

# APPROACHING SELF-TRANSLATION IN LATIN AMERICAN INDIGENOUS LITERATURES. THE MAPUCHE BILINGUAL POETRY OF ELICURA CHIHUAILAF AND LILIANA ANCALAO

*Melisa Stocco*

Universidad Nacional de Cuyo.  
Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones  
Científicas y Técnicas (Argentina)

SELF-translation can be understood as a creative practice which articulates cultural difference, and produces, negotiates and confronts meanings in a space between languages and cultures, with the particularity of the double agency of its “author-translator”. The text authored through this practice can be defined as ‘bilingual’ (Hokenson and Munson 1), and the process involved poses a theoretical and methodological challenge for translation studies, as it can frequently operate at the limits of the presumptions and assumptions of this field (Santoyo 36). Self-translation also challenges core concepts of translation studies such as those of author and translator, original and target text, equivalence and the target reader (Klimkiewicz 189-90). In all its complexity, self-translation is one of the most intriguing translation practices, whose study is gradually growing within the disciplines of literary and translation studies.

Because of the fusion of the competencies of author and translator, self-translation has generated interesting debates regarding its nature. Views on the matter range from conceiving it as just another translation, to considering the practice as a re-creation that produces a “second original”, or as a form of writing that “escapes temporal sequencing, as it is a product of one hand addressing two cultural spaces existing simultaneously” (Hokenson and Munson 207). The latter is the definition that we prefer, since it considers self-translation from the spatial and cultural perspective we will develop in the present work. The status of the self-translator has

also been subject of debate. Whereas some consider him/her a translator using the same strategies as any other person dedicated to the task (Tanqueiro 19), there are different positions that highlight the creative character of the self-translator and his/her role of cultural mediator and rewriter (Mercuri 2009; Bassnett 2013).

As we review the literature available on the matter of self-translation, we realize that very little has been written about the situation of Indigenous literatures in Latin America. Except for some particular and relevant cases, such as the works of Gustavo Pérez Firmat (*Tongue Ties*, 2003), Debra Castillo (*Redreaming America*, 2005), Doris Sommer (*Bilingual Games*, 2003), or Isabel de Courtivron (*Lives in Translation*, 2003), which, in the area of Latin American Studies, have focused on the bilingual operations of Anglo-Hispanic literature, the study of self-translation has been mainly focused on European authors. If we consider postcolonial self-translations other than the ones belonging to the Hispanic scene of the United States, attention has been drawn to the French-English bilingual literature from Canada and some cases from Africa and India (Bassnett and Trivedi; Cordingley). Since scholars have emphasized the fact that the study of self-translation has been quite limited to the work of canonical European authors such as Vladimir Nabokov, Julien Green, Joseph Brodsky or Samuel Beckett (Recuenco Peñalver 197-98), there is still a lot to be done to move towards points of reference other than the Eurocentric. It is therefore crucial to analyze the phenomenon of self-translation as a practice of great relevance in the current production of Native authors of Latin America. In fact, the work of bilingual Indigenous authorship in the continent has had an enormous development in the past years, extending from Mexico to the south of Chile and Argentina. In their varied agencies and motivations for taking up bilingual discursive practices, these authors challenge not only the monolingual and monocultural paradigms of national literatures in Latin American countries, but also what is generally assumed to be the *telos* of self-translators: an intention to become affiliated with a particular receiving literary system or culture. Instead, many Indigenous self-translators seek to make a reverse movement: that of reappropriating the lost language of their ancestors and thus re-elaborate some features of their own identity.

In this study we propose to approach the issue of self-translation in contemporary Indigenous literatures from the perspective of the ‘spatial turn’ and through the productive and dynamic concept of ‘*ch’ixi*’ developed by Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui. *Ch’ixi* is a notion that contrasts with the idea of ‘hybridity’, in the understanding, as Rivera Cusicanqui states, that the cultural scenario of Indigenous Latin America “manifests an active recombination of opposed worlds and contradictory meanings, which forms a fabric in the very frontier of these antagonistic poles” (“The Potosí Principle” par. 10). We consider self-translation, in its linguistic border crossings and transfigurations, deviations and omissions, contradictions and complementarities, to be the aesthetic and literary manifestation of such a *ch’ixi* recombination of “opposed worlds”.

Indigenous authors self-identify as members or descendants of aboriginal peoples of the continent and write in Spanish and – though not as an excluding characteristic, in their respective vernacular languages, which had mainly possessed a historically oral tradition: Kiché, Mapudungun, Náhuatl, Quechua, Mazateco, Wayunaiki, Uitoto,

among many others. This emergent movement constitutes a territory of Indigenous agency in the context of contemporary Latin America, in terms of a linguistic, aesthetic, epistemic and political project (Arias et al. 7). Writers self-translate their works from their vernacular languages into Spanish or viceversa and the bilingual versions are generally presented *en face*.

Self-translation is a widespread practice in the production of a great number of Indigenous authors, though as we have already highlighted, bilingualism is not always the case, as many authors write only in Spanish, which points at the heterogeneity of a literary production that evades the attempts of the academy to establish generalizations. In fact, if we focus our study on self-translating practices, we will also encounter diversity insofar as double register writing is carried out both by subjects with a high level of bilingualism, as well as by those who have learned their ancestors' mother tongue in adulthood, with the help of grammars, dictionaries and other speakers. This rather late acquisition mostly corresponds with a movement of cultural recovery and reaffirmation of their Indigenous identity.

