



MONASH University

**DISTANCIA,
A Measure of Intimacy**

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Abstract

For a decade, Ensayos has existed as a nomadic research program through which artists, scientists, academics, and locals consider the ecopolitics of the Fuegian archipelago. The program's art and cultural outcomes include exhibitions, lectures, performances, publications, and now a web series, titled DISTANCIA. The underlying curatorial praxis is experimental, transdisciplinary, and polyphonic. This PhD is part (though not all) of Ensayos's research program, and encompasses the web series DISTANCIA (the practice-based research component) and the accompanying exegesis.

As the founding curator of Ensayos and co-director of DISTANCIA, I make sense of the complex web of entangled perspectives by using an epistolary form which spells out that as author I am differently positioned in relation to both the material outcomes and to my Fuegian interlocutors. In order to question the role of mediation, translation and interlocution in my own practice, I investigate numerous modes of address, exploring ways to attend to the different 'actors' of the web series, while struggling with the question of how to establish a practice based on reciprocity and mutuality. Through these addresses to the vital 'actors' of the web series, human and non-human, I critically question and affirmatively transgress traditional ethics of representation aimed at depicting and speaking on behalf of. The aim of this practice-based research is to creatively investigate multi-layered meanings of love, mourning, art, storytelling, collaboration, and place in the context of affirmatively decolonializing endeavours and contemporary efforts to learn from indigenous cosmo-onto-epistemologies. In focus are the Selk'nam people of Karukinka Tierra del Fuego and their initiation ritual, referred to as Kloketen-celebration or Hain, as well as the white anthropologists, Martin Gusinde (1886-1969), and Anne Chapman (1922-2010), who earned their scholarly fame through their portraying of the Selk'nam. In addition to critically discussing the problems of the approaches of Gusinde and Chapman, I explore other critically-affirmative, decolonializing moves, and caring ethics—in conversation with the isle of Karukina, Selk'nam activist Hema'ny Molina and gender scholar Nina Lykke, tycoon David Syre, artist Carolina Saquel, Fuegian local Ivette Martínez, and finally with Australian Aboriginal philosophers Mary Graham, Greg Lehman and Paddy Roe. The method of merging criticism, theory and fiction in my epistolary essays is inspired by fictocriticism. This is not autobiography. It is posthuman auto-phenomenography, it is montage, it is curatorial confabulation, it is archipelagic philosophy grounded in Karukinka Tierra del Fuego.

Declaration

This exegesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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I honour the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people as the traditional custodians of the land and waters where I have lived and learned during my PhD, sovereignty has never been ceded. I pay my respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.

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*

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To the Reader,

Ten years ago I initiated a nomadic research program and called it Ensayos, which translates from Spanish to English as ‘essays’ or inquiries’. Since its beginning, Ensayos aimed to enable collective experiential transdisciplinary practice as a model to deal with ecological issues across the archipelago of Tierra del Fuego at the southernmost tip of the Americas (and more recently on other archipelagos too). It unfolded from one ‘essay’ or ‘inquiry’ to the next, each driven by a specific environmental concern. Over the subsequent decade, I have often been asked what it means for the work of a curator, which is the role I broadly identify with, to be devoted to an archipelago, rather than, as in its more conventional form, to an institutional program, collection, art related issue or the work of a specific artist.

I’ve improvised many responses to this question because ultimately, there is no one answer. Each inquiry into the environmental folds of Tierra del Fuego, into what might also be referred to as its ecopolitics, requires a unique approach to the issues at stake. Maybe, too, the tone of the question and improvised answer changes over time, as I, Ensayos and the world are different at the outset and conclusion of each inquiry.

Every *ensayo* has me ask: How do I curate *this* inquiry?

Just as ethical action must proceed case by case, context by context, I work from particulars. So, throughout the chapters of this exegesis I chronicle my evolving curatorial approach to one specific inquiry, *Ensayo #3: On the Question of the Human Geography of Tierra del Fuego*, which has resulted in the first season of the experiential television web series, DISTANCIA, as a primary key practical outcome.¹ Moving through the philosophical, theoretical and practical aspects underpinning DISTANCIA, the six chapters of this exegesis gestate a response to the initial question about the nature of curatorial practice. The move enables me to conclude that to be devoted to Tierra del Fuego is to be part of its ecology. Therefore, it follows that as a curator I have the responsibility (and sometimes the authority) to tell stories of my involvement with the archipelago, to speak from within its ecology, rather than from the remove usually assumed by a conventional academic enterprise. Enough academics now refuse the ‘remove’ that it’s more standard practice than not, especially within academic art and curatorial practices, where it is almost required.

The importance and responsibility of story-telling for environmental remediation is the fundamental tenet of DISTANCIA. Aspiring to do justice (to an archipelago, an art object or an experience) by the telling of remedial tales is also the basis of my curatorial

philosophy, evolving from the early days of my curatorial practice in the late 90s, during which I gallery sat for hours at a non-profit art space in Los Angeles, California tending to the works on exhibition not only by watching over them, but by animating for the visitor each work's reason for existing in the world. By talking to, with or about an art object I feel one enacts a temporary alliance for combined action and this can seed what feminist postcolonial Chicana theorist Chela Sandoval called "differential consciousness" or "love" (Sandoval 2000, 139). Love, as conceptualized by Sandoval, is "a technology for social transformation" (ibid, 2). I sympathize with this idea because since my early experience with curating I have understood it as a practice of confabulation that by engaging with difference produces loving attention. The summer in 1999 I spent caring for the artist Michelle Lopez's marzipan boat sculpture *Posy* by rubbing vegetable shortening on it every morning to avoid it drying and cracking, enabled me to lovingly speak to audiences attending Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions about the artist's investment in the personal experience of migration, transport, freedom and security.² Twenty years later, my comprehension of curatorial practice as an act of confabulation has expanded in organic ways. Transformed by *Ensayos*'s transdisciplinary ecofeminist methodologies and outcomes, my practice is now more bound up with place than with art objects per se. This shift responds to my love of Tierra del Fuego and as the Koori poet and writer Tony Birch put it, "to live with a healthy planet we need to tell stories of our experience with it, and our love for it. Stories that speak of a love of place encourage us to act ethically towards it. We must share our stories and we must grant equal voice to the stories of others." (Birch 2018, 208).

As a corollary of this turn from art object to place, my initial curatorial rationale, in 2014, for proposing television as a research methodology for *Ensayo #3* was simply that TV is a popular medium and that, as such, it offered a means to broadcast significant stories born from the collective ecocritical inquiry of Tierra del Fuego's human geography. But turning an open-ended inquiry of the kind that *Ensayos* had already undertaken (namely, *Ensayo #2*, a speculative exercise questioning the notion of invasive species by troubling speciesism, the assumption of human superiority) into a TV series was not as simple as I thought.

My previous curatorial experience, commonly taking the form of exhibitions or, more recently, discursive or performative events, had not prepared me for the challenges of TV production. Moreover, a set of pressing philosophical questions, enmeshed in the technical aspects of how to make and launch a TV series, emerged that required careful attention: What sort of surrendering of common television tropes (i.e. a fixed plot) needs to

be achieved to foster a process of polyphonic storytelling that doesn't fix truths and works against the oppressive hierarchies —between race, gender, species, class, nature and culture—that pervade the history of representations of Tierra del Fuego? And, if it is possible to create a televisual production process that undoes the existing colonial utopias of Tierra del Fuego, how to amplify it for those who will view it from afar to foster coalitional love and prompt a type of caring ethics in relation to the more-than-human?

To address these questions I researched issues regarding the ethics of representation—both in the sense of depicting and of speaking on behalf of—and began to actively question my own positionality (Chapter 1). I reflected on the role of personality and desire in processes of mediation, translation and interlocution, and through this guise closely analysed existing representations (the key anthropological treatises) of the human geography of Tierra del Fuego and the circulation of these representations (Chapter 2). After this, I resolved that one way to attempt to undo the anthropo- and western-centric truth-speak that those texts, photos and films so often reproduce, was to make my own writing contiguous with the dialogical mode of sense making (interviews, conversations and singing, amongst others) that characterizes *Ensayos*. Addressing my evolving research questions to the different human and non-human 'actors' of *DISTANCIA* (I refer to the actor as what the philosopher of science Bruno Latour calls an 'actant', someone or something that has agency in the world (Latour 1996)) each chapter of this exegesis is ultimately an experiment in appropriate modes of address, and endeavors to strike up dialogues with key human and non-human actors. Taking the form of letters, this epistolary exegesis aims to posit *DISTANCIA* as a collective storytelling technology that brings into perspective a world in which all 'things' (interlocutors) speak on their own terms, and therefore should be addressed respectively.

In terms of the methodology of the writing I was inspired by fictocriticism (Muecke 2002), autophenomenography (Allen-Collinson 2011), i.e. auto-ethnography with a phenomenological approach, and more generally by intersectional feminist approaches to writing academic texts differently (Lykke 2014). Fictocriticism, as a genre of academic writing, evolved predominately in Australia and Canada and highlights the subjectivity of thought and insight in a move to avoid authoritarian constructions of knowledge (Mischke 2013). Drawing on postcriticism, hypertextual electronic writing, my story and *écriture féminine* (the French movement of experimental women's writing (Cixous 1991)) fictocriticism purposefully eschews academic prose "for its odious (Western) imperial paradigm of 'objectivity'" (Kerr 2001, 109) to give way to other forms of knowledge. Such is the celebrated fictocritical epistolary novel *I Love Dick* (1997). Written by Chris Kraus the

book claims to be a form of “confessional literature” that triumphs knowing through one’s direct experiences or what Kraus calls “lonely girl phenomenology” (Kraus 1997, 87). Kraus’s epistolary fictocriticism inspired me to surrender the claim to mastery usually demanded by academia and to embrace my position as a go-between, a curator structuring relationships of exchange based on my own affinities, privileges and shortcomings. Furthermore, the Australian professor of ethnography, Stephen Muecke, who describes the fictocritical task as a ‘deforming’ of literature and narrative “to attribute a value to the strangeness of others, and to provide occasions for giving this value a force and a usefulness” (Muecke 1996, 22), influenced me to consider my letters to ‘others’ as a form of instauration: a way to renew or restore curiosity in the ‘other’ through the relaying of personal investment.

As a foremost proponent of fictocriticism within academia, Muecke’s own work, especially his book *Reading the Country* (1984) in collaboration with Nyigina peoples of Western Australia and the French-Moroccan painter Krim Benterrak, offered me a model of how to coalesce my ongoing exploration of the meaning of Tierra del Fuego for myself with the making of DISTANCIA and with the charting of Fuegian human geography at large. In *Reading the Country* Muecke, Nyigina elder Paddy Roe and Benterrak innovatively combine creative writing, anthropological fieldwork, traditional scholarship, visual media and personal testimony.

In an auto-ethnographic exploration and analysis, the researcher’s own experiences are also used as research material. When auto-ethnography is combined with a phenomenological approach specific focused is placed on bodily sensations, disruptions, and orientations as well as affective aspects and intercorporeal relations to other bodies, human as well as non-human (Lykke 2018).³ Like DISTANCIA, this exegesis takes a sensual approach to sense-making and storytelling; one that doesn’t shy away from visceral experience or affectivity but embraces them as a political stance that wants to evidence the motives, traumas, fantasies and desires that are the infrastructure of any story and storyteller. Yet, unlike DISTANCIA (which will unfold in forthcoming seasons), this exegesis is less hermetically sealed and functions like its skeleton key.

By choosing to make the exegetical text the telling of my story, I show *how I came to know what I know* about Tierra del Fuego; rather than displaying *what I know* about it (Muecke 2002). As an extension of DISTANCIA, this exegesis is a collection of performative acts. Each chapter was written to enable some form of communication between the person, persons, or hyperobject (Morton 2013) to which it is addressed. In Chapter 1, I address Karukinka (the name given to Tierra del Fuego’s largest isle by its

original inhabitants, the Selk'nam people). A salty ballad of sorts, my letter "To Karukinka" is a declaration of my devotion to the island (the primary location of the first seven episodes of DISTANCIA, that together with this exegesis make up my PhD project), as well as an account of how I came to be so engrossed in all things 'Fuegian'. The story of an interloper, whose life was redirected upon contact, I speak to Karukinka—not on its behalf—and enunciate my request to be allowed to televisualize mine and Ensayos's entanglement in the archipelago's ecopolitical becoming. Knowing I would not get an answer (in any traditional sense), this letter, written during the first year of my PhD, while living in Narm Melbourne, emerged as I imagined how to broach the distance between Australia and Karukinka and tried to gauge my new responsibility to both these islands. Fantasizing that all the waters of the planet are related (Neimanis 2017), I began to mentally script my address while swimming in a public pool in North Melbourne and envisioned the way in which my cerebrospinal fluid, sweat and snot—charged with the pulse of my desire—might travel through the swimming pool drainage system to the city's water treatment plants and eventually out to the Pacific Ocean, finally, perhaps, even after my lifetime, coming into contact with Karukinka. Language, responsibility, touch, bodies, bodies of water speaking, time and space all began to morph as I fathomed the relationality between the Fuegian and Australian archipelagos.

Following my first epistolary to Karukinka (Chapter 1), I addressed a letter to David Syre, ex-CEO of Trillium, a North American logging company that went bankrupt partly due to the environmental activism of Fuegians protesting against its illegal activities on Karukinka. I wrote Syre twice. First, I sent him via email a multi-layered curatorial proposition that included interviewing him about his version of the legal battle and bringing him on board DISTANCIA, as a co-producer, in order to tackle our different economic value-systems and give these negotiations primacy to inform the televisual web series content. He replied simply that he would not concede me an interview, nor partake in any other form in the making of DISTANCIA. I felt the urge to respond, but this second letter was no longer addressed to him as a person, but rather to David Syre as the archetype of the white western colonist. This fictionalization allowed me to more outrageously articulate my differences and also recognize some of my undesired but inevitable complicities with. Needless to say, I did not email this dramatization of my political position to him, but I did deliver it as a lecture performance to the cast and crew of DISTANCIA during pre-production, impelling a conversation about our alliances. Its literary version, titled "To David", is the third chapter of this exegesis.

Chronologically, the second chapter of the exegesis, titled “To Academia”, was written after I wrote to the fictionalized Syre (now Chapter 3 in the exegesis). But, in terms of the importance and impact on my thinking “To Academia” is more significant: it reflects years of grappling with the two most prominent academic sources on the human geography of Tierra del Fuego, the ethnologist Martin Gusinde (1886-1969), and a generation later, the anthropologist Anne Chapman (1922-2010), both of whom earned their scholarly recognition from their portrayals of indigenous Selk’nam culture.

The Oxford Dictionary of English defines academia as “the community concerned with the pursuit of research, education and scholarship”; thus, I addressed academia as the gender studies scholar Nina Lykke and the Selk’nam activist Hema’ny Molina, the two women whom helped me queer and refute the false notion that the Selk’nam people are extinct (one that Syre, most Chileans and, until recently, I too upheld). Humans have been living in Tierra del Fuego for at least 10,000 years and we know from Gusinde’s ethnographic studies (Gusinde 1931) that the Selk’nam, Yámana and Káweskar people were telling each other very sophisticated stories about the human geography of Tierra del Fuego before the arrival of white man some 500 years ago. Indigenous tales, which took the form of intricate ceremonies and complex dramatized narratives of cosmic inter-relations, are an alluring precedent to television-making. One of these ceremonies was the *Kloketen* (also known as Hain): a highly refined, performative, artistic practice of representation concerned with bringing about the collective ethical structures needed to sustain the community in relation to the land (Molina, personal communication, February 17, 2019). It was while studying the way this ceremony has been relayed by Gusinde and Chapman, amongst others, that I realised my mounting critique of their scholarly work and the powerful epistemic habits of Western anthropology; namely confronting colonial violence through practicing white melancholia and humanist innocence (Wekker 2016). Subsequently, however, I decided to veer from straight-forward critique and turn towards a critically-affirmative effort to trace and work through the layers of lostness imposed by colonialism, dispossession and genocide in Tierra del Fuego. With this in mind I constructed the chapter “To Academia” to include a choir of voices.

First, I introduce my own authorial voice to situate myself as part of an assemblage of interlocutors and to account for my privileged position as the one who creates the stage for the other voices. Then, I introduce the voice of gender studies scholar Nina Lykke, who I approached to mentor me in the process of queering the aforementioned academic sources that precede my own research. I finally introduce the voice of Hema’ny Molina, president of a recently initiated Selk’nam organization (Covadonga Ona), whom Lykke and

I met through preparations for a workshop on queering Chapman and Gusinde's work. The workshop occurred in Santiago, Chile in January 2019, two months after the Chilean premiere of the first season of DISTANCIA.

Due to its ambition, this chapter is divided into three parts. In Part One, I strike up a conversation with Lykke on the anthropological gaze of Gusinde and Chapman. Together, we entangle how the truth-speak of these two anthropologists reproduce a colonial approach, even though both of them, in different ways, were part of modernizing trends in the discipline. We pinpoint how the voices of the anthropologists are embedded in a white Western melancholia, sustaining coloniality through a nostalgic mourning. In Part Two, the conversation between Lykke and me focuses on the film *The Ona People: Life and Death in Tierra del Fuego*, co-directed by Chapman and anthropological documentary filmmaker Ana Montés (1977). I proposed to Lykke that we analyse this particular example from Chapman's vast scholarly work because like Chapman, I too use cameras to conduct research in Tierra del Fuego and I am painfully conscious of how, despite the best of intentions, these apparatuses have historically furthered colonial and neo-colonial enterprises. I make the point, however, that my analytic departure from Chapman's work is that of *mestiza consciousness*; a form of radical *mestizaje*, described and defined by third world feminists as a critical apparatus arising on the borderlands (Anzaldúa 1987). As a mestiza woman, I aspire to craft a new form of antiracist feminist critique and so in the second section of the chapter I introduce the perspective of Hema'ny Molina, who is actively claiming recognition and Indigenous rights from the Chilean state in the name of the Selk'nam community. Though Hema'ny is not an 'actor' that appears in the first season of DISTANCIA, because I only met her after having finished filming and editing the first season, meeting her has redirected my thinking/feeling of future seasons of the web series. And, I find it ethically so alarming that the existing Selk'nam community is continually buried by contemporary scholars of Tierra del Fuego (Harambour-Ross, Prieto, amongst others) that I felt a burning responsibility to give her a place within my own academic reflection of the archipelago. Finally, Part Three describes the workshop that brought Lykke, Molina, and me together, and how it was organized to enable participants, including the three of us, to collectively explore ways to transgress white melancholia not only through critique, but also in an affirmative way, using methods of creative writing, to try to create other platforms for sharing, resistance, and coalition building.

The fourth chapter of the exegesis digs deeper into coalition building and is not epistolary per se, but better described as an ode: a poem meant to be sung, a lyrical form that celebrates the specific nature of that which it addresses. The ode as practiced by the

Chilean poet Pablo Neruda is considered an epistolary form that he used to address his compatriots and celebrate the elemental (Peden 1990). I employed the ode as a curatorial gesture to promote the main ‘actor’ of the first season of *DISTANCIA*: Ivette Martínez, a Fuegian local who led the anti-Trillium activist group, a principal researcher of *Ensayo #3*, co-producer of *DISTANCIA* and co-owner of Caleta María—the cove where most of the first season of the television web series takes place. Along with singing an ode to Ivette, I wrote odes to the director, Carolina Saquel; the photo director, Matías Illanes; and the sound designer, Ariel Bustamante, with the intention that each crew member become aware that they are being seen just as much as they are seeing/depicting what they see. Ivette’s ode, however, differs from these in that I have translated it from Spanish to English and extensively annotated it, building it into a chapter (in the endnotes) by delving deeper into the ethical and technical implications of curatorial framing, of the researcher/research-participant relationship, and of intercultural/ intermedial translation.

In chapter five of the exegesis I turn to Carolina Saquel, the artist with whom I am credited as having co-directed *DISTANCIA*. Since, in a traditional sense, Carolina and I did not script the first season of the web series but rather ‘found’, throughout the research process, that the story unfolded and the actors took shape, we also ‘found’ our roles and functions within *DISTANCIA* during post-production. As an ex-lawyer, Carolina suggested the sound idea that before proceeding with the distribution of *DISTANCIA* we devise and sign a contract, or “convention” as she called it, for the purpose of clearly denoting and crediting the roles and responsibilities each of us had assumed. Included in full at the beginning of the chapter, the signed Collaboration Convention was written from scratch by Carolina and edited by me. After signing, however, I began to wonder how the convention inflected on the process of making *DISTANCIA*, and whether it was successful in conveying the complexity of our bond to each other and to Karukinka. Because I had my doubts about the latter, I used the device of the addendum to add to the convention, to undo the norms of the official legal rhetoric with narratives of the personal experience driving its clauses. Using the addendum as a framing device for an auto-phenomenographic account of the vulnerability, intimacy and cruelty that characterizes collaboration I co-mingle “story-truth” with the authoritative non-fiction language of “happening-truth” that Carolina and I used to write the convention (Bocher and Ellis 2016). “Story-truth” is defined as the reshaping of the factual objective account of events—“happening-truth”—when telling a story to reflect the subjective emotional experience of the events (Bird and Wanner 2014). Though the retelling of certain shared stories between Carolina and me, the addendum aims at better describing and making meaningful our

relationship and commitments. In the spirit of the epistolary I wrote the addendum with Carolina in mind as the primary reader, and shared it with her shortly after writing it. Her empathic response fuelled my sentiment that auto-ethnography is centered on self-other relations contrary to the more common idea of it as self-centered (ibid).

Carolina and I often grumble about how the first world systems of contemporary art, contemporary anthropology, and contemporary law denigrate and disempower us as women, as mestizas, and as environmentalists. Striving to dislodge us from these oppressive structures it is essential for me, as the curator of *Ensayo #3*, to learn about and become good at ways of negotiating first world cultures and legacies with a sense of integrity and power.

Since moving to Narrm Melbourne three and half years ago, I have been living on the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri and Boon wurung peoples. I have also travelled to the lands of the Palawa, Kombumerri, Goolarabooloo, Turrbal and Quandamooka peoples. As an uninvited guest on Aboriginal *country*, I have had the good fortune of being welcomed by Indigenous scholars, artists and friends who have introduced to me 'reading' the land and to understanding its Law (Graham 2009). Connecting significantly to Aboriginal *country* during my time in Australia has prompted me to think/feel that if I am to stand by the claim that I am a curator speaking from the ecological 'folds' of Karukinka and searching for appropriate modes of address then I must conclude this exegesis by recognizing the extent to which the teachings of Mary Graham, Greg Lehman and Paddy Roe articulate my own understanding about DISTANCIA and the role of place in curatorial practice. To do this I have asked Graham, Lehman and Muecke/Roe for permission to extensively cite their writing.

While being on *country* with Mary Graham, Greg Lehman and Daniel Roe, I learned that when *country* is conceived in the sense that Indigenous communities in Australia understand and experience it, it posits responsibility for those who act on it. Over the span of working on my nomadic, serial, epistolary PhD project devoted to Karukinka Tierra del Fuego I have in fact been acting on Aboriginal *country*. Thus, in the sixth and final chapter of the exegesis, titled "To You, Dearest", I fondly acknowledge *country* by honouring the voices of the three Indigenous philosophers under whose wing I have learned to respect Indigenous legacies, be mindful of the difference of the 'actors' of any given place and observe local protocols for the telling and sharing of stories. Apart from the briefest of thanks and recognition of place, I abstain from further narrating my story to give way to their voices as the sovereign sources of knowledge.

Methodologically, my replacement of a more conventional conclusion with extensive quotes by Mary Graham, Greg Lehman and Paddy Roe, Daniel Roe's great grandfather, as transcribed by Stephen Muecke, should be understood as a generative stance inscribed within feminist anti-racist politics of citation (Ahmed 2013, Mott and Cockayne 2017) but also as a "practice of refusal" of the academic tendency to over-explain "situated in a critical understanding of settler colonialism and its regimes of representation" (Tuck and Yang 2014, 1). This strategic practice is akin to the decolonial philosophy of "getting out of the way" (Maddison 2019) that recognizes that, due to colonialism, "certain bodies will have different stories" and that, therefore, it is vital for decolonial projects to acknowledge "dissimilar embodied experience" (Donelson 2018, 80) and how it shapes the way *we know what we know*. Throughout the making of DISTANCIA and the writing of this exegesis I heed to this philosophy by procuring space for storying **and listening**.

Each storyteller has a unique mode of going about it. My curatorial stamp is that I diffract and multiply narratives to create collective, co-responsive, ecological organizational structures that attempt to stretch beyond the human. By abstaining from a more conventional conclusion, Chapter 6 emphasizes how this exegesis is largely a fictocritical confabulation between two archipelagos, Tierra del Fuego and Australia, and foregrounds Ensayos as a growing political platform that emerges and gains traction not as an independent linear endeavour but as an ecology of knowledges (Moraes and Almeida Freire 2016), a meshwork of past, present and future efforts to derail colonial oppression as experienced on the archipelagos of Fuego-Patagonia and across the Pacific Ocean. Stories render us capable of better attuning—listening—to the ethical implications of living and dying on this planet, DISTANCIA and this exegesis are meant to reflect on the partiality of narratives, not to diminish the potential of the narrative form by claiming that stories are bias but, on the contrary, to enhance the experience of the relationality of narrative, of narrativity as a confabulatory mode of knowing and scholarship that explores the overlap among place, politics, aesthetics and ethics.

Invitation to watch DISTANCIA, a more-than-human web series:

Please consider the first season of the web series DISTANCIA as the key practical outcome of this PhD project. All seven episodes can be found on DISTANCIA's homepage, www.ladistancia.tv, and may be viewed directly on the site or on any of the other platforms to which the web series has been uploaded (YouTube, Facebook, Instagram) all of which are accessible via the homepage.

I highly recommended you wear headphones while watching DISTANCIA and also invite you to browse the Ensayos website: www.ensayostierradelfuego.net.

Karukinka,

I realise the most common reasons for people arriving to your shores since the sixteenth century onwards have been conquest, escape and the lure of adventure. It was probably the latter that brought me to your side. But in hindsight I wonder if the most powerful motive for us all is the need to sense we *belong* on the earth. Would you agree that earthly *belongingness* is the leading cause of attraction to your distant topography?

Distant from what you ask? I smile, and think that in claiming to have found my place on your rugged back you are not distant from anywhere significant, instead everywhere else is far away from you, from home. Though to call you home seems a stretch. You know better than I do that the contemporary definition of home is shredded along your wind-swept coastline. Littered with abandoned fisherman's quarters, weathered *estancia* buildings, and other such attempts to "make house", your frayed edges are testament to a modern history of failed homesteading. Your landscape, seemed to me for a time, as a memorial to the violence of unsuccessful attempts at settler habitation. You are marked by the colonial efforts to claim you, by the different waves of missionaries and migrants drawn to make a life within your confines, eventually abandoning their enterprises. Scattered hundreds of kilometres away from each other those derelict settler buildings lay bare the incongruence of my claim of belonging: no one seems to be able to claim they are "of" Tierra del Fuego; is this because those indigenous to you have been disappeared and denied their sovereignty? If I have tried to "build" on you it has been invisibly, ephemerally, nomadically. I have always felt that the character of my presence within you has been ecological, but I wonder now what that even means.

Years ago, during an art-residency in Northern Sweden, I gave a lecture to the small group of artists who I was sharing the house with and in preparing to speak of you I looked up the etymology of the word 'ecology'. I was struck to discover that it comes from the ancient Greek word *oikos* meaning "house" or "familiar property" and *logos* for "reason, discourse, or the study of". Back then, I was inclined to describe the "institution" I was building in your name as a residency program. Since then I have changed the description of Ensayos to nomadic research program, ecofeminist collective and feminist nomadic curriculum.⁴ This shift in labelling is important because it reflects a coming to terms with belonging as a constant drive to wonder about existence rather than a need to be fulfilled. Ensayos is unsettled, nomadic. I don't need to own you. You own me. Or better yet, we are of each other: as a curator I am enmeshed in your conflicts, implicated in your

wellbeing, moved to address you responsibly. And, if I were to judge if you like me, I'd say that my impression of your address as usually splendid is an auspicious sign. Over time, however, you have shown me your feral temperament and once, recently, you knocked me around hard enough that I reconsidered if I knew you as well as I thought.

Since we are on the subject of knowing and names, Tierra del Fuego is a recent one for you. Tierra del Fuego, Land of Fire.

Ferdinand Magellan, upon sighting you, identified smoke arising from your insides; when his description of your contours arrived at the ears of the Spanish king, Carlos I, it is said the king inferred that if there was smoke, there was fire (Chatwin 1988,144).

It's an evocative name, one that has given you a certain standing in the atlas, an elemental appeal. Yet for thousands of years prior to this colonial christening you were known as Karukinka.

Carlos Gallardo, who studied Selk'nam people and culture in the early 20th century, wrote that "they named their land Karukinka by fusing together the particulars kar (extreme/very), huhin (earth/territory) and ka (ours/mine)" (Gallardo 1910, 98), but to say that Karukinka is a toponym used by the first people who inhabited you misses the point: Karukinka is your place name. As an original word, Karukinka unfurls your geography. You would have heard Ángela Loij, Selk'nam woman, telling Anne Chapman (the anthropologist who recorded her):

Karukinka is that land that's far away. Yes, that is karuk. The island must have been united to the mainland. Several families hunting guanacos must have come where there was a pass [a land bridge] I think, in those times, years, centuries ago. Then they became isolated here. An earthquake must have made it an island and the pass was covered with water. But that was centuries of years ago. So they stayed here. They increased until there were lots of people. This is how karuk came to be alone, yes. This became, karuk. (Chapman 2008, 50)

Your separation from the mainland, your isolated geographic position, your address, your peoples name for you, Karukinka.

In speaking of your coordinates Loij brings up her ancestors (nomadic hunters who walked onto your lands chasing after guanacos), she refers to the tectonic event that separated you from the mainland and ends by singling you out: insisting on you being

alone. Karukinka is therefore not just a word that denotes a place, but a way of calling you unique.⁵ You are remarkable; I can attest to that. I was attracted to you even before I laid eyes on you: sitting in a sixth-grade classroom on the third floor of an old Manhattan building, my heart skipped a beat when I first heard your western name. I'm not sure if it was the ring of Tierra del Fuego/Land of Fire, the ensuing image of territory ablaze or, the story of the Portuguese explorer who, aiming to circumnavigate the world, "discovered" that there was a piece of it that had broken off, allowing him to sail from one ocean (or western understanding of the planet) to another. Though I'm sure my familial ties with Chile, the nation state that claims a part of you today, fuelled my initial passion for you, it is your eccentricity that charms me now. I mean this literally: you are peripheral to the whole of a continent, you are half Chilean-half Argentinean, you are part of a group of many islands —so many I've never known them to be counted. In this, your singularity deviates from established notions of individuality, giving way instead to the porous potential of finding/losing one's self in the hybrid multiplicity of an archipelago. As Loij suggested, you reveal a sphere of belonging for those subjects who find themselves in your thrall, and as I move deeper into the concrete matters of your archipelagic identity I feel compelled to continue to articulate a curatorial proposal for you.

I, who can move with ease because of my privileged life, my adventurous nature, my hunger for knowledge, my longing to belong, my ability to translate languages, will act as megaphone: a spokeswoman amplifying the knotted, "multinaturalist" realities that you contain.⁶ I, who come and go from your side, pay tribute to this intimacy by drawing on the way your folds have taught me how to be-in-longing.

