



Unexpected Places

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Land, words and silence in a Mapuche family trajectory of (dis)placement.

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Land, words and silence in a Mapuche family trajectory of (dis)placement.

This article explores the relationship between land, words and silence, and the ways they are articulated in biographical trajectories. In the context of displacement and successive home-making, it follows the spatial and temporal trajectories of a Mapuche family, their non-linear routes through the experience of exile, and the process of dwelling in the elsewhere. Exile is addressed here as a condition of being, a tension between presence and absence that involves loss, and that is negotiated through the interplay between words and silence, leading to the meaningful emergence of what I call ‘unexpected places’. At the core of this argument is a recognition of the intersubjective and hermeneutic borders that exist between persons in relation to speech and silence, in this case my partial understanding of the word ‘land’ (*mapu*), which disclosed the limits of language and the specificity of one’s lifeworld, and thus the boundaries of anthropological knowledge.

Keywords: Mapuche, biographical trajectories, place, displacement, words, silence

I was sleeping in the mountains. I dreamt.
I told my uncle ‘Pewman *chacha*’ (I dreamt, *chacha*)
‘*Chem pewmaymi?*’ (What dream did you dream?)
I dreamt I was flying like a bird and I was looking down.
There was a sea. I arrived at a place with a lot of sand.
And he gave me the answer: ‘Ah, you, they are not going to kill you’.
(Rafael, January 2012)¹

Rafael Railaf sat in the living room of his house in the north of the Netherlands, where he had been exiled from Chile in 1977 during Pinochet’s regime, and where he still lives today. I looked at him and away from the window, through which lay the Dutch landscape, whose flatness had little to do with Rafael’s passionate story. When we came to the years of the dictatorship, after recounting

in rich detail the struggles for the land in which he participated as a Mapuche indigenous leader and the time he had spent underground after the military coup in 1973, he only briefly mentioned what happened after his arrest. He did not linger on the violence and torture he had to endure. Instead, he shifted into the narrative of a dream he had had the night before being caught. He was flying over the sea, until he reached a place with a lot of sand. It was his uncle, to whom Rafael described the dream, who gave him the answer: you will survive. And this was Rafael's anchor through terror: the memory of the dream and the certainty that he would eventually reach a land of white sand.

Rafael's dream took us to another dimension of his narrative, where language was raised at the interplay of words and silence. Generating meaning precisely there where it seemed impossible, stories arise where words are broken: Rafael's dream negotiates his position 'between being a 'who' and being a 'what'' (Jackson 2002: 12), coming to terms with political violence and displacement. The recollection of this dream, with his uncle first, but also with his family afterwards, and again with me within our dialogical space of narrative negotiation, was both a way of keep silent and of defying an imposed political oblivion through memory and telling (see Richard 2019). It constituted a 'form of communication' – as in the Mapuche social practice of sharing and interpreting dreams (Degarrod 1990, see also Casagrande 2015) – while at the same time making visible the limits of words and language. Riddled with historical and experiential fractures, the entanglement of what can be told and what cannot traversed the thread of Rafael's narrative, built around the central issue of land. Land – his own birthplace and the territory of his community in Southern Chile; the claimed land; an elsewhere that nevertheless continues to shape his life in exile – constituted the core of his personal history. An 'object' presenting a certain historical contingency and political specificity, it triggered emotional engagement by means of which the resulting 'assemblage' exceeded the materiality of landscape (Navaro-Yashin 2009: 9). Coming back again and again in his narrative, Rafael's land was something one has no choice over, but 'needs' (*había que; tenía que*) to fight for. Struck by the intensity of his claim that eventually led to his arrest, a

few weeks and many conversations after the account of his dream I asked him with some uncertainty what was this need that he was constantly referring to. He looked at me, silent for a few moments, and said: '*porque yo siento un dolor*' (because I feel a pain), and nothing more.

Rafael's brief declaration stayed with me for a long time. Thinking through his statement, I began wondering how processes of emplacement and displacement contribute to the shaping of 'land' – currently and historically the core of the claims of indigenous Mapuche in Southern Chile – and how the production of this very land is at the crossroads of materiality, politics and the existential dimension of lived experience. I was interested in the relationship between these aspects, the ways in which they interact, being constitutive of each other and producing the kind of pain Rafael was describing to me. What was at stake here? I asked myself what the word land (*tierra*) really meant to him, and how it was connected with the feeling of pain, through a biography caught between politics and emotions, intimately intertwined. In our agreed common Spanish language, were we talking about the same thing?

