analysis of the equivocation of sleeping. This analytical exercise must take ethnographical evidence seriously as testimony to a distinctive reality, and not merely as the disclosure of an epistemological variation or of a ‘*cultural belief* in nightmares *as if* they were actions of evil spirits’ (Nakashima Degarrod 1990:192, emphasis added). Rather, as Argyrou (2002) argues, it

is anthropology's own nightmare that reduces realities (ontologies) to beliefs (epistemologies), and explains differences through similarities. Having said this, what kind of ontological situations is the word 'nightmare' referring to?

2.3 *Nguken* as unilateral vision

In the following section, I will provide further evidence for my conceptualization of *nguken* as attacks characterized by wicked unilateral vision. In order to do so, I will describe separately the performances that a person carries out while *nguken* occurs, on the one hand, and the performances carried out by evil spirits on the other. I will sketch an outline of this (so-called) 'encounter,' in order to better understand the ontological problem that a victim of witchcraft has to deal with when experiencing *nguken*.

As I hope to demonstrate in this section, the strong link between witchcraft, illness and vision in Alto Bío Bío is an ethnographic fact. I have implicitly argued that what is dismissed by the multicultural approach to nightmares is the relations existing between visible and invisible beings within the Pehuenche world. Under the lens of the sleeping pills action, nightmares appear as individual actions executed by a liberal subject (see Chapter One). Conversely, within Pehuenche ontology, the relations configuring nocturnal attacks entail complex visual configurations, which will be discussed below.

Generally speaking, in Alto Bío Bío it is extremely common to hear conversations about people suffering from illnesses (Ch. *kutran*) related to witchcraft (Sp. *males* Ch. *kalkutun*). The word *kutran* is usually translated as 'illness' (Sp. *enfermedad*), but it also means 'pain.' However, in some communities like Pitril, where Chedungun is no longer spoken daily (especially by the younger generations) and where only some native words are commonly used, the Spanish word for 'illness' (Sp. *enfermedad*) is used to refer to health problems not involving witchcraft performances. One of the people I spent several months living with used to say that his problem 'was not an illness' (Sp. *no es enfermedad*), but was in fact witchcraft (Sp. *mal*). During the day, he was often tired and

suffered from headaches: 'I walk as if I had been made drunk,' he said, because evil spirits had visited and weakened him by sucking his blood while he was sleeping.⁴⁶ As I will show below, this sucking action is inextricably linked to the visual capacities of the unwanted visitor. For the moment, I will focus my reflection upon the Pehuenche visual capacities and incapacities involved in evil nocturnal visitations (Ch. *nguken*) caused by witchcraft. It must be noted that this discussion will not address witchcraft actions executed through the use of poisons and food (Ch. *ilel*) or objects (Ch. *unfitun*), but will only make reference to nocturnal attacks (Ch. *nguken*). In order to understand the epistemology of *nguken* experiences, I will try to avoid structuring my reflection through the classification and defining of local illness nosologies, as many scholars have already done (Grebe 1975; Oyarce 1988 & 1989; Bacigalupo 2007 for example). Thinking through rigid and descriptive classificatory logics would be forcing a particular understanding of the complex and vague way illnesses are experienced daily, and the ways in which these experiences are conceptualized by the Pehuenche. However, if forced to classify *nguken* situations within the categories of previous scholars, I would have to consider them to be evil illnesses (Ch. *weya kutran*): illnesses implying an intentionality on the part of those who provoke them.

In daily life, the most common expressions used to talk about evil illnesses refer to the illnesses themselves as active beings. 'The illness walks around' (Sp. *anda la Ch. kutran*), for example, is a very common expression in Alto Bío Bío, used to refer to the presence of an illness and the vigilance required to avoid being afflicted with it. Evidently, *what is around* (the illness) has a threatening character for people, since they are susceptible to falling victim to such illnesses. This threat, on the other hand, is always related to the (absent) presence of a witch. The act of casting witchcraft upon another person is described in the vernacular as 'to do a job' (Sp. *hacer un trabajo*), a sentence used to refer to both the practices of witches and the practices of those who heal. Broadly speaking, witches are characterized by their negative personal intentionality (Ch. *weya rakiduam*) towards another person. This *job*, or wicked activity,

⁴⁶ For a similar point concerning the Piaroa, see Overing 1988. For the Piaroa, 'disease is always considered to be a process of being eaten' (Overing 1983-84: 342).

always requires the presence of a witch (Ch. *kalku*), a word that means different things in different situations: a person who has the capacity to do witchcraft is a *kalku*, the device or instrument that this person uses to ‘do the job’ is a *kalku*, and the spiritual beings related to the witch are also *kalku*.⁴⁷

In the vernacular, witches are considered to be people (Ch. *che*), but not true people (Ch. *reche*). Accordingly, the dictionary of Augusta (1916) defines *reche* as ‘any individual that is not *kalku*,’ a definition that my ethnography strongly corroborates in certain ways. The conceptualization of witches as not being real people can be found among other Indigenous peoples in South America. For example, Ewart (2008) has argued that witches ‘do not subscribe to the productive and social life characteristic of real people as embodied by the Panará values of social availability and energy for collective endeavors’ (Ibid. p.517). In daily life, the topic of who is and is not a witch is often a subject of late night conversation and debate, but it is never declared with accuracy who is indeed a witch. Moreover, people speak about alleged witches with extreme caution, and convey a desire to avoid excessive discussion of this topic. Indeed, when I spoke about this topic with friends I was frequently asked to be quiet or was offered a whispered warning that I should not speak about these things aloud because the *kalku* could be ‘listening and observing somewhere around.’ When compared to interactions of mutual vision (as discussed in Chapter One), the presence of a witch is characterized by unilateral vision. They can see but not be seen, they can listen but not be heard. As I hope to demonstrate, this unilateral vision inherent to the Pehuenche conceptualization of witches is crystallized in *nguken* situations.

It is necessary to emphasize that in daily life, witches always remain hidden. In a sense, they are always outside the realm of the visible (*kin*) that is shared by real people. For example, one of my friends had a mother-in-law whom many of my acquaintances suspected was a witch. This man had a very difficult relationship with that woman, yet,

⁴⁷ For historical accounts of *kalku* within Mapuche literature, see Guevara 1908 and Latcham 1924. For other ethnographies in South America concerning dark shamanism and the moral ambiguity of shamans/witches, see Whitehead & Wright 2004. For an analysis of this ambiguity among the Mapuche people, see also Bacigalupo 2001 and 2007.

he was forced to visit her very often. Many friends would express curiosity about these visits, and would frequently ask him if he ‘had seen something.’ This man never noticed anything that would corroborate the hypothesis that his mother-in-law was in fact a witch however. Thus, the capacity to hide and to be outside of the normal Pehuenche range of sight seems to be a feature of the powers of those who undertake witchcraft.⁴⁸ In fact, my old friend Pedro told me that the old people used to say that witches ‘hide the *kalku* in the vagina’ (Sp. *se escondian los kalku en la zorra*). Here, he was implying that the witch's vagina was an inaccessible place where the *kalku* could be concealed and made invisible.⁴⁹ Victims of witchcraft are therefore always victims of a type of presence incapable of being clearly defined or detected, and characterized by both the capacity for continuous transformation (discussed further below), and unilateral vision. Within the Pehuenche world, knowledge of witchcraft is always incomplete and impossible, and appears as a difference that does not generate any difference (Bateson 1972). This is the case with *nguken* experiences when analyzed from the victim’s point of view, to which I now turn. Amongst different moments related to contingent visual capacities and incapacities, sleeping is the privileged moment for an attack by a nocturnal visitor. In order to understand how this is possible, I would like to examine both the visual symptoms a person develops when they are the target of nocturnal attacks, as well as the contingent visual capacities inherent to a sleeper. In a way, the former can be understood through the latter.

2.3.1 Symptoms: sick from visions

What are the symptoms experienced by victims of *nguken*? What problems and dilemmas do *nguken* create for Pehuenche people? People from Alto Bío Bío typically state that victims of nocturnal witchcraft ‘see visions’ (Sp. *la gente ve visiones*).

⁴⁸ For a similar point among Panará witches, see Ewart 2008.

⁴⁹ I am aware of the possible gender-based criticisms this statement might trigger in the reader. However, I am using this data only because of its relevance for my argument concerning vision, visibility and invisibility. For gender studies about the Mapuche, see Bacigalupo 2007.

‘Visions’ refers to the experience of seeing something that cannot be clearly perceived and is therefore difficult to define. In other words, for victims of witchcraft, ‘seeing visions’ is a daily experience during which they see things that should not be seen under normal circumstances, and are not completely identifiable. ‘Seeing visions’ is thus a literally unspeakable situation characterized by the presence of shapeless visitors. Thus, when people speak about their experiences of falling victim to a night visitor, they use rather vague language.⁵⁰ Wicked visitors are referred to with many vague Spanish words such as:

thing: Sp. *cosa*. e.g. ‘Yesterday that *thing* came to see me once again.’

bug: Sp. *bicho* e.g. ‘Last night the *bug* was around.’

that one: Sp. *ese*. e.g. ‘Again *that one* appeared, bothering.’

appearance: Sp. *apariencia*. e.g. ‘That *appearance* was around in the night, one believes that it is something but it never really is as it appears.’

silly thing: Sp. *lesera*. e.g. ‘I don’t like that *silly thing* that comes to see me.’

It is evident that none of these nouns clearly specifies an unambiguous perception of the identity of the wicked visitor. Thus, these beings are frequently labeled as ‘wicked spirits’ (Sp. *espíritus malos*), an expression that does not provide any details about what these wicked spirits really are.⁵¹ Moreover, the expression ‘wicked spirits’ is also ambiguous, as it is used to designate both *kalkutun* beings related to witches, as well as beings that have no relation to the wicked will of a third person (see Chapter Three on *wekuve*). I argue that this descriptive difficulty is related to the special transformational power of nocturnal visitors on the one hand, and the particular states a person is in while sleeping on the other. The particular contingent state of the personal composition while sleeping places victims of *kalkutun* in an extremely vulnerable state in which the enemy is never known. To be more precise, the enemy is not even an enemy, since, as Siegel

⁵⁰ For a general review of similar issues in South America, see Whitehead & Wright 2004.

⁵¹ For a similar point related to the shamanic death of Kanaima in the Caribbean, see contributions by Colson and Whitehead, in Rival & Whitehead 2001.

(2006) has convincingly argued, the fear people have of witches is directed against something that cannot be truly named and remains outside the possibility of recognition:

The witch is the opposite of an enemy because the enemy is always an equivalent: someone recognizable who offers the possibility of being conquered. The witch, however, asserts a non-dialectical possibility, in effect a power of discourse that is outside the control of even the person who is accused (Siegel 2006:217).

Having said this, I can now enunciate one of the key points of my argument: The visitor (which technically should not be considered a true enemy) is powerful *because* he is able to unilaterally see his victim. Evidence of this from Spanish are sentences such as ‘Yesterday that thing came *to see me*,’ or ‘I don't like that silly thing that comes *to see me*.’ In Chedungun, the most common expression is *witrangemen* (*witra*: visitor; *nge*: being; *me*: going and coming back) or *pepan* (*pe*: seeing; *pa*: here). According to one of my friends there are many ways to refer to visitations, and most of them are formed with the verb ‘to see’ (Ch. *pe*). In other words, the *nguken* experience is always a situation that implies different actors with different visual capacities and incapacities: whereas the visitor is able to see its victim, the victim is not able to clearly see his or her visitor. The victim then experiences visual symptoms, becoming, in fact, *sick from visions*. This kind of visual asymmetry gives the visitor a distinct advantage, and places the victim in the position of having to deal with beings of an uncertain ontological state (Course 2011). In this way, the nocturnal visitor, in the victim's experience, is nothing other than an *appearance*; that is to say, something that is not as it appears.⁵² Thus, *unilateral vision* is an integral component of nocturnal visitations, and I would argue is the main source of the *kalku*'s destructive power. However, this unilateral vision is only possible because the victim is not fully capable, given the dislocated nature of his or her personal composition while sleeping, of really seeing who the visitor is.

As described in Chapter One, from the Pehuenche perspective, when someone goes to sleep, their *ina mongen* goes out ‘to travel around its life.’ This dislocation suggests that sleep is a particular situation in which a person's physical body is left in solitude to some

⁵² This reminds me of the deceptive nature of appearances in Amazonia, where, as argued by Riviere (1994), *what you see is not necessarily what you get*, due to the ‘highly transformational world’ in which Amerindian people take part.

extent. Part of the person is exposed as a moment of organism, as Nancy (2008) puts it. On the other hand, when the *am* exits the personal composition, the *püllü* remains to watch out for the sleeper. In fact, one can conceive of the relationship between the *püllü* and the earth—in some parts of southern Chile, these words are even interchangeable—as that which enables the *püllü* to remain in the domestic space and care for the sleeper while the *am* goes out on its own, sometimes to places far beyond its community. This raises the following question: What is it that the *püllü* is taking care of, considering that ‘oneself’ is somewhere else? Or better still, to put it in a way that does not betray the performances involving evil spirits and sleeping persons: exactly which part of the personal composition is prey to evil spirits?

During sleep, a person comes closest to a state of pure materiality, to being a site rather than a place (see Chapter One and Nancy 2008): the sleeping person appears as a site, given the maximum dislocation of his or her *ina mongen* in the space of existence. This dislocation of the constituents of the personal composition, understood in a more Amerindian jargon as the personal conjunction of self/other or consanguine/affine (Viveiros de Castro 2001), reaches its maximum intensity during sleep. As a result, the corporeal support of the sleeper emerges as the person, but in their *de-affinalized* version: while sleeping, a stage of dislocated sociability is produced. At the time when the visitor arrives, the person inhabits this dislocation. This can also be described as an impersonal moment, or at least a stage where the personal composition reaches its maximum fragmentation: the site of the corporeal support of the sleeper is *de-personalised*. Put differently, the person is truly exposed while sleeping, due to his or her condition as a mere organism. Evidently, as I will show, this condition is conducive to antisocial interactions.

What is being taken care of by the *püllü* is the person, but characterized by a particular incapacity: a visual-social incapacity. This is due to the dislocation of the capacity to see oneself as human, a capacity inherent to the *ina mongen*. The *püllü* is thus taking care of a personal decomposition, a blind version of the personal composition dislocated from the capacity to be a reflexive human. The person's constant tendency to escape from the

centre, (if we admit (mistakenly) that he or she can even have something like a centre) - the *am* actually 'departs' from a multiple composition - means that, while the person is asleep, his or her *ina mongen* looks to establish social relationships somewhere else. In this sense, the *ina mongen* can be understood as an 'insomniac social capacity' which temporarily flees from the 'centre' of personal singularity. However, in order to be able to truly understand why nocturnal attacks are dangerous, it is also useful to concentrate on the type of performance an evil spirit carries out when visiting its victim.

2.4 Antisocial visual perception

It must be stressed that for the victim, the existence of evil spirits manifests as a peculiarly visual experience: people 'see visions' (Sp. *la gente ve visiones*), or more precisely, they 'see appearances' (Sp. *ven solo apariencias*). This act of (not) seeing reinforces the victims' awareness that they will not be able to fully see the evil spirit that lurks behind a given appearance or manifestation. Furthermore, as if this was not enough, the victim also finds himself unable to defend himself from these manifestations. Indeed, such manifestations cannot be counter-attacked physically: 'If I could, I would hit them with a stick,' Pedro told me one night, rendering explicit the fact that not being able to do so was an important part of his problem as a victim.

The experiences of witchcraft victims (particularly in instances of *nguken*) involve the impossibility of seeing beyond the immediate appearances of these evil spirits, which ultimately leads to the impossibility of speaking clearly about them. I suggest that the lack of mutual vision leads to the impossibility of constructing a social relation. *Nguken* experiences are thus not particularly *enlightening*. Following Ecks (2010) and his reflection on Kant's famous work *What the Enlightenment is?* (1784 [1996]), it can be said that these experiences do not respect the Kantian definition of the enlightened capacity to reflect, through thoughts and reasonable words, on anything that is susceptible to being seen. Rather, I suggest that *nguken* moments are (in opposition to Kant) an experience of *impossible enlightenment*, due in part to the characteristics of

what is being (un)observed. *Nguken* implies the inability to talk clearly about what one has ‘seen without really seeing,’ precisely because vision, as an ‘affective dimension’ (Surrals 2000 & 2003), is a prerequisite for language. Moreover, following Siegel (2006) and his reflections on Kant, *nguken* experiences cannot even be considered experiences of the sublime:

In nature exists an objective quality which we cannot cognize (...). Faced with such, we feel overcome (...) the sublime is something that we *know* in retrospect. After the event we see what we went through using our powers of memory and analysis. But suppose that we had not recovered such abilities. We would then suspect, rather than know, that something was affecting us (Siegel 2006:23-24, emphasis added).

The very non-accountability of *nguken* experiences, as events dominated by a fear of the uncanny, would not have been a real possibility for Kant. A rather different way to frame these issues would be to follow Lévi-Strauss' (1963) illuminations about witchcraft. In a general sense, he argues that there is nothing that escapes signification, coherence being the most important thing in social life. Lévi-Strauss claims that the expression of truth (and therefore, the achievement of coherence) is more important than justice. For the Pehuenche, as I have tried to demonstrate, this is not the case, since coherence can never be achieved.

One day my friend Pedro seemed to lose patience with my persistent enquiries about his nocturnal aggressors. He told me emphatically:

One cannot see that thing. You just can see as in dreams, nothing more, but that one is always bothering me. Since there are always bad people, I cannot know who it is, nobody can. I do not know what it is. There are some names, antiimalen... three names, the wekuve, the antiimalen and the chonchon.

In many ways, this was the most enlightening comment that Pedro had made about his encounters with wicked spirits. However, this comment was also his clearest request for me to cease questioning him on the matter. In that moment, I understood that the names Pedro used to refer to evil spirits were not of primary importance. After all, the identity of these spirits (even if ‘identity’ is not the best word to use here) was never clear nor distinct. As mythological beings, evil spirits are characterized by their self-difference, rather than their self-identity (Viveiros de Castro 2007). The ambiguous terms Pedro

used to refer to these spirits (in opposition to the *clear and distinct* Descartes expression) challenged my professional tendency to categorize clearly. For him, *chon chon*, *antiimalen*, and *wekuve* were nothing more than names used to designate an unknown source of evil.⁵³ These names demonstrated an attempt to shed light on something that cannot be fully illuminated, since *experiences with evil spirits cannot be captured in words*. This kind of speech has been conceptualized by Siegel (2006:8) as an attempt to ‘domesticate the pure gift,’ witchcraft experiences being a ‘pure gift, which is not considered even as a gift and therefore cannot be reciprocated since one cannot account for its origins’ (Ibid. p.6). That is, the evil spirits cannot be subjected and are always moving through a non-determined space, which is problematic when thought of from a liberal logic based on self-identity (see Chapter One). In fact, even when an evil spirit manifests itself, this manifestation is never fixed or definitive and can instead be repeatedly transformed. An evangelical Pehuenche friend once told me that evil spirits ‘can turn themselves into cats, dogs, chickens, roosters, people, male goats... thousands of things. The bad spirit is art. Those birds are artifact, they are art.’

Ineke Smeets (1989) has provided us with some linguistic evidence from Chedungun that I would like to report here, since it allows one to grasp the incommensurability of these grammatical constructions when translated into English as well as the inherently transformational capacity of these evil visitors.⁵⁴ In the native language, the sentence ‘they turn themselves into cats, or dogs, or people’ can be uttered as *narkiluwkiyngün* ‘they turn themselves into cats,’ *trewaluwkiyngün* ‘they turn themselves into dogs’ or *cheluwkiyngün* ‘they turn themselves into people’ (Smeets 1989:546). In Mapudungun, these transformative expressions are usually uttered with the particular suffix *-uw*. This suffix is referred to by Smeets as a *reflexive reciprocal* suffix (Ibid.). Having said that, and analyzing these grammatical aspect analogically (Course 2010), I would add that evil spirits have the deceitful, *reflexive*, and inherent capacity to transform themselves

⁵³ I am not concerned here with providing ethnographic descriptions of these entities and the possible narratives surrounding them. This has been done extensively by Waag 1982 and Citarella et al. 2000. Regarding *wekuve* and its relation to potential affinity, see Chapter Three.

⁵⁴ Regarding the limits and uses of grammar in comparative ethnographical writing, see Course 2010.

into different entities precisely because they are constitutively composed of self-difference rather than self-identity. In the words of one of my hosts ‘the evil spirit visitors (Ch. *witranalwe*) who arrive at my body (Sp. *que llegan a mi cuerpo*) can come in any form - as snakes, toads, or any other species - but it is always an appearance that one cannot see, and it is not known who is really there.’

The word ‘relationship’ is not the most appropriate to describe moments of maximum proximity between evil spirits and *kalkutun* victims in *nguken* situations. Neither is the word ‘encounter.’ Both words connote social interactions, but what characterizes the attacks by wicked spirits against their victims is, in my opinion, their violent anti-social quality.⁵⁵ The word used most often by Pehuenche people to refer to these situations is the word ‘visitors,’ which refers to those who come close to the domestic space ‘to see’ people. As Alexander Surrales (2003:779) has already pointed out, many Amerindian societies do not perceive their environment as a space of peace and quiet, since ‘hostility between local groups is endemic, settlements are isolated, and conditions of transport within the tropical forest are difficult’. In these contexts, visits are rare, so people seek to overcome their geographical isolation ‘through schemes of formal visitations between households settlements’ (Surrales 2003:779). Visitors, therefore, have to be received properly to avoid latent hostility.

Doubts about the exact nature of the strangers is the primary concern, for the notion of humanity is precarious from an ‘animist’ perspective. As the visitors come from deep within the forest where ‘non-humans’ dwell, it is necessary to ensure their ontological status (Ibid. p.784).

In Alto Bío Bío, this is also the case. People live in fairly isolated areas, and schemes of formal visitations are very common. In *nguken* situations, however, these visitors are not welcome.

In sum, so far I have described the experiences of victims of *kalkutun* in the context of *nguken* as ones in which the victim sees temporary and superficial manifestations of beings that cannot be readily defined and are capable of transformation. The visual

⁵⁵ For an exhaustive analysis of the violence of witchcraft (rather than its functioning), see Siegel 2006.

limitations of the victim are due in part to the deceitful, reflexive, and inherent capacity of unknown visitors to transform themselves into different entities, but also to the particular states of sleepers, who are highly exposed and not fully activated (through mutual vision) as real people.

2.4.1 Motivation for *nguken*: eating blood

The evil spirit visits its victim every time he or she is sleeping. This is not a coincidence, but rather an opportunity for attackers. In fact, it is the consequence of a deliberate decision on the part of the evil spirit and his or her witch owner. Several times Pedro told me that the ‘thing’ was ‘waiting’ until he was sound asleep to visit him:

Witches tell their evil spirits that they have to go kill that particular person, to weaken him, to beat him at night when he is in bed. So the evil spirit waits to take advantage.

It is also significant that evil spirits attack when the person is in a horizontal position, which is a good opportunity for an attack by antisocial beings. Specifically, the person does not have their feet on the earth, a connection that in Alto Bío Bío is very important. For instance, new constructions made of cement are problematic for the Pehuenche people in that the artificial structures interfere with the direct contact between a person and the earth-soil. Furthermore, as we have seen, sleeping is also a time when the *am* leaves its corporeal support. At that time, evil spirits can ‘take advantage,’ as my friend told me, of the particular situation during which the personal composition is not fully attained. In this sense, following Fausto’s (2007) conceptualizations about cannibalism, *nguken* experiences can be thought of as situations of *opportunistic cannibalism*.⁵⁶ During sleep, the *ina mongen*, that is, life in the form of a person with his or her full reflexive human capacities awakened, is absent. It is somewhere else. That is the reason

⁵⁶ Fausto (2007) describes the indispensable Indigenous eating practices needed for de-subjectivizing prey in a world inhabited by humans and non-humans, where predation is the more productive relational schema. These are performed through a series of shamanic and culinary operations, in order to avoid cannibalism: the game animal (which is considered to be human) needs to be *produced as food* and ‘to be reduced to the condition of an inert object’ (Fausto 2007:503). Conversely, *nguken* experiences do not require any work by evil spirits, other than waiting for the best moment to attack and eat sleeping persons. They are an ontological *opportunity*, rather than the result of a process.

why the sleeping person is, in a way, unfolded, dislocated, and unable to establish social relationships. In other words, while sleeping the human capacity is away from its corporeal residence and a person is in a state of natural de-subjectivation. This is surely the reason why the *püllü* has to be devoted to taking care of the body during nocturnal states (see Chapter One). While sleeping, people are in a temporary stage of personal decomposition (a moment when the distinction between physics and metaphysics is meaningful). At this time, the person is in an antisocial stage, which presents an opportunity for evil spirits to attack. Before being able to do so however, the evil spirits have to face the *püllü*, the caretaker spirit.

That thing waits until I am deeply asleep, then it frightens my spirit, and then the truth is, there is nothing one can do against him, that it is the problem. If I could, I would grab him, I'd grab him and beat him with a stick.⁵⁷

This is what Pedro told me one day, scared and worried before going to bed. Taking into account what has been discussed up to this point, it is evident or at least reasonable to think that what the evil spirit attacks is the body, the corporeal support. It is the body of a person, detached from his or her human capacity to engage in social life, the *am*, and also unbound from its caretaker spirit ('then it frightens my spirit'), the *püllü*. Evil spirits can then attack this un-composed, or fragmented person. In other words, what the 'thing' does is take advantage of one of the few, or perhaps the only situation during which the Pehuenche person reaches a state of maximum vulnerability. This means that the evil spirit is able to *take advantage* of a situation in which the Pehuenche person is unfolded and exposes itself fully as prey. Pedro told me several times that the evil spirit 'arrived at his body':

The evil spirit arrives at the body and I don't know how it enters. I don't understand how it enters if my body is all closed, if the head is all closed, how does it enter?⁵⁸

⁵⁷ In other places on the continent, predation against other humans through sorcery has been conceived of as hunting (Chaumeil 1983) or as invisible warfare (Albert 1985).

⁵⁸ The use of the word *cuervo*, 'body,' as a space the evil spirit can get into, coincides with the definition of *kalül* given by Augusta (1916) *Kalül* is the body, or the stomach. Augusta also states that the expression *kalülelkukalen* is a shamanistic expression to indicate that some spirit is 'in' the body of the victim. On the other hand, Ibacache (2002) uses the word *kalül* as a literal translation of the physical body, while Huirimilla (2007) translates it as the physical body susceptible to feeling the *erotic pleasures of flesh*.