We will concentrate our analysis on the body of work produced by authors belonging to the Mapuche Nation. This Indigenous people are mainly based on central and southern Chile and southern Argentina. Their native language is Mapudungun, a language of oral transmission and tradition which had begun to be transcribed to the Western written system in colonial times and which is used by a group of contemporary authors of Mapuche ascendance to write a bilingual body of work. There are diverse orthographic systems (*Unificado*, *Grafemario Raguileo*, *Aziimchefe*) created in an attempt to standardize writing but no single one has been chosen uniformly by all Mapuche speakers and writers so far. According to Rodrigo Rojas (17), it is in the 1990s and in consonance with the fifth centenary of Columbus' arrival to the continent, that institutions and literary critics "re-discover" a group of authors described under the label of "Mapuche poetry". Maribel Mora Curriao (22-3) establishes the beginning of a Mapuche literary canon with Segundo Jara's work published in 1917, Sebastián Queupul's in 1939 and Anselmo Quiñaqueo's and Pedro Alonso Retamal's in 1966 and 1970, respectively. However, it is in the 80s and 90s that the Mapuche literary activity begins to flourish. Two books signal the incorporation of contemporary Mapuche poetry into the literary system and the critical academic circles of Chile: Elicura Chihuailaf's *En el país de la memoria* published in 1988 and Leonel Lienlaf's *Se ha despertado el ave de mi corazón* published the following year. Chihuailaf's first book shows an experimental character with the use of varied typographies, a collage of words, pictures and press articles. As regards Lienlaf's work, it was awarded the *Premio Municipal de Literatura de Santiago* in 1990 and prologued by the renowned poet Raúl Zurita (Huenún 16).

The bilingual Mapuche body of work presents very particular circumstances not taken into account in the characterization of self-translation by translation studies. This argument can also be extended to other literatures of Indigenous authorship in the continent. For instance, it is generally accepted that authors who self-translate take up a new language through motives such as exile and immigration (Hokenson and Munson 40). However, the relationship of Indigenous authors to the language

of their ancestors and the imposed Spanish language determines a very different scenario. As Renate Eigenbrod reflects upon the different situations of migrant authors and Aboriginal authors in Canada: “while migrant authors are able to go back to their country and relearn a language they may have been forced to forget . . . Indigenous people, whose languages are threatened with extinction (or have already become extinct), do not have this option. A language that is lost on this continent is lost forever” (35-36). Indigenous people are not immigrants, however, they are displaced (Eigenbrod 81), a displacement produced first by colonial forces and later by the modern nation states.

These forced movements of Indigenous groups involved not only the dispossession of lands but also the invisibility and erasure of Indigenous cultures and languages as well as the imposition of the colonial language. The “taking up” of a “new” language for the means of self-translation by these authors would therefore be inaccurate. Which should be in this case the “new” language? The one imposed by the colonial power or the native language of the ancestors, now relearned as a second language, as is done by many within the Indigenous communities? In line with these questions, we review some conceptualizations made within the dominant lines of translation studies as regards the motivations for self-translation and bilingual writing, which Latin American Indigenous literatures seem to challenge.

As Jan Hokenson suggests, the practice of self-translation is generally considered to derive, among other interests, from the drive of the author to situate their own work “with relation to canonical figures, conventions and genres in both traditions”, their own and the foreign (55). In the case of the poets we study, their motivation to self-translate has more to do with establishing a mode of resistance, of re-appropriating the expressive dispositives of mainstream canonical literature to produce their own “counterdispositive of enunciation”: bilingual, double. In this movement, a voice is given to languages that do not generally have a literary tradition as understood by Western canon, since, in most cases, the tradition of Indigenous Latin American languages is oral.

Corinna Krause’s argument for “non-translation” in the case of another minor literature, Gaelic poetry, and therefore the consideration of self-translation into English as a straitjacket and as an instrument of invisibilization of the minority language (138) cannot be paralleled to the case of Latin American Indigenous languages either, provided that we start by admitting that they *were never visible* in the first place. On the contrary, we consider bilingual editions that present both texts *en face* as an effort to make the Indigenous language visible and to put it on an equal literary and aesthetic footing with the hegemonic language, Spanish.