This article focuses on the spatial and temporal trajectories of Rafael and his family, the Railaf Zuñiga, following their non-linear routes through the experience of exile, between Southern Chile and the Netherlands, from the late 1960s until 2012. While the starting point is Rafael's story, this article develops an analysis of the ways different members of the family relate to their lost homeland through the disruptive experience of exile. Interrogating how they have engaged in the process of dwelling in the elsewhere, exile is addressed here as a condition of being, a tension between presence and absence that involves loss, and that is negotiated through words and silence.

In the entanglement of emplacement and displacement (Lems 2016, 2018), the Railaf Zuñiga biographies take us to another dimension of place, where land emerges through different and interconnected landscapes, engaging in the active production of 'unexpected places'². Moving from this meaningful spatiality and the centrality of language in negotiating displacement and loss, I argue that the fundamental move of the process of 'worlding' comes together with that of wording -

for dwelling in the elsewhere involves stitching together the torn fabric of space-time as much as that of language. Yet at the same time, I want to bring attention to the ways in which the mnemonic significance of land is very much related to silence and its emotional materiality. At the core of the argument proposed here is the sudden knowledge of my partial understanding of what the word ‘land’ actually meant for Rafael: it was impossible for me to inhabit that word the way he did (Irving 2011). It is this awareness that first disclosed to me how the limits of words participate in the shaping of one’s lifeworld.

In what follows, I first address the shared construction of the Railaf Zuñiga family biography, briefly referring to the broader Mapuche context in Southern Chile and to the work of Piergiorgio di Giminiani on spatiality and Magnus Course’s analysis of the ‘force’ of language within this indigenous society. In the ethnographic section of the article, I re-trace Rafael’s and his family’s trajectories through different spaces and times, resulting in the active production of ‘unexpected places’. The subsequent discussion concentrates on the meaningful entanglement of land, words, and silence.

The Railaf Zuñiga family biography, ‘land connections’ and the force of language

In 2012, I worked with the Railaf Zuñiga for one year in both the Netherlands and Southern Chile. Beginning with Rafael’s life history and soon incorporating other family members – his wife Rosa; their children Rosario, Rafael Jr, Maria, Hector, Antonio; their granddaughter Nadia, and part of the family in Chile – I co-constructed their trajectories and family biography with them.³ While storytelling was common practice within the family well before my arrival - especially after the end of the dictatorship (1989) - I was aware that my presence acted as a sort of catalyst: as ‘the one who asks’, I engaged with them in what Fabian defines ‘memory work’ (2003: 490). The resulting family biography was constructed within the shared space of our intersubjective dialogue, including affect as well as distances and what remained untold (Casagrande 2015; see Crapanzano 1980; Jackson 2002).

Rafael Railaf was forced into exile with his family after two years in prison for being a leader of the *Movimiento Campesino Revolucionario – MCR* (Peasant Revolutionary Movement) during the 1960s and early 1970s. The MCR brought together indigenous Mapuche and *campesinos* engaging in land struggles in rural areas in Southern Chile under the umbrella of the *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria – MIR* (Revolutionary Left Movement), a left-wing organisation led by middle-class university students during the years of socio-political turmoil culminating with the socialist government of Salvador Allende (1970-1973). The brutal coup of General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte on the 11th of September 1973 was the end of these processes, leading to 17 years of military dictatorship (1973-1989), political violence and forced exile. Yet it must be made clear that neither indigenous Mapuche oppression nor their claims for land are limited to those years. Their territory in Chile – from the Biobio to the Toltén river – was occupied during the *Pacificación de la Araucanía* (Pacification of the Araucanía), a military campaign taken forward by the recently established Chilean Republic culminating in 1883. The indigenous population was forced into *Reducciones* (Reservations) at the margins of the dominant society, in plots of land of 5 hectares per family (Marimán et al. 2006). Riddled with conflict, structural inequalities and colonial continuities (Antileo et. al. 2015), the Mapuche territory is today at the centre of contestation against economic policies of land exploitation implemented by the neoliberal State. Indigenous activism is ‘criminalised’, leading to the incarceration and death of many Mapuche activists (Mella 2007).⁴

