LA ROYA, THE DREAM: HETEROTOPIA AND POTENTIALITIES OF A STORM

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Resumen

En este texto abordo las relaciones entre humanos, lugares y plantas en un valle de los Alpes franceses antes y después de un evento climático desastroso. En tres movimientos observo las transformaciones espaciales y temporales, las reverberaciones y la forma en que emergen y toman forma nuevos entrelazamientos. Analizo los procesos de creación, deshacer y co-constitución de *locus*, sitio, que defino como heterotópico, para ver qué potencialidad, si es que hay alguna, podrían tener las consecuencias del desastre climático.

Palabras clave

Heterotopía, contraespacio, ruralidad, entrelazamiento, más que humano, desastre.

Abstract

In this text I address relationships between humans, places, and plants in a valley of the French Alps before and following a disastrous climate event. In three movements I look at spatial and temporal transformations, reverberations, and the way new entanglements emerge and take shape. I investigate processes of making, unmaking, and co-constitution of *locus* (site), which I define as heterotopian, in order to see what – if any – potentiality the climate disaster might hold.

Keywords

heterotopia, counter space, rurality, entanglement, more-than-human, disaster.

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1. Introduction

The Persian word *roya* translates as "dream", I was told by a friend. The river Roya lends its name to a valley – the valley of dreams – in the Maritime Alps of France, near the border with Italy and less than a one-hour drive from the Mediterranean Sea. It was hit by Storm Alex on 2 October 2020, an unprecedented[1] extratropical cyclone whose deluge of rainwater caused multiple mudslides. On the way down the valley were steep slopes, watery mud, accumulated gravel, boulders, trees, built infrastructure,

human housing, cars, as well as human and non-human bodies. The *dream* for a time turned into a nightmare, some of the participants of this research reflected. The storm, as disasters tend to do, uncovered a variety of frictions that had existed in the place for a long time beforehand[2].

I first came to Roya in 2010, on a train that connects areas north and south of the river with the Italian regions of Piedmont and Liguria. Pristine is the word I would have used then to describe it. Terraces climbing the mountains covered in a golden afternoon light seemed otherworldly. It remained imprinted in my memory in such a way that I felt urged to return after I learnt about the storm. This valley was the site of my ethnographic research from the end June 2021 to mid-May 2022. The disaster and the relationships that emerged in the place in its wake were my entry points to approaching the entanglements that emerged between humans and nonhumans there. What became evident was how those dwelling in the valley live in a multitude of places even though it might seem like they are one and the same. Rather, there are various places that interconnect, spill over, and overlap. More than anything I wanted to convey the potential of imagining – or dreaming – various ways of dwelling in this or any other place, within and outside the context of climate disaster, in forms that would embrace togetherness, multitudes, and frictions.

In the text that follows I approached these places as heterotopias. Foucault defines "heterotopia" as a real place (in contrast to "utopia" which is a no-place), but one that is "outside of all places" in the way in which contests other spaces in a real and mythical way (Foucault and Miskowiec, 1986:24; Vidler, Foucault, and Johnston, 2014). Foucauldian heterotopia is a place where incompatible things are juxtaposed. It is a site of heterochrony, where different times overlap and coexist (examples would include the time of dissolution and eternity in cemeteries and the fleeting time of festivals), among others. Heterotopia requires a permission to enter. In relation to all that remains outside, heterotopia's function is to create a different arrangement of space that would contrast with all that remains outside of it. In Roya, various arrangements are co-constituted along the lines of tensions both within and outside the heterotopias I will define here, which are only a few of the many that exist. In addition, contemplating these heterotopias connects with the concept of the pluriverse (Kothari et al., 2019; Mignolo, 2018), a world where many worlds coexist in dialogues and polylogues that happen well beyond the human as potentialities of a more attuned dwelling.