December 2009. I had finally made it south enough to smell the salty air that separated Punta Arenas, mainland Chile, from you. This is the first time I sat across from you, facing the Strait of Magellan, wondering how to begin to experience you. I'd need to rent a car and find some alternative to the usual campground or hotel option: none of these were to be found. Landing on the website of an outlying scientific field station, run by the Wildlife Conservation Society, I contacted them to arrange lodging. Then, I drove out to meet you.

I got off the ferry and the wide-open space of your northern territory engulfed me. The tightly compressed dirt road that appeared on the maps glistened in front of my eyes. Nobody for miles, only windswept fields of golden yellow grass that hardly seemed to counter the enormity of the sky. An occasional band of birds swooped between the two.

The pull of your curvature is very distinct. It's as if one doesn't even need to press the gas pedal: the slight inclination of the planet draws the vehicle forward, deeper. Rolling pastures turned into bush and eventually into high peaks. I was invaded by a sense of being swallowed whole. I continued to follow the road, thinking that surely you won't hold out much longer: How much more earth can there be?

The sun broke the clouds. The wind quickly turned the day from gloomy to bright to dark. I lost track of time; space expanded around me and I distinctly recall feeling that I was no longer me. I was out there running alongside the guanacos that gracefully hurdle the barbed wire fences. When I see those fences vacancy, slaughter and uselessness rattle inside my head.

Every time I stare out the window, into your vastness, I see everything as occupied: not solely by my mind, but by your bio-diversity. Most accounts by early European explorers seem to have noticed neither this nor your intricate cultural life, daring even to give the name Useless to one of your most outstanding physical features.⁷ I shake my head with disbelief when I think of the sheer senselessness of those that imprinted on you such an ignorant title. How could they miss seeing how valuable and occupied you were? How could they not tell stories of your eco-complexity and cultural sophistication? What shielded them from being moved by you?

I treasure the way you set me in motion. Once, you got me on my knees. It was on a grassy knoll, near the old brick chimney that had outlived the furnace that made the coal to fire up the engine of the machine that now rusts in the sea air near where I was standing. I was looking out over the Admiralty sound. That cove of yours, Caleta María, is an extraordinary sight: to the north a majestic rock wall of gleaming silver plunges into the sea. Capped by icebergs and tickled by waterfalls, this procession of rock runs perpendicular to the Andes. As a Chilean, this throws me off—the prominent Andes is always to the east—but as a human, its effect is more visceral: the immensity of the Range overwhelms my senses, my knees weaken, I am no longer able to stand.

You are more than beautiful. But that was not what floored me that day. It was a sense that just like I was seeing you, you were seeing me. I felt petite under your gaze, but simultaneously I knew that you knew that I knew that behind those high peaks—teaching me my scale in the world—lay a park, run by the Wildlife Conservation Society Chile, called Karukinka in your honour.⁸

There a small, underfunded environmental science program struggles to keep in check introduced species and other such threats to your existence. Having spent time there, I was aware of what the well-meaning scientists were up to, but I was also painfully conscious of the ecopolitics of environmental “management”. As I would come to understand, getting to know you engenders response-ability.⁹

It’s one thing to surrender to your mountains and another to respond to your ecopolitical intricacies; this is why I call my approach to our relationship Ensayos. I can only curate repeated attempts to creatively respond to your challenging multiplicity. Such is the case of aiming to tackle your invasive species issue. Severely worrying to the scientists who knew you better than me, the problem created by introducing twenty pairs of beavers (*Castor canadensis*) to you complexifies the understanding of what ‘you’ are and so this urgently seemed the place for Ensayos to begin.¹⁰ I suggested that artists collaborate with scientists in considering the matter by asking a slightly different question, one that I hoped you’d feel more at ease with: How to bring the beavers into the discussion of their own future on Tierra del Fuego? Though sometimes I am assaulted by doubts, I continue to nurture a space for speculative contestation of the existing beaver eradication plan. Am I wrong in opposing the very notion of species? Is my attempt to re-choreograph the efforts to eradicate beavers relevant? What do you make of Ensayos’s questioning of taxonomy? Does it pain you that the 20 pairs of beavers that were introduced into the bay of Ushuaia in the 1940s have overrun your streams and waterways, flooded your riverbeds and drowned countless native trees (Anderson, Clayton, Rosemond, Rozzi and Dollenz 2006, 467)? Or are you more upset by the sheep that, pound per pound, outnumber the beavers and turn your forests into grazing pastures (Ogden 2016)? You’ve experienced the European “human species” arrive on your shores, bringing with it not only other species but also disease and famine. You’ve watched them lock each other up, kill each other off, and cheat each other too. You’ve also observed us studying you, admiring you, mapping you, photographing you, drawing you, filming you, singing to you, speaking of you, and speaking to you. Can you hear me?

You exude a sense of continuity, of entropic stability in the face of the changing tides that surprises me and supersedes my capacity to understand your relationship to deep time and the future. Your resilience, expressed in the appearance of millennial lichens, wayward penguins, and ghostly glaciers, reminds me that you’ve withstood countless forces of change. Seeing the arrival of Fitzroy and Darwin aboard the HMS Beagle in 1833 did you sense the inevitable transformations to come? The influenza and

pistols that decimated your indigenous Selk'nam, Yámana, Káweskar and Haush peoples; the mining machinery that, still today, reaps your minerals; the bibles and other books that changed the language uttered in your regions; the military apparatus that divided you into this or that nation. I'm sure that when Selk'nam captive Jemmy Button jumped off the HMS Beagle he whispered in your ear how he had been taken to the far away isle of Great Britain where everyone spoke that new language sweeping over your shores.¹¹ He probably told you how in the north peoples observed different customs that drove them to discuss your fate in economic terms, parcelling you off. Did his warning allow you to foresee what Darwin's *The Origins of Species* would do to your celebrated holism? Isolate and primitivize you using naturalist science theories, efface co-operation between your human and non-human peoples.

Karukinka, since my aesthetic/ethical awakening within your bounds I have dedicated my vocation to you: I curate for you by cultivating a likeness of you. This may sound odd but as you know in 2011 I became ill with cancer, and faced with the task of understanding what it meant to have radical cells differencing themselves from the rest of "me," I thought of you. I pictured my body as an archipelago composed of many solid parts floating in water, porous and susceptible to the atmosphere. I thought of how you have survived so many "radical" invasions. I dissolved my sense of self and forged a more expansive image of me. To do this I had to teach myself to die.

Over the millennia you've seen the world end again and again. I believe this experience has given you infinite ecological wisdom, which I've seen you impart to those who I gather around the project of inquiring into your human geography. Your stories illuminate, for us, the potential unfolding of a model of contemporary cohabitation: one that does not deny difference, that holds space for remediation to emerge, that stores memory, and that re-winds the superficial divide between species and things, between nature and culture, between native and non-native, between language, land and law.

I want to tell stories—we want to televise your stories: stories in the time of climate change, stories of the extreme earth and how we may make collective sense of your lore.¹² I believe your portrait will prompt a sense of belonging to the earth that will unleash response-abilities I can't even foresee. Will you help me take your picture, record your sounds, translate your smells, replicate your textures, reproduce your diversity and edit them into a TV miniseries? Will you let me attempt to represent your eco-political density? If this proposition seems reductive I assure you that I am working hard to create a process of filming that won't flatten you into pure entertainment or replicate the exploitative

narratives of the past, but that will expose the multiplicity of relations that sustain you and which you sustain.

How dare I promise this? Well, because I've seen certain films transmit the liquid, nuanced relationships between objects and subjects, between nature and culture, between past, present and future.¹³ So, I trust that if I put the experimental ethnographic methodology used by those films to work for you I can curate a process that is worthy of your eco/cultural-complexity.

To curate for you is to caretake; to art-make without a plot so that place (and not history) can speak.¹⁴ Experimental ethnography is not a new film-genre but a “methodological incursion of aesthetics on representation, a collision of social theory and formal experimentation” (Russell 1999, xi) that wants to rework “memory and tradition as fantastic forms of cultural desire—rather than as sites of authenticity” (xviii). The most prominent of recent filmmakers to deploy this method is the feminist postcolonial scholar Trinh T. Minh-ha. Through an acute awareness of the needed procedural self-reflexivity of attempts to challenge individualism and the reigning neoliberal world order, Minh-ha's more fluid conception of reality results in experiments in “otherness” (Minh-ha 1989, 107). Neoliberal world order is posited on the value of production, this order imposes effectivity on everything, and in doing so turns everything into a commodity, as Minh-ha points out this includes love-making, portraiture, landscape and the apprehension of mystery (113). This letter to you, may read as deeply anthropocentric/anthropomorphising—it's an incredibly difficult, in fact impossible task, to picture beyond the human, or to exit the human—but I believe that by expressing love and devotion I am vowing to hold fast to a process of picturing you that will actualise the ways in which self-reflexivity breeds connectivity, sensuality, inter-species dependency and makes time for contradictions. By valuing effectivity, neoliberal logic misconstrues the awareness of self as a selfish, anthropocentric principle that warrants the human individual the right to dominate and own the world. As I vouch for a curatorial process that attempts to embroil my experience of you into a set of concrete stories fraught with material concerns, I am declaring the opposite: to reveal the knotted moral implications of your more-than-human geography.¹⁵

It's both exhilarating and terrifying to be addressing you in this way. I feel childish, naïve, and romantic, but I will not succumb to the idea that these feelings denigrate the seriousness of my enquiry: the child, the inexperienced, the lover strike me as exactly the characters who can re-image world order. These are also precisely the kinds of roles that academia or academic certification (such as this PhD for examination) would seem to dismiss because they threaten the legitimacy of the academic voice. Yet, I stand by the

peacemakers, the healers, those willing to forge creative relationships to overcome the powers that turn everything into quantitative data; powers that privatize, exclude, classify, and incarcerate the will to be of the earth not just on it.

I end this address by recognizing that given the physical distance and difference between you and me I don't imagine you feel the way I do or hear what I hear, but I also know, from experience, that when I set foot on you I touched a presence. I felt observed, heard, caressed; sometimes even slapped.

You defy me. What I mean by this is that "I" dissolve in your gaze, I disappear in your breath, I re-materialize in your bitter cold; I know myself through you and in you and of you and so I know that you know, that I know, that we both know, that we see each other, but neither of us has been willing to say so. MAMIHLAPINATAPAI.¹⁶

Karukinka, you and I may not speak the same language (it has been pointed out to me that you don't "speak" at all), but I am willing to say I hear/feel you. It's risky, but I'm going to make myself vulnerable in the name of transgressing the norms that deny your livelihood and that of your original inhabitants and to contest the governments that sell you off, the individuals that fence you in, and the peoples that refuse to care for you and have historically not seen your worth, or even "seen" you at all.

March 2019

To Academia,

My aim now is to first investigate multi-layered meanings of mourning, death and loss in the context of contemporary efforts to decolonialize indigenous cosmo-onto-epistemologies and ancestral knowledges. And, to do this via critically-affirmative efforts to trace and work through the layers of lostness imposed by colonialism, dispossession and genocide. Second, I reflect upon ways to “learn to unlearn” (Tlostanova and Mignolo 2012) the powerful epistemic habits of Western anthropology: confronting colonial violence through practicing white melancholia and humanist innocence (Wekker 2016). Third, I explore how to commit to revolutionary practices of mourning the lost, as well as to trace possibilities to open rather than close horizons of resistance, activism and new coalition building. The focus of the investigation is the indigenous Selk’nam people of Karukinka Tierra del Fuego and their initiation ritual, referred to as Kloketen-celebration or Hain.

I. Troubling the white anthropological gaze

November 1, 2017

Dearest Nina,

As you know from reading my address “To Karukinka”, until recently I have almost exclusively engaged with Tierra del Fuego as an environmental entity of such vast temporal and spatial dimensions that it defeats traditional ideas about what a place is. When you and I crossed paths for the first time in 2016 I had only begun to grapple with Tierra del Fuego’s human history and to question the trope of Selk’nam disappearance. My inclination towards creating ways to acknowledge Selk’nam sovereignty of the main island (Karukinka) of the archipelago of Tierra del Fuego was fuelled by your work as co-founder of the International Network for Queer Death Studies and the International Network for ECOcritical and DECOlonial Research, as well as by your books on feminist theory, intersectionality and creative academic writing as method of feminist inquiry. I am grateful you have agreed to contribute to my research by helping me to use creative writing as a path to learn to unlearn the colonizing moves of the anthropological gaze which has been forcefully cast on the island and the Selk’nam people.

To introduce you to the task, I ask you to follow me through a series of arguments as I analyse the work of two of the most prominent scholars of post-contact Fuegian cultural life, namely Austrian missionary Martin Gusinde (fieldwork circa 1923) and, a

generation later, French-American anthropologist Anne Chapman (fieldwork circa 1966). But before I do let me frame the invitation.

Lying at the southernmost tip of the Americas, beyond the strait of Magellan, stretching towards Antarctica, the archipelago of Tierra del Fuego is deemed a windy outpost of the earth (Bridges, L. 1951, Lamming 1957). Like so many places far from the world's metropolises, Tierra del Fuego remains marked by ongoing colonial practices, violent venture capitalism schemes, forced migrations, extreme tourism, and, as of late, futuristic environmental remediation plans, with none of these interventions paying any responsible measure of acknowledgement to its original inhabitants, the Selk'nam, Yámana, Kawéskar and Haush peoples.¹⁷

When those fortunate enough (I) come into contact with the expansive Patagonian pampas, the roaring coastlines of the strait, the glacial peaks of the tail end of the Andean mountain range, the wind sculpted forests of southern beeches, the wild herds of grazing guanacos, the scarcities of condors, they (I) experience an uncertainty about their (my) bounded identity that dislodges their (my) subjectivity.¹⁸ This sense of diluted individual human agency and its complex political projections into the past, present and future is what inspired me to found Ensayos, a series of experimental inquiries into the ecopolitics of Tierra del Fuego undertaken by a shifting group of transdisciplinary researchers over the past ten years. *Ensayo #3*—which looks into the human geography of the archipelago by focusing on the history of its representations—is the subject of my practice-based PhD titled *DISTANCIA: A Measure of Intimacy*. My exegetical writing reports on the curatorial process of the making of the first season of the web series *DISTANCIA*, an episodic portrayal of the deeply intertwined, cosmopolitan 'naturecultures' of the archipelago.¹⁹

This epistolary exchange between you and me will be the second chapter, in which we review the literature on Tierra del Fuego attempting a decolonizing *movida* (Sandoval, 200).²⁰ While interrogating the exploratory impulse, research drive and disciplinary methodologies of the two scholars whose work is undoubtedly the most circulated with regards to Fuegian history and Selk'nam culture, Gusinde and Chapman, is important, I have recently come to concentrate on the latter for two reasons. First, Gusinde's work has been widely reviewed by Chilean scholars: the historian Marisol Palma has re-interpreted his photographic work through the lens of his unedited diaries (Palma 2013), the Latin Americanist scholar Margarita Alvarado has compared Gusinde's ethnography to that of his peers (circa 1924) creating an archive of the representation of the concept of the "Fuegian" (Alvarado 2007), and, amongst others, Carolina Odone has placed Gusinde's work within a spatial and territorial context (Odone 2006). Chapman, on the other hand,

hasn't been as widely critiqued even though she is considered a leading source of knowledge on Tierra del Fuego and the Selk'nam. I think this is in part because Chilean feminist scholars appreciate that her main focus was the feminist revision of Gusinde's work, however, what I argue is that Chapman's revision is too focused on his description of one ceremony which, according to her, "the Selk'nam called the Hain (pronounced 'highn'), but which is more familiarly known in the anthropological literature as the *kloketen* initiation rite." (1982, 1) She footnoted this claim clarifying that "Gusinde, like most of the other authors who have written on this ritual, mistakenly refer to it as the *kloketen* ceremony," and that according to her information, "this latter term was employed almost exclusively for the young man being initiated in the ceremony." (157) The ceremony, which I refer to as the Kloketen/Hain (to hold the contention), was the focus of one volume of Gusinde's three-tome treatise on the peoples of the archipelago, entitled *Die Feuerland-Indianer* (1931). Closely studying Gusinde's work on the ceremony, Chapman reported that this ceremony "served to initiate the young men, the *kloketens*, into adulthood and train them in the ways of adult society," but that it "had numerous facets, a great wealth of meanings, and several vital objectives." (1982, 157) In particular, Chapman underlined that these additional functions "included the 'teaching' of the women, over who the men expressed their superiority during the ceremony" (Chapman 1982, 1). The feminist turn that Chapman is supposed to represent in the scholarship of Selk'nam culture is the second reason for my focus on her work over Gusinde's. Chapman laboured over the question of whether the women knew or believed in the spirits the men represented during the ceremony, obsessing over the 'secret' of the Hain. The 'original secret' of the ceremony was the foundational myth of matriarchy: this 'secret' "so well kept from the men" was that "the divinities, the spirits who appeared during the ceremony, were simply women in disguise" (Chapman 2004). At a given point in time, the men discovered the 'original secret' and "killed their wives, daughters and sisters who had been initiated because they knew the 'secret' of the Hain" (ibid). Centuries later, the men recouped and "founded their own Hain. Today the Selk'nam men guard the secret of the Hain in order to subject the opposite sex to their will" (ibid). Insisting that her informants "rarely spoke of this ceremony using the term *kloketen*," and that it was her "informants' words, together with the lexicon of the ceremony, that confirm the usage of the name Hain," (157) Chapman renamed the ceremony. Her primary Selk'nam informants were Lola Kiep'ja and Ángela Loij, both of whom she enlisted to challenge Gusinde's ethnographic accounts of Selk'nam culture:

My study of the Selk'nam culture began in early 1965 when I first met Lola Kiepja at her home on the reservation near Lake Fagnano, on the Great

Island of Tierra del Fuego, Argentina. She was the last Selk'nam who had lived as an Indian and the only remaining shaman...She especially enjoyed singing ancient chants for me to record, and to hear her voice played back on the recorder...Lola and I became close friends and when I left in June 1966, I promised to return to see her the following year. Sadly, she died four months later, on 9 October 1966 at the approximate age of ninety. I did return in 1967, again for three months, when I worked mainly with Angela Loij who I had met the previous year as a friend of Lola's. She helped me to translate the words of the chants I had recorded with Lola. This proved difficult because of the esoteric language shamans employ while chanting. As Angela tried to explain the meaning of the phrases to me in detail I discovered that she also knew a great deal about Selk'nam culture, even though she was born at the turn of the century at the height of the turmoil caused by White occupation of the island. However, both her parents were Indian and she lived her early years in the midst of her people. (3-4)

Chapman was influenced by the feminist turn in anthropology of the 1960s and 1970s—which was inspired by the rise of second-wave feminism and the work of the influential first-wave feminist anthropologist Margaret Mead—and tried to revise Gusinde's work, focusing on what she saw as a social conflict between women and men in Selk'nam society. Her scholarly strategy was to use female informants (the shaman Lola Kiep'ja as well as Ángela Loij) to try to mobilize other perspectives than those she found when reading Gusinde's texts. As a male ethnologist, Gusinde had close relationships with male informants (the influential male shaman Tenenesk was one of Gusinde's most significant sources on the Kloketen/Hain). Naturally Chapman saw a possibility to revise Gusinde's ethnographic accounts through her access to female informants. However, as I attempt to read between the lines of Chapman's revision of Gusinde's study of the Kloketen/Hain ceremony I'll argue that by proclaiming her informant Lola Kiep'ja the "last Selk'nam shaman" (Chapman 2003, 1), Chapman's academic research—as it appears in her book *Drama and Power in a Hunting Society: the Selk'nam of Tierra del Fuego* (1982), her double CD compilation *Selk'nam Chants of Tierra del Fuego* (2003), and her film *The Ona People: Life and Death in Tierra del Fuego* (1977)—perpetuates the kind of white anthropological melancholia and discourses on extinction, which he had initiated, among others talking about himself as "the last Selk'nam" (Palma 2004, 36). Both Gusinde and Chapman contributed to the abuse and neglect of Selk'nam resilience and cultural

continuity being practiced by the Chilean State today, which still claims that Selk'nam are extinct.²¹ To sustain this point, I will queer Chapman's motives and speculate that her "feminist informant lens" is simply Chapman's own white Western lens, not that of Kiep'ja and Loij's.

I understand queering broadly, where the verb form refers to a methodology of critically analyzing and disrupting all kinds of normativities (Puar 2007). The normativities scrutinized in this case are those embedded in the discipline of classical anthropology, to which both Gusinde and Chapman belonged. Classical anthropology was crafted along the lines of a colonial gaze on Anthropos (the whole of humanity), seen from the point of view of Humanitas (so called "civilized humanity", i.e. white modernity, founded in an epistemology of assumed superiority) (Osamu 2006). Against this background, I consider it relevant, methodologically, to mobilize convergences between a queering and a decolonizing move towards learning to unlearn (Tlostanova and Mignolo 2012) colonial epistemes and methodologies of disciplines such as anthropology.

Over the past three years, I have read, listened to, and watched most of Chapman's work on Tierra del Fuego (including the aforementioned book, CDs and film) against the backdrop of her better-known work, the two coffee-table books *End of a World: The Selknam of Tierra Del Fuego* (2008, originally published in Spanish in 1989) and *Hain: Selknam Initiation Ceremony* (2008, originally published in Spanish in 2002). Both of these circulate widely and can easily be purchased at the airport in Buenos Aires, tourist shops in Santiago and novelty stores all over Patagonia. These two books were my own first introduction to Chapman's work, and via that to the Selk'nam. Her work, which reproduces a selection of Gusinde's photographs of the Kloketen/Hain ceremony taken in 1923, provided my own initial engagement with Tierra del Fuego. Chapman's writing on Lola Kiep'ja, the Hain, the 'secret' and its relation to an alleged primordial myth of matriarchy, overturned by patriarchy through a matricide in mythical times, gave me a severe jolt. As did Gusinde's alluring photographs. Together these are the only artefacts that circulate today from the historic Kloketen/Hain and they conspire to disable anyone (me) to consider Selk'nam culture as alive today.²²

Gusinde arrived in Chile as a young Salesian priest in 1912. A year later he became employed at the Anthropological Museum of Santiago. As director of a section of this museum, in 1918 he launched his study of the peoples of Tierra del Fuego. He claimed that they were the least understood of all the indigenous tribes of Chile due to their inhabitation of the furthest islands and fjords of the Americas (Gusinde 1979). Gusinde travelled to Southern Patagonia four times, and on his fourth and final trip in 1923 he

documented a Kloketen/Hain ceremony through photography and meticulous field-notes that later fed into his book on the subject.²³ The photographs depict an outstanding collective art form: the Selk'nam men painted and decorated their bodies in the likeness of animals, trees and mountains; wore masks; and danced, both for attending women and amongst themselves. The Chilean art philanthropist, Roberto Edwards (who was the son of the right-wing magnate and prime Pinochet supporter, Augustin Edwards), is the figure behind the pairing of Gusinde's bewitching photographs and Chapman's texts. Edwards' personal interest was in body painting, a medium he used to make his own photographic work, and he funded the project of popularising Gusinde's photographs alongside Chapman's writing as flashy coffee-table books. These have been republished numerous times and some of the newer versions also include theoretical texts by the aforementioned Chilean scholars (Margarita Alvarado, Carolina Odone, and Marisol Palma), amongst others, all of them hired by Edwards to labor, in collaboration with Chapman, over how the Selk'nam disappeared (Prieto 2005, 183-184).

Having been fed these discourses of "lostness" while studying a Bachelors in Aesthetics at the Universidad Católica in Chile (1997-2001), it wasn't until I started cultivating a relationship with Karukinka Tierra del Fuego in 2010 that I began to upturn the deeply seeded ignorance in which I had been enculturated. And even then, it was years before I was able to fully estrange myself from Chapman (and Gusinde). Blinded by my youthful feminist impulses, only through a slow and tenacious process of learning to queer the Kloketen/Hain ceremony have I come to question Chapman's renaming of the ceremony. For years I celebrated her work as a clear anti-patriarchal gesture, a siding with the women's story. Today, however, I read Chapman's alternative to Gusinde's authoritative story differently. I see it as an echo of the self-reflexive turn taking place in the discipline of anthropology in the 1960s and 70s, in which female anthropologists realised that women had access to different parts of a culture than male anthropologists did, and this affected the information they could gather and created a fuller view of the culture they were studying (Johnson 2011). Chapman was improving her discipline, but she was also continuing to bury the culture she was studying.

By focusing on the problem of the 'secret' of the Hain, "on whether or not the women knew that the spirits as they appeared during the ceremony were represented by men," she concerned herself with the symbolism of the Hain, "what it represents in terms of ideology and the socio-economic structure of Selk'nam society," and with the Hain as "ritual and as theatre," not with the actuality of her informants (Chapman 1982, 155). She stated that "viewed as theatre, the problem of whether or not the women were party to the

'hoax' is resolved," and that her evidence suggested that "the women knew the 'secret' even though they did not realize that Xalpen was only an effigy." Furthermore, "the women were not just pretending to believe in the spirits; they did believe in them while the scenes were being enacted, because they were participating in a theatrical representation." (157) This assertion served Chapman's conclusion that the Hain "symbolized the daily experiences of women." For, according to her, "they lived in a patriarchal society in which male authority was real, though not usually manifested through violence or as tyranny." She continues:

The relations of production (which in this context includes hunting, gathering and fishing as well as tool making) were communal yet hierarchic... In the communal yet stratified instances of the mode of production lies a fundamental contradiction: the society was egalitarian yet patriarchal. This conflicting force constituted the society's dynamics and, as such, a radical contradiction which the ideology strove, in one way or another to justify. The Selk'nam society will, I believe, be recognized as a classical example of a truly traditional hunting-gathering culture, rich, vibrant and almost perfectly adapted to its environment. (157)

I read Chapman's celebration of the "truly traditional hunting-gathering culture", on the one hand, and, on the other hand, her denouncement of the economic dynamics that produce the sexual inequalities that "inspire Selk'nam society's anti-woman ideology" (155) as arising from white anthropological melancholia with a second-wave feminist twist. Chapman reproduces the white melancholia of Gusinde and classic anthropology, a romantic nostalgia for a vanishing world of noble savagedom, while she from a feminist point of view deplores the patriarchal relations apparently existing there—as a snake in the paradise.²⁴

Bent on reading the Kloketen/Hain as a cultural expression of the past²⁵ Chapman not only needed to stress the fact that the Selk'nam were a hunter-gatherer culture, but also that one of her informants (Kiep'ja) was a shaman and that both (Kiep'ja and Loij) were the last of their peoples, thus foreclosing any future opportunity for an anthropological encounter with Selk'nam descendants knowledgeable of the "truth" of the Kloketen/Hain after Kiep'ja and Loij's death.²⁶ Despite alleged differences in their interpretations, for both Chapman and Gusinde the Kloketen/Hain represented the complexity and sophistication of a culture and a people that they saw as primitive and living on the brink of extinction—an extinction they criticized from a humanist perspective,

while making themselves complicit with the violence their discipline, anthropology, inflicted on all indigenous peoples, enrolling them in modernity's linear and hierarchical story of progress from "primitive" to "modern".

I'm curious to hear how you, Nina, read the Kloketen/Hain controversy I've outlined above. I look forward to continuing to queer Chapman's white woman's anthropological gaze with you.

Expectant, Camila

February 1, 2018

Dear Camila,

Thanks for inviting me to follow you into the world of Tierra del Fuego, the Selk'nam people and their cosmologies as articulated, among others, in the Kloketen/Hain ceremony, which became the pivot of an anthropological controversy, Chapman's endeavours to revise Gusinde's portrait of Selk'nam culture from a feminist perspective. I feel honoured and privileged to have received this invitation to engage with this world and its layers of lostness. I am deeply impressed, Camila, by your way of committing more and more networks of people from all over the world to the cause of Karukinka and the Selk'nam people through your longstanding work on Ensayos and through your amazing PhD project, the web series DISTANCIA and the exegesis. I am deeply inspired by your compelling way of committing us (networks of people all over) to invent different approaches to the layers of lostness and erasures of important ancestral knowledges with which contemporary postcolonial and anthropocene-tric capitalism confronts us rather than just keep immersing ourselves in the white melancholia and nostalgia in which the authoritative gazes and voices of the anthropologists invite us to engage.

My entrance point to the queering and decolonializing of the Kloketen/Hain—and let me underline that I agree with the ways in which you, in your above letter, defined queering and as potentially intersecting with decolonizing—is to be understood against the background of searching for different approaches, engaging in a process of learning to unlearn (Tlostanova and Mignolo 2012) which you also referred to. I agree that, as part of the process, it is important to establish a critical relationship to the scholarly work of Gusinde and Chapman. Indeed, they represent rich sources of knowledge, even though crafted from problematic perspectives of the white gaze, which cannot, just by mobilizing humanism, opt out of its structural complicity with violent colonialism and dispossession. Therefore, I have tried to follow your lead in terms of exploring some of the textual, sonic and visual sources, available on the internet, in published books, in historical and anthropological archives, etc. Even though these sources, to a large extent, reproduce an

objectifying white colonializing gaze, and appear as messy due to the interventions of many tricksterous translators and re/mediators, I found the journey through these materials important. I agree that it does not help to skip them.

When studying the anthropological sources, however, I take your point that Chapman tries to squeeze Selk'nam cosmology and culture into a straitjacket, which does not seem to fit. I agree that her approach is inspired by early feminist critiques of anthropology, which I think were important, but, seen in retrospect, also problematic, among others due to the ways in which they underestimated differences between women, which intersectional, post- and decolonial and posthuman feminist theories since then have strongly emphasized. I agree that Chapman seems to be keen on marking out a space as a woman anthropologist, who, by contrast to Gusinde, whose main informants were male, can reveal other perspectives through access to female informants. Her strong emphasis on the name "Hain" for the ceremony is, as you convincingly argue, a sign of this marking out her own space. But perhaps she was too keen on proving Gusinde wrong, also when it comes to the naming? Having close-read Gusinde (1931) in German, I find it interesting to note his reservations vis-a-vis the term "Hain" (1931, 837)—reservations which Chapman does not quote. This made me speculate that perhaps Gusinde doubted the "authenticity" of the term "Hain", and suspected a European import in so far as the alleged Selk'nam word "ha'in" both semantically and phonetically more or less coincides with the German word "Hain", i.e. "a small forest", which, in particular, in combinations with the adjective "holy" [heilig] associates to a cult place in different religions, including pagan ones (Duden Wörterbuch 2019).²⁷

To be a woman in academia when Chapman did her research on the Selk'nam people, was not easy, and I agree that it seems as if her strong ambitions to carve out a space for herself, proving Gusinde wrong, made her focus much too much on the issue of whether or not the Selk'nam women knew the "secret" of the "Hain". I would add to your observations, that my attention, when reading Gusinde, was drawn to two more issues which I find interesting to note for our further decolonializing and queering endeavors—issues which only appear sporadically in Chapman's text due to its focus on the question of a social conflict between women and men in Selk'nam society, marked as a "patriarchy" (Chapman 2002, 25), sustained by a mythical ideology.