Within this broader context and against a background of transnational identities and practices, I foreground Rafael’s and his family’s narratives and experiences of exile and diasporic relations with the home country (Kaminsky 1999; Chihuailaf 2005; Rebolledo 2006).⁵ I privilege a closer focus on their biographical trajectories, dealing with human existence in addressing the ways in which people shape and are in turn shaped by place, negotiating their position in the world (Hage 1997; Jackson 2008; Lems 2018). Guided by the ‘intersubjective force of the storytelling moment and its ability to move between the here and there, now and then’ (Lems 2016: 320-321), I claim that the Railaf Zuñiga engage in a practice of dwelling that undertakes temporal and spatial

'elsewheres', even if their concreteness as precise sites is long since lost. It is only by following the unpredictable paths of 'personal trajectories' through space that the materiality of Rafael's land becomes apparent, being moulded also by *other spaces* (Massey 2005; see also Ingold 2007). This dynamic between presence and absence, involving issues of imagination and space production, is what is missed in the analysis of Mapuche territory. While Mapuche spatiality has been exhaustively addressed (Morales 2002; Dillehay 2007; Calbucura, Le Bonniec 2009; Di Giminiani 2018), its significant relationship with other spaces has rarely been taken into consideration, and personal biographies and narratives have not been considered in all their articulations.⁶

Moving from the above-mentioned literature and taking a step further, in building my argument I draw on Piergiorgio Di Giminiani's and Magnus Course work in Southern Chile. Following Di Giminiani, 'land connections' are a central element of indigenous identity not only as an articulation of historical continuity, but first and foremost in the dynamic of the mutual constitution of people and land as political subjects (2018: 5-6). Yet while the object of land is at the core of past and present struggles, these processes reach far beyond the political sphere. Political action and embodied experiences of the environment are entangled in the act of dwelling, encompassing the emotional sphere: place elicits existential, bodily and physical dimensions to be addressed in their 'eventmentality' (Casey 1999: 26-38), shaping people's biographies and routes (Ingold 2000, 2007). The connection with land and territory actively participates in processes of self-making, and in Mapuche society 'places make people as much as people make places', in a mutual relationship between two sentient subjects. The Mapuche person is thus constituted by an ongoing process of construction in social, relational and spatial terms, involving human and non-human elements of the social and material landscape (Di Giminiani 2018: 10-11; Course 2011).

Language plays an active part in this construction. As one of the main means of creating relationships with others, it allows the positioning of the subject with respect to one's interlocutor and within a shared social and natural space (Course 2012). As a matter of fact, the word *dungu* (language) is a polysemic term that also means 'thing' or 'event', and is understood as 'a

heterogeneous means through which new relations are forged and new entities are brought into being' (Course 2012: 20). Similar to other indigenous societies in South America, as highlighted by Mario Blaser in his work with the Yshiro (2010), narrative and storytelling are relational practices of knowledge, inevitably and deeply connected to inhabited places, encompassing natural and spiritual domains. Human language is part of broader semiotic processes not limited to human agency. Characterised by a sort of 'excess' and 'incomplete control' by the speaking subject, 'utterances are understood to be equally saturated with an autonomous force of their own, a force which is continuous with an ontology of force constitutive of the Mapuche world' (Course 2012: 2). Echoing Michelle Rosaldo's critical understanding of linguistic action as demanding always more than the simple description of what individuals intend to say (quoted in Course 2012: 3), language emerges as much as from the speaker's intentions as from the force of the world itself (Course 2012: 19). It is by focusing on this 'force' that it becomes apparent how both words and the world are constitutive of the 'land connections' theorised by Di Giminiani.

