

Wallmapu ñi tukulpazungu, mapuzungun witrapuratungey

Memories from Wallmapu, the Mapuzungun Rises



© Piam told by Cornelio Puelman in 1987

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Piam are the stories that are passed from generation to generation, and reveal meaningful events in the Mapuche's history. Many of the piam happened in the historical time of the persecution and genocide of Mapuche families during the so called "conquest of the desert," perpetrated by the Argentine nation-state between 1878 and 1885. Piam are a type of counter-history and counter-memory that stand counter to the official history of that invasion and colonization of Puelmapu, Eastern Wallmapu, Mapuche ancestral territory, in what is now known as Argentine Patagonia.

Unlike academic and well-documented studies that confirm state terrorism in Argentina, piam, as oral histories, are passed from generation to generation, or are recorded, and they reconstruct a specific time. Here we offer one of these piam, transcribed for us to counter forgetfulness. As they

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are told to us and as we hear the *piam*, we believe it: we don't need to verify it because we know that it happened in this way and it is in the collective memory of our people.

Although they seem like stories from a remote past, they are current for today's generations. They are revitalized in every new gathering, because the signs of those events are part of a symbolic and effective violence that renews the invasion daily. For instance, in the Villa Llanquin rural elementary school, there is a human skull on display in a glass case. Until recently the skull had a sign that said "head of an Indian." Another example is that a lake, a city in Patagonia, a train line, and many streets and parks are named after Julio Roca, the Argentinian Minister of War, who led the invasion of Wallmapu, and who continues representing Argentinian society. Furthermore, there are several equestrian statues of Roca in uniform throughout the country, one which is even located in the Civic Center of Furiolfche City—an emblem of the power that is exercised today against the Mapuche nation in their own territory.

The following *piam*, told by Cornelio Puelman, was told to him by his grandfather, who belonged to the generation that witnessed the beginning of the end of that ancestral world that was once still free and autonomous. Puelman belongs to the generation of grandfathers and grandmothers, *chachay ka pu papay*, who left this world around 2011. Daughters and sons, nephews and nieces of Puelman's generation are now mothers and grandmothers, fathers and grandfathers of the generation who are revitalizing the language, the land and the memory, and who are speaking Mapuzungun, a language that suffered from the Argentinian policies of the silencing and prohibition of Indigenous languages.

The story that Cornelio Puelman is telling us is not an isolated one. Stories like these have been heard in many places, such as among the Rankülche in the Province of Buenos Aires, or in the Pewenche areas, as well as in other regions of Wallmapu where people witnessed similar events.

These stories are told in Mapuzungun with the grammatical suffix "em" or "yem", which is used to report something that is old or that is no longer here. It also carries a connotation of sadness and nostalgia for that world that is gone. It is customary in Mapuche philosophy to reflect upon the *kuifike che yem*, because Mapuche thought is always thinking toward the past, on what the ancestors would have done if they were here in the present. This is a way for the ancestors to continue speaking to the present, so that the past returns and the circle closes. This is why it is important to rescue this *piam*.



PUELMAN CORNELIO ÑI NGÜTRAN

Feychi zungu ta mülele faw mu, fey mu ta müley ta tufa zungu. Fechi zugu ta mülele, inche ta laku zuam ta ngülam ta tufi. Ngey mapu em ta tufa mo, inchiñ ta kupay ta winka chew weshake kuzaw ta kupay. Müley ta kulliñ. Inche ta mülen..., inche ta ngen mapu, fey entuy taiñ paisano em. Inche ta nielay ta fey paisano em. Inche ta feychi zungu, ta niey ta tio em. Kupaygün kupay winga inche nga entunge mapu pi em, entunge mapu.

Fey miawngey mapu em, pia em, winka. Tüfa mari kiñe tripantu nien, mari küla tripantu, miawunge mapuzuam. Entuy mapun tiewtüfa kangelu mapu tati.

Consejalu ka winka entungeiñ mapu em. Ka winka mapuche tiew mülele, küme rüpü tüfaw pülle, inche feychi kampu, inche ta rangi pingey mu, tüfaw mu ta entungen, piam . Fey mo ta inche ta em.

Amuen tüfy ta tüfachi tüken ta tüfy, ta tüfachi mapu, fewla tañi mapu nien. Tükulen fewla ngülam müten kampu ta tafy, anay. Femgechi ta conseja ñi ta che, fey ta consejo feyta küme amuy ka. Consejaniele che inchiñ taiñ paisano em. Kiñe ta ka pülle amuy ka anüy ta kay müley pu che. Fey mu ta inchiñ ta winka ta kiñer, pim, pülle ta winka. Kom fey mincheawchi amuley, fey mu ta winka awüwün ta kelluy ta tüfey.