One is that Gusinde, when presenting the Kloketen-ceremony, puts a lot of weight on the ways in which the underlying complex of related origin myths refers to the relationship among humans, animals, genders and geological formations, and not only to social relations of women and men. Gusinde accounts meticulously for the different

species of birds and other animals into which human women are transformed as part of the matricide—ending of the “matriarchal” origin myth of the Kloketen-celebration (Gusinde 1931, 869)—and vice versa, how the men in the myth of the new “patriarchal” Kloketen-ritual are descendants of sea mammals, birds, and linked to a specific mountain range (Maustas) (Gusinde 1931, 871). This begs the question whether the meaning of the Kloketen/Hain mythology and ritual rather than socially regulating the relationship between women and men, perhaps is cosmologically addressing intersections of gender and human-animal-plant-landscape relations.

A second observation, which Chapman ignores in her reading of Gusinde, is that Gusinde seems pretty keen on establishing a division between what he describes as the misogynistic tendencies of the Kloketen-celebration and the everyday life of the Selk’nam. In several places, he confirms that, according to his findings, such a separation exists. He thus maintains that “the basics of the secret men’s celebration are crossed totally out in everyday life reality” and that “the men never have gathered together in a permanent bonding, built on misogynistic tendencies” (Gusinde 1931, 1081, transl. from German by NL). By contrast to the misogyny characterizing the origin myth about the men’s Kloketen-celebration Gusinde seems to understand gender relations among the Selk’nam as equal. He goes so far as to define the men’s Kloketen ceremony as of “foreign” origin due to its misogynistic tendencies (Gusinde 1931, 1078-79). Gusinde does not explain this somehow surprising hypothesis about “foreign” influence further, but he states that—like one of his teachers, the influential anthropologist Wilhelm P. Schmidt (1924)—he belongs to the school in anthropology which saw the origin of human life as based on matriarchy (Gusinde 1931, 1078-79). The matriarchal origin story made up one of several key trends in 19th and early 20th century ideas about early human societal organization, going back to the work of Bachhofen (1861) and Morgan (1877); these are trends that also inspired Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels to their ideas of early human societal formations based on equality and communism before private property entered the stage.

I do not add these observations regarding Gusinde’s text, and Chapman’s eclectic reading of him, to launch us into looking for true essences “beneath” the anthropological discourses, but because I agree with you that one of the strategies that we can set in motion is to trouble the anthropologists’ smoothly monologuing, authoritative truth-speak by looking for excess meanings.

Hugs, Nina

II. Tracing excess and other voices

December 22, 2018

Dear Nina,

Thanks for your contribution to queering and decolonizing the texts of Chapman and Gusinde. I especially take your point about private property and how this completely transformed indigenous socio-cultural practices. I wonder if in your reading of Gusinde you encountered the mention of how he had to buy 360 sheep from *estancia* owners to fund the 1923 Kloketen/Hain (Chapman 2008, 42; Gusinde 1931, 818). There is much to unpack there, but I propose that our next step be to take a closer look at the film *The Ona People: Life and Death in Tierra del Fuego* (1977), co-directed by Anne Chapman and filmmaker Ana Montés Gonzalez. I have already begun to deconstruct Chapman and Montes's film—to identify the specificities of how these power structures operate in their filmic discourse but, since I wanted to practice this analysis not solely as a form of critique, rather also as means to affirmatively attend to excess meanings of the film and to rekindle relationships with the deceased, I began to play with speculating that the filmic medium captures more than what is readily visible.²⁸ Along these lines, I attempted to stay open to what is latent in the 16mm footage and was, perhaps, effaced by Chapman's white melancholic narrative voiceover; discourse so strong that the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) website, where you can view the film, offers the following brief description: "The Ona or Selk'nam people were hunters, warriors and shamans who lived in Tierra del Fuego. The film tells their story and how the ethnic group became extinct."²⁹ This exercise of staying open to latent content proved to be so intense that I had to break up my viewing; it was in one of those breaks that I came across an article that alerted me to the existence of a recently constituted Selk'nam Corporation Covadonga Ona. Can you believe it? After all these years of operating on the uneasy convention that Selk'nam peoples were no longer, there, in plain print, a testament of Selk'nam cultural resistance. Imagine my distressed excitement. The good news is that I am now in touch with the president of the community, Hema'ny Molina, and she has agreed to meet us when you come to Chile, and to take part in the Santiago edition of our Queering the Kloketen/Hain-workshop.

Enthusiastically, Camila

January 7-17, 2019³⁰

Dear Hema'ny,

¿Será muy contradictorio si te escribo esta carta en inglés? I suppose it is, but I'll sustain the contradiction because it leads precisely to the crux of the problems of translation, lostness and 'truth-speak' which you and I have been discussing over the phone.

As you know, only two weeks before holding the second edition of the Queering the Kloketen/Hain workshop in Santiago (the first was held in Melbourne in March 2018), subtitled *Lost in Translation*, Nina Lykke (collaborator and friend) and I were re-viewing Anne Chapman's film *The Ona People: Life and Death in Tierra del Fuego*. I was in the middle of this work and at every turn pained by the outspoken claim that the Selk'nam are a dying race (minute 44:30); by all accounts the Selk'nam genocide was one of the most rapid and successful depopulation efforts ever (Harambour-Ross 2012, Prieto 2007, Martínez 2017), but Chapman's presentation of it—based on the anthropological notion of "purity" that implies that you only count as "Selk'nam" if you grow up according to the ancient life style of the Selk'nam people (a requirement that was impossible to fulfil after colonialization, deportation and genocide)—and its consequences seemed to obscure the chance that the offspring of the Selk'nam people depicted in the film, or other Selk'nam descendants, practiced cultural continuity, as you and your community Covadonga Ona are doing.

I turned to the internet and came across the recently published article "Ser selknam en el siglo XXI" (To be selknam in the 21st Century) (Di Girolamo 2018). I couldn't believe it! I read your story to Nina and we learned of the struggles of your community and the ambition of your organization Covadonga Ona:

One of the reasons why the Selk'nam are not recognized by Chilean law has to do with the writings left by Anne Chapman, who spoke of the last Selk'nam, referring to those who had both an Ona (meaning Selk'nam) father and mother. "Purism, a classic line of anthropology, posits that if customs and language have been left behind, and no indigenous family tree exists, then people cease to be indigenous. But it is not like that, cultures are dynamic. In addition, if they have left the language and customs it is because society has had a policy of disappearance of the indigenous," explains anthropologist Pedro Campos, who led one of the workshops of the Selknam Corporation Covadonga Ona and actively participated in the process of the Diaguita people to attain recognition; successfully managing to incorporate themselves into the Indigenous Law in 2006. (di Girolamo 2018, translated from Spanish by CM)

This article seriously disrupted the preparations for the second edition of our Kloketen/Hain-workshop in Santiago. Would it be appropriate to play audio and videoclips from Chapman's film featuring Lola Kiep'ja, as we had done in Melbourne? (Now, I can ask you this). Could our endeavors be relevant for you personally and for your organization's struggle to gain rights, or would you consider it as one more act of cultural appropriation? In light of these questions, the workshop took a new turn, for it is you, Hema'ny, to whom I now feel most accountable—scholarly, politically and ethically.

First transformation: we had planned to hold the workshop in English, for Nina's sake, but this was no longer acceptable since you told me over the phone you don't speak English. So, I began translating the introduction to the workshop into Spanish. In doing this, I had to look up words I had never thought of in my mother tongue: queer, trickster, mourning. And struggled to find their equivalent: cuir, embustero, dolo. I became acutely aware of my own queer mournful trickstering.

Second transformation: I had to devise a mode of live translation during the workshop that would recognize that there were going to be a spectrum of language opacities in the room; we would be flipping from Spanish to English to Selk'nam to English to Spanish.

As you know, moving from one language to another takes time and patience. Therefore, the workshop contents and format, as we had presented them in Melbourne, had to be revised, and what emerged was no longer a practice of speculation but one of transfiguration and translation. We ended up being ten participants, including you, Hema'ny, that mid-summer morning, January 16, 2019, at the Gender Studies Department of the Universidad de Chile in Santiago. The ten of us didn't know each other, and our reasons for showing up were never disclosed, though I can guess that Nina's prestige and the queerfeminist decolonial approach that we advertised as our methodology for working through the mourning of the layers of lostness of the Selk'nam Kloketen/Hain ceremony were equally a catch. As an active participant—in an improvised exercise of travelling, with the mind's eye, to your ancestral lands—you led all of us to Karukinka. Our imaginary was subjected to yours, *gracias*. *Viajé contigo; tu sentir se hizo palabra, y tu palabra se hizo imagen, y esa imagen, se me hizo conocida.*

Hasta pronto, Camila

January 8, 2019

Dear Hema'ny, dear Camila,

First of all, let me underline that I am very happy that we got in touch with you, Hema'ny, and that you accepted our invitation to meet and participate in our Hain/Kloketen-workshop in Santiago.³¹ I really hope that we can craft our analyses and the Hain/Kloketen-workshop, so that our critical troubling and deconstruction of the truth-speak of the anthropologists will work in support of yours and the Selk'nam Corporation Covadonga Ona's struggle for rights.

In preparation for the workshop, here is my contribution to the deconstruction of *The Ona People* (Chapman and Montés 1977). I think that the film illustrates the ways in which anthropologists—despite their stated intentions of criticizing colonial violence and dispossession from a humanist perspective—end up blindly repeating a colonizing gesture, a gesture which you, Hema'ny, so forcefully pointed out, stating that Chapman's discourses on “extinction” and the “last” Selk'nam actually make your organization's claiming of rights from the Chilean state difficult. I agree that the film rhetorically sustains the discourses on “extinction” in highly problematic ways, and I shall contribute to the analysis of its problems through a close-reading of its dramatic structure and its hierarchy of voices.

The Ona People is divided into two parts, creating a dramatically dichotomous structure, accredited to Montés. The first part “Life” describes the life of the Selk'nam as the anthropologists conceive of this people as having existed for around 9.000 years until disturbed by white colonization in the late 19th century. The second part, “Death”, portrays the violent destruction of Selk'nam culture and people through white colonization, dispossession, and modernization. The dichotomy between life and death, “primitive”, precolonial harmony and “modern”, colonial violence, is emphasized through this structure, and apparently meant to critically question the colonization of Karukinka. However, the dichotomous structure also reinforces the statement, underlined many times during the film, that colonization ended the world of the Selk'nam, making them become “extinct” through genocide, dispossession, and “white man's diseases”. The film is pervaded by references to extinction and vanishing not only of Selk'nam culture, but also of Selk'nam bodies. There are innumerable references to being the “last” of a dying people, the “last generation” etc.

The film's critique of the “extinction” through colonial acts of violence and dispossession is no doubt well-intended, cf. e.g. Chapman's closing statement questioning the colonization and assassination of a “defenseless people” (Chapman and Montés 1977,

minute 50.48). However, even though the film is pervaded by critique of violent colonization and dispossession, it is also reproducing coloniality in terms of authoritatively interpreting Selk'nam life within the epistemic logics of modernity. The dichotomous structure of the film and its linear narrative of decline from prosperous collective life (part one) to sad and lonely death (part two) performs a key example of adaptation of Selk'nam history to Western modernity's obsession with teleological time moving towards "progress" or "decline".

The same applies to the relationship between the voices, coming to the fore in the film. The film is narrated by two voices; as voiceover, Chapman's voice alternates with a male voice (credited to Carlos Marichal). Altogether nine Selk'nam people (including Kiep'ja who died before filming started) are accredited as informants, mentioned by name and, for most of them, also by the year of death. The relations between the narrators' voices and those of these informants can be considered as palimpsestic. The narrators' voices, those of Chapman and Marichal, are the ones to interpret all events. Overall, the perspective of the voiceover is that of the anthropological gaze. The film is narrated from a position of enunciation of the humanist anthropologist. On the one hand, this narrator's position seems characterized by the wish and scholarly aim to mediate the image of the harmonious "primitive" life before the encounter with coloniality—the narrator thereby "saving" this life from extinction through filmic documentation. On the other hand, the narrator's position seems based on the wish and aim to critically show the decline and violent extinction that coloniality has fostered. To speak with decolonial scholar Walter Mignolo, the perspective of the voice-over, is that of humanist "saviour modernity", which hides, but still can neither opt out of nor disavow its structural links to the "darker side of modernity" (Mignolo 2011), the violent acts of colonization. Speaking in the name of the traditions of the discipline of anthropology, the film's authoritative voiceover claims to be able to speak the objective truth about thousands of years of Selk'nam culture (Life section of the film) and its violent extinction in modern times (Death section of the film).

I interpret the narrative, told by the authoritative voiceover as palimpsestic, implying that a visible writing over-layers traces of an erased text, due to the ways in which voices of the Selk'nam informants are not heard, but only paraphrased in English, except for a couple of instances, which rather than casting doubt on, confirm the authority of the voiceover. The stories of the Selk'nam informants are throughout paraphrased, interpreted, translated, and told by and from the perspective of the voiceover. The voiceover defines what the Selk'nams lost, what they mourn and how they feel about it. Moreover, the Selk'nams are represented as soon to be totally extinct, because even though the credits list nine

Selk'nam informants, the second part of the film states that only a few rather old people of Selk'nam descent are still alive. Moreover, the film gives detailed information about the day of death of most of the accredited Selk'nam informants. Or in other words, Selk'nam mourning is colonized, assimilated into the white melancholia which modernity's humanist saviours articulate on behalf of the Selk'nam—with testimonies of their dead or dying bodies as proof of the “extinction”. Listening to the voiceover, I cannot but conclude that its truth-speak is inscribed in a colonial discourse, “subaltern voices” (Spivak 1988), in this case Selk'nam ones, cannot speak for themselves; or in other words, the anthropologist/documentarists come to carry out an act of epistemic violence, colonializing the mourning of the Selk'nam.

But how to get out of the endless affective circulation of images evoking white melancholia and reconfirming the colonizing of Selk'nam mourning, such as the film's showing Chapman and Loij walking in the (Christian!) churchyard where many Selk'nam are buried? (Chapman and Montés 1977, minute 37.55) I shall suggest that we mobilize the trope of the *palimpsest* for methodological purposes and try to let it guide us beyond a *hermeneutics of suspicion*, critically “staying with the trouble” (Haraway 2016), but also affirmatively trying to move in other directions.

According to *English Oxford Dictionaries* (2018), the short definition of a palimpsest is, “a manuscript or piece of writing material on which later writing has been superimposed on effaced earlier writing.” The earlier writing is gone, but the viewer might perceive blurred and fragmented traces of it, when looking at the superimposed writing. In so doing, viewers will perhaps become touched by the excess, and enabled to enter into other conversations than acting only in response to the invitation of the over-layered writing. I suggest that we think about the truth-speak of the anthropologists as the superimposed writing which nevertheless reveals an excess of other meanings that can only be accessed in remediated (Bolter and Grusin 2000) and translated forms, but which may speak to us as a ghostly presence and may urge us to create new meanings.

Firstly, the palimpsest is a good figuration to think with because it exposes the power hierarchy between different discourses. The superimposed text is evidently coming to the audience (us) with a much more powerful and authoritative voice, which, sustained by modern technologies make strong claims to speak “the truth”. Secondly, the palimpsest figuration seems to me also to be a good tool for starting to queer and decolonize the effects of the powerful voices, to trouble their claim to superior authority. The palimpsest shows traces of other articulations, different from the “truths”, claimed by the powerful technoscientifically mediated apparati. We (the audience) cannot access these other

articulations, but their half-effaced appearance can open our horizon—guide us to pose questions and to speculate about excess meanings, trickster voices and ghostly perspectives.

So, with this in mind let us return to the issue of the linear narrative of decline from life to death, from pure noble savagedom to colonial extinction, as told by the authoritatively mourning voiceover of Chapman's and Montés's film and let us try to enter into conversation with *palimpsestic excess*. Let us see if we can find ways to contribute to a process of unlearning the linear temporalities of modernity that have either lead us to a celebration of "development" and "progress" or thrown us into melancholic and nostalgic mourning of an "Edenic", but lost past.

Affectionately, Nina.

January 10, 2019

Dear Hema'ny, dear Nina,

I share with you some of my reflections of the anthropological documentary film: *The Ona People: Life and Death in Tierra del Fuego*, co-directed by Anne Chapman and Ana Montés de Gonzales. As we discussed, the exercise of unpacking this film, in preparation for the Kloketen/Hain workshop in Santiago, was conceived of as a move to slowly break out of the epistemologies of ignorance and disappearance, in a stretch towards creating different interpretations and storylines.

In her curriculum vitae, dated April 2006, Anne Chapman lists *The Ona People* as her first film, writing:

documentary, 16 mm, 1 hour. Co-direction: Ana Montés de Gonzales: camera man Jorge Prelorán, collaboration Oscar Gamaro. The seven Selk'nam and mestizos who participated in the film have all "passed away" (2004): filmed between 1968 and 1972, first presented at the Wenner Gren Foundation, New York, May 1977. (2006)

In the screen credits, however, the order and roles of those who participated in the film's making are slightly different. Ana Montés de Gonzales's role is given more emphasis as the division of labour between the two co-directors is specified: Montés is credited for production, dramatic structure and recording of narratives, whereas Chapman is credited for writing the text, for her role as scientific advisor and for the recording of Kiep'ja's chants. These credits don't appear at the very start of the film nor at the end (as is often the case) but only after a two-minute voiceover by Chapman introducing Kiep'ja,

whose Spanish name was Lola and died in Tierra del Fuego at the end of winter 1966. With her all direct testimony of a millenary culture disappeared, that of a stone age hunting culture...In the last years of her life, when I knew her Kiepja still identified with her people and still preferred to speak her own language though she was fluent in Spanish. (minute 0:35-1:55)

So many questions run through my mind: Why did Chapman, in her CV, downplay Montés's role as producer, creator of the dramatic structure and in charge of recording of narratives? Chapman's second film *Homage to the Yaghans the Last Indians of Tierra del Fuego and Cape Horn* (1990) was not co-directed by Montés, did something go sour between them? Another line of questions: Was Kiep'ja fluent in Spanish? I remember that elsewhere, Chapman states otherwise and she credits Ángela Loij as her interpreter.³² Finally, what would Kiep'ja think/feel of the film? Made ten years after her death, would she have agreed to her chants circulating the way they do? As I muse over these unknowns, the film has continued playing on my computer. I pause it and jump to Chapman's website, hosted by the Reed Foundation. I click on her 1971 article "The End of a World" and transcribe two of its paragraphs:

She made me promise never to play the tapes for anyone on the island except Angela and one other friend. In January, 1965, during the three weeks we had recorded in Angela's house (on the outskirts of Río Grande), whenever anyone approached the house she became nervous and asked me to hide the recorder. The following year, on the reservation, we had very few visitors and she seemed less timid. She explained to me that the "others" (the Whites as well as some of the other Indians) would laugh if they heard her singing, that they did not understand.

And,

Once she became annoyed with me. I was showing her copies of the photographs that accompany Martin Gusinde's volume on the Selk'nam. Included among them are photographs of the "spirits" of the Hain, actually men disguised by paint and masks. When she saw the first of these, she pushed it aside, refused to look at the others. Scowling at me and said: "No es para los civilizados" meaning Whites should not see them. ³³

What are we to make of these inconsistencies? I'm at a loss to understand the precise powers at play here, however, Kiep'ja's scowl "no es para civilizados" and Chapman's

assertion that this meant that Whites should not see them triggers me. I want to spend time with each of the inconsistencies outlined above as a means to procedurally fragment, break down and reduce the dominant white Western discourse that overpowers and effaces the indigenous and mestizo voices of Chapman's informants. I interrupt my writing of this letter and reach for my phone to ring you, Hema'ny, but it's late and I leave you a voice message instead, asking what you think/feel about the denomination mestizo. You respond:

The truth is that the word mestizo doesn't affect me negatively or positively. I think that, at least for my people, miscegenation was one of the ways in which we survived. Thanks to miscegenation we are still here, descendants who can still speak and share the memories passed on orally through family members. Miscegenation and silence were the two main forms of resistance of my people. I have no qualms about it, I have no problem in saying that I am a mestizo, and I am happy being a mestizo because none of the ancestors embarrass me, neither from the indigenous side nor from the European side, on the contrary, they both make me feel very proud. I must admit that I prefer my indigenous ancestors and that I identify with them, but I cannot deny the other side; my grandmother also left me great teachings and a lot of love and much affection. So, the label mestizo does not affect me in a negative way, nor can I tell you that it affects me in a positive way.³⁴

From your answer, Hema'ny, I am drawn to problematize Chapman's ambivalence towards Ángela Loij. Of her translator, Chapman said that she had "the impression that Ángela Loij felt like a Selk'nam, though it was no longer possible to be a Selk'nam" (minute 10:49) by which I think Chapman meant that Loij could no longer practice ancestral ways of living. This was true at the time, however, relegating Loij to the role of mere instrument to access a dying culture, comes right after the voiceover has presented all the other descendants of Selk'nam that also did not qualify, by Chapman's anthropological standards of pure descentance (both mother and father of Selk'nam descent), as good enough to be the *one thing* she needed, the last Selk'nam. Ángela Loij and the figure of the translator emerge forcefully as I strive to, as Donna Haraway puts it, "make the weak stories stronger and the strong stories weaker" (2017).

Loij (who appears in the film even though it is not about her) is just out of Chapman's focus and I wonder if it was Montés who, in postproduction, paired Chapman's

statement about the “last Selk’nam” with the image of Loij sitting across from her. Was she trying to question Chapman’s exclusion of mestizos as “proper” Selk’nam informants? or is that just me?

Let me contextualize the montage techniques used by Montés. The use of the film camera as an ethnographic tool occurred almost immediately after the appearance of the first films in the mid 1890s. Praised for its function as a precise collector of evidence the camera was considered to objectively record human behaviour. So, “naturally” it complemented the “more personal” handwritten field notes of ethnographers (Winston 1995, 175). Neglecting the ways in which the camera is also hand held and determines (if not fully constructs) the reality being documented wasn’t an issue until the French anthropologist and filmmaker Jean Rouch developed a new form of anthropological cinema that fully dismantled the idea of objectivity, namely ethnofiction (Malik 2009, 34). Attempting to overturn the idea that an ethnographic account offers objective information about a people, early ethnofiction film used assemblage techniques to demonstrate how the fabrication of truth is achieved during montage by introducing raw footage to reverse the meaning of the whole film, or parts of it. Montés’s work as anthropological documentary filmmaker was in resonance with innovative trends in the genre (jump cuts to found footage, handheld camera shots reminiscent of surveillance film, speaking-over unrelated images, amongst others) and Jean Rouch was a significant influence on her cameraman, Jorge Prelorán, renowned for being the Argentine pioneer of ethnobiographic filmmaking. Seeking to redefine the making of ethnographic films by moving away from the depiction of subjects as exotic or primitive, Prelorán strove to make films that, as he told *Americas* magazine, “do not use the people about whom they are made.” (Prelorán 2009) This statement makes me think of the celebrated declaration “I do not intend to speak about. Just speak nearby,” made by the independent filmmaker, composer, feminist, and postcolonial theorist Trinh T. Minh-Ha in her 40-minute, 1983 film *Reassemblage*. Though, unlike *Reassemblage*, *The Ona People* is not decidedly an anti-documentary Montés’s assemblage techniques do seem to aim to “destabilize the position of the viewing subject” (Russell 1999, 124).

In *Reassemblage* Minh-ha does this by shooting from a range of different angles and distances, while Montés and Prelorán add voice-overs and found footage in what appear to be attempts to layer a line of critique over Chapman’s authorial truth-speak. I continue watching and transcribing, seeking and making excess meaning. A black screen displays the dwindling numbers of the Selk’nam population: “from 3500-4000 around 1880

to “1 ona and 5 mestizos” when the film was edited” (minute 49:48). Heightening the dramatism of the assembled narrative Chapman’s voice is heard one last time, asking: “So was it necessary to assassinate a defenseless people or let them die of diseases to take their land? I don’t think so, but this is how Tierra del Fuego was colonized and all of America from North to South and this is how America is still being colonized” (minute 50:48). This closing statement is spoken over images of newspaper clippings whose headlines read: “Western culture continues to destroy indigenous civilizations in Paraguay,” “Fierce killing of Indians in Colombia,” and finally “A German ethnologist denounces genocide against the Guayaki.”

Is Chapman trying subconsciously to exonerate herself from a feeling of guilt and complicity? Is Montés assisting her, or is she branching off, making evident the ways in which the media and medialization are used as heinous tools of colonization, inscribing the horrors rather than abolishing them?

In what feels like an interruption of Chapman’s dreary closing remark, we hear Kiep’ja chanting, while translations of her words glide over a close-up of a still image of her aged face until it is absorbed into blackness. Attending to the grain of her voice, the force of her utterance, as I hear Kiep’ja chants I am carried to dark thoughts, to the messiness of the palimpsestic layering going on in the film. Hema’ny, should we listen to Kiep’ja’s singing at the workshop? Shall we show that final clip of her face? Can we use the English translation of her chant as inspiration for a writing exercise?

I open the book lying on my desk *Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labor of the Negative* (1999) written by the anthropologist Michael Taussig, and flip to part three, titled “In That Other Time: Isla Grande”. On page 131 I find the subheading *The Power of Unmasking Lies in the Riddle of Childhood Memory of Maternal Speech* under which Taussig (who I have shared time with on “Isla Grande” Karukinka Tierra del Fuego, and who appears in episode 5 of the web series) also wonders whether women knew the ‘secret’ of the Kloketen/Hain. He writes “they know they have to keep right away from the Big Hut, go far over, that way, for water, and far over that way for firewood, and never come close by.” (Taussig 1999, 133)

Paraphrasing Gusinde, Taussig spends a couple of paragraphs describing the function of the women’s role in the ceremony by analysing their singing: “it is the mother of the eldest initiate, for instance, who sings the midnight song those first eight nights in that deep voice the women have, a voice of men, this sad and frightening song taken up by the other women of the camp.” (133) Taussig outlines how Gusinde saw the woman as feeling “real and terrible pain”, and this is “why her acting is more than acting”, so that “we (the

readers) ... [become] witness to her gift in the general economy of gift giving, of which mimesis is but a part, mimesis itself being that faculty of becoming other in the trade of secrets." (133)

Hema'ny, Nina, I wonder what you make of Taussig's poetic interpretation of the women's role in the Kloketen/Hain being "to know they must not know." (131) I am anxious about the workshop. Wading through the palimpsest of voices leads me back to my own and I fear that my curatorial formulations might reinstate power structures rather than create access to other voices. I am so grateful to both of you, having you as interlocutors breaks my angst because our differently situated positions challenge me to reflect on my privileges and to assume the role of translator, one I assume proudly.

I look forward to seeing you, Camila

III. Touching, Reaching out, Resisting

January 15, 2019

Dear workshop participants,

We are happy that you responded positively to the open invitation made by the University of Chile's Gender Studies department, and especially that you Hema'ny accepted our invitation to participate, when we recently told you about the event, and consulted with us on developing the content. For this workshop, "Queering the Kloketen/Hain: Lost in Translation," we adopt a palimpsestic approach aimed at exploring excess meaning when considering the truth-speak of the authoritative voices of white anthropologists. To do this, we invite you to engage in a critically-affirmative body/mind/writing exercise on death and mourning, instigated by one of Lola Kiep'ja's shamanistic chants, as visualized, replayed and translated into English in the film *The Ona People* (Chapman and Montés 1977). We will lead you through this writing exercise, suggesting that you use poetic language as a method of actively engaging with the chant. We will insist you take into account that we can only access the chant through the mediation of the anthropological gaze and the technologies of modernity (Bolter and Grusin 2000). Within these considerations, we will ask you to address the chant through "relational touching," (Lykke forthcoming) an affective reaching out through poetic language, rather than thinking it as a representation. We feel it is neither ethically appropriate nor respectful to consider the chant as representation. We only have access to the authoritative gaze of the anthropologists, who, against the background of the traditions

of their discipline, and their western gaze, interpreted, wrote down, recorded, represented—selecting what to restate and what not to—and translated (with the help of Angela Loij) Kiep’ja’s stories, songs, and chants. Kiep’ja’s perspective, her subjective understanding and the meanings she ascribed to all this, only exists as spectral presence, incorporeal excess possibly captured by the technologies of recording, photographing, and quoting (Derrida 1993). Thus, we will try to access the excess through poetic language sustained by hauntological thought, as theorized by Jacques Derrida, who defines “the figure of the ghost as that which is neither present, nor absent, neither dead nor alive” (Derrida 1993). Through this exercise of the impossible act of accessing Kiep’ja’s spectral presence we hope to enable us all to create an ethical relation of mutual immaterial touch, which may inspire new queering and decolonizing moves, new ways of practicing resistance, and solidarity with the Selk’nam Covadonga Ona organization.

To help us all engage in poetic touching and revolutionary reaching out, we begin the writing exercise with automatic writing. It is meant to capture the images and associations which come spontaneously to mind when listening to Kiep’ja’s chant. The format of automatic writing implies that you are not allowed to lift the pen from the paper; if your head goes “empty”, you just write “lalalalala...” until words start to form in your mind again. From longstanding work with creative writing (Lykke 2014), Nina recommends automatic writing as a format for exploring sensuous, affective and embodied reflection beyond the control of the intellect. Against the background of your automatic writing, you construct a poetic text—a poem, a small narrative, a drama, a mix of all genres, etc—by first rereading your “raw-text” and ringing in key words and concepts. Afterwards, we will share and discuss these texts together.

Organizing the workshop is a way of taking seriously what we (Camila and Nina as organizers of the workshop) share with Gusinde and Chapman: that our “good” intentions do not “save” us from reproducing epistemologies of ignorance (Tuana 2007); epistemologies that universalize certain privileged outlooks, such as those of classic western anthropology, neglecting the possibility of other perspectives.

The workshop format is crafted in order to set in motion a process of unlearning and undoing the authoritative white gaze of anthropologists. A process, which, as defined by decolonial scholars Madina Tlostanova and Walter Mignolo (2012), is linked to the decolonial option of “delinking” from the claims to universal truths of modernity:

The decolonial option starts from delinking, learning to unlearn that the objectivity and truth without parentheses in which universal options are grounded, have been exhausted. The decolonial option is not a new

universal, a readymade project for the future but, on the contrary, a starting point where the future has to be made in the process of learning to unlearn. (Tlostanova and Mignolo 2012; 222).

To instigate delinking from the authoritative gaze of the anthropological texts, visuals and recordings, we invite networks of interested people to share experiences from many different intersections of decolonizing, feminist, queering practices, and to critically-affirmatively engage with the layers of lostness appearing when we approach Selk'nam cosm-onto-epistemologies.

Until soon, Camila and Nina

January 25, 2019

Dear Hema'ny and Nina,

In the writing workshop what I read aloud, or to be more precise, what I hollered out loud was:

MI CABEZA NO CABE EN ESTE HOYO!!!!!!!

Nina, in English this translates to:

MY HEAD DOESN'T FIT THIS HOLE!!!!!!!

That day's singular scream was the raw expression of my mestiza consciousness (Sandoval 2000), triggered by Chapman's ambivalence towards Ángela Loij, her Selk'nam translator, who she perceived as "half-caste." (Chapman 1977, minute 10:48). Since the workshop, Ángela Loij has emerged forcefully in my imaginary and I have started to write to her.

Sincerely, Camila

January 27, 2019³⁵

Hello Camila,

I hope you are very well ... here is my result of the exercise you led in the workshop.

