Chapter 8

Imagining Chile's South

The Making of a Phobic Landscape of Prestige in the Forests

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This chapter is about the relation between nature and culture (Descola 2013a, 2013b) and its role for imagining Chile's south during colonial times and the first decades after independence (1818). Until the mid-nineteenth century the south, the region that stretches from Chillán southwards, was largely independent and controlled by Mapuche peoples, with two exceptions: the enclaves of Valdivia and Chiloé.[1]

For central Chileans this made the south a landscape of resistance that was not broken until the 1880s by military defeat (Crow 2013: 19–50). Landscapes emerge out of the tensions that bind nature and culture inseparably together (Schama 1996: 3–19), and thus they are "cultural image[s], a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolizing surroundings" (Daniels and Cosgrove 1988: 1). Landscapes are an essential part of a nation's imaginary and are core to local, regional, and national identification(s) (Smith 1988: 183–90).[2]

In the following, I am interested in examining, through an analysis of key documents, how conquistadores, missionaries, and Creoles have related to sentient landscapes in the context of their efforts to "civilize" Mapuches.[3] It will become evident that the narratives of the colonial period present the strength of Indigenous resistance as a result of a privileged relationship between humans (Mapuche) and nonhumans (nature, especially forests). From a "modern" point of view it was a savage relationship unsuitable for the so-called civilized part of the world. This contrast provides evidence for the end of an age and the rise of a new Western cosmology, where nature ceased to be understood as being one and reigning everywhere, "distributing equally among humans and nonhumans a multitude of technical skills, ways of life, and modes of reasoning." By

introducing the difference between human and nonhuman, "[m]oderns were discovering the lazy propensity of barbaric and savage peoples to judge everything according to their own particular norms." At the same time, with this very same difference "they were masking their own ethnocentricity behind a rational approach to knowledge, the errors of which at that time escaped notice" (Descola 2013b: xv).

Second, I argue that the Creole elites that carried out Chile's independence were eager to resignify the special relationship between Mapuches and nature in order to break indigenous resistance and obtain access to Mapuche land. Creoles desired Mapuches to become like Germans, as both were deemed to have a similarly privileged relationship with nature and especially with forests. From the outside this special relationship meant that it was believed Germans felt and understood the sentient character of nature in a way that was inconceivable for a civilized person. It was due to this ancient relationship, which dated from Roman times and was followed by an impressive civilizing record, that Chilean elites deemed German settlers to be extraordinarily suited to civilize nature and transform the southern landscape of resistance into a landscape of progress,[4] just as they had done in central Europe. In other words, Germans were admired for conserving their special relationship with nature and at the same time for using their wisdom against nature, thus overcoming the condition of savagery. At the same time this constitutes the making of a phobic landscape that excludes Mapuches and their way of relating to nature. My analysis aims at fostering the understanding of mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that operate through landscapes and nourish and feed back into the ongoing social, political, and economic conflict in Chile's south (Miller Klubock 2014).

The Eye of the Observer Makes the Landscape

A narrative regarding a determined territory is never fixed, instead it steadily evolves and (re)signifies the associated landscape. Even a hegemonic narrative about a territory still signifies just one of many possible landscapes—something nationalists deny. For them there is just one unique landscape that truly represents the nation's essence and identity. This exclusiveness, the focus on identity and not identification, is what makes a landscape's phobic character. Nationalists are keen to present this phobic heritage as "an acquisition, a possession that grows and solidifies" (Foucault 1977: 146), with little interest in highlighting the ambiguity and contingence inherent even in hegemonic narratives. Analyzing the genealogy of narratives is not the search for "a timeless and essential secret"

but is instead the effort to show that narratives "have no essence or that their essence was fabricated. . . . What is found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity" (ibid.: 142).

Uncovering this disparity "disturbs what was previously considered immobile; it fragments what was thought unified; it shows the heterogeneity of what was imagined consistent with itself" (ibid.: 147). Thus, the emergence of landscapes is not the result of an innocent process; rather, it is dependent on power relations and the outcome of ideological disputes over how to envision the world. This explains why, by analyzing landscape, "we discover its links to broader historical structures and processes and are able to locate landscape study within a progressive debate about society and culture." Furthermore, research on the social construction of landscapes helps us to better understand how "people have signified themselves and their world through their imagined relationship with nature, . . . through which they have underlined and communicated their own social role and that of others with respect to external nature." In this relationship the "terrestrial space [is] both subject and object of human agency" (Cosgrove 1998: 15).

Communities are also imagined through landscapes (Anderson 2006), and the narrative that structures a determined landscape at a certain moment combines what is perceived as real and what is understood as imagined. Consider, for example, the experience of the Polish scholar Ignacio Domeyko,[5] whose detailed descriptions of the virgin forests south of the Biobío River awakened the interest of central Chileans in a territory they were previously little aware of. Domeyko prepared for the trip in 1845 by reading *La Araucana*, an epic poem written by the Spanish nobleman and soldier Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga. He had participated during 1557 and 1559 in the military campaigns led by the Captaincy General of Chile to subdue the Mapuche, or Araucanians, as Spaniards then referred to them.[6]

Before the arrival of Spanish conquistadors to Chile in 1536, Mapuches had already resisted Incan attempts to conquer them. Due to their spirit of resistance, the Inca called them in Quechua *purumaucas*, which means wild and indomitable enemies. Most likely the Spaniards derived Araucanian from the abbreviation *aucas* (Rinke 2007: 14), as they too experienced the spirit of resistance that resulted in roughly a century of intense warfare. The impossibility of defeating Mapuches militarily made the Crown's representatives in the captaincy change their approach and pursue a different strategy. In the symbolically important Quilín peace agreement from 1641, Spaniards acknowledged Mapuches' independence, and it was agreed to establish the Biobío River as the frontier. In return, the natives accepted the activities of Christian missionaries on their territory. Although after-

ward there were still skirmishes between both parties, the intensity of the conflict diminished considerably, especially after the abolition of "Indian" slavery in 1674. This opened up the space for peaceful coexistence, with mutual benefits and transculturation.[7] This exchange gave Mapuches an advantage over neighboring tribes on the other side of the Andes, and while Mapuches extended their influence over their neighbors, Spaniards established an economy based on agriculture and trade (ibid.: 17ff.).