During our long conversations, Pedro also referred to his body as a body in which the *am* was absent, because he understands that the *am* exits the personal composition while he sleeps at night. Once the evil spirits have arrived however, what do they do? How are their attacks finally executed?

Taking into account the previously-stated argument about unilateral vision performed by evil spirits against their sleeping victims, it might be plausible now to conceptualize nocturnal attacks as cannibalistic moments, since people's blood is in fact eaten. These attacks are performed through what I will provisionally call *anti-greetings*. In Chapter One I rendered explicit the importance of mutual vision and greetings in order for a person to be activated as a real person. I also pointed out the relevance of seeing and touching as key elements required for the establishment of a social relation. Yet, throughout the current Chapter I have described how these affective capabilities emerge as an impossibility for sleepers: they cannot see nor touch their visitors. They are, in a way, forced to take part in a visitation where real greetings are impossible, and where any sort of reciprocal exchange with the visitor can never take place. In this sense, and following Siegel (2006), when *nguken* experiences are considered from within gift exchange logics, the very possibility of exchange never takes place: 'This would be the indescribable experience of the pure gift, the non-event which, though it never happens, leaves a trace' (Siegel 2006:25). On the other hand, these visits are responses to a destructive will, which is why I refer to them as wicked unilateral visits, or anti-greetings. Sleepers are thus in the 'face of the pure gift' (Ibid. p.26). Yet, from the point of view of the visitor, *nguken* can be conceptualized as actions of cannibal consumption, blood being the focus of attention.

Broadly speaking, blood (Ch. *mollbüm*) seems to be a crucial element in defining the moral qualities of a Pehuenche person, and it is also the main target of the attacks by evil spirits. A Pehuenche person can be defined by others as having either weak-bad blood (Ch. *weya mollbün*) or good-strong blood (Ch. *kvme mollbüm*). One of my friends once told me that

Those who have bad thoughts or evil thoughts and want to fight and kill someone, that is the evil, that's bad blood (Ch. weya mollbüin), that is arrogant blood.

On the contrary, good blood (Ch. *küme mollbüin*) refers to a humble attitude, the attitude of a person who does not look down on people. Good blood is also often used as synonym for good thinking (Ch. *küme rakiduam*). As many people told me, one can think properly precisely 'because one has good blood.' I suggest that witches' and evil spirits' motivation is to seize and to destroy the good human intentionality of the victim through the visual predatory dynamics I have called unilateral vision. This was fully apparent for me the day a relative of a person who had recently died because of witchcraft told me the following:

What witches want is to destroy people, because they do not have the heart that allows them to look at other people on the same level (Sp. No tienen el corazón para mirar a otras personas de igual a igual.) They want people to be destroyed, and that's why they do witchcraft and they use those malignant spirits.

Witches are not able to 'look at other people on the same level,' and are therefore not fully part of the realm of mutual vision that allows the mutual recognition of persons as real persons. They are on a different plane, one involving unilateral vision. In this sense, it is interesting to note that witches are always characterized by feelings of envy, a negative moral intentionality.⁵⁹ They appear to be antisocial beings who threaten the social stability generated among people of good blood. Not surprisingly, as has already been stated, witches are not considered true people (Ch. *reche*) in Alto Bío Bío and are excluded from good (Ch. *küme*) social relationships.

The only time I met Marianela, a supposed witch from Pitril, she confessed to me that she was extremely upset with the people who were organizing the *nguillatun* ritual because they had not invited her to participate with the rest of the community. For this reason, she had conducted her own ceremony with their family, but without friends.⁶⁰ When I told my friends in the community about this encounter, admittedly feeling a general sensation of uneasiness, they advised me not to talk to Marianela again, the

⁵⁹ For a classic article on envy and morality, see Foster 1965.

⁶⁰ For the importance of friends in the construction of true people, see Course 2011.

reason being that ‘she throws blows.’ Marianela had bad blood and bad thinking, they said. Hence, it was necessary to keep away from her and her evil, cannibalistic intentions. As Pedro told me one night:

Witches are only interested in having bad spirits to damage other people. The cheruve is where the spirits take their strength from, that is where the witch is stuck, because cheruve is thinking of eating Christians, sucking blood, and witches get the spirit from there. The cheruve is interested in Christian blood. All the old people said that, that the cheruve is thinking of sucking the Christian’s blood and killing him.⁶¹

Cheruve means ‘ball of fire,’ one seen blazing in the darkness. It is frequently described as a very dangerous and evil fireball that may be the source of the evil (see Lenz 1897; Augusta 1919; Koessler-Ilg 1962; Gundermann 1981; Waag 1982; Citarella 2000; and Hernandez 1995 & 2006). There is a general consensus in Alto Bío Bío regarding the cannibalistic need to eat blood that characterizes and defines evil spirits. It does not seem to be a coincidence that the two most common evil spirits, namely, the *witranalwe* and the *antiimalen*, do not have proper corporeal support and blood.⁶² According to my friend Pedro, while people are ‘filled with blood and are in fact people for this reason,’ the *witranalwe* and the *antiimalen* do not share this attribute. Both beings are characterized by the absence of a proper residence.

Having said this, I argue that blood for the Pehuenche is not only a visible bodily fluid, but is also the invisible moral intentionality of a person. Indeed, blood can be thought of as a hinge between the visible corporeal support and the invisible spiritual person. This may seem like a paradox or a contradiction, however for the Pehuenche it is not: evil spirits do not leave any visible prints or signs in or on the sleeper’s physical body when they suck his or her blood; in its material quality the body-site remains untouched.

⁶¹ It could be argued that in the case of the Pehuenche, not all perspectives are equal, hence the spirits want to gain access to the human perspective through the blood of humans. If this is the case, Pehuenche ontology would be closer to Londono-Sulkin’s (2005) ideas of perspectivism, as configured by the morality of non-equivalent perspectives.

⁶² *Antiimalen* means ‘child of the sun’ and is often described as ‘shining like the moon’ or appearing as a bright pebble on the ground. It is often described as the burnt body of a child - a body without blood. It can only be seen as a tiny light, its luminosity being its most important feature. For a brief analysis of conceptualizations of light among the Pehuenche, see Chapter Three. For accounts of the *antiimalen* within mapuche literature, see Guevara 1908; Latham 1924; Koessler-Ilg 1962; Casimiquela 1964; and Waag 1982.

The production of good blood can be achieved by practices of commensality, which represent a key preventive action against evil outsider spirits for the Pehuenche.⁶³ For this reason, it is very important for people in Alto Bío Bío to always be well fed, and to share food with others. Once, while having breakfast with my friend Flora, her small nephew Juan complained because he did not want to eat. ‘If you don't want an evil spirit to come and get you and kill you like your uncle, it is better that you eat... you need to have strong blood (Ch. *küme mollbiim*) if you want to go to the mountains,’ she said. Flora’s brother had been ‘grabbed by the devil.’ He had committed suicide (Ch. *kidu lamwvun*, literally ‘kill himself alone’). They had found him hanging from a tree near her house a couple of years ago. Although this example refers to situations that are not necessarily linked to witchcraft, it demonstrates the importance of eating for the mutual construction of strong blood, and the similarity of blood among true people. This similarity allows the building of a commonality across the different domains of different humanities. It is ‘a device for producing identity across species’ (Fausto 2007:500).

It is interesting to mention here one particular aspect of the *nguillatun* ritual. The prayer performed at this ceremony, the ritual where commonality is built (Course 2011), involves mixing the blood of a sacrificed sheep with the *chavid*, a drink that has been collectively prepared the day before the prayer. Each family prepares its own *chavid*, which is blended with the *chavid* of other families, and later on mixed with the blood of the sacrificial animal. This final product is offered to the deities during the prayer. The mixture of *chavid* and blood can be considered a further form of positive human intentionality offered to the deities as sign of unity against predatory difference (see Chapter Three). I suggest that it is precisely this unity that is envied and attacked by witches’ beings, which seek to destroy it through unilateral vision.

⁶³ For an analysis of commensality as producing kinship see Gow 1991; Lagrou 2000; McCallum 2001; Rival 1998; Vilaça 2002; and Viegas 2003.

2.5 Conclusions

This Chapter began by pointing to a territory of ethnographic wonder in which multicultural technologies (in this case sleeping pills) unwittingly obscure and threaten Pehuenche alterity. In particular, I reflected on how certain ‘medical things’ work in controversial situations to configure what I called ‘ontological disorders’. These are based on an uncontrolled equivocation (Viveiros de Castro 2004a)—an equivocation in which the interlocutors are unaware that the homonyms ‘body’ and ‘sleep’ conceal different realities for different perspectives. I have suggested that *nguken* experiences, when considered from a multicultural approach working upon the premise of a universal nature, are simply reduced to Pehuenche beliefs. Therefore, by considering *nguken* experiences, I argue that it is necessary to reformulate the tradition of the comparative analysis of dreams as an analysis of the equivocation of sleeping. Specifically, ‘sleeping’ in Pehuenche cosmology unveils the evident multiplicity of Pehuenche personhood. Moreover, and most importantly, I have shown how during sleep people are not being acknowledged as real people through mutual vision, mostly due to the personal dislocation and the distance of the *am* from its corporeal support. I have argued all along this Chapter that the very lack of mutual vision in *nguken* situations can entail particular ontological risks in which people are not fully enacted as people. I have also tried to demonstrate that the *am*’s absence makes the sleeper a vulnerable victim who can be attacked by evil spirits strongly characterized by unilateral visual performances. In more general terms, I have presented *nguken* situations as ethnographical evidence of the self-determined Pehuenche ontology particularly related to its visual configurations. I hope to have demonstrated that what truly characterizes *nguken* situations is violence executed through unilateral visual perception. This is caused by witches, who are not able to ‘look at other people on the same level,’ resulting in the emergence of illnesses. In the following Chapter, I turn to the examination of the importance of vision within Pehuenche healing practices.

Chapter 3

The Gift of Vision: Healing practices as cosmo-activism

How does one escape those anti-greetings performed through unilateral vision described in Chapter two? What can people do to contest the prey status conferred onto them by particular spirits? In this Chapter, through an ethnographic account of two different healing practices, I argue that the restoration of the normal plane of Pehuenche visibility can only be achieved through particular visual performances. In the vernacular, Pehuenche healers are commonly referred as those who have ‘the gift of vision’ (Sp. *el don de la vision Ch. pelontuncheve*), a capacity that is not a skill, but rather a spiritual and relational privilege of healers.⁶⁴ In this Chapter, I explore why this is the case and suggest that through the ‘gift of vision,’ healers reorganize the personal place of existence, resulting in the creation of an optimally intensive (rather than extensive) distance between the predator and its prey.⁶⁵ Broadly speaking, my contention here is that practices of healing aim to generate a relational movement within a predatory interaction. This Chapter also explores how this is accomplished through the assemblage of particular visual capacities that I call *gazes for detachment*. By making the unknown visitor visible, healers are capable of doing what patients cannot: they can interact with an enemy, rendering it temporarily invisible or a-relational, and as we have seen, being out of sight equals being out of sociality. I conclude this Chapter by suggesting that the intense efforts made by the Pehuenche to keep the potential affinity of spirits *out of sight* can be conceptualized as practices of cosmo-activism. Throughout this Chapter, I illustrate how in Alto Bío Bío, vision plays a central role in the protection of a human relational field, in a world where getting sick is always related to the alteration of the

⁶⁴ For an anthropological analysis of skilled vision, see Grasseni 2008.

⁶⁵ I am using the terms *intensive* and *extensive* in the sense of Deleuze’s (1994) conceptual distinction. Broadly speaking, extensive differences such as area, length or volume, are intrinsically divisible. Conversely, intensive differences refer to properties such as pressure or temperature that cannot be divided as such. Intensive distance, then, is defined by an indivisible intensity, rather than an extensive space prone to being measured in Euclidian terms.

process of construction of similarity.

3.1 Healing practices as kinship protection: a theoretical framework

It has recently been argued that Mapuche people, when considered through traditional understandings of kinship, are confined within consanguineal kin (Course 2011), and that the relative values of consanguinity and affinity found elsewhere in South America have been inverted to a certain extent, by both forced settlement on reservations as well as the imposition of a system of patrilineal inheritance by the Chilean State (Ibid.). In this Chapter, I will focus on the persisting conceptual continuities between Mapuche and Amerindian kinship by stressing the relevance of intensive affinity in terms of spirits, shamanism, and personal composition, for Pehuenche people. In particular, my aim is to think of Pehuenche healing practices as strongly predicated on kinship as an Amerindian process, and more specifically as practices of de-potentialization of affinity and protection of similarity. By focusing on the visual aspect of healing practices, I aim to examine the relationship between spirits and people through the lens of potential affinity.

In a key article, Viveiros de Castro (2001) has argued that affinity is the *generic mode* or *relational principle* of relatedness in South America. In arguing this, the author was inspired by both Rivière's (1984) work on the 'amerindianization' of kinship (see also Rivière 1993), and more importantly the accounts of Lévi-Strauss (1943) regarding the model of affinity and relations with strangers in South America. Viveiros de Castro (2001) has convincingly argued that affinity prevails over consanguinity in Amazonia, but also that hierarchically, the former encompasses the latter. In a nutshell, his argument is that in Amazonia, while affinity as the 'dimension of the cosmic relational matrix' (Viveiros de Castro 2001:19) is a given, consanguinity needs to be socially constructed through human action and intention. As Fausto (2007) has forcefully argued, within this ontological context of relatedness, the fundamental opposition is 'not between being human or not but between being (and having) a relative or not' (Fausto 2007:502). Thus, the main opposition is relational: kinship goes beyond the relations between humans,

and is related to the ‘ongoing management of relations with alterity’ (Ewart 2008:506). These reflections go beyond the importance of the domestic sphere in the construction of kinship (Carsten 2000), and question the problematic division between exotic and domestic spheres because this division is not ethnographically supported (Vilaça 2002).

In order to go beyond the conceptualization of affinity as kinship ties, Viveiros de Castro (2001) proposed the concept of ‘potential affinity’ (later re-conceptualized as ‘virtual affinity’) as a given generic relational value, or a virtual dimension in ‘which kinship is the process of actualization’ (Viveiros de Castro 2001:22).⁶⁶ This generic relational value, however, had already been described by Lévi-Strauss (2000) through the analogy of a ‘hinge’ (Fr. *charnière*) between two ubiquitous opposites: affinity, as a hinge, (dis)connects human and divine, friend and enemy, kin and outsider, and so on. Moreover, this hinge is strongly characterized by the metaphysics of predation (Lévi-Strauss 2000; Viveiros de Castro 2010), which, as a result of a mythical cosmological background, consist of different virtualities (affines) fighting for particular actualizations (or consanguinity). The complex conceptualization of this intensive, or virtual hinge needs to be differentiated from the extensive, or actual affinity that is subordinate to consanguinity (Viveiros de Castro 2010).⁶⁷ The former goes beyond inter-species borders, and involves the relations between humans and animals, plants, and spirits, while the latter refers to kinship as the construction of consanguinity through the de-potentialization of affinity. The tension between these opposites emerges in societies ‘without interior,’ in which the ‘inside is a mode of outside’ (Viveiros de Castro 2001:26), and where the exterior ‘is a constitutive part of kinship relations (...) because these relations are constructed from alterity as a starting point’ (Vilaça 2002:349). The Other is conceived of as a constitutive relation. Among the Pehuenche, the exterior as a constitutive part of kinship relations is an ethnographic fact that is clearly evident when considering the term used to refer one’s maternal uncle, *weku*. *Weku* literally means

⁶⁶ In a recent book, Viveiros de Castro (2010), following Taylor (2000), has stated that what he had conceptualized as ‘potential affinity’ in his 2001 work should rather be called ‘virtual affinity,’ since this terminology fits better with his Deleuze-inspired philosophical framework. For other discussions of potential affinity, see Overing 1983-1984, Albert 1985, and Taylor 1993.

⁶⁷ For a deeper elaboration of kinship in Amazonia, see Viveiros de Castro, 1992, 2001, 2002, and 2008.

‘outside,’ and is a metaphor almost identical to *wekuve*, a generic term for ‘evil spirits,’ which has been literally translated as ‘outside person’ (Hernandez in Briones 2002). The suffix *-ve* is often used to refer to a subject that performs a particular action. Therefore, *wekuve* could be literally translated as ‘the one who performs the outside.’ Lienlaf (in Sierra 1992) has stated that *wekuve* can be also translated as ‘the one who is in charge of balance’ (Sp. *equilibrador*), and ‘the one who builds by destroying’ (Sp. *el que compone echando a perder*).

In this context, kinship can be seen as a process that emerges ‘as an intensive stabilization of predation’ (Viveiros de Castro 2010:39, my own translation), and predicated on the ‘constant dialogue with non-human entities’ (Vilaça 2002:347). This literally enables the making of kin out of others (Ibid.). However, as Viveiros de Castro (2010) has himself suggested and I aim to demonstrate through my ethnography of the Pehuenche, this stabilization can also be thought of as the creation of a fleeting ‘plateau of intensity’ (Bateson 1949:85). Briefly, this can be understood as a ‘steady state’ that emerges as the nearest point to identity or the near-absence of schismogenesis (Bateson 1969). Within this philosophical reasoning, the impossibility of achieving full similarity is due to the simple fact that difference precedes similarity (Surrallés 2000; Viveiros de Castro 2001; Taylor & Viveiros de Castro 2006), the latter being a particular case of difference which does not exist for itself (Lévi-Strauss 1971).⁶⁸ In other words, affinity as a particular relation ‘is virtually eclipsed by consanguinity as part of the process of making kinship’ (Viveiros de Castro 2001:24). Yet, as I will show in this Chapter, the potential affinity of spirits is never fully eclipsed for Pehuenche people, a fact that is strongly related to the emergence of illnesses and the subsequent need to be healed. In this context, vision plays a crucial role.

⁶⁸ For a philosophical analysis of this idea, see Deleuze 1994.

3.2 Dealing with predators through the gift of vision: the case of evangelical practices

One of the first things I realized when I was living in the Pitril community was that healing practices and decision-making about who was the most suitable healer to go to had nothing, or almost nothing to do with the approaches and activities of the public health administration (see Chapters Four and Five). On the contrary, many people, when feeling sick, look for treatments and healers that are not necessarily those implemented by the State. Evangelical churches offer one of these healing alternatives, and will be the central subject of this section.⁶⁹ Two kinds of people can be distinguished among the many adherents to Evangelical churches. A minority takes Evangelical practices very seriously, and considers them to be a theological project: they stop drinking, attend rituals, etc. Yet most people approach them in a very practical way, using pragmatic criteria when deciding to look for a cure at church. Evangelical practices are chosen only as far they are seen to be effective.

With the exception of burials, the only regularly held collective events in the day-to-day life of the Pitril community were Evangelical gatherings, which were held every week, not only in Pitril but also in every other Pehuenche community in the Queuco Valley. Most of the people who attended such Evangelical events felt significantly better after having participated in the weekly act of worship. They came back to their homes describing the *instantaneous* therapeutic effects these Evangelical practices provided them with. This relief, I will suggest, was possible because these acts of worship helped temporarily rid people of the predatory dynamics that were causing their suffering.

The problem my host Pedro was dealing with while I lived in his house is again relevant here. The fact that ‘that one’ had been sucking his blood periodically (according to him

⁶⁹ For a historical analysis of Evangelical Protestantism and Indigenous populations in South America, see Gros 1999. For a review of the surge in Protestant and Pentecostal churches in South America, see Levine 2009. For examinations of the Christianization of native peoples from an anthropological perspective, see Hefner 1993 and Cannell 2006. For an analysis of the native experience of Christianity as part of the wider socio-cosmological context within which this religion is classified, see Vilaça & Wright 2009. For a deeper analysis of continuities between Mapuche cosmology and Pentecostalism, see Foerster 2003.

the reason why he always felt tired and weak) was a source of motivation for him to attend Evangelical gatherings. On the 18th of September 2009, Pedro attended the nocturnal act of worship (Sp. *vigilia*) organized by one of the two Evangelical churches in Pitril. He invited me to attend as well, because he knew that I had not been sleeping well, and he thought that I could benefit from taking part. The evening before, Pedro's daughter, a young woman in her thirties that I will call Teresa, confessed to me that her father did not know anything about the Bible, because he was not able to read well enough. A couple of months later, though, I would find Pedro wearing his glasses (which rarely happened) trying to read a bible. On that occasion, he told me he was trying *to see*, despite not being able to grasp the written religious meanings. Teresa added that what was really important for her father was his participation in the *vigilia*, despite not understanding its biblical meanings. What was essential was not the Evangelical message but the presence and participation of people known to be visually gifted (Sp. *gente con el don de la visión*). The efficacy of Evangelical practices therefore has something to do with visual capacities and the predatory states interfered with by visually gifted people.⁷⁰ Why did Pedro, and many others, feel *that* good after attending those events? What happened to the evil spirits within those evangelical devices? In short, how is healing and being visually gifted related?

3.2.1 La vigilia: The anointment performance and its cosmo-political significance

The nocturnal act of worship started around six p.m. and lasted until after dawn. The Evangelical church was in Pitril Bajo, a place that in the past had been known to be dominated by witches. Once there, and after having given a large contribution of potatoes to the pastor Francisco who was welcoming the 'sick' (Sp. *enfermos*), we went straight into the church. Inside, a band was playing. A rusty keyboard was playing the main melody and an out-of-tune bassline. There were also two guitarists, some minor

⁷⁰For general reflections on efficacy and traditional medicine, see Waldram 2000.

percussion instruments played by young women, and a small choir. There was plenty of room, and the church was furnished with wooden chairs to accommodate the 'sick people' as they were arriving. While clapping and following the musical rhythm, most of the people in attendance sang along to the songs that were played repeatedly, each lasting more than half an hour. Between songs the pastor, a man in charge of delivering the religious speech, gave talks based on the classic stories of the New Testament. The pastor shouted and spoke loudly about all the possible benefits Jesus' manifestation can have on sick people's lives. As he was speaking, participants spontaneously and loudly yelled out sentences such as 'You are the biggest, Jesus,' 'Thank you my lord,' 'All the blessings for you,' and so on. The whole ceremony involved alternations between moments in which the pastor gave his religious speech, very long songs, and moments in which everyone simultaneously and loudly prayed, asking for particular needs to be fulfilled by Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Lord. After a couple of hours, the church was crowded with about forty participants. I sat beside Pedro for hours while he actively followed the whole ceremony, like everyone else inside the church. After four or five hours, he asked me if I could make it to the end, or whether I preferred to go home. I stayed, but once I had spent about seven hours there, Pedro approached me again to ask if I was too tired, and I shyly said 'A bit.' 'We can go home whenever you want,' he said, 'but just wait for me a bit more.' It was then I realized he was still waiting for the most important moment of the *vigilia*. At a certain point, without any announcement, a few pastors stood up from the audience and headed towards the centre of the church where there was a very worn red carpet. This was where pastors took sick people to be healed, where a very crucial act was performed. Beside me, Pedro was waiting to be chosen to be among those who were going to take part in this performance, which was called 'the anointment' (Sp. *el ungimiento*). Several pastors, each in charge of healing one sick person, performed the ceremony at the same time. The pastors shivered and screamed as they placed their hands over the kneeling sick person's head and back. Finally, after being selected by one of the pastors, Pedro went over to the carpet, took off his hat, and stayed there on bended knees for a while. The pastor put his hand over Pedro's head, spilling some drops of a liquid he took from his pocket on Pedro's

forehead.⁷¹ After some minutes had passed, he came back to sit beside me, and said: ‘I am ready. We can leave whenever you want.’ After that night, Pedro was fine for three or four days. He could sleep well, and he did not mention anything about visits from evil spirits. But, unexpectedly, the presence of his visitors became a problem again a few days later.

After some weeks, during which time I regularly attended the Sunday act of worship, I realized there was a clear pattern connecting Pedro’s well-being and the moment of anointment performed during the act of worship (Sp. *culto*). In fact, every Sunday we left the ceremony immediately after Pedro had taken part in the anointment, because that act was what he was really looking for and needing. The benefits of that moment generally lasted for at least three or four days, with only a few exceptions. Thus, when the anointment effect had vanished, attending the evangelical ceremony was necessary once again. This happened on a regular basis; the cycle was repeated for weeks.

It started to become clear that the Sunday anointment performance had an impact on the evil relating occurring between Pedro and the evil spirit. Even if I was intuitively aware about the fact that the anointment practice had something to do with the gift of vision many people had spoken to me about, this only became fully apparent to me when I met Ramón, a Pehuenche pastor from the Cauñikú community. That Sunday, Ramón and his wife Pia (another pastor from Cauñikú) had been invited to give their ‘testimonies’ (Sp. *testimonios*) at the Pitiril Evangelical church. Testimonies are the personal stories of people who have been healed by Evangelical practices, told publicly to the rest of the religious audience. These healing experiences are shared as a way of encouraging the Evangelical commitment of the sick people. Testimonies always refer to very difficult and critical personal experiences people went through before the Evangelical turning point in their lives. While giving his testimony, Ramón retold with precision the moment he had actually started *to see* strange things inside people's bodies: frogs, snakes and all kinds of evil creatures. This had occurred when he was participating in an Evangelical

⁷¹ The relevance of this liquid to the whole performance will not be considered here, since I will mostly focus on the visual aspect of the anointment.

event somewhere else, and another pastor had been able to see that he was visually gifted. ‘When someone saw I was gifted (Sp. *cuando me vieron el don*), I started to be able to see’ (Sp. *yo empecé a ver*). Ramón had started to take part in evangelical practices while he was in prison in the Chilean city of Los Angeles, a place where he lived for almost four years after a mysterious killing in Cauñikú took place at the beginning of this century. The reason many Pehuenche ended up in prison was never clear. However, it was not rare to hear people calling that period the ‘curfew period’ (Sp. *toque de queda*). This expression was widely used by Chilean people during Pinochet’s dictatorship to refer to moments in which military repression was strongly executed. That day, Ramón said that he could actually *see* people in the church suffering: there was a lady in the musical band that ‘had her eyes dried,’ and someone with ‘very strong back pain.’ He added that God had shown him all these things and ‘even what is very hidden, because God is always looking... sometimes we are clean from outside but very dirty from inside.’ Towards the end of the act of worship, once Ramón had already performed the anointment for several sick people, he came to me and invited me to go over to the red carpet: ‘I saw that you are suffering from back pain, come with me.’ I did not refuse the offer, since during the preceding week I had in fact been suffering from intense back pain. I found myself on my knees, eyes closed, listening to a very noisy clamor of screams and people praying and crying. Ramón put his hands over my head and back for some minutes, then he starting trembling. Only when he took some distance and left me alone did I come back to my seat, where Pedro was waiting for me. Once there, he asked me straightforwardly: ‘Are you ready? Let's go home.’ In that moment, it was fully clear to me that the gift of vision and the anointment performance were both strongly connected and were crucial elements to be considered in order to understand how the sick person was indeed protected (from the healer’s perspective) and healed (from the sick person perspective), if you will, by Evangelical practices.