I found the exercise brilliant, the feelings and views that emanated are very different from what one believes one will write. I have continued practicing it. Thank you, it is a beautiful tool that you gave us all.

This is what I wrote that day, or rather the final result, the one I read aloud.

The wind whispers in my ears
stories that the sand hides,
while these hard hands open with roughness
the cradle where the flesh of my flesh will sleep.
The sea in its immensity
rocks so many memories
that under the weight of its pain
they sink, they hide.
The pain is so long and
so little the hope.
The rain is not enough to cry.

HEMANY

My pseudonym is my first name spelled out in caps but obviously you can say who I am and tell about my people.

So far, the few publications of my writing that exist have been in blogs in Argentina and here in Chile at the SECH (Sociedad de Escritores de Chile), and I always sign just using my pseudonym, it is also registered as intellectual property.

I like the result so much that I will use it in a recording that we are working on for a documentary that is being made about our community.

In this piece of writing I reflected on what I felt when we held the ceremony of the burial of the placenta of my grandson, Ketel, in Tierra del Fuego or Karokynka, as we call it.

I leave you a hug,

Hema'ny Molina Vargas
President
Selk'nam Corporation Chile
Selk'nam indigenous community
COVADONGA ONA

February 8, 2019³⁶

Estimadas Nina y Camila,

Camila, I've read the text you sent me very carefully, I think it's very interesting how you are dealing with the subject.³⁷ I have always had many reservations with everything

that is considered “official” history, not because I consider it false, but because it is incomplete. It reflects a moment in a particular place or circumstance, moments that were perhaps spontaneous or maybe were staged and created using force. Either way it only reflects the feelings of one person who develops a vision from their scientific perspective.

History is a coin that has two faces, and usually only one side is shown, the one that shines. The winner’s tale is shown as true; revealing their version of the facts, leaving behind the other side, it’s as if the other face of the coin didn’t exist. That is what happened with us. Even today we are denied, in the same way that Gusinde denied us when predicting our future extinction in his letter to the governor of Magallanes (accounting for his trips)³⁸, without having greater certainty of it. I cannot say that it was due to the ignorance or the denial of the mestizo, or even to the non-mestizo, who in order to survive, ended up working in the ranches and mingling with the shepherds; they went unnoticed by the anthropologists and by all those who also wanted to tell the story.

They were already dressed, they spoke Spanish, and they worked for a salary ... They were no longer considered indigenous or savage as Gusinde calls them in his studies. For example, there is the case of Tenenesk, who was considered a great *xo’on* (shaman), but when Gusinde met him, he was no longer living in the way of the Selk’nam *tolderías*, he was a sheep hand who worked in the ranches and whose history can be found in the writings of Father De Agostini. Tenenesk charged money to be photographed wearing guanaco cloaks and posed for those well-known photos of Gusinde’s in which he appears as a Selk’nam *xo’on*. It may be that the traditional clothing was worn to dramatize for future readers the magical world that was disappearing, for a future in which the photographer is the hero who managed to make records, and that these documents will be considered treasures of humanity? I do not know if I err in my thinking, but I do know that because I think like this, I have been questioned and criticized.

I feel similarly about Anne Chapman, even more so after having had the opportunity to meet and talk with the greater Selk’nam community of Rio Grande, Argentina. They met her, they shared more than a day with her, and they witnessed her way of working and collecting the information that she later used to carry out her written work. Her methods are questioned in Rio Grande, and just as there are people who oppose her work there are others who defend it, believing that thanks to it, at least they know the songs of Lola Kiep’ja. The great majority of today’s Selk’nam—or descendants as some prefer to call us in a reverence to “Chapmanian” thinking, for she made it clear that we are only descendants but without any of the rights of a true Selk’nam—do not agree with many

things that Mrs. Chapman did and we especially disagree with her making Lola's songs public, denying her family the legitimate right to make decisions about this legacy.

In my opinion, modernism, inculturation and development ignored the fundamental right of people to be considered in the decisions respecting their own culture. The fact is that today in the 21st century, this is still happening. Every time that people take us as an object of study, and use us for the furthering of their degrees, they perpetuate this by making it their work to study us; which they never do because they just speculate and usually base themselves on what has already been cemented by Gusinde and Chapman. Because of this oft repeated type of scholarly attitude, I tend to see most academic work as wrong from the start, because most take Gusinde and Chapman for their word and in so doing they disregard us. I have found value in some new academic papers but I cannot consider them 100 percent sound because their foundations are wrong: they have not questioned Gusinde or Chapman or at least part of their work.

For this reason I was intrigued by your work and pleasantly surprised by your proposal, especially that of the literary workshop you invited me to, and to which I went with so much enthusiasm, because I honestly believe that only by questioning can we reach a point of view beyond what is projected and usually expected.

I feel that the work of all those who in some way have developed an understanding of the culture of my people is valuable, but none holds the absolute truth. Despite the good intentions that may have motivated them—the anthropologists, historians and religious people, who were present during the unfortunate events that occurred in Karokynka from 1800 onwards—all of them, without exception, have only partial truth of a story that we will never finish knowing. We can only speculate, but until now I have only read work in which the authors present themselves as owners of the truth. A truth, that by the way, not even we, as Selk'nam people of the 21st century, claim to have.

I feel deep pain for having to witness, again and again, the publication of work that presents us an extinct people, a people of whose culture there is nothing left. It is painful to witness how altruists and studious people sell and sell books, mount galleries of photos, and give talks in which they talk about us, they speculate about us, they question whether or not we are descendants, they earn money working on our culture; all the while presenting themselves as defenders of the rights of a people that do not exist... and while all this goes on we look from a window in which nobody wants to stop and listen to us, look at us, or include us.

You have come into my life to give me an injection of literary vitality. Ever since that workshop, I felt an infinite desire to write and advance my literary work, which I had abandoned.

I am currently working on the stories of my grandfather. I am also working on an article that a Brazilian university asked me to develop about education (with a focus on Selk'nam nowadays and education within the family), for which I am starting to interview women in the community.

On the other hand, I am also working on a book (or I do not know what to call it). The end result of years of research that started with my family and continues on with the process that I have undergone in these past years, since I began to do political work with the goal to request that my people be recognised in the Chilean indigenous law.

I think it's fair that I thank you for this new stage in which I have found a renewed love for writing. I especially thank you, Nina, knowing you has inspired me a lot. Getting to know both of you has been very beautiful.

A big Hug,

Hema'ny

To David,

It's been a little over a month since you replied to my initial letter. As I let you know in my brief thanks-for-your-reply email, your refusal to accept my propositions came as a (surprising) relief. What you don't know is that, since then, I embarked on the task of fictionalizing you.

Originally, I wanted to steer clear of speaking on behalf of the people and things whose stories I want to see televised, so I rejected the early suggestion by my advisors that I should write scripts to get the web series going. As I described in my previous letter to you, I argued instead for a more experimental process of ethnofiction filmmaking, advocating for casual interviews, playful reenactments and analytical editing techniques as my chosen methodology. This process has already advanced the web series in many ways and has allowed it to draw on factual interactions as its basis (no matter how these might be later reimaged or reinterpreted). But your unwillingness to be interviewed has forced my hand: I feel obliged to assume authorship in a way I initially thought was unnecessary, to develop a form of scriptwriting to keep you alive as a character. I'm writing this letter as just that: scriptwriting. So even though it is addressed to you, I won't be sending it, because it's not simply a letter, but an attempt to unearth your seminal role in the ecopolitics of Karukinka Tierra del Fuego, and to understand why I find your story so compelling.³⁹

It is certainly nothing new to say that every documentary practice fundamentally involves elements of fiction,⁴⁰ but to fictionalize an interview with you requires that I confess and measure up my own contextualizing gaze. I've tackled this through a series of self-reflexive exercises which I'll describe, but before I do I want to quote Michael Taussig, an Australian anthropologist who teaches at Columbia University and whose class, 'Anthropology as Avant-Garde Art Form' (on the likeness between ethnographic and artistic strategies), impacted me as a young master's student in 2003. You might have heard of him: he is known in his discipline for his unconventional work on shamanism, colonialism, and mimesis, but he's useful here for another reason. He writes on exactly the procedure of self-contextualization that I'm attempting to undertake here, arguing it should be one that "admits of our presence, our scrutinizing gaze, our social relationships and our enormously confused understandings of history and what is meant by history" (Taussig 1992, 44-45). This, he says: "is not autobiography. This is not self-indulgence. It is neither

of these things because first it opens up to a science of mediations—neither Self nor Other but mutual co-implicatedness—and second because it opens up the colonial nature of the intellectual relationship to which the contextualized other has for so long been subjected” (44-45).

As a privileged, white, American male, you are not a common subject of the contextualizing gaze—in an ethnographical sense—and though you have not been exempt from scrutiny, my intention, as expressed in my first letter, was to have a dialogue with you, a studio visit in fact. Since I did really want to meet you in person, David, and as I still believe that a conversation between the two of us would have resulted in some good, I decided—despite your refusal—not to drop my impulse of interviewing you. Inspired partly by Chris Kraus’s fictocritical novel, *I Love Dick*, in which she insists on writing letters to a man she calls Dick, who never, or hardly ever, responds, I’ve gone ahead and interviewed you.⁴¹

How you may ask? Well, aided by fiction. Fictional role-playing in fact: asking three people to allow me to interview them as if they were you. My only direction to the David stand-ins was that they reply spontaneously, not pausing to give much thought to what you might say, simply responding. To assist them with this direction, I described an exercise fashioned by the psychiatrist Adrianna Schnake, as detailed in her book *The Voice of the Symptom*, in which she interviews her sickly patients asking them to reply as their diseased organ. Encouraging them to speak “organically,” or put in other words, in a visceral manner, Schnake’s suggestion intends to bring to consciousness what might not be in the field of awareness of the patient.⁴² The method, which evolved from an elaborate understanding of psychodrama, performativity, neurology, psychiatry, philosophy, physiology, and Chinese medicine (just to name a few of its many underlying disciplinary references) is a sophisticated one and I certainly am not claiming to know how to deliver a therapeutic experience of this kind. But by invoking this exercise I simply place emphasis on my interest in performativity and my developing curatorial practice of ‘speaking with’ things that seemingly don’t talk back (organs, islands, non-humans, and even some humans).

I recorded the interviews. You won’t be surprised to hear that they are bizarre, and it’s very unlikely that they sound anything like you. However, receiving responses to my questions helped me come to terms with three critical issues that I now see as defining my curatorial framing of the web series, namely: maleness, whiteness, and wealth.

If you were looking at me right now David, you might think: “Well, she seems to share some of these traits” and you’re right, I do. I am very masculine, and though I identify as a woman, I feel quite man-like. Certainly I can behave like a man or show traits commonly attributed to men: I can be highly rational, over-competitive, and self-centered. As the first-born child of an extremely functional and ambitious man, an Olympic athlete in fact, I was trained to perform this nascent masculinity from an early age. This may sound harsh, except it wasn’t: my education was very loving, and today, I continue to take pride in the discipline, determination, and logic that I learned from my father. But there’s also a flipside. An unexpected result of my upbringing is my strong aversion to the patriarchal history of men like you (and my father) who venture to far off lands to initiate heroic projects of conquest.

I made the association between you and my father in the first play interview, a conversation between the cinematographer, Bejamín Echazarreta, and myself. Like you, my father makes investments in foreign countries and sets up companies that utilize natural resources on other people’s land in “good faith.” Both of you are so steeped in your masculinity that you are condemned to unreflexively enact it without ever noticing how the mastery over nature, women, and others—performed by those of your gender—is predicated on radical exclusion and hyper-separation.⁴³

So, from this first play-interview I distilled the following curatorial principle: mind difference, remaining vigilant to exclusionary dualisms (reason/nature, male/female, native/non-native). This is really an ecofeminist frame, or as Val Plumwood called it, “a thorough grounding for a feminist environmental philosophy,” (Plumwood 1993, 2) and as such an essential foundation for the web series *DISTANCIA*.⁴⁴

The second interlocutor was Bill Hannan, my neighbor. As a young man, in the late 1940s, Bill joined the Victorian teaching service and later led the educational reform revolution, which he called the Great Expansion.⁴⁵ Aside from being an educator, activist, writer, and father, Bill is also known for having co-founded an income sharing commune with his wife, Lorna Hannan, also an academic, and a group of approximately sixteen other people, all of whom shared the Hannan’s keen sense of social justice and culture. Asking Bill the questions that I would have asked you showed me how ambition for power and money gets instilled in the young, and particularly in young men, through the secondary schooling system that equates skill with the accrual of goods. Bringing to the process a sense that your own character in this regard might have been set by your schooling, Bill—an educator—helped me understand why so many of the affluent explorers of Tierra del Fuego expressed the mistaken view that the “skill level” of the

Fuegians was inferior to their own. Often, I've mused quizzically over the conclusions their travels so quickly solidified within them. Take as an example the following incongruent statement scribbled by Darwin in his journal while voyaging on the HMS Beagle in 1833:

The perfect equality among the individuals composing the Fuegian tribes must for a long time retard their civilization... In Tierra del Fuego, until some chief shall arise with power sufficient to secure any acquired advantage, such as the domesticated animals, it seems scarcely possible that the political state of the country can be improved. At present, even a piece of cloth given to one is torn into shreds and distributed; and no one individual becomes richer than another. On the other hand, it is difficult to understand how a chief can arise till there is property of some sort by which he might manifest his superiority and increase his power.

I believe, in this extreme part of South America, man exists in a lower state of improvement than in any other part of the world. The South Sea Islanders, of the two races inhabiting the Pacific, are comparatively civilized. The Esquimaux, in his subterranean hut, enjoys some of the comforts of life, and in his canoe, when fully equipped, manifests much skill. Some of the tribes of Southern Africa, prowling about in search of roots, and living concealed on the wild and arid plains, are sufficiently wretched. The Australian, in the simplicity of the arts of life, comes nearest the Fuegian: he can, however, boast of his boomerang, his spear and throwing-stick, his method of climbing trees, of tracking animals, and of hunting. Although the Australian may be superior in acquirements, it by no means follows that he is likewise superior in mental capacity: indeed, from what I saw of the Fuegians when on board and from what I have read of the Australians, I should think the case was exactly the reverse. (Darwin 1967, 111)

I now stomach these crass Darwinian descriptions with a sliver of hope, because if what Bill says is true—that the colonial, capitalist relationship between mastery over nature, wealth and property gets instilled through education—then perhaps something can be done for future generations. Racism and speciesism can stop being taught. The malformed “market individual” that you embody doesn't have to be the character type endorsed by our education systems. But I'm not going to take on the education system, or not just yet. I'm only thinking about how a serialized, eco-socialist, feminist, anti-racist

account of the human geography of Tierra del Fuego can counter the mythification of characters like yours. I'm imagining that by the power of fiction your type can be dismantled: 'David' re-imagined counters the David, fashioned by his own biography.

I don't want to over vilify you, David; I'm simply trying to get to know your make-up. To counter any bias, I cite a description of your character from the book *Taking Back Eden: Eight Environmental Cases that Changed the World* written by Oliver Houck, a professor of Law at Tulane University:

Syre was used to taking chances, and winning them all. Tall, soft-spoken, and personally charming, even his adherents used the word "aggressive" when speaking of his ventures. Syre had fought his way back from polio at an early age to a series of investments that put him, then in his early fifties, at the top of a \$450 million enterprise that stretched from Alaska to the tip of South America. He started out in real estate by building a 176-unit condominium complex near Glacier Park, then a shopping mall in his hometown of Bellingham, Washington. He purchased "at fire sale price" large chunks of downtown Denver, Vancouver, Ketchikan, and Anchorage. He opened a business park named Cordate and a nearby resort called Semiahmoo. He did nothing by halves here, not even the names. (Houck 2010, 153)

My response to this is the second curatorial principle for the web series: it is not-for-profit. The web series sides with the stories of people struggling to resist the destruction of nature and advocating for a dissociation of the notion of nature from that of resource. For these matters to transpire I acknowledge that a coherent rule of conduct for the process of capturing these ecological struggles is that they be told without marketable ambitions (though there are other, non-financial profits and ecopolitical ambitions at play). My own participation in social and ecological communities in Tierra del Fuego is founded on a not-for-profit ethics (I derive my salary and other financial needs from teaching and writing). This not-for-profit framework (which for years I referred to as an ethics of the "useless"⁴⁶) has proved essential for the advancement of non-instrumental narratives of contemporary environmental issues and for the explication of such key concepts as friendship, acting in solidarity with, caring for others for their own sake, and recognizing the other's intrinsic value. (Plumwood 1993, 154)

As you know, it was Ivette Martínez, a Fuegian local and dear collaborator of mine, who suggested I get in touch with you, for she had hoped that you and I would meet. She believes that if we met we would get along, and she imagined that I would have been a good mediator the Chilean stakeholders—who continue to be skeptical about your current Fuegian projects—and yourself. Naturally, I asked her to play interlocutor too. She read, and was critical of, the first letter I sent you; saying that I laid all my cards on the table at once or as she put it: “tiraste toda la carne a la parrilla” (which literally translates to “you threw all the meat on the barbeque”), which is her way of critiquing my lack of “strategy.”⁴⁷

Conversations with Ivette are always eye opening. As a research collaborator, she has taught me so much about Chilean political history; illuminating, with her first-hand experience, the ideals and real battles that she and her *compañeros* fought during the military dictatorship. Her participation in the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR) still informs her thinking (though she exhibits sharp critical distance too) and her grassroots community organization skills (which helped take your corporation to court) shine bright when we are doing fieldwork in Karukinka Tierra del Fuego. Nevertheless, in our interview she drew a very clear distinction between you and another American businessman, conservationist, and philanthropist, Douglas Tompkins, someone with whom I had previously equated you. Both of you white Northerners investing in far off Tierra del Fuego strike me as the contemporary version of the conqueror who masks his intentions in the guise of environmentalism and social responsibility. Though Ivette had ill words to say about Tompkins, she made a different, more sympathetic case for you, stating that although you are wealthy, your working-class background makes you a more simple and honest man. I took her point, but as I learned through interviewing you via Bill, it’s not just being born wealthy that instills in men the view that they can master the world. Alongside education there is, of course, also the privilege you’ve known due to your whiteness. Certainly, you enjoy the benefits of belonging to the dominating race. Is this something you are aware of?

Peggy McIntosh writes, “I think whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege.” Later she adds, “I have begun in an untouched way to ask what it is like to have white privilege, and I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing each day, but ‘about’ which I was meant to remain oblivious.” (McIntosh 2004, 188) Often, when out of Chile, I am asked: “Where does your accent come from? To which I reply, “Chile,” knowing by now to expect the all too common follow up question, “But you

don't look Chilean. You must have some German blood? Or other European ancestry?" Perhaps I do, but to the best of my knowledge I am mestiza, born into a family that attempts to track its "pure" lineage back to European settlers; though some do litter our family history and make my skin white, there are too many "other" stories for me to buy into the myth of "purity". I am not making a case for my indigeneity here, because the stories of racial mixing are still very obscured in my clan. But I can't avoid queering questions of identity, nationalism, and subjectivity in light of this personal experience that repeats itself so often enough in my life to make me precociously aware of the issue of skin color privilege.

During my childhood in Manhattan, I coped with this recurring, unsettling question of why I didn't resemble my ethnicity (why my skin is too 'white' to be ethnically Chilean) by imagining I was a chameleon in disguise that changed her skin color to blend in. In my teens, I learned that "blending in," or being white, meant that I could go unnoticed. I began to profit from not standing out, from knowing I'd be let off the hook if caught doing something wrong because that is the privilege of looking the part of a normal, white girl, nondescript and harmless. I'm inclined to think it was at this stage that I started practicing the art of the go-between, because I consciously toyed with this "ability" to fit in, actively accessing spaces of white privilege, while also becoming aware of the inequitable confidence that this ability gave me to walk into non-white spaces. As my understanding of the privileges and discontents of my unstable identity matures, and I try to forge a more responsible analysis of how to conduct myself in the world, I'm struck by how the current white, patriarchal world order is no more than five hundred years old on the American continent. It was only one hundred and eighty-five years ago, on December 17th, 1832, that Darwin wrote this entry into his travel journal:

Having now finished with Patagonia and the Falkland Islands, I will describe our first arrival in Tierra del Fuego. A little after noon we doubled Cape St. Diego, and entered the famous straight of Le Maire... While entering we were saluted in a manner becoming the inhabitants of this savage land. A group of Fuegians partly concealed by the entangled forests were perched on a wild point overhanging the sea; and as we passed by, they sprang up and waving their tattered cloaks sent forth a loud and sonorous shout. The savages followed the ship, and just before dark we saw their fire, and again heard their wild cry...A single glance at the landscape was sufficient to show

me how wildly different it was from anything I had ever beheld. At night it blew a gale of wind, and heavy squalls from the mountains swept past us...

When we were on shore the party looked rather alarmed, but continued talking and making gestures with great rapidity. It was without exception the most curious and interesting spectacle I ever beheld: I could not have believed how wide was the difference between savage and civilized man; it is greater than between a wild and domesticated animal, inasmuch in man there is a greater power of improvement. The chief spokesman was old, and appeared to be the head of the family; the three others were powerful young men, about six feet high... Their only garment consists of a mantle of guanaco skin, with the wool outside; their skin is a dirty coppery red color. The old man had a fillet of white feathers tied round his head... His face was crossed by two broad traverse bars; one, painted bright red, reached from ear to ear and included the upper lip; the other, white like chalk, extended above and parallel to the first, so that even eyelids were thus colored. The other two men were ornamented by streaks of black powder, made of charcoal. The party altogether closely resembled the devils which come on stage in plays like *Der Freischutz*.

Their very attitudes were abject, and their expression of their countenances distrustful, surprised and startled... The language of these people, according to our notions, scarcely deserves to be called articulate. Captain Cook has compared it to a man clearing his throat, but certainly no European ever cleared his throat with so many hoarse, guttural, and clicking sounds.

They are excellent mimics: as often as we coughed or yawned, or made any odd motion they immediately imitated us. They could repeat with perfect correctness each word in any sentence we addressed them, and they remembered them for some time... All savages appear to possess, to an uncommon degree, this power of mimicry. (Darwin 1967, 194-195)

David, did you choose distance by not accepting my request for a studio visit? By declining to have your story entangled with those of other Fuegians in the web series, do you choose to distinguish yourself from the people whose lands beguile you? I am driven to

think this is so, and that you—perhaps fearful of being mimicked—decided to enact your individualistic freedom, your right to privacy, by actively ignoring the preconditions of your privileged existence. Since your refusal to be interviewed means you can't contest this assumption, I am left to analyze the statements you make in the YouTube trailer (Harris 2017) of your project, *The Peace Trail*, a walk in Tierra del Fuego accompanied by art installations:

When you move through this valley you will experience a landscape that has been untouched by humans as if the ice has just left. Guanacos are abundant here. Very, very healthy animals. Very unusual animals. Birds with long special beaks and big wing spans so that they can lift in this harsh environment. I've seen as many as twenty or thirty condors in one place in this valley. And they soar and you feel like they are going to lift you into heaven. And then as you move through the valley to the spiritual area which is the headwaters of the San Pablo, that is where the owners had their Hain celebrations and those celebrations are particular just to the people, the native people, of the area (minute: 2:59).

That ludicrous first statement, and the ones that follow, seem as condescending as those penned by Darwin. Perhaps they are worse, given the alternative perspectives now available. To whom are you speaking, David? You clarified in your response to my introductory letter that your plans are to create land art, not an eco-tourism trail. I can only assume that by land art you mean artwork in the tradition of Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* (1970) or Richard Long's *A Line Made by Walking* (1967). If so, then is *The Peace Trail* trailer addressed to someone like me, a curator and potential land art enthusiast? But your descriptions could only appeal to the most naïve of tourists, romantics whose desire for the "untouched" is an active choice to remain oblivious to the genocide and dispossession of Selk'nam peoples at the hands of sheep farmers and blind to the radical environmental effects that those very farms have had on the land.

I am still going to call you out on your statements, despite your unwillingness to enter a curatorial dialogue with me about *The Peace Trail*. They make me certain that your white privilege blinds you to the logic you endorse (you are the first human to walk the landscape of Tierra del Fuego), but, even more troubling, you bury the history of your own entrepreneurial logging of the island. Do you want us to forget that your logging company's demise happened thanks to a group of fervent environmental activists who took you to court in the name of the constitutional right of all peoples to live in an environment free of

pollutants?⁴⁸ Your video trailer, and by extension your land art piece, oppresses the complex ecopolitical struggles that makes Tierra del Fuego such a unique place—the very complexities that I believe should be highlighted, not entombed once again.

To sum up my critique of your video: firstly, you style yourself as the lone adventurer who discovers untouched country. Then, by crudely describing the guanaco, you claim a naturalist interest in Tierra del Fuego and, with missionary zeal, read the bird's flight as a gateway to heaven. Finally, you revive the very 'natives' you disregarded, reanimating them, as specters, as owners even (which they never claimed to be) of a reduced area of the island, in order to advance your romantic concept of the spiritual/heavenly qualities of Tierra del Fuego. By ending with the clumsy description of the Hain as a celebration, you personify the amateur ethnographer who wrongly interprets a sophisticated cultural ceremony as a party. In a mere few sentences you align yourself with all the colonial forefathers of the archipelago.

Truly, you are the archetype of the conqueror. From now on you are no longer David, but the Archetype. Tierra del Fuego has for too long been a stage for men like you “who conceive of themselves as the self-contained center of their needs and desires” in whose projects “there is no non-eliminable reference to the welfare or projects of others.” (Plumwood 1993, 152) In response, I declare my third curatorial principle: no representation of Tierra del Fuego is complete without acknowledging the sovereignty of Fuegians, the brutal genocide to which they were subjected, and its consequences which continue to be of great significance for those concerned with the ecological custodianship of Tierra del Fuego.

Soon after leaving the archipelago, Darwin wrote again about the Fuegians:

Young and old, men and children, never ceased repeating the word “yammer schooner,” which means “give me.” After pointing to almost every object, one after the other, even to the buttons on our coats, and saying their favourite word in as many intonations as possible, they would then use it in a neuter sense, and vacantly repeat “yammer schooner.” After yammerschoonering for any article very eagerly, they would by a simple artifice point to their young women or little children, as much as to say, “If you will not give it to me, surely you will to such as these.”

This constant “yammerschoonering”, translated by Darwin as a plea for goods and trinkets, became so odious to him that he later added:

On leaving some place we have said to each other (he is referring to Captain FitzRoy here), “Thank Heaven, we have at last fairly left these wretches!”, when one more faint halloo from an all-powerful voice, heard at a prodigious distance, would reach our ears, and clearly could we distinguish—“yammer schooner”. (Darwin 1967, 234)

What Darwin failed to understand was that this call was a plea not for goods but for recognition: as missionary Thomas Bridges later learned whilst living amongst Fuegians, the proper translation for ‘yammer schooner’ was not “give me”, but “be kind to me.” (Chapman 2010, 194).

Darwin, I mean David, I know I asked a lot from you in my initial address and that you found my proposal unstable, unbound from any legible cultural order that made any sense to you.⁴⁹ I suppose that my own “yammerschoonering” even irritated you, reminded you of your otherness, and finally also cast me as a panhandler. If you agreed to entangle yourself with the project of televising Tierra del Fuego’s human geography, you would be drawn into a network of devotion. A network that would require that you become a producer of the web series, alongside everyone else “authoring” it. Readers of the first letter pointed out that you probably took it as a petition for financial support, a cry for a button, which it was, but only in so far as you would come to care for, and value, the experience of mutuality and difference that I outlined as the basis for the making of the web series.

Kin, kinship and kindness share the same Old English genus, *cynd*, and I imagine the Fuegians who Darwin describes as pointing to everything, even buttons, as asking him to recognize the kinship between them, him, and all things. I imagine them asking Darwin not for charity, but to consider being kind, kind of like them, even.⁵⁰

<p><u>Oda a Ivette</u></p> <p>Manjar a cucharadas, café sabor vainilla, los placeres intachables de la experiencia, sin edad.</p> <p>Dientes a la vista, ceño fruncido, mirada sigilosa, cuéntate un cuento largarte una risotada, alguna de tus verdades, tanto testamento.</p> <p>Maestra, de un castellano refinado, y garabateado, sobre todo, en la cocina donde la olla de fideos alimenta al compañero al bueno y al malo, discriminando cuando se haga saber su deseo.</p> <p>Tú, que me acogiste y que hasta plata me entregaste, sabes que atesoro la Tierra a la que me vas llevando.</p> <p>Allí,</p>	<p><u>Ode to Ivette⁵¹</u></p> <p>Spoonfuls of sticky toffee, vanilla-flavored coffee, the unrivalled pleasures of settler experience, age-less.</p> <p>Gnashing teeth, worry lines, vigilant gaze, tell me a tale cackling, share your truths, testaments of contradiction.⁵²</p> <p>Teacher, of refined Spanish, swearing, above all, in the kitchen, where the bottomless pot feeds the comrade, the good and the bad, discriminating evidence of desire.</p> <p>You, who brought me up and even endowed me, know that I treasure the Land you lead me to.⁵³</p> <p>There,</p>
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<p>donde encontré mi origen, como bicho reintroducido, cual castor, me arrodillé.</p>	<p>where I found my origin, a re-introduced critter, beaver-like, I knelt.</p>
<p>De domesticidad compartida, esta <i>Doña Flor y sus dos maridos</i> une el sur y el norte, el negro y el blanco, el futuro y el pasado, así ningún valor es absoluto, todo es sentido a discutir, empinando una lata de cerveza.</p>	<p>Living communally, <i>Doña Flor and her two husbands</i> straddles north and south, white and brown, past and future, no-thing is absolute, sensing and up for debate, knocks back a beer can.⁵⁴</p>
<p>Madre de abogado, abogada de muchas madres, hija de su madre, madre de mis hijas.</p>	<p>Lawyer's mother, advocate of women, daughter of her mother, mother of my daughters.</p>
<p>Líder del Partido, deportista de lo extremo, empeñosa de la ley guardiana del bosque, armada de valor tu derrocas al que se cree, al que se pasa de la raya: ¿no vieron los alambres de púa?</p>	<p>Leader of the Party, extreme sportswoman, legally diligent custodian of the forest, armed with your courage you throw out the imperialists, the ones that grab for more: did they miss the barbed wire?⁵⁵</p>
<p>Los pingüinos, los alerces, los Selk'nam y sus bosques, todos ellos soberanos, dignos de la devoción</p>	<p>The penguins, the larches, the Selk'nam and their forests, all of them sovereign, worthy of the devotion</p>

<p>de esta Juana. Mujer de arquetipos, Afrodita, Artemisa, Atenea, Hestia, fiel amiga.</p> <p>Cuando te conocí no teníamos ninguna casa, hoy vamos sumando saberes y placeres, techos y techumbres, carpas y mochilas, calcetines y mapas.</p> <p>¡Que atractivo! Esa curiosidad, avidez de justicia, tenacidad inagotable, lucidez de lingüista, y esas pantorrillas de porteña. Jamás te vi cansar.</p> <p>Festejadora de lo distinto, del saber, de la astucia del pueblo, de la agencia del viento; Sabe que la sensibilidad de Don Cata, brilla por sobre los helicópteros de Don Douglas, cuya avaricia enmascarada, sangre derramó. Herida patriarcal supurante.</p> <p>Las élites llegan en barco, miran sin ver.</p>	<p>of this Jean. Archetypical female, Aphrodite, Artemis, Athena, Hestia, loyal friend.</p> <p>When we met neither had a home, now we sum a collection of wisdoms and pleasures, roofs and ceilings, tents and backpacks, socks and maps.</p> <p>What allure! The curiosity, the longing for justice, the inexhaustible tenacity, the linguistic lucidity, and those calves sculpted by the hills, none of which I ever see tire.</p> <p>Celebrant of difference, of know-how, of popular ingenuity, of the agency of the wind; she knows that the sensitivity of Don Cata shines brighter than the helicopters of Don Douglas, whose masked greed has shed blood. Festering patriarchal wound.⁵⁶</p> <p>The elites arrive by boat, looking but not seeing.</p>
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<p>Se les encoje el hombro y tú: nada que ver. Pero doblemente generosa, todo gato tiene en ti un hogar.</p> <p>Dirigente, la sigo. “Vaya usted,” me dice.</p> <p>Gracias por esperarme, por dejarme caminar tras suyo, por escuchar mis pesares y pensares, entretener mis dudas; infatigable consejera.</p> <p>La que empaca poco, sabe viajar. Poca queja, mucha acción. Buena memoria, lleva a la oportuna decisión.</p> <p>Caleta María, nos desvela: atentas al entusiasmo al ensueño a la pena por ocupación.</p> <p>Esa, tu lucha, mi lucha, una lucha desarmada, una lucha nómada, finita e infinita,</p>	<p>Their shoulders cringe and you: shrug. Twofold generosity, every cat finds a home in you.</p> <p>Chief, I'll follow. “You go,” she says.</p> <p>Thank you for waiting, for letting me walk beside you, for listening to my sorrows and conclusions, entertaining my doubts; tireless counselor.</p> <p>She who packs light, travels well. Few complaints, abundant action. Good memory, opportune decision making.</p> <p>Caleta María, keeps us vigilant: of zealous enthusiasm of giddy enchantment of grief by occupation.</p> <p>Your battle, my battle, the battle, an unarmed battle, a nomad battle, finite and infinite,</p>
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<p>de alta sensualidad.</p> <p>Ágil, flexible, mentalmente acuciosa, incisiva. Perspicaz, desprejuiciada. Al trote, vamos hilvanando.</p> <p>Cruzando continentes a pie, conversando con silencio, desde Alaska a la Patagonia, nada que temer, hasta llegar.</p> <p>Fiel Fiel Fidel</p> <p>Sigamos manejando, por el camino que se construye, que ya llegó, que todo lo cambió, que, a pesar de haber llegado, supiste adelantar, para que, al cortar la cinta, no se les fuera coronar el seno con el título de Reserva Marina.</p> <p>¿A dónde vamos ahora? ¿A dónde llegaremos? ¿Sabremos llegar? ¡LLEGAMOS!</p>	<p>highly sensual.⁵⁷</p> <p>Swift, flexible, thorough, incisive. Insightful, judicious. Jogging, we suture.</p> <p>Walking across continents, conversing with silence, from Alaska to Patagonia, fearing not, until we get there.⁵⁸</p> <p>Fiel Fiel Fidel</p> <p>Let's keep driving, down this road that's being built, that has arrived, and changed everything, and that despite its coming, you knew to get ahead, for when the ribbon was cut, they would need reminding to crown the fjord with the title Marine Reserve.</p> <p>Now where to? Where will we arrive? Will we know how to make it there? WE ARE HERE!</p>
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Ahora a trabajar.