Elin-Maria Evangelista goes over Mary Besemeres’ argument that self-translation is a threat to the author’s own identity, “which would be formed in the first language and would thus be reliant on it for a true expression of self” (Evangelista 177).<sup>1</sup> This ideal of the ‘mother tongue’, which has its origin in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe, displaces and questions multilingual practices and establishes that speaking only one language is the natural norm (Yildiz 6). In the case of Mapuche writers, Besemeres’ argument in favor of monolingualism and against self-translation as an obstacle to the expression of identity would probably not apply. Poets such as Lil-

iana Ancalao (Comodoro Rivadavia, Argentina, 1961) and Adriana Paredes Pinda (Osorno, Chile, 1970), have precisely learned the language of their ancestors in an act of reappropriating self or lost identity. These authors are, once again, not immigrants, but exiles or displaced subjects in their own land, they do not possess full competence of the language they consider their “mother tongue” and speak in the language of the colonizer. Thus their sociolinguistic situation challenges some established notions on identity and first language and gives clear proof of lives that do not comply with essentialist ideals of culture. Translating oneself is definitely not, in the case of Pinda or Ancalao, a “devastating loss” (Evangelista 180). On the contrary, it is, though an awkward and uncomfortable place to inhabit as Gloria Anzaldúa states when portraying her *‘Nepantla’* (237), a form of gain, and in some cases, of bewilderment as the newly bilingual authors find they discover new connections or new sides to their selves they had so far not been able to express, or had expressed very differently, in Spanish.

#### THE “SPATIAL TURN”

In order to reflect upon the complexity of self-translation and, particularly, upon the specificity of our case of study, recurring to spatial concepts such as those of ‘Third Space’ by Homi Bhabha (1994) and Edward Soja (1996), becomes particularly instrumental. We also consider the notion of *ch’ixi* provided by Bolivian sociologist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui to problematize the concept of linguistic hybridity.

With regard to the “spatial turn”, Santa Arias and Barney Warf outline a theoretical approach which emerged in the 60s with the contributions of Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault to a critique of historicism: a de-spatialized consciousness in which geography figured weakly or not at all, and which posited “the existence of temporal “stages” of development, a view that portrayed the past as the progressive, inexorable ascent from savagery to civilization, simplicity to complexity, primitiveness to civilization, and darkness to light” (Arias and Warf 2). The need to think in spatial terms has transcended disciplines such as philosophy and geography and, in the case of translation studies, some reflections on the need to open to a spatial turn direction have been forwarded, for instance, by scholars such as Harsha Ram, Jan Hokenson and Marcella Munson. Ram states that the modernist theories of translation have privileged syntax over meaning, which “coincides with a metaphysics of time” (206). As a result, a lack of theorisation on the “refractory nature of trans-cultural space” (206) ensues. Hokenson and Munson, on their part, critically point out that the focus on time has been predominant in the area of translation studies:

one of the stumbling blocks for translation theorists has been the concept of time in translation. Like it or not, those of us in translation work or theory, or manuscript studies, have been conditioned to think in terms of first and second texts, versions, languages. It is almost as though we continue to conceive translation along the vertical axis of *translatio studii* whereby a second text descends from the summit of arch-value of the “original”, in diminution and loss. (Hokenson and Munson 206-207)

In contrast, the scholars propose, taking up Ram's ideas, that the spatialization of translation would restore the metaphoricality of *trans-latio* as a text created across cultural spaces (207). What is the place of self-translation within these reflections? More than any other form of translation, the bilingual text "escapes temporal sequencing" and can be approached through a "flattening" of the temporal axis and an outward focus to cultural spaces, thus allowing for the emergence of self-translation as "a cultural and historical practice bridging audiences in unique ways" (Hokenson and Munson 207). We propose two concepts that can be useful for the analysis of self-translation from a spatial perspective: 'Third Space' and the 'trialectics of space' of Edward Soja.

One of the theorists who have contributed the most to the spatial perspective in the Humanities and Social Sciences is Edward Soja. His notion of 'Third Space' is particularly important to our study. In order to grasp this concept, we must also bear in mind the important antecedent of Homi Bhabha, who defines 'Third Space' as that place from which cultural hybridity emerges, which is open to translation, and by which it cannot be said that a totalizing previous moment of being or essence exists (Rutherford 211). As for Soja, with his definition of 'Third Space' which recovers some ideas by the philosopher Henri Lefebvre, he points at considering space not only as physical, but also as a symbolic, imagined force:

The space where all places are, capable of being seen from every angle, each standing clear; but also a secret and conjectured object, filled with illusions and allusions, a space that is common to all of us yet never able to be completely seen and understood, an "unimaginable universe" or as Lefebvre would put it, "the most general of products".  
Everything comes together in Thirdspace: subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and the unconscious, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history. (56-57)

Additionally, he defines an ontology of 'Third Space' – to be in the world is definable as being simultaneously historical, social and spatial (76), and an epistemology or spatial thinking called 'trialectics of space' which points at deconstructing binarisms "by interjecting and-Other set of choices" (5). In his own words:

Thirthing-as-Othering is much more than a dialectical synthesis *à la* Hegel or Marx, which is too predicated on the completeness and temporal sequencing of thesis/ antithesis/ synthesis. Thirthing introduces a critical "other-than" choice that speaks and critiques through its otherness. That is to say, it does not derive simply from an additive combination of its binary antecedents but rather from a disordering deconstruction and tentative reconstitution of their presumed totalization producing an open alternative that is both similar and strikingly different. (Soja 60-61)