I accidentally bumped into Ramón on the bus a couple of days after that Sunday worship. He asked me about my back pain, and whether or not I felt better. Then, he explained that he had not done anything at all when healing my back, because he was

‘just a healing instrument.’ With this expression, he was pointing out that the real healing work was not done by him, but by someone else *through* him. I started to realize then that being visually gifted did not mean pastors were the agents of a capacity that afforded vision beyond appearances, a point I will return to below. I asked him whether the relations he established (as another entity’s instrument) in order to see/heal implied any kind of risk to himself. I was not expecting him to be so straightforward when he emphatically and angrily told me that he was not a shaman (Ch. *machi*), ‘because shamans work *with* the enemy. In order to undo witchcraft, shamans must know how to do those things! They can be witches; they are witches! I, on the other hand, fight *against* the enemy!’

3.2.2 Relational spiritual safety

Spiritual safety was a common statement of appreciation Pehuenche people made of the benefits of Evangelical practices. It was very rare to engage in a conversation with an Evangelical person who did not render explicit this benefit of participation in religious activities. Pastors, I was told many times, were capable of keeping a distance between them and the enemy when combating the latter, since the spiritual relations they created with their spiritual colleagues were morally clear and distinct, so to speak. These relations guaranteed an intervention that was never destructive, but rather the opposite: their actions offered security.⁷² In fact, many people used to say that Evangelicals worked ‘only with God,’ which made Evangelical gatherings a handy and unthreatening healing device. However, this statement was generally made in comparison to other traditional healing practices such as those performed by shamans, which were, on the contrary, considered very risky for both shamans and patients.⁷³ Renato, Francisco’s son

⁷² I should mention that the Evangelical perspective of the Pehuenche is of course much more complex than this statement indicates, but I cannot develop this further in this thesis. It must be said however that some Pehuenche people who do not participate in Evangelical events claim that Evangelical attendants are becoming Chilean, a reason why those events are to some extent dangerous as well.

⁷³ On this tension among the Mapuche, see Bacigalupo 2001. For a reflection about this tension in Amazonia, see Whitehead & Wright 2004.

who was also an Evangelical pastor also told me that their battle was ‘just against the enemy, the *cheruve*, (usually translated as ‘the Devil’) adding that they did not work *with* the *cheruve* ‘as shamans do.’ Thus, Francisco and Renato helped me understand that Evangelical healers were people capable of establishing relations with particular spirits while at the same time avoiding certain kinds of spiritual relatedness. But if they do not work *with* the enemy, what is their source of vision, the spiritually secure relation that allows them to see/heal/fight *against* and not *with*? What kind of relating allows them to take part in a spiritual battle in such a protected way? What was the pastor’s relational singularity when performing the anointment? And last but not least, how were all these healing performances linked to the privileged gift of vision so intrinsically attributed to pastors’ actions?

3.2.3 Relational spiritual vision

Once, Ramón asked me about the people who were behind my research. Unexpectedly, he seemed pleased when I mentioned I was working with people from England. The Spanish word for England is ‘Inglaterra,’ but Renato referred to this place with the word ‘Inglatierra,’ which sounded a bit unusual, but made clear the importance that land (Sp. *tierra*, Ch. *mapu*) had for him. He mentioned that they had a very good friend in *Inglatierra* named Andy, who had lived in Alto Bío Bío for many years and who had actually helped them build their church. Andy was an English Evangelical pastor who had a strong relationship with the land, he said. Thus Ramón was very pleased to hear that I also worked with people from that land. As I will show, relations with the land’s spirits were indeed important when performing healing practices, particularly those involving the *püllü* spirit.

As mentioned in Chapter One, every person is in coexistence with a particular *püllü* that under normal conditions is a part of the personal composition. In this sense, every person could actually be, as Kracke (1987) has pointed out, in part a shaman. I argue that the difference between normal people and visually gifted ones is due to a relational

intensity (Viveiros de Castro 2007), rather than the accumulation of knowledge: Visually gifted people actually have their *küme püllü* in outstanding balance with other *küme* personal attributes (*küme rakiduam*, ‘good thinking,’ *küme mollbüm*, ‘good blood,’ *küme dungun*, ‘good words’).⁷⁴ More precisely, the relational privilege of Evangelical pastors is their ability to work with the Holy Spirit, which is translated in Chedungun with the words *küme püllü*. The very capacity of seeing inherent to the gift of vision possessed by pastors is indeed due to a spiritual proximity defined by its strong instrumental character. Evangelical pastors are instruments of vision used by spirits (univocally good) that are commonly called ‘the witnesses of the sky’ and are defined as ‘those who work with us, those who can see.’⁷⁵ This spiritual proximity allows visually gifted people to not only gain some know-how of healing through dreams. For example, Ramón learnt how to perform the anointment through dreams. At the same time, pastor-instruments also need other kinds of objects (heuristically speaking) while performing their healing actions. At the most intensive part of the anointment, a perfume and/or a bible are used as healing instruments. In fact, every time a pastor started shaking, loosing the strength in his legs and knees, he put a little bit of perfume over the head, ears, and back of the sick person. ‘God collaborates with the Holy Spirit, I put the perfume,’ I was once told by Ramón.

It was a shared opinion among Evangelical people that the background for this occasional vision was the Enemy’s omnipresence. The evil spirit’s omnipresence is experienced by the Pehuenche as part of an ongoing predatory dynamic between people and possible attackers. In fact, as Ramón told me, evil spirits are

always near people, observing. They never say goodbye to people, they are like peukos with chickens: when they see a little chicken, the peuko is always waiting to attack and eat them. That one is always interested in people, it is always beside people, they never say goodbye to people.

Peukos (parabuteo unicinctus) are predatory birds that often eat the chickens people keep in their homes. These *spiritual peukos*, to use Ramón’s analogy, could only attack when a person was alone, and tended to keep a distance when there was ‘more than just

⁷⁴ For discussions of the word *küme* within Indigenous moral dualism, see Briones & Oliveira 1985. For more epistemological discussions about language, appreciation, and words, see Mol 2012, in press.

⁷⁵ For a discussion of the spiritual relations of shamans, see Bacigalupo 2004.

one person.’ This is a crucial point in arguing that healing practices can be considered practices of *cosmo-activism*, understood as the strengths stemming from being together in mutual visual recognition. This point will be returned to in the conclusion of the current Chapter.

3.2.4 The gift of vision: Assembling gazes for detachment

As I have already pointed out, the effects of the pastor's healing performance have a limited duration. As I will show, this duration is directly connected to the gift of vision and the act of seeing: healing requires as an essential precondition the capability of gazing at the evil visitor, bestowing upon the latter the very status of an *Enemy*.⁷⁶ In short, the Enemy has to be put *out of sight* after having come *into sight as enemy*, through specific procedures involving particular visual capacities-intensities and actors. As such, this gaze is a helpful action working to ephemerally move the sick person out from the position of victim. Being able to see the Enemy, is not a capacity prone to being achieved in a definite way however, but rather a position to be transitorily inhabited and constructed during specific relational moments. In short, I suggest that seeing the Enemy enables the detachment of the ill person from their evil relating through ‘gazes for detachment.’ The healing capacity has to do not only with the visual gift healers are endowed with, but also with the relational detachment they are capable of maintaining while seeing and fighting against the Enemy.

Concretely, what the anointment action provides is an instantaneous change with respect to the distance evil spirits establish between themselves and their victims, having as a result the malignant visitors’ disappearance. In fact, for a limited time, those frightening ‘visitors’ are kept out of sight, and in a way their very status as ‘visitors’ is successfully

⁷⁶ As demonstrated in Chapter Two, while the enemy attacks it cannot be considered an enemy since, as Siegel (2006) has convincingly argued, the visitor is something that cannot be truly named, and it remains outside the possibility of recognition.

contested.⁷⁷ Through the gift of vision, sick people can actually move away from the status of food their Enemy's interpellation confers upon them (keeping in mind that malignant spirits eat their victims' blood). The anointment moment can therefore be thought of as predicated on radical primary dialectics 'between seeing and eating' (Mentore 1993:29). I suggest that this is achieved by creating an optimal intensive rather than extensive distance between the predator and its prey. I use the term 'intensive' because the spirits' disappearance, which I am mostly concerned with here, has nothing to do with an Euclidean metric or an extensive space made of bounded and artificial extensive boundaries. To put it in De Landa's (2005) words (inspired by Deleuze), the anointment performance cannot be thought of as being within 'zones that extend in space up to a limit marked by a frontier' (De Landa 2005:80). Conversely, the whole anointment procedure functions within a space that is *indivisible* and appears configured by *zones of intensity*, a space that cannot be divided without changing nature (Ibid.). In this logic, the change produced by the anointment is related to the degree of visual intensity in motion. Spirits do not go away as if they are expelled by simple spatial metrical addition. Rather, they are expelled through the 'emergence of a spontaneous flow or movement, which (...) tends to cancel the differences in intensity and restores equilibrium and average values' (Ibid. p.81).

Broadly speaking, the achievement of *intensive disappearance* in regards to these spirits echoes Deleuzian thinking where 'everything which happens, and everything which appears is correlated with orders of difference: difference of levels, temperature, pressure, tension, potential, difference of intensity' (Deleuze 1994:222). Along this line of thinking, everything that *disappears* is correlated with orders of difference, with the enaction of particular intensive visual healing performances that I call 'gazes for detachment.' In short, I argue that seeing the Enemy allows one to frighten it away and to render it temporarily invisible or a-relational: being *out of sight* is equal to being out of sociality. Moreover, when thinking of the durational effects of anointment, or those days without visitors, it becomes clear how this optimal, intensive distance finally

⁷⁷ For the importance of visitations among Indigenous peoples, see Surreales 2003 and Chapter Two of this dissertation.

allows the creation of a non-relational coexistence between visible people and invisible evil spirits. These ontological tensions involving potential affine spirits in a world inhabited by different actants (*sensu* Latour) are in daily life shaped by the repetition of that ongoing healing cycle experienced by sick people. I argue that the days characterized by the temporary suspension of predatory difference through vision are the expression of the de-potentialization of affinity involving spirit affines. By rendering visible the conflictive interaction between people and spirits, the risky, possible actualization of potential affinity is *temporarily* stopped. This is achieved through the creation of an unstable human relational field that I call the ‘Pehuenche plateau of human visibility.’ This ‘Pehuenche steady state’ emerges as the nearest point to identity or the near-absence of schismogenesis (Bateson 1969).

The weekly pattern involving Pedro, the anointment performance, and the evil spirit, helped me realize that the presence of the Enemy cannot be fully diluted nor destroyed. Rather, the healing practices have an impact on the relation between a person, or what I have called the personal composition (Chapter One), and their particular evil relatings. In short, the evil spirit, or in Evangelical jargon, the Enemy, is not capable of being killed, but rather is just moved away: through the anointment, the frightening visitor is itself intensely frightened. Moreover, in cases where gazes for detachment reach a significant intensity, the performance is called a ‘surgery’ or ‘operation’ (Sp. *operación*). This spiritual operation, in which the Holy Spirit uses the pastor as its main instrument, is mainly defined by its defensive effects. Seeing allows one to defend the sick person through an intensive spiritual gaze that is capable of creating the conditions necessary for throwing the Enemy out of sight. This surgery consists of activating the spirit’s presence through the pastor’s corporeal support, who, in Ramón’s words, ‘puts his hands over the body while nobody can see him (the spirit): he is the only one who can see himself. What arrives is power.’

3.2.5 The relevance of the pastor's corporeal support as an instrument

The capacity to see without being seen (in the vernacular referred to as 'power') is not attributed to the healer's agency. This explains the absence of explicit ethnographical data about what is seen at the moment of anointment. The pastor is not the agent of vision, but is just a material instrument for the Holy Spirit to occupy the predatory visual position with respect to the Enemy. In those moments the pastor is an instrument precisely because 'witnesses of the sky' can express themselves and engage in relations with sick people *through* pastors' corporeal supports. The point I would like to make here is that in order to frighten evil spirits away, and to recreate a human relational field with the sick person, the presence of a human corporeal support is needed. More specifically, I suggest that the part of the *instrument* played by pastors within these visual performances is relevant in that it enacts the presence of achieved consanguinity, the physical human body. This corporeal support is necessary to momentarily and humanly inhabit that space in between opposite dimensions. I want to suggest that the unstable stability of the 'Pehuenche plateau of human visibility' is achieved through the complex relation between different virtual or spiritual intensities in assemblage with a pastor's corporeal support. What I am suggesting in fact, is that the achievement of intensive vision itself can be thought of as a fundamental action of management in regards to the cosmological hinge. It is the visual intensity of the personal composition created in the act of healing that is an essential precondition for achieving a stabilization of the predatory and omnipresent spirits' 'virtual affinity.'

Going back to the anointment ceremony, once the Enemy was made relationally visible, the pastor uttered two or three words aimed at forcing out the enemy's presence. In this sense, it seems undeniable that, following Surreales (2003) vision is the expression of true people's presence, which allows (de)communication between humans and non-humans: intensive vision is indeed the hinge. Moreover, as I have been arguing, the fundamental aspect of acts of worship is the total aesthesia of the moment of anointment, which is based on intensive vision, itself understood as a perceptual interaction which precedes speech. Without vision, there is only the realm of antisocial interactions where any

process of conceptualization is impossible, as the experience of *nguken* renders apparent (see Chapter Two). The re-composition of the personal composition enacted by healing practices is possible because of this very anti-relational, protective, and intensive gaze that separates.⁷⁸ *Gazes for detachment* allow the transformation of spirits' omnipresence into a *temporary absence*, characterized by a temporary intensive distance, partly because the intensity of the gaze is itself ephemeral. Finally, this intensive vision is related to the creation of a minimal difference understood as the reproduction (or protection) of kinship or human physicality, or the suspension of predatory difference. In this way the Enemy, very often called 'the illness' (Sp. *la enfermedad* Ch. *kutran*) or 'the Devil', finally goes away. An intensive distance is created, a spiritual detachment known as 'a cleaning' (Sp. *limpieza*) of the evil relating *through* vision (at least in part, and as a preliminary move). The relational cleaning thus produces an anti-relational effect consisting in pushing the enemy away. I propose that these healing performances are indeed *gazes for detachment* that allow the sick victim to move temporarily away from their prey position within a wider predatory dynamic.⁷⁹

In a nutshell, I suggest that during the moment of anointment, a particular pastor's personal composition is able to see *more than meets the eye*, both more than meets the sick person's eye as well as the pastor's own eye under normal circumstances. However, this performance has nothing to do with eyes as physical organs (pastors often perform their work with their eyes closed), but rather with intensive vision without organs. In fact, Pehuenche people conceive of and evince these visual performances with a visual bias of their own: these actions are not simply *visual*, but rather, to put it in very general terms, they refer to ontological relational differences. In this sense, and following Ewart (2008:507), I not only suggest that 'the social significance of the senses is as much bound up with an understanding of sociality (...) as it is bound up with sensory experience itself,' but also that *sensory experience* should itself be considered as the

⁷⁸ For the study of 'relations that separate,' see Strathern 1988 and Stasch 2009.

⁷⁹ As I have already shown, these therapeutic gazes have a finite duration. While performing the 'surgery,' the Holy Spirit also gives *injections* that last for two or three days. These injections, which were hardly ever fully described by my friends in detail, are strongly related to the pastor-instrument-Holy-Spirit's intensive gaze.

materiality (*sensu* Keane) of sociality.⁸⁰

3.3 Dealing with predators through the gift of vision: The case of *lawentuncheve*

Like many young women in Alto Bío Bío, Giorgina had emigrated to Santiago looking for a job as a maid. While working with a rich family, she fell ill. She could not work well, and most of the time she felt weak. Giorgina's skin deteriorated, and she felt very ugly. In fact, as she told me, she desperately wanted to be normal, to look like a normal person. Worried about the situation, Giorgina's boss (Sp. *patrona*) took her to one of the most expensive and prestigious private medical clinics in the city. Doctors there said she had acne problems, and prescribed her many pills - too many, as she said. However the treatment did not work at all. Every time she looked at herself in a mirror, she cried. Eventually she decided to go back to Alto Bío Bío. Giorgina's oldest sister, troubled by her sister's appearance, decided to take her urine to Flora, an herbalist working in Cauñikú. The herbalist looked at the urine and said that Giorgina had a blood problem. Her blood was very weak, she said before providing her with many liters of herbs (Ch. *lawen*). When I met Giorgina for the first time in Cauñikú, she definitely felt much better and she had decided to stay in Alto Bío Bío. She told me:

Doctors could not help me at all, since they could not see what I really had, what my problem really was. I do not know what kind of sight doctors have. They thought in fact that my problem was just a skin problem. Flora, on the other hand, could see my illness. She could really see everything.

Naty always wondered why doctors could not see some illnesses. When she got ill, doctors took X-rays and the only thing they could actually see, she said, 'were gallbladder stones and some pneumonia problems.' None of the medical treatments offered to Naty by the local health clinic were at all effective. She followed different treatments and she took many medications, but she did not feel better. She was going 'completely crazy' when she decided to see a *lawentuncheve*.⁸¹ Naty took her urine to

⁸⁰ For a discussion of senses and materiality, see Keane 2008.

⁸¹ For a definition and analysis of this word, see below.

Flora and she was told that her problem was witchcraft. ‘Doctors cannot see witchcraft,’ Naty told me. ‘You can get really sick because of that. Witchcraft exists! But only Flora was capable of seeing that.’

Herbalists’ healing practices are based on particular visual capacities, which oftentimes enable an intervention against evil relations. As these stories show, comparisons between local practices of healing-seeing and biomedical practices are also very frequent. Here, I will consider these comparisons as a general way of detecting ontological differences. I deliberately chose to begin this Chapter by discussing evangelical performances rather than those of herbalists because the former could be (wrongly) considered, by anthropological theories of acculturation and cultural change, as *less* Pehuenche.⁸² I hope to counter this possibility by rendering explicit some similarities between the performances of herbalists and Evangelical pastors related to vision and healing.⁸³

3.3.1 The gift of vision of the *lawentuncheve*

The word *lawentuncheve* literally refers to a person (Ch. *che*) who knows how to work with medicinal plants (Ch. *lawen*).⁸⁴ These persons have been conceptualized by some scholars as non-proper shamanic people and categorized as healers who deal mostly with *natural illnesses* (Grebe 1975; Oyarce 1988; Bacigalupo 2001; Citarella 2000). This is a conceptual consequence of another distinction generally made within Mapuche scholarship, namely, the division between spiritual and natural illnesses (the latter being a simplified translation of the Chedungun word *rekutran*) (Grebe 1975; Oyarce 1988; Bacigalupo 2001). For instance, physical wounds, fractures, etc. have been categorized as natural illnesses and have mostly been associated with the performances of herbalists. Even if none of my friends in Alto Bío Bío would deny that a wound, for example, has

⁸² For a general reflection on how acculturation has been analyzed within traditional anthropological debates and how Indigenous peoples conceptualize of acculturation as simultaneously implying both a weakness and an improvement, see Gow 1993 and 2001; Kelly 2005, and Turner 1988.

⁸³ For reflections on conversion and perspectivism see Vilaça 2008.

⁸⁴ Medicinal herbs have been studied in detail by many scholars. See Gay 1852; Murillo 1889; Gusinde 1917; Moesbach 1959; Hoffman 1990; Citarella 2000.

nothing to do with spiritual illnesses, in my own experience the distinction between natural and spiritual illnesses can be conceptually problematic and is not fully grounded on ethnographic data. Nevertheless, within the taxonomical tradition in Mapuche healing literature, *lawentuncheve* have been strongly associated with natural illnesses and have been categorised as laypeople (Sp. *gente común y corriente*, according to Bacigalupo 2001). As a result, and probably because of the less exotic nature of their activities in comparison with proper shamans (Ch. *machi*), *lawentuncheve* have been shamanically underestimated so to speak. One of my aims in this section is to counter this trend by arguing that differences between herbalists and shamans have to do mostly with the degree of (relational) intensity these healers establish with their *püllü* spirits.

In general terms, the herbalists' work is defined by two particular healing capacities. Firstly, they are people who actually know a great deal about medicinal herbs, being able to prepare different medicines for different illnesses. General knowledge about medicinal herbs (Sp. *conocer remedios*) is transmitted by old people (Ch. *koiviche*) to the new generations and is also disseminated among women. This is done through informal conversations (Ch. *nutram*) in which such knowledge (Ch. *kimun*) is shared. However, the transmission of this knowledge is progressively disappearing in Alto Bío Bío because of the new generations' (Sp. *gente nueva*, Ch. *wekeche*) lack of interest in these matters. In fact, there are only a few herbalists left in Alto Bío Bío (and no proper shamans left) and all of them are seriously worried about the future of their healing practices. Since it involves 'too much sacrifice,' young people do not want to learn, they say. In the words of one of the herbalists I met, to learn about herbs 'is like learning to read.⁸⁵ You need to study, and you need a teacher. When I die, this activity will be finished. Nobody wants to study with me. Too complicated, they say.' Furthermore, herbalists need to collect their medicinal plants in the mountains, and it is a shared opinion that medicines are progressively disappearing. The apparent reduction in medicinal herbs is thought to be due to the decision of the supreme being *Ngenechen* who is hiding the *lawen* away from the many new non-Pehuenche inhabitants of the

⁸⁵ For similar comparisons between the transmission of Indigenous healing practices and non-Indigenous reading/writing practices, see Viveiros de Castro 2007 and Gow 2001.

valley.

Importantly, herbalists are capable *of seeing* different illnesses (Ch. *kutran*) through particular visual capacities. Not surprisingly, and in a similar way to Evangelical pastors, herbalists are usually known by laypeople for having the *gift of vision*. They are considered *pelontucheve*, which in Chedungun means that they are ‘people capable of *really* seeing.’

3.3.2 *Pelontun willen*

The main method of seeing, and thus making a diagnosis, is enacted by herbalists while looking at a patient’s urine.⁸⁶ In this section, I will focus on this particular activity, even though I am fully aware that the visual capacities of *lawentuncheve* are not limited to these actions and also include the special ability of seeing in dreams (Ch. *peuma*), which are an undeniable source of knowledge about the conditions of patients and the availability of herbs. For instance, *lawentuncheve* can generally see a sick person in dreams when the latter is too sick (Sp. *enfermedad muy cargada, muy pasada* En. *rotten*), as well as particular places certain herbs can be found. This method of diagnosis is called *pelontun willen*, which in the words of one herbalist’s daughter, means ‘to really see what is really going on, when what is going on can indeed be visualized in the urine.’⁸⁷ However, few people can *really see* I was told, ‘beyond what you can normally see.’⁸⁸ The word *pelon* can mean ‘seeing,’ ‘brightness,’ ‘prediction of the future,’ and also ‘diagnosis of illness,’ all of which point to extraordinary capacities of vision. Moreover, *pelon* sometimes refers to ‘light,’ but not as a range of electromagnetic radiation that can be detected by the human eye, as light is commonly conceived of in physics. In fact, if someone wants to refer to light in the sense of the light of the sun or the light of day, for example, the Chedungun word for ‘sun,’ which is the same word as

⁸⁶ For other diagnostic practices and a brief historical review of these, see Bacigalupo 2001.

⁸⁷ It is also very common to hear that herbalists see the *mor*, an abbreviation of the Spanish word *humor*.

⁸⁸ As argued by Bloch (2008), within the Pehuenche world vision is not a guarantee against deceit. This is apparent by the fact that there are different intensities of vision.

for ‘day,’ must be added (Ch. *antü pelon*). Thus brightness in Pehuenche ontology is often not related to electromagnetic radiation, but rather has a particular Pehuenche intensity. A similar point has been made by Viveiros de Castro (2007:164): ‘in the Amazonian case, this does not involve a conception of light as a distributor of relations of visibility-knowability across an extensive space (I’m thinking here of certain passages from *Les mots et les choses*) but of light as pure intensity, the intense and intensive ‘heart’ of reality which establishes inextensive distance between beings.’ In Alto Bío Bío, there are different ways of referring to intensive and extensive light, the former being associated with a particular relational capacity few people have, as I will demonstrate below.

Being able to see illness is a capacity that cannot be learnt. It is a gift that even after years of study cannot be developed. In fact, in Alto Bío Bío it is commonly believed that doctors cannot see (Ch. *pelolay*) ‘through’ urine because they have only studied and do not have *the gift*. This gift, however, is not something that someone *is* (a matter of being), but rather, as I will try to show, it is a relational capacity herbalists *have*: it is the possibility of engaging in relations with some particular ‘seer’ spirits (a matter of having).⁸⁹

Camilo was the oldest son of an herbalist working in Alto Bío Bío. During his life, he had learnt many things about medicinal herbs and he had always wanted to be able to ‘see’ urine. Claudia, one of his sisters, told me that he had actually been punished because of this forbidden pretension. One day, Camilo’s seven year-old son fell ill. That night, when Camilo was a little bit drunk, he publicly proclaimed that he actually had the capacity to see in urine. He said that he actually knew what illness his son had, but none of his sisters believed him. A couple of hours later, his son’s condition worsened, and he had to be taken in as an emergency to the nearest hospital in Santa Bárbara. The day after, Camilo’s wife decided to take the child’s urine sample to Camilo’s mother who said that the boy had an illness that doctors could not see. She then told Camilo in a firm

⁸⁹ For an accurate reflection on the crucial importance of relations between spirits and people in the creation of knowledge, see Cesarino 2010.

tone that it was not possible to see the urine without having the gift of vision. She suggested to him that if he did not want to be punished, he should stop trying to pretend to have that capacity. When Camilo's sister told me this story, she emphatically added: 'You can learn something about herbs - for instance, which herbs are good for some abdominal pains and so on - but you cannot have the gifted capacity of knowing *who* was actually the source of that illness.' With these words, Claudia was pointing out the essential shamanic imperative for the emergence of knowledge: in order to know, to personify is always essential. By finding out the intentionality and the *who(ness)* at stake within a particular action, every event could in fact be seen as being an action (Viveiros de Castro 2010). Yet in Alto Bío Bío, access to this knowledge does not necessarily imply taking the Other's perspective, as has been suggested for other Amerindian contexts (Viveiros de Castro 2004). However, in order to know *who* the evil source producing illnesses is, it is always necessary to engage in a particular spiritual relation.