Despite this lasting and largely peaceful coexistance that culminated in Mapuches' backing of the royalist cause during the wars of independence at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Pinto Rodríguez 2003: 67), Domeyko was expecting to encounter a landscape of resistance, as described by Ercilla almost three hundred years earlier. He was hoping to meet the invincible, indomitable warriors (ibid.: 55) and (re)discover a "territory that has never surrendered to the yoke of a central government" (Domeyko 1846: 16).[8] Instead, he found a people "in its *normal* state, that is, in time of peace, because man was created for peace and not for war." Domeyko describes a Mapuche in this normal state as being "affable, honest, susceptible of the noblest virtues, hospitable, a friend of quiet and order, a lover of his country and therefore of the independence of his homes, circumspect, serious, energetic: he seems born to be a good citizen" (ibid.: 75).[9] His scholarly view of this landscape is dominated by Ercilla's account, and Domeyko constantly compares the landscape he travels through with the imagined landscape that became real to his mind's eye while reading *La Araucana*. "Passing now further of the aforementioned plains, mountains and ridges," he writes, "we find ourselves in the classic land of Arauco, at every step stumbling upon the memories of times gone by and with the riversides sung by the zealous Ercilla" (ibid.: 15).[10]

Domeyko (ibid.: 31) experienced his insertion into "a rain forest so dense and difficult to walk through" that it were as if he had traveled through time. It felt "as if no one had passed through it since the time when the first conquistadors set foot on Araucanian soil."[11] For Domeyko the words that still most accurately described the territory he traversed were Ercilla's, as the landscape "involuntarily reminds us of what [he] said when passing through [it]." So much so, that he could not resist quoting a verse from the third part of *La Araucana*:

> Ne'er did Nature block man's footsteps / Nunca con tanto estorbo a los humanos
> With a barrier so obstructive; / Quiso impedir el paso la natura,
> Ne'er did trees and creepers measure / I que así de los cielos soberanos
> So the height of sovereign heavens; / Los árboles midiesen la altura:
> Nor amidst such cliffs and gullies / Ni entre tantos peñascos i pantanos
> Were such scrub and lichens mingled / Mezcló tanta maleza i espesura,

> As on this trail-path forbidden, / Como en este camino defendido
> Woven close with trees and bracken. / De zarzas, breñas i arboles tejido.
> (Ercilla quoted in Domeyko 1846: 31)[12]

Finally, Domeyko (ibid.: 98) also had another landscape constantly on his mind: the European one that he had left behind. For him, the climate in the south "is the one of all provinces in Chile that most resembles the temperament of northern Europe." This led Domeyko to consider that one of the most convenient means for civilizing the territory and its people was European immigration. He claimed that ancient Gauls and Teutons had a proven civilizing record in Roman times and under much worse climatic conditions than those of Valdivia, "when immense forests and swamps covered a large part of central Europe" (ibid.: 99).[13] Therefore, European settlers in Chile's south should do the same as their ancestors in ancient Europe, with the most beneficial effects for the local climate. The settlement of those forests and mountains would improve the climate "due to the cutting of the trees and the cultivation of the land that until now just attracts and conserves humidity and exhales evil miasmas" (ibid.: 98–99).[14]

The idea of landscape is of European origin (Schama 1996: 10), and Spanish conquistadors and missionaries as well as Creoles and European immigrants were keen to impose this European idea in Chile. The dispute was and is not about the form of landscape but the underlying European idea that humans and (nonhuman) nature are separate spheres, with the former dominant and understood to be superior to the latter. For Mapuches—at around a million people one of the most populous Indigenous populations on the American continent (Museo Chileno de Arte Precolombino 2002: vi)—"the dividing line between human, animal, tree and mountain is not clear-cut. They do not distinguish 'at a glance' between 'animate' and 'inanimate,' 'sentient' and 'non-sentient,' 'thinking' and 'non-thinking'" (Böning quoted in Le Bonniec 2013). For them, natural elements are not just matter but have a social existence; they are imagined as forceful tutelary spirits that are the forest, the volcano, the river, and so forth. Ewald Böning, a missionary of the Society of the Divine Word, noted in the early 1970s that when his informant from Pucura in Southern Chile saluted fauna and flora, like a bird, a tree, or a stone, he did not give thought to whether it possessed an intellect or not. For him, "a European, who does not know this Mapuche thinking, or rather this feeling, would relate these greetings and prayers to spirits and belief in gods; but that would be a misinterpretation" (Le Bonniec 2013).