## CH'IXI

This non-binary, spatial perspective is compatible with the way we propose to think of hybridity, which is one of the most outstanding characteristics of self-translated texts. Since they are bilingual works authored by individuals who live within conflicting cultures, languages and worldviews, it is important to reflect upon the supposed dualism and all-too-often essentialism entailed in their study by problematizing these issues through a “thirding” logics.<sup>2</sup> If, for instance, we think of hybridity as a simple fusion, we run the risk of not discussing aspects of contradiction and antagonism in phenomena of cultural contact. The notion also presupposes the subordination of any intercultural phenomenon to the temporal, i.e. to the preexistence of two clearly separated ordinary moments that give place to a third one. In contrast to the idea of hybridity, we recur to the concept of *ch'ixi* which Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui takes from the Andean Aymara culture and language, not only as a decolonizing gesture, but as a constituent element in an alternative and more complex *episteme*. This concept accounts for a *mestizo* reality where cultural differences do not fuse into some form of toned-down hybridity but co-exist in antagonism and complementarity. Following the *ch'ixi* perspective, mixture is conflictive, as each difference reproduces itself from the past and relates to others in contentious ways (70).

*Ch'ixi* can be translated as “motley, spotted” and introduces an epistemological turn in the concept of hybridity. *Ch'ixi* allows for understanding subjectivity and cultural identity in a “dialectic without synthesis” between opposing forces that complement and antagonize. In this movement of permanent tension, Rivera Cusicanqui argues that borders and binarisms such as the autochthonous and the alien interact in subversive, mutually contaminating ways (“The Potosí Principle” par. 17).

The *ch'ixi* perspective implies that hybridity as a conciliatory third term emerging from a dualistic opposition is surpassed by the acknowledgment of difference and conflict as productive energies within communities and subjects. This appraisal of the notion of mixture implies a conscious appropriation of the condition of *mestizo* in a way that focuses on the conflicting articulations of cultural difference in Latin America and contends with a conciliatory position which Antonio Cornejo Polar has defined as offering “harmonic images of what is obviously torn and belligerent, proposing figurations which at heart are only relevant to those who find it convenient to imagine our societies as smooth, not-at-all-conflictive spaces of coexistence” (341).<sup>3</sup> In line with this argument, Renate Eigenbrod criticizes “the linear thinking of postcolonial studies” (117). In opposition, Eigenbrod, a lucid and committed reader of Indigenous literatures, suggests a methodological framework that incorporates contradictions and tensions. Thus, a complex, culturally literate reading arises since, to deny the existence of conflict, also “denies Indigenous peoples the right . . . to be ‘complicated, internally diverse or contradictory. Only the West has that privilege’” (118). Since the *ch'ixi* is a concept that does not deny the existence of conflict and contradiction within identity, we find in it a similar logic to that proposed by Soja with his idea of ‘trialectics’: that of embracing contradictions as a way of deconstructing binarisms, instead of adding elements in search of unification or totalization.

SELF-TRANSLATION AS *THIRD SPACE* AND *CH'IXI* PRACTICE

Self translation is a “third space” in and of itself, and following Soja’s trialectic logic, it can be described as a *ch’ixi* space in Rivera Cusicanqui’s terms. It is both a real and imaginary space which combines the scales of the physical – bodies, topography, texts in their materiality, the social – ancestral cosmogonies, postmodern cultures, minor and major languages, and the historical – the past and present of authors and their communities. In the sense that it breaks duality, self-translation is *ch’ixi*, since it enables contradiction and complementarity to thrive in the double register of writing, thus forging the singular expressive richness of self-translated texts.

Given the complex characterization of the concept of self-translation that we have tried to delineate and the specificity of Mapuche self-translated poetry, we opt to elaborate our theoretical and methodological framework with contributions from diverse sources. As Anthony Pym suggests, when regarding an issue of translation studies “we should feel free to move between the paradigms, selecting the ideas that can help us solve problems” (164-5). In this sense, we choose to combine a comparative methodology in the analysis of the Spanish and Mapudungun texts and relate it with the previous concepts of spatial thinking and the notion of the *ch’ixi*.

Regarding the comparative approach to the texts, we follow Claudio Guillén’s statement that “the task of the comparatist is a dialectical one” (15), in which there is an awareness of the emergence of certain tensions. However, we propose that such a dialectic be open. *Ch’ixi* proposes a dialectic without synthesis, or rather, a non-totalizing ‘trialectic’. As Rodrigo Rojas suggests regarding Mapuche self-translated poetry: “texts are rather a co-elaboration between languages” (108).<sup>4</sup> We therefore recur to the term of *ch’ixi* to critique the idea of versions in double register as equivalent, synonyms between languages, a mechanistic and unifying view on the self-translating practice.

Furthermore, the importance of similarity and difference as two poles of the search of the comparatist does have a methodological purpose. As Domínguez, Saussy and Villanueva argue: “pursuing similarity, but using similarity as a starting point for discovering what is different, orients a comparative project toward close reading and yet includes, via similarity, the necessary move away from mere description toward explanation” (75). Therefore, we seek to make the task of comparison more complex, by not searching for equivalence among texts but for what is antagonistic between them, what defies simple synonymy and opens up to the tension, the overlaps, and overflows of meanings coming and going from one text to the other.