3.3.3 Spiritual relatedness

The shamanic spirit in relation with an herbalist is generally called *wenu püllü* and can be activated every time a *lawentuncheve* is dealing with a sick person. Even if that spiritual relation is considered a given, an herbalist needs to accept this as a relational privilege. In this sense, the personal will and conscious decision to become an herbalist is a precondition for the activation of such a relationship.⁹⁰ More precisely however, the gift (Sp. *don*) of vision is strongly related to the *püllü* spirit of a *ngen* (see Chapter One) in a relationship with a person who is characterized by their good thinking, or *küime rakiduam*. Indeed, Manuel once told me tautologically that a person needs to be very 'spiritual' in order to engage in relationship with a *ngen's* spirits (see Chapter One). In Alto Bío Bío, this relationship is considered a particular intensity of being related to *Ngenechen*, a deity that, to put it in a very reductionist Euclidian way, also shares the space of heightness (Ch. *wenu*) as its place of residence. In fact, the moment of vision

⁹⁰ This is the same spiritual relatedness shamans are involved in (See Bacigalupo 2001).

(Ch. *pelontun*) can be thought of as the result of the presence of *Ngenechen* as well as a privileged relationship with this deity. It can indeed be said that it is *Ngenechen* or the *wenu pillü* who can actually see in or through the urine, and is co-responsible for intensive vision. However, before elaborating further on this relational aspect that allows intensive vision in the urine, some other aspects of the procedural practices of performing *pelontun willen* need to be mentioned.

3.3.4 Fluid invisibilities: Procedures to make them visible

It must be stated from the outset that this act of seeing performed by herbalists is possible not only because of the spiritual relation just mentioned, but also because the urine is a suitable diagnostic instrument. My friend Flora once told me that she could not really understand how some healers said that they could make a diagnosis by looking at an egg. She was referring to an old non-Pehuenche lady who could actually ‘read’ an egg. ‘How can the breath of a person go through that solid eggshell?’ she asked. This is probably related to the nature of fluids as materials not prone to being extensively (as opposed to intensively) confined. Furthermore, I have good reason to believe that there is a link between a person’s blood and his or her urine, or more generally, between contiguous personal body fluids. One particular piece of evidence for this is that one of the defensive strategies used to protect children and some sick people against evil spirits is to drink *winka* (non-Pehuenche) urine. *Winka* urine, it is said, mixes quickly with one’s blood, and the automatic merging of the non-Pehuenche urine and Pehuenche blood is thought to make the spirit run away. ‘The evil spirit won’t like a blood mixed with *winka* urine, so it will leave,’ Manuel once said. It is also important to note that the very act of seeing in the urine is ephemeral, this bodily fluid being an instrument of *passage* by which virtualities of the invisible Pehuenche realm can be momentarily screened. The fleeting nature of an image in urine became fully clear to me at a time when I was living near Temuco (very far away from Alto Bío Bío) with a shaman who also used urine samples as diagnostic tools. She had recently seen several urine samples

from different patients. After some days went by, the samples were still in the place where she had left them the day she saw her patients. I had in fact been wondering whether those samples were being kept there for a purpose when I heard her angrily ask her son to ‘Get rid of those bottles of nasty piss!’ (Sp. *bota de una vez ese meao!*).

In practical terms, the act of seeing the urine is simple and not exotic, possibly a reason why it has been dismissed as an improper shamanic action. Patients are requested to collect their first urine of the day in a bottle. It is important to not have eaten anything before urinating, and the collection must be done before the sun starts rising. The urine sample is often taken to the herbalist by a friend or relative of the patient, a person who is usually referred to as ‘the owner of the sick person’ (Ch. *ngen kutran*). Once the herbalist has asked who the urine sample belongs to, the bodily fluid is put in another transparent bottle made of glass. This glass bottle is then placed in the sun or against any white background (a wall or a notebook for example). The *lawentuncheve* holds it for a while, waiting until the liquid becomes completely still.⁹¹ It is not necessary for the patient or the patient’s relative or friend to be present while the herbalist looks at the urine, and herbalists often see a urine sample without actually seeing the patient. What can *really be seen* in the urine by the *lawentuncheve*, and what laypeople cannot see, is a small human shape or image usually described as ‘the whole body of a person.’ One of the most widespread analogies used to refer this event is a comparison between the *pelontun willen* image and ‘X-rays of the whole body.’ Many times herbalists can point out the particular organs involved in the illness in question (such as the kidneys, bladder, gallbladder, and so on), as the affected organs appear visually emphasized. For instance, the first time I was told of the reason for the stomach pain I had been dealing with for many months during my fieldwork was by Flora, the herbalist in Cauñikú. When I asked Flora what she was seeing in my urine sample, she told me that there was ‘a little man with a very irritated gallbladder.’ She added that the reason I had that wound (she could see a wound on the gallbladder) was probably because I had eaten too much lamb at the *nguillatun*. After my fieldwork, I indeed needed to have a surgery to have my

⁹¹ For different procedures for performing *pelontun willen*, see Gutiérrez 1987.

gallbladder removed.

The moment in which the urine becomes still is very important: it is exactly at that moment that the ‘illness appears,’ or as some of my friends told me, the ‘illness comes to presence’ (Sp. *se presenta la enfermedad*).⁹² That moment was described to me by an herbalist as if one could see through a ‘magnifying glass.’ Yet, an essential spiritual presence is needed in order to see this. Flora once told me:

*In that moment, Chao Chao Ngenechen must be present. It is Chao Chao who gives everything, he shows everything, and then helps me find the most suitable herb for that particular illness. Ngenechen is the powerful one, I just ask him to be present. He puts his hands on the sick in order to help the sick person, he helps me, he gives everything.*⁹³

Ngenechen’s presence, however, needs to be permanent during the whole healing process, as Renato once told me:

Doctors can only see through X-rays, through scientific stuff, then they can know what the person’s problem is, but they will never ever know what the person’s problem is only by seeing them. The doctor asks you what you feel but he is never sure about that. So they send you to the hospital to take X-rays. Conversely, within Indigenous medicine, the person is very important. Herbalists talk to the sick person, but most importantly, there is always a dialogue with Chao Ngenechen. When a lawentuncheve gives you herbs, she prays, asking the herbs to be effective, and also when you take those herbs, you need to pray for Ngenechen to be present. Without Ngenechen, nothing happens.

3.3.5 Screening human intentionality

The X-ray analogy commonly used to describe *pelontun willen* underlines the fact that both technologies aim at rendering visible something that at first glance goes unnoticed by laypeople. However, even if both procedures allow that illness to come to visual presence, there is something an X-ray will never be able to screen: human intentionality. Until now, I have provided examples in which the human shape appears while looking at urine samples, an event that may be related to a screening of the *am* (Chapter One), the latter understood as the virtual, singular aspect of a person: their invisible side. However,

⁹² It has been suggested by other scholars (Bacigalupo 2001) that a trance is not necessary when performing *pelontun willen*. I hesitate to support this affirmation however, since what is at stake, I argue, is the intensity of that ‘trance,’ rather than the trance itself.

⁹³ *Chao Chao* and *Ngenechen* are just different ways of referring to the same ‘owner’ of the people.

this 'organic' image of the whole body if you will, is just one of the shapes capable of being seen in the fluidity of urine. In many conversations with Flora, I was told that most of her patients arrived with the 'devil stuck to them.' This fact could actually be seen in the urine, but not only there, as the following ethnographical anecdote demonstrates.

One morning, while I was helping Flora repair a very old window that had been broken by the wind, I saw a very young girl arriving with a woman. They came from Malla Malla, a Pehuenche community near the Argentine border, and they were looking for Flora. While I continued working, Flora helped the girl, who could not walk properly, to get to the kitchen where the house's cooking fire was. This was the place where the *lawentuncheve* would spend time with her patients, sharing food, preparing medicines, talking, and so on. Lucia, the eleven year-old girl, had been playing alone outside her house. It was the beginning of the winter and the ground in Malla Malla was starting to be covered by the first snow of the season. While she was outside she had gone to pick up some apples that had fallen down from a tree. She also tried to collect some chicken eggs. When she came back inside the house however, Lucia was very different. The girl was behaving in a very odd way. While outside, she had been 'caught by the devil,' I was told. She could not speak properly nor walk naturally. Her gaze also seemed different. Lucia's parents had already taken her to an Evangelical act of worship in Malla Malla, but without any encouraging results. After that event, Lucia still had a very strange look, and she had not been able to sleep for two days. Her legs were crooked, and she could not walk straight. Flora told me that looking in her eyes was frightening because she had an 'evil spirit stuck to her blood.' The main complaint made by Lucia's mother was that they had not been able to 'move that illness away' (Sp. *apartar la enfermedad*). Flora told me that she had looked at her urine even if it was already clear that she had 'someone' stuck to her. She then prepared a particular *lawen* to protect the girl, medicine that she called 'an *against* (Sp. *contra*) medicine.' When Lucia drank the medicine, she started shouting and whistling, and she tried to reject such 'against medicine.' After a while however, she calmed down: the evil spirit had moved away.

Some months later, during one of my visits to Cauñiku, I again spoke to Flora about this event. I was very curious about how evil relating could be seen in the urine. So while we were collecting some wood, I asked her about that incident. She told me that not only could witchcraft (Ch. *kalkutun*) be seen in the urine, but also evidence of *treventun* or *topantun* moments. These were moments in which a person suddenly and literally bumped into a spirit while outside in the mountains. In fact, *topantun* comes from the Spanish word *topar*, which means ‘to bump into.’⁹⁴ In Amerindian contexts, these interactions have been called supernatural encounters: ‘an abnormal context wherein a subject is captured by another cosmologically dominant point of view,’ and consisting ‘of suddenly finding out that the other is ‘human,’ that is, that it is the human which automatically dehumanizes and alienates the interlocutor and transforms him into a prey object’ (Viveiros de Castro 1998:483).⁹⁵

By recounting this story, I wish to make it clear that spiritual illnesses are not only caused by witchcraft, but also by other kinds of predatory outsiders. Moreover, what I would like to emphasize here is how these interactions can be screened through *intensive vision*. I recall now a brief part of a long conversation I had with Flora:

C: Is it possible to see kalkutun or topantun in the urine?

F: Of course. It appears. The evil spirit appears there. It presents itself (Sp. se presenta).

C: And how does it come to presence?

F: You can see it at the side of the person.

C: How come?

F: That's the way it is. It appears there, beside the person.

C: But never inside the person?

⁹⁴ Grebe (1975) and Oyarce (1988) have described *topantun* or *trevuntun* as sudden encounters between people and bad spirits.

⁹⁵ For a similar supernatural situation, see Course (2010:257): ‘The victim finds himself undergoing a transformation which has been affected by falling into the perspective of another, more powerful agent. At the same time, the more powerful agent has not actually acted upon the victim other than to perceive him and this makes him correspond to its own perceived reality.’ Also see Alexiades 1999, regarding similar situations involving *edosikiana* spirits.

F: Never, the evil spirit is next to the person, stuck over the person, sucking people's blood.

She added that it had not been difficult to move that spirit away, since it was stuck just *on top* of Lucia, *over* her. She could see this because of the *wenu pillü* and her contact with *Ngenechen*, she added. *Ngenechen* was the seer, she told me. Yet, she said, to see that kind of interaction was not always possible. Sometimes, when the person is too ill, and the illness has been 'next to the person' for a long time, nothing can be seen in the urine. This means that it is too late to help the person, since their '*am* has been fully taken,' and therefore the human shape does not appear on the urine (Ch.*willen*).⁹⁶ On such occasions, the only thing that can be seen is a very dark mark, but nothing (nobody) else. This had been the case when Flora had seen the urine of a very ill person who died four days after her visit. Even though she was alive, her *am* had been already taken, she said. On other occasions however, virtual predator actions are sudden and devastating. This was the case with Flora's brother, who died when bumping into the devil in the middle of the mountains, a place to which he was 'taken away by *that one*.' Gundermann (1981) reported in his ethnography that thirty years ago, in the same area where I undertook my fieldwork, a person was killed by a luminous presence. People explained this by saying that the *cheruve* caught this person's *am*.

I suggest that urine is an instrument of *passage* where the virtual aspect of people is separated from their actual side. In other words, through the performance of intensive vision, urine allows 'the ordinary opacity of the human body' (Gow 2001:135) to be put aside momentarily. Thus the person, as an affine, can be seen in interaction with other potential affines who are attempting to eat people's human intentionality (namely, blood, see Chapter Two). *Pelontun willen* provides visual evidence of supernatural interactions as well as predatory dynamics and their predatory degrees. In fact, many times, these affectations are long-lasting processes of potential affine spirits' nutrition. The evil spirits in action are usually described as 'stuck' or 'attached' to the blood of people, an excessive proximity that results in the potentially fatal weakening of victims. Broadly speaking, what Pehuenche intensive vision is capable of doing through urine screening is

⁹⁶ This can be thought of in terms of Fausto's (1990) 'familiarising predation.'

to translate intensive interactions into extensive images. Thus, the human shape appears as bounded and discretely separated from the attacker who is always *on top*, *beside*, and/or *stuck* to the person. In this sense, I suggest that herbalists can be thought of as extensive cartographers of the intensive conflicts of the cosmos. In fact, what they actually do is re-demarcate a border between the visible and the invisible, between real (actual) people and (virtual) Others, by interfering with the evil spirits' constitutive omnipresence. As a result, the creation of a temporary absence, or a fleeting spiritual detachment is achieved (mostly) through specific visual capacities.

Last but not least, in order to understand the protective nature of herbs, it is essential to learn something about the particular *against*-herbs medicine mentioned above. Unfortunately, I have no explicit ethnographic data on this topic. Yet, if I were to speculate about how these herbs work, I would think about possible relations between the *owners* of herbs and visual interactions. Not surprisingly, there are many stories asserting that the manager of herbs is indeed *Ngenechen*. Yet, it seems that *Ngenechen* not only keeps herbs hidden so strangers cannot find them, but also hides the very possibility of conceptualizing himself, always leaving final anthropological categorizations *out of sight*.

3.4 Conclusions

In Alto Bío Bío there is not a single shaman (Ch. *machi*). In Pitril, for instance, the last shaman (named Triana) died more than thirty years ago. This shamanic absence is a very complex subject to understand, and most people hesitate when trying to provide reasons for this. I am aware that some informed readers might claim that the presence of shamans is very controversial within Indigenous communities and that shamans tend to remain invisible, even in places where they still exist, because of their ontologically predatory status. In my opinion, this statement is misleading in the case of Alto Bío Bío, where memories involving shamans are abundant and vivid.⁹⁷ Furthermore, all the

⁹⁷ Just to give an example of this: A very old friend, remembering a time when *machi* were still present in

memories I was recounted involving shamans pointed to similar dynamics between shamans and *püllü* and herbalists and *püllü*, as discussed in this Chapter. Intensive vision was always achieved through the relation between a shaman's corporeal support and a *püllü* spirit. The outstanding fact in Alto Bío Bío is that even if there are no shamans *as such*, shamanic functions are still alive, as is evident when considering Evangelical practices and *lawentuncheve* performances.⁹⁸ What I argue here is that an essential element of Pehuenche healing practices is the creation of the precondition of signification (and social life) through intensive vision.⁹⁹ Thus, following Surreales (2003), vision is a sensory precondition for meaning and, I would add, kinship reproduction. Not surprisingly, in Chedungun the verb *to see* (Ch. *pen*) points to a relational action of reciprocal vision between real people, implying direct and mutual vision (see Chapter One).

I argue that shamanic performances in Alto Bío Bío, understood as ‘cosmic managers controlling the relationships of predation and exchange among different life forms and communities, human and non-human’ (Århem 1996:197), are held by *cosmo-activists* in the sense that they protect and work for the reaffirmation of people’s human perspectives from *within* the realm of human people. In order to do so, as I have tried to render apparent, a corporeal human support is always needed. In the case of Evangelicals, the Holy Spirit expresses itself through the pastor’s corporeal support (the *instrument*),

Alto Bío Bío, told me: ‘I have seen *machi* in the past. I saw them when they were *machis* performing their activities... and they got into a trance, they called out to their spirit with their *kultrun* (shamanic drum), they did a *wutrun* (call) so the *püllü* arrived and started talking. It was not the person who talked, but rather the spirit. It was just the *Ngenechen* spirit. That's why another translator was needed. Have you ever seen a *machi* when she is in the *püllü*? Here there are no *machi* since all those *machi* spirits have left.’

⁹⁸ For a similar argument about shamanism without shamans in another context, see Pedersen 2011.

⁹⁹ This kind of shamanism does not fit with the general Amerindian model. Amerindian shamanism has been conceptualized as a cosmo-political institution focused on the translation of different perspectives. In this framework, shamans are those capable of seeing other species in the way they see themselves, namely, as humans (Carneiro da Cunha 1998; Fausto 1999; Stolze Lima 1996; Vilaça 1999 & 2002; Viveiros de Castro 1998, 2004, & 2007 among many others). Thus, shamanism has essentially been conceived of as *cosmic diplomacy* devoted to the translation of ontologically disparate points of view (Viveiros de Castro 1998; Carneiro da Cunha 1998). Having the capacity to adopt other points of view via the transmutation of their bodies (Vilaça 2002) and tending to acquire the characteristics of the aggressor (Vilaça 1992 & 2002), shamans are in charge of a transversal communication among non-communicated entities (Viveiros de Castro 2010). The shaman is a *spokesman* for other species (Viveiros de Castro 1986), capable of crossing ontological borders (Viveiros de Castro 2004).

having as a result a subject of vision that emerges from this relation between the virtual (Holy Spirit) and the actual (instrument). In the case of *lawentuncheves*, it is the *wenu püllü*, the one who sees, that is in a relation with the healer's corporeal support. I suggest that the accomplishment of this act of intensive vision, which aims at the deconstruction of potential affinity (alterity), necessarily requires the presence of *the ordinary opacity* of the corporeal support (identity). If I am correct in framing Pehuenche healing practices as predicated on Amerindian kinship process, this may be due to the tautological fact that, within healing practices, 'consanguinity' (as a constructed human body) needs to be present in order to reassert consanguinity. The intensity of the *püllü* spirit would not be such without the presence of human corporeal support. It is the assemblage of the actors and the resulting intensive vision that allows the (re)creation of the relational human field put into question by the evil relating. In other words, I suggest that the (de)communicational hinge embedded in intensive vision emerges through the relation between human (corporeal support) and non-human (spiritual intensities). What connects or separates the actual and the virtual is not the presence of the *püllü* spirits itself, as has been argued by Viveiros de Castro (2007) for the *xapiripë* spirits, but the assemblage of virtual and actual that I have called *intensive vision*. If we consider that healers are privileged because they can indeed establish kinship relations with spirits, this very capacity and force should be related, as Bacigalupo (2004) has already shown, to their belonging to different and multiple intensities of kinship. However, my point is also that there is no visual human agency whatsoever when healing practices are performed, but rather a kind of transcendental vision activated through the practices of *cosmo-activism*, understood as the strengths stemming from true people being together in mutual recognition. Notably, to be 'accompanied' or to be 'together' can be expressed as 'to be one' (Ch. *kiñewiün*), which also means 'to be many.' Furthermore, this expression is often used within a ritual where similarity is created (Ch. *kiñewünküleygün ngillatun mew*). To be alone then (as the sick person is), might be problematic precisely because the person's status as human is not being fully activated by other people through mutual vision.

Having said this, my ethnography should not be anthropologically absorbed by those reflections that fully relate perspectival shamanism to a practice of immanence (Pedersen 2001; Holbraad & Willerslev 2007).¹⁰⁰ It should rather be thought of as a particular case in which a radical, non-relational ontological parallelism is at stake:¹⁰¹ there is a virtual world of intensities that in a way remains fully outside of Pehuenche being. In other words, within Pehuenche ontology it is impossible to deny that the presence of spirits is a *constitutive relation*, and some shamanic functions embedded in intensive vision remain outsiders *tout court*.

Finally, when taking into consideration healing practices and intensive vision (*wenu pillü* and the Holy Spirit in particular, and the presence of *Ngenechen* in general), it is clear that a post-ethnographic theoretical argument trying to categorize the Pehuenche within a dualist or non-dualist ontology would be totally misleading. Or, in the words of Strathern (2011:127), an anthropologist aspiring to provide a coherent account would be 'relieved of any final reckoning in terms of difference or similarity.' Dichotomised categorizations such as immanent/transcendent or dualist/non-dualist would not be useful tools with which to grasp the ambiguous and open-ended Pehuenche conceptualization of being.¹⁰² Having said this, let us now explore what happens when Pehuenche ontologies are the subject of strong, clear, and distinct attempts at categorization, through an exploration of how the Chilean State is dealing with these spiritual health issues and by focusing on its main assumptions and practices.

¹⁰⁰ Stephen Hugh-Jones' (1996) elaboration of Jonathan Hill's (1984) distinction between 'vertical' and 'horizontal' forms of shamanism would not really fit within this ethnography. Even if some similarities can be found between horizontal shamanism and the cosmo-activist shamanism I describe in this Chapter (such as the relevance of 'doing' as opposed to 'saying'), horizontal shamanism has always been associated with the exchange of perspectives performance. However, for horizontal and vertical shamanic conceptualizations among the Mapuche, see Course 2012.

¹⁰¹ For a similar idea about this parallelism, see Rio, in press.

¹⁰² For a similar point see Course 2012. For a critical argument about non-dualist meta-cosmological theory with a specific ontology see Scott 2011.

PART II 'Political vision and divisions'

Chapter 4

The Cultural Vision of the State: Reflections on intercultural illuminations

Relations between Pehuenche people and the Chilean State have been characterized by a remarkable ideological contradiction that has become increasingly apparent during the last few decades. Whereas the Chilean State acknowledges the collective rights of Indigenous peoples through the implementation of specific policies such as those relating to intercultural health, many of the natural resources present in Indigenous territories are being exploited for the global market (see Stavenhagen 1990; Bengoa 2000; Hernandez 2003; Mallon 2004; Pinto 2003; Latta 2004; Mella 2007; Aylwin 2007; Boccara 2007; Richards 2010; Di Giminiani 2011). In this Chapter, I will discuss one of the most important political activities performed by the Chilean State and its public health institutions in Alto Bío Bío during recent years: the act of ‘visualizing’ - as workers of the State call it - the existence of traditional healers within Indigenous communities.¹⁰³ My aim in this Chapter will be to disentangle what the concept of ‘visualizing’ entails for the multicultural vision of public health institutions. I begin the Chapter with an ethnographic description of how State actions in ‘Intercultural Health’ are implemented. I suggest that the visibility of public health in Pehuenche communities is constructed through a clear, bounded and a priori idea of what cultural difference is, and is based on univocal understandings of the body. I go on to explore how this visualization of Pehuenche practitioners implies, through the creation of ‘protocols of referral’ for Pehuenche patients, a system of visible transportation of people to and from places that were not necessarily connected before the government initiatives. I suggest

¹⁰³ For classic anthropological literature arguing for the ethnography and study of the State, see Sahlins (1976) and Schneider (1976).

that such protocols work as a matrix for the representation of the State as a single and bounded entity, providing us with a visible and reductionist fiction of a single and coherent model of the healing world in Alto Bío Bío.¹⁰⁴ In the final section of this Chapter, I will describe how the emergent initiatives called ‘Intercultural Health’ are founded upon Western mental health practices. I conclude by providing ethnographic evidence of the practical consequences of this equivocated relationship between mind and culture which has quite a dramatic impact on the lives of Pehuenche people.

4.1. ‘And where is ‘the Origin’?’

When I first arrived in Cauñikú, the psychologist at Cesfam took me to meet Flora, the *lawentuncheve* who was associated with the public health service in Cauñikú. He had previously arranged this meeting from Ralco, on the radio frequency that connects all the rural posts to each other. He had left a message for Flora with the local worker who lived in the clinic, announcing our arrival. It took us about an hour to get to Cauñikú from Ralco, on a very dusty road along the mountains. Once there, the first thing I noticed was that the rural clinic and Flora's house were very close to each other, separated only by a rusty iron fence. I was actually struck by this proximity, since in Alto Bío Bío large distances between places of residence are very common and almost a rule. The psychologist mentioned that Flora and her family used to live in Rahueco, a place far away from the road, up in the mountains, but they had moved their residence closer to the road a few years before. Now both the rural clinic and Flora's house were easily reachable and visible from the road, and all the movements going on along the road were also fully visible from Flora's house. I was told that this rendered communication with the *lawentuncheve* easier, which had not been the case when her family lived in Rahueco.

Flora was the youngest sister of Greta. They both belonged to a family in Cauñikú that is

¹⁰⁴ For further analysis of the magical, spiritual and religious mechanisms through which the image and the strengths of the State are created, see Taussig 1997.

well-known for their expertise in healing and their knowledge (Ch. *kimun*) of healing herbs (Ch. *lawen*) (see Chapter Three). Greta had died some years before, when they were already living near the road. Until then, Flora had not been the person in charge of making a diagnosis using urine or preparing medicines for patients - Greta was. The latter was indeed very well-known for taking care of patients throughout the Queuco Valley. Nowadays however, Flora is the *lawentuncheve* of Cauñikú, and she collaborates with the State's public health services. She is one of the three herbalists in Alto Bío Bío considered to be a link to the public health program called the 'Intercultural Health Program.'

When we arrived, the first question she asked us was regarding a person she called '*el Orígen*,' someone who had not been around for ages, she said. '¿Y *el Orígen*?' And where is *el Orígen*? I did not understand the question, and I did not know the person she was referring to. The psychologist told me that *el Orígen* was his boss, and that they usually came to visit Flora together to help her with practical needs. A couple of weeks later, I went to visit another *lawentuncheve* in Alto Bío Bío named María, in the community of Callaqui. At the entrance to her house, I was asked if I knew *el Orígen*. This repetition appeared to be more than just a coincidence. *Orígenes* is a Spanish word that means 'beginnings,' or 'origins' and the phrase *el orígen* means 'the beginning,' or 'the Origin.' In Flora's utterance, the word *orígen* is being used as a proper noun to refer to a particular person - it is the nickname of a person associated with both the psychologist and the public health service workers. Within the public health service however, *Orígenes* is the name of a well-known national program based on Chilean Indigenous policies, as I will explain below. Later on in my fieldwork, I found out that the first time Flora had met *el Orígen* was at her former house in Rahueco. It was not fully clear how and when Greta, Flora, and one of their brothers, Jerman, moved to live near the road. What is clear, however, is that this program and *el Orígen* had influenced that move.