The Mapuche poet Leonel Lienlaf explains that this way of understanding stems from envisioning the world with *az mogen*. This Mapuche way of

seeing life is about "how you 'live with' the territory. . . . The land does not belong to us, but we belong to the land" (Le Bonniec 2013). The *lonko* (Mapuche chief) and academic José Quidel Lincoleo (2016: 716–18) describes how the relationship between human and nonhuman life in a place is established. He refers among other works to an account by Jimena Pichinao, who illustrates the relationship by alluding to the *anülmapun* ceremony. The term means to put down roots or to settle in a place, and from the Mapuche point of view, to inhabit a space implies knowing everything that is alive in it, be it human or not. Formerly, when a family settled on a land, they performed this ceremony, which consisted of a formal greeting to the nonhuman entities living there. This was considered to be the first necessary protocol in order to gain a balanced coexistence between humans and the places' other beings. Thus introduced, the beings would let them live, accompanying them without negatively interfering in the family's daily life (Pinchinao cited in Quidel Lincoleo 2016: 718). Therefore, land is not conceived of as a dead object to be owned but is full of (immaterial) life that mutually defines people and landscapes (di Giminiani 2018). McFall (2002: 306) describes this relationship with the analogy of a spider web that has to be maintained in order for Mapuche communities to prosper.[15] They depended on vast lands and these lands had their purpose, function, and cultural, sociopolitical, and economical meaning, as the Mapuche art historian José Ancán argues. "Those lands always were an indispensable part of the collective imaginary" (Ancán cited in Le Bonniec 2013).

Although this way of life "does not follow the canons relating to landscapes," it does include an "aesthetic concept of the idea of inhabiting a territory," as Leonel Lienlaf states (Le Bonniec 2013). However, Europeans and their descendants did not recognize these spaces as landscapes but as wilderness and unoccupied land, or as territory with a culturally inferior human imprint that was the result of an inefficient and unprofitable way of doing agriculture (McFall 2002: 308–14; Miller Klubock 2014: 31).[16] This argument that "the land belongs to those who make it productive and not exclusively to those who occupy it" (Marimán et al. 2006: 12) is still made today. At the beginning of the twentieth century the supposedly unproductive ways Mapuche related to their land were linked to "natural laziness," but now the formerly "weak and drunk" Mapuche are discredited as terrorists by Chilean elites (Quidel Lincoleo 2016: 714) in order to undermine their land claims (di Giminiani 2018: 50). The magnitude of this ideological dispute and its impacts become evident when looking for an adequate translation for landscape into Mapudungun (the Mapuche language). As Le Bonniec (2008: 58–59) shows, there are two expressions used for landscape in Mapudungun that are constructed around the core notion of *az mapu*, which describes the shape of the land. On the one

hand, landscape is referred to as *azy chi mapu*, which means "the earth is beautiful." This expression describes the land as it should be, in a state of harmony bounded by "the law of nature," *ad-mapu*. The other term that is used for landscape, *azwentulay mapu fantepu*, expresses the transformation of the earth's shape. It means that "at this point the earth is out of shape," or "in these days, the earth is no longer beautiful."

Germans, Araucanians, and the Forest: A Special Relationship

From the time of independence onward Creole ideologues intimately linked the destiny of Chile to a national project based on the idea of progress—a project for which European immigration was considered necessary in order to complete the state's de facto takeover of a large part of the southern territory, then mostly still controlled by Mapuche peoples. Although in the long term "education and enlightenment" were to ensure the country's civilizing progress (O'Higgins 1822: x),[17] Chilean elites were convinced that in the short term this progress could only be achieved through European immigration. "Attracting foreign farmers, industrialists, and capitalists is not possible," Chile's founding father Bernardo O'Higgins claimed in a speech during a constitutional assembly, "without offering them a great guarantee, and all the freedom they enjoy in other regions: this is the most important acquisition, the fertile surface of our soil is still virgin, and intact its entrails, they alone will soon provide us with new fruits and treasures" (ibid.: xi).[18]

In other words, since the elites' expectations were that Indigenous people would not become civilized as quickly as required, importing already educated and enlightened people was seen as the short-term remedy. In the eyes of the Chilean authorities and based on the *Report on Foreign Immigration*, presented to the Chilean government in 1865, Germans were the kind of civilized people deemed most suitable for the colonization of the country's southern territories.

> The German, because of the nature and climate of the country he inhabits, is more suitable for the hard work that our agriculture and mining requires. He also possesses with greater perfection than our farmers the methods of cultivation and is more experienced in the exploitation of mines than our workers. These advantages are of great value in Chile's present condition, since the country is not so much in need of arms to increase its productive force but rather intelligence that takes advantage of the robust ones that it possesses by itself and that it now wastes by ignorance or by our insurmountable attachment to routine. (Vicuña Mackenna 1865: 27)[19]

Additionally, one of the concerns Chilean governments had regarding the influx of immigrants was the threat they could pose to the territorial unity of the state. It was feared that concentrated immigration from a single nation-state could provoke a future annexation of settlements by the nation of their origin. As there was no German nation-state until the proclamation of the German Empire in 1871, *The Report on Immigration* from 1865 considered that German immigration would reduce this risk of colonial intervention:

> [T]he German—unlike the Englishman whose first pride is the homeland, the Frenchman who loves it out of vanity and enthusiasm, the Spaniard who binds all his concerns and all his virtues to it—dispenses more easily with these attractions, and forms his homeland in the forest where he builds his home and in which he sees his children grow up freely and happily. (Vicuña Mackenna 1865: 26)[20]

The belief among Chilean decision makers that Germans had a special innate relationship with nature seems to stem also from a deeper cultural history. There are indeed striking similarities between the descriptions of "Indians" by Spanish conquistadors and the representations of German tribes by Romans. An important document in this respect is the Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus's *Germania, or, On the Origin and Situation of the Germans*. He wrote it around the year AD 98 when the empire's troops were undertaking a series of military campaigns to "pacify" the Teutons. Tacitus created an account of civilization versus barbarism, in which Germanic tribes had managed to remain innocent children of nature, "clad in the skins of wild beasts or, according to the first-century geographer Pomponius Mela, in a garment made from tree bark" (Schama 1996: 76–77). Garments made of tree bark, albeit among the Chilean "Indians," would also be noticed by Spanish chroniclers some fifteen hundred years later. There, Mapuches used the Maque tree,[21] as its "bark is thin and long and consistent strands come out of it. . . . [T]he Indians used to make garments out of [its] threads before they had sheep's wool" (Rosales 1877: 224).[22] Tacitus's descriptions represented Germans as ferocious but noble primitives, due to their essentially natural purity, which made them instinctively indifferent and immune "to the vices that had corrupted Rome: luxury, secrecy, property, sensuality, slavery" (Tacitus cited in Schama 1996: 77).