[Now to work.59](#)

Collaboration Convention (1)

Camila Marambio, independent curator, director of Ensayos (RUT 10.969.301-4), address Albert Street 461, Brunswick West, VIC 3055, Australia and Carolina Saquel, artist (RUT 9.905.421-2), address 12 Rue des Boulets, 75011, Paris, France, both, from here on out “the authors”, make known and agree on the following:

FIRST: OBJECT (2)

Camila Marambio Bunster, director of Ensayos and Carolina Saquel Martínez, artist, are currently working on the realisation of a web series titled DISTANCIA. The making of the web series is framed within the research program Ensayos and specifically within the line of inquiry known as Ensayo #3: On Human Geography.

DISTANCIA is a web series designed to have multiple seasons, the first of which is comprised of seven episodes of variable durations. The number of episodes is not definitive and can be redefined at any time by mutual agreement between the authors.

Each episode is understood as an independent unit inscribed within the totality of the first season of the web series DISTANCIA. The web series will be aired once the totality of the episodes are finished, this is to say, once all the necessary stages of production and post-production are achieved to secure the quality of each unit and the series as a whole.

SECOND: ROLES/FUNCTIONS (3)

The authors agree to having different degrees of authorship established according to the specific competences of each and in regard to which this project originated. The authors stipulate the roles and functions to be credited as follows:

Direction: Camila Marambio and Carolina Saquel

Original idea: Camila Marambio

Original images and montage: Carolina Saquel

Editing: Camila Marambio - Carolina Saquel

General Production: Camila Marambio

Executive Production: Camila Marambio, Carolina Saquel, Ivette Martinez, Julio Gastón Contreras.

Photography: Matías Illanes

Camera: Matías Illanes - Carolina Saquel

Original sound and montage: Ariel Bustamante

Sound Recording: Ariel Bustamante - Sebastian Arce

Sound Mixing and Mastering: Pablo Infante

Title Design: Pablo González

Colour Correction: Darío Ordenes

THIRD: COPYRIGHT (4)

Intellectual property of the original idea for the web series belongs to Camila Marambio; intellectual property of the images belongs to Carolina Saquel.

Mentions of the web series DISTANCIA must always include the following line: “directed and edited by Camila Marambio and Carolina Saquel as part of the research for Ensayo #3: On Human Geography”.

In specific cases, of mutual accord, an episode may have a different definition of copyright. For example, if for any given episode a guest director or editor is invited, he/she will be designated as such.

FOURTH: DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES (5)

Camila Marambio, in her role as curator, creator of the original idea, co-director, general producer, executive co-producer, and editor is responsible for the conceptual and theoretical framing of the web series, for organizational logistics, for direction of scenarios and of the people involved in them, amongst others.

Carolina Saquel, in her role as artist, co-director, image-maker, editor, and executive co-producer is responsible for conceiving and realizing the images, filming, and directing others in filming.

For the correct realisation and development of the web series in general and of each episode in particular, the authors agree that they may hire specific people to execute certain tasks or stages in different phases of production and post-production. These

people must be professionals in their field and must demonstrate the adequate capacities to complete the tasks asked of them so as to bring the web series to its stage of completion. Amongst others, these professionals are audio-visual technicians, which include (not exhaustively) directors of photography, sound designers, recordists, sound engineers, colourists, and post-producers. These, like those that may be hired as consultants, producers or other, must be people who exhibit the capacity to execute their jobs fully and on this point the authors must be in mutual agreement.

FIFTH: PERMISSIONS (6)

Through this present agreement, Camila Marambio, Curatorial PhD candidate from Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, in her capacity as co-director and in exercising her intellectual property over the original idea of the web series, has authorization from Carolina Saquel to present audio-visual material obtained during different film periods, shot by Carolina Saquel and by others under her direction, during the whole of her PhD candidature. This includes the permission to show unedited material, as well as material in different stages of production, to her professors, peers and anyone else directly involved with the development of her PhD. Camila Marambio commits to communicating with Carolina Saquel about each of these screenings and to mentioning her co-authorship.

In turn, Carolina Saquel, in her capacity as co-director and in exercising her intellectual property over the images of the web series, has authorization from Camila Marambio to show in-process audio-visual material obtained for DISTANCIA during the different residency periods framed by Ensayo #3. Carolina Saquel commits to communicating with Camila Marambio about each of these screenings and to mentioning her co-authorship.

Through this agreement, Carolina Saquel, in her capacity as co-director and in exercise of the intellectual property of the images, may use the images realised by her and others under her direction for the purposes of her own artistic work, independently of the web series, taking care that under no circumstance this use threaten or defy the development of the web series. This precaution must be taken for up to at least two years after the airing of the web series.

The use, by both authors, of the audio-visual material recorded during the course of development of the first season of DISTANCIA should under no circumstance be contrary to the artistic integrity of the web series, nor to the distribution objectives of said series (to be defined by the authors), nor to the intellectual property of the other.

SIXTH: AGENDA/FUNDING (7)

The authors commit to making a provisional production calendar (attached to this convention). This provisional calendar contemplates the estimated timing of all the remaining stages of production, post-production and circulation of the first season DISTANCIA, ending with the broadcasting of the web series on a website specifically designed for that purpose, and signalling the end of the production of the first season. Under no circumstance may the total period of production of the first season exceed a two-year period (upon the signature of this convention).

Likewise, the authors commit to investing themselves to the task of obtaining funding to remunerate, in part or in full, the work, past and future, realised by themselves and by the collaborators.

All decisions regarding the ensuing production, post-production and circulation of the web series and the funding of these activities must be taken by mutual agreement between the authors, with the exception of this function being delegated to a third party if the case were that a General Producer were hired to better achieve the stages of post-production and circulation.

Funding applications can be signed by Camila Marambio as co-director or by Carolina Saquel as co-director. In either case, the signing party must share the application via email with the other and receive a written response of approval.

This convention will not affect funding already obtained either individually or conjointly, nor does it include the obligations or rights that these funds may carry.

SEVENTH: CONTRIBUTIONS/REMUNERATION (8)

The realisation of the first season of the web series has already received funding from third parties and a considerable investment on the part of the authors. These contributions have been made in cash, in equipment and in services. All of those who have contributed thus far will be appropriately credited as either executive co-producers or as funding entities.

EIGHTH: CIRCULATION (9)

The broadcast rights of the first season of DISTANCIA belong to Camila Marambio and Carolina Saquel.

All income, prize money, screening fees, and other forms of recognition derived from the first season will be equally divided amongst the authors. In the case of obtaining significant funding, the authors will mutually agree to distribute a portion of said financing to retroactively remunerate anyone who has voluntarily worked for the web series in the stages of post-production and circulation and who did not receive payment.

NINTH: TERMINATION (10)

The present convention expires two years after the launch of the web series (this is to be considered as the moment it is made public on its specifically designed website).

The authors can mutually agree at any time to end their relationship, in which case they commit to assuring the other may continue with the execution of the first season of the web series if it has not yet been done. If both authors decide they would like to continue to work together on a second season of DISTANCIA a new convention must be drawn up. In case both or either do not want to continue, Camila Marambio, as the author of the original idea of the web series, can invite another artist to co-direct this endeavour.

TENTH: COPIES/STORAGE (11)

Each of the episodes of the first season as well as the two trailers, will be mastered. This file "Master" is the highest quality of image and sound is understood as the original of each episode and trailers.

In addition to this Master, other files will be made in different formats which will be intended for the dissemination of the series on the web but also in other circuits defined by the authors.

A copy of the Master and of the online versions of the 7 Episodes and the two trailers will be kept by each of the authors. A third backup will be left with the sound designer Ariel Bustamante. These files are non-transferable to third parties.

IN CASE OF LITIGATION: (12)

If conflict were to arise between the authors, they agree to have Julio Antonio Contreras Martínez as mediator and agree that Punta Arenas, Chile is where litigation would occur.

June 2018 - April 2019

Addendum to the Convention

(1) Collaboration Convention

I, Camila Marambio Bunster, have decided to listen to Duran Duran while I type up the Addendum to the Convention. Duran Duran is Carolina Saquel Martínez's favourite band and I am not sure I've ever heard their music before—though as “Is There Something I Should Know”, the first song on their *Greatest* album, blasts through the headphones into my ears I instantly recall that it was in the mid 1990s, at the *fiestas de quince* (sweet sixteen parties) I attended upon my return to Chile, that I first listened to British New Wave bands. Growing up in New York City in the 1980s and early 1990s I found myself under the influence of Hip Hop and probably this is why it was so difficult for me know how to dance to synth-pop at those conservative, semi-formal, heteronormative events that cemented, in me, a caricature of the compliant behaviour of post-dictatorship Chilean sociability. I was used to the sweatier, sexier, bumping and grinding of Salt-N-Pepa, Snoop Dogg, 2Pac, TLC, and The Notorious B.I.G. I suppose our different taste in music, our polar opposite upbringing and our age difference is what makes mine and Carolina's collaboration fruitful, unexpected and sometimes challenging.

Carolina and I first met over eight years ago, in Paris in 2011. I emailed her to request a studio visit, after coming across her hypnotic video piece *Pentimenti* (16mm colour film transferred to video, 8min 33sec, 2004) at the Kadist Art Foundation, where I was a resident curator. I'd heard of Carolina but, as with my ignorance of Duran Duran, I was a Chilean expat and ten years younger and my knowledge of Chilean art and pop culture was incomplete, so it wasn't until her work appeared in Kadist's collection that I focused on it. *Pentimenti* captures the entrances and exits of a grey-black horse from a horse pit in the dark. The “objective” camera does not move but through repetitive editing we are made aware of the borders that limit our vision and give us only a slice of the whole process. The phantasmagoric lyrics (or voice-over) are still rattling in my head, nearly a decade later:

Donde estás? Donde te ubicas?

Carolina invited me to her apartment, 12 Rue de Boulets, 11^{ème} arrondissement, where she lived with her partner at the time. We sat on cushions strewn on the parquet floor of the living room and drank green Jasmin tea that she poured from a cast iron tea pot into delicate ceramic cups. Taken by her wordiness, I remember finding myself trying to match her expressiveness as she cited psychoanalysis, art history and film theory with ease; without pretension, she aimed at complex conceptual constructions and I was happy to follow. She made a strong first impression.

Now it's 2018. I begin writing this addendum from the library at Performing Arts Forum (PAF), looking out over the open window at the quaint French country town of St. Erme, roughly two hours northeast of 12 Rue de Boulets, Paris. I've come here to do just this: add information to the Collaboration Convention. This is a self-assigned task that underscores the epistolary nature of the PhD I am writing to accompany the practice of visualising and realising DISTANCIA with Carolina. I will email this Addendum to Carolina as a mode of meta-communication. While I wait for us to resume editing the first season of DISTANCIA, I try to make sense of our particular form of communication, or as Gregory Bateson puts it, "to communicate about communication" (Bateson 1951/1968). This Annex does not change the status of what is declared in the convention even if it raises incongruencies or appears to be in contradiction with it. My purpose is not to trouble the agreement per se but to coat it with a layer of anecdotal knowledge that I believe reflects the richness of our contract: a richness that includes humour, irony, pleasure and pain—a shared life experience that the legalese is unable to represent.

Carolina is an ex-lawyer who studied Fine Art only after five years of law school (1988-1993), six months of family law and finally taking her legal oath at the Supreme Court of Chile in December of 1994. Naturally, she proposed and drafted the first version of the convention, and together we amended it, massaging it into the document above, which we both signed. Drafting the convention was less easy than finding a way to co-write DISTANCIA. Carolina and I did not pre-script DISTANCIA but instead fully came to co-author the narrative during the editing process, which flowed surprisingly well. The conversations around the right wording for the convention were by contrast much tenser.

As a means to speculate on the unforeseeable events that could arise during the production and circulation of DISTANCIA, the convention was a helpful aid in producing discussions on our personal desires and weaknesses; writing the convention together was thus an exercise in formalising our projections of how we will manage the future of the web series. But spelling out the type of behaviour that we find acceptable in the case of eventual trouble or success was not where we hit our major road blocks. It was, rather,

when we looked back at what we'd done to discuss how this would be portrayed in the credits that we stumbled upon trauma and ambition. So as a form of assembling our past experience and specifying our talents the convention is, in my eyes, a somewhat clumsy instrument—though functional.

Over the years, my and Carolina's lengthy conversations have always been characterized by a form of discussion that I would call compassionate. Minding each other's differences, she and I do "research in conversation" and mutual well-being is our subject matter. Interviewing each other endlessly we have become friends, we have grown to trust one another, and we have crossed boundaries. We have moved beyond the artist-curator relationship to one of co-directors. We share authority. And, as long as we continue to improvise and risk being collaborators, we will continue to face new struggles.

Now writing from Australia, I am conscious of a difficult Skype conversation scheduled for tomorrow morning, or should I say my morning, for Carolina is in the northern hemisphere and I am in the southern. This distance is our greatest enemy. I sometimes miss our Skype appointments and this produces frustration and insecurity for her. She lashes out, doubts my commitment. I am hurt by this accusation, which I feel is misplaced. The intensity of our exchanges may produce the semi-conscious, quasi-rebellious acts that indeed endanger our dearly beloved and ethically minded communication, yet I remain hopeful about our "purifying conversations" (Bochner and Osvath 2018); a form of exchange that we are not masters of, but that we continually engage in as a mode of overcoming adversity and promoting healing.

(2) Object

Wikipedia tells me that a web series is "a series of scripted or non-scripted videos, generally in episodic form, released on the Internet and part of the web television medium, which first emerged in the late 1990s and became more prominent in the early 2000s." (Wikipedia contributors 2019) And that "in general, web series can be watched on a range of platforms, including desktop, laptop, tablets and smartphones; they can also be watched on television." As I read this definition, I think back to the moment Carolina and I embraced the idea that we were making a web series and coined the title and tagline: DISTANCIA, a more-than-human web series. I had proposed we consider the format—given the difficulties we were having pitching an unscripted TV series to Chilean broadcasters. Carolina then suggested we apply to a new fund dedicated to the production of web series and during that process we profiled our growing sentiment that DISTANCIA would resist the truth-speak that pervades historic representations of Karukinka Tierra del

Fuego. Since their inception web series were considered to enable “new directions for narrative flow” (Alexander and Levine 2008, 1). Storytelling patterns emerging from digital networks and social media were being described as “open-ended, branching, hyperlinked, cross-media, participatory, exploratory and unpredictable” (ibid), and, happily, these attributes both struck a chord with my own ambition to curate and distribute an object that was polyphonic, multi-perspectival and inconclusive, and could easily be used to describe Carolina’s artistic work in its own right.

In his 2008 essay “When ANT meets SPIDER: Social theory for arthropods” the British anthropologist Tim Ingold playfully narrates a conversation between an ANT (“the network builder”) and a SPIDER (“the web builder”). Using the fable to pit Bruno Latour’s **Actor Network Theory** against his own theory of **Skilled Practice Involves Developmentally Embodied Responsiveness**, Ingold wittingly chooses insects to personify the debate between two very different approaches to post-human social theory. The SPIDER says to the ANT:

the web is not an entity. That is to say it is not a closed-in, self-contained object that is set over against other objects with which it may then be juxtaposed or conjoined. It is rather a bundle or tissue of strands, tightly drawn together here but trailing loose ends there, which tangle with other strands from other bundles... (212)

For me, each episode of DISTANCIA is like one of Ingold’s bundles, trailing loose ends that lead to other bundles, outside the web series. Rather than an object in and of itself, I understand DISTANCIA as a form of measurement of how intimate or far apart objects are.

(3) Roles/Functions

Sharing the title of Director with Carolina emerged half-way through the weaving of the first season of DISTANCIA. I was happy to call myself assistant director, but Carolina asked me to assume this designation so I would be accountable for the results.

As a trained lawyer, Carolina is prone to protracted discussions on designations. I am less so, but because it matters to her, I play along. Constructed through play, our ways of producing DISTANCIA are different from those of the television industry that have no play process. Over the years, Carolina and I have organically developed a liberatory conversational practice that is focused not on *disclosing* what we are to each other, but on *refusing* what we are. We have aimed to self-reflexively transform ourselves during the

process of analysing, critiquing and constructing a non-western depiction of Karukinka Tierra del Fuego. The Chicana feminist theorist, Chela Sandoval, writes that “the generation of new kinds of citizen-subjects can happen only when we become capable of refusing the kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries” (Sandoval 2000, 160). She is referring to Michel Foucault’s prediction, as expressed in *The Subject of Power* (1983), that “the self-deconstitution of (Western) Man” necessitates psychic transformations that dissolve one’s sense of “individuality” (Foucault 1983, 216). Dissolving one’s individuality can be a very painful thing, mostly because individuality is a sum of traumatic traits that one does not want to deal with. This became evident when Carolina and I began to work on the credits. This task embroiled us in tearing apart our collaborative creative practice to give names and values to our individual “work”. Then, and only then, did we need to be miserably recognised in our individuality. Carolina cried. I wonder now: Why did we need to individualise for the credits? What was the imperative there? We think ourselves radically anti-normative on so many other fronts, but did not work around this one. Like the anxious poets, described by literary critic Harold Bloom in his book “The Anxiety of Influence” (1973), who daemonize the uniqueness of the efforts of their precursors in a subconscious move to establish their own originality (Bloom 1973, 15) we too cracked under the desire of legacy and the pressure of legitimation.

Our conversations have long been characterized by a recognition of how our perceptual apparatuses and survival tactics are tainted by outmoded conceptions of power and resistance. We laid bare our eating dis/orders and resisted the shame of acknowledging that we had both internalised someone else’s idea of what we should be as women, and how we had been made subject to forms of control and dependence that we repudiated. To break with this Carolina and I have had to consciously oppose “our” bad habits, constantly tending to the ways we compensate when under stress by minding that we each get enough time to care for our bodies in a healthy way, while filming, editing, grant writing, etc. so as not to push ourselves into states that trigger anxieties and bulimic coping mechanisms. This determines our work schedule and sets up a rhythm that balances the intensity of output to input. Transparency and fluidity are key components of this form of interaction that I’ll call *hermandad*, which translates from Spanish to English as sorority but this English word does not convey the nuanced meaning of *hermandad* as an affective solidarity existing between peoples who are not family members.

The credits miss this affective femme dimension completely. My experience of making of DISTANCIA is positive and multiple, nomadic and mobile, less concerned with who did this or that than with how we can do things differently, care-fully, experientially,

through another order. I like to think of DISTANCIA as a constant generator of opportunities to distance ourselves from what we refuse to be as individuals and to become more intimate with the rights of collective-individualities. I hope that in future contracts Carolina and I will try and redefine our roles and functions to include mother, friend, babysitter, mentor, shoulder to lean on, pebble in each other's shoe, match-maker, teacher, student, ally, cook, etc. We didn't include these in our current credits. Though the credits reflect that DISTANCIA was a collective art-making process there appears to be a discrepancy with the process. By ending in a standardized credit roll DISTANCIA became distinct from our creative effort to prioritize non-authorial structures and challenge patriarchal norms. In hindsight I think there is disconnect between artistic process and artistic product and as we move into the second season of DISTANCIA I vow to tune into this issue more closely.

Taking inspiration from how the Civic Laboratory for Environmental Action Research (CLEAR), a feminist marine science laboratory in Canada, decided not to circumvent the problem of author order but to "stay with the trouble" and contend with the compromised and dominant structure within science (Liboiron et. al 2017, 3), I feel confident that we too can develop "an approach to author order that emphasizes process and equity rather system and equality." (3)

(4) Copyright

In the context of Ensayos and DISTANCIA, the notion of intellectual property feels off-kilter. As a category of property, intellectual property refers to the intangible creations of the human intellect (Wikipedia contributors 2019). Property as a colonial anthropocentric mentality and instrument jumps out at me now and I regret falling into the "convention" of using this term. Why not intellectual custodian or another word that does not suggest ownership as a kind of unquestionable stability?

Who is the author of collective knowledge?

By strapping Go-pro cameras to different bodies (human and non-human) Carolina generated some of the hybrid imagery that makes DISTANCIA prismatic and gives way to an experience of how powerful collectivities interact or intra-act, to use Karen Barad's terminology from the field of quantum physics (Barad 2007). Carolina has long experimented with the camera as an eye/I giving machines, animals and body parts vision. Naturally, she strapped cameras to the vehicles that drove us in to Karukinka Tierra del Fuego and towards Caleta María that first time that she was experiencing the magnetism of Karukinka. I watched her attach those cameras, making sure they wouldn't blow away in

the wind. I let her attach a camera to my hip, filming an arduous hike up a mountain; set to auto-focus the footage from these captures of Karukinka Tierra del Fuego is dizzying and closely couples bodily movement to an intellectual perception of unstable terrain. Arising from a shared space of bodily reality the audio-visual techniques of DISTANCIA reflect the partial identities, contradictory standpoints and fragmented narratives that have constituted being (in each other's company) in Karunkina Tierra del Fuego.

The phenomenological story of an archipelago and its peopled history, however, is a complex thing to represent, let alone grasp. Rehearsing a new politics of articulation was already underway when Carolina came on board *Ensayo #3* in 2014 in Paris. The thread that we were chasing back then was a sinister one, a connection between Paris and Tierra del Fuego via the dramatic exhibition of nine Selk'nam people who had been abducted from the archipelago in 1888 by the Belgian businessman Maurice Maître with the purpose of exhibiting them at the World's Fair in Paris in 1889 (Báez and Mason 2006, 48). The pictures of this abduction circulated in the first volume of the anthropologist Martin Gusinde's extensive study of Fuegian peoples and culture, *Die Feuerland-Indianer. 1. Die Selk'nam* first published in 1932. I was so conflicted by this episode in the history of Karukinka Tierra del Fuego and its overlap with the history of exhibition making that as part of *Beyond the End* (2014), an exhibition I curated at the Kadist Art Foundation, I staged a courtroom drama at the Natural History Museum of Paris. Conflating nascent concerns with how violent colonial history repeats itself, the improvised theatrical case study titled "Dans la Peau du Castor" was centred around *Ensayo #2: On the Question of Invasive Species (The Case of the Beaver)*, but it polemicized the similarities between colonial extermination practices and neo-liberal environmental conservation tactics. Using techniques from Brazilian theatre director Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed*—a theatrical process by which a "facilitator" involves "spect-actors" in "observing and creating dramatic meaning and action in any performance" (Boal 2008)—the 'evidence' for the case of the beaver was constituted by the trap camera footage used by conservation biologists to incriminate the introduced beavers (going about their business of making dams and diverting waterways) for environmental degradation and contrasted with video footage from the artist Christy Gast's documentation of the imagined livelihood of beavers on the archipelago (Gast, *Castorera: A Love Story*, 2014, video, <https://vimeo.com/132004573>).

Mixing Boal's "legislative theatre" (aimed at giving spect-actors the opportunity to take the stage to voice their opinions about legislative processes) with his "rituals and masks" exercise (a technique aimed at revealing the ideological superstructures of a society using masks) the tension between fact and fiction was laid out in the courtroom

and the audience had to decide whether beavers were culpable or if it was the scientific desire of extermination that posed a greater threat to humanity and the well-being of the archipelago.

Weaving herself into the tendrilous multi-year conversations between those of us who had been thinking about the human geography of Karukinka Tierra del Fuego, Carolina joined Ensayos in New York in 2015. I asked her to accompany me to meet Carlos Eden-Maidel, a Kawéskar man (the Kawéskar people navigated the channels around Karukinka until they were no longer allowed to by the Chilean State) who has lived in New York since the late 1970s. While we awaited him outside the New York Public Library in midtown Manhattan Carolina and I chatted about how we would interview him. We had no set questions for Carlos; I was simply curious to hear his story and of his political activism against the dictatorship. Like Ivette and Julio Gastón, Carlos had been a revolutionary leftist and candidly shared his experiences, including his early memories on the archipelago. He told us of the few times he has returned to his ancestral lands and described the contemporary feuds within his community, aggravated by state intervention. I think that because he was speaking to us, he gossiped about two artists who had attempted to tell his story in a documentary form and how that project went sour. He eventually sued them to stop them from using the footage that they had shot. Later that week, Carlos surprised us by affectionately attending the opening of *It's Getting Hot Down Here*, an exhibition of Ensayos I curated at the Bruce High Quality Foundation. I wonder if we'll circle back to him in a future season of DISTANCIA or if he, like so many others who have formed Carolina and I, will remain a source of knowledge able to be credited only in an addendum.

Meetings and passing conversations are always part of the process of forming, and unforming, thoughts. Resonating with the idea of the palimpsest, the inclusion of this anecdote about meeting Carlos Eden-Maidel points to how things are effaced from authoritative representation, but how they remain as impressions, facts, layers of history.

(5) Duties/Responsibilities

Chupi Producciones is the name of the make-believe production company that Carolina, Ariel Bustamante and I created during our joint editing sessions. *Chupi* is a term of endearment that means absolutely nothing: it is one of those sweet words born out of trying to express affection. The motto for *Chupi Producciones* is “pegado con moco” or in English, “glued with snot”. The reference to snot humorously evidences our visceral engagement with each other's own secrets and sliminess but also suggests the

MacGyver-like problem solving of our production company, emerging from the precarity of our working conditions.

Carolina had not heard of Ariel when I suggested him as sound designer for our ‘official film shoot’ aimed at concentrating our usual research activities (interviewing, walking, deep listening, mapping exercises and presentations of all sorts) around the question of filmic representation. The officialness of the shoot meant that sound recording could no longer be something casual, especially not if we were serious about the wind being treated as a principal actor shaping the land and the mentality of those on it. Ariel, a sound artist I had worked with on numerous occasions and whose excellence and sensibility I am still awed by, insisted that he needed an assistant. Once the sound team grew to include two members, it was evident to Carolina that she needed a second camera, or better yet, a director of photography. After asking friends in the film industry to suggest photo directors for DISTANCIA, I interviewed Matías Illanes and fell in love. He was passionate about his trade, dedicated to exploring its boundaries and had been dreaming of Tierra del Fuego since he was a boy. This dream was reason enough for him to agree to forgo his usual fee. Which put him in the same boat as Ariel, Sebastian (on sound), and Carolina. For the past three years I have received income from an international PhD scholarship, and even if I’ve used some of it to leverage most of our production costs, it has afforded me a stipend. I am not proud of not being able to secure artists fees (as curator I’d like to create sustainable working conditions for all of us), but forgoing fees (or the willingness to do so) does speak to the power of our affinity, the *eros* of our attachment to the uncertain project of DISTANCIA.

It is difficult to unpack the experience of “falling in love”, but as Chela Sandoval points out in her book *Methodology of the Oppressed* it was Roland Barthes who evoked falling in love as an alternative mode of being, one directly linked to “turning from narrative’s comforts and limits,” for Barthes claimed “narrative is a death...that transforms life into destiny, a memory into a useful act, a duration into an oriented and meaningful time” (Sandoval, 142). In our endless conversations about our shared taste for defying objectivity and linear narrativity Carolina and I usually refer back to the concept of *lo inútil* (the useless)—reminiscent of Bahía Inútil, the Fuegian bay that originally triggered me to write about the useless for the first issue of Ensayos periodical, *Más Allá del Fin*, published in 2014 by the Kadist art foundation—which we equate to what lies outside the frame, beyond the image. Enamoured by the potential of drifting away from the objective, our proposition to Matías, Ariel, and Sebastian, was that rather than follow a script we would

follow consensually established guidelines. I lyrically articulated these as a manifesto, at Ariel's request, after we all enunciated them:

Un Cuasi Manifiesto del Visitante

Silenciarse para escuchar lo silenciado.

Aprender a sentir lo oculto.

Preguntarse por nuestro estar.

Reconocer lo Selk'nam, Kawéskar, Yámana, Haush.

Atender a la erosión, a las cicatrices que dejó y que va dejando la colonización.

¿Sabiendo que dejamos huellas, qué forma tienen? qué color? qué tono? qué olor?