That meeting between *el Orígen* and Flora's family had taken place at the beginning of this century, when Greta was still alive and Flora was not yet fully dedicated to working

for her community, but was simply helping her sister. Then, *el Orígen*, who was working for the *Orígenes* program, had arrived with the idea of filming a documentary about traditional healers, accompanied by a Pehuenche person who nowadays occupies an important role within the local government. Unfortunately, I did not meet Greta personally since she had died before I started with my fieldwork. However, I did see her face in the documentary filmed by *el Orígen* entitled *Los Curanderos de Alto Bío Bío*, ‘The Healers of Alto Bío Bío.’ As I was told by *el Orígen* himself, the goal of this film was to ‘visualize’ local agents of healing in Alto Bío Bío.

Orígenes is the name of a national program launched by the Chilean president Ricardo Lagos in 2001, funded using credit from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and further economic collaboration from the State. The *Orígenes* program is framed by Chilean Indigenous policies called the *New Deal for Indigenous Peoples*. The program was run with IDB credit of US\$80 million provided to the Chilean government, plus an investment of US\$53 million from the Chilean government itself. This program was aimed at improving the capacities and opportunities of rural Indigenous communities in Chile, focusing on fostering the Areas of Indigenous Development (Sp. *Áreas de Desarrollo Indígena* or ADI) established by the Indigenous Law in the nineties. *Orígenes* intervention was made with the collaboration of public services working in areas such as education, health, and economic development. Among this program’s initiatives was a focus on what was called ‘intercultural health,’ specifically aimed at improving the quality of and access to public health services by incorporating traditional practices into public health policies.¹⁰⁵ For Flora however, the program *Orígenes* was a person, the current chief of the department of the district’s Ministry of Health, who had been an *Orígenes* employee in Alto Bío Bío in the past. In several conversations I had with Flora during my fieldwork, she used the word *Orígenes* in different ways – it was

¹⁰⁵ As Bendel (2002) has suggested, the notion of *intercultural health* is formed on the understanding of the difference between traditional and Western health systems. Western healthcare is based on scientific/modern/progressive concepts, in contrast to the idea of traditional medicine as magico-religious/traditional/static. For a further critical analysis of this program in terms of governance and the governmentality of Indigenous peoples, see Boccara 2007, Boccara et al. 2008, and Cetti 2009. These scholars consider the *Orígenes* program to be a key tool of *Chilean new-indigenism* framed by *neoliberal multicultural policies* that encourage participation in such programs as a key strategy of governance.

not understood as an abstract program, but rather referred to a particular person who had arrived, some years ago, at her house and into her life. In Flora's words:

I was very sad when my sister died. I took care of her while she was ill. When she died, I did not want to do anything, even if my sister had asked me to keep on working - I was too sad. After one or two months, el Orígen came, and he tried to cheer me up. Before dying, my sister told me that el Orígen had helped us a lot.

When the *Orígenes* program arrived in Alto Bío Bío, it did so with explicit intervention purposes, one of them being to focus on the development, empowerment, and reinforcement of Indigenous medicine. The proximity of the rural clinic to Flora's house, for instance, can be seen as a pragmatic result of this. However, it is extremely important to note that the *Orígenes* program arrived in Alto Bío Bío (and in Southern Chile in general) at a time when there were many political problems between Indigenous people and the State (see Aylwin & Yanez 2007). Furthermore, there was a general atmosphere of increasing political instability within the country. In this national scenario, Alto Bío Bío had already been affected by the controversial construction of hydroelectric dams, which had mobilized different actors within the political scene. During this period, communities in the Queuco valley had also begun to organize the autonomous re-appropriation of lands - an action that was highly controversial and ended with two Pehuenche people being killed in Cauñikú. Jose Bengoa (2009) has argued that this conflict can be understood as an expected result of Mapuche conflicts, which tend to end in internal killings framed by an alleged 'Mapuche sacrificial platform.' This view was considered completely erroneous by all Pehuenche people I met in the field however, who clearly recognized the involvement of non-Pehuenche people in this controversial event. To better understand the historical context of this event, see the brief historical summary in the introduction of this thesis. These contextual aspects need to be kept in mind when analyzing the emergence of 'intercultural health' programs in Alto Bío Bío.

4.2 The invention of an intercultural visibility

The main problem people working for *Orígenes* faced when trying to implement

initiatives that involved traditional healers was the difficulty in knowing who the ‘local agents’ working in health issues actually were. One of the most striking things these workers of the State noticed was that no one within Indigenous communities spoke about traditional healers. The person in charge of running this program once told me in an interview:

Local agents were not visible, their actions were in some way hidden in the territory. But this does not mean that there were no healing practices, because there have always been practices of healing in the territory - lawentuncheve, midwives, etc.

It is worthwhile mentioning that during the Pinochet dictatorship, Pehuenche midwives were violently persecuted, arrested, and discriminated against, so any attempts on behalf of the State to work on health issues within these communities were seen, in the view of this program leader, as highly dangerous for Pehuenche people. For the moment, I will leave aside the question of whether or not this truly reflects the point of view of Pehuenche people. I met a couple of women who used to do the work of midwives when there was no access to Chilean hospitals. One of them had been jailed for many years because of her work, and the other was not working as much nowadays since this activity, she told me, was *privada* by the State. This is a Spanish word used in a particular way in Alto Bío Bío to refer to what has been forbidden, or literally, taken away (its antonym in daily use is *permitido*, ‘authorized’). Judith, a Pehuenche woman who used to work as both a *lawentuncheve* and as a midwife within her community told me that she had to give up her work as a midwife since it was *privado*. *Orígenes* considered the persecution of midwives to be a coherent and sufficient explanation for the alleged invisibility of ‘local agents’ of healing. In its implementation, the national *Orígenes* program had to overcome a complex situation therefore - namely, the apparent absence of people willing to speak about local agents of healing and the invisibility of these actors.¹⁰⁶ In the words of the person in charge of the *Orígenes* program:

¹⁰⁶ In Chapter Two I have discussed how complex and difficult the speech acts related to witchcraft and healing practices are from a native perspective. Here I am interested in emphasizing the State’s logic of action. In this sense, I am aware that the argument that *lawentuncheve* disappeared because of discrimination under Pinochet is typical of those arguments which assume that the ‘object’ is out there but

No one spoke about these people within Indigenous communities, and for people like me who just arrived it was not easy at all because Pehuenche people could not tell you who was or was not a herbalist, this is a lawentuncheve, this is not.

Within this context, people working for *Orígenes* had to design strategies aimed at making Indigenous medicine visible. In their own words, above all they had to carry out a process of ‘visualizing’ traditional healers, a process that was one of the first and biggest efforts the *Orígenes* program, undertaken in order to improve the public health system and to fulfill their own goals. As is usual within developmental projects of this kind, the functionaries of *Orígenes* had to find a quick way to invest the money coming from the Chilean State and the International Bank. In short, ‘visualizing local agents’ consisted of focusing on finding and validating interlocutors within the communities who could collaborate with the State program. This process was carried out through the organization of collective gatherings called ‘meetings in intercultural health,’ where people from Indigenous communities came together to share food offered by State workers. These meetings aimed at rendering visible local agents of healing, since the *Orígenes* program had to quickly demonstrate results for its role in intercultural health.

Concretely, the actions of workers involved in this program were mainly focused on making contact with the three herbalists in the area, because, as the person in charge of this told me, ‘as the State, you cannot have political dialogues if you do not have actors.’¹⁰⁷ In this context, the invisibility of traditional healers, or the difficulties in rendering them visible was seen as a local tendency that would not be helpful for the eventual success of the government program. The aim of *Orígenes* was then ‘to visualize valid interlocutors’ and to generate what they called the ‘cultural validation’ of the people who were going to take part in the process of conversation/negotiation with the State. Thus, *el Orígen* initially spoke to different people who were retained as ‘agents of medicine,’ even if many of the people initially identified as such did not participate in this process in the end. *El Orígen* met Greta when she was living in Rahueco, where

has been obscured by external rather than internal forces, i.e. the nature of the ‘object’ itself is never in doubt and Pehuenche healing appears as isomorphic to Chilean healing.

¹⁰⁷ The very concept of dialogue is problematic since it implies firstly that Pehuenche people have already ‘recognized’ the Chilean State as an interlocutor, and secondly, that they want to enter into a dialogue with it. This will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

they had several conversations and friendly exchanges while drinking *mate* tea around the *fogón* (fire). The purpose of *Orígenes* was to assess how to negotiate a process of ‘collocation’ of these ‘agents of medicine’ that would ensure positive results for the people involved; what in the words of the chief of the program was seen as ‘a sort of indirect recognition.’ This kind of recognition has been conceptualized by Povinelli (2002:6) as a multicultural form of recognition that works to inspire ‘subaltern and minority subjects to identify with the impossible object of an authentic self-identity, i.e. a domesticated, non-conflictual traditional form of sociality and (inter)subjectivity.’

The challenge for the national *Orígenes* program laid in the following premises: Pehuenche medicine is important; there are local agents of healing; they are not visible; Indigenous health is not recognized within Indigenous communities; *Orígenes* action should aim to make these agents of healing visible. In order to do so, the State offered certain benefits to the new visible ‘agents.’ As *el Orígen* told me, a ‘narrative’ about this process of ‘recognition’ of local agents was constructed, and new, visible *Centers for Pehuenche Medicine* were created and fostered. These new ‘intercultural’ performances mainly consisted of making some visible signs and posters with the words *Centre for Pehuenche Medicine* that were placed outside the houses of the people involved.

Our biggest task has been to render them visible.¹⁰⁸ So they can negotiate with the State, because there is intervention, but our intervention is about having more culture, if there is more culture, there is more health. To strengthen cultural systems always produces positive effects in the lifestyles of people. That's why you need to base your work on the Center for Pehuenche Medicine, within their territories - what makes their medicine Pehuenche.

I was told this in an interview with *el Orígen*. These *Centres for Pehuenche Medicine* then were one of the new ways in which the State presented itself to the Pehuenche communities. Through these specific and localized images, the State and its public health policies aimed to be ‘discursively imagined as something greater than simply its local manifestations’ (Sharma & Gupta 2006:19). The general assumption behind this was to advertise among Pehuenche people - through this process of rendering visible –

¹⁰⁸ These practices can be framed by what Ecks (2009) has called *Colonial Enlightenment*, an ongoing attempt to ‘enlighten’ or ‘illuminate’ bodies without really succeeding.

the fact that there were *lawentuncheves* working in their communities, having as a point of departure the assumption that people did not know about their existence, or at least that people did not talk about them because they did not know about them. In order to engage with ‘local agents,’ what the State offered the herbalists was an improvement of the places where they saw their patients, to provide them with beds for patients who needed to stay overnight, to build some toilets, as well as other kinds of material benefits. After a year of work, the State workers considered these actions very successful and remarkable since ‘Lawentuncheves became more visible within their communities.’ For State workers, this meant that they had indeed reinforced *more culture*, and therefore, *more health*. Having said this, the location of the rural clinic in relation to Flora’s house cannot be seen as a random coincidence, but rather as the result of a national political strategy coordinated in conjunction with international capital. In a way, and at least in its external manifestations, Flora’s world was remade under the impress of economic pressures (Biehl 2005).

On the other hand, this process of visualization also implied the transportation of people to places that were considered to be more strategic for the implementation of the Intercultural Health Program. As far as the ‘collocation’ of these newly recognized agents of healing was concerned, state workers used their own time to help Indigenous healers move. For instance, *el Orígen* told me that he had helped Greta take their belongings down the hill when they moved from Rahueco to their new house beside the Cauñikú post. However, soon after having moved to her new house, Greta died. This death was a concern for *el Orígen*, since without Greta it was not clear what would happen to the intercultural program in Cauñikú. At her funeral, *el Orígen* himself had asked the people there if they knew what was going to happen. He told me:

We do not intervene within cultural territories, even if I am an expert in intervention. At her funeral I was given the opportunity to talk and I just asked what was going to happen then, because when Greta died no one thought Flora could have assumed her role.

Thus, *el Orígen* was very concerned about losing one of the interlocutors that had been involved in the implementation of these so-called *Centres for Pehuenche Medicine*. His

concern is not surprising at all, since *el Orígen* himself had been the origin of this new trend of intercultural visibility.¹⁰⁹

If we look carefully at the State's practices described above and focus on the steps involved in the implementation of the 'Intercultural Health Program,' some of the univocal assumptions of the State come to the fore. First of all, the clear and distinct visibility of practitioners of healing is necessary as this visible status is seen as an essential requirement for the application of this program locally. The kinds of relations Pehuenche people might establish with these 'local agents' is taken for granted however, since for the State, it does not really matter what these traditional healers do, what healing is for them, and what their practices are. Furthermore, there is no real consideration of how Pehuenche people behave and what they really do when needing the help of a person capable of healing. Healing, in this sense, is taken for granted, and it is assumed from the outset that people in these communities refer to healing practitioners in a similar way people from a big Chilean city may seek a doctor's consultation for a cure. In sum, the State's actions focused on what was considered a priority - namely, to identify the bounded and single bodies of traditional healers, based on the assumption that practices of healing needed to be visible for Indigenous communities. State practices, in this sense, do not accept the antonym of visibility. Let's advance this idea a bit further: invisibility, and the possibility of dealing with forces, beings, or non-humans that are not fully visible, is outside of the State's ontological repertoire. In other words, the Chilean State is truly Rousseauian, since the installation of the State also involves acceding to reason, which guarantees proper visible procedures. The State, as Rousseau conceived of it, is opposed to invisibility as an ontological possibility for being. To put it differently, the intercultural program is designed for univocal visible humans (whose visible humanity is taken for granted) as the unique ontological possibility - the unique possibility of existence. Thus, the implementation of the intercultural health program is a work of purification: the hygienic construction of a nature separated off from society (Latour 1993), of a visible

¹⁰⁹ For further analysis of the invention of 'Intercultural Health' in Southern Chile see Cetti (2009).

realm separated from an invisible one. The general assumption embedded into the practices of the State is that these traditional healers were already *out there* and they just needed to be ‘illuminated,’ or, as functionaries of the State prefer, ‘visualized,’ and rendered public in order to be ready for use. Public policies need public bodies. Moreover, intercultural public policies need the existence of different cultures that are defined by and through the State’s actions as a matter of fact and not as a ‘matter of concern’ (Latour 2005). In other words, although the existence of *lawentuncheves* before the arrival of the intercultural program is not in question, they were (re)enacted by the State’s actions and were brought into being in particular ways and through particular scenarios. Moreover, the ‘culture’ that the State was defining through its local actions was a ‘culture’ that should in some way respond to similar logics of care stemming from Western tradition. Here, I use the word ‘culture’ in a similar manner as Carneiro da Cunha (2009). She has argued that

To speak about the invention of culture is not to speak about culture, but about ‘culture’, namely, a reflexive meta-discourse about culture. The coexistence between ‘culture’ (as a resource or weapon to make up identities in front of national states or the international community) and culture (that invisible network of which we take part) produces specific result (Carneiro da Cunha 2009:372, my own translation).

What I am trying to emphasize here is that these traditional healers were not just ‘discovered’ by the State, but rather were *enacted* by its practices. This process of enacting consists of giving shape to a particular reality, now called ‘intercultural,’ that involves the alleged preexistence of these *lawentuncheve*. However, it is worthwhile mentioning that the way I met the *lawentuncheve* during my fieldwork was through information I received from state workers. For example, I met Flora for the first time because of the local psychologist. Ethnographies of scientific practices have discussed in depth the question of how different ontologies are brought into being, rendering it apparent that ‘reality does not precede the mundane practices in which we interact with it, but is rather shaped in these practices’ (Mol 1999:75). ‘What exists,’ in this case (*el Orígen*, Flora, the psychologist, myself, and so on) is always the ongoing effect of historically situated practices, including their mutual interactions (Haraway 1997; Law & Hassard 1999; Mol 2002). However, my point here is that the enacting of these

traditional healers, under the frame of the intercultural program, was based on a particular assumption of what humans and bodies are all about, without questioning what ‘humanity’ might be for Pehuenche people living in these communities (see Chapters One, Two and Three). In other words, and to say it bluntly, in enacting these local agents, what we might call *intercultural illuminations*, or local understandings about how particular practices of healing were taking shape, were not considered. But if this is the case, how did the implementation of this program proceed?

4.2.1 From visible bodies to visible paths

Protocols. I heard this word many times during my formal and informal conversations with professionals working in the public health services: ‘We work with clear protocols when we have patients that need a shaman.’ ‘We organize our work in intercultural health very well, through very well-designed protocols we have for that purpose.’ ‘We avoid working just by using our intuitive ideas, that's why we have protocols.’ Doctors, psychologists, intercultural facilitators, administrative staff, and so on, all pointed out the existence of protocols as a key element in dealing with Pehuenche patients who presented with problems that could not be healed by medical doctors. I should make clear that intercultural facilitators are a role created by the government of Eduardo Frei (1994-2000). They consist in the incorporation of a local Indigenous person into teams of public health workers. In short, their role in practice is to act as translators from Mapudungun to Spanish when this is needed, as well as to collaborate in the bureaucratic activities of the public health institutions (see Cetti 2009). However, during my conversations, it was not fully clear to me what this word ‘protocol’ might mean in practice, nor how this way of working was being performed in daily life. My curiosity about these protocols increased progressively and I insisted on gaining more information about them. I had the impression that this word referred to a very concrete set of procedures, that (I wrongly expected) would have been carefully defined and written down. However, the most elaborate and explicit information I received about these

protocols was the image below. Carefully examining this diagram brings to the fore the assumptions related to the intercultural initiatives of the public services. The image depicts the routes or paths a particular patient is expected to take, under the supervision of public health workers, before gaining access to a shaman (Ch. *machi*). There is a sequence of relations and contacts patients should go through, to be followed in a linear fashion, according to particular steps on the route.

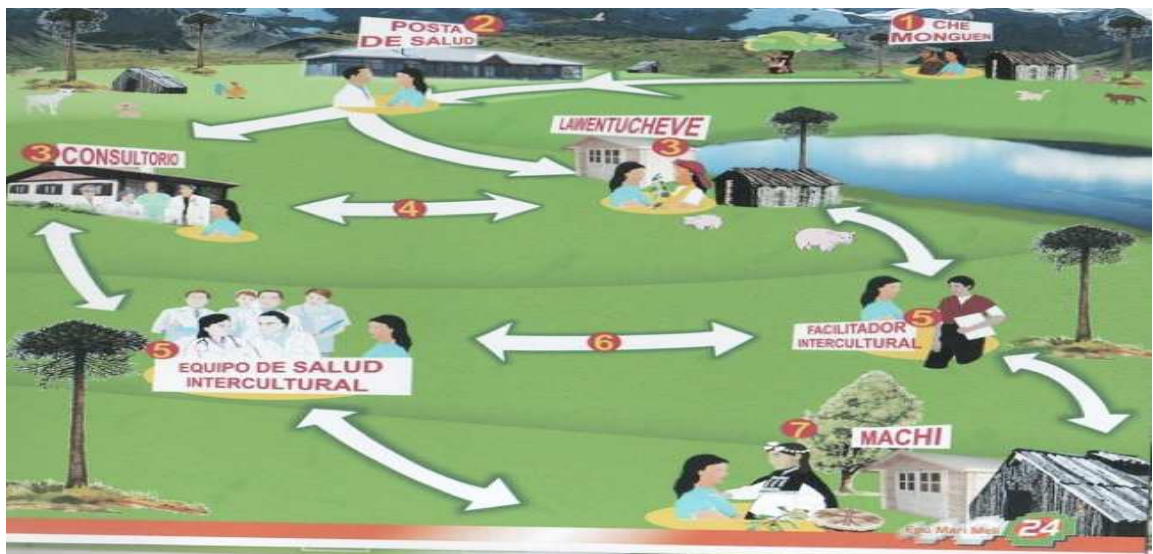


Figure 4. Protocols of referral

The lines that define the transportation of people from one point to another are the following: first, a person who lives in a Pehuenche community is expected to go to the local post. It is here that a functionary of the State, who only once a week is a professional doctor, establishes the first contact with the patient. Then, if the patient's condition is not fully clear and understandable to the public health workers, the person is given a check-up by one of the *lawentuncheve* who collaborates with the post. In the words of the chief of the intercultural program in Alto Bío Bío: Pehuenche people must see a *lawentuncheve* and follow these protocols if they 'really love their *culture*':

The protocols define the procedures to follow when the intervention of a shaman is needed [...]. The first step that must be followed in case a person needs to be seen by a shaman involves the lawentuncheve. If you are Pehuenche, and respect your territory and love your culture, you must respect the role that a lawentuncheve has.

The diagram, in this sense, represents not only particular understandings of what respect, love, and culture are, but also the definition of what it is 'to be a Pehuenche.' The negative implication here is that if you do not go to a *lawentuncheve* you are not Pehuenche, which means that all those Pehuenche people attending Evangelical worships (see Chapter Three), are not Pehuenche. Thus, practices defined by the State bring into being a particular understanding about what 'culture' is. This is considered a political strategy (Cetti 2009) involving the politicization of culture (Wright 1998). Thus, protocols of referral are enacting what has been described as the stereotype of a *hyper-real Indian* (Ramos 1992), which takes shape according to the particular assumptions of the State. According to Hale (1998), the so-called *hyper-real Indian* would correspond to a perfect image of the expectations of the State: being unable to act, except for reflecting upon the imposed preconceptions of the State. Furthermore, the State can only work with a particular *Indio*, namely, the *Indio Permitido*, the 'authorized Indian' (Hale 2004), who does not imply any sort of threat to the State. According to Hale (2004), in the context of Latin American neoliberal cultural projects the model of unitary citizenship is promoted by policies of assimilation, precluding any cultural specificity. This leads to the creation of contradictory identity frames in which to fit Indigenous people. In contrast to a 'modern' *Indio Permitido*, who has 'substituted *protest* with *proposal*, and learned to be both *authentic* and fully conversant with the dominant milieu,' the Other is 'unruly, vindictive and conflict prone' (Hale 2004:19). The 'authorized Indian' is invited to transit throughout a social space hegemonically constructed or composed, as has been argued by Ramos (2005), of places of mobility and places of immobility. Consequently, if we consider carefully what people do in order to be healed (Chapter Three) and at the same time take seriously the words of the administrative health worker and his definition of 'culture,' we would be forced to conclude that most of the Pehuenche people do not love their culture. What is interesting to stress for the moment is how the State, through its local 'intercultural health'

practices, is undertaking its activities with a particular understanding of ‘culture’: Culture is an abstraction and has a bounded meaning.

The diagram also shows how the *lawentuncheve*’s house is next to the rural post; a fact that we have already mentioned and analyzed as a result of wider administrative, political, and economical procedures. At this point in the referral protocol, the *lawentuncheve* talks with the patient and decides whether the intervention of a shaman is needed or not. If this is the decision the *lawentuncheve* comes to, the ‘intercultural health’ team of the clinic in Ralco, with the ‘cultural’ advice and collaboration of Pehuenche people working within this institution, then makes the final call in deciding if the intervention of a shaman is in fact needed. If this is the case, the Ralco clinic provides a van to transport the person to the house of a particular shaman who lives very far away (at least 400 kilometers away) from Ralco. Even though the shaman involved in this protocol is a Mapuche healer, she belongs to a community that is far away from Alto Bío Bío, both geographically and culturally. It is worth pointing out that there is also a hierarchical aspect to the roles of Indigenous healers. Implicitly, the role of the shaman is seen by the State as superior to that of the *lawentuncheve*. This does not necessarily reflect Pehuenche understandings of the differences between these two types of healers however (see Chapter Three). It is the intercultural health team that schedules this visit with the shaman. Thus, we have a clear sequence of steps that a person in need (and who loves his or her ‘culture’) should follow in order to be transported to a shaman’s residence by the clinic’s driver. This transportation is free of charge for the patient, who travels with other patients and (generally) the intercultural facilitator, and this is very often used by public health workers as a key argument to highlight the benevolence of the intercultural health program. It is apparent however that all kinds of inequalities between the Chilean State and Pehuenche people remain ideologically invisible (Žižek 2009) and hidden by this cynical economic argument.

What is missing from this diagram is that many times, if a patient is out of control and his or her violent behavior implies a risk for other people, a further step in between the clinic and the shaman is needed. In these cases patients are taken to the nearest hospital,

the Hospital of Santa Bárbara, to be treated with pharmaceuticals in order to help them ‘calm down.’ When dealing with patients who are out of control, the hospital is where, according to the psychologist of the clinic, patients are sedated until they can follow the route toward the shaman. Moreover, another issue that is not apparent from this diagram was summarized during my first week in the field by a Pehuenche woman who used to be my neighbour:

The Ralco clinic takes us to the shaman, they help us with the transport, we do not need to pay, and they take us to the South, far away from here. Recently, however, they have not made any trips, since the situation in the South with the Mapuche is hot, so they do not want to go. There are many conflicts there, so they have stopped going.

The conflicts mentioned here by María refer to land conflicts between the State and Indigenous populations, and demonstrations by Mapuche people in the South.¹¹⁰ For María, and for the public health services conflicts are somewhere else, in the South, not here in Alto Bío Bío. It is interesting that the image illustrating these health service protocols has been drawn over a very simple green, empty area of land that does not depict the existence of hydroelectric dams, forest industries, and so on, that have been, sources of intense conflict in Alto Bío Bío. These are of course *ethnographically less visible* (Farmer 2004) local history and the global political economy are not part of the *protocolscape*, so to speak, enacted by the State through the imposition of practices concerned with the transportation of people. In other words, protocols of referral appear as being enacted over a *non-violent zero level* (Žižek 2009), an *a priori* peaceful state of affairs in Alto Bío Bío. This state of affairs is possible because of ideological regulations and should not be thought of as a social dimension that is taken for granted. Following Žižek (2009), protocols of referral themselves help to maintain the *status quo* of the inherent and objective violence of the system.¹¹¹ This fact is what Žižek (2009:87) calls a ‘fetishistic disavowal’ present in totalitarian systems and neoliberal societies, and is expressed in Octave Mannoni’s (1963) well-known saying ‘*Je sais bien, mais quand même*’: I know very well, but nevertheless. We know very well what the State has done

¹¹⁰ For a current analysis of land conflicts, see Bengoa 1999; Richards 2004; Mallon 2004; Bacigalupo 2007; Di Giminiani 2011.