Así es.. unos con otros los winka no se tratan de joder. El paisano trata de joder al que está bien, trata de joderlo. El winka no, el winka se ayudan unos con otros, al jodido lo ayuda, por eso levanta, y nosotros no.

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Felelay pues... felelay, felelay.

Inchiñ müley ta tüfey. Ilkungey feyta müley ta che ta tüfey. Feychi wule ta trawayu kom ta kiñelzungu pülle kom fey pülle. No, trawayu inche kupalan, inche amulan, well weza zomo, tiew weza ka mo ngelay ko ka tiew nielu lelfun mew. Fey mu ta tripalay fey. Kiñelzungu ta pilen, fey kiñelzungu, ¡ta müley fey! –¿Amuay pülle? –¿Amuayu? –¡Amuaiñ!

Fütra kuifi ta müley pichi paw llazkünun ta tüfi. Fey mu ta tripalay ti pu che. Inchiñ taiñ mapuche ngeiñ ta tüfa. Kom ta feychi kiñelzungun ta nielay. Kiñe ta kay zungunge kangentuy ta ka zungu ka rakizuam müley. Fey mu ta inchiñ küme kuzawlaiñ. Küme kuzawlaiñ.

Kufikeche...

Kuifikeche müna malleo, kelluy, kelluwiñ; fotüm, ñawe, malle kiñelzungu, pi. Itrokom feley ta tüfy.

[...] Antiguamente estaban todos unidos, todos unido. ¿No ve? Hoy estábamos conversando cuando yo tuve conocimiento tendría unos 10 años, 11.

Pütuiñ may, ngolliiñ, zunguiñ. Peleao, peleao may tati peleolaiñ tati. Küme nguntrankaygün, tayültuku faw, tayültuygün, ngollygün, ulkantuygün, paylanaygün, pero weza zungulay. Fewla, kiñentuku pichikeche, pichikeche wüneltun me quieren pelear. Fey winkangefuy ta tüfey. Eso ha sido antes así.

Kuifikeche müley inche ñi fütra laku em nomen nga cruzafiy, rumen nga trentrenün zafiy, pi. Chew wefürpun pun gelle fulle, epu gelle fulle. Tripay nga lewfun mo nga amuaygün kiñe ngillañ engu. Kintuy nga chew müley rume nentuy sale fey mu tüfay müley pi, fey mu akufuy ñi puwü key.

Inche nga pikey ñi fütra laku em. Puwi nga winka nga inawlfiy katan ñi kawell pi, mollfunkawell mu nga bebiñ. Müley nga la kulliñtufuy iloentufiy fey ñi fütra laku em zomo nga kütrangeiñ, fütra nga kütrangeiñ laku em tañi kushe laku em. Femgechi nga rupay pikey fütrakeche. Fewla nga ngtrumka mu ngelelle nge che koilaniefige “inche pelafi koila tati”, pingén tati. Así fuy.

Yo digo así fu. Son mentiras, dicen, yo no lo he visto. Pero uno que ha conversado está como un libro abierto, mi hijo. Claro... eso contaban los antiguos, que sufrían tanto, comían caballo muerto, punzaban su caballo. Si iban diez personas, diez kawell punzan, y si no, no alcanza la sangre. Mollfüñ kawell para matar el hambre. Si estaban sin comer, ellos, van dos, tres días, si no matan ningún bicho tienen que punzar el caballo. Punzan al lado de la vena. Si lo punzan del guargüero por lo menos cuatro litros de sangre sale. Ahí van tomando en jarro, sal y sangre, sal y sangre.

Pasaban tanto hambre porque tenían que andar disparando. Disparaban cuando vino este...

¿Cómo es que se llamaba el que vino a acaparar el país acá? ¿Los españoles? ¿Colón...? ¿Cristóbal Colón no es? ...No, Roca, cuando vino ese.

Ka müna weshaley winka.

Una vuelta creo que kuifikeche piam müleygün, müley ta wütan, wütan ta müley. Amuaiñ fey mu winka nga müley fey mu, inche nga lay nga ñi pu che, pi. Nga kasike amuaiñ nga ñi kasike kechu mari ...kechu pataka ...kechu waranka wentru, piafi em. Kechu waranka wentru, piam, langümeymu, piam.