Yet, both these ideas – connection and excess – only implicitly refer to the underlying aspects that are fundamental for the analysis I propose here: the dis-connections that are equally a part of the self-making processes intertwining people and land; the silence resulting from the incompleteness of human language. These ruptures emerge when taking into account the 'colonial wound' and its continuities - lack of land, forced migration to urban centres, marginalisation, structural discrimination and violence (see Antileo et. al. 2015) – and the silence that enfolds them (Alvarado 2015), shaping the Mapuche territory in Southern Chile (and beyond). If recent uses of terms such as *Wallmapu* - referring to the territory prior to occupation - constitute 'an act of speech' (Le Bonniec 2009: 60-64) conveying the utopic horizon of territorial recuperation, other (unexpected) places also contribute to this construction. In a way similar to Nahuelpán's discussion of Mapuche 'micro-politics' (2016), more than being marked by monuments or formal landmarks, the Mapuche landscape can be thought of as scattered with micro-geographies that are constituted around biographical trajectories, including paths that dwell in the absence of the (claimed) land and

in the incompleteness of words.

I address these interconnected processes of (dis)placement in the next section, focusing on the narrative and ethnographic account of the Railaf Zuñiga trajectories from Southern Chile to the north of the Netherlands.

‘Porque yo siento un dolor’

The lost land: September 11th, 1973

Rafael was born in 1933 in the municipality of Lautaro, north of Temuco, in the heart of the Mapuche territory. He was the youngest of nine siblings. His grandfather was a wealthy Mapuche and his mother, known for having the same green eyes that Rafael has inherited, was one of his numerous wives. Rafael has vivid memories of his early years in the community: his mother and grandmother talking to him in Mapudungun; the songs he used to sing in his youth; and especially the things his elders spoke about - when the *winka* (non-Mapuche) arrived, and how they lost their land during the *Pacificación*.

Growing up in his mother’s community, the Chavarría reservation created in 1908⁷, Rafael was raised listening to an orally transmitted history that connect the land with both violence and resistance, present beyond its loss as it was in everyday speech and views. Common spatial reference points brought this conflicting history with them: the river that marked the border with surrounding estates, the group of trees down the hill, where the land once belonging to the community was occupied. Thus, Rafael was ready to be part of it when, at the end of the 1960s, left-wing students arrived in the rural areas surrounding Temuco, talking of land struggle. He had by then married Rosa and they had had their first two children, Rosario and Rafael Jr. After a few months, he had become one of the Mapuche leaders of the MCR, and land claims took a more radical turn, in order to push the State to land expropriation. Organised in groups, at night *campesinos*, Mapuche and students moved the fences delimiting their lands ‘back in place’ (what

was called *corridas de cerco*), namely where they were before the often illegal occupation by settlers and landowners, relying on the memory of the elders as to where the previous borders of the community's land were. During the Allende government (1970-1973), the *corridas* became *tomas* (land occupations), resonating with the socio-political turmoil characterising Chile and Latin America more broadly, and constituting a fundamental moment of redefinition of the political landscape in Southern Chile⁸.

These processes were suddenly interrupted by the military coup on the 11th of September 1973, which overthrew Allende's socialist government and led to open political repression and violence. Rafael went into hiding for two years. He never went far from the house where Rosa and their children were living, often coming back at night. Sometimes the military occupied his house for days waiting for him, and Rafael Jr, who was seven at the time, brought him food and clothes. Then one day in 1975, he was caught. After his arrest, Rafael disappeared for six months, lost in different torture centres throughout the country, and Rosa looked for him without rest until he suddenly reappeared in Temuco prison.

As in the stories Rafael listened to as a child, repression was brutal, the *winka* as hostile as they were during the *Pacificación*: 'terror as usual' (Taussig 1989), witnessed by the same places. The landscape was again one of violence, fear and silence. Rafael's land had gone underground, and with it the utopic landscape of a possible recuperation. The land stood still, and when Rafael's narrative reaches the months in which he was tortured, this stillness – the limits of language for telling extreme experiences of violence and pain; the fracture between self and the world in being naked and blind-folded in the torture centres (Jelin 2003) – turns into the narrative of the dream he had just before being caught. While the connection between place and self becomes opaque, Rafael's flight over the sea conveys the ruptures produced by extreme violence. He kept returning to it during his imprisonment: in the impossibility of relying on his own senses, the dream became a sort of lens through which Rafael sees and literally comprehends reality. In the fracturing of the

usual links between oneself and the world conveyed by language (Scarry 1985), it comes to constitute a ‘form of communication’ (Degarrod 1990) at the margins of silence, pursuing a different kind of emplacement.