¹¹¹ For particular ways of exercising power sovereignty through repeated acts of violence over human bodies and populations, see Blom Hansen & Stepputat 2005.

with Pehuenche lands and what it represents, but we nevertheless accept its procedures when dealing with ‘intercultural health,’ a concept created by the State itself. I use the word ‘we’ here to refer to all those people in Alto Bío Bío who are taking part in this process of transportation and are part of a wider process that has been called, using Foucauldian reasoning, ‘ethnogovernmentality’ (Boccaro 2007):

‘Intercultural Health represents a new social engineering within a new diagram of knowing/power. It can be thought of as a new type of governmentality that produces emergent, collective or individual, ethnic subjects through a double dynamic of ethnicization and responsabilization. Through the implementation of intercultural health programs, the relations between social and individual bodies, public and private spheres, individual and population and the State and its citizen are modified and rethought’ (Boccaro 2007:186, my translation).¹¹²

Having said this, what can we learn from the State’s protocols of referral in intercultural health? What kinds of bodies are being enacted by the State, and how? The visual artifact representing State practices discussed above renders explicit how the State operates in people’s daily lives, and allows us to approach the State not as an abstract entity, but through its daily practices (Rose 2006; Mitchell 2006). Furthermore, these protocols actually show us how the State presents itself to people in their communities, transporting bodies through paths or lines that, even if they are deliberately constructed, are taken for granted as a priori realities. It seems to me that the transportation of people from one point to another is the final aim of the intercultural program.¹¹³ By doing so, people can be counted, and results can be provided to the central administrative offices of the Ministry of Health, a trend that fits perfectly with what Hacking (1991) calls our growing ‘fetishism for numbers,’ a trend that defines worlds in very particular ways. These protocols of referral can be understood as mundane bureaucratic procedures or stereotyped practices that allow us to understand the micro-politics of the State. These micro-politics need clear and distinct actors in order to function; actors who in this case,

¹¹² For a foundational discussion about the concept of *governmentality*, see Foucault 1991, 2004a & 2004b and Ferguson & Gupta 2002. A more accurate review of Foucault’s conceptualizations of governmentality and biopower would go beyond the possibilities and targets of this thesis.

¹¹³ As Boccaro (2007) argues, as much as this program is intended to facilitate intercultural communication, it reaffirms the ultimate domination of Indigenous knowledge in several ways: the incorporation of traditional Indigenous medicine into a frame predetermined and dictated by the Western healthcare system, the de-politicization of the Indigenous historical identity, and the refusal to recognize the actual social and political context of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations.

correspond to clear and distinct bodies that are considered to be bounded, singular, and in the unique shape of what ‘humanity’ is: they are universal bodies.

In short: one state, one nature. In this sense, the visualizing process of the State does not end with the ‘discovery’ of ‘local agents’ of healing, which is nothing more than a new version of colonial practices, but also necessarily implies the creation of lines for the transportation of people, or bodies, who actually refer to these actors of healing. Thus, the practices of the State create paths that can be followed again and again by different people. Furthermore, these protocols of referral are the creation of a bureaucratic authority structure (Sharma & Gupta 2006) that is repeatedly enacted through performative practices (Butler 1990). This bureaucratic authority structure gives the illusion of a fully coherent *outside* created through and with an ideological scale. Latour (2005) has theorized this as *panoramas*:

Panoramas, as etymology suggests, see everything: But they also see nothing since they simply show an image painted (or projected) on the tiny wall of a room fully closed to the outside [...]. They design a picture which has no gap in it, giving the spectator the powerful impression of being fully immersed in the real world without any artificial mediations or costly flows of information leading from the outside [...] Panoramas give the impression of complete control over what is being surveyed, even though they are partially blind and that nothing enters or leaves their walls except interested or baffled spectators (Latour 2005:187-188).

Protocols of referral, seen as a panorama, can be locally disentangled by looking at those sets of practices that allow them to exist as coherent representations of reality. In other words, these sets of practices (visualizing bodies, delineating paths, transporting bodies and so on) are not a reflection of a coherent and bounded pre-existent core of the State, but rather, they actually ‘constitute that very core’ (Sharma & Gupta 2006:13). The State is, in this sense, a set of practices that define procedures of healing relations that are taken for granted in a very simplified way, resulting in many other relevant aspects/practices of Pehuenche healing processes and health being dismissed. A very well-known Foucauldian reasoning is embedded here in the ‘cultural’ aspect of the State’s practices: health and medicine (a technology of the former) assume an increasingly significant place in the administrative system and the machinery of power, which extends beyond the service to the sick and populations cures (Foucault 1978).

What is striking about this trend is how in Alto Bío Bío, health issues appear as ‘the object of an intense political struggle’ (Foucault 1974[2004]:7): protocols of referral must always be conceived of as a political phenomenon related to population governance, control, and power. In other words protocols, seen as panoramas, apparently mean social control, and this was something even the doctor of the Ralco post openly admitted. When I asked him what he would improve if he was in complete control of the health system, he responded:

I would improve the way we deal with the referral of patients to a shaman. I would try to render those procedures more flexible. Right now, everything depends on us. We decide whether or not someone needs to go to the shaman. You, as a patient might not want to say what is going on with you and your hallucinations. Maybe you want to keep those stories secret and just say that you need a shaman. But here it works in a different way: we are in charge of keeping an eye on patients that according to us need the intervention of a shaman. We also decide the date and the time they can go, as we are in charge of the transport and we arrange the day with the shaman. It could be more flexible, this system, more comfortable for the people, but unfortunately it is always the health system that is in control, because the health system is the boss.

Through these protocols, and by enacting ‘docile bodies’ (Foucault 1977), the State makes up a social landscape that ‘will never be flattened enough for the cost of connecting vehicles to be made fully visible’ (Latour 2005:184). These visible and docile bodies are caught by the panoptic medical gaze (in its cultural version), so they can be *surveyed*, *used* and *transformed* through surveillance, regulation and control (Williams & Bendelow 1998). I should emphasize that the mechanisms described here are good tools with which to examine different State performances. Yet my ethnography clearly shows that Pehuenche bodies are highly indocile (see Chapters One, Two, and Three). However, these bio-political actions of the State are ‘the historical outcome of a technology of power centres on life’ (Foucault 1978:144).¹¹⁴ In this case, what is at stake are the lives of Pehuenche people. When analyzing these protocols in a world where health has become ‘the political symbol that is most subject to manipulation’ (Scheper-Hughes 1992:202), it is obvious how general social issues surrounding Indigenous people dealing with Western healthcare systems have an inherently political aspect. In

¹¹⁴ For a general discussion of the limits of the concept of life in Foucault, see Agamben (1998) for his concept of bare life. For an analysis of the politics of life as not only a question of governmentality and technologies, but also of meaning and values, see Fassin 2009.

the case of these protocols of referral however, the ideological aspects related to health and governance are, in a way, invisible. Indeed, they are seen as ‘normal abnormality’ (Scheper-Hughes 1992), and are constituted through practices that (re)produce the State in daily routines of ‘proceduralism’ that can also be seen as settings for the production and continuity of social inequalities. In other words, the State is ‘produced through everyday practices and encounters and through public cultural representations and performances’ (Sharma & Gupta 2006:27). However, a possible question is then the following: How is the unity of the State, as a single reality ‘out there,’ achieved in spite of its multiple performances?

I believe that the State’s ‘proceduralism,’ embedded in protocols of referral, has the role of coordination and distribution (Mol 2002): different practices are either made to hold together as a single entity or are kept apart to avoid mutual interference. Briefly, coordination works by accumulating performances as if they were manifold perspectives on a single object and by dismissing discordant ones. On the other hand, distribution works by keeping different practices separate so that inconsistencies between them do not collide, allowing the establishment of a ‘truth’ necessary to safeguard the unity of a given object. I suggest that, following Blaser (2009) who in turn follows Mol’s (1999) work, the inclusion of Pehuenche people in intercultural health programs, as well as the multiculturalist premise these are based on, have ‘coordination and distribution effects’ (Blaser, 2009:17) that contribute to guaranteeing the unity of the State, and more generally to protecting the modern constitution:

The Internal Great Divide [between Nature and Culture] accounts for the External Great Divide [between Us and Them]: we [moderns] are the only ones who differentiate absolutely between Nature and Culture, between Science and Society, whereas in our eyes all the others—whether they are Chinese or Amerindians, Azande or Barouya—cannot really separate what is knowledge from what is society, what is sign from what is thing, what comes from Nature as it is from what their cultures require (Latour 1993:99).

I suggest that the modern constitution is represented by the State as a single entity that is capable of differentiating what culture is as if it were something *outside* (something outside that can actually be loved), beyond the State itself, which is representative of

Nature. In sum, after rendering visible and individualizing these ‘local agents,’ the performance of coordination and distribution is deployed through the creation of protocols of referral. Patients are referred by doctors to ‘local agents’ when medical treatments do not work or the results of medical tests do not reveal any medical problem. If this is the case, public health workers maintain that this is because of cultural reasons. In short, for the State, the whole issue concerning Pehuenche people corresponds to an epistemological problem, and not an ontological one.

4.3 Culture as Mind: Risky abstractions of intercultural illuminations.

At the beginning of my fieldwork I was told that there was an intercultural team also working in the Santa Bárbara Hospital (which forms part of the *protocol* discussed above), a hospital situated 50 kilometers from Ralco. It did not take me very long to realize that this team did not really exist however. It was suggested to me that I get in touch with the psychologist of the hospital there, so I called him and asked for a meeting with the team. He agreed, but asked me to meet them after their working hours. Once there, the psychologist and the former intercultural facilitator of the hospital were waiting for me. They explained to me that their intercultural work was not fully recognized by local authorities within the health system. They both apologized for the fact that other members of the team could not attend the meeting, and finally explained that the team was not working as such, since the doctor interested in ‘cultural issues’ had left the hospital. They mentioned that the role of intercultural facilitator was currently in the hands of a woman, and that Luis, the one I had thought to be the facilitator, had been removed from his position because he was considered to be too ‘controversial.’ However, they told me that when the doctor with *cultural interests* was working at the hospital, it was easier to work using an intercultural approach. In addition, carrying out long-term initiatives was almost impossible since the high turnover of doctors was always a problem. In sum, intercultural activities depended on one doctor’s will, and there was no such will at that time. However, as was the case in Alto Bío Bío, they told

me that they had developed clear protocols of referral for patients, in order to avoid acting solely on 'intuition.' Their work consisted of making decisions about whether the intervention of a shaman was needed or not. If it was, they transported the patient to a shaman who was thought to be very effective in her treatments. Both the hospital workers emphasized that the activities of the intercultural health program were strictly related to mental health, 'since dealing with patients that are going through a schizophrenic episode is obviously a fact related to mental health problems,' the psychologist told me. The protocols mentioned were used to differentiate what is a Pehuenche illness and what is not: a distinction that was never fully clear to me. However, generally speaking, in cases where medical assessment (including neurological exams) could not determine the source of the patient's problems and the person was still sick, the intervention of a shaman was deemed necessary and the illness was considered to be a Pehuenche illness. Culture was in this way defined at the same level as mental illness - an emergent reality that stems from the physical universal body. The doctor at the Ralco clinic had made this clear when trying to explain to me what the intercultural team was all about: 'We reinforce what is cultural, especially what is related to mental health illnesses.' According to this view, the concept of culture responds to the general question of multiculturalism - namely, *What can a mind do?* As has already been argued,

We are accustomed to worrying about our minds because we assume that even if our mental powers are ultimately generated by our brains (bodily parts we have in common with others), it is what we can do with our minds - the ideas we come up with, our way of thinking about things - that makes us different from others (other people, other cultures, or even other species or spirits) (Holbraad & Willerslev 2007:329).

Thus, rather than raising a more interesting question (in my view) concerning what a *body* can do, multiculturalism, through the so-called intercultural health program, proposes practices that respond to the question of what a mind can actually do. The question *What can a body do?* therefore appears as totally irrelevant in this context, since for multiculturalism in general and intercultural health in particular, bodies do the same kinds of things everywhere. It is worth mentioning Deleuze and Gattari's (1987) point of view here:

We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to destroy that body or to be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body (Deleuze & Guattari 1987:257).

It is clear then that the relationship between culture and mind implicit in the work of the public health workers is a good example of how multiculturalism works in daily life: through an allegedly universal naturalism consisting of - following Descola (2005, 2006, & 2009) – a dissimilar interiority plus similarity in physicality. In this case, dissimilar interiority would be equal to mind/culture and what they can actually do, whereas similar physicality would correspond to a taken for granted and universally shared coherent physicality. The general assumption of the State lies in the multiculturalist premise that conceives of the singularity of Nature as a univocal shared mode of existence, or as a hegemonic language game (Wittgenstein 1953). The premise of this language game presupposes the existence of one body (physical continuity), and many cultures (metaphysical discontinuities). This has been clearly explained by Viveiros de Castro (2004a), who claims that this is the main proposal of Western cosmology: one human nature and many cultures.

As has already been shown, this assumption takes shape through the very concrete performance of ‘visualizing’ traditional healers, adopted in the implementation of the intercultural program. In fact, the discontinuity enacted by the State when ‘visualizing’ local practitioners of healing was indeed metaphysical. ‘If Pehuenche people love their culture, they must be seen by their healers.’ Differences among Pehuenche and non-Pehuenche people were seen as defined by cultural matter. In other words, this visualization also implied other kinds of coordination framed under the Western logic of understanding culture as the emergent part of the more grounded plane of the physical body. In fact, the program itself is called ‘intercultural’ rather than for instance ‘inter-natural,’ as perspectival ontologies would suggest. Indeed, a sort of inter-natural program in health would be a very odd artifact for the government, since the main premise of the State’s actions is based on the Latourian Internal Great Divide between (one) nature/body and (many) cultures/minds. In other words, if we are faced with many

cultures and just one nature that maintains all the particular cultures together, it is not difficult to understand why in practice, the intercultural program was a very close relative (or perhaps just the same artifact) of what in Western tradition is known as ‘mental health.’

As I have already pointed out, another way to deal with the multicultural assumption of one body (physical continuity) and many cultures (metaphysical discontinuities) is to think through what has been the most typical question of multiculturalism, namely, *What can a mind do?* When the question of the performances is framed within the variety of cultures, differences between people can only be ‘cultural differences,’ since it is taken for granted that their bodies are actually the same. In this sense, any problem related to Pehuenche people that does not correspond to the universal body is immediately seen as a problem related to the other side of the dichotomy: if is not physical, it is mental, since what is not physical is cultural. Culture, in this sense, is something that a mind can do. In Western contexts, the people who know what to do with actions of the mind are professionals of the *psy*-mind. What I suggest and will make apparent is that thinking in these multicultural terms, the health of the Indigenous population has ontological consequences, and by ‘ontological’ I mean the kinds of consequences that can put people’s lives at risk.

Nica was a young woman who had twice attempted suicide near her house in Cauñikú. People working at the Ralco clinic were very worried about this situation, and started to investigate the details of this woman’s story. She did not speak much with any of the Ralco workers, so they decided to speak to her relatives. In her family, three other people had already committed suicide. Besides this, the workers were also told that many of the family members actually saw things, and Nica finally confessed that she was very scared of these presences. Every night there were hands coming out from the wall, and spirits had asked her to kill herself and to attack other people. She had already assaulted her mother, who also experienced apparitions and heard voices that told her negative things, inviting her to harm herself and others. The medical team started a treatment that consisted in providing them both with anxiolytics such as benzodiazepines

so they could rest and sleep better. The doctor and the psychologist had also asked for the intercultural facilitator's opinion, and together they decided that the *lawentuncheve* should be consulted. The *lawentuncheve* saw the woman and said that the problem was witchcraft, without offering any further details. Since the woman still suffered from suicidal thoughts, the team decided to take her to a shaman in Chol Chol. As previously mentioned, this place is both geographically and culturally very distant from Alto Bío Bío, and Pehuenche people are being transported across large distances to see a shaman there. The shaman said that the family's house, which was full of soil from the nearby graveyard, had been affected by witchcraft. In this case, the shaman had to actually go to the house in order to do 'the job' (Sp. *el trabajo*). The team, the shaman and the patient scheduled a visit and coordinated the transport of the shaman, who would travel with one of the drivers from the post.

The day the shaman came to Cauñikú, Flora woke up feeling very weak. She could not really understand what was going on, but she had strange feelings and was not able to do what she had to do that day. The shaman's patient lived near Flora, who saw the clinic's vehicle arriving with some strangers. After a while, the psychologist came to greet Flora, while the shaman proceeded with her duties. Once in Nica's house, the shaman said that the witchcraft was too intense and that the only option was to move the family out of the house. Also, the family needed to burn their mattresses and throw out the clothes they used to wear. After this intervention, Flora did not want to talk to the team for a long time, and she was very upset with the whole performance. Many people in Cauñikú also started to wonder what kind of person the health team had brought to their community. People in Cauñikú were not sure whether the shaman that had been there was really a shaman or a *kalku*, a witch. After a few days had passed, a relative of Nica's died in a very strange way, suffocated in his own bed. According to the public health workers, it had been an epileptic attack, even though the doctor was not able to find any sign of injuries on his tongue. Most of the people in Cauñikú assumed that this death was due to the visit of a witch, and the previous actions of the health clinic were strongly questioned. In other words, people believed that Nica's relative had been murdered.

The conflict just mentioned deserves to be taken seriously as it clearly shows how the State's actions, based on the multiculturalist approach, regard the participation of Indigenous people in health services as responding to mere epistemological issues. Starting from the assumption that there are many views of a single and unitary world, culture is nothing other than differences on a metaphysical plane. However, what the dramatic situation just mentioned provides evidence for is that conflicts that emerge and are based on this equivocal assumption can lead to fatal consequences for the people involved. This situation makes it clear that the intercultural encounter does not merely consist of dialogues between different epistemologies or knowledges. Rather, we are faced with a situation where two different ontologies or modes of existence clash dramatically, having as a result the death of a person. This kind of conflict is configured within what has been called a 'political ontology': conflicts that emerge

as being about the continuous enactment, stabilization, and protection of different and asymmetrically connected ontologies [...], the power-laden negotiations involved in bringing into being the entities that make up a particular world or ontology. It refers to a field of study that focuses on these negotiations but also on the conflicts that ensue as different worlds or ontologies strive to sustain their own existence as they interact and mingle each other (Blaser 2009:10-11).

Having said this, the proceduralism in intercultural health is based on a sort of multicultural tolerance, understood as the condescending attitude by secular modernists in general and state bureaucrats in particular, that make allowances for other worldviews that nonetheless are not taken seriously (Stengers 2010). Other worlds are just 'tolerated.' In this way, multiculturalists neutralize the possibility of any opposition or of being contested, since all people are already considered and included in 'their' difference. In the particular ethnographic situation presented here, related to the implementation of a local program in intercultural health, it is clear how multicultural actions transform radically different worlds into abstract, mental entities. This tolerance makes a contrast between Indigenous ontologies and modern ontology (*sensu* Latour) irrelevant, and implicitly considers personhood and agency as universal facts. As many scholars have stated (Bird-David 1999; Descola 1996a, 1996b, 2005; Descola & Palsson 1996; Grim 2001; Ingold 2000; Viveiros de Castro 1998, 2004a, 2004b), this tolerance

does not put into question the basic assumption of a nature-culture divide. In this sense, the intercultural program is in fact an intracultural program based on internal comparisons: the Strathernian ‘analogies between domains’ (Strathern 1992) inherent to this nature-culture divide. In other words the tolerance just mentioned, embedded in the form of this mentalization, is grounded in a physical continuity that works as a way of making commensurable what is not: different modes of existence that do not share the stability and individuality of the coherent body and the performative mind of multiculturalism. The claim that cultural differences are equally valid perspectives on one world only works, as Elizabeth Povinelli (2001) has argued, if Indigenous people act within the limits of what is reasonable and conceivable. These limits are defined by reality ‘out there,’ which in this case is the universal body that was brought into being by bureaucrats and public health workers in the context of the intercultural program.

4.4 Conclusions

In this Chapter I have described state practices related to intercultural health and emphasized how these practices focus on the definition of visible agents of healing in order to create a system of transporting people from one point to another. I have shown how the intercultural program in Alto Bío Bío operates through the design of visible paths for the transportation of people who are and have clear and distinct visible bodies. In this sense, I have tried to disentangle how the State’s workers understand the ‘visualization’ of local health practitioners, pointing out how visible, public paths are needed to transport people who are the target of (cultural) health interventions. These interventions are put into effect with a particular understanding of culture and cultural difference that does not really consider, and it is very distant from, local conceptualizations and practices related to illness and healing. Moreover, I have shown that the body the State works with has to be bounded, single, visible, a priori and universally shared, ignoring the fact that what could be called ‘Pehuenche suffering’ responds to particular ontological configurations and coexistences between humans and

hardly visible non-human bodies (see Chapters One, Two, and Three).

In general terms, my aim here has been to reflect on how the premise of multiculturalism (one nature/many cultures) helps to create the illusion of the unity and homogeneity of the State, which is considered to be an artifact whose reality precedes the daily life practices of people in interaction. In reflecting upon this, I have argued against Western commonsense, which tends to conceive of the State as a unitary and autonomous object - as a clear, bounded institution that is different from society (Sharma & Gupta 2006). In contrast, and in line with many scholars who have critically questioned the idea that the State is an a priori conceptual or empirical object (Mitchell 1991 & 1999; Radcliffe-Brown 1940; Sharma & Gupta 2006; Trouillot 2003), my aim up to now has been to understand how the State's 'Intercultural Health Program' is implemented and what this implies for Pehuenche people. Having said this, I now turn to an analysis of local reactions to the State's attempts at 'visualizing' Indigenous peoples.

Chapter 5

The Unproductive and Blind Sociality of the State and its Local Contentions

In the following Chapter, I analyze how Indigenous people both react to and conceptualize the State's attempts at 'visualizing' Indigenous actors (Chapter Four) within the realm of intercultural health. In particular, I suggest that Pehuenche people's complaints against state functionaries can be thought of as a response to a certain kind of paradigmatic sociality enacted by the functionaries themselves. I suggest that the interaction between health workers and local people appears as highly determined by an *unproductive sociality*, paradoxically characterized by the proposal of an exchange without exchange and a kind of sociality that denies itself. If we take into account the significance of the relation of mutual vision needed for the emergence of a person (Chapters One, Two and Three), I suggest that this type of sociality can be also thought of as a particular type of *blind sociality*. In short, I suggest that the paradigmatic sociality determining intercultural relations takes shape through the creation of a web of relationships that, paradoxically, do not allow the emergence of real relationships among real people through mutual vision. Moreover, this analysis of how people experience state activities also aims at rendering apparent the taken-for-granted illusion of the cohesiveness of the State and its contested and fragile existence (Sharma & Gupta 2006). This Chapter considers two disruptive ethnographical events in which native conceptualizations of intercultural relations come to the fore. I consider particular activities carried out by the health workers of the Ralco clinic *outside* the clinic and analyze how functionaries of the State engage in relations with Pehuenche people when the latter spend their summers in the Andean highlands, far away from Chilean settlements. I also reflect upon the vernacular label 'functionaries' as a key local term

pointing out the contested ontological status of people working for the State, and recount how a *machi* collaborating with public health services questions her own collaborative performance when the Chilean earthquake of 2010 occurs. I conclude the Chapter by suggesting that fleeting Indigenous contentions against the State respond to the transcendental way functionaries of the State visually interpellate (*sensu* Althusser) Indigenous peoples.

5.1 Veranadas

The natural characteristics of the Alto Bío Bío landscape create a system of altitudinal zones which allow for the development of distinct agricultural ecosystems, such as *mallín* prairies, lowland plains, native forests, pine forests (*araucaria* forests) and highland plains. These zones are in turn divided into two different regions known as the *invernada* and the *veranada*, which not only have economic importance to Pehuenche people, but also have socio-cultural connotations. The *invernadas* are the winter stations in the low valleys, while the *veranadas* are the summer stations in the high pastures. Residence in winter and summer stations is dictated by seasonal weather changes, and being dependent upon the presence or absence of snow, are thus part of transhumant practices in the rearing of cattle and the harvesting of crops and pine nuts. The predominant subsistence economy of the winter stations involves corrals, domesticated animals, prairies and part of the native forest. In the lowland region, the low snowfall enables families to inhabit the area during the months of May to December. The migration to the summer stations in the highlands starts in the spring when the last snows have finally melted away and the animals have given birth. Herds are transported to new grazing pastures and the harvesting of pine nuts (from the *pewen* or *araucaria araucana*) that were not collected during the previous harvest takes place. Moreover, in contrast to the permanent housing found in the winter stations (Sp. *caserados*), the housing in the summer stations consists of makeshift constructions of planks of wood (Sp. *puestos*).

For the past ten years, workers at the Ralco clinic have been visiting *veranadas* in order to undertake preventive health campaigns. I was invited to go along on one of these trips to the *veranadas*, as they performed one of the ‘intercultural’ initiatives Ralco public health workers engage in. Since every community throughout Alto Bío Bío spends their summer in a different place, the team organizes their calendar in order to visit the majority of communities. I accompanied them on their journey to the *veranada* of Cochico, which is where the communities of Trapa Trapa and Butalelbun spend their summers. Getting to the *veranadas* is quite difficult, and most of the places can only be reached by several hours on horseback.

The day before going to the *veranada* I attended a preparation meeting for this journey at the Ralco clinic and met Sonia, one of the clinic’s intercultural facilitators, who was in charge of the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was simply to ask each of the participants, consisting of a doctor, a psychologist, the intercultural facilitators, a nurse, a social worker, a midwife, and the chief of the municipality’s health service, to contribute some money towards the purchase of tomatoes and bread to take with us (Sp. *hacer una vaca*). The next day, I got to the Ralco clinic at 8am, as previously agreed with the team. No one apart from myself had arrived, so I chatted with one of the drivers of the clinic. He explained to me that we needed to get to the rural post of Trapa Trapa by car, as this was where we were going to rent the horses. It takes about an hour and a half to get to *Trapa Trapa*, and from that point to Cochico, it takes about another five hours. He also told me that he had arrived in Ralco in the eighties, hired as one of the supervisors for the construction of the road that connects Ralco with the Pehuenche communities. Workers like him built the road in collaboration with Pehuenche people, and it took about ten years to complete the project. As a supervisor, he had met most of the people of the valley. Yet, he added, he never participated in politics, since he prefers to be a *friend of the people*, rather than being a functionary.