2. Heterotopia of frictions: hippies and indigenous

"It was like the dance of Tibetan singing bowls"[3], Amélie told me when I asked about the night of Storm Alex, adding that the cyclone was a rather

meditative or trance-inducing experience. No, she had no fear, it was wondrous, she said. Amélie did not remember any wind, it was just rain and boulders rolling from steep slopes across the river from her home. When she opened the door the next morning, she was "struck by the absolute silence". Everyone, from birds to "elemental beings"[4], was silent. Amélie believes that it was the sign of Mother Nature trying to "tell us, humans, that we have to do something."

Some people I met referred to Amélie as a witch. She works with earth magic in the sense that she cultivates and collects healing plants and produces balms, teas, salves, and oils with them. She also makes delicious jams from the fruits she grows in her garden. Recently she has moved from living two hours by foot from the nearest village to living relatively close to the main road of the valley, so that she can move around and sell her products in the local markets. Forty years ago, Amélie left Paris, where she was an engaged activist, to settle in the valley of Roya so that she could raise her children "between earth and sky", as she defined it. She arrived to find Roya emptied – after yet another wave of rural exodus (Médail & Diadema, 2006:628) – with a lot of agricultural practices on high-altitude slopes abandoned. Hence the space lent itself to new dwellings.

The mountainous landscape of Roya has been highly anthropized over the centuries of human activities since around 5000 BC, the neolithic period (Delhon, 2022). Its inhabitants developed a system of landscaping terraces that allowed them to expand the volume of arable land fit for the cultivation of food. But this also meant that mountain slopes were exploited up to altitudes of 1900 metres above sea level or higher (Gabouriaut, 1984; Cossa, 1980 in Médail & Diadema, 2006:628), impacting non-domesticated plant life. The gradual abandonment of terrace agriculture during the 20th century led to bush and forest taking over the terraces. This abandonment resulted in the inhabitants of this rural valley moving mostly to the coast of the French Riviera, in various waves connected to the two world wars, the change of the national border[5] and the rapid growth of industries in urban territories since the *Trente Glorieuses*[6]. Social transformation led to environmental changes, and the abandonment allowed the land to rewild itself. I can see how a lush green valley full of abandoned human-built structures – some of them inaccessible except by foot – could have lent itself well for the cultivation of dreams and hopes of alternative life-worlds.

Amélie was just one of many people that came to the valley in the seventies and early eighties in pursuit of a place to live differently. They were part of the first neo-rural wave in France that followed the general strike of May 1968. This wave was comprised of people from various cities of France and Germany, who followed an ecotopian and anti-capitalist vision that explored the possibilities of living in complete self-sufficiency[7]. As Frank, a former

shepherd and now gardener, explained, they tried to live following the principles of autarchy, raising animals, growing gardens, leading a communal life. Frank and Sara, a peasant couple who work and live in the north of the valley, said that newcomers did not receive a warm welcome to the valley. On the contrary – the mayor of one village threatened to exterminate the "hippie community" with a flamethrower and sent police to evict a group of around a dozen people who were living in abandoned military buildings and promised to break everything those "hippie villains" had built. However, this not only failed to discourage them, but had an opposite effect: Frank, who was part of this original group, recalled how the "hippies" dispersed, bought abandoned farms, and raised animals, shepherding them in the mountains. Years later, their children followed suit – some have taken over small-scale farming activities, one group established a local timber collective, while others have taken to the mountains as guides, shepherds, or lodge supervisors. All these people are integral to the core of the agricultural community of the valley of Roya, engaging in ecological and sustainable practices. They are still dubbed "neo-rurals"[8], with forty years not being time enough to be considered as local, especially from the point of view of those that have six generations of relatives buried in cemeteries, as one of the valley's locals explained. These "hippies" were seen as out of place in this border valley and in a way they still are. In our interview, Sara referred to the descendants of generations who have lived in the valley as "the indigenous", who hold most of the bureaucratic positions in local municipalities and continue to uphold the rift between locals and newcomers via controls and restrictions[9].