Tacitus's criticism—as Schama (1996: 76–77) shows—aimed at explaining the Roman Empire's failure to subdue the Germans, an effort that had already been underway for two hundred and ten years. If it had not been for the empire's decadent aberrations, the argument goes, Germans would not have been in a position to teach Romans lessons time and again.

Tacitus's interest in the Germans was motivated by his desire to criticize the Roman Empire and thus bring about the necessary change in order to make civilization prevail over barbarism. In his descriptions of German tribes, he was clear that what they represented, after all, was the opposite of Rome. As Schama (1996: 81) argues, Tacitus's aims are especially clear when he writes about German topographies by describing them as shapeless and dismal: "For a Roman, the sign of a pleasing landscape was necessarily that which had been formed, upon which man had left his civilizing and fructifying mark."

Fast forward some fifteen hundred years to the Captaincy General of Chile, where Alonso de Ercilla participated in the Spanish Crown's military campaigns to subdue the Mapuche. This experience inspired his epic poem *La Araucana*, the foundational work of Chile's national literary imaginary (Oyarzún Peña 1967: 12). In this context it is interesting to note with Goic (1992: 342) that Ercilla most probably had also been inspired in his writing by Tacitus's *Germania*. In a way similar to Tacitus, Ercilla idealizes Araucanians. There is no better example of Ercilla's instrumentalization of the Mapuches than his invention of the term Araucanian to refer to the Indigenous peoples of Arauco. The term's power becomes evident through the words of the ethnologist Ricardo E. Latcham, whose works were published in the first third of the twentieth century. Latcham admitted that his objects of study are known "by the name Araucanian" not because it did them justice but because it was "invented by Ercilla to refer to the Indians of Arauco." Its use then had been "extended to cover all the Indians of war, becoming generic for all the Indians of the area" (Latcham quoted in Parentini Gayani 1996: 28).[23]

Monsalve (2015: 127, 130) explains that Ercilla exploits the figure of the violent and diabolical Araucanian to make it appear as if the defeats the Spaniards suffered were nothing more than a divine punishment for the dangerous moral decadence that had spread among the conquistadors. When Ercilla criticizes greed and laments the excesses of war, he does not do so due to concerns regarding the fate of Araucanians and their "admirable" warriors. Rather, he does so because he believes that moral corruption threatens the stability of the state by interfering with the proper functioning of colonial governance (ibid.: 129). Thus, Ercilla's objective is arguably to rescue the colonial enterprise and ensure the longevity of an ever-stronger Spanish Empire (ibid.: 130).

Mapuche resistance lasted until the 1880s, when "pacification" attempts succeeded and Creole elites extended the state's control over Mapuche territories. At the moment of defeat, Mapuches had been struggling to maintain autonomy for approximately four hundred years. At the time the conquistadors arrived, they had already been put under pressure by

the Incan Empire. In both Tacitus's and Ercilla's stories of civilization versus barbarism, an element that reinforced this difference was the privileged proximity the noble primitives had to nature. As savages they were represented "as the social equivalent of a force of nature" (Schama 1996: 89). Both Germans and Araucanians appeared to belong to and somehow be an extension of the woods by "suddenly . . . rushing from the forest" (ibid.: 89) and by "retreating into the woods" during the engagement in "hit-and-run attacks" (ibid.: 90). Indeed Ercilla presents the forest as one with the "savages," as becomes evident in the context of a Mapuche ambush, where the natives "were buried in the brushwood" for "concealment" and a "safe covert":

> Here the Indians lurked in ambush / Aquí estaban los indios emboscados
> Waiting for our band's arrival / Esperando a los nuestros si viniesen
> Whom they thought to catch, disordered, / Por cogerlos sin orden descuidados
> Ere they grew aware of danger. / Antes que del peligro se advirtiesen:
> They were buried in the brushwood / De un bosque a mano hecho rodeados,
> So that they might have concealment, / Para que más cubiertos estuviesen,
> And by ruse that none suspected / Hasta que, inadvertidos del engaño,
> From safe coverts work their mischief. / Pudiesen a su salvo hacer el daño.
>
> Down the fourteen Spaniards hastened, / Los catorce españoles abajaban
> Down the slope and toward the valley / Por un repecho, al valle enderezando,
> Where the savages lay hidden, / Donde ocultos los bárbaros estaban
> Waiting, covered o'er with leafage. / Cubiertos de los ramos aguardando:
> Ours had not yet reached the thicket / Los nuestros con el bosque aún no igualaban
> When the Indians, beating, blowing / Cuando los indios, súbito sonando
> Tabor drums and hoarse-lunged trumpets / Bárbaras trompas, roncos tamborinos.
> Occupied the roads and passes. (Ercilla 1945: 40) / Los pasos ocuparon y caminos. (Ercilla 1910: 61–62)

Finally, there existed also the belief among Creole elites and scholars that the first people to settle in Chile belonged to the German tribe of the Frisians. This was put forward, for example, by José Toribio Medina (1852–1930), one of the most renowned Chilean intellectuals at the turn of the twentieth century.[24] In *The Aborigines of Chile,* he refers to sources that show the origins and extension of this belief dating back to the early days of the conquistadors' arrival, as a reference to *La Araucana* shows. Medina (1882: 15) mentions an author of the seventeenth century who explained that Glaura, an Araucanian native noble, would have confessed to Ercilla her Frisian descent, and he quotes the following verse for evidence:

> Glaura am I named, engendered / Mi nombre es Glaura,
> In a fatal hour, and daughter / en fuerte hora nacida,
> Of good chieftain Quilacura, / Hija del buen cacique Quilacura
> Of the noble blood of Friso (Ercilla 1945: 230) / De la sangre de Frisio
> esclarecida. (Ercilla cited in Medina (1882: 16).