SELF-TRANSLATION IN *MAPUCHE* POETRY: ELICURA, CHIHUAILAF AND LILIANA ANCALAO

We have chosen two poets from the Mapuche Nation to exemplify through the close reading of their texts what we have discussed so far regarding Indigenous self-translation as a ‘third space’ and *ch’ixi* practice. Elicura Chihuailaf (Quechurewe,



*Gulu Mapu*, 1952), whom we have already presented as one of the pioneering figures of contemporary Mapuche poetry, is a Mapudungun native-speaker poet and essayist. His work revolves around the memory and history of his community. Liliana Ancalao (Comodoro Rivadavia, *Puel Mapu*, 1961), whom we mentioned among the group of authors who have learned the language of their ancestors in adulthood as a second language, is a poet and essayist whose work is marked by this particular sociolinguistic situation.

The selected poems are *Nvtramkaleyñ taiñ pu Wenu Mapu Che / Hablando con la gente de la Tierra de Arriba* (“Speaking to the People of the Land Above”) by Elicura Chihuailaf, extracted from his book *De sueños azules y contrasueños* (1995) and a passage consisting of the fourth and fifth stanzas of the poem “*las mujeres y el frío / pu zomo engu wütre*” (“women and the cold”) by Liliana Ancalao, extracted from *Mujeres a la intemperie/ Pu zomo wekuntu mew* (2009). Both bilingual texts address the event of *Nguillatun* or *Camaruco*, the most important spiritual celebration of the Mapuche people. We chose this particular topic in order to illustrate more clearly the tensions, overlaps and overflows of meaning within the representation of the ancestral cosmogony in both languages.

In the case of the poem of Chihuailaf, the sacred aspects of the celebration are highlighted. As Luis Cárcamo Huechante has pointed out, the ritual and ceremonial treatment of words weaves the contemporary Mapuche world into a symbolic territory impregnated by the sacred (41). The poem describes one of the central phases of the ceremony of *Nguillatun*: the *awvn* or circular horse ride around the *rewé* or center of the ceremonial field. In contrast, the passage of Ancalao’s poem concentrates on the portrait of the lateral events which take place among the campfires surrounding the *rewé*, the spaces where the members of the community rest, converse and share food and drink in between dances or *purun*.

One way in which meanings expand, contradict, and complement each other between versions in Mapudungun and Spanish can be observed even in the title of Chihuailaf’s poem through the use of the word *nvtramkaleyñ* (68), which is derived from the verb *nvtramkan*, “converse”. In contrast, the Spanish version presents the gerund *hablando*, “talking” (69). This difference is not a minor one, insofar as the idea of conversation has a special meaning in Mapuche culture. As declared by Chihuailaf himself:

CW: Para los Mapuches la conversación, o el ritual de la conversación, era tremendamente importante, ¿no?

ECh: Claro. Al extremo, maravilloso, que la conversación es considerada un arte, que denominamos *Nutram*. Y que tiene también algunas reglas esenciales. Y que nuestros mayores, nuestros abuelos, nuestros padres nos enseñan desde que venimos a este mundo. Y que es que la conversación requiere, sobretudo, aprender y por lo tanto saber escuchar. (Cross 2)

[CW: For the Mapuches conversation or the ritual of conversation was extremely important, was it not?

ECh: Of course. To the wonderful extreme that conversation is considered an art we call *Nutram*. And which has also essential rules. And which our elderly teach us from the moment we come into this world. And conversation requires, above all, learning and therefore knowing, how to listen]<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, in the Spanish text the translation of the word *tretrogkven* (Chihuailaf 68) is omitted. According to the dictionary of Félix Augusta, this could be translated as “(being) gigantic” (2: 173). While in Spanish it only says “*cabalga en círculo*”, “I ride in circles”, the Mapuche term tells us something else about the meaning of the ritual horse ride: an experience of immensity, of spiritual connection with the benevolent forces of the spiritual world. Such omission lends another instance of semantic tension between the Spanish and Mapudungun versions of the poem. The “third space” of self-translation is thus constituted by the omissions, deviations, and differences between the texts, which highlight the *ch’ixi*, that is, the simultaneously complementary and contradictory nature of the bilingual and bicultural text.

More of these examples of cultural difference can be found in the verses *Oo! Fvchakecheyem / Oo!, Anciana, Anciano* (“Oo!, Old Woman, Old Man”) (Chihuailaf 68-69). The term *Fvchakecheyem* in the Mapudungun version consists of a generic that refers to the elderly pair of the *Wenu Mapu* or “land above” in the Mapuche cosmogony. In opposition to this unifying notion, the author chooses to break down the term into “*Anciana*” and “*Anciano*”, the mother and father creators. It is also important to note the order of the terms, first the female, then the male, or rather the female on the left and the male on the right, which seems to express another idea of the Mapuche worldview. In fact, the ordering principle of the Mapuche system of symbols is the opposition left/right, mental and spatial categories that organize thought and social practices of the communities. According to Faron as quoted by Foerster, the female is found on the left and the masculine on the right (57-59). It is important to note that, in this manner, the Spanish and the Mapudungun versions work semantically in complementarity with one another: while in the Spanish version the emphasis is put on the clear-cut differentiation of the pair of elderly figures of the *Wenu Mapu*’s divine family, the Mapudungun version highlights the indissoluble nature of these entities which constitute the base for the divinity *Ngenechen* (Bacigalupo 12).