However, Sara and Frank laughed, telling of how the neo-rural community continues to proliferate and how it is the children of their children who have filled up the valley's schools in recent years. It is important to note that this line of tension is not as clearly drawn and distinct as that of "newcomers" *versus* "indigenous". Some newcomers, especially those that took up shepherding practices, learnt from earlier generation of shepherds of the valley, forming an alternative node of relationalities to those with the villagers. It was a node tethered to earth practices: to all that required manual labour, soil, and learning a language of the plants, non-human animals, and abiotic vectors – water, rock, and so on – of the place[10]. It resulted, I would say, in a heterochronic dwelling – one of overlapping time, to use the term proposed by Foucault. There was and still is a pursuit of being within the historical time that is performed by reproducing what are perceived as traditional practices and less-mechanized approaches to working the land. However, historical time overlaps with the time of the myth – one made of legends and myths told by generation after generation of shepherds, constantly renewed by new encounters with non-human animals as well as with things and beings that are other than animals, plants, or mountains. Historical and mythical time overlaps with what some

of the participants of this research define as "natural time", meaning seasonality. Inevitably, there is also the layer of nowness, as defined by the regimes of productivity and accountability to the state that provides support for shepherds and other farmers, and that requires accountability in order for that support to be given.

What Sara, Frank, Amélie, and other members of this neo-rural community of farmers and shepherds have in common is their seeing the valley as a place apart. Their valley is outside of the world, yet still part of it. In much the same way as they cultivate grain, cabbages, or sheep – opportunities for themselves and their friends to earn their living – they cultivate tight-knit relationships. These relationships gravitate around communal work practices that serve as important occasions for making kin and (re)defining who is part of the community. These relationships are nurtured through the times of festivity: festivals, parties, gatherings, time spent together in the marketplace. They are also fortified by a common understanding that their choice of living and working in the way they do is political, as well as their engagement in border activism – yet another political[11], even radical (Halfacree 2007:131, see also Halfacree, 2022), dimension of their lifestyle. Many of those that are identified as neo-rurals in the valley have shared their personal stories in connection to people on the move[12]. Neo-rurals extend the care with which they tend their gardens, orchards, and nonhuman animals towards people that try to cross into the territory of France, only to find themselves stuck in this *cul-de-sac* of a valley. Providing shelter, food, and a promise of a different life is part of the peasant community's effort in maintaining the heterotopia of Roya. Those that gravitate around border activism act as gatekeepers who seek to keep the heterotopia open for those that might seek it. We are brought back to what Foucault defines as the "most essential" of all attributes of heterotopia: it is a space which "by creating an illusion [...] denounces the rest of reality as an illusion" (Vider, Foucault, Johnston, 2014:22). The reality of the neo-rural community of Roya as an aspiration for the interconnectedness of bodies, minds, values, and practices, counters that different reality of border regimes and other impositions of the state. Aware that they are living in a fleeting and ever-changing construct of a place, the peasants, farmers, and shepherds I met are balancing life on fragile terrain – in terms of the ground beneath their feet given the ever-more sensed impacts of the climate crisis, as well as in terms of the world they co-create and the worlds they envision to live in.

3. Heterotopia of entanglement and attunement

Once Storm Alex subsided, every place along the river traversing the valley had been changed. Inhabitants living in the heart of the village of Breil sur Roya without riverside-facing windows had not seen the peak the water had

reached during the night of the storm. They were shocked to find the main square buried under more than two metres of mud, cars piled haphazardly on top of each other. One of the villagers with a terrace facing the square told me how, during the night, he would periodically calm his upstairs neighbour who had limited mobility, assuring her that the water was still quite far away. Meanwhile he was watching the cars, with their lights blinking, floating around the square, with the water level just a couple of inches below the top of his stairs. Morning broke with the rupture of all infrastructural connectivity: phone lines, internet, roads, and water pipes were either unearthed or broken down. What was broken had to be mended. Able-bodied people set about shovelling dirt out of the premises of what the day before had been a café, a restaurant, or supermarket. Sharing the uncertainty of what would happen otherwise, people organized themselves to collect water – while it lasted – from the sole functioning fountain. Bag after bag, the supermarket gave away the food from defrosting fridges to a line of villagers. Many compared the day after the storm – with the mobilization of inhabitants and the sounds of helicopters circling above their heads – to an experience of war, although none of them had any experience of this.