The Prodigious Tree That Grew in the Shape of a Crucifix

Apart from *La Araucana* there exist additional accounts that build on the same equation between the forest and Araucanians, corroborating the use of this trope outside the lyric and epic traditions. The Jesuit chronicler Diego de Rosales (1877: 221) wrote in his 1674 book *General History of the Kingdom of Chile. Indian Flanders* the most complete work on his time.[25] He introduces the chapter titled "Different species of trees, their utilities and medicinal virtues" by noticing that "the trees and thick forests that the mountains and valleys of this kingdom produce are everywhere extremely dense and grow more and multiply with greater vigor" the closer they are to the Antarctic (ibid.).[26] These "forests have been the most impregnable fortresses where the Indians have defended themselves, because they go into them when the Spaniards come to look for them, without wanting to fight hand to hand, unless some forced occasion demands it." These fortresses were their refuge, whence "they go out to make raids to our lands" (ibid.).[27]

This idea of savages being an organic part of nature, in this case part of the woods, was also exploited by Jesuits for Catholic proselytizing among Mapuches in rural areas. "It is about the prodigious tree that grew in the shape of a crucifix in one of the mountains of Chile,"[28] as the title of one of Alonso de Ovalle's (1646: 58) chapters announces. According to this chronicler's written testimony (ibid.: 59), it all began in 1636, when an "Indian" went into the woods of the central Chilean Limache Valley near Valparaiso to fell trees for construction purposes. Completely immersed in his work, he first cut down various trees and then diligently set about wielding the axe in order to obtain the beams he needed. Without noticing, he started to work the miraculous tree first on one side and then on the other until he suddenly realized the perfect shape of the cross the tree hand grown in and stopped. Ovalle (ibid.: 59) states that the perfection of the cross alone would have sufficed to cause admiration in everyone lucky enough to see it, but the miracle was even more astounding: "On top of this thusly formed cross the very same tree had formed a crucifix of the thickness and size of a perfect man." Everything, every single part of the body with all its details, seemed "as if a sculptor had formed them."[29]

Figure 8.1. Limache Cross. Source: Alonso de Ovalle's 1646 *Histórica Relación del Reyno de Chile* (Historical account of the kingdom of Chile) (between pp. 58 and 59). © memoriachilena.

For Ovalle (ibid.: 59) and his contemporaries this prodigious tree represented "such a great and new argument for [their] faith" that it reassured them in their missionary efforts. It symbolized in a meaningful and moving way "how faith begins to take root in that new world and that the author of nature wants the roots of the trees themselves to sprout and bear witness to faith no longer in hieroglyphs, but in the true representation of the death and passion of our Redeemer, as he was the only and effective means by which faith was planted" (ibid.: 59).[30]

The big unsolved mystery of Ovalle's account is the reaction of the native woodcutter when he discovered the prodigious tree. A description thereof is completely absent, as if his response did not matter. For Ovalle, the most important part for the "Indian" in this story seems to be his dis-

covering the tree, and thereby his faith. At the same time Ovalle makes the reader understand that the "Indian" by himself was not able to keep, watch over, and strengthen his faith. The need for spiritual tutelage is reinforced by Ovalle's behavioral description of the native woodcutter's rashness and inattentiveness. He somehow reproaches him for not having noticed the divine providence immediately, which led him to damage the crucifix, as "the part that belonged to the head and face was taken away with an axe blow" (ibid.: 59).[31]

The Jesuit Ovalle tells that after the unearthing of the venerable tree the "word of such a great prodigy spread and a very noble lady, who was very devoted to the Holy Cross and had her haciendas in the very same valley of Limache, did great diligences to have this treasure" (ibid.: 59). When everything was prepared "she took it to her ranch where she built a church and placed it on the altar" (ibid.: 59).[32] Thus, the forest was the appropriate place for the divine to become manifest and the tree to be discovered, but not a suitable site for it to be venerated. Veneration had to be done in the institutional framework of the church, which made the difference between barbaric paganism and civilized faith. Ovalle (ibid.: 59) made this clear by stating that among all those who went to visit the cross was also "the bishop of Santiago, [who] granted the indulgences he could for those who visited the sanctuary."[33]

This was the way Ovalle (ibid.: 59) himself approached the crucifix: "From the doorstep of the church I saw this prodigious tree and at the first sight that celestial figure was represented to me in a mystified whole." He goes on by describing how impressed he was by this spiritual experience and how he "felt moved on the inside and [at the same time] as if outside myself, recognizing with the naked eye what can hardly be believed if it is not seen. I myself had not expected it to be that much."[34] Seemingly, what baffled Ovalle (ibid.: 59) the most was that divine providence could become manifest in nature and in insensible things, as those are the thoughts he expresses in the closing part of the chapter. In order to assist the "devout reader" in retracing this extraordinary experience, he enclosed a picture card that was as authentic as possible (figure 8.1). This should bring the reader to "admire the divine wisdom of our God and his most high providence in the means and motives that he has given us even in natural and insensible things for the confirmation of our faith and the increase of the piety and devotion of his faithful" (ibid.: 59).[35]