Practicar doblamientos, desdoblamientos, torceduras, horizontales en verticales y verticales acostadas.

Entonar odas al viento.

Habitar el espacio entre lo consciente y lo inconsciente.

Enredarse los unos en los otros, con ternura y curiosidad, con coraje, dispuestos a perdernos.

Soñar.

Mirar las estrellas.

Ensoñar otro devenir. Ensoñar para sanar. Ensoñar para actuar en la geografía externa e interna.

Practicar el asecho.

A Quasi Manifesto for Visiting

Become silent to be able to listen to that which has been silenced.

Learn to feel the occult.

Ask yourself what it is 'to be'.

Recognise the Selk'nam, Kawéskar, Yámana, and Haush sovereignty.

Attend to the erosion, the old and new scars caused by colonization.

Knowing that we leave traces, what form do they have? What color? What smell?

Practice bends, out-of-body sensing, twists and toques, horizontal verticals and lying verticality.

Sing odes to the wind.

Inhabit the space between the conscious and the unconscious.

Entangle yourself in the others, with tenderness, curiosity, courage, willing to lose.

Dream.

Look at the stars.

Envision another future. Hallucinate healing. Fantasize to act on the internal and external geography.

Practice ambush.

The sincere state of uncertainty that the *Quasi Manifesto for Visiting* demands is a roadmap that is not for everyone. Opening up to being carried away by any other agenda than one's own is to throw caution to the wind. Carolina and mine's decision to not enforce a story line but to commit to a practice of 'visiting' sets up a rhythm, a rhythm that unsettles the idea of ever arriving and commits to constant questioning of one's positionality. Drifting/visiting is a fundamental research methodology of *Ensayos*, which is why *Ensayos* is a nomadic research program. Drifting-beings don't settle; they live in precarious symmetry.

Precarious Symmetry: Ariel Bustamante and Carolina Saquel

An exhibition curated by Camila Marambio as part of the making of the web series *DISTANCIA*, and held at the MADA Gallery, Monash University, April 2018.

Precarious Symmetry is a face-off.

Precarious symmetry is what might emerge from a game of call and response between artist Ariel Bustamante's *Untitled* sound composition (10 minutes, 6 channels, 6 active speakers, 2017- 2018) and Carolina Saquel's *Untitled (Landscape)* video work (11:16 minutes, colour, silent, 2014-2017).

Precarious Symmetry is a set-up.

Precarious Symmetry is what could momentarily occur if, in the tradition of the *Baile Chino*, the curator Camila Marambio's prediction about the encounter of Ariel and Carolina's distinct works was to come true.

The *Baile Chino* is a spiritual technology that knots together the sound of the universe and the image of reality. In the *Baile Chino*, a pre-Columbian ritual dance still practiced today along the Chilean Andes Mountains, the dancers respond to each other's strident flutes, exciting one another into a dialogue that lasts for hours, inducing a trance-like state aimed at sustaining

the dissonant emissions. Dissonance is sought-after, because it is through that from it a rajadura (rip) occurs. This rip, or tear, is a cut, an opening, towards other dimensions.

Ariel, Carolina, and Camila are dancers attempting to tear each-other-together-apart, to slip through the slit, into a fantastical new dimension they call DISTANCIA.

For more on DISTANCIA and on the artistic processes of the works on exhibit visit www.ensayostierradelfuego.net.

(As an offering to Precarious Symmetry, Michael Taussig wrote the poem “Borderlands of Being”. As a further offering to the visiting audience, the poem was printed and made available for the taking during the exhibition period).

Borderlands of Being

On the edge of nothing and everything where dust rises and settles and rises some more, where the earth dissolves in formless forms and the northern desert of ghost towns and copper mines breathes its lullabies as night falls, here we settle, here we dissolve. The minutiae of particulate matter, aural and optical, evades our long-inherited schemes for understanding. If it wasn't for the littleness, if it wasn't for the quiet and the slowness of a rhythm as old as the hills, gentle, gentle, more, more, again, again, learn to listen, once again, learn to see, once again.

What am I, after all?

mick taussig

10.iv.2018

(6) Permissions

In her book *Cinema Interval*, the decolonial scholar, Trinh T. Minh-ha, writes that she “thinks and theorizes through making films” (Minh-ha 1999, 25). It's not that film is a way to think and theorize, but that it is possible to think and theorize *differently* than the

white Western cannon, as she does. Let me explain this difference through a brief analysis of her first film *Reassemblage* (1982). In it I can hear how the sound of the film seems not to obey the image; instead it offers a counter logic, in that nothing is explained through the sound. The repetition of texts, the intervals of singing and silence, and the use of offbeat ambient recordings make it impossible for the audience to conceive of the film as objectively neutral. But her avoidance of tying everything together evenly through sound and her allowance of sonic slippages are, for me, not signs of her formal first world education. What I hear is Minh-ha asking me to question what I see and reflect on how the medium of film and video has predominately entertained western ideals and not others. I believe, Minh-ha was exercising an oppositional consciousness (Sandoval 2000), enacting her distance from first world cultures despite her absolute immersion in them (Minh-ha arrived in the USA at the age 18 from Vietnam and lives in California today). Like *Reassemblage*, *DISTANCIA* wants to stir up ethical and aesthetic sentiments that lead to interrogating the objectivity of representation and wondering about the possibilities of inclusive participation. Keeping in mind that the initial intention of *DISTANCIA* was to steer clear of the oppressive representational regimes inflicted on Karukinka Tierra del Fuego by explorers, anthropologists, scientists and artists from the first world, *DISTANCIA*'s drift away from the norm is not an original act, it is rather an acting in accordance with protocols and prohibitions which have not been respected in the past. The most important of which to recognize is Selk'nam sovereignty.

Questioning the many facets of living and dying in Karukinka Tierra del Fuego *DISTANCIA* positions itself as a distinctly other form of depiction that sits somewhere between truth and reality; not far from the hybrid genre of ethno-fiction, but maybe closer to sensory ethnography (Nakamura 2013) because *DISTANCIA* wants to be a more-than-human web series. Genres aside, what this means is that we are feeling our way through the oppressed indigenous protocols of Karukinka. We listen, we learn. We do this with our senses, and whatever fragmented meaning emerges from the tools that we have used we weigh up, against the backdrop each other's ethical compass. Sometimes we decide to silence ourselves, sometimes we silence the official narratives. Always we grapple with the incommensurability of understanding a language that one does not natively speak.

(7) Agenda/Funding

DISTANCIA is an assembly of wills. A story about feeling.

The whole (six episodes, which later became seven) inaugural season of *DISTANCIA* was first mind-mapped as an image by Carolina and me. Mind-mapping was

Carolina's idea, and I smile when I remember how giddy she was about using the new software she had acquired so that we could do it. Once we had pinned down the key concepts, characters and events as they appeared to us while reviewing the footage, we decided that we would progress from episode 1 to 6 in a cyclical manner. Our thinking was to move somewhat chronologically through the material because the only structural element that was in place was the inevitable one and only road that introduces itself and us into Karukinka Tierra del Fuego. It didn't take long, however, before we began to deviate from the linearity of the road, to swirl into pockets of meaning and explore obscure sentiments. We got lost in the wind, and began to make jump cuts, to transpose our experience of time. Is this fiction?

As each sequence of images gave way to slippages, Carolina's ease with the software Adobe Premiere became evident. Cutting seconds off one sequence, adding to another, quickly, Carolina and I found our footing. It was early April 2018 and we sat in an editing suite on the fifth floor of building B at Monash University, Caulfield Campus in Melbourne. This sound proof room, with all the needed editing hardware and software, had been facilitated for us by Dr. Tessa Dwyer, lecturer in Film and Screen Studies in the School of Media, Film and Journalism. Ariel, who was also in Melbourne, and in the building, had been asked by me, at Carolina's request, to give her and I a couple of days to gather our thoughts before stepping into the editing process. This created the briefest of tensions for it seemed to uphold the idea that sound came later, after the image. Which I suppose in Carolina's mind it did because that is the usual order of post-production—Ariel let it pass (at first)—but what lay underneath this medium-specific tension was of another order. Carolina and I had been harnessing the idea of making a television web series together for a little over three years whereas Ariel was a newer member to the project, but seniority was not at the heart of what Carolina was requesting. Rather it was her misgivings about how his early intromission into the yet unformed editing dynamic was a product of my rash enthusiasm. I had arranged to have Ariel with us in Melbourne (an act that could also cynically be read as a compensatory gesture through which by providing him the opportunity to come to Australia I paid him back for his volunteering to be the sound designer of *DISTANCIA*) without fully understanding the order of the editing process. I had made the curatorial choice to stretch the funds I had received from Monash Art Design and Architecture (MADA) to accommodate two artists rather than one.

After the inauguration of *Precarious Symmetry*, I had I arranged for us to continue working outside Melbourne. Our new digs were a makeshift editing suite in the dining room of the Mac McCaughey family's summer cottage on Waratah Bay. With monitors that we

had borrowed from Monash, Carolina and I sat in front of large vertical windows that framed an expansive promontory. Often, we had to block out the light and forget that just outside there was a landscape as magnificent as the one that we were digitally tinkering with. Ariel was in a back room, taking acoustic leaps in and out of the material he had recorded while in Karukinka Tierra del Fuego, composing and heightening the character of the wind. When it was just starting to appear like the three of us had become confident in our methods of co-editing, a heated discussion arose from the wound left by the misaligning of sound and image work. Ariel argued that he would have preferred to take part in the theoretical discussions leading up to Carolina and mine's decisions about how to edit the video footage (mindmapping). He made the point that those discussions were the locus of creativity and that coating each episode with a sound track, after Carolina and I had composed them, was a "technical service" that he could do, but that he found less inspiring. Carolina went silent. I assumed the clumsiness of the process, by which we had fallen into that normative procedure, and promised to go about it differently for the next season. I also suggested that we repair the damage done, if possible, by finding ways to add independent, differently-approached capsules into one or more episodes of the first season. Soon after the passing disaccord, we all found tremendous pleasure in editing and often laughed out loud at how the recorded images and sounds revealed their own intent to us.

Anxiety about authorship and money is genuine in any collaboration. What differences DISTANCIA from other projects is that the artist-curator relationship is not mediated by an institution but by a sentiment towards an archipelago. This is (perhaps) a corollary of my curatorial practice because even though I am funded by an Institution (MADA) my devotion lies with Karukinka Tierra del Fuego, and this takes away the neutralising effects of Institutional work and allows it to flow between artists and archipelago. I think about this a lot, how to be in but not of the University.

(8) Contributions/Remuneration

Carolina and I know that our ability to experience Karukinka Tierra del Fuego is a luxury and as she and I begin to talk about the second, third and fourth season we are hard pressed to answer the question: How do we measure our contribution? Our gain? Our impact? Can we truly share a struggle if we are so distantly positioned? Does DISTANCIA make a difference?

In the zones of translation, different forms of knowledge are combined. The truth is beyond the human, search for the truth is the human condition. Alternatives are everywhere. New epistemologies = alternative thinking of alternatives. All knowledges are incomplete in different ways. Justice among knowledges = ecologies of knowledges.” (Sousa Santos 2018).

This grouping of phrases (taken from my notes of Boaventura Sousa Santos’s keynote lecture at Contemporary Ethnography Across the Disciplines—where Carolina and I presented the first season of DISTANCIA) animates my reply.

Carolina and I attempted in the first season of DISTANCIA to articulate our experience of seeing what is made to be absent in Karukinka Tierra del Fuego. By converting absences into emergences, we find ourselves now in the position of facilitators. DISTANCIA is an autonomous artistic medium and as such a viable political platform. If Carolina and I opted for a compositional approach to editing it was mostly so that we could tune our anti-narrative impulses to the desires of our research partners. We took the risks we could to transform our liberties (artistic and curatorial) into a process of liberation for all of those involved. In my experience, collaborative knowledges create subjectivities that protect non-authorized freedoms.

The autonomy to get involved in a struggle, to ally one’s self with victims of colonialism, capitalism, nationalism, racism, sexism and extractivism requires the deep senses and since most of us are not trained to experience deep sensing this is one thing we can offer to a much larger, complex problem in need of multifarious solution.

(9) Circulation

Today (March 22, 2019), Carolina is in Lille, France, at Series Mania, a festival dedicated to the TV series. Long form, short form, episodic, made for public television, pay per view, premium or web TV, the festival highlights quality productions. That is what it says on the website anyhow. DISTANCIA’s episodes 2, 4 and 6 were chosen for screening within the category “series by artists”. Since the early days of Carolina and mine’s thinking around distribution strategies we discussed the value of festivals. We submitted the trailer to “first look” category of the Berlin Webfest and when we were selected, we decided it was worth our money to attend. Nothing like what we expected, the Webfest atmosphere exuded a type of amateurism, especially felt in the lack of criticality towards the business of entertainment. Everything about the festival was aspirational and most disappointing

was that the content of nearly all the series in competition resembled, or wanted to resemble, the types of narratives that are already on TV. Carolina and I took part in a couple of workshops offered to participants and they too were light and commercially oriented, geared towards having a “good pitch” to impress production companies. And there I was thinking that web television was a medium gaining traction because it presented as an independent political platform.

Our pitch “A poethical (Da Silva 2014) non-linear story developed by a transdisciplinary research group concerned with environmental justice at the world’s end” did not prove to be very successful at festivals, and Carolina has been a smart phone user for no longer than a year and up until about a week before the launch of DISTANCIA in Santiago she was not an Instagram user either so, naturally, we went with the simplest circulation strategy possible.

I hired the Chilean journalist, Teresita Quezada, to be my interlocutor on choosing marketing channels and distribution platforms, building an integrated campaign and creating a brand. I chose Teresita for her eco-philosophical bent, her humour and her tech savviness. I went on the gut feeling that Carolina and her would get along and left it to Teresita to explain to Carolina that by existing as a web series DISTANCIA was going to need to count on social media and different forms of small chunks of content (microcontent) “to yield synergistic effects” or conversations that occur across multiple sites with multiple connections in between. Under the rubric of fleshing out DISTANCIA’s abstract narrative style and to help viewers grasp the profile of it Teresita requested microcontent (most often created by viewers, but “in a start-up campaign you need to create it yourself,” she said) in the shape of 20 one-second capsules for Instagram, Facebook, and DailyMotion. Carolina sifted through footage that was discarded in the editing room in response to Teresita’s definition of the 20 most relevant actors in the web series. And so, just like that DISTANCIA began to grow into a story with more characters, interpretations, and threads.

(10) Termination

The word termination refers me back to Selk’nam extermination and the unsettling essay “Decolonization is not a metaphor” (Tuck and Yang 2012) that posits that decolonizing the Americas requires that “all land is repatriated and all settlers become landless” (28). What follows from this is the abolition of land as property and the upholding of “the sovereignty of Native land and people” (ibid). I feel strongly about backing this move in Karukinka Tierra del Fuego, even if this means that Carolina and I have to give up

our right to go there at all—were the Selk’nam community to decide to restrict outsider access to their ancestral lands. Property, property rights, community, collectivity, authority, authorship, privacy, privatization, access and accessibility, all of these are the matters knotted together in the process of making (and in the product) *DISTANCIA*. Making me think that even before we surrender our right to visit Tierra del Fuego, we might need surrender our figuration of Selk’nam lands and cede *DISTANCIA* to the Selk’nam community. I wonder what sort of new Convention this would require? And whether Carolina would be willing to draft it? The thought enlivens me.

(11) Copies and storage

This nightly ritual of backing-up all the film footage and audio recorded in Karukinka Tierra del Fuego was a moment of near delirium in which, overcoming tiredness and the desire to sleep, the whole team concentrated on securing that day’s material. This image of cohesion and rigor is something I may never forget.

Can an analogy be made between this preservation fervor and the lostness and mourning I critique Anne Chapman for? Chapman and I share a sense of wonder about Tierra del Fuego that has led us both to invest copious amounts of scholarship to the human geography of the archipelago, however, despite this connection there is also a distancing (a *distancia*) between her and me. On the one hand, Chapman recorded with the intention to preserve for posterity a world she considered to be at its end (Chapman 2008, 1). On the other, I gather teams of people in Karukinka Tierra del Fuego with the intention of world making. In a posthumanist sense, world-making practices are defined as “tying together imaginaries (the core of culture) with larger processes of materialization” (Åsberg 2014, 57). Though through *DISTANCIA* all of us involved in its making mourn the dead bodies of the massacred Selk’nam, we do not claim Selk’nam culture as lost but as emerging in confabulation with Selk’nam descendants and as always already present in the land, in the wind, and in the stories.

(12) In case of litigation

It’s now 2020, and Carolina, Ariel and I are back in front of a computer, editing. The Selk’nam community Covadonga Ona visited their ancestral lands on the Chilean side of Karukinka for the first time in late November 2019. We may or may not have accompanied them, the audience will never know, but our task now, at the request of the community, is to dedicate season three of *DISTANCIA* to their lore. “Will we do this with old footage, new footage, or found footage?” we ask ourselves.

April 16, 2019

To You, Dearest,

Mary Graham and I climb into her red Toyota. It's March 28, 2017, and I have joined Graham, a Kombumerri philosopher and cultural leader based at the University of Queensland, for a trip to Jebribillum Bora Park located on Kombumerri country about an hour's drive southeast of Brisbane, Queensland. Trailing behind us in another vehicle is the Swedish artist duo Goldin & Senneby and the Brisbane gallerist Josh Milani. We are an unlikely mob gathered together to learn from Auntie Mary about the philosophical underpinnings of Aboriginal Worldviews (Graham 1999). As we drive, I realise that this group—Goldin & Senneby, Milani and I (brought together by me for a project I was instigating at the Institute of Modern Art titled "Making Time") represent the unknowing actors being shown what lies behind the curtain. Aunty Mary has primed us for exactly this. In preparation for our visit she shared with us a number of essays she has written on the subject of coming to know *country*. One in particular, "Understanding Human Agency in Terms of Place: A Proposed Aboriginal Research Methodology" (*PAN: Philosophy Activism Nature* No. 6, 2009: 71-78), continues to illuminate my curatorial path. I quote large sections that articulate as a Kombumerri guide for lawful relations between people and place:

Place and Change

For Aboriginal people, place is epistemologically and ontologically central to notions and discussions regarding action or intent. Not only history but meaning arises out of place, whether place is geographically located or an event in time.

In other words, Place precedes Inquiry. Place defines and supersedes Inquiry. Place is a living thing, again whether place is geographically located or an event in time. Place does not hamper, confuse or attenuate Inquiry, rather Place both enhances and clarifies Inquiry. Place underpins Inquiry but not ideologically so.

If change is the fundamental nature of reality or existence, as described by Heraclitus (Llewelyn 2000, 115), then Place is the fundamental existential quantifier, that is to say, Place is a measuring device that informs us of

‘where’ we are at any time, therefore, at the same time, it’s also informing us ‘who’ we are. (5)

...

Place method does not claim critical knowledge as a privileged form of “true science”. Instead, it accepts its potential fallibility, as well as awareness of its own precarious and contingent relation to social change and the inherent difficulties of self-reflective mode of theorizing. Because self-reflection is itself historically situated and cannot make any claim to a transcendent quality. Second, although reflection may reveal an interest in liberating, it does not necessarily or automatically provide a linkage between this interest and actual emancipatory action. That is, even if one has developed consciousness-raising and unravelled ideological distortions, emancipation still requires active engagement (political), choice and commitment. (7)

...

Because Indigenous research methods stress the moral nature of physicality (especially land) and the need for relationality and interconnectedness with all life forces, the theoretical model that emerges or is identified from those methods will also have that ethical quality.

Narration is one method of both therapy and research that segues well with the notion of Place. The recounting of stories, personal and collective, is premised on the idea that the lives and the relationships of persons are shaped by the knowledges and stories that communities of persons negotiate and engage in to give meaning to their experiences. (2)

...

The inclusion of Place in a story provides an authentic explanation of how and why something comes into the world that in turn provides a balance between agency (human and spiritual) and point of origin or Place. Balance

and re-balance is achieved when Place is used like an ontological compass.
(4)

...

Every research project has several conventional features. There is a difficulty/dilemma to address/solve or further information to discover; a limit to resources; a work team of varying skills and abilities; a timeframe; a selected research method to follow. However, the core value is that it is placed, or begins, somewhere. Even though the same project may actually be in more than one site and/or have nothing to do with land/property at all but rather be involved with events in time, actual or metaphysical, still, agency has an origin. (2)

Throughout the process of making DISTANCIA and the writing of the exegesis I have often wavered under the weight of academic questioning. Fruitful as it has been, the thing that matters most is Karukinka. To echo Auntie Mary, I only understand who I am—at any given time—in relation to Karukinka. It is the source of knowledge. Since learning about Aboriginal Australia’s “Law of Place” (Graham 2009, 6) my devotion and response-ability to Karukinka now encompasses its relation to you, Aboriginal *country*.

February 9, 2016

I’ve read Trawulwuy curator Greg Lehman’s essay “Life’s Quiet Companion” (*Island*. 69, 1996: 54-61) over and over. Greg shared it with me before our visit to the Oyster Cove burial site in Trowuna (Tasmania). With my deepest respect for Trowuna and its people I quote the first of the essay’s three sections:

I

Unlike the living
I remember the Dead
Cast in stone
They are silenced
With head stones that decay

*Unlike my memories
Unlike the grass
that softens the outline
of the graves*

When the French first reached the shores of Van Dieman's Land, it was not with the sophistication of European society that they heralded their arrival. It was not with the intellectual hubbub of an emerging *anthropologie* or even with the swish of their travel-weary frocks. It was with an arrogant death that they presaged their appearance and from that time on it has been death that has characterised the island we call Trowuna.

Nothing, apart from a memory of the brief appearance of Dutch ships one hundred years before, could have prepared my people, the indigenous Palawa, for what was to come. Not even the murder of one of our people by the French prepared us for the reality of invasion. This death, the first at European hands, was eclipsed by the brutal massacre at Risdon Cove in 1803. Within a few short months of the arrival of the British, men, women and children were assaulted by the infamous New South Wales Corps. But the statistics of death are unimportant to this story. The identity of the killers and the nature of their weapons are only accessories that fascinate today's watcher of television news; the seductive, soft abstractions that distance non-Aboriginal Tasmanians from the reality of death. With its predisposition for physical detail, the announcement of the massacre at Port Arthur recently was for Palawa more than an instance of tragedy: it was a reminder of our own experience.

Death for us is not the musket shot or the hangman's hand. It is not the high-powered rifle of the mass murderer. Death is part of the spirit of our existence: an event which moves us and changes us. When the White man arrived among us, he was called Numera, which means ghost. His arrival was the arrival of our ancestor spirits. The Palawa who saw him were aware of also seeing the arrival of their own death and an imminent, profound change to their world.

Ironically, Tasmanian Aborigines have become famous at an international level for our own (supposed) extinction. Anthropologists, archaeologists and historians have built their professional careers on this suggestion. What is it like to be extinct? We can tell you this: it is to be touched intimately by death. The nuclei of each of our cells, with their sacred links to the world's most ancient continuing indigenous culture, are caressed by the passing of the Old Ones. These are the people whose names are mentioned daily to give us strength and to remind us of the obligations of being who we are. The Old Ones who have passed away have imbued each one of us with a spirit that radiates from the past.

Imagine, (if you will), that your whole family were killed. Not by some accidental twist of fate or malfunction of technology, but by a wilful act; a popular desire. Imagine too that this homicide took away not just your mother and father, children, spouse and siblings, but uncles, aunts, cousins and kin. The removal of your houses, towns, playgrounds and farms complete the picture. This is what many have called the 'cultural genocide' of the Tasmanian Aborigine. But for the Old Ones who experienced this in just the space of a lifetime (for those who died and for those who escaped to ensure our survival) it was the culmination of their existence. For those of us who live in the present it is a guarantee: we share an acute awareness of today with an abiding spirit of yesterday. The world we live in vibrates with the energy of political struggle and revitalisation. The clarity of our vision and the depth of our understanding of the world today is made possible through their intimacy with death.

In many ways my people have had to overcome death. We have had to defy the historians who pronounced our extinction. We have had to escape from the Royal Society and the College of Surgeons who laboured to collect our bones. Their frenzied efforts over the past century spurred on by their fear that such precious specimens would cease to be obtainable and the glass cases of their institutions would be unacceptably incomplete without our various parts. Is it any wonder that, even today, we resist and resent further efforts to study us?

Many Palawa can recall visits to Cape Barren Island by the anthropologists. They were intent on measuring our heads and studying our curious speech. They knew nothing of the land or the ways of the sea. The things that were of real importance seemed of little interest to them. They had no real manners; asked questions both rude and bizarre and had no story of their own to tell. Never treating us as equals, even in conversation; these men had no respect for us as a living people.

Greg has taught me how to respect the dead, honor the living and care for land in ways that sensitize me to how to better curate for Karukinka Tierra del Fuego in the coming years. The Chilean state had obscured my understanding of Indigenous resistance. And, if I had not been for Greg teaching me about “arrogant death” I might have not been prepared to pay my respects to Hema’ny Molina. Welcomed by Greg, Trowuna and Karukinka are starting to appear like distant cousins, and as equals in conversation he and I plan to continue to fathom this connection.

June 5, 2018

Thanks to Murri scholar Philip Morrissey who soon after my arrival to Narrm Melbourne in 2016 gifted me the book *Reading the Country: Introduction to Nomadology* (2015) I began to dream of walking the *country* it describes, 110 kilometres of coastline along the Indian Ocean. From Broome through Walmadan (James Price Point) to Minarriny, the Goolarbooloo people, Traditional Owners for the area, walk the Lurrujarri trail yearly. Meeting one of the three authors of the book, ethnographer Stephen Muecke, a year later reinforced my desire. Muecke advised that to fully grasp the notion of Aboriginal relationality between Place, Law and storytelling (Dreaming) I had to be on *country*, observing protocol emerge. And so I went.

Reading the Country is a unique book that weaves together conversations between Muecke and Goolarabooloo elder Paddy Roe on the trail with paintings by Krim Benterrak and photographic images also by Muecke. Straddling the epistemological differences between reading *country*, reading text, and reading images *Reading the Country*, like the episodes of DISTANCIA and the chapters of this exegesis, embraces the slipperiness of

representation, refusing to have those myriad close examinations to cohere into a fictive whole.

I quote significantly from the book, specifically those parts that draw me nearer to acknowledging that by spending time on the archipelago of Australia, looking closely, but from a far, at the archipelago at the southernmost tip of the Americas, I have come to 'see' that the mediation I am best able to perform is that of holding two different things—places, peoples, worldviews—precariously in conversation with one another:

Muecke: [Another] reason for the emergence of place [as a relevant category] is the proliferation of ecological studies and the concept of world heritage; a new sensitivity is being demanded of people's perception of the environment. This sensitivity is not to be achieved through mutual encouragement to be "more human" or "caring" with what we already have, but thorough seeing the "already-there" in quite a different way. Words like "seeing" and "reading" must continue to be theorized and worked upon with a method which makes these seemingly innocent words carry the responsibility they deserve.

It is reasonable to assume that the study of communication is a proper area for this kind of work. The theory of communication which is subscribed to here is one that depends on relative *difference* rather than on the ideal of sameness through "effective", "skillfull" or "smooth" communication. It attends to the *means* (the meadi) and the ways in which they represent different positions, types of people and knowledges. (13)

...

Muecke: When I sought a unifying form for a book which emphasizes place, the movement from one place to the next, I found it in "nomadology", the study of nomadism... there is a gap in discussions about Aboriginal ways of life; it seems that no one has tried to explain what it means to think like a nomad, or what consequences nomadism as a counter-ideology arising in pre-capitalist use of land might have on Australian life.

More importantly, nomadology is not a general theory, a summary of observations. It is rather a way of looking which is specific (to a place like

Roebuck Plains), a way of representing things (in discontinuous fragments, stopping and starting). It is an aesthetic/political stance and is constantly in flight from ideas or practices associated with the singular, the original, the uniform, the central authority, the hierarchy...without for all that ascribing to any form of anarchy.

It is descriptive, but also analytical and creative. While it might talk about things that people do in their travels, it can also be about abstract journeys taking place while one is sitting down: trips in intensity which involve working with a kind of avidity to keep words and images on the move.

This book is a record of Paddy Roe's dreaming at its most important nexus: the country itself. Of course, as the spoken voice is transformed into writing and the country then becomes the book, the traveler then in turn becomes the reader... The nomadic reader [will then] come along afterwards and track things up, deciphering the traces. There will be no general idea of what the whole thing is about, only specific lines to be followed. (14)

...

Interview Stephen Muecke with Paddy Roe:

Paddy: Yes, what else we gonna talk about? Tell me what you want?

Stephen: Well, we've been right through that country now haven't we?

Yeah, we finish.

We might have to go back and find something else we forgot about.

Yeah.

But that's good.

We've been right through to the end of the country.

Thank you.

What about um, I might ask you a question.

Yeah.

You ever hear the word nomad?

Eh?

Nomad, you ever hear that word, nomad?

Mahomet?

No, nomad.

No maid.

No-mad.

No made.

Yeah.

Er no, oh I might have.

Well some people say that's the way Aboriginal people live.

Oh.

As nomads.

Oh no maids.

Nomads, they go, they don't live in house with garden.

Ooh yes yeah.

They move around.

Yeah move around all the time yeah that's right that's right Oh that's the ere r that's what the word say?

Yeah.

Yeah yeah.

You think that's a good way to live?

GOOD way to live that's the way we used to live we go from place to place right around that place come back other side (Laugh) till we come back to work same thing.

But you still do it now, little bit.

Yes, we CAN do it we do it too sometimes when I take the childrens out you few people go out you know.

Oh yes 'nother las', oh two three weeks ago they had two little boy and two old women the old woman is there now one of them living with me you know *Mamabulandjin.*

You know But that's the way the old people used to live you know little mob here little mob there but we all one person (Laughter) you know?

Why we do this because if we all go in one mob you know not enough to eat 'cos we gotta go in small mobs to get enough feed might be two goannas, *barni* you know? Enough feed to this little mob that's finish next day we get 'nother two so the food never go short

always there no good kill one place, lot you know we gotta keep some for
the next time come round again (Laugh). (214)

Nomadology and the practice of reading the *country* are fruitful figurations for a curatorial methodology that takes Place seriously. As a nomadic curator, I learn from Aboriginal *country* how to continue to serve Karukinka Tierra del Fuego by strengthening the ties between communities of (re)searchers dedicated to Place.

To end this epistolary exegesis a poem by me, *To You, Dearest*

A waterhole

A rock

A surprise blow

Laughing kookaburra, what I am to make of my intrusion?

Birthday snake

Ancestral tunnels

Growing old

Will my bones be found alive?

Kangaroo grass

Woven into eel traps

Slow to burn

Quick to light

Ground sandstone

Lotus scent

Making time

Dying young

Keep me,

keep me close.

Endnotes:

Preface: To the Reader

¹ The other Ensayos are: *Ensayo #1: On the Question of Interdisciplinary Research*, *Ensayo #2: On the Question of Invasive Species (The Case of the Beaver)*, and *Ensayo #3: On the Question of Coastal Stewardship*. For more information on these Ensayos please visit the website: <http://ensayostierradelfuego.net/>.