A day later the national army arrived: trains full of volunteers from the coast of the Blue Lagoon, followed by volunteers from around France and beyond. Among those who arrived in the first days was Hélène from the coast. I met her on the promenade alongside the riverbank. Below the promenade was what remained of the former camping facilities. She was knitting on a bench, and we started chatting. Hélène told me she had spent many months volunteering in the make-shift storehouse in which donations from all over the country – clothing, household items, appliances – were being distributed. Before that, she worked as a volunteer in a gymnasium – the main point for the reception and redistribution of food and other donations – as well as preparing foods for volunteers working out in the open. She shared how invested she felt in making caring and accommodating space for all involved. But she added that the sweet had turned sour when she witnessed what she described as the power games of locals. By the summer after the disaster, she seemed to know half of the villagers, as she took the train from the coast and back nearly every day. She would knit next to the river, chat at the pétanque, visit all the events in the village. Through the investment of her own labour in reconstruction efforts, with good moments experienced within that period, she had become entangled with the place. Entangled through affects that had been generated through specific encounters in particular places, Hélène could not leave as most of the volunteers did. Every detail she shared was in some way connected to her experience as a volunteer. The frame of that experience was no longer accessible, yet she remained in it.

Along with another wave of other volunteers came Marc, who I met as Amélie's apprentice. He had previously been studying to become a teacher but did not feel it was the right fit for him. Once he heard about the storm, he boarded the train with many others to come help. Disembarking at the station of Breil sur Roya, he met Amélie, who was there to enlist any willing workers. A group accompanied her and helped move stones and dirt from her garden, to reconstruct the terrace walls and the tiny bridge over a stream behind the house. In time, Marc came to realize that he would like to learn from Amélie, and, for her part, she needed someone to take over her knowledge and practice. Marc felt intimately connected with the place at a time in which he realized he needed a change in life. Thus, he started his apprenticeship, helping to collect, dry, and prepare the herbs, balms, oils, and learning along the way. During the autumn I would see them both in the market, Amélie explaining and her apprentice taking notes.

Pierrot, too, arrived after the storm. He had planned to visit the valley for hiking, and the storm presented him with a reason to come. For some time, he moved between the valley and elsewhere, coming for extended periods, engaging in the physical work of reconstruction. Strongly engaged in border activism, it was no surprise that at one point he decided to stay longer and explore both the creative opportunities of the place and join local activist groups. He was also exploring the trails of the valley in often risky situations. The valley that opened in front of his eyes and within him was as much a valley of historical lines traversing the crests as it was one of the realm of spirits and ghosts. The two were linked by myths and legends told by the older generation of shepherds – now on the lips of their apprentices – and affects afforded by particular places of the valley. The magic and power of a place are in the eye of the beholder. The agency of the place and the vibrancy of matter (Bennett 2010) was something Pierrot sought and recognised upon encountering. When we first met, Pierrot was working on a script for a documentary. Together we went to the source of the river Roya, trudging through debris and construction sites. That was the place he considered starting the documentary from, the source of all things: the valley, the storm, and his own being there. Since I left, he went into the stage of production with his documentary. On one occasion he gave an interview to a regional news outlet, defining himself as becoming *montagnard*, mountaineer, a mountain dweller. His entanglement started from a physical engagement of making make the space liveable again. Over time, Pierrot discovered the valley as having a certain depth, as a world of spheres that overlap, coexist, and feed into each other, whose meaning is "gradually revealed" through "a kind of sensory attunement" (Ingold, 2011 [2000]:213). He continues to work on his attunement with the place through mythical time – one that he has learnt about from shepherds and one that he is creating himself.

Each of these people contributed to and took part in what I would define as a heterotopia of entanglement, attunement, and (re-)enchantment[13]. The state of enchantment, according to Jane Bennett, is the state of wonder and suspension, arising from an unexpected meeting, with an aspect of the uncanny (2001:5). The changed, post-disaster of the Roya valley gave each of them a mobilizing experience to feel part of the re-constitution of a place. They co-constituted a framework which bound some of them to humans and plants, and others to canyons, rocks, ghosts, and legends. What they all have in common is the lasting wonder and the urge to attune themselves to the place they have discovered through becoming entangled with physical beings and beyond.