"The" Araucanian invented by Ercilla had a threatening resemblance to "the" native that was reborn as Araucanian by graceful divine providence, as described by Ovalle: both were imagined as a people that were naturally deprived of speaking for themselves. Of course, "Araucanians" appear in *La Araucana*, but it is Ercilla who imagines their words and

idealizes them. And with these words, speaking through them, he "not only distances himself from the Indian's cause, but also rebukes the Araucanian rebellion, which he deems illegitimate" (Monsalve 2015: 125). The crucifix did not stay in the Limache Valley; it was brought to Renca, San Luis, in Argentina, and although it did not remain preserved as Ovalle had seen it, veneration never stopped. The Lord of Renca, as the crucifix is now known, is a firm part of the regional religious folklore, and in a song called "Zamba del Señor de Renca," devoted parishioners and pilgrims cheerfully haunt the Mapuche soul by chanting "Christ you were born Araucanian."[36]

The Triumph of Civilized Nature

The resurrection of imaginaries was easier than the establishment of a dialogue eye to eye between Creole and Mapuche elites during the struggle for independence from Spain. Creole elites became interested in the glorious past of Mapuche resistance because they identified similarities between the Indigenous struggles against Spaniards in the sixteenth century and their own (Collier 1967: 212). This interest was strongly guided by Ercilla's *La Araucana*, which after a hundred years without any reprinting had been republished in Europe four times between 1733 and 1804 (ibid.: 28). Heroic Mapuche military leaders, such as Michimalonko, Lincoyán, Colo Colo, Caupolicán, and Lautaro, were idealized in an artificial way as role models for Creole elites' own military endeavors without feeling the need to harmonize the past and present realities of Mapuche lives (ibid.: 213). A representative example is provided by the priest, journalist and revolutionary Camilo Henríquez, who founded the country's first newspaper *Aurora de Chile*, in 1812:[37]

> Oh, patriots . . . recover your rights, imitating in unity and constancy your Araucanian ancestors, whose ashes repose in the urn of the sacred cause of liberty. . . . May Colo Colo, Caupolicán, and the immortal Lautaro (the American Scipio) be reborn amongst us, so that their patriotism and valor can serve . . . to frighten the tyrants. (Camilo Henríquez quoted in Collier 1967: 212)

This time the native reborn as Araucanian (as described above) became the Araucanian reborn as Chilean. And once again the rebirth was imagined as an event that had to take place in the forest with all its consequences for nature and natives. This is exemplified by the introductory part of the tragedy *The Triumph of Nature*, written by the author of the lyrics to Chile's first national anthem, Bernando de Vera y Pintado.[38] It was performed on 20 August 1819, O'Higgins's birthday (Collier 1967: 215). The

scene is set at the mouth of the Biobío River, where the last descendent of the Araucanian lineage of heroes watches the sun set over the sea. Behind him dominates the "thick forest" (Anrique 1899: 113).[39] While he speaks to the sun, he sees a Chilean frigate approaching: "O universal life, O soul of the world, O heart of nature, O progenitor sun of our fathers, at whose sight there is no new species!" (ibid.: 114). The closer the frigate comes the better he hears the crew's shouting of patriotic slogans, and when they go ashore, he decides to hide behind the willows (ibid.: 116). Then the captain continues to ignite his crew with an emotive speech invoking the *maitén* trees in front of them:

> Oh, sturdy *maitenes*, whose trunks were once watered by unmixed blood—the indomitable Araucanian's blood with which he sealed his eternal independence. Today behold beneath thy shade the patriots who are renewing liberty in all the land. A day will come when, associated with the natives of this beautiful forest, we shall form a single family together. Her brilliant ferocity softened, Araucania will then taste the fruits of trade, the arts and the sciences. Agrarian laws will regulate her fields. Industry, and those connections which bring pleasure and wealth, will replace rusticity and indigence. (Vera y Pintado quoted in Collier 1967: 215)

The idealized Mapuche leader of course agrees to be reborn into civilization and takes the irresistible fruits—apples?—of trade, the arts, and the sciences, as it will be Eden on earth. The "natives of this beautiful forest" will swallow the tempting apple that will change savage life in the forest to civilized eternity in Eden. No more resistance.

Conclusion

Although the abovementioned scene is fiction, it does anticipate and further develop a dominant narrative present during the conquest of Araucanía in the second half of the nineteenth century by the Chilean state. As Crow (2013: 19–50) has shown, there are multiple and contested histories of this occupation, and she identifies two as the most dominant for the time of the military campaigns: on the one hand, stories of peace and friendship between Chileans and Mapuches, and on the other hand, shocking accounts of violent conflict (ibid.: 22). The former were state sponsored, leading to the dominant view that prevailed until the end of the twentieth century and presented the occupation of Araucanía as a peaceful process. The latter version began to prevail at the beginning of the twenty-first century, when the Commission for Historical Truth and New Treatment of Indigenous Peoples determined that Santiago's society

at the time had become "convinced that it was [only going to be possible] to occupy Araucanía through violent means" (quoted in ibid.: 34).

In the tragic play *The Triumph of Nature*, the idea expressed by the captain aims at making the land productive by means of trade, arts, and sciences. Mapuches that approve the idea seem to have to trade in their own laws for new agrarian laws that do not take into consideration landscape's sentience, which makes the play really an absolute triumph of so-called civilization over the Mapuche. In the play there is no space for manifold indigene agency that would allow for adoption and cultural survival, as described by Crow (2013). There seems just one inevitable proceeding, the violently friendly absorption of the Mapuche by "civilization" that grew to the magnitude of a ruthless war of extermination (Bengoa 1996: 205–248)). Is this how "the fortunate copy of Eden" was thought to be made? That copy of Eden praised in the fifth verse of the second Chilean national anthem from 1847 is still sung during official ceremonies today:

> Pure, Chile, is your azure sky, / Puro, Chile, es tu cielo azulado,
> Pure breezes also blow across you, / Puras brisas te cruzan también,
> And your field, embroidered with flowers, / Y tu campo de flores bordados
> It is the fortunate copy of Eden: / Es la copia feliz del Edén:
> Majestic is the snow-white mountain, / Majestuosa es la blanca montaña
> That was given to you by the Lord as a bastion, / Que te dio por baluarte el Señor,
> And this sea that tranquilly washes your shore, / Y ese mar que tranquilo te baña
> Promises you future splendor. / Te promete futuro esplendor. (Lillo quoted in Pedemonte 2008: 156)

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Notes

1. It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that the several Indigenous peoples that had Mapudungun as a common language decided to use Mapuche (people of the earth) as their common and unifying denomination. Mapuches were organized in a decentralized way, unlike the Inca and Spaniards (Rinke 2007: 19).
2. For example, coats of arms often include scenic details and they are frequently referred to in official anthems.
3. For a conquistador's account, I use Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga's *La Araucana*, the foundational work of Chile's national literary imaginary. It was translated into English by Charles Maxwell Lancaster and Paul Thomas Manchester (Ercilla y Zúñiga 1945). Two Jesuit chroniclers account for missionary views. On the one hand, there is Ovalle's *Histórica Relación del Reyno de Chile*, the first chronicle dedicated exclusively to the country, printed in 1646. This work established a long tradition of Jesuit historians, which would be continued by Diego de Rosales and others. On the other hand, Rosales wrote in 1674 the *General History of the Kingdom of Chile. Indian Flanders*, the most complete chronicle on his time. Finally, *The Triumph of Nature* (Anrique 1899), written by the author of the lyrics to Chile's first national anthem, Bernando de Vera y Pintado, makes for the Creole account.
4. I understand this landscape of resistance without clear distinction between nature and culture. The landscape was perceived as hostile by creoles, mainly because of the imagined alliance between nature and Mapuche peoples.
5. Ignacio Domeyko (1802–1889) was hired by the Chilean government in 1838 as a secondary school teacher for chemistry and mineralogy. He became a renown scholar and dean of the Universidad de Chile. Due to his merits he was granted Chilean nationality. See "Ignacio Domeyko," Biblioteca Nacional de Chile, http://www.memoriachilena.gob.cl/602/w3-article-646.html#presentacion, 18.06.2022.
6. Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga (1533–1594) was educated at Emperor Charles V's court. After the publication of the first of three parts of *La Araucana* in 1574, he was ordained knight of the Order of Santiago. See "Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga," and "La Araucana," Bilbioteca Nacional de Chile, http://www.memoriachilena.gob.cl/602/w3-article-3285.html; http://www.memoriachilena.gob.cl/602/w3-article-3286.html, 18.06.2022.
7. On the beneficial economic transformations for Indigenous and colonial communities after the peace agreement, see Pinto Rodríguez 2003: 34–53.
8. The original reads: "un territorio que nunca se ha rendido al yugo de un gobierno fijo."
9. The original reads: "Este carácter, si se le examina en su estado *normal*, es decir, en tiempo de paz, porque el hombre ha sido creado para la paz i no para la guerra, este carácter es afable, honrado, susceptible de las más nobles virtudes, hospitalario, amigo de la quietud i del órden, amante de su patria i por consiguiente de la independencia de sus hogares, circunspecto, serio, enérjico: parece nacido para ser buen ciudadano."

10. The original reads: "Pasando ahora más al sur de las citadas llanuras, montañas y cordilleras, nos hallamos en la tierra clásica de Arauco, dando a cada paso con los recuerdos de tiempos que fueron y con las riberas cantadas por el esforzado Ercilla."
11. The original reads: "entramos en una selva tan tupida i difícil de transitar, como si por ella nadie hubiese pasado desde los tiempos en que los primeros conquistadores pisaron el suelo Araucano."
12. The English translation is from Charles Maxwell Lancaster and Paul Thomas Manchester (Ercilla y Zúñiga 1945: 292).
13. The original reads: "Mucho mas ingratos que el temperamento de Valdivia habian sido los de la antigua Galia i Jermania en tiempo de los Romanos, cuando inmensos bosques i pantanos cubrian una gran parte del centro de Europa."
14. The original reads: "Uno de los efectos mas benéficos que pudieran resultar de la colonizacion de aquellas selvas i montañas, consistiría en la mejora del temperamento de toda la provincia de Valdivia, mejora que se debería al corte de los árboles i al cultivo de los terrenos que hasta ahora no hacen otra cosa mas que atraer i conservar la humendad i exhalar miasmas maléficos."
15. Descola (2013b: 5) explains this relationship in a similar way for the Achuar living on both sides of the frontier between Ecuador and Peru. "Conjugal harmony depend[s] on the relationship that the Achuar have managed to establish with many different interlocutors, both human and nonhuman—relations that ensure that these others are well disposed to them."
16. This relates also to experiences elsewhere, as the testimony of a leader of the Jawoyn of the Australian Northern Territory expressed after part of their land was converted into a natural reserve. "Nitmiluk national park is not a wilderness, . . . it is a human artefact. It is a land constructed by us over tens of thousands of years through our ceremonies and ties of kinship, through fire and through hunting" (Descola 2013b: 35 f.).
17. Bernardo O'Higgins Riquelme (1778–1842) carried out Chile's independence in 1818 and consolidated the nation in its early years. See "Bernardo O'Higgins Riquelme," Bilbioteca Nacional de Chile, http://www.memoriachilena.gob.cl/602/w3-article-562.html, 18.06.2022.
18. The original reads: "Atraher extrangeros agricultores, industriosos y capitalistas, no es posible sin ofrecerles una gran garantía, y toda la libertad de que gozan en otras regiones: esta es la adquisición más importante, virgen todavía la feraz superficie de nuestro suelo, é intactas sus entrañas, solo ellos nos procurarán en breve nuevos frutos y tesoros."
19. The original reads: "[E]l aleman por la naturaleza i el clima del país que habita, es mas idóneo para las fuertes labores que nuestra labranza i nuestra minería requiere, posee ademas con mayor perfeccion que nuestros labriegos los métodos de cultivo i es mas espertos en la esplotacion de las minas que nuestros operarios, ventajas de gran valía en la actual condicion de Chile, pues el país no tanto requiere brazos para aumentar su fuerza productora, sino intelijencias para aprovechar las robustas que posee por sí mismo i que ahora malgasta por ignorancia o por nuestro invencible apego a la rutina."