² Michelle Lopez's marzipan boat, titled *Posy*, was part of the group exhibition "The Untitled Thumb and Drape Project" at Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE), May 1 – June 26, 1999. Accessed June 6, 2019, <https://welcometolace.org/lace/the-untitled-thumb-and-drape-project/>.

³ Phenomenology is the study of lived experience from the unique perspective of the individual that is engaged in the experience (Thibodeau and MacRae 1997). The German philosopher Edmund Husserl, considered the father of phenomenology, referred to it as a descriptive science that is concerned with universal essences rather than facts. Yet Husserl warned of avoiding the temptation to speculate and though his predecessors, most specifically the German philosopher Martin Heidegger, reconceived phenomenology as contextualized by gender, culture, history and related life experiences, phenomenology is still criticized for producing research that borrows other peoples' experiences and reflections "in order to understand human experience" (Van Manen 1990, 206). This is why auto-phenomenography in cross-section with fictocriticism is of interest to me because it undoes the idea of the partial observer while at the same time allowing the observer to speculate.

Chapter 1: To Karukinka

⁴ In English, *ensayos* translates to inquiries or essays: an essay is an attempt, a trial or a rehearsal, as well as a short piece of writing on a particular subject. As a program Ensayos brings together artists, social scientists, natural scientists, and local agents to contemplate and engage in matters related to the political ecology of Tierra del Fuego. <http://ensayostierradelfuego.net/ensayos/intro/>.

⁵ Guanacos are a wild Andean mammal similar to the domestic llama (*Lama guanicoe*, family Camelidae).

⁶ Multinaturalism is a category derived from Amerindian perspectivism, and opposed to multiculturalism, that: 'assumes the coexistence of different "natures". These "natures" include non-human animal perception along with a human one, all of them sharing a common perspective or affinity.' As put forth by the anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro: 'what matters is no longer to classify species in which nature is divided, but to know how the species themselves take over the task, producing images of nature according to their perspective.' Eduardo Viveiros Castro, *Cannibal Metaphysics: For a Post-Structural Anthropology*, Univocal, Minneapolis 2014, p 69.

⁷ Useless Bay was named in 1827 by Captain Phillip Parker King because it afforded 'neither anchorage nor shelter, nor any advantage for the navigator.' Charles Darwin, Robert Fitzroy, and Phillip Parker King, *Narrative of the Surveying Voyages of His Majesty's Ships Adventure and Beagle, between the Years 1826 and 1836: Describing Their Examination of the Southern Shores of South America, and the Beagle's Circumnavigation of the Globe*, Henry Colburn, London, 1839, p 125.

⁸ 'WCS-Chile exists since 2004 and is formed by researchers, park rangers and administrative personnel, a team oriented to make the nearly 300,000 hectares of the Karukinka reserve, in Tierra del Fuego, an economically and ecologically sustainable conservation area, that interacts with the local community, open to the world and that constitutes the legacy of WCS to the future... Prior to 2004, what we know today as Karukinka Park used to be an immense piece of land located geographically on the world's most remote spot, a natural paradise originally inhabited by the Selk'nam. This part of Tierra del Fuego, part of Chilean Patagonia, was not protected and lacked regulation to protect and manage its possible exploitation. A major part of its territories were in hands of the forestry company Trillium, which shortly after beginning their exploitation went bankrupt. The U.S. investment bank Goldman Sachs received them as part

of the debt. Out of this situation arises a new partnership with Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), when Goldman Sachs donates the land acquired. From that moment on, an innovative model of ecological conservation and management of Karukinka-, one of the largest private parks in the world-, was implemented.' Karukinka WCS Chile, "History", accessed February 1, 2017, <http://www.karukinkanatural.cl/en/history>.

⁹ Here I am using this term in reference to the theorist Donna J. Haraway who purposefully breaks up the word responsibility to suggest that we can foster an ability to respond to the non-human if we make ourselves available to hearing its call. From the very beginning *Ensayos* has practiced a curious mode of attending to the call of the non-human in a belief that it will bring about new abilities to deal with ecological issues. Donna J. Haraway, *When Species Meet*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2007, p 71.

¹⁰ "In an effort to develop a fur trade, the Argentinian government introduced 20 pairs of Canadian beavers into Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego in 1946. As an economic development proposition, the beaver introduction proved unsuccessful, though with few natural predators the animals' establishment in the region has been formidable. Beavers have and continue to reshape the landscape, contributing to widespread forest decline and reduction in key ecosystem services. Beaver management poses one of the greatest conservation challenges for the region and Parque Karukinka is a leader in this push to eradicate [Charles Choi, "Tierra Del Fuego: The Beavers Must Die." *Nature* 453, no 7198, 2008, p 968]....Beavers certainly offer much to think about and think through. Like humans, beavers are social creatures that have the capacity to engineer large scale transformations of the landscape. The allure of their pelts resulted in wide-spread transformations of economic, social and political organizations in North America and produced a reformed global geopolitics, as the anthropologist Eric Wolfe has shown in his book *Europe and the People Without History* (UC Press, California, 1982). As exotic species in Tierra del Fuego, their presence generates a series of philosophical, ethical and cultural dilemmas in addition to their ecological impacts. For instance, how helpful are the essentialist hierarchies of "native" and "exotic" when places and ecosystems are always changing? These questions, including the roles of science, art and politics in our understanding of nature, animals, and humans served as points of departure for the inquiry dedicated to beavers on Tierra del Fuego." Christy Gast, "Ensayo #2", accessed February 1, 2017, <http://ensayostierradelfuego.net/ensayos/ensayo-2/>.

¹¹ Jemmy Button was one of the four Fuegian natives seized by Captain Robert FitzRoy in 1830. As a hostage, Jemmy Button was taken to Britain and taught the English language to "become useful as an interpreter and be the means of establishing a friendly disposition towards Englishmen" upon his return to Tierra del Fuego, which occurred in January of 1833. A summarized version of Button's return is narrated in the film *El Botón De Nácar = The Pearl Button*, directed by Patricio Gúzman, Atacama Productions, Production Company and Kino Lorber, Inc, 2016.

¹² Over the past five years I've invited numerous people to take part in *Ensayo #3*: the inquiry of the human geography of Tierra del Fuego. Some have contributed on one or more occasions (Sofía Ugarte, sociologist, Emilie Hache, environmental philosopher, Barbara Villez, legal historian, Denise Milstein, sociologist, Alfredo Prieto, archaeologist, Michael Taussig, anthropologist, Alberto Harambour, historian, and Amanda Piña, choreographer), others have committed to be part of the team that will see the project through to its fruition: Carolina Saquel, artist, Ivette Martinez, educator, Julio Gastón Contreras, doctor, Ariel Bustamante, artist, Matías Illanes, director of photography, Bárbara Saavedra, ecologist, Kiko Anderson, park ranger, and Cecilia Vicuña, artist.

¹³ Some of those films are: *Surname Viet Given Name Nam* (Trinh T. Minh-ha, 1989), *Wutharr: Saltwater Dreams* (Karrabing Film Collective, 2014), *The Difficulty of Crossing a Plane* (Carolina Saquel, 2010-2011) and *Two Women* (Arthur and Corinne Cantrill, 1979).

¹⁴ Curators Valentina Desideri and Stefano Harney have brilliantly defined this kind of curatorial caretaking as an operational mode of becoming "accomplice". As they put it: "the curator becomes the accomplice when she helps to produce this uncomfortable care [a care without end, a care for the space and what can happen in it, what keeps happening in it, not a concern for what is produced], a care that is dangerous, made together but open to anyone and anything, a beautiful care that enlivens attention, heightens sense till sense and meaning coincide." (Harney and Desideri 2013, 134).

¹⁵ The foremost proponent of experimental ethnography, the anthropologist Michael Taussig, describe this process as one of “contextualisation” and considers it a “deeply mystifying political practice in the guise of Objectivism”, a procedure that he says is “montage—the juxtaposition of dissimilars such that old habits of mind can be jolted into new perceptions of the obvious.” Michael Taussig, *The Nervous System*, Routledge, New York, 1992, 44-45.

¹⁶ Mamihlapinatapai is a Fuegian word, derived from the Yámana language, which according to Wikipedia The Guinness Book of Records listed as the ‘most succinct word’ defining it as ‘looking at each other hoping that either will offer to do something which both parties desire but are unwilling to do.’ Reverend Thomas Bridges who compiled a Yámana-English Dictionary [Thomas Bridges, *Yámana-English : A Dictionary of the Speech of Tierra Del Fuego*, Ediciones Shanamaim, Ushuaia, Argentina, 1987] shed some light on to the morphology of the word by distinguishing that it consists of the reflexive/passive prefix *ma-* (mam- before a vowel), the root *ihlapi* (pronounced [iʔapi]), which means ‘to be at a loss as what to do next’, the stative suffix *-n*, an achievement suffix *-ata*, and the dual suffix *-apai*, which in composition with the reflexive *mam-* has a reciprocal sense, and which I loosely interpret as: I know that you know that I know that we both want the same thing but neither of us is willing to say.

Chapter 2: To Academia

¹⁷ My PhD work focuses on the main isle of the archipelago, Karukinka, and primarily on the Chilean side of this island. Though the Kawéskar and Yámana peoples canoed around it, Karukinka is the ancestral ground of the Selk’nam and prior to them of the Haush, who were relegated to the southwestern most tip of the island. All of these communities have witnessed and suffered through the installment of sheep ranches on their territories, the introduction of the foreign *Castor canadensis* (North American Beaver) for the purpose of creating a pelt industry, the building of Christian missions for them to be relegated to once caught by government officials, the helicoptering in of millionaires to revel in Karukinka’s beauty and practice fly fishing in its rivers, and the proliferation of conservation initiatives looking to repair and manage all the previous interventions using high-tech equipment and new eco-philosophical approaches.

¹⁸ The noted French archaeologist, Anette Laming-Empeaire, dedicates over 300 pages of her book *En la Patagonia Confín del Mundo*, (Santiago, Chile: Editorial del Pacífico, 1956) to describing how she lost her sense of self during her nearly twelve months of fieldwork in the region, from October 1952 to September 1953; mostly pitting the wind and other features of the territory to account for her experience.

¹⁹ *natureculture* was coined by Donna J. Haraway in 2003 in *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*. (Vol. 1. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press) and synthesizes nature and culture recognising their inseparability in ecological relationships that are both biophysically and socially formed. I add the adjective cosmopolitan to indicate how despite being considered remote, Tierra del Fuego’s geohistory is littered with foreign influence, i.e. human visitors as worldly as Charles Darwin and Bruno Latour, animal diasporas from Canada (*Castor canadensis*) and Scotland (Cheviot sheep) and exotic flora and fungi from all corners of the globe.

²⁰ The Spanish language word *movida* translates to English as movement. A decolonizing *movida* is a Spanglish notion invented by Chicana theorist of postcolonial feminism Chela Sandoval to describe U.S. third world feminist moves to decolonize. What distinguishes these movements from other decolonial struggles is their appeal to the fundamental role that desire and love play in social transformation. When I first encounter Chicana feminist theory, through the poetry of Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), it quenched a thirst I didn’t even know I had. Growing up as a Latinx in the U.S. I experienced the hybrid identity issues central to Chicana feminist theory and feel a strong affinity to the concepts of duality, *mestizaje* and nepantla spirituality explored by Anzaldúa, Sandoval and Cherrie Moraga, amongst others. Thus, my proposal to Nina Lykke (who is well aware of Chicana feminism) is that our decolonizing of the key anthropological representations of Tierra del Fuego be a *movida*, meaning that we move along the lines of analysing the desires that drive the anthropologists in question and our own inquiry.

²¹ “In Chile, the Indigenous Law 19.253 of 1993 recognizes the existence of nine indigenous peoples; Aymaras, Quechuas, Atacameños, Collas and Diaguitas in the north of the country. Mapuches, Kawashqar or Alacalufe, and Yámana or Yágan in the South, and Rapa Nuí on Easter

Island, in Polynesia. Other indigenous peoples, such as the Aoniken of the Magellanic pampas, also known as Tehuelche or Patagón, and the Onas or Selknam of Tierra del Fuego, were not recognized due to their recent extinction in the twentieth century, which has reduced the country's ethnic diversity and multiculturalism.” This quote appears in *Guía de Antecedentes Territoriales y Culturales de los Pueblos Indígenas de Chile* (Guide to the Territorial and Cultural Antecedents of the Indigenous Peoples of Chile), published in January 2012 by the Ministry of Public Affairs, http://transparencia.dgop.cl/OtrosAntecedentes/docs/Guia_asuntos_indigenas.pdf, accessed on February 21, 2019.

²² Some 200 of Gusinde's 1000 photographs are also reproduced in *The Lost Tribes of Tierra Del Fuego: Selk'nam, Yamana, Kawésqar*. Edited by Christine Barthe and Xavier Barral (2015) and photographs have been reproduced endlessly as postcards, on t-shirts, mugs and other trinkets.

²³ For a lively scholarly debate around the staged nature of these photographs please refer to Margarita Alvarado, Carolina Odone, Felipe Maturana, and Dá-Nae Fiore's *Fueguinos: fotografías siglos XIX y XX. Imágenes e imaginarios del fin del mundo*, (2007). Santiago: Pehuén.

²⁴ The notion of white melancholia, as it is used in this exegesis, is derived from conversations with Nina Lykke. In these conversations we discussed the notion of “white tears” (Kunzru 2017)—a propensity of some white people to focus on their own feelings in issues regarding race, instead of acknowledging their privilege— and its relation to melancholia, thinking with Paul Gilroy's theories of “postcolonial melancholia” (Gilroy 2006) and Enzo Traverso's “Left-wing melancholia” (Traverso 2017). The notion of white melancholia has also been used in a Swedish context, by antiracist researchers Tobias Hubinette and Catrin Lundstrom (2011).

²⁵ Due to the mounting dangers of gathering—Selk'nam people were either being massacred or brought to missions, by the Argentine and Chilean State—there are no recorded Kloketen/Hain ceremonies after 1923.

²⁶ Anne Chapman's reiterative claim that Kiep'ja and Loij were the last Selk'nam women can be found throughout her books, articles and films, e.g. *Drama and Power* is dedicated: “In memory of Lola Kiepja and Angela Loij, the last Selknam women.”

²⁷ As standard term for the initiation ceremony, Gusinde uses “Kloketen-celebration”, and “big hut” [Grosse Hütte] for the hut, in which key parts of the ceremony are carried out. He uses the term “Ha'in” very few times to designate this hut, but, the first time he does so (1931, 837), he explicitly accounts for the “unprecise” way, in which the term is noted down in four earlier printed sources.

²⁸ I am here thinking of both the difference between “taking” a picture (representation) and “making” a picture (production) lies in staying open to all the contingent factors in process and play between subject, environment, apparatus and operator as described by the art theorist Tessa Laird in an unpublished text titled *Spirits on Film*, and the spiritual-material technics of ghostly filmmaking as described to me by Matías Illanes, the photo director of DISTANCIA, “the Bolex 16mm film camera is a machine particularly suited to capturing spectral energies. Something about the concrescence of light, the crystalline structure of the apparatus's lenses and mirrors, the receptive surface of the celluloid, and the alchemical processes of developing, make it the perfect medium for catching ghosts.” Here, the word “medium” as conduit or vehicle, takes a leap from the world of art practice, and instead channels the *spiritual* medium, who in turn channels voices from other worlds.

²⁹ <https://videotheque.cnrs.fr/doc=721?langue=EN>, accessed on February 22, 2019.

³⁰ The following letter was written as a reflection on the contents of a conversation with Hema'ny Molina that began over the phone on January 7, 2019 and continued after the Queering the Kloketen/Hain workshop held on January 16, 2019 at Universidad de Chile, Santiago. Hema'ny has since read this letter and approved it as evidence of our communication.

³¹ Hema'ny Molina, Camila Marambio and Nina Lykke, met prior to the workshop, at a café in Providencia, Santiago, Chile on January 15, 2019.

³² “Kiep'ja only had rudimentary knowledge of Spanish,” is a quote from Anne Chapman's, *The End of the World*, as it appears on Chapman's personal website <http://www.thereedfoundation.org/rism/chapman/end.htm>, accessed on February 15, 2019 and on that same site, on a page titled *Ángela Loij*, (first published in Spanish in the *Journal de la Société des Américanistes*: vol. 62: 235-36, 1975, Paris, in English several times, and “slightly modified

since the last version in 2003”) she credits her “interpreter”, Loij, as the one who had to translate for her.

³³ Anne Chapman, *The End of the World*, as it appears on Chapman’s personal website <http://www.thereedfoundation.org/rism/chapman/end.htm>, accessed on February 15, 2019. First published in English in 1971 under the title of “Lola” in *Natural History* vol. 80 (3): 32-41, and then again in 2003 in Chapman’s book *The End of a World. The Selk’nam of Tierra del Fuego* (1st ed. ed. Buenos Aires: Zagier & Urruty Publicaciones, 2008), this article seems to be the script for Chapman’s voiceover in the film, however, the two paragraphs here transcribed do not appear in the film.

³⁴ Correspondence with the author, January 26th, 2019. Translated from Spanish by CM.

³⁵ Translated by CM on February 7th, 2019 and published here with permission from Hema’ny Molina.

³⁶ Translation from Spanish to English provided by Hema’ny, with corrections made by Camila, approved by Hema’ny.

³⁷ The text Molina is referring to is an early draft of this chapter, previously titled *Decolonizing mourning: On the Selk’nam Kloketen/Hain and its layers of lostness*.

³⁸ Molina is referring to a series of letters written by Martin Gusinde’s and printed in *Expedición a La Tierra Del Fuego*. 1st Spanish ed. Chile: Editorial Universitaria S. A., 1979.

Chapter 3: To David

³⁹ Seminal is a word that feminists tend to reject (for its obvious associations to semen and semen’s influential power) and often replace with the term germinal. I explicitly use it here because I’ll make the point later that your actions, which have strongly influenced later developments in Tierra del Fuego, predominately derive from your maleness.

⁴⁰ Trinh T. Minh-Ha said this in her book, *Framer Framed*, referencing how interviews, which occupying a “dominant role in documentary practices”, are “actually sophisticated devices of fiction.” Minh-ha is a germinal figure for me (I’ve said this before, but I don’t tire of acknowledging the female voices that influence me) and her films, especially *Viet Surname Viet Given Name Nam*, 1989, set a precedent for the kind of work I dare to do. Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Framer Framed* (New York & London: Routledge, 1992), 193.

⁴¹ In the afterword to the 2016 edition of Kraus’s classic book, *I Love Dick*, Joan Hawkins writes, “When Chris finally does give the letters to Dick, “things get pretty weird” (162). But by that time, the letters have become an art form in and of themselves, a means to something that has almost nothing to do with Dick.” I suppose this might be the case with this letter, but only time will tell. Joan Hawkins “Afterwords” in *I Love Dick* (London: Serpent’s Tail, 2016), 251.

⁴² Adriana Schnake, “Enfoque HSE,” Anchimalen Centro de Terapia y Desarrollo, accessed May 28, 2017, http://www.anchimalen.cl/sitio/?page_id=571.

⁴³ The Australian ecofeminist philosopher Val Plumwood postulates that “the polarizing treatment of gender characteristics in Western culture provides a good model” of the “dualistic construal of difference” that “aims to maximize the number, scope, or significance of distinguishing characteristics,” this is not done “in a random way, but usually by classifying characteristics as belonging exclusively, as far as possible, to one side or the other, thus setting up sets of complementary qualities formed through exclusion and denial of overlap. Thus the master claims for himself reason, contemplation and higher pursuits, and disdains the slave’s merely manual occupations, while the slave is forced to exclude from his or her makeup the characteristics of the master, to eschew intellect and become submissive and lacking in initiative. These very qualities then confirm the slave’s different nature and fate, for she or he is ‘a slave by nature.’” Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1993), 50.

⁴⁴ Heading to both difference and continuity is a basic premise of environmental feminism or, as Plumwood calls it, a fight against the “standpoint of mastery.” This fight, she argues, involves “seeing the other as radically separate and inferior, the background to the self as foreground, as one whose existence is secondary, derivative or peripheral to that of the self or center, and whose agency is denied or minimized.” *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁵ Bill Hannan, *The Best of Times: The Story of the great secondary schooling expansion* (Northcote, Victoria: Lexis, 2009).

⁴⁶ See also my essay on ‘uselessness’ in *Beyond the End, Más Allá del Fin* a publication accompanying an eponymous exhibition at the Kadist Art Foundation in Paris in 2014: <http://ensayostierradelfuego.net/periodical/kiosko-timaukel/>. I argue that art’s supposed uselessness can provide a framework for creating alternatives to relations founded on objectification, commodification, and abuse.

⁴⁷ She has since revoked her critique, stating that she thinks that what I did was “decente”. I’m not sure decent is what I was going for, but in hindsight, my ‘unstrategic’ strategy resembles the logic of the potlach. Described by the French ethnologist, Marcel Mauss, in his book *The Gift*, potlachs refer to a set of exchange practices in tribal societies characterized by “total prestations”, so a system of “gift giving with political, religious, kinship and economic implications.” Maurice Godelier, *The Enigma of the Gift* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1996), 147–61.

⁴⁸ The court case I am referring to here is the well-known “Trillium Case”, otherwise termed “the right to a healthy environment,” decided by the Supreme Court of Chile on March 19, 1997, Decision No.2.732-96, available at <http://www.elaw.org/content/chile-trillium-march-19-1997-espa%C3%B1ol>.

⁴⁹ I was privy to a trail of emails in which you asked Michael Harris to ask Kiko Anderson (Ivette Martínez’s partner) about my intentions and who I was. If my first letter came off as slippery it is because I was crossing boundaries, identifying with you while claiming difference. I took the risk of critiquing you instead of attempting to charm you. I did this not to insult you, but to establish a less hierarchical relationship, one in which I could be blunt with you. I tried to ignite a mode of conversation in which each of us could feel free to express our ideas, however unpleasant. I am not well versed in this form of confrontational communication, but I do hope to see it grow through this very project of televising Fuegian stories.

⁵⁰ The feminist cultural-theorist, Donna Haraway, has a lot to say about kind and kin. I’ll delve further into her theories when I begin to script-write with the wind of Tierra del Fuego, but I suggest that you read her as soon as you can.

Chapter 4: To Ivette

⁵¹ It struck me that before we returned to Caleta María to shoot *DISTANCIA* in December 2017, I needed to recite to Ivette what it is about her and her settler relationship to Caleta María that animates the first season of the web series. I considered the ode as a form, especially the *Selected Odes of Pablo Neruda*. Margaret Sayers Peden, Neruda’s translator, states:

Exuberantly, his odes exalt their subject matter. But they are not characterized by an elevated style; it is here that a Neruda poem consciously differs from its prototype. Neruda’s odes glorify the ordinary and the everyday, with little or no bow toward transcendency or ontological inquiry... Perhaps more than in any other of Neruda’s works, it is in his odes that we see his physical absorption of the world, his consciously anti-intellectual manner of perceiving reality about him (Peden 1990, 3).

I disagree with Peden on the lack of transcendency, for I believe that Neruda’s *Odas*, much like New Materialist philosophy, complicate the binary between the discursive and the elemental by emphasising a materialist approach to the ontological question of the ‘nature of nature’ (Barad 2007, 42). Nonetheless, I am indebted to her translation effort. Her observation of how Neruda “reiterates the word *cantar* throughout the odes; ‘singing’ this poetry as odes were sung in ancient times” (Peden 1990, 3) inspired me to sing to Ivette and eventually to translate this song as a way to render my observations into a reaffirmation of her own movements. I hoped that my celebration of her would allow her to continue to dance to Caleta María’s rhythm in front of the camera and breath air into the Chile that she has taught me to see.

*

Peden quotes Neruda’s claim that “Chile was invented by a poet” (Peden 1990, 3) and I kept this in the back of my mind while walking the circumference of the Native Grass Circle in Royal Park, Narrm Melbourne as I recorded myself singing *Oda a Ivette*. Later, as I typed it out, edited it, and then emailed it (both audio and text) to Ivette, I thought “Chile is still being invented.”

Thanks to my iPhone 5 and its numerous apps, the thousands of kilometers that separate so-called Terra Nullius (Australia) from so-called Terra Incognita (Tierra del Fuego) are squashed, and Ivette (like everyone else involved in DISTANCIA who also received an ode from me) heard my song while in Karukinka. This physical distance induces deep-time fantasies of the Mesozoic era, during which South America and Australia would have been one continent, Gondwanaland. Listening to the songs of Selk'nam elder, Lola Kiep'ja, and reading their translation into Spanish by Ángela Loij, I first learned of the ancient earthquake that made Karukinka Tierra del Fuego distinct from the mainland. Kiep'ja's oral knowledge is to be found in the *Selk'nam Chants of Tierra del Fuego, Argentina*: a selected sample of the anthropologist Anne Chapman's field-recordings which include 47 chants sung by Kiep'ja (Chapman 2003). The power of song to constitute images and create binding relationships between people and country was strong then, as it is now. Who gets to record songs and distribute them, however, is a contentious and shifting debate.

In María Esther Grebe's *Ethnomusicology* review of Chapman's recordings, she insists on describing Kiep'ja as "the last Indian shaman of the Selk'nam of Tierra del Fuego," and categorizes Record I as containing "16 shaman chants" and Record II "as gathering a variety of brief pieces: 17 shaman chants, 1 war chant, 10 laments, 1 lullaby, and 2 religious chants learned in a Salesian mission." (Grebe 1974, 173). I'll quote Grebe at length here, because her clarifications of this intriguingly obtuse catalogue disclosed two fundamental facts about Chapman and Kiep'ja's relationship, a relationship that has troubled me for years and that has been the backdrop for my attempts to enable a different researcher/research-participant relation than Chapman/Kiep'ja's, one that torques the inherent power structure and queers the "outcomes" of research. Grebe writes:

[T]hese field-recordings... supported by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research and sponsored by Claude Levi-Strauss and Gilbert Rouget... were made in an Indian reservation located near Lake Fagnano, Argentina, from March to June 1966; all the material was recorded in Lola's hut employing a UHER recorder at 19 cm/sec. As each chant was recorded 4 to 8 times, only the best 47 renderings were selected.

Later, she adds:

although the technical quality of the discs is good—but not exceptional—its material constitutes a valuable primary source of high significance for both anthropological and ethnomusicological cross-cultural and area studies. (Grebe 1974, 173).

Until reading this, I had been unaware of who had financed Chapman's research. I knew Claude Levi-Strauss and Gilbert Rouget had overseen her work, as her PhD advisors, but had not given much thought to the fact that the recordings were pre-destined to be anthropological material, nothing more, nothing less. What use, if any, could such anthropological material have had for Kiep'ja? Though Chapman states that Kiep'ja "especially enjoyed singing ancient chants for me to record, and to hear her voice played back on the recorder," and that Kiep'ja also "seemed pleased to have someone with whom she could share her memories of all that had disappeared," (Chapman 1982, 4) I can't avoid feeling that Chapman's valuable recordings of Kiep'ja are a product of cultural extractivism, a process of unmeasured exploitation of cultural values (Selk'nam oral history) for worldwide (academic) exportation premised on the false promise of social development through knowledge production (Varas 2015, 1).

I had also never considered what technology was used to record Kiep'ja's voice. I may be more sensitised to this issue since after filming the first season of DISTANCIA; having witnessed the many ways in which specific cameras and recorders changed hands between crew and non-crew, and how this significantly transformed the relationships of all the involved. As far as it is known, Kiep'ja was always on the recorded side of the UHER; she did not own a device, never operated one, and did not commission its use in recording her songs. Chapman introduced her to this technology, the tool of her own trade, which gave Chapman the upper hand. Chapman was scavenging for anthropological material, which she accrued and then delivered to the body funding her investigation.

This raises another question: What are the tools of my trade? Is it my iPhone, or is it my voice, my discursivity, my writing or my transnationality? (These could all well be Chapman's too). If translation is my tool, what powers does it bestow me with? And furthermore, do I own what I know? Or, are my tools relational and therefore subject to circumscription as collective tools?

Despite being brought up bi-lingual, I've never been particularly good at translating text from Spanish to English or vice versa. In fact, I'm awful at it. I get lost in the question of semantics, I fumble choosing specific words, and I often distort texts almost beyond recognition. Owning this shortcoming, I should specify that when I declare translation as my tool I am referring to a different type of translation, maybe it is more to the point to call myself a storyteller or a curator? I swing somewhere in between interpreter and creator, becoming a vessel for other voices, for experiences that lie beyond my own, that touch me and that I offer to carry. As a carrier I am not empty, but I am well versed.

⁵² Grebe also wrote that the notes accompanying Chapman's recordings offered a comprehensive ethnographic document, which described general characteristics of the Selk'nam culture, "including some demographic, economic, social, religious, and linguistic data; Lola's biography and personality; a description of cultural contexts of chants; fragmentary translations of song texts; and were complemented by cantometric analysis by Alan Lomax." (Grebe 1974, 175). However, she noted an absence among this material. The "English translations of song-texts", she wrote, "do not include the corresponding texts in Selk'nam language." For Grebe, "a transcription of the texts in parallel columns in both native language and placing the explanations as footnotes, would have increased its [the recordings] methodological accuracy and reliability, avoiding at the same time a lack of clarity, meanings, and symbolic connotations." (Grebe 1974, 175).

*

Coming to terms with the responsibility of the act of translation, I am attempting, through these notes, to clarify and reference my *Ode to Ivette* for the reader. Since I was the one who suggested to Ivette that we televise her trials to defend Caleta María from the State's repeated unlawful appropriation of her a portion of her property (first for excavating material for the building of a road, second for the lotting of plots to create a tourist village), I am faced with the task of enabling a transmission process that captures the amplitude of the symbolic connotations of her struggle. Curating is a practice of recasting, of adaptation, of elucidation, of translation. Academic translating, however, has its specificities and confronts me uncomfortably with my desire to challenge established meanings, to move away from clarification and towards the unseen spirit of things and words. My own inclination is towards transmutation, and ultimately, I covet mysteriousness and cultivate the principles of uncertainty, but in translating somebody else's story this personal drive has to be disclosed, if not suspended. On the issue of the difficulty of translation and of attempting to stay truthful to Neruda's odes, Peden says that she followed four commandments: (1) respect simplicity; (2) respect sound; (3) respect sense; and (4) respect shape. Though later she adds that in some ways, "respect meaning" should come before any other commandment:

While one may often be tempted to tip the scale toward musicality, many of the odes are mini-narratives—some diatribes, some propaganda, some declarations of love, or scorn. Even those that recount an instantaneous experience or mention, have some aspect of "telling." Content is important and it is the translator's obligation to render that telling as accurately as possible. (Peden 1990, 3).

Oda a Ivette is a curatorial gesture more than a poem for public exposure. Written to convey my feelings and intentions to Ivette, I nonetheless had it professionally translated by Sofía Ugarte. This was an exercise in reflecting on the problem of translation. After outsourcing the solution to the 'problem' I simultaneously counteracted by annotating it extensively. This last move is my attempt at dealing with the challenge that underlies accuracy: intentionality. These 'notes' to the English language version of the ode are therefore an effort to highlight not the literal meaning of the words, but the why of why Ivette's story matters. The feminist theoretician Rosi Braidotti affirms that we simply need new forms of literacy in order to decode today's world. Theory, she says, "is corporeal,

bodily, literal, figurative not metaphorical. One cannot know properly, or even begin to understand, that towards which one has no affinity. Intelligence is sympathy.” (Braidotti 1994, 109).