4. Heterotopia of time on hold and things that are not

I arrived nine months after the storm had devastated the valley. The first day in the field, instead of azure waters, I was looking at the river of rocks. Water temporarily rerouted, the river at Breil sur Roya was one of boulders, rock, and gravel. Day in and day out, the villagers watched machinery push rocks back and forth to consolidate the riverbanks. The entire village felt as though it was in waiting: waiting for one more bridge to be reopened, for the next dozen metres of road – torn off by the storm water – to be asphalted. I would walk the banks stumbling on debris – a piece of iron wire here, a lump of concrete there, watching other humans stumbling around for what they had lost.

The heat of July and August added to the feeling that humans in Breil sur Roya and villages higher up in the north of the valley had been left suspended in waiting. Among the things we were all waiting for – in vain – were heavy afternoon rains, which I was told used to arrive mid-August and last for two weeks. Waiting, however, was the time that only those who did not grow crops or raise animals could afford. Farmers and shepherds, on the other hand, set about laying new pipes, some several kilometres long, to compensate for dried-out streams with waters from deep and far away. Meanwhile, in that same dry heat, on the rocky bank of a mountain river, half a kilometre from the town centre, a colony of self-sown tomatoes was proliferating. If you had ever talked to gardeners where I come from (Lithuania), you would have heard that the tomato is a fragile plant, in need of ample amounts of water, unhappy with the wind, and easily damaged by cold misty nights. On the banks of the Roya, I was witnessing tomatoes thrive on a plot of land that seemed to be only sand, gravel, and stone, in harsh sun, dishevelled by the wind. All the moisture they would get would have been the moisture the roots had to delve deep to reach, as the river was several metres away. That effort gave them resilience.

Many plants were emaciated, yet all were lively. From the end of August until October, they provided all the tomatoes on my kitchen table and would have provided more. In March 2022, fenced off for the yellow, green, and grey machines that were erecting mounds of gravel – sorted according to diameter along the riverbank – the area's disposition had changed. Infrastructure was being built anew on the riverbed[14], from which the tomatoes had grown, and a temporary gravel road was made for the machinery to roll up and down.

On this riverbank that was once more becoming part of the local infrastructure, I observed an ongoing tension between the human need to reclaim control (Gibas, 2022) over the area the locals had identified as nothingness and/or ruins and the bewildering expansion of life[15]. For a moment, this plot of land seemed to have escaped human agency, was undefined and alien, and thus in between the categories[16]. Not really a riverbank, it was more of a wound that remained after the storm water retreated, with the riverbed several times its previous width. It was not exactly a garden either. It was simply a place of ruin. Locals were avoiding it: it was a space produced next to what used to be a stadium, orchards, a hotel. The ruins – or rather the absence of what used to be – generated strong affective response (Navaro-Yashin, 2009, 2012; Gordillo, 2014). I was under the impression that it was the absence of things that were no more, rather than new becomings – such as that of the tomato garden – that was governing the gaze of the villagers. "There used to be a garden on the riverbank higher up. There was a garden, there is nothing there anymore", Marcel, one of the research participants explained once. He had moved into the town following his retirement. There had been many modest families that cultivated gardens and orchards next to his, he recalled. The part of the riverbank where those orchards and gardens used to be no longer exists – it is now a river. But the wild tomato garden on the opposite bank might be what remained of those gardens. I had imagined stormwater lifting the fallen fruit and remnants of overripe tomatoes up from compost piles, scattering the seeds, and thus creating gardens all along its way to the Mediterranean.