[figure 1 near here]

After two years in prison, Rafael was sent into exile with his family (fig.1). They arrived in the Netherlands in June 1977. Many exiles recount how they felt lost due to the absence of the *cordillera* (the Andean mountain chain), the recurrent landscape of almost every part of Chile, and ill at ease due to the ‘upside down’ seasons (see Rebolledo 2006). Rosario, who was eleven years old, still remembers a similar sense of dysfunction concerning her own body. The most difficult thing was walking: ‘my feet were hurting [...]. To walk on bare soil and on concrete are two different things... [...] I missed the soil that moves, [adapting] to the form of your feet. Here I felt pain under my feet’ (Rosario, February 2012). In the ruptures produced by forced exile, body movements were suddenly foreign to her. This sense of displacement arises when a ‘radical discontinuity’ between body and world emerges (Irving 2005), as expressed by Rosa, describing the impossibility of connecting with her own senses:

They sent me to school; you have to take a [language] course. Here [pointing at her ear] it went in, on the other side it went out... nothing, nothing, nothing. Nothing lasted, not one thing [...]. I felt I was in winter, I felt a cold, so much cold. [...] Everything, the weather, the people, everyone was so different. I looked around and I felt that I was a child. A child that cannot, cannot see, cannot hear... anything. (Rosa, March 2012)

In Rosa’s narrative, the foreignness of the sounds of Dutch language is related to the incomprehensibility of the surrounding environment. Everything she had learnt in her previous life did not work anymore: habits and social roles, gestures and words. The world seemed unreachable to her and Rosa felt paralysed, blind and deaf. The youngest children had similar reactions during the first months after arriving in the Netherlands: Maria, who was three at the time, screamed that

she did not want to speak ‘the language of the *gringo*’, and Rafael Jr, nine years old, could not bear being excluded from the conversations around him.

Language is at the heart of these ruptures: as during Rafael’s disappearance, the world had become speechless. The absence of words characterises the experience of displacement. The land was lost and faraway, standing still in another space-time, while the Dutch landscape was unintelligible, a foreign grammar for social relationships and for life itself. In the numbness of the senses and in the absence of language, this moment of suspension resembles Rafael’s flight over the sea, with space resisting articulation and escaping definition (Crapanzano 2004: 60-61). At the same time, as we will see in what follows, Rafael’s flight opens up *other places*.

Landscapes in tension: June 20th, 2012

Rafael’s dream, in the suspension of words, meaning and land, is also a claim for survival: it allows the possibility of a different spatiality. As a ‘stride over something not said’ (Berger, Mohr 1982: 285) constitutive of every step, it works as a necessary bridge, the silence needed for a new formulation of words. The absence of land and language, in the disruption of exile, marks a practice of dwelling that undertakes the ‘elsewheres’ of Rafael and his family’s life. How is this engagement negotiated through newfound ways to ‘re-constitute themselves in time and re-enter the flow of life’ (Irving 2005: 330)? How does familiarity occur through time? How do words come into being again, through different sounds?

In June 2012 the Railaf Zuñiga decided to organise the Mapuche ceremony for the renewal of the year cycle (*We Tripantu*) in the north of the Netherlands, as they had already done a few times before. The location was to be the small farm of a Dutch couple who had known the family for a long time, and it was to be held around the 20th of June, the winter solstice on the other side of the world. Mapuche living in different countries throughout Europe were invited to participate, together with other indigenous peoples living in the Netherlands and some Dutch friends.

The ceremony began around four in the afternoon. In the cold summer of the north, the sun was rising and clouds were drifting. There was a lot of wind, which calmed down very suddenly. The chosen site was a small field delimited by a wooden fence at the back of the house (fig. 2). The view was beautiful: the Dutch landscape unfolding in all its flatness as far as the horizon. Without any *cordillera* to shadow us, the sky seemed to have no limit, yet it felt like something was missing: in the absence of the *cordillera*, the light pervaded the ground and the sky, allowing for the infiltration of a sort of nostalgia for a more contrasting landscape.