Tranawüftuy nagtuy, nagüntun, nagentual. ¿Chumafungechi? Trafyeymu lanza mu trawil mu. ¿Chumafuy? Traka mu müley tralkatuy. Kechu waranka piam lay.

Cinco mil personas le mataron al cacique. Murieron, dicen. Que le dijeron un *wütan*, *wütan* antes de ir hubo, un *wütan*. Y *wütan* es cuando le late un brazo o le late donde quiera, y le va ir mal, no, no vaya. No, voy ir nomas. Voy a atropellar a los winka, decía. ¿Que van a hacer con los Remington de los winka? Los agarraron en fila, así los mataron. Caían como pajaritos. ¿Y las lanzas y las trawilche, qué van a hacer los paisanos? Cinco mil mataron, dicen, volvió con mil. Seis mil personas, creo que atropellaron. ¿Qué va a hacer con el winka?

Wütan mu piam mu. Müley ta müley ta zugun wentru zomo fey zugunge. ¿Chumngechi amuan ta tūfa? ¿Küme amuan ka weza amuan? Weza amuaiñ, pita, weza wütan. Weza amuaiñ. No, amuan müten. La wütantufe le había dicho, la adivina ya le ha dicho que le va a ir mal. ¿Y usted cómo sabe?, dice el lonko. Venían por él. Si yo tengo un wütan, zugun wütan, zungulu wütan ¿küpaley winka? Küpaley. Wütan ta tūfy, küpay nga tiw. ¿Chew küpaley winka? ¿Küpay winka? Küpaley ta winka ta tūfa.

¿Mirador pūrayaiñ? May, pūray mirador. Pūraaiñ mirador piam. Resultó ser un mirador, para el sur. Pūray nga, piaeymu. Küpaley winka pūralu winka tūfa mu imulüy kümey kura kay lamngümaiñ winka.

Küpay, piam mu. Küpaley, piam mu. Küpaley, piam mu, pu winka. Küpaley winka. Itrokom kelü rangiñ, kelü rangiñ. Tiw faw küpaley tati. Pūraley ñi kiñelke pu che, los matan. Kansau pi ta winka, müna kansau. Katripel, katripeliel lanza mu, winka piwke lanza mu. Pūraiñ. Rupay winka. Rupalu winka, si disparalew kawellun wiñotuy. Volvieron para atrás otra vez, en el mirador.

Antiguamente, eh, cuando andaban disparando de la expedición, subieron para el cerro y dice que si llegan a subir vamos a hacer rodar una piedra desde allá arriba. Van a pasar, llevando caballos, gente, y cuántos. Pūraley winka, pūraley antü. Pülle nga ta antü ta purraygün lamgümfiy. Si llega la hora suben. Todos no van morir, algunos dos, tres pueden subir allá, los matan a esa gente, van a salir disparando. Pūra antüley che. Chumgechi nge montuy. Montuy. Feychi zapiley.



THE NARRATION OF CORNELIO PUELMAN

If we were to talk about this matter that we are dealing with here. If we were to talk about this topic, my grandfather would give me this advice. We were the keepers of this land before, but the winka [non-Mapuche] brought bad works wherever he settled. Before there were animals. And being here..., and being from this land, the winka took the land from the Mapuche, as we were here and of this place. Those things didn't happen among us. That was how my late uncle told me. They arrived, the winka, and although we were from here they took the land from us—they say—that's how they took the territory from us.

The old ones used to say that the winka were trying to get land. I was eleven years old, I was thirteen, and they, the winka, were going around with the intention of taking land. They took away our rights to our land and to other lands as well.

The winka had been instructed to take away the old lands from us. Also the winka took the land of those Mapuche who had been on the good path, or that field in the middle. I remember those sad memories.

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When I first came to this land where I am now, I planted this. Now I have this land. I only have this advice about the land: sow, friend. This is how people used to be counseled, so you will continue to be fine following this advice. The old Mapuche used to counsel us in this way. Some of them went and settled near the winka, and there were all the people. It is said, then, that we and the winka began to be together. The winka all went one on top of the other, so if a winka is harmed by himself or by others, they help each other, that's what they do.

That's how it is... the winka don't try to screw one another. The paisano tries to screw someone who is doing well, they try to mess him up. The winka, no, the winka help one another, they help the one who is screwed, this is why they go forward, and we don't. This isn't any good.... It's not good, no good at all.

We live in this way. There are folks that get angry, folks that are just like that. If someone says:

"Tomorrow we'll get together to address the same question-united- one with another."

"No, I'm not going to get together, I'm not going... suddenly my wife is sick, the one from over yonder is still ill: I don't have water."