Tensions and intentions form an interesting node if we follow the history of tomatoes. Domesticated in Mesoamerica (Long, 1995:239) tomatoes were brought to Europe following the first voyage of Christopher Columbus to the Americas. This way of introducing a plant is called hemerochory – separating and taming. Ernst-Detlef Schulze et al. (2005:545) use the term interchangeably with anthropochory, which accentuates the role humans play in the process. As botanical novelties, tomatoes were planted in botanical, royal, and aristocratic gardens (Andel et al., 2022), but because of their resemblance to poisonous mandrake and belladonna they were thought to be inedible or poisonous and were thus cultivated as ornamentals (Peralta & Spooner, 2007:18; Long, 1995:246). Neither their

flowers nor their smell was attractive enough for them to gain popularity (Long, 1995:246). After the conquest of Tenochtitlan (now Mexico City) in 1521, chronicles of European invaders noted that Aztecs cultivated a great variety of tomatoes. With time, the Spanish adapted the Aztec culinary practice of using tomatoes to make sauce (ibid. 247), which was later embraced by Italian cuisine. The Mediterranean region opened itself as an ecological and cultural niche for newly introduced plants shipped from a distant continent. In the wounded landscape of post-disaster Roya, tomatoes dwelt with something that I perceived as intentionality, having escaped[17] a garden enclosure to explore an accidental arid plot of land.

The history of the introduction of tomatoes into European gardens is part of the history of immense ecological changes caused by European invaders and colonizers – and the building of colonies was itself defined by Foucault as an effort to building heterotopias. The colonial period is defined as *Invasion worlds* by Anna Tsing et al. (2020), and is one of the Anthropocene detonators (causes, initiators) in the *Feral Atlas* spanning across times and scales. *Invasion worlds* are defined by "world-ripping" (Tsing et al., 2020), rather than world-making practices: taking, moving, displacing, exterminating pathogens, plants, animals, and humans, whether deliberately or accidentally.

However, in ripping the worlds apart, new cohabitations and entanglements ensue. Hence these riverbank tomatoes softly taking over a terrain reverberate historical assemblages (Tsing, Mathews, Bubandt, 2019:187) and, in turn, shape new relationalities. I interpret this proliferation as intentionality, following various thinkers, including indigenous people of various continents who acknowledge the agency of everything in the world[18]. For the villagers, the liveliness of other beings – their agency – comes in and out of existence in relation to their role in the making of human worlds. For example, the river "has reclaimed its rights" when "enraged" storm river waters ravaged the valley. However, extending human concepts of ownership (human appropriation of the world is addressed more in detail by Ingold 2011[2000]:213), reclamation and emotional reactions to a river obscure human responsibility in the making of climate disaster, rather than give it agency. Tomatoes, growing silently on the shore, are not seen as playing any big role and are perhaps barely visible, so their agency is out of the question. I am unable to understand their *Umwelt*, or their sensed world, although biologists have proven that plants are sensing, future-oriented beings, capable of collaboration, competition, defence, and healing. I thus propose that this tomato plantation had created its own place outside of all places, and as such is worth considering as a heterotopia. In this way, we take a step further from the idea of heterotopia as a human construct[19]. As a concept it is human, to be sure. But as a place, it must be more than that.

5. Concluding remarks

Many of the human participants of this research have reflected that they had been thinking about the necessity of change for several decades and have chosen to lead the lives they do in order to create something different and thus change the course of the future. Examples in this text fall short of showing the multitudes of heterotopias that exist among the dwellers of the Roya valley, but their common denominator is that they are "*counter* spaces" destined to oppose, neutralize, or "to purify" (Vidler, Foucault, and Johnston, 2014:20, emphasis in the original) spaces they counter. Dreams here seem to help build places that defy borders, that are grounded in practices of togetherness and sustainability, and are open to the non-human.

As a researcher who is also an artist, I create my work to make, dream, and imagine things, to deconstruct, and to transfigure. I therefore choose to imagine that even things that come as disasters hold the potential for a radical transformation that would be life-giving and nurturing rather than solely life-taking and subject to mishandling once the weeds[20] are allowed to proliferate. That potential is locked in the heterotopic realm in which a plant on a riverbank redraws the lines.

Acknowledgement

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Notas

[1] Evaluation based on historical and pluviometric data, see Carrega & Michelot, 2021.