The site was carefully prepared before the ceremony started: a *chemamul* (wooden sculpture) at the centre, with bowls filled with fruit and musical instruments including the *kultrun* (drum) and the *trutruka* (horn) for the traditional *purrún* (dancing) ready to be played; the branches of a tree were distributed in order to spread some of the *mudai* (drink made out of fermented corn or wheat) on the ground, offering it to the earth. Rafael Jr and Maria explained – first in Spanish, then in Dutch – how the ceremony would be performed. Rafael and Rosa, the eldest among those present, would lead the ritual in Mapudungun. The prayers would not be translated, but everyone was invited to participate in them in his or her own language. Flags and bamboo sticks were handed out, substituting the traditional *foye*, a sacred plant always present in Mapuche rituals, and the ceremony began. In the Dutch landscape of the north of Europe, a Mapuche ceremony took place in an unusual way, bringing with it the intimacy of Mapuche spatiality and the sounds of the Mapuche language. Just like the *foye*, the land of Southern Chile was there and was not at the same time, re-enacted in other places and through different objects.

[figure 2 near here]

In this celebration, the Railaf Zuñiga acted on place. They engaged in its otherness, allowing the Mapuche landscape to emerge in unexpected spaces, making their land present even in its material absence. Confronting displacement, this acting on place is constitutive of the family during events such as spiritual ceremonies or political gatherings, as much as in everyday gestures like Rosa cooking *sopaipillas* (fried bread) and Rafael singing in Mapudungun. As spaces of remembrance in

which it is possible to do memory without commemoration (Stewart 2004), these practices and performances can be read as an ‘empowering process of creative action, [...] drawing on the possibilities of imagination in challenging norms and going beyond a certain situation’ (Bright 2014: 99). Imagination and memory provide the ground for the reconstruction of a felt landscape, in a dialectical move that looks backwards as much as forwards.

When he was informed of what was to be the country of his exile, Rafael was sure it would be fine, because the Dutch cows he had got to know as a small farmer were good ones. Rosa decided that the family would settle in the northern province of Groningen, because only there had she finally felt there was something she could relate to: green fields, animals, the familiar gestures of local farmers. Dwelling in unknown spaces means simultaneously relating to familiar places, through memories by means of which different landscapes are constantly and dynamically reconnected. ‘Familiar topography gives way to the unfamiliar, one landscape nests within another like Chinese boxes – except that the boxes are permeable’ (Bender 2001: 6). People do not live in one defined, coherent and overarching landscape, but in a multiplicity of landscapes emerging through active engagement with the material world as much as through memory and imagination (Allerton 2012). Giving place to what Barbara Bender defines ‘polysemic landscapes’, people ‘hold many landscapes in tension’ (1993: 2), whose connections and entanglements are made of the fragile and elusive fabric of inner images, emotions, and words.

For the Railaf Zuñiga, the practice of dwelling engaged first in tiny (re)connections, waded through everyday gestures, small memories and tentative imaginations; then giving place to the shaping of a peculiar spatiality through political and ceremonial performances. This process - as much as loss and rupture were intertwined with the lack and incompleteness of words - is deeply connected with the learning of a different language: when the *We Tripantu* ceremony took place in the north of the Netherlands, the sounds of Dutch were present as much as the sounds of Spanish and Mapudungun, in a practice of translation that engages with the otherness of place. As a matter of fact, Rosa began to feel home when she became fluent in Dutch and got used to drinking coffee

instead of *mate*. She could finally call her colleagues at the local Emmaus for their mid-morning break: *kom binnen, koffie drinken* (come inside, drink coffee).

Words and silence: the emergence of land

Following a non-linear path that entangles multiple spatialities and temporalities, Rafael's and his family history are about how 'land' is connected with 'pain'. In what could be described as a 'lived word', possessing very different meanings in accordance to particular biographies (Irving 2011), Rafael's use of the word *tierra* (land) has multiple layers that began to emerge when he connected it with 'pain', at the same time drawing my attention to the limits of expression and articulation through speech. In the first place, even if we were talking in Spanish, Rafael was probably also implying the Mapuche concept of *mapu*, only superficially translated as *tierra*, while it refers to the 'material and immaterial space where the different dimensions of Mapuche life manifest themselves' (Marimán et al. 2006: 275). This oversimplified translation represents an emptying of the word's deeper meaning, by means of which it becomes *unendangered*, losing its substantial connection with being (Irving 2013: 309; see also Heidegger 2000). To understand the entanglements of land and pain implies undertaking the task of 're-endangering' words (Irving 2013: 309), engaging with the meaningful links between words, place and being, equally shaped by the silent materiality of their own absence.