So the matter never comes out. I would like to bring these things out all together, united. In this way, if someone says, "Let's meet over there?" Everyone answers, "Come on! Let's go!"

In former times, we nearly grieved over these things. Now these folks don't come out. We are Mapuche here. We no longer have matters that we work on all together. When there is a concern, it is not like it was before, things are different, it's another kind of thinking. So we don't do good work, we don't work well.

The old folks. The elders, those who came before, cousins, uncles, helped one another, we helped ourselves together. The sons, the daughters, my uncle, they walked all together as if they were one, they say. All of them! That's how.

Yes, that's how. Because before, I was already forty, and even so my deceased father told us what to do as if we were children. "Do this!", he ordered, and I did it. He wasn't my father, he was my uncle. And today a fifteen year old son, what does he do? If he wants to do something, he does it, if he doesn't want to, he doesn't do anything. How are things going to go well in this way, my Friend? It's because of that that it goes so badly.

...In the olden days, they were all united, all united. Can't you see? What we just said, when I would have had understanding, I would have been ten or eleven. Sure, we drank before, we got drunk, we talked. But fight? Fight amongst ourselves? No, no, we never fought. We had good

conversations, then we'd start the tayül, sing the tayül, sing romanceadas, and rest.¹ But there weren't any problems. Nowadays the kids drink and the first thing they want to do is fight. This comes from the winka. That's how it was before.

(Puelman now tells what the violent occupation of the territory was like and about the stalking and persecution of families during the invasion of the Wallmapu. He also tells the stories that he has heard from his elders.)

His brother-in-law was who crossed my great grandfather over to the other side of the river with just enough to cure him, the elders say. Even though it was night, and they were two, they crossed to the other side. They came out of the river, and he and his brother-in-law went on together. They looked for any way out, this way, they said; that's how they got there.²

That's how my deceased grandfather told it. Then, later, the winka arrived there. They told of times when they were being persecuted, and they pierced their horses, they, my grandfather and his wife, found dead animals and ate their flesh. These things suffered. Many torments were set upon my deceased grandfather and paternal grandmother. In this way they got on, this is how I was told the elders survived. Even though I tell it now, people say that I am lying. "I didn't see that," they say "It's a lie."

I tell this story and they say, "They're lies, I've never seen it." But those who have spoken are like an open book, my Son. That's what the old folks said, that they suffered so much, ate dead horses, pierced the flesh of their own horses. Ten people would go and pierce ten horses, if they hadn't, they couldn't have reached enough blood. They drank their horses blood to stave their own hunger. If they didn't eat for two, three days, and they didn't kill any other animal, they had to pierce the horse. It is pierced on one side of the vein. If the horse is pierced by the guargüero, you get at least four liters of blood. Right there they drink from a jug: salt and blood, salt and blood.

They suffered so much hunger because they had to shoot as they went. They had to flee, escaping when the... what was he called, the one who came to devour the Mapuche nation here? The Spanish? Columbus? Was it Christopher Colombus? No, Roca, Roca it was. That winka was real bad.

¹ The *tayül* is a ceremonial and sacred song. Every element of nature has a sacred song: the lake, the river, the rain. People also have a *tayül*. The *romanceadas* are spontaneous songs that relate to or narrate everyday

situations and are told in a sharing and funny way. Sometimes they are sung in counterpoint. There are many kinds of songs about a diverse range of situations that are sung as *romanceadas*.

² For the Mapuche worldview, rivers should not be crossed at night. The situation of persecution described is so desperate that it forces them to transgress that rule.

One time I think that the older one, they say, who had a presentiment, a hunch, there was a wütan, when a part of a muscle pulsates.³

“Let’s go then, because the winka, who killed my people are here,” said the lonko. “Let’s go,” said the chief, “with 50...500...5000 men,” the grand lonko said. They say they killed 5000 men.

One after another they lined them up on their knees and shot them down, downhill. What were we going to do? They went with lances and trawils.⁴ What were they going to do? The winka were armed and they fired. They say they killed 5000 men.

They said that he had a feeling, a hunch; he felt a wütan before going. And the wütan is when you feel a pulse in your arm, or a pulse anywhere, and it lets you know that things are going to go badly for you, so don’t go.

“No, I’m just going to go,” they say the lonko said. “I’m going to trample the winka,” he said.

But what were they supposed to do against the winka’s Remingtons? They lined them up. That’s how they killed them. They felt like little birds. With lances and trawilche? What were our countrymen going to do? They say they killed 5000. He came back with a thousand. I think they killed 5 thousand. What could they do against the winka?