The same “female-left/ male-right” order is observed in the following verse: *Vlchakezomo ka Wechekeche mvlelu Wenu Mapu / Doncella y Joven de la Tierra de Arriba* (“Young Maiden and Young Man of the Land Above”) (Chihuailaf 68-69). *Vlchakezomo* and *Wechekeche* are also generic terms in which the suffix *-ke* denotes plurality, referring respectively to the young women and men of the “primordial family”. In this line we find the same opposition “generic term vs. singular term” between the Mapudungun and the Spanish versions. Following Foerster’s study once more, it is worth mentioning that the generic terms have to do with the complexity of the quadripartite structure of the Mapuche *Wenu Mapu* entities. Although there is a basic unit of four members, there are diverse “families of divinities of four to sixteen anthropomorphic or anthroposocial deities, each of whom have a certain hierarchical level and function in the total mythical configuration” (Foerster 68).<sup>6</sup> Among these entities are the protective forces or *pu ngen* of the stars, the moon, the mountains, the water, the four cardinal directions. The use of generic terms in the case of the Mapuche text refers to a variety of functions, which antagonizes with the choice of singular terms in the Spanish version. Finally, we find the following differences in the last lines: *Mi Kallfv muayvwvy ñi mollfvñ / en vuestro Azul se regoci-*

*ja mi sangre* “my blood rejoices in your Blue” (Chihuailaf 68-69). The possessive pronoun *mi* in the Mapudungun version is a second person singular “your”. In contrast, by using the pronoun *vuestro* “your” as second person plural, the Spanish version is contiguous with the reference to the four separate entities. These differences antagonize again, given the aforementioned indissolubility of the superior entity.

In the case of Ancalao’s poem, although developed from the apparent unilateralism given by writing first in Spanish and then self-translating into Mapudungun, there is a series of semantic subtleties between versions which enrich and overflow what each on its own can express. One example is the manner in which the Spanish version describes the dozing group of people around the fire with the expression “*dormíamos apenas*” “we barely slept” (10). This idea is expressed in the Mapudungun version with the verb *ümérkülen* (11), which means “being with closed eyes” (Augusta 1: 241). The verb endows the Mapudungun version with a different tone. The group is not sleeping in Mapudungun, *umautun*, they are with closed eyes, in a slumber close to a meditative state. It represents the drowsiness of those keeping the flame that protects them from the cold of the open field. Such subtlety not only shows the expressive potential of Mapudungun in tension with Spanish, but also confronts the languages in the representation of an image that can simultaneously be pedestrian and ritualistic, commonplace and solemn: what Soja referred to in his portrayal of ‘Third Space’ as being both “everyday life and unending history” (61). In such a single line, as expressed in both languages, a more complex, *ch’ixi* portrait is provided.

Regarding once more this idea of simultaneously ordinary and extraordinary representations of the same image through the expressive potential of each language and their respective cultural implications, the translation of “*descampado*” as “*lifmapu*” could be literally translated as “clear, open land”, since “*lif*” is an adjective generally used to accompany the word “*wenu*” or “sky”, to refer to a cloudless firmament. For “open field”, the usual term is “*wellilen*” (Augusta 2: 116), though “*lifkalechi mapu*” is also a possibility (2: 109). The choice of “*lif*” to describe the *mapu*, “the land” and not the sky, bears a semantic charge which becomes more interesting if we think that this open field is not an ordinary one but the space of the celebration, a sacred place for invoking the inhabitants of the realm of the above, which is fittingly called *wenu mapu* in Mapudungun, i.e. “land above”, or “land of the sky”.

Likewise, the verb *reymi*, from *reyilen*, “to be tousled” (1: 197) enriches the image of the hair of “*eufemia*”, the female figure who is resting. The night not only confuses the sight – what is grass and what is the old woman’s short hair, but also disarranges it, making it part of the landscape. The harmonic and conflicting relation of women with nature is a recurrent feature in Ancalao’s poetics (Mellado 103). Through such images, Ancalao’s poetry deals with the construction of her own contemporary and *ch’ixi* Indigenous identity, in a “third space” between Spanish and Mapudungun, and between the urban and rural contexts to which her life is attached. The author has frequently expressed her conviction that her identity would be built only by herself and not imposed by any external factors (Mellado 130). Ancalao explicitly proposes the acceptance of contradictory and conflictive elements in an overlap of cultures and languages between tradition and modernity,

community and individuality, ancestral language and imposed language (Ancalao, "Oralitura" 33).

Given the previous examples of Mapuche bilingual poetry, it is evident that self-translation, as currently practiced in Latin American Indigenous literatures, confirms its complexity as an object of study which requires an equally complex theoretical and methodological approach. The development of a theory of self-translation in Mapuche poetry and other Indigenous Latin American literatures should give thought to some relevant issues. For instance, the hybrid character of the texts studied could be tackled throughout the productive lens that the notion of the *ch'ixi* provides.