Once in the Trapa Trapa rural post, I noticed that the local medical worker had already arranged the rental of horses with local people. In fact, outside the post there were a couple of Pehuenche people waiting with their horses while the team and I were inside

the clinic. From the post, I could see other people arriving with more horses. Finally, after about an hour, there were seventeen horses waiting for us. The doctor, the psychologist, the nurse, and other men on the team had started drinking beers, and cans covered the white medical desk in the office. The intercultural facilitator, who was originally from Trapa Trapa and was in charge of negotiating the rental price for the horses, went outside to talk to the group of Pehuenche people. When it seemed that they had reached an agreement, Patricio, the facilitator, came back inside to say that twenty thousand pesos (about 25 pounds) per day and per horse was a good price. Mauricio, the chief of the health service, who was in possession of the cash for the horses, rejected the offer: 'That's too much! Patricio, you have to be on our side and try to bargain properly!' The tone of his voice indicated that this was an order. Patricio went back outside, and the psychologist said 'Patricio does not want to bargain like a *winka* (non-Pehuenche person), he is never going to bargain like a *winka*. We need a facilitator who can negotiate as a *winka*, otherwise the price is going to be too high.' The Pehuenche woman who worked daily at the Trapa Trapa post replied that the people outside deserved to be paid properly, since they had brought their horses from far away. Some of them had even come from Butalelbun, the most distant Pehuenche community in the Queuco Valley. Patricio came back with the final price: sixteen thousand pesos for each horse, per day. The chief asked to talk directly with three of the owners, to pay them personally. His negotiations with the horse owners took the form of an ultimatum. They talked for a while, while the rest of the men from the team were in the other room of the post drinking beer. The women, on the other hand, were outside choosing the horses they wanted. Suddenly, I saw the nurse (a man) going outside, laughing. The psychologist said 'He cannot be that drunk. We have not drunk that much! He must be pretending!' I watched him get on a horse, and after a few seconds, he fell off. The people inside the post laughed. I decided to stay silent and continue my participant observation: I drank a beer. Finally, after an hour or so, we were ready to go. In addition to the team, there were three Pehuenche guides who, besides being in charge of showing us the way, were also taking some of the functionaries' luggage on special horses rented for this purpose. No one uttered a word to them.

After a couple of hours, we arrived at the first ‘*puesto*,’ which is the name of the rustic houses Pehuenche people build in the mountains during the summer. Most of the time, the *puestos* are very close to fenced enclosures where animals stay during the night. Each family has its own place, each located a few kilometers from the next. To my surprise, the first Pehuenche family to notice our presence started walking in the opposite direction, avoiding talking to us. When the midwife tried to ask them where Edwin’s *puesto* was (Edwin was the name of our host and his *puesto* was where we were going to set up camp), they walked away without answering at all. We continued on for a while, and eventually found the place where we were going to stay. The area was astonishingly beautiful: clean air, big spaces, forests of araucarias on the mountaintops creating a nice contrast between the outlines of the trees and the clear blue sky.



Figure 5. Veranadas Cochico

Edwin arrived at the camp later, accompanied by a friend of his. Both of them had spent the whole day taking care of their animals (Sp. *campeando*). When Edwin saw us, he said straightforwardly:

So you have arrived [...] I hope you are not coming with Piñera¹¹⁵ [...] Piñera has still not come to this place, that's why this year it was not a good year for the pine nuts. Not all years are good, and we don't have many pine nuts now [...]. If we had good years for pine nuts all the time, we would be even bigger than Piñera [...] but in some way it is good not to have pine nuts all the time, as we can stay here without having Piñera coming to bother us.

When he arrived, everyone was busy setting up the camp. I saw Patricio struggling with a big tent, and he asked me to help. After a while, he left me alone and went away. A little later I realized I was trying to set up the Chief of Health's tent, who had ordered Patricio to do the job for him. The chief spoke to Edwin about buying a goat to eat that night. Edwin said he would be happy to sell us a goat, and added 'Well, yes, that's my job, to feed them, not like yours that *is just pencil* [...] Yes, *you are just a pencil*. Not me, I take care of animals the whole day.' I thought about being 'just a pencil,' and the anthropological writing that was waiting for me after my fieldwork. Edwin left, and after a while he came back with a very nice white goat. It was getting dark. 'How do you want it? Alive or dead?' Edwin asked. 'Dead,' said the chief. Edwin killed the goat using his knife, twisting it in the animal's neck for a quick death. I was the only one helping him, providing light for the whole procedure with my lamp. While the goat was bleeding from its neck, Edwin worried about the animal's blood being wasted. 'No one wants to eat *niachi*?' No one responded. 'We lost the *niachi*' he said.¹¹⁶ In the meantime, Patricio arrived with a beer and offered it to us. Edwin kept on '*carneando*' (En. butchering) the animal, asking for more beer. When the animal was ready, we mounted it onto a long steel rod. The whole team was around the bonfire, waiting and chatting. The Pehuenche guides were apart, but were also around the fire. Edwin continuously rotated the steel rod. The goat took about half an hour or so to cook. Once it was ready, Edwin offered his knife to the health workers in order for us to take turns slicing off our own pieces of meat. Some of us used the knife but the rest of the team did not respond to Edwin's offer, so Edwin took his knife and started offering pieces of meat, all the while making fun of the health workers' attitude with sarcastic comments. At this point, his sarcasm was not just my own interpretation of the situation. It was apparent to everyone that the

¹¹⁵ Sebastian Piñera was the Chilean president who had been elected a few weeks previously.

¹¹⁶ *Niachi* is the animal's blood eaten immediately after an animal has been killed.

atmosphere was getting tense.

The men were drinking wine now, and Patricio was in charge of distributing the glasses of wine. There was not much interaction between the health workers and the Pehuenche people. The only one who interacted with everybody was Patricio. The atmosphere became increasingly tense, and after we had finished eating the goat and it was getting late, I opted to go to my tent. After a while, I realized that almost everyone had also gone to sleep, and there was a nice deep silence in Cochico. This silence did not last long however. I soon heard the voices of Edwin and his friend in the camp. I could hear that Edwin was very upset, and his friend was trying to calm him down.

What the hell are these functionaries (Sp. funcionarios) doing here? [...] The doctor has nothing to do here, whenever I want I go to the doctor, but I do not need the doctor coming to see me. What the hell are they doing here? Now, it won't take me very long to bring my gun and to throw out all these functionaries. [...] because no one represents my self! Who is going to respond on behalf of me? Nobody! They are rich, I am poor, they should not be here. Now they are going to understand what I mean. Just let me go for my gun and I will start kicking out all these functionaries.

At that point I realized that I might be in trouble, and I tried to find some objects inside my tent that could be helpful in protecting myself. I could hear that his friend was trying to convince him to go away, but Edwin was too upset to take his friend's advice. Finally, after a long while, I heard their voices moving away. I tried to sleep, without success however, as I was anticipating Edwin's return. He did not come back. Before finally succumbing to sleep, I wrote a few words in my field notes: *functionaries, just pencil.*

I awoke to a beautiful day. To my surprise, I saw Edwin near my tent. He was smiling and looking for his horse that had escaped night before. The rest of the team came together near the bonfire for breakfast and made comments about the situation the night before. All of them had been scared, I found out. The midwife was furious, and blamed her chief, who she said should not have been drinking alcohol with Pehuenche people. However, there was a general agreement that the responsibility for taking any action last night had been Patricio's, and he was extensively questioned by his colleagues. He responded by saying that he had tried to find a big stick to defend the team. Everyone mocked him, not believing what he was saying. The psychologist angrily and

sarcastically said: ‘Very good Patricio, you have very good friends here. Very good.’

5.2 A shaman visualized



Figure 6. *Machi* Juana in a Chilean newspaper

The first time I saw this picture, in the most important Chilean newspaper, *El Mercurio*, was in September 2010. Its Sunday edition is read by millions of Chileans and this photo appeared in the main national news section. The picture was taken during one of the most difficult moments the Chilean government went through with regards to the Mapuche people in 2010: a hunger strike held by almost forty Mapuche people who were being tried with the anti-terrorist law created during the Pinochet dictatorship.¹¹⁷ The government attempted to stop the hunger strike due to pressure from the international media and other organizations. This photo is of the shaman (Ch. *machi*) Juana, who was called to represent the Mapuche in a public meeting of negotiation between Indigenous people and the State.¹¹⁸

I found this picture surprising for two reasons, the first of which is simply because I personally know *machi* Juana. Indeed, I was living with her when the earthquake occurred, seven months before this photo was taken. Secondly, I think this photo is an

¹¹⁷ For a deeper analysis of this hunger strike, see Aylwin 2010.

¹¹⁸ For general accounts about *machi*, see Bacigalupo 2001 and 2007.

incredibly good summary of the relations the State is establishing with Mapuche people.¹¹⁹ Land conflicts, military repression, and unfair legal judgments are being publicly presented as issues that are related to health. In relation to this, it is noteworthy that the first representative of the government to engage in a dialogue with the hunger-strikers, once they had endured almost three months of fasting and were already very weak, was the Minister of Health, who was a doctor. During this time, shamans and doctors were both under the limelight in the public domain. Let's take a closer look at this picture. Which actions characterize this scene? The State is observing (visualizing) the *machi* (the functionaries of the State are looking in her direction), as well as making her visible to the public through the newspaper. But what would happen if, in the same photo, the *machi* were not there? Who would be the public interlocutor of the government? Who would be the passive object of the State's gaze?



Figure 7. *Machi* Juana at her home

Here is *machi* Juana, again. This time, I was the photographer. This photo was taken at

¹¹⁹ For a discussion of gendered uses of female *machi*, the State, and governance, see Bacigalupo 2007.

her home in Chol Chol, a little rural town close to the Chilean city of Temuco, where I spent some time living with her and her patients. *Machi* Juana is well known to the public health workers of Santa Bárbara Hospital and the Ralco clinic, places from where she gets many patient referrals (see Chapter Four). Administratively speaking, the hospital does not work directly with Pehuenche people living in the mountains, since that population seeks healthcare in the Alto Bío Bío district. However, when the hydroelectric dams were built, several Pehuenche families had to abandon their communities and were relocated to a place known as La Peña, just ten kilometers away from Santa Bárbara. For this reason, there are many Pehuenche people who refer to the Santa Bárbara Hospital for healthcare without any mediation from the Ralco clinic. Sometimes their illnesses cannot be treated by Chilean doctors since they *cannot see*. In those cases, a link between *machi* Juana and people from La Peña is created by public health workers, and more specifically by Ana, the hospital's intercultural facilitator. She invited me to take part in the monthly trips she organizes to Chol Chol, when she takes Pehuenche people from La Peña to the *machi*'s house. After about four hours in a van, we arrived in Chol Chol where I was introduced to *machi* Juana and her husband Magno. All the visitors were invited into the *machi*'s house, and to sit down around a table. The travelling party included Matias, the president of the Pehuenche community of Ayin Mapu, his wife Carmen, and their daughter Katia. There was also another family from La Peña, plus a worker from the hospital who had come to visit the *machi* as a patient. After a very informal conversation about the trip and about certain patients who could not attend that day, Juana went outside the house, where she sees each patient individually.

I am not interested here in providing details or exotic descriptions about how this *machi* works. Rather, I am interested in describing how public health workers have been involved in the creation of this intercultural performance. After the *machi* finished a short prayer in front of the *rewe*, she asked who was going to be the first patient to be seen.¹²⁰ Ana decided who would go first, and she approached the *rewe* with him. The

¹²⁰ *Rewe* is a polysemic term that literally means the 'pure place.' In this context, it refers to an altar

machi asked everyone to go inside the house, but Ana stayed outside nevertheless. Each patient had been requested to take a urine sample with him or her before coming to Chol Chol; a sample that is carefully examined by *machi* Juana and is used as her main tool for diagnosis (see Chapter Three). Time flew, and after a couple of hours, Juana had seen all her patients. She came back inside the house as everyone was seated around the table drinking *mate* tea and eating. She asked her husband to write down a brief summary of each patient's diagnosis, outlining the treatments and the amount of *lawen* needed. Before he could do this however, Ana took the notebook and started writing. Ana wrote down the amount of *lawen* each patient was going to take at home, a brief summary of how to drink it, and the specific details of each treatment. When it was Matias' turn, he was told that he needed to come back to stay a few days with the *machi*. He immediately agreed, telling me that he was very impressed with the things the *machi* told him while looking at his urine sample. Neither the Chilean doctors, nor popular Chilean *médicas* (non-Mapuche healers) had been able to see what he was suffering from. After a while, when everyone had paid for the general check-up (3000 *pesos*, or about five pounds) and the *lawen* (2500 *pesos* per liter, or almost four pounds), we said our goodbyes and walked to the van that would take us back to Santa Bárbara. We had arranged to come back in a month's time.

A week later, I was invited to visit La Peña with Ana. In tears, she told me that she had gotten 200 000 *pesos* (about 300 pounds) from the hospital to do 'something' in La Peña, and she needed some advice from me as a professional. I accepted the invitation. The day we were leaving for La Peña, I went to the hospital and found out that there was also another intercultural facilitator who would be coming with us for the visit. This person was a Pehuenche woman who was 'learning' how to work in intercultural health. When I arrived, they were both working on a very structured questionnaire to take with us, as a method of general diagnosis of La Peña. I suggested that perhaps it was not

composed of a step-notched tree trunk. For a deeper analysis of the polysemic nature of this term, see Course 2011, Di Giminiani 2011, Dillehay 2007, Faron 1963, and Foerster 1993. Juana's *rewe*, I was told, must be changed every four years. In dreams, Juana gets clear instructions about how and when to change it. The one time she forgot to do it on the date stipulated, she got very sick, and needed the intervention of another *machi* who came to treat her.

necessary to do a questionnaire, and it might be worthwhile to just speak with people. My comment was clearly not welcome, and I understood that my collaboration, or rather, my participant observation, was just going to be 'strategic.' Strangely enough, I got a call from Ana a couple of weeks after our trip during which I was told that a company called ENDESA was wanting to pay a psychologist for a professional opinion of the psychological well-being of the communities. An offer that I of course declined.

The day we went to La Peña, we first went to Matias' house, since he was the president of the community and Ana wanted his authorization before doing the survey. When we arrived, many people were undertaking the harvest of wheat (Sp. *la cosecha de trigo*). There was a very big barbecue (Sp. *asado*) being prepared to feed the workers and celebrate the harvest, and I found some friends of mine from Ralco who had come to help their relatives in La Peña. They invited me to stay, but I was with Ana, and I noticed that Matias was very upset by her presence. He told me that the other intercultural facilitator who was with us was a very bad person who did not help at all when her sister was in the hospital. The atmosphere became tense, and Ana's colleague was forced to go back to the hospital's vehicle and wait there. Unexpectedly, a young man I did not know asked me straightforwardly whether it was possible for me to help him with his legal papers (Sp. *papeles*) which were *dirty*, and as a result of that he could not find a job. I told him that I was just a visitor and that I did not really work at the hospital. He then told me 'I thought you were a functionary.'

After a month, back in Chol Chol once again, *machi* Juana and Magno were very concerned about a young patient from Alto Bío Bío named Cristian who had arrived at her house on his own two weeks ago and did not want to leave. *Machi* Juana said that she was very worried because Cristian did not speak at all, and spent the whole day outside, not moving, like a statue. Yet, *machi* Juana added, Cristian was aware of social interactions around him, and therefore she did not think he was mad (Ch. *wei wei*). Also, when it was time to eat, he put up no resistance, and actually ate everything, criteria that for Juana was enough to declare that someone is not insane. But the shaman and her family were worried because he did not seem to be improving, and they did not want to

be witnesses to a tragedy. In short, Juana did not want Cristian committing suicide in her house, or harming one of her relatives. I was told that Cristian had actually been one of Juana's patients in the past and had been recovering well from his *mal* (witchcraft). The problem, the *machi* said, was that Cristian had begun treatments prescribed by another *machi* while she was treating him. One of Cristian's relatives, supported by a well-known person from Alto Bío Bío who was against the work in 'intercultural health' undertaken by the public health workers, had taken Cristian to see another *machi* who did not collaborate with the public services. According to Juana, this other *machi* was a witch and had destroyed all the improvements he had made.

The *machi* saw her patients in front of the *rewe*, as usual. Ana again stayed close to her. I heard some of the patients complaining about this amongst themselves. After every patient had been seen, *machi* Juana proceeded with the distribution of *lawen* inside the house. Ana again took the notebook and started writing. After a while, the functionaries left, but I stayed back and lived with Juana for a month as her helper. During that time, I shared a very small room with Matias and his wife, who slept on a thin bed besides a bunk bed. Their small daughter was sleeping in the bunk under mine. Cristian slept in the next room, and two other patients shared the third room in this shamanic ward. One morning, while I was helping Juana with the preparation of *lawen* for her patients, she confessed that she was very upset with Ana. The notes Ana had written down were not helpful at all, and all she could read were the prices each person had paid for the *lawen*. Juana did not know exactly how to proceed since she could not really remember all the details of the diagnoses she had made. Besides this, she had gotten many complaints from patients about Ana, as she should not be in front of the *rewe* talking to patients during the prayer. She also mentioned that there was a very big inauguration for the Chol Chol marathon on Sunday, and that she had been invited by the local administration to publicly open the event. She invited me to go along, adding that a very nice event had taken place the week before when the municipality had inaugurated a sculpture of a Mapuche icon at the main entrance of Chol Chol and she had given the initial blessings.

Machi Juana and her husband were very worried about Cristian, a concern that I shared

since I was sleeping in the same shamanic ward, so to speak, and his behavior scared both me and the *machi*'s patients. Juana decided to go to the police office in Chol Chol and asked me to go with her. Once there, the policeman said that he could not help, since Cristian had initially been accepted as a guest and had not done anything that justified police action. *Machi* Juana seemed very upset and softly complained that the police do not fulfil their proper roles, but that they are just 'journalists,' people who arrive when the worst has already happened. *Journalists. Functionaries. Pencils.* I started to understand that these words shared something in common.

Once, in the middle of the night, I woke up to screams. Matias and Carmen were screaming desperately. Matias was shouting out my name very loudly, moving towards my bed, telling me to wake up. I could not see much in the darkness, but I realized that the room was shaking like a ship in the middle of a very turbulent storm. I jumped off my bed and tried to open the door to get out, without success. Behind me, Carmen was crying, praying and begging to not be punished. Once we managed to get out of the house, the night sky was completely darkened by clouds. The earth was moving violently and none of us could keep our balance. When the ground stopped shaking, we all entered the *machi*'s house and sat down around the table with a few candles. *Machi* Juana seemed extremely shocked. She started praying in Mapudungun, and the first words I understood of her prayer were against white domination, against the *winka*. She spoke to *Ngenechen*, begging not to be destroyed. She said that she was guilty, that all of us were guilty, that the *winka* domination involved all of us in one way or another. I found a very small radio with batteries and managed to find the only signal available. The broadcaster said that this earthquake was one of the biggest in all of Chilean history. *Machi* Juana was horrified, and started telling me how this was also her fault, that this happened because of the *winka*, but not solely because of them; she was also guilty because she had been participating in things that were not related to *machi* issues. She told me in a serious tone that she should not have been involved in the public events of the municipality and that she was not going to go to the marathon inauguration. This destruction was due to *winka* destruction, she kept on saying, and *Ngenechen* had given

us a clear message of this.

5.3 Blind sociality

The ethnographic description of these two events allows one to reflect upon the particular kind of sociality dominating relations within intercultural health performances. In particular, I would like to examine the type of sociality that is generated within the relational space denominated as ‘intercultural’ by state policies. Broadly speaking, I think this data corroborates a more theoretical and epistemological reasoning premised upon the following statement which considers relationships as the truly constituent part of what is human:

If we are to produce adequate theories of social reality, then the first step is to apprehend persons as simultaneously containing the potential for relationships and always embedded in a matrix of relations with others (Strathern, in Ingold 1996:66).

Relationships are primordial, not secondary. Said otherwise: every practice implies a relationship. I suggest that when practices or sets of practices performed by functionaries of the State are examined, a paradigmatic kind of sociality comes to the fore, as these state workers engage in relationships with subjects visualized within the State’s intercultural logic in very peculiar ways. What interests me here is the predominant mode of relating within this matrix of relationships labelled as ‘intercultural’ (see Chapter Four). For this reason, what I would like to highlight here are the relational consequences of certain types of sociality (or modes of relating) that are inherent to, or at least paradigmatic of, the State’s intercultural practices. My aim here is to present an analytical critique of the specific intercultural practices narrated above, in order to suggest plausible generalizations about relationships between institutional and non-institutional subjects. It is necessary however, to briefly render it explicit that the concept of sociality as it is used here stems from the British anthropological tradition, the seeds of which can be found in the work of Edmund Leach (1961).

Generally speaking, Leach (1961:304-305) declares with an anti-Durkheimian argument

that society is not a thing, but rather ‘a way of ordering experience.’ In other words, society cannot be thought of as a social entity that is transcendental to social relationships; it is not possible to think about what is social from outside social interactions. Social practices are always social experiences and cannot be separated from human behaviour. Nor can they be conceived of from outside the relational experience. In the words of Marilyn Strathern (1996:60), who refers to Leach’s work, ‘there is not an autonomous realm of social existence to be pitted against the material facts of property or locality.’ It is with reference to this tradition of thought that avoids using abstractions to refer to what is social, that I would like to reflect on the ethnographical data just introduced, emphasizing the predominant mode of relating between public health workers and Pehuenche people. What these ethnographical events show is a set of relational consequences for the way the State visualizes Indigenous people (see Chapter Four). I believe that this set of consequences can only be thought of as a product of relationships, or more precisely of a web of relationships, and that it responds to a particular mode of relating (in this case motivated by functionaries of the State). The focus of my reflection then, will be on the type of sociality configuring these events, a sociality understood not only as ‘the relational matrix which constitutes the life of persons’ (Strathern 1996:64), but also, following the work of Course (2011), as the particular mode of relating that constitutes this relational matrix. It should be self-evident that my objective here is not to propose absolute generalizations about the relationships that exist among *all* the people who work for the State and *all* Pehuenche people. However, I believe that these ethnographic situations clearly demonstrate a hegemonic type of sociality that characterizes relationships institutionally shaped in the realm of public health.

The first situation, taking place at the *veranada*, involves several interactions that can easily be identified as both hierarchical and typical of a certain type of ‘effective action of power relationship’ (Clastres 1976:115, my translation). I suggest that these interactions can be considered characteristic of the mode of relating proposed by the State’s functionaries. My own position inside those relationships is not exempt from this

type of power relationship. Furthermore, it is precisely from my own feelings of perplexity and annoyance as a participant in these relationships that I write these reflections. My participant observation is just a fleeting anecdote inside an extremely complex history of relationships.

It should be self evident that during the trip to the *veranada*, the way in which the chief of Public Health executes his power does not consider the significance of relations. What is really striking is the types of relationships that this leader and the other *functionaries* form (or not) with the Pehuenche - relationships that in both events clearly appear as highly conflictual. My point here is that the mode of relating, or the sociality that characterizes workers of the State was based, to put it in Edwin's terminology, on *pencils*. Edwin renders it evident that the most significant difference between him and the functionaries was based on what he was capable of doing and what the *functionaries* were not. While the functionaries' main concern was about representational meanings (functionaries are '*just pencils*'), Edwin's concern was mainly about daily practices. In other words: in the same way 'the Aché are what they do' (Clastres 1972:209), Edwin seems to say 'I am what I do, not what you mean.' Edwin uses the metaphor of the pencil as a key image for the definition of public health workers. I would like to suggest that Edwin's speech points out that the practices of functionaries are always mediated by representations. That is, they are symbolic practices. To put it differently, functionaries establish a type of relationship based on meanings and abstractions, a mode of relating that is *just pencil* - merely a matter of symbolic meaning. Yet Edwin is not interested in the representational meanings of things and he does not engage in relations with the functionaries that are predetermined by a role or function to be performed. On the contrary, Edwin, with a Clastrean spirit (1972), is motivated by a pragmatic interest closer to the question 'How does this work?' rather than 'What does it mean?' Edwin's concern is about how to take care of his animals. The way he is related to his world is pragmatically based: through his angry rant against the *functionaries*, Edwin criticizes the abstract and 'out of context' role played by the workers of the State. What I suggest is that through his words, Edwin questions the type of sociality proposed by the team of

public health workers. Let us then analyze more closely the practices of these functionaries, focusing mainly on the way people engage (or not) in relationships.

There were several different moments of negotiation between the chief of Public Health and Pehuenche people during the trip to the *veranada* (the rental of the horses, the purchasing of the goat). None of them, however, can be understood as configured by a productive exchange: those moments of interaction merely correspond to monetary transactions that do not imply any exchange beyond these economic transactions.¹²¹ In fact, what is striking here is that the exchange of words between public health workers and locals is very rare and almost non-existent. Rather, one could say that there is no true exchange in the mode of relating between functionaries and Pehuenche people. In the renting of horses for example, it was the intercultural facilitator who had the task of negotiating and speaking with the locals. Besides Patricio, nobody else interacted with the local people. I find that the role of the facilitator is quite conflicting. What the functionaries request of him as a functionary is to interact with Pehuenche people through a certain type of logic of power characteristic of the relationships that they themselves denominate as *winka*. Indeed, the facilitator should negotiate, according to the psychologist, as a *winka*. Specifically, he should engage in relations with others starting from a particular mode of relating: he should defend the interests of the institution.

Generally speaking, the performance carried out by the team of functionaries at the rural post also renders apparent the way in which the State is enacted, and the particular type of 'effective action of power relation' executed by its functionaries. For the functionaries, it is not important to engage in relations with the owners of the horses - what really matters to them are *their* horses. Likewise, it is not even necessary to talk to

¹²¹ This Chapter might evoke in the reader Sahlins' (1972) classic notion of negative reciprocity, understood as the unsociable extreme embracing theft, barter and gambling, which are impersonal and entail opposed interests. However, my aim in this Chapter is to reflect upon the types of sociality within intercultural relations, mostly by considering mutual vision as a prerequisite for social relations. In this sense, even if there are some resemblances with Sahlins's concept of negative reciprocity, my argument is built upon ethnographic evidence of visual transactions. This is why later in this Chapter I will propose the concept of *blind sociality*, which I think is a better tool with which to consider these intercultural relations.

the Pehuenche guides who accompany them to the *veranadas*. They simply execute their function. There is no real exchange within this institutionalized type of symbolic sociality.