They said that he had a feeling, a hunch. The chief brought this news to the community, and they discussed: “What do we do with this? Are we going to do well or are we going to do badly?”

“It’s going to be bad for us. That hunch is bad presage, it’s going to be bad for us”, they told him.

The wütantufe, the one who interpreted the sign, had already told the lonko that it was gonna go badly.

“And you, how do you know?”, they say the lonko demanded. “If I have a feeling, the feeling, what the pulsing says is that the winka is coming?”

“Yes, they are coming. This presentiment is that they are approaching from over there?”

“Where are they arriving? Are they coming here?”

“Yes they are arriving,” the wütantufe told him.

[In another persecution that the Mapuche families suffered on the prairie it is told that they said]

“Should we climb up to the lookout?”

³ The wütan is a pulse in the muscle that is interpreted as a premonition, a sign. Having a pulsing beat on the left side of the body is considered a bad omen.

⁴ The trawil is a weapon with a single stone that has a slot in the middle where a reha or choyke tendon is tied.

“Yes, let’s climb up to the lookout.” “Let’s climb on up!” they say they said.

It just so happened that there was a lookout, to the South.

“Climb up!” they shouted. “When the winka arrive and are climbing up we’ll roll down a hefty rock, that’s how we’ll kill the winka.”

[He sings] **“They’re coming, they say they said/ They’re approaching, they say./ The winka, they’re arriving, they kept on saying/ The Winka comes.”**

Half the people were covered in blood. Here they come! They climbed on up. Those that climb up are killed. They say that the winka were tired, very tired. With their spears they went for their necks and their hearts. That’s how it happened for the winka that climbed up. When the winka passed through, they had to run away, they returned riding. They retreated again, in the lookout.

Long ago, when they were fleeing from the expedition, they climbed into the hills. It is told that they said if they manage to climb after us let’s roll a good-sized rock from above. They’re likely to go by with horses, people, everything. And if the winka should come up, their hour has arrived. If that day arrives when they come up, they’ll kill them.

If they go up once they reach the lookout, not all will die, some, those who go up. Two, maybe three, will keep on climbing, they’ll be killed, they’ll be the ones to be killed, shot. That’s how it went at that time, that’s how the Mapuche people saved themselves. That is how they freed themselves. That was the way they took care of themselves.



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FOR MORE ABOUT THE STORYTELLER AND THE TRANSLATORS

Cornelio Puelman is Teodora Puelman's brother. His mother was a machi, that is, a traditional Mapuche healer. He lived in the area of Fütta waw, fütta lefun mew, in a rural area located in the prairies, near Comayo, Puelmapu, today the Province of Río Negro, in the so-called Argentine Patagonia. He belongs to the generation of grandfathers and grandmothers who left in the 2000s. Many of his great-nephews and his descendants continue to live in that area known as Línea Sur. They are reclaiming their Mapuche identity and the Mapuzungun after years of "shaming policies."

Sandro Rivas Pichicura was born in Furilofche, Nawel wapi lafken mapu mew, in Puelmapu, also known in Spanish as Bariloche, Province of Río Negro, in Argentine Patagonia. His father was born in Fütta ruiñ, Cabestro Quemado. His mother was born in Pilawe. Both—Fütta ruiñ and Pilawe—are located in the rural area of the great prairie of the so-called Línea Sur. He has been a member of different Mapuche organizations and is currently an activist for the revitalization of the Mapuzungun. He teaches Mapuzungun at the Highschool Level and works in different linguistic revitalization projects. He has worked as a radio communicator and has participated cultural initiatives, such as the microdocumentaries [Mapuzungun. El habla de la Tierra](#).

Violeta Percia was born in Buenos Aires. She currently lives in Nawel wapi lafken mapu mew. She is a poet, audio-visual artist, and scholar. She works as a professor of Literary and Comparative Studies at the University of Buenos Aires. She studied film at the Cuban EICTV Alternative Cinema. She recently translated and wrote the introduction of *I Am a Damned Savage*, by the Innu writer An Antane Kapeshe (2023). She also has published *Ideorrealidades. Poemas y papeles dispersos de la obra futura* de Saint-Pol-Roux (2013); *El narcisismo del arte contemporáneo* de A. Troyas y V. Arrault (2020), the poetry books *Clínica enferma* (Buenos Aires, 2003), and *Poesía del Tanti Rao* (Mexico DF, 2019); and the novel *Como nubes* (Córdoba, 2021).