[2] Disasters unveil and exacerbate existing social and other inequalities and injustices (Passerini, 2000). For more on the subject see Centemeri, Topçu and Burgess (2021).

[3] The interview with Amélie was not recorded, but jolted down as notes and transcribed as per mutual agreement. The names of all research participants are changed as per agreement struck prior to each interview. All quotes of the research participants are in quotation marks.

[4] Amélie adheres to principles of biodynamic gardening. The founder of principles of biodynamic agriculture, R. Steiner, has defined elemental beings that participate in the equilibrium of life-making practices on Earth as gnomes, undines, sylphs and salamanders.

[5] The II article of Paris Peace Treaties of 10 February 1947 redrew the border between France and Italy, gaining 413 km2 of territory and 7000 inhabitants for France (Sanguin, 1983:20-22).

[6] Term denoting thirty years of economic growth following the end of the World War II.

[7] A detailed historical account of the waves of neo-rural expansion has been done by Catherine Rouvière (2016).

[8] The term is as used by the participants of this research. I will not expand on the concept of neorurality here as this is not the aim of this paper. Chevallier (1993) explains that he uses neo-rural as an umbrella term including neo-artisans and neo-peasants, and defines as the unifying goal of neo-rurals the one of "attempting to return to a pre-capitalist economy in a world dominated by competition, profits and mass production" (185).

[9] Control and restrictions here have to do with limitations to access to land among other things.

[10] As many authors note, this pursuit of different kinds of relationships to the ones in urban (and) capitalist spaces has been among the main motivators to move to the country.

[11] For more on how through re-connecting to the rural tradition neo-rurals seek to develop a different relationship to the political, time and body dimensions see Danièle Léger (1979).

[12] I use this term instead of "migrants" due to my personal engagements. Forkert et al. in their project "Conflict, Memory, Displacement", reflect on how the blanket identity of "migrant" is constructed with aims to erase other identities and to marginalize.

[13] Brackets refer to the discussion between Bennett and Akeel Bilgrami regarding *enchantment* and *reenchantment* which I recognise as similar, in the way that each concept suggests a relation to the world beyond the desentisized and mechanised.

[14] Among the lessons to be drawn from the disaster, one had been to leave the riverbed to the river, one research participant with engineering background explained. Had the riverbed been left alone instead of constructing in it, there would have been less deaths, he said, sharing an immense guilt he felt for his earlier participation in construction and planning.

[15] My use of *life* here is inspired by Jeffrey Thomas Nealon's writing Foucauldian concept of life, wherein "life is not representable. Life is in fact a kind of unplumbable depth, animating the organism from a hidden origin somewhere within." (Nealon, 2015:7).

[16] This consideration is inspired by Descola's text (2019) about the Amazonian garden, forest and society, that is in ontological in-between-ness, rather than based on oppositions between wild / domesticated, garden / forest etc. (244).

[17] Invasion biology proposes various ways of thinking about the plant-other. Tomatoes that migrated from one shore of the river to the other are escaped plants, that is non-native domesticated organisms found in the wild (Falk-Petersen et al., 2006:1411). Escapees are oftentimes ornamentals and their escape may result in invasion where they become pests (Riefner & Smith, 2015, 205), although in some cases they may have positive environmental impacts (Kowarik, 2005, 97). The category defines the position the tomato is assigned in the order of things in relation to other things.

[18] In Western philosophy, from Master Eckhart (Cole, 2013) to contemporary discussions by those in the New Materialism, Actor Network Theory and Object Oriented Ontology, the agency of non-human other is discussed. *Being* within (as opposed to discussing) the pluriverse where all things are agents of co-creating the world as well as *thinking* of the world as inter-agential and co-constituted (defined as metaphysics by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (Skafish, 2016) has been addressed by anthropologists that have worked in Amerindian communities, with various groups of Aboriginal in Australia and elsewhere.

[19] In Foucauldian heterotopology there is no space for the -topos created by non-humans.

[20] Reference to the concept as used by Anna Tsing: weeds as "creatures of human disturbance" (2019:33).