The need to understand translation beyond the historicist paradigm of "source text-target text", with consideration for the transit between cultural spaces, rather than focusing on sequence and linguistic equivalence, should also be taken into consideration. For this purpose, working with concepts of the "spatial turn" allows for the acknowledgment of different levels of analysis: physical, social and historical, within that "third space" between languages and cultures that opens up amidst the two versions of a bilingual text. Additionally, the spatial perspective allows for a 'trialectic' logic that goes beyond the binary thinking presupposed by hybridity, all of which is coherent with the idea of *ch'ixi*. The combined application of the 'Third Space', 'trialectics' and '*ch'ixi*' concepts would enable the elaboration of a more complex method of text analysis, in which the emphasis is not on the search for equivalence between versions but rather on finding the traces that evince the semantic complement and antagonism between them. We propose that there is a space of intersection which can be acknowledged by analyzing the decisions of the author in the process of self-translation. We have set out from a comparative interlinguistic methodology of analysis and concentrated on the tones, omissions and expansions of words that allow us to speak about the "text" that is weaved between the two versions.

Thinking in spatial terms, as suggested by Soja and Bhabha with the concept of 'Third Space' or Rivera Cusicanqui's notion of '*ch'ixi*,' engages the study of self-translation in way that, without moving away from the bilingual text but rather starting from the close reading of its double, open corporeality, it is possible to think about the materiality of bodies, social, cultural and historical spaces which are constructed in the poems. We have shown how self-translation produces a "third space" that emerges from the contact of cultures, with all their contradictions, ruptures and continuities. In the space between the two versions of the poems, meanings do not withdraw from one another but rather overflow and undertake each other, like two rivers at the point of confluence.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Mary Besemeres mainly refers to the autobiography of writer and self-translator Eva Hoffman, *Lost in Translation: A life in a New Language* (1989), and to other authors who were "forced to translate themselves" (278). Elin-Maria Evangelista contests the issue of loss in the article included in Cordingley's edited volume *Self-Translation: Brokering*

*Originality in Hybrid Culture* (2013). We may also add here that Besemeris is speaking about authors who choose a second language to write due to different reasons than the ones we refer, that is, the motivation of seeking one's own lost, erased roots.

<sup>2</sup> We coincide with Arnold Krupat's definition of essentialism as "the tendency to specify racial, cultural, or (much less frequently), class traits as fixed or given and as largely determining discursive practice" (3).

<sup>3</sup> The translation is ours. The source text states: "lo que hace es ofrecer imágenes armónicas de lo que obviamente es desgajado y beligerante, proponiendo figuraciones que en el fondo solo son pertinentes a quienes conviene imaginar nuestras sociedades como terrosas y nada conflictivos espacios de convivencia" (Cornejo Polar 341).

<sup>4</sup> The translation is ours. The source text states: "Los textos más bien son una coelaboración entre dos lenguas" (Rojas 108).

<sup>5</sup> The translation is ours. This fragment is extracted from the transcription of the interview to Elicura Chihuailaf conducted by Cristián Warnken on the TV programme *Una belleza nueva*, recorded on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2003 in Santiago de Chile. Regarding the importance of the *nvtram* and its semantic scope, see Mellado (58-62).

<sup>6</sup> The translation is ours. The source text states: "familias de divinidades de 4 a 16 deidades antropomórficas o antroposociales, poseyendo cada una de ellas un determinado nivel jerárquico y función dentro de la configuración mítica total" (Foerster 68).

#### WORKS CITED

- Ancalao, Liliana. "Orality: una opción por la memoria." *El Camarote* 5 (2005): 32-33.
- . *Mujeres a la intemperie. Pu Zomo Wekuntu Mew*. Buenos Aires: El Suri Porfiado, 2009.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera. The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999.
- Arias, Arturo, Luis Cárcamo Huechante and Emilio del Valle Escalante. "Literaturas de Abya Yala." *LASA Forum* 43 (2011): 7-10.
- Arias, Santa and Barney Warf. *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary perspectives*. London: Routledge, 2009.
- Augusta, Fray Félix José de. *Diccionario Araucano*. Temuco: Kushe, 1991. 2 vols.
- Bacigalupo, Ana Mariella. "Rituales de género para el orden cósmico: luchas chamánicas mapuche por la totalidad." *Scripta Ethnologica* 26 (2004): 9-38.
- Bassnett, Susan. "The Self-Translator as Rewriter." *Self-Translation: Brokering Originality in Hybrid Culture*. Cordingley 13-25.
- Bassnett, Susan and Harish Trivedi, eds. *Post-Colonial Translation*. London/New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Besemeris, Mary. *Translating One's Self: Language and Selfhood in Cross-Cultural Autobiography*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2002.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Castillo, Debra. *Redreaming America. Toward a Bilingual American Culture*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2005.
- Cárcamo Huechante, Luis. "La memoria se ilumina." *Katatay. Revista Crítica de Literatura Latinoamericana*, 8 (2010): 38-42.
- Chihuailaf, Elicura. *De sueños azules y contrasueños*. Santiago de Chile: Universitaria, 1995.