At the core of the trajectories retraced here is the 'critical event' (Das 1995) of exile, resulting in the forced reconfiguration of one's self and one's world. The physical environment suddenly becomes a foreign one: place refuses its role of mirroring and confirming social, family and personal life, marking a clear-cut boundary between before and afterwards. In exile, the biography of the Railaf Zuñiga was broken, suddenly flowing outside the familiar tracks of known places. It was as if the timeline had doubled, torn by the dimension of space, in the opacity of thought and senses described by Rosa and Rosario. Borrowing Koselleck's well-known concepts (2004), exile entails a new temporality, in which the limits between the 'space of experience' and the 'horizon of

expectations' diverge, as if past and future were moving in a new and unknown order. This requires the repositioning of one's experience, for not only familiar places are absent, but also the very possibility of projecting oneself is questioned. In the silence of landscape, no horizon is possible either. Eradication thus means a painful distance from the surrounding world, which now appears other than the self. In what Amy Kaminsky defines 'disarticulation', the space outside stands as an incomprehensible interlocutor: 'internal maps' and the 'kinetic knowledge of the place that is your home' become lost (1999: 11). The familiarity of dwelling turns into hard efforts, while the sense of continuity resting upon everyday practices and habits (Ingold 2000) is interrupted. All that was known before 'flows out' of the person, in a 'disembodiment of knowledge' (Irving 2005: 330), with all the implications this entails for people's sense of self, personhood and social status.

Hence, Rosa's reference to a sort of deafness is not accidental. Her loss of location within her own language speaks of a broken subjectivity, for the sounds in which she found herself immersed no longer coincided with the 'language of the self' (Hoffman 1998: 121). Especially considering its relational role within Mapuche society and material and immaterial environment (Course 2012), the lack of language and the disruption of one's lifeworld are part of the same fracture, turning the surrounding space into a silent landscape.

The fundamental move of the process of worlding, then, comes together with that of wording. Dwelling entails stitching together the torn fabric of space-time as much as language, opening up to the possibility of horizon and words again, as in Rafael's dream. The 'present past' is incorporated in remembering and re-enacting the lost land, while 'the future made present' of expectation (Koselleck 2004: 260) is linked to its present absence through everyday practices and performances involving both foreign and proper sounds. This spatiality is reconstructed in dialogue with other places, chronotopically linked by rhizomatic connections (Deleuze, Guattari 2004), and incorporating one another rather than overwriting each other (Bender 2001). Far from being static, place is open and constantly transforming through 'our continuous acts of arranging, clearing and what Heidegger calls *einräumen* (making-room)' (Lems 2016: 332). These acts of 'making-room'

are at the same time constructing links with other places, engaging with *here* and *there*, as in the dynamic observed by Hage in the lives of Lebanese immigrants in Sydney. Their home-building practices look back while settling, and their nostalgia, more than the longing to return, represents ‘a desire to promote the feeling of being there here’ (Hage 1997: 108). In home-making, as well as in the painful process of emplacing oneself in displacement, people carry with them ‘elements of elsewhere’, whose presence makes itself felt (Hinkson 2019: 8). This interconnection with and through different places is similar to translating one word into another, or one world into another – as with Rosa’s substituting *mate* for coffee – trusting glanced affinities and ‘family resemblances’ (Wittgenstein 2001: 32). At the core of this entanglement lies the possibility for ‘unexpected places’ to take shape, coming to constitute a space of ‘endurance and hope (...) a zone that allows for the imaginative production of the otherwise’ (Risør 2016: 330), in the active creation of horizons where they are most unexpected, in the *else-where*.

Yet while this acting on place engages with processes of translation, in every transposition of words from one language into another something is inevitably lost. Somehow fragile and temporary, the ‘otherwise’ is here not only a space of possibility and action, but also the production of particular places in all their material significance as shaped by an absence. This is how both the force and incompleteness of language work, in a tension belonging to every action of meaning-making where ‘words stand for the world’ (Jackson 2002: 18). In this transposition – or translation – any narrative order is put into question by what remains at its margins. Thus the limits of language constitute an integral part of the production of (unexpected) places, for place is characterised by non-linearity and a gathering force (Casey 1999) encompassing words and silence, presence and absence.