*

Just as I ask the reader to pay attention to the curatorial nature of the relationship between Ivette, Caleta María, and myself, I too have been training to listen for signs of the nature of Chapman and Kiep’ja’s connection, aiming to identify the quality of their relation. Sensing that this is perhaps the most telling fact to be retrieved from Chapman’s work, I attune to signs of Chapman’s motivations and beliefs as a way to peel off a layer of inscription that I feel obscures Kiep’ja.

During these past two years my academic research has led me, time and again, back to the question of what gets “lost” in translation, especially in translating from the oral to the written. I have focused on the relaying of the so called ‘myth of matriarchy’—the ‘secret’ that it was Selk’nam women who originated and practiced the cultural ceremony (first termed Kloketen and now usually referred to as the Hain) before it was co-opted by men. Striving to re-interpret the ceremony from a ‘feminist’ perspective, Chapman never bothered to transcribe Kiep’ja’s Selk’nam words, and this troubles me. So, I listen for the interstitial moments in which Chapman speaks to Kiep’ja and try to discover what their conversation sounds like when the roles of anthropologist and “subject” are breached, if they are at all. I discover that when they become Anne and Lola, they often laugh, which suggests they did enjoy each other’s company. Chapman has written that on walking down Lola’s street she frequently found Lola outside her hut, waiting, expectantly, as if eager to spend time with her. Certainly, Chapman’s interest in Lola Kiep’ja is well documented: in the numerous books she dedicated to her and Loij, in the two films she made during her field work (one of which denounces the Selk’nam genocide), in the picture taken not long before Anne’s own death, in the living room of her apartment, where the most prominent object is a large photograph of Lola’s elderly face hanging on the wall (the same picture that adorns the cover of Chapman’s last book *The End of a World*), and finally in the poem, *Memory of Kiepja* (Chapman 1988), that I found on Chapman’s website only weeks after having written *Ode to Ivette*. I take my distance from Chapman in that I believe, and wholeheartedly invest in, the project of upturning our notion of objectivity to regain at least what was (purposefully?) lost in translation and of doing this in the name of the decolonization of Karukinka. To achieve this, I listen to Kiep’ja’s chants: repetitive and resonant, Kiep’ja’s nasal singing is like a solemn cradle song. Building up with fast and slow attacks, sharp and long envelopes, the sound of Kiep’ja’s voice, steeped in an ancestral dialogue—a call and response—creates an iterative, trance-like momentum. But what is she saying?

Academically, I am often asked to take a position on Chapman and Gusinde, to argue for or against their research methodologies, to be clear about who and what I identify with. But, acknowledging my *mestiza* heritage, I choose to inhabit the border and engage critically with contradicting parts of my own identity (Anzaldúa 1987), applying *othered reasoning* (Majaca and Parisi, 2016). This entails the implementation of instrumental thinking, of actively exploring recording technologies to regenerate memory. Picking at Chapman and Gusinde’s research is not undertaken as a way to inscribe myself within the canon of white Western academics; I have no desire to position my theories and experience in concordance or opposition with theirs. I do, however, strive to challenge my own understanding of Karukinka Tierra del Fuego and self-consciously, performatively, identify with alternatives that include the use of instruments and techniques that broadcast generational sounds, images, discourses co-produced with Ivette, Carolina, forests, roads, sound recorders, cameras, drones, all animated by the vitality of Karukinka, Selk’nam country.

I am not a native Selk’nam and neither is Ivette. My siding with Ivette and her settler story, in the first season of *DISTANCIA*, is a way to collaboratively work through our unconscious *moves to innocence*, I am here thinking with critical race and indigenous studies scholars Eve Tuck and K.W. Yang who argue that unsettling innocence requires “an ethic of incommensurability, which recognizes what is distinct, what is sovereign for project(s) of decolonization in relation to human and civil rights based social justice projects” (28) As an eco-activist Ivette sympathises with

indigenous struggles, but “performing sympathy” or in my case, performing “environmental education research,” still imbricates us in settler colonial narratives, meaning that we sometimes ignore the settler colonial contexts where we work and resides (29). This is not an easy thing to confess, but we must.

⁵³ It has always felt utterly wrong to call Ivette an informant, and even the more politically correct term, ‘research participant’, falls short of our involvement.

I am neither an anthropologist nor a linguist, and she is not the subject of ‘my’ study. Rather, she and I and a number of others (mentioned throughout this text) have become intertwined in each other’s lives in such a way that our concerns have technically mingled, at times seeming one and the same or, at the very least, simultaneous iterations of a unique impulse: environmental justice.

Ivette and I are *comadres*: co-mothering a web series and other such Ensayos inquiries. We are co-producing, co-envisioning, co-operating on the first season of DISTANCIA. As I was typing these words, I received an email from Ivette. Addressed also to Carolina Saquel, another comadre of DISTANCIA, Ivette was writing to tell us that she had just returned from spending some time in Caleta María with her friend, the architect Gastón Herrera. Gastón is helping her survey the new lots that she wants to put up for sale (for reasons I soon discuss). She writes, “on a spectacularly sunny day, he used his drone to get some fantastic shots of the territory. I would like him to send this material to you so that we can review it and consider using some of this footage in DISTANCIA.” This is an example of one of the ways in which Ivette is co-steering the relaying of her own story.

The new lots that she refers to are the second batch of hectares that she intends to sell. The first grouping of lots were larger, 14 hectares each. Ivette’s decision to create these new smaller allotments is twofold. First, it responds to the need that she and Julio Gastón, her ex-husband, have to cover the costs of their ongoing legal efforts to protect Caleta María, territory they co-own, from the unlawful usurpation it is undergoing by the Chilean State (we suspect this is for military, mining and touristic reasons). Second, the sale will kickstart a project that aims at creating a larger community of invested, territorial custodians of Caleta María. For both these reasons, Ivette and Julio Gastón have set up very specific conditions regarding the possible ‘uses’ of the land and in the first instance they set the prices for the larger lots too high for them to ever become profitable. I admit, I am conflicted by the parcelling of privatized land (the private sale of land in Tierra del Fuego is counter to the project of indigenous sovereignty I stand by) and the ways in which drones (a military technology) are being used to map difficult to reach territories—even if its use is in name of a new model of environmental care. Carolina and I deal with our contempt for this neo-colonial technology by tweaking it in post-production. By slowing it down, colouring it, and adding a soundtrack we suggest it depicts an *other* perspective. We show Ivette the results and she consents.

Years ago, I proposed that Ivette offer one of the seven large lots to Ana María Yaconi, an exceptional woman—an educator, art historian, and philanthropist—who I had come to know through her ongoing funding support of Ensayos. The sale went through and without asking for it, in February 2017 I received a small cut of the earnings, which I immediately reinvested in DISTANCIA. The 1,200,000 CLP (1,829 USD) covered the costs of that month’s pre-production trip to Karukinka. Meaning that Carolina Saquel, Nicolás Spencer (sound artist) and I were able to travel along the road to Caleta María and back streamlining our road-movie tactics. We hired a car, crossed the strait of Magellan, rented some sound and video equipment (most was already owned by Carolina and Nicolás) and met Ivette and Julio Gastón on the shores of the Admiralty Sound where we discussed the illegalities perpetuated by the State, shot video footage of the disturbed site and played around with different ways of using the equipment we could afford to bring. Sources of funding shape the results. Previous trips have been financed by each participating researcher thanks to individual grants from associated universities, arts councils, and private art donors. A list of these is available on the Ensayos website.

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The 2nd of January of 2018, on the last evening of our most official filming period in Caleta María, I addressed the issue of funding sources in a presentation that I titled, *The Infrastructure of the Image*. It was nearly 11pm and we were gathered around the dining room table; plates had been cleared and replaced with cameras and sound recorders. The sun had just set, there was still no need for artificial light. Cecilia Vicuña and Michael Taussig had their notebooks and pencils out, attesting to their respective roles as poet and anthropologist on board our crew. Ivette—who was leaning against the old couch near the wood-burning stove, still wearing her cooking apron (her usual evening attire)—was unusually excited for that night’s set of presentations. Grouped under the name “The Construction of the Image,” Carolina Saquel and Matías Illanes, DISTANCIA’s director and director of photography (DOP) respectively, would also be presenting and Ivette was eager to know how Matías defined the task of a DOP; he was the newest member of the film crew and the youngest.

I sat on a tall stool, my own log book open to the makeshift budget that I had been keeping as bills and expenses began to add up during our film shoot. I had decided to start by calling out each expense, its exact amount, who had paid for it, and where the funds had come from:

Airplane tickets Santiago-Punta Arenas return, 719,139 Chilean Pesos (CLP), Camila Marambio, expense covered thanks to the donation of 3,000,000 CLP to Ensayos by Ana María Yaconi. Camera Rentals and Other Equipment, 2,254,940 CLP, fronted by Ariel Bustamante, soon to be reimbursed from the aforementioned donation by Ana María Yaconi. Food and Petrol, 740,006 CLP, Ivette Martínez and Julio Gastón Contreras, paid for out of their own pockets, etc.

This went on for quite a while; by the end of it, the numbers had twisted my tongue, and I was happy to move into a more speculative discourse on how the monetary insufficiency of our precarious economy was subsidised by our affects. I cited Patricia T. Clough, who in *The Affective Turn: Political Economy, Biomedicine and Bodies* said that: “the turn to affect points to a dynamism immanent to bodily matter and matter generally—matter’s capacity for self-organization in being informational—” (Clough 2008, 1). My aim in citing Clough was to celebrate the amazing dynamism of that week’s film shoot and to reflect on how our differently abled bodies were in fact our greatest trans-formational capital. That week our activities had included unprecedented dancing, singing, and weeping. We had practiced a highly sensual approach to depicting contemporary Fuegian human geography; attempting to contribute to it by nurturing custodial relationships to place; and, perhaps, beginning a process of decolonizing Karukinka.

⁵⁴ Planning meals for Caleta María is an activity that Ivette and I have rehearsed repeatedly. Despite our culinary differences, neither of us likes excess, so we carefully consider the weight of each fruit, the need of each individual, and all our wastes. In any case, as I stated before, our budget is limited and due to the long-distance travel to Caleta María we take precautionary measures with our food supply. Which is not to say that we don’t delight in the pleasure of preparing meals: Kiko (Ivette’s partner) presents us with his US-flair by making his special nutritional-yeast sprinkled popcorn; I forage seaweed, stir-fry it, and usually surprise the sceptical palate; Ivette bakes canned-fruit pies, while her son Julio Antonio makes bread in the mornings. Carolina makes wonders with left-over rice and Cecilia instructs us all on how to spice-up quinoa and lentils. Our ability to know how to be in, or should I say be *with*, Caleta María is an embodied knowing that is slowly evolving. A performative practice of collectively being Fuegian today entails fishing but also brewing store-bought vanilla flavoured coffee shipped to the duty-free port of Punta Arenas from who knows where (thanks Walmart). Contradictions are endless.

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Archipelagic entrapment exacerbates the awareness of distance. When in Caleta María, 398 kilometers from the ‘comforts’ of the nearest township of Porvenir (despite its name meaning “what is to come,” as the capital of Chilean Tierra del Fuego, Porvenir can hardly be considered comfortable. With lacklustre lodgings, the town presents as a deserted place, where finding a job, fresh food, let alone a cinema are something of the past), nothing is too close, everything is too far. Yet, upon arrival, Caleta María feels like the very centre of the world. Distance is relational.

For most, this is at first an uneasy experience. Unravelling over time, for some (me included) it can turn into a passion. *Becoming* better at unfolding into the states of uncertainty aroused by Karukinka (Ugarte 2014), at wading on the borderlands of Caleta María, requires staring at the trouble of being so removed from comfort zones. Trouble, according to feminist scholar and historian of science and technology, Donna Haraway,

is an interesting word. It derives from a thirteenth-century French verb meaning “to stir up,” “to make cloudy,” “to disturb.” We—all of us on Terra—live in disturbing times, mixed-up times, troubling and turbid times. The task is to become capable, with each other in all of our bumptious kinds, of response. (Haraway 2016, 18).

In my experience, through *Ensayos*, the uncomfortable practice of staring at the trouble with new and ancient technologies has given way to a repertoire of surprising, new, sensual/ethical abilities, such as: seeping through the cracks of history, seeing the dead, hearing the sorrow of the wind, feeling for the non-human by smelling their desires, telling alternate stories, unsettling one’s self, and co-creating instrumental moving-image reality. Are these then what Haraway calls *response-abilities*?

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An enigmatic shot of earth-turned-dust, momentarily suspended in the air, clouds the screen. This phenomenon, caused by a fast-moving vehicle gliding over an unsurfaced road, is a recurring moving image in *DISTANCIA*. Carolina has captured it by strapping cameras on to the back and front of the cars that drive us from one edge of the main Isle (Porvenir) to another (Caleta María).

Extending an invitation for Carolina to come to Caleta María in 2014 was easy. Finally getting there in 2016, an investment on her part. Returning, in 2017 and 2018, a shared commitment. During her second visit, one evening, after dark, I asked Carolina to present Ivette and Julio Gastón with some of her video work. On a small computer screen, we viewed a couple of her own favourite pieces (*Pentimenti*, 2007; *Cuero Vivo*, 2010). Carolina’s filmic technique has been described by the sociologist and curator Maria Berríos as “observing nature as hard material, playing with the textures, tonality and rhythm of the image, that through camera movements and perspective turn its matter into narrative.” (Berríos 2010).

After the screening, the four of us talked for hours about the excavation site that we had visited and filmed earlier that day. The heavily disturbed, scarred land is a short walking distance from the house where we sat chatting in the dark. It is the result of an illegal excavation, led by the Chilean military workforce, in search of gravel with which to continue building the very road that we had used (and filmed) to get to Caleta María. Carolina, who is both an artist and a lawyer, expressed keen interest in the legislative procedures Ivette and Julio Gastón had undertaken (and succeeded in) to make the claim that the upheaval of that land was unlawful. Painstakingly responding to Carolina’s incisive questions, I gleefully observed Ivette and Carolina bonding.

⁵⁵ Ivette asked if she could invite the historian Alberto Harambour with us to the shoot. He was one of her Master’s thesis advisors and has dedicated his academic life to unearthing the horrifying facts of the Selk’nam genocide.

Looking for mentions of murder, of State consent, and of massacre, Harambour reads the log books of the early Southern Patagonian ranchers with a fine-tooth comb. He is one of the few that analyses these atrocities, and after reading his work I was convinced he knew how to stare at the trouble. I didn’t need to be convinced that he was a good actor to have in *DISTANCIA*, Ivette’s wish to have him was enough. Though I did read some of his articles for myself and was impressed by the wealth of historical data that I had not encountered before, today (after having launched the first season of *DISTANCIA*), however, I am baffled by the fact that during our travels together, Alberto made no mention of Hema’ny Molina or the Covadonga Ona Selk’nam community, despite his having interviewed them earlier that year. Once again, a disciplinary gaze obscures a skilled researcher. Academic research facilitates cultural imperialism and colonialism, which brings to mind Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s declaration that the word ‘research’ is itself “probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary” (Tuhiwai Smith 1999, 1). The thought

of the serial nature of DISTANCIA is the only respite from the uncomfortable feeling that this issue stirs up for me because season two of DISTANCIA will allow us to amend our oversights and future seasons will give us the opportunity to continue acknowledging the historical constructions that we are up against.

We all agreed it was important to get side-tracked and drive out of our way to visit two sites of Selk'nam genocide en route to Caleta María: the first sheep ranch established on Karukinka Tierra del Fuego in 1885 known as *Casa Hobbs*, and *Caleta Josefina*, established in 1894. We filmed there and we cried there too, wailed really, as a reaction to sensing and hearing of the torture and cruelty suffered by hundreds of Selk'nam men, women and children (Harambour-Ross 2012) during the waves of extermination that took place.

Provisionally, the artist and poet Cecilia Vicuña was with us and since she has a practice of spinning webs around pain, trauma, and the unsayable, under her guidance we ritualised the dead. We acknowledged their passing and voiced how sorry we felt.

I look forward to further troubling mourning, memory and place with guidance from Hema'ny and her community in the second season of DISTANCIA.

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Ivette has taken to calling those of us *strays* who gather in Caleta María 'The Party,' as in a political party, and sometimes she gives this Party a first name: Selk'nam. It's a name she deploys with purpose and with respect, though recently I have become suspect of how aware she is of the weight of the appropriation.

The Selk'nam peoples inhabited Caleta María 12,000 years before us. They arrived on foot and roamed the great isle of Karukinka (the largest island of the archipelago of Tierra del Fuego), chasing after guanacos (Prieto, 2011) until the fences came up in the early 1900s. With this fencing began the end of their world as they knew it. It is too often repeated that Lola Kiep'ja was the 'last of the Selk'nam' (Chapman 1977), but this trope undermines serious eco-political issues that urgently need to be addressed, not by insisting on "lostness," but instead by devoting time, energy, creativity, money, thought and willpower to the sentiment that a Selk'nam polity was, and is still, possible. If Ivette's Party is the political Party that honours Selk'nam culture, that commits to the complexity of being bound up in the archipelago's human geography, and that emerges from queering kinship, then it is a party I willingly work for. If, as Laura Ogden pointed out to me, the trope of the "lost tribe" is being used as a kind of warning (metonym) of eco-apocalypse then I dissent from the Party.

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In 2010, I walked to Caleta María behind Ivette, Julio Gastón and Kiko. They were leading sixteen of us (artists, scientists, and park rangers) over the twenty kilometres stretch, of dense bog and thick forest, that had not yet been gravelled. It took us eight hours to reach the coast of the Admiralty Sound and before descending the last peak to Caleta María, I remember rhetorically asking: "What are we hunting for?"

⁵⁶ There are things about Ivette and Caleta María that won't be disclosed in the web series. DISTANCIA is not a documentary, it does not attempt to mirror reality, it is not invested in sameness or scientific fact. DISTANCIA is a short-form web series that attends to what the physicist Karen Barad calls *diffraction* or patterns of difference (Barad 2007). By disrupting linear narrative to embrace a playful interpolation of numerous points of view, DISTANCIA performs a way of being in Karukinka, a drifting-being. As I mentioned earlier, even in these very 'notes' to Ivette's ode I am attempting to open up meaning, not fix causalities, nor speak on behalf of all of the others involved in the making of DISTANCIA. Each 'note' is therefore a vignette, an episode, that like each episode of the web series tries to cope with the epistemological problems of representation.

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Striving to hear each other's muffled voices, Ariel Bustamante and I are having a conversation about the wind. The effort to try and understand the wind as a standalone, standstill object is useless, he says, "it can only be heard when it meets something else. The wind is a relationship." Ariel, artist and sound designer of DISTANCIA, has explained this to me countless times. He suggests we take the *observer effect* (in physics, the observer effect is the fact that simply observing a situation or phenomenon changes that phenomenon) as an analogy, and for a passing moment, I think I understand. Nevertheless, I trust that he understands, and learn from the way he listens.

For at least five years now, Ariel and I have sent each other short sound clips captured casually from our everyday. Using our iPhones we gift each other snippets of noise and music, fragments of our sonorous existence. Until early this year, Ariel had only heard the Fuegian wind through these digital capsules that I had propelled in his direction. Like arrows travelling through space and time, I was pursuing him with these bites from Tierra del Fuego, wanting to reel him in, to eventually get him to take on the task of recording the wind for DISTANCIA.

Two weeks before this was finally about to happen, during our preparative meetings in Santiago, Ariel suggested to Carolina, Matías, and me that we devise "rules for the game," a "minimum and a maximum." At some point, he even requested that we write a joint "manifesto for visiting Caleta María." He was referring to the procedural aspects of the film shoot, asking us to decide upon a specific dynamic of play, but what I perceived he truly desired was a clear ethical framework. In response to this, I scheduled a conversation session titled 'On Ethics and the Filmic Process' as the inaugural event of the shoot. It was my belief that a serious conversation on ethics had to emerge in dialogue, between the visiting team and Fuegian locals.

That settled, Ariel reviewed the production schedule and after reading it carefully and asking many questions, he defined that there should be two systems to capture sound. Each necessitated specific equipment and the assistance of one sound technician (this is how the musician Sebastian Arce came on board the visiting team). One system was meant for recording interiors, meaning all the scenarios in which we would be in doors speaking casually, giving prepared presentations, conducting deliberated interviews, or performing movement exercises. The other sound system was for exterior scenarios; to take on excursions or for anyone to use at any given moment when exploring on their own. For production purposes, the nomenclature we decided upon to designate these two systems was *fixed* and *loose*.

Both *fixed* and *loose* recordings needed to be backed up every night of the shoot, transferred onto computers and hard drives. Cloned to make copies. "El backup," was what Ivette called this nightly ritual that she observed with admiration, saying: "Never have I seen such a careful procedure of securing collective techno-memory."

⁵⁷ Legacy is something that Ivette and I have given much thought to over the years, both together and apart. A synonym for legacy is patrimony and Patrimonial Studies is the name of the specific track Ivette followed within the Master's Program in Social Sciences at the Universidad de Magallanes in Punta Arenas. "Patrimony, legacy, inheritance, birthright, endowment, these are tricky words; trouble," she and I concur over coffee one morning in Caleta María.

In her thesis, Ivette proposes that Chilean society lacks forms of collective memory making, and though she establishes a causal relationship between this lack and the military dictatorship, her specific thesis question is why the well documented Selk'nam genocide has not become a collective Chilean memory. Ivette carried out her Fuegian fieldwork (interviews with locals) in Porvenir and Timaukel, and through cross-referencing her interviews with literature on the subject she determined that the most significant reason for an obscured collective memory of the genocide is the tripartite alliance that carried it out: the execution proceeded without a specific culprit being established due to the allegiance among the State, businessmen, and the Catholic Church, leading to "the measles" being blamed for the crimes (Martínez 2017, 9).

Ivette presented her thesis to all the players during the film shoot. Through a PowerPoint presentation she explained how she has followed, with much enthusiasm, the local germination of a process of ethnogenesis (a term used to designate historical processes of collective ethnic constitution). But, she argued that a bricolage methodology is needed for this process to grow by

making a case for the fundamental need to bind loose individual memories to “emblematic collective memory” (Martínez 2017, 12). She told us how the Selk’nam case has been of interest to Latin American Studies scholars in recent years because of the binational claim to Tierra del Fuego. “On the Argentinian side, there is a small community of Selk’nam descendants that have been legally recognized as such and have been granted land by the State in recognition of their ancestors’ sovereignty. On the Chilean side, there is no State recognition and no claims of Selk’nam descent” (Martínez 2017, 54). Though, as she pointed out, there have been recent cultural manifestations, in Chile, inspired by Selk’nam memory such as theatre plays, concerts, and dance pieces. Ivette highlighted her discovery that contemporary Fuegian inhabitants use a common recurring element to explain their experience of the territory, this being a particular relationship between time and space that they often expressed as connected to Selk’nam culture. “Defined as long and slow, time in Tierra del Fuego is considered bound to distance, and the extreme distance between sites on the island and between the island and the main land is considered the condition for common feelings of abandonment, freedom, precariousness, patience, and isolation.”(ibid, 59) Ivette continued her argument by explaining how each person interviewed had speculated that the Selk’nam probably felt the same isolation as they did, given that they had lived on the same land.

This identification process ended abruptly, however, when I showed them (the interviewees) pictures of Selk’nam peoples. These pictures, most of them taken by Martin Gusinde, some by the Salesian Priest Alberto D’Agostini and still others by the North American explorer William Furlong, were considered by all interviewees as “exotic” and “fantastical,” everyone interviewed knew these images well, as they adorn restaurants, waiting rooms and t-shirts (Martínez 2017).

During the years she undertook her Master’s research, Ivette was unaware of the Selk’nam community Covadonga Ona’s claim to counter the request of State recognition of the genocide; asking, instead, for the State to recognize them as an existing Indigenous population of the Chilean Republic. The Covadonga Ona community has never been able to visit the Chilean side of Karukinka because there has been no one to host them and the lack of public access and transport to Chilean Karukinka has made it impossible for the community to go of their own accord. On the Argentinian side, the Rafaela Ishton Selk’nam community has welcomed them on numerous occasions.

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The geographer David Harvey proposes that despite the strong globalizing and homogenizing tendencies there still exists a unique and affective bond between individuals and the places they call home (Harvey 2010). Similarly, Ivette’s hypothesis is that the territory that determined the life of Selk’nam people continues to determine the life of its contemporary inhabitants and that this fact is entangled with the ghostly traces of Selk’nam life and culture, i.e. the fishing corrals the Selk’nam built along the banks of Bahía Inútil (Useless Bay) that are visible every day at low tide. These vestiges, like open wounds, make the Selk’nam felt. This is what matters, she says: “that we feel with, for, and through the territory. Reanimating memory.” (Martínez 2018, spoken).

⁵⁸ In 1922, ninety years before the road arrived at Caleta María—and two years before Father Martin Gusinde found himself not far from there, at Lago Fagnano, participating in the Kloketen ceremony that he financed, wrote about, and photographed—the American painter, printmaker, illustrator, writer, sailor and adventurer, Rockwell Kent, sat in a small boat in the middle of the Admiralty Sound. From it he depicted the coast of the land now owned by Ivette and Julio Gastón, which was Selk’nam territory then, and a meeting place with the Kawéskar and Yagán, canoe peoples with whom the Selk’nam traded (Prieto, 2011). I take special interest in the story of this artist who braved harsh conditions to paint Tierra del Fuego because later he also dared straddle the realms of politics, law, and labor rights. This resonates with my curatorial notion that geographical distance and techno accessibility shifts the way artists conceive of the role of art in relation to politics and the law of the land. Kent’s paintings are fairly unknown to Fuegian locals and curatorially speaking, this is due to the fact that Kent’s work has never been exhibited in the Fuegian region. A region that poses curatorial challenges because it is not centralized and therefore even if an exhibition was to be presented in the capital, Punta Arenas, those living on

Karukinka would never see it. This is probably the reasons why Kent printed images of his paintings in magazines alongside his political articles and why television is our approach to broadcasting an artistic process that questions the relations between place, people and the property law.

Kent's paintings, alongside drawings and lithographs, can also be found in his published travel journals, titled *Voyaging: Southward from the strait of Magellan* (1924). On a cold starry night in 2011, Kiko uses the light from the blazing flames of the campfire to see the words in the chapter of *Voyaging* that describes Caleta María and reads these out loud to those gathered there. After about ten minutes, he breaks from reading, to tell us that despite Kent's "relatively privileged background he had formed radical political views early in life joining the American Socialist Party in 1904," and that his trip to Tierra del Fuego had been preceded by one to Alaska. Though Kent seemed to enjoy the extreme outdoors, Kiko implied that he had been sent to such outposts by his colleagues who commissioned him to write travel memoirs intended to keep him away and out of trouble with the law. Undeterred by their efforts,

Kent's political activism came to the fore in the 1930s, when he took part in several initiatives of the cultural popular front, including support for the war on fascism. Most notably, he participated in the American Artists' Congress at the time of its formation in 1936 and later served as an officer of the Artists' Union of America and then the Artists' League of America in their efforts to represent artists to boards, museum and dealers.

In the changing post-war context, Kent also advocated nuclear disarmament and continued friendship with America's wartime ally, the Soviet Union. Kent was not a communist and considered his political views to be in the best traditions of American democracy. However, his participation in the Stockholm Appeal and the World Peace Council led to the suspension of his Passport in 1950. He filed a suit to regain his foreign-travel rights, and in June 1958, the US Supreme Court in *Kent v. Dulles* affirmed his right to travel declaring the ban a violation of his civil rights. This was not his first time in court, for in 1951 he also had to defend his record in court proceedings, coming under attack as an officer of the International Workers Order, a mutual benefit and cultural society supported by leftist and immigrants. (Wikipedia contributors 2019, April 29)

I relay this story (whose facts I pinched from Wikipedia) for three symbolic reasons. First, the sheer eeriness of how Kent's tale of eco-political global entanglement presages the contemporary political situation in his home country and abroad. Second, I am fond of how his story highlights the commitment of the artist to the pressing political and environmental struggles of his time. Third, Kent's case is an example of how "American citizens know their rights and how their judicial system works, even though there has never been an obligatory program on the subject included in school curricula." (Villez 2009, 1). Barbara Villez, a legal scholar, suggests that "it is likely that a vast majority of the population in the United States has acquired this information simply from watching courtroom dramas, perhaps religiously and for some, from a very young age." (ibid). Though during Kent's early childhood (born 1882), he would not have been watching TV—as noted by Villez the legal genre began in radio broadcasting in the 1930s and moved to television in the 1940s (ibid)—maybe he was brought up listening to courtroom dramas on the radio? Nonetheless I am fascinated by the story of an artist (or any citizen for that matter) that enacts his rights, performing the law as Kent did, because one of the original motivations for the making of the web series DISTANCIA was to tell the tale of the legal actions valiantly taken by Ivette and Julio Gastón against the Chilean state (future seasons of DISTANCIA will dip further into the legal proceedings).

⁵⁹ Though I'm uncertain about whether these 'notes' have achieved "the clarity, meaning, and symbolic understanding" that Grebe believed (desired?) could have been attained from Chapman's recording of Kiepja had Chapman translated and annotated Kiep'ja's verses, translating and annotating *Oda a Ivette* with that intent has certainly been an exercise "in reverberation, in repetition, and in methodological accuracy," as well as practice in the language-translation that will be undertaken to make the web series accessible to non-Spanish speaking audiences.

By using direct address, repetition and familiarization, segmentation, open narratives, and self-reflexivity I have been rehearsing the use of certain tools commonly “used to guide the public’s reading of televisual discourse.” (Villez 2009, 4). So, even if the reader is not a fan of the fragmented nature of this text the reader has acquired from her general experience certain habits, which have sharpened her reception skills. Learning how to read this fragmented annotated discourse, the reader has been drawn in to an archipelagic mode of inquiry. One that wilfully makes Karukinka matter.

To matter is a right that should never be negated. Caleta María, among other fjords of Karukinka, has been the site of matricide, genocide, ethnocide, political repression, and most recently ecocide (wilful destruction of ecosystems for the sake of extractivist gain). What is lost must be mourned. What remains, cared for. And those who pay attention to this whole process, celebrated: held in high esteem.

As my curatorial practice intertwines with Karukinka the bond between us grows stronger. Questions of representation, memory, legality, and territory are further complicated and diffracted by questions of mediation, broadcasting, agency and new technologies. Ivette and I share a mutual desire for environmental justice for Karukinka, the shape of which is evolving, and our differences keep us going; hard at work we are learning the protocols of translating the experience that comes from staring at Caleta María.

*

While I navigate the treacherous waters of post-production and distribution, I will be guided by the soundness of the Yámana word *Uun-Darana(ta)*: To open the eye(s) wide. tr. To cut off a large slice. To slice off. (Bridges, T. 1987). The Yámana are the people who saw the Selk’nam, their neighbours, and I plan to make every attempt to enact the mandate I hear in this Fuegian word-concept: look with the eye(s) wide open, splice off. DISTANCIA will not re-enact the colonial gaze, it will stand instead as a neighbourly *manifesto for visiting* the other. An ode to the other. A looking that constitutes a wider I/eye by founding a deep, respectful, response-able more-than-I/eye, a not-I, a we, a thy. A sliced eye/I that is willing to recognize its shortcomings, as a mere slice of the whole picture.

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