- Cornejo Polar, Antonio. "Mestizaje e hibridez: los riesgos de las metáforas. Apuntes." *Revista Iberoamericana* 180 (1997): 341-44.
- Cordingley, Anthony, Ed. *Self-Translation: Brokering Originality in Hybrid Culture*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.
- Cross, Melanie. "Transcripción entrevista a Elicura Chihuailaf." *Una belleza nueva*. (2003). [www.unabellezanueva.org/wp-content/uploads/documentos/entrevista-elicura-chihuailaf.pdf](http://www.unabellezanueva.org/wp-content/uploads/documentos/entrevista-elicura-chihuailaf.pdf). Accessed 10 Sept. 2016.
- De Courtivron, Isabelle. *Lives in Translation. Bilingual Writers on Identity and Creativity*. New York: Palgrave, 2003.
- Domínguez, César, Haun Saussy and Darío Villanueva. *Introducing Comparative Literature. New Trends and Applications*. London/New York: Routledge, 2015.
- Eigenbrod, Renate. *Travelling Knowledges: Positioning the Im/migrant Reader of Aboriginal Literatures in Canada*. Winnipeg, Man.: U of Manitoba P, 2005.
- Evangelista, Elin-Maria. "Writing in Translation. A New Self in a Second Language." *Self-Translation: Brokering Originality in Hybrid Culture*. Cordingley 177-187.
- Foerster G., Rolf. *Introducción a la religiosidad mapuche*. Santiago de Chile: Editorial Universitaria, 1993.
- Guillén, Claudio. *The Challenge of Comparative Literature*. Trans. Cola Franzen. Cambridge, Massachusetts/ London: Harvard UP, 1993.
- Hoffman, Eva. *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language*. New York: Dutton, 1989.
- Hokenson, Jan. "History and the Self-Translator." *Self-Translation: Brokering Originality in Hybrid Culture*. Cordingley 39-60.
- Hokenson, Jan and Marcella Munson. *The Bilingual Text: History and Theory of Literary Self-Translation*. Manchester and New York: St. Jerome Publishing, 2007.
- Huentún, Jaime Luis, ed. *La memoria iluminada: poesía mapuche contemporánea*. Trans. Víctor Cifuentes. Málaga: CEDMA, 2007.
- Klimkiewicz, Aurelia. "Self-Translation as Broken Narrativity: Towards an Understanding of the Self's Multilingual Dialogue." *Self-Translation: Brokering Originality in Hybrid Culture*. Cordingley 189-201.
- Krause, Corinna. "Why bother with the original?": Self-Translation and Scottish Gaelic Poetry." *Self-Translation: Brokering Originality in Hybrid Culture*. Cordingley 127-140.
- Krupat, Arnold. *The Turn to the Native. Studies in Criticism and Culture*. Lincoln and London: U of Nebraska P, 1996.
- Mellado, Silvia. *La morada incómoda: Estudios sobre poesía mapuche. Elicura Chihuailaf y Liliana Ancalao*. General Roca: PubliFadecs, 2014.
- Mercuri, Valentina. "Autotraducción, libertad de autor y mediación cultural: El caso del italiano Carlo Coccioli." *Quaderns. Revista de traducció*, 16 (2009): 135-42.
- Mora Curriao, Maribel. "Poesía mapuche: la instalación de una mismidad étnica en la literatura chilena." *A Contracorriente* 10 (2013): 21-53.
- Pérez Firmat, Gustavo. *Tongue Ties. Logo-Eroticism in Anglo-Hispanic Literature*. New York: Palgrave, 2003.
- Pym, Anthony. *Exploring Translation Theories*, London: Routledge, 2010.
- Ram, Harsha. "Translating Space: Russia's Poets in the Wake of Empire." *Between Languages and Cultures: Translation and Cross-Cultural Texts*. Ed. Dingwaney, Anuradha and Carol Maier. Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh UP, 1995. 199-222
- Recuenco Peñalver, María. "Más allá de la traducción: la autotraducción." *Trans* 15 (2011): 193-208.
- Rivera Cusicanqui, Silvia. *Ch'ixinakax utxiwa. Una reflexión sobre prácticas y discursos descolonizadores*, Buenos Aires: Tinta Limón, 2010.

- Rivera Cusicanqui, Silvia. "The Potosí Principle: Another View of Totality." *E-Misférica*. 11.1 (2014) [www.hemisphericinstitute.org/hemi/en/emisferica-111-decolonial-gesture/e111-essay-the-potosi-principle-another-view-of-totality](http://www.hemisphericinstitute.org/hemi/en/emisferica-111-decolonial-gesture/e111-essay-the-potosi-principle-another-view-of-totality). Accessed 10 Sept. 2016.
- Rojas, Rodrigo. *La lengua escorada. La traducción como estrategia de resistencia en cuatro poetas mapuche*. Santiago de Chile: Pehuén, 2009.
- Rutherford, Jonathan. "The Third Space. Interview with Homi Bhabha." *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990. 207-21.
- Santoyo, Julio César. "On mirrors, dynamics and self-translations." *Self-Translation: Brokering Originality in Hybrid Culture*. Cordingley 27-38.
- Soja, Edward. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.
- Sommer, Doris, ed. *Bilingual Games- Some Literary Investigations*. New York: Palgrave, 2003.
- Tanqueiro, Helena. "Un traductor privilegiado: el autotraductor." *Quaderns. Revista de traducció* 3 (1999): 19-27.
- Yildiz, Yasemin. *Beyond the Mother Tongue: The Postmonolingual Condition*. New York: Fordham UP, 2012.