Concluding in unexpected places

There is no straightforward connection between self and place. Rather, a multi-layered relation with place is constituted through different *heres* and *elsewheres*, made up of material and immaterial features. Biographical trajectories are articulated through non-obvious links between different places, whose interactions trigger political as well as affective dimensions, history as well as imaginative aspects and feelings such as pain and desire. If being alive means being emplaced, being emplaced involves a multiplicity of landscapes, drawn together through both presence and absence, and engaging with the elsewheres of one's life. The Railaf Zuñiga family dwelling in exile leads not only to a 'landscape beyond land', but also, and maybe more interestingly, to 'land beyond landscapes' (Lewis 2012), bringing into being new entities and relations through an active engagement with both land and language and their absence.

These interactions elicit what I have defined 'unexpected places': an open field in the north of the Netherlands can thus become the felt landscape of a Mapuche ceremony.

The emergence of these 'unexpected places' speaks of indigenous spatiality as performative and ever-changing, far from essentialist representations, engaging with different practices of place-making and forms of belonging. It also brings to the fore broader issues within contemporary anthropological debate: how people dwell in displacement; how the elsewhere can be present in its own absence; how different words and worlds are inhabited and translated; how silence participates in the shaping of one's lifeworld. And, finally, the ways in which ethnographic experience unveils the boundaries of anthropological knowledge.

This, and probably much more, was included in Rafael's brief declaration with which I began this article. Focusing on 'the empirical details of a particular person at a particular moment in time, disclosing what is at stake for him' (Jackson 2008: 58), Rafael's land and Rafael's pain become visible in their production of meaningful assemblages, intersections, ruptures and in-betweenness. The Railaf Zuñiga's biographical trajectories tell us about the finely grained fabric of human

experience, how it gets ripped, and how it incorporates the wounds of this ripping into a newly woven tissue. In this perspective, land does not constitute a material reference for Rafael's pain, rather it constitutes his very pain: there is no land 'outside' Rafael's pain.

I believe we were not, in fact, speaking of the same thing.

¹ *Chacha* is a Mapuche term used to address old people as a sign of affection and respect.

² This expression is indebted to Povinelli's well-known concept of 'spaces of the otherwise' (2001). I use 'unexpected' for it conveys a sense of astonishment key in the analysis I propose.

³ We recorded a number of interviews (lasting one to three hours, between two to six for every family member) in order to give coherence to what usually emerged during the sharing of everyday life, family meals and celebrations, political and cultural activities. We also went through the family photo-albums and private archive, a collection of documents, newspaper articles and letters. The ethnographic work with the Railaf Zuñiga family was part of my PhD (2011-2014).

⁴ The last one of these, Camilo Catrillanca, was shot by the police on the 14th of November 2018.

⁵ For fundamental works on diaspora and transnationalism, see Glick Schiller, Levitt 2004; Faist, Bauböck 2010; Jeffrey, Khasnabish 2013.

⁶ With the notable exception of Claudio Alvarado Lincopi's work on the urban context of Santiago (2016). For a broader debate about indigenous spatiality, see Basso 1996; De La Cadena 2015; Johnson 2018.

⁷ The Manuel Chavarría Reservation was established under the name of the local cacique (*lonko*), through the *Título de Merced* (title of mercy) n. 415 of 1908, the legal document dividing the former indigenous territory into reservations. The assigned land was then reduced due to usurpation by adjacent landowners, as recorded in the historical memory of the community. While it is not possible here to go deeper into this fundamental issue of Mapuche spatiality, I refer to Di Giminiani's work (2018), especially Chapters 1 and 4.

⁸ For the analysis of these processes that is not possible to provide here for reasons of space, see Casagrande 2017.

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List of figures

Figure 1. The Railaf Zuñiga in a local newspaper. The Netherlands, 27th September 1985. Courtesy: Railaf Zuñiga family.

Figure 2. The *We Tripantu* site in the Netherlands. Photo by the author.