20. The original reads: "[E]l aleman, a diferencia del ingles cuyo primer orgullo es la patria, del frances que la ama por vanidad i por entusiasmo, del español que vincula en ella todas sus preocupaciones i todas sus virtudes, prescinde con mas facilidad de estos atractivos, i forma su patria en el bosque donde levanta su hogar i en el que vé crecer sus hijos libres i felices." (Vicuña Mackenna 1865: 26).
21. The scientific name for the Maque (also Maqui or Clon) is *Aristotelia chilensis*, and it is known as Chilean wineberry (Cordero, Abello, and Galvez 2017: 36–37).
22. The original reads: "La corteza es delgada y salen de ella ebras largas y de consistencia, tal que antiguamente hazian los indios vestidos de sus ilos antes que tubiessen lana de ovejas" (Rosales 1877: 224).
23. It is important to state, as the Chilean Government–employed German linguist Rodolfo Lenz (1895–1897: xxi, footnote p. 2) did, that Mapuche "is the only term the Indians themselves use."
24. See "José Toribio Medina," Biblioteca Nacional de Chile, http://www.memoriachilena.gob.cl/602/w3-article-663.html, 18.06.2022.
25. The *Historia general del reino de Chile. Flandes Indiano* was first published by Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna in three volumes between 1877 and 1878. Although it does not go beyond the first 117 years after the conquistadors arrived, it does range far beyond the purely military chroniclers who have dealt with this period, such as Alonso de Góngora Marmolejo, who finishes his account in 1575, or Pedro Mariño de Lobera, who goes only slightly further. See, "Historia general del reino de Chile. Flandes Indiano," Biblioteca Nacional de Chile, http://www.memoriachilena.gob.cl/602/w3-article-3356.html, 18.06.2022.
26. The original reads: "Los arboles y espesos bosques que producen las cerranias y valles deste Reyno, son en todas partes espesissimos y crecen mas y se multiplican con mayor lozania en las tierras de mayor altura polar."
27. The original reads: "Y estos bosques an sido las mas inexpugnables fortalezas donde los indios se han defendido, porque en ellas se meten quando los van a buscar los españoles, sin que alguna ocasión forzosa lo pida, y della salen a hazer correrías y malocas a nuestras tierras, volviéndose luego a su guardia de la montaña, donde tienen sus casas."
28. The original reads: "se trata del prodigioso arbol que en forma de Crucifixo nacio en una delas Montañas de Chile."
29. The original reads : "sobre esta cruz assi formada, se ve un bulto de un Crucifixo del mesmo arbol, del greusso, y tamaño de un hombre perfecto . . . como si un escultor [lo] hubiera formado" (Ovalle 1646: 59).
30. The original reads: "aquel santuario [left the admirer] consolado de ver un tan grande, y nuevo argumento de nuestra fee, que como comiença en aquel nuevo mundo a hechar sus raizes quiere el autor dela naturaleza, que las delos mesmos arboles broten y den testimonio de ella, no ya en jeroglificos, sino en la verdadera representacion dela muerte, y passion de nuestro Redentor, que fue el unico, y efficaz medio con que ella se planto."

31. The original reads: "y assi se llevo de un hachazo a quella parte, que correspondía ala cabeza, y rostro."
32. The original reads: "Corrio luego la voz de tan grade prodigio, y una señora muy noble, y muy devota dela Santa Cruz, que tiene sus haziendas en el mesmo valle de Limache hizo grandes diligencias por haver este thesoro, y haviendole alcançado, lo llevo a su estancia, y alli la edifico una Yglesia, y la coloco en un altar."
33. The original reads: "de todos los que van a visitarla fue entre otros el señor obispo de Santiago y la concedió las indulgencias que pudo para quien visite aquel santuario."
34. The original reads: "luego, que delos Umbrales de la Yglesia vi este prodigioso arbol, y a la primera vista seme representò en un todo confuso aquella celestial figura del Crucifixo, me sentí movido interiormente, y como fuera de mi, reconociendo a vista de ojo lo que a penas se puede creer sino se ve, ni yo havia pensado que era tanto."
35. The original reads: "he querido juntamente añadir una estampa […] y esta ajustada con su original todo lo possible, para que el piadoso lector tenga en que admirar la divina sabiduria de nuestro Dios, y su altissima providencia en los medios, y motivos, que nos dado, aun en las cosas naturales, y insensibles confirmacion de nuestra fee, y aumento dela piedad, y devocion de sus fieles."
36. For the lyrics of the song and current veneration accounts about the Lord of Renca, see http://elcristoderenca.blogspot.com/2007, 18.06.2022. Mulhall (2003, 133) states that the song was ordered to be composed by the priest Miguel Rocha in 1963.
37. See "Camilo Henríquez," Biblioteca Nacional de Chile, http://www.memoriachilena.gob.cl/602/w3-article-564.html, 18.06.2022.
38. The anthem was sung from 1820 until 1828. See "Primer Himno Nacional," Biblioteca Nacional de Chile, http://www.memoriachilena.gob.cl/602/w3-article-94806.html, 18.06.2022.
39. I became aware of the existence of *The Triumph of Nature* through Collier (1967) and use his translations. Mine are indicated by referring to the original source in Anrique (1899).

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