At this point, it may be helpful to refer to some Althusserian reflections about the relation between the configuration of a subject and the State. According to Althusser (1971), institutions of the State teach particular *knowhow* specific to the practices that each ideology embodies. What the institutions of the State teach, which in this case is reflected in the relationships of power worked out by the functionaries, is a 'subjection to the ruling ideology or the mastery of its 'practice' (the practice of that ideology)' (Althusser 1971:135). In this sense, it seems interesting to note that Althusser himself, without having had the pleasure of knowing Edwin, defined functionaries of the State as 'the high priest of the ruling ideology' (Ibid. p.145). In this sense, the effective action of power relation (Clastres' State) carried out by the functionaries can be seen as a relational version of Althusser's Ideological State Apparatus, which operates through distinct and specialized institutions. This Ideological State Apparatus, in the Althusserian logic, functions mostly by ideology and non-repression. The Althusserian idea that is important to highlight when considering this ethnographic data is that 'Ideology interpellates individuals as subjects' (Ibid. p.147).

I suggest that when the interactions between functionaries and Pehuenche people are examined, the predominant mode of relatedness that appears is strongly characterized by an *unproductive sociality* dictated by the functionaries. The latter, as actors of the State's ideology, 'hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects' (Ibid.). In this context, it seems interesting to underline the fact that the functionaries carried out the interpellation in a slightly different way from Althusser's concept of interpellation. Perhaps Althusser himself was mistaken (or Althusser himself was strongly interpellated by Western ideologies) when assuming the individual as *a priori*: in Alto Bío Bío, functionaries interpellate subjects as individuals, and this is carried out through a certain effective action of power relation. In this sense, relationships between functionaries and natives can be seen as a clear example of what operates as a de-substantialization of the

State (Barbosa 2004): the State ‘is not its ministries, neither Eliseo, neither White House, neither Kremlim (...) The State is an exercise of political power (Clastres, 1978:166).’ It is an ‘effective action of power relation’ (Ibid. p.115). In this sense, and following Barbosa (2004), I believe that Edwin, through his night time monologue, proposes to us a certain type of sociality, rather than society, against the (de-substantialized) State. The latter is enacted through a particular kind of relationship, local and material as Strathern (1996) wanted, and based on an effective action of power relation. Edwin's anger strongly questions the functionaries’ particular mode of relating, characterized by a type of sociality that I have called *unproductive*. Therefore, what Clastres proposes and Edwin performs are not societies against the State, but rather socialities against the State, or ‘social machines without any external aspect regarding the subjectivation forms that they produce and through which they operate’ (Barbosa 2004:561, my own translation).

Having said this, Edwin's greeting is also illustrative. When the functionaries arrived, his main concern was related to the presence of a particular person: Piñera. Edwin refers to the Chilean president with his name rather than with his (abstract) symbolic institutional role (Edwin does not say, ‘Thank god you have not brought the ministries,’ or ‘Thank god the President of Chile did not come,’ for example). This mode of relating against a depersonalizing abstraction is also present in Edwin’s expression ‘just pencils.’ To say that functionaries are ‘just pencils’ is another way of saying that those people are very distant from the significant practices taking place in *veranadas* (related to caring for the animals that are a main source of subsistence). According to this logic, I suggest that the relation proposed by a functionary is determined by an unproductive mode of relating for which individuals both exist *a priori* beyond their contexts, and precede relationships. This unproductive sociality is based on the transaction of meanings and abstract currencies, and is characterized by the apparent indifference of functionaries to the pragmatic function of *veranadas*. Thus, the functionaries appear as symbols of the State, as symbols of a symbol. In this sense, Edwin’s yelling is a particular reaction to a type of fully unproductive sociality, paradoxically characterized by the proposal of an exchange without exchange and a kind of sociality that denies itself. In other words,

Edwin does not accept the functionaries' interpellation, and he denounces it by shouting out in the middle of the night the name of an interaction without persons but with functions: *functionaries*. His threat can also be seen as a reaction to an unproductive sociality that does not facilitate the recognition of people as people and in which mutual vision is not possible. This unproductive sociality, which can be called *blind sociality*, renders subjects strongly subjected and powerfully determined by their roles. In other words, what the yelling against the functionaries (sociality against the State) denounces is the depersonalizing function inherent in the interpellation by the functionaries. As I have just mentioned, the unproductive blind sociality surfaces as an attempt to determine the subject by interpellating it as an individual: Edwin, in this case, would not be allowed to appear as a subject becoming a subject (in the Deleuzian sense) through mutual vision. Likewise, the utterance 'just pencil' appears as a mode of questioning a relationship that is established from the *outside* of practices. This type of relationship remains caught in a kind of semantics without a locality, it is de-localized. It is this trap, evidenced by Edwin's late night tirade, that transforms the work of the intercultural facilitator into an impossible task. In fact, there is nothing to facilitate, since the facilitator has already been interpellated by the State and its 'double bind' (Bateson 1972) relational proposal so to speak, concerning an exchange without exchange and sociality without sociality, what I have called *unproductive sociality*.¹²²

Indexical relationships, not symbolic abstractions, seem to be Edwin's invitation to the State's functionaries. Flora also resisted institutional abstraction when conferring the name *el Orígen* onto a state worker (Chapter Four). It is important to keep in mind that in Mapuche history, there was never a tributary surplus that allowed the appearance of the institution, and therefore the existence of functionaries. The Mapuche 'never institutionalized power in a way of producing functionaries and representatives in charge paid by a system of tributes imposed to the population' (Marimán 2006:61, my own translation). In Chile, functionaries are paid with the '*kullin*' (money) that comes from a system of tributes, rather than the '*kullin*' (animals) that Edwin takes care of in the

¹²² For a discussion of 'double bind' within intercultural relations, see Foerster & Montecino 2007.

mountains. The word '*kullin*' in Alto Bío Bío is used to refer to both animals and money, because for many Pehuenche, money comes from the sale of animals. One of the facilitator's functions (negotiating the rental price for horses) was therefore to establish the symbolic *kullin* (money) of the indexical *kullin* (animal), if you will.

Institutional abstractions that mediate relationships are not welcomed by either Edwin or Flora (as discussed in Chapter Four). 'El Orígen' and 'Piñera' refer to people with personal nouns: the sociality against the State here appears as an insistence on personalizing institutions (or de-institutionalizing persons). This insistence tends to consider institutions within relations rather than entities of power separated from relationships: *El Orígen* is not a representative of the State, but rather a person who assumes his or her own name, *el Orígen*. In this way, I suggest that sociality against the State appears as a critique of the abstract mediation that generates a transcendental alterity at the moment of its interpellation. In other words, Flora and Edwin push us to think of the necessity (and prerogative) of persons when establishing relationships. *El Orígen* and Piñera are not institutions separated from people, but rather, they form a part of relationships. It is perhaps for this reason that Edwin claims that nobody represents him and that nobody can speak for him. Immediate and local relationships are those that really matter to Edwin, as opposed to those relations that have turned into an objectified representation through the functionaries' pencils. Edwin simply reminds us that 'relationships reduced to 'command-obedience' as ways of understanding the political, in America do not work' (Clastres 1969:10-11). In other words, Edwin and Flora are *against the State*, to use Clastres' (1974a) classic title, but against a State understood as the imposition of a certain *blind sociality* based on de-personalizing abstractions and on the power that abstraction and its hierarchy implies.

The second ethnographic situation recounted above might be understood as an instance of *shamanistic transparency*, because it implies an over-codification and over-exposition of a subject (the *machi*) in relation to a certain type of effective action of power relation:

nothing remains hidden.¹²³ This shamanistic transparency can also be thought of as a specific result of the ‘culture’ (*sensu* Carneiro de Cunha (2009), see Chapter Four) enacted by functionaries and the State’s programs in intercultural health, which, as discussed in Chapter Four, *need actors to be able to negotiate*. It is also apparent that the way the State interpellates the *machi* is clearly based on an individualistic ideology of the person. This ideology determines the very possibility of ‘intercultural negotiation,’ even though local conceptualizations of personhood in general, and mutual vision in particular (Chapter One), are not considered whatsoever. In other words, this shamanistic transparency can be thought of as being the result of an exchange without *sociality of exchange* (see Course 2011), the latter being premised upon the equality, autonomy, and perceived difference of the participants. In contrast, and this is the main argument I would like to put forward in this Chapter, the paradigmatic sociality determining intercultural relations takes shape through the creation of a web of relationships that paradoxically do not allow the emergence of real relationships among real people through mutual vision. In short, the interaction between health workers and local people appears as highly determined by an *unproductive sociality* which, if we consider the very significance of the relations of mutual vision needed for the emergence of a person, could also be thought of as a particular type of *blind sociality*. The *machi* being enacted by the media appears as such precisely through the activation of an interpellation that is not based on the visual mutuality of the participants. The subject of the State’s interpellation appears (at least temporarily) as configured within a situation with no exit. To continue with Althusser: the moment there is a ‘you’ (in this case, the *machi* of this shamanistic transparency), there is immediately an ‘I,’ namely, the State as subject. This interpellation does not escape the ‘logics of the pencil’ inherent to the relational style of the State’s intercultural health program. This *blind sociality* is premised upon symbolic meanings rather than indexical practices. The metaphor of the

¹²³ I am using the concept of transparency based on Vattimo’s (1992) work on *transparent society*, mass media and postmodernism. He proposes ‘(a) that the mass media play a decisive role in the birth of a postmodern society, (b) that they do not make this society more transparent, but more complex, even chaotic, and finally, (c) that it is in precisely this relative ‘chaos’ that our hopes for emancipation lie’ (Vattimo 1992:4). For a critical reflection on the ideology of transparency, see Strathern 2000.

State subject as being *just a pencil* is illustrative of this type of sociality, and not only when Edwins's utterances are considered: in Chol Chol, the intercultural facilitator intervenes in the *machi*'s performance with her pencil, without understanding the functions of that particular *machi* in practice.

In a more general sense, the connection created between the *machi* and people from La Peña is clearly embedded in a scenario of structural violence (Farmer 1996, 2004) involving people that had been resettled from Ralco Lepoy in the Andean mountains to La Peña on Santa Bárbara's rural-urban fringe. These resettled Pehuenche people are living in situations of great inequality (Gonzalez-Parra & Simon 2009). In this place, the *pencil* appears once again as a metaphor for the functions of functionaries, this time with its inseparable kin, the *paper*: I was seen as a functionary, somebody who has the power to manipulate meanings written on paper. In that particular context, I am part of an effective action of power relation defined from outside the relationship itself.

The case of Cristian obeys the same logic of power relation, but it is even more delicate. In a certain sense, Cristian, as a patient, embodies the specific consequences of intercultural health initiatives. Cristian appears in the crossroad that is generated between the intercultural health initiatives of the State, the Indigenous people who participate in that intercultural network and those who oppose these kinds of initiatives. The change in *machi* and the change in treatment is in fact triggered precisely because *machi* Juana, being in connection with the public services, is perceived by some in the community to be a witch bound to the State. It is known that *machi* are generally seen as radically different people inside their communities, feared for their radical alterity and their healing/destructive capacities (see Bacigalupo 2001 & 2007). In this case however, the situation implies a different complexity: the *machi* is rejected by part of the community because of her relatedness to the State. Within the State's interpellation, the *machi* recognizes the State as subject, and by doing so she becomes part of it, part of that effective action of power relation. This dynamic, however, is what really matters for the self-reflection *machi* Juana goes through while *Nüiyün*, the earthquake, occurs. *Nüiyün*, without necessarily being an institution (the earthquake here appears as a subject rather

than as a force of nature) strongly interpellates the *machi*, but from a different subject position. It is a cultural interpellation (in a multi-naturalistic sense) that falls upon the *machi*, forcing her to critically think about her own position within a certain effective action of power relation. *Nüyün* thus appears as being against the State, the latter understood as a certain type of *winka* sociality, blind and unproductive.

What is striking here, and needs to be highlighted, is that when the *machi* criticizes ‘*winka* domination,’ she does not do so as if there was an external or transcendental dominance: it is *in* her. In other words, she is guilty because she cannot escape from the interpellation that the State imposes on her, a relationship based on an unproductive blind sociality. If what is *winka* is understood as being involved in a power relationship or a certain type of sociality, the *machi* recognized herself inside that *winka* relationship when *Nüyün* interpellated her. It is for this reason that the category ‘functionary’ is not related to a dilemma of identity but rather to one of self-difference. Edwin’s condemnation of ‘functionaries’ denounces a way of treatment of difference. It is a contestation of the way difference is being conceived of. In the same way the *machi* critically reflects on her own practices after *Nüyün*, Edwin criticizes a certain type of effective action of power relation. What is being criticized, I would like to suggest, is a transcendental power that gains force precisely because it has been conceived of as separated from relationships. In other words, for the State, intercultural health relationships are secondary, mediated, and paradoxical: they are relations that do not allow and are not based on a *productive sociality*, the latter characterized by ‘autonomous thought, agency, and social interaction based on language and exchange’ (Course 2011:30). If it is true that in Mapuche ontologies ‘personhood is necessarily predicated on relations with others (...) and a privileged mode of these relations with others is that of exchange’ (Ibid. p.25), the type of unproductive blind sociality that I have described here does not allow the emergence of relationships in which the recognition of people as people is possible (through mutual vision). According to Course (2011), others recognize the state of personhood only when the capacity for productive sociality (human sociality, action) converges with human physicality (human body,

form). Considering this line of argument in general, and mutual vision in particular, I want to suggest that what characterizes the *unproductive blind sociality* of the functionaries is in fact a lack of human sociality. My point is that what configures relations proposed by functionaries is an incapacity for productive sociality, or phrased in a more positive way, a capacity for unproductive blind sociality. If both the mode of sociality of exchange proposed by Course (2011), and my claim about mutual vision as a precondition for the emergence of a real person, imply the equal and autonomous nature of the participants *as well as* an act of visual recognition, the *unproductive blind sociality* present in the relationships between functionaries and natives implies, in fact, the opposite. *Unproductive blind sociality* is characterized by an unequal and heteronymous mode of relating that derives from the impossibility of the recognition of personhood within these relatings. It is this type of sociality that is being criticized by Edwin's rage against the functionaries, and what the *machi* questions in her reflection regarding her own role in connection with the functionaries. However, both reactions are ephemeral: they appear as moments of accusation that cannot really change the general *State of the situation* (Badiou 2001).¹²⁴ Thus, these moments of contention carried out by Edwin and *machi* Juana against the hegemonic interpellation by functionaries of the State, although violently excluding the Other, demarcating an external politics ('you functionaries!'), and at the same time affirming a homogeneous unit from within (what impedes the division between dominant and dominated) (Clastres 1977), disappear quickly: the day after his tirade, I awakened to a smiling Edwin looking for his horse, and the *machi* appeared in the newspaper only months after her critical reflection. It is apparent then that the effective action of power relationship inherent to the practices of the state functionaries is indeed effective.

¹²⁴ For Badiou (2001), *the State of the situation* is a position that governs the situation's terms, a meta-structural doubling of the situation itself and what assures the stability of any situation's presentation.

5.4 Conclusions

In this Chapter, starting from the description of two disruptive ethnographic situations, I have attempted to show the paradigmatically conflicting character of the daily relationships between state functionaries and non-functionary Indigenous people. I have demonstrated how these relationships are based on a certain type of sociality that I have called an *unproductive blind sociality*, since it does not facilitate the recognition of the people involved as real people through mutual vision. I have also suggested that the label ‘functionaries,’ commonly used by Indigenous people to refer to those who work for state institutions, points to particular kinds of relations that are not premised on mutual vision. ‘Functionary,’ thus, is a concept referring to the particular ontological status of subjects that are not locally conceived as real people.

In general terms, using these specific ethnographic situations as a base, I have questioned institutions as unique and unavoidable principles of social organization, and have shown how the *unproductive blind sociality* proposed by the functionaries does not allow for the emergence of a true dialogue between real people. Instead of real dialogues, intercultural relationships are merely based upon symbolic abstractions and do not consider people's real indexical practices. I have also tried to provide relational evidence against the State/society divide that claims that culture is produced by the State but not the other way round (Steinmetz 1999). What is really at stake within these relationships is in fact the type of sociality that configures relationships between functionaries and Indigenous people. I suggest that these relations are symbolically conceived of from outside relationships themselves, operating through an interpellation of individuals that is always transcendental. I believe that this is in fact *the* problem at stake when considering local reactions against this *unproductive blind sociality*, exemplified by the words of Edwin and *machi* Juana, people who in this Chapter have been considered as embedding a more paradigmatic type of ‘intercultural’ relationship. This Chapter has tried to provide an answer as to how it is that ‘the objectivity of the sociality can operate through the ‘subjectivity’ of people in interaction’ (Barbosa 2004:535, my own translation). I have suggested that Edwin and *machi* Juana’s local

contentions against the *unproductive blind sociality* can be summarized as responding to the following question: ‘How to let oneself be invested with alterity without this becoming a seed of transcendence, a basis of power, a symbol of the state, a symbol, that is, of a symbol?’ (Viveiros de Castro 2012:38). Finally, I have tried to show that the transcendent ‘visualization’ by functionaries of the state is contested precisely because it contains the seed of transcendence, which leads to local reactions that attempt to contest the symbolic multicultural ontology inherent to the functionaries’ daily practices.

Final Conclusions

‘The sowing of potatoes must be done when the moon is waning (Ch. *chenkülakuyen*). If you plant them when the moon is waxing (Ch. *chencherikuyen*), those potatoes will not grow.’ Pedro taught me this on one of the spring mornings we spent together in Pitril. Since the waning moon of that October was nearing, we were selecting the best seed potatoes from several sacks he had put aside the previous year. We had been discussing the land, earlier cultivations, the best time to castrate animals and so on, when he unexpectedly began to reflect about the past and the many transformations that had occurred in Pitril in recent years: ‘Too many things have changed with all this mess of people around! (Sp. *Muchas cosas han cambiado con todo este trajino de gente!*) Most of all, there are much fewer *appearances* (Sp. *apariencias*) around than there used to be.’ He spoke about the different beings that had decided to go away because of the massive *trajino*, such as the *water cow* (Ch. *wacaco*), a very big snake, and a dangerous predator bird called *piuchen*, but also many other (not always malevolent) beings that used to live and could be seen near the river. ‘All those beings have not been seen around here in recent years,’ he added meditatively, before becoming silent. That calming silence lasted until Pedro’s daughter arrived to say good morning: ‘Did you sleep well, Daddy?’ Pedro replied with a laid-back ‘Yes,’ adding that, fortunately, ‘that one did not come to visit me last night.’ Then Teresa stared at me, and in a voice dripping with sarcasm said that it was much better when her father was very tired before going to sleep, because then, the *witranalwe* did not bother him at all. Her cynical tone was no surprise to me at all, since Teresa had already demonstrated her attitude towards the ‘strange things’ her parents *believed* in. Such beliefs, however, were not merely ideas, she once emphasized: ‘For them, witchcraft issues are *tangible* things,’ she had said.

Bearing in mind the reflections in this thesis, Teresa’s attitude could be considered a

multicultural stance, in the sense that she was reducing particular realities into systems of belief (Chapter Four). However, that particular attitude was not consistent in Teresa's way of dealing with the world. Many times, for instance, when she had an important decision to make, she would go to the mountains to listen to the *chucaco*, a bird who provided advice through its songs. Also, when someone had died, she would not hesitate in attributing the death to witchcraft. However on that October day in Pitril, as sunset approached and we were all sitting together drinking *mate* tea, Pedro returned to our conversation regarding the many changes that had occurred in Pitril. Once again he emphasized the strange phenomenon of the 'appearances' disappearance.' He told me he could not fully understand why the *witranalwe* did not visit the younger generations (Ch. *wekeche* Sp. *gente nueva*) very often. After some minutes of reflection, he said that one of the likely reasons for this was the many changes biomedical injections have induced in the blood of the *wekeche*. In a very literal sense, he said that with 'all this mess' (Sp. *trajino*), and with all the new things the construction of the road had brought to their communities, the blood of the youth was no longer enticing to the *witranalwe*. 'The *witranalwe* does not like that mixed blood!' he added with conviction. At that point his oldest son who was in his forties said in a very friendly tone 'The *witranalwe* is an *ecological* bad spirit; he wants to be in shape!' Everyone laughed, and we continued drinking our *mate* tea. 'The *wekeche* are changing very fast', Pedro told me that night before going to sleep.

This anecdote provides ethnographic relevance of the vernacular distinction between 'new people' (Ch. *wekeche*) and 'old people' (Ch. *koiviche*) that my host Pedro and many others used to make. I heard many people in different communities claiming that the construction of the road connecting the communities of the Queuco Valley with the town of Ralco had created a noticeable difference between *wekeche* and *koiviche*. The former were often said to be more adapted to the way of life of Chilean people. In fact, those generations were very often described as *being in winkarakiduum* (non-Pehuenche thought), speaking *winkadungun* (non-Pehuenche language), and using *winkaniütram* (non-Pehuenche ways of talking). As shown in the introduction, the history of contact

between Pehuenche people and Chileans in the last century is a matter of fact. However, most of the people in Alto Bío Bío claim that daily contact between them and the Chilean public services only became significant about thirty years ago, because of the road built under Pinochet's dictatorship.



Figure 8. The former *renü* or the Pinochet Stone (Photo: Cristian Castro)

On this road in the middle of Pitril, there is a very famous large boulder all the inhabitants use as a landmark when describing where they live. This boulder is widely thought to have been a *renü*, a sacred place imbued with particular force (Ch. *newen*), and in the past was used by people as a place where people could foresee the future. Today this place is known as the *Pinochet Stone*, and its power to bestow visions of the future is now gone. The future is, at least temporarily, gone, so to speak: part of the *koiviche*'s old system of vision is not active and vivid, as it used to be.



Figure. 9 The former *renü* or the Pinochet Stone (Photo: Cristian Castro)

It must be stressed here that Pehuenche life, Pehuenche vision, and Pehuenche divisions are far more complex than the partition between Pehuenche and non-Pehuenche ontology I have focused on in order to build up my overall argument. Nevertheless, even if intergenerational and intra-cultural contradictions and divisions are both complex and multiple, young people in Alto Bío Bío still inhabit, to a great extent, a Pehuenche cosmo-politic. Teresa, like many other *wekeche*, still accepts the truth of witchcraft, and cannot help referring to the *chucao* when dealing with her existential dilemmas.

Having said this, this thesis has examined two contrasting analytical inventions (*sensu* Wagner 1982). First, I illustrated a system of vision I have called ‘Pehuenche vision’ (Part I). I suggested that this can only be understood as being part of a wider multi-natural Pehuenche cosmo-politic, understood as a politic where ‘cosmos refers to the unknown constituted by multiple, divergent worlds and (...) the articulation of which they would eventually be capable’ (Stengers 2010:995). Secondly, I have analyzed particular actions of political vision strongly determined by multicultural thinking and practices (Part II). By ‘political,’ in contrast to ‘cosmo-political,’ I mean the focus of the State’s practices (executed by functionaries) on ‘an exclusive human club (...) with a finite list of entities that must be taken into account’ (Latour 2004:454).

On the one hand, with vision as the key ontological operator, Part I focused on what Viveiros de Castro (1998) has pointed out as the main problem for Amerindian perspectivism, namely, how to separate and particularize within a world where relations are given and substances must be defined. Part II on the other hand, focused on what has been described (Viveiros de Castro 1998) as constituting the main problem for Western cosmology: how to connect and universalize within a world where individual substances are given and relations have to be made. I have demonstrated that whereas a multi-natural world entails the risk of becoming sick because of the excess of eyes, a multicultural one implies the risk of becoming sick because of the excess activity of one's own *neurono* (to say it in the words of the healer quoted at the beginning of this work). For the most part, I have made these ontological contrasts by considering intercultural relations, however intra-cultural distinctions between *koiviche* and *wekeche* might be constituted, to a certain extent, by similar but unexplored tensions.

The structuring of these sections was based strictly on ethnographical data about what organizes the lives of Pehuenche people. In this sense, this thesis has taken shape through a particular invention aiming to avoid the risk of reducing the Pehuenche account to arbitrary personal choices (see Strathern 1987). In order to demonstrate the relevance of Pehuenche thought to the critical evaluation of predominantly multicultural ontologies, I have described not only a visual system that appears in all its ontological splendour when *koiviche* (the old people) conceptualizations of being are examined, but also a visual system that is still relevant in the daily lives of many *wekeche*. Nowadays however, the younger generations rarely live in their communities since they often have to migrate to Chilean cities looking for jobs and/or to study. Not only have *ngen* spirits been withdrawing from Alto Bío Bío, but *wekeche* are also dwindling in number.

Within this extremely complex ethnographical scenario dominated by 'ontological disorders' (Bonelli, forthcoming), what has largely guided my account of Pehuenche people is what all the *koiviche* and many of the *wekeche* I met in Alto Bío Bío openly declared as their main concern: in Alto Bío Bío, *something* is slowly disappearing. I have exposed some of the intricacies of this Pehuenche world by focusing on Pehuenche

vision. I have shown how the relational visible ground between people requires the convergence of the personal composition (through mutual vision) within a dynamic space that I call the 'singular dynamic composition' (Chapter One). I have also examined particular situations of nocturnal predation in which seeing (unilaterally) equals eating. Through the consideration of unilateral vision and witchcraft and illness, I have demonstrated that Pehuenche ontologies are predicated on a radical primary dialectics 'between seeing and eating' (Mentore 1993:29) (Chapter Two). Moreover, I have described the relevance of the gift of vision in restoring direct and mutual vision between people, arguing that an essential precondition for the contingent recognition that discriminates between real people and non-real people is the creation of shared ground of human visibility (Chapter Three). I have also explored how liberal premises are enacted through multiculturalist practices of the State (Chapter Four), and how these practices, determined by a *blind sociality*, lead to particular local reactions (Chapter Five). In a nutshell, I have not only examined the role of vision in both a multi-natural and a multicultural world, but I have also reflected on the consequences a non-reflexive encounter between these entails. By underlining radical differences between both non-commensurable systems of vision and these vision of systems, I hope to have made a contribution to intercultural relations, broadly conceived. Within the political arena of States, these intercultural relations are often under-conceptualized and are frequently premised on the taken for granted and equivocal configuration of discrete and bounded worlds in interaction that allegedly exist *out-there*. With this thesis I hope to have demonstrated that, as I said in the introduction, there is more to Pehuenche vision than meets the individualistic, liberal eye.

Last but not least, considering that perspectivism, which has been a major source of inspiration throughout this thesis, 'should not be regarded as a simple category, but rather as a bomb with the potential to explode the whole implicit philosophy so dominant in most ethnographers' interpretations of their material' (Latour 2009b: 2), I hope this thesis can also be a bomb with the potential to explode the daily liberal and individualistic ways we tend to look at and see each other.

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