Global Coloniality of Power in Guatemala

Racism, Genocide, Citizenship

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In Loving Memory of

My dear father Manuel, my first mentor on the unnaturalness of injustices, killed in 1981.

My beloved younger brother Memito, whose bravery inspired this book; he was killed in 1989.

My courageous sister M. Dinorah, a strong survivor of torture and rape, who suddenly died in 2005.

And to

All Killed and Disappeared who put into practice the dream of struggling for a just world

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Acknowledgments

In most social science book acknowledgments, authors recognize that it is almost impossible to thank all the people who made the writing possible. Such statements are very truthful, especially so, I might argue, when one recognizes that a book based on critical research and analysis is inevitably a communal project. The Maya Cosmovision emphasizes this principle, cautioning us not to get too caught up in our own egos by believing that knowledge is the work of a sole author, and reminding us that we must take responsibility for our own work, in particular for all its limitations, which I do.

Despite the fact that this book is part of a communal creation of knowledge in which countless women and men have participated—some of whom left this world in the middle or at the end of its writing—I must thank first the Maya women and men in the communities of Santiago Atitlán, San Juan Cotzal, and Nebaj for opening their houses and parts of their life histories to me. I also thank the tireless Maya women and men who live in other places and who, in between their busy schedules, talked to and challenged me to further examine the very often hidden ways in which our minds and spirits remain colonized. My deep thanks go out to Mercedes, Antonia, Concepción, Elena, Marta Juana, Manuela, Manuel, Jacobo, Salvador, and Argentina, who worked with me, enabled me to gain access to participants, and were honest about the limitations of what they name as "book knowledge," for it is always incomplete. In the same line of grounded, critical knowers, I must mention here one of my first (and now ongoing) Maya mentors, who is also my partner in life, Esteban, for having the patience to support me in my time of ill health, especially during the last stages of this work, but more especially for being a hard, yet non-judgmental, questioner and critic. His influence appears in the background throughout the book, as he requested it should.

For, as he says, “individual names of the living are not always important, but those of the fallen must be at the forefront, because the conditions of the world in which we live sometimes do not allow us to honor our dead political activists.” My gratitude goes also to our dear son, Manolo. Thanks for just being there, and for reminding me with your smile that it is important to have outlets, such as listening to music, to be able to get through tough times and do research and write about painful issues.

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Chapter One

Introduction

In 1981, the deadly triumvirate of power in Guatemala constituted by the state, the dominant classes, and transnational forces, especially those of the United States, brutally murdered my father. My first mentor, he had taught me that poverty and exploitation are entirely unnatural, that they are justified as a creation of "God" precisely by those who, in the name of God, the Fatherland, and Freedom, persecute, jail, kidnap, torture, and kill women and men who stand up and struggle for a life of dignity and respect.

It was my father who first said that I, as a woman, was not put on this earth merely to be a wife and breed children, but that I had a mind that I had to use, not only for my own benefit, but also to make a difference for others. In my father's view, there was good knowledge in the world, and he taught me to learn from it and to take the best from life. He used to give me his second-hand books, the only ones he, at great sacrifice, could afford, and he would recite poems about life, love, and struggles for social justice, saying that our souls need good food. This was a paradox, for too often, and despite the extraordinary efforts of my mother and my father, we did not have nutritious food on the table on a daily basis. For my father to say that our souls need good food, such as poetry, was an expression of how working-class women and men, forgotten by dominant cultures, have many talents, and also hold deep principles about what is *just*. But we seldom hear from them as creators of their own lives and of their societies more broadly; when we do, it is often as "informants," a pejorative and humiliating term still in use in many social science and humanities methodology textbooks and research reports. "Informants" is also an ambiguous and dangerous term in contexts where genocide has been perpetrated as a modality of state terror, as many people have been forced to be informants for the deadly "security" forces of the state and of capitalist powers and institutions.

The teachings of my father were complemented by those of my maternal grandmother, Mama Amalia, who insisted that I, because I was an angel, learn how to take care of myself if I wanted to be an independent spirit who would fly all over the world. To hear these words, words that were incentives, when more affluent and light-skinned children, teachers, priests, newspapers, television programs, and so on, were telling you that you were a nobody, a poor, dirty creature who would never be otherwise, was an extraordinarily uplifting experience. Juan de Dios, my paternal grandfather, narrated to us, his grandchildren, his commitment to the peasants and his love for real democracy. He told of how, because of this love, he was jailed for several years after 1954, when the United States, through its Central Intelligence Agency, and with the complicity of the Guatemalan economic and military elites, invaded Guatemala. Through his dignified example, he taught me that it was necessary to go beyond our individual selves, in order to feel connected to others while remaining true to one's self. From my mother, I learned a deep strength and daily courage to face extreme poverty and classist-gendered humiliation and bullying, and so how to struggle in order to prevent the family from starving—for we always had some *tortillas* and beans, or *tortillas*, tomatoes, and lemons on our family table.

When I was a child, I had to go with my family to a cotton plantation to earn a miserable wage to keep us barely alive, and it was in this place that I—a Xinka-Pipil[1] -Mestiza girl—first interacted with the Maya peoples. Entire families like mine were there, sleeping on the wet, soiled floor, crowded together in a warehouse like cattle, a warehouse that had been sprayed with toxic pesticides to "clean it" after another group of working families had left. When I asked my father why these families, especially the women and girls, dressed differently than I, he gave an answer that had more sense to it than all my later school texts that discussed the European conquest and the devastation it brought to us and to our ancestors—texts that presented that conquest as some "past" event, and Maya peoples as members of a dead culture. Many of these texts celebrated the conquest as our entrance to the "civilized" world. Teachings on Contemporary Mayas treated them as "little Indians" and "backward people," if they were even mentioned at all. My father, who named the European conquest and its colonialism as barbaric and cruel events, said that this conquest created two kinds of Guatemalans: those who feel they are descended from Europeans—even though they are brown-skinned and are actually Indigenous or Mestizos, but are being taught to be ashamed of their ancestry—and those who are the descendants of original peoples. It was from my father's everyday teachings, and his freedom from racist attitudes, that I began to develop a strong interest in learning more about that other history, the one that is not very often described in books. It was from my father's example that I had seeds planted in me against racism, colonialism, and imperialism, not as a product of book knowledge, but as a

concrete, embodied reality. He did not express himself in an elevated language, but did something much better: he taught by example the importance of remaining dignified and of having faith in the possibility of progressive social and political change. But while certainly not perfect in many ways, my father had another virtue: from his love of knowledge and his voracious reading, he came to value the role of good theorizing and analysis. These were two things that he taught his own children and the many others who surrounded him in his life, including some law students whom he mentored.

I share these genealogies of life with you because they represent the roots of an experience and an analysis that are socio-personal expressions of how ruling relations of power, including of course those of European colonial projects, shape daily life, and how, at the same time, they organize societies and the world as it is, and as it has come to be. These genealogies are also glimpses of how impoverished peoples of the global South are not lazy, backward, or uncivilized, but are peoples with long histories, including histories of civilizations. What my mother, father, grandmother, and grandfather taught me by their example, and through their storytelling, was that it is not possible for people whose histories and lives have been shaped by Eurocentered colonialisms, capitalism, and heteropatriarchies, to fragment social identities; and that the realities of oppression, of daily hardship in poverty, of the treatment of women as good only for biological duties taken as "natural," and of the treatment of Indigenous Peoples as inferior, are interlocked. These invented fragmentations justify the imposition of an economic and sociopolitical order that has had devastating consequences for millions of women's and men's lives.

Thus, when many years after these first teachings I had to cry because of the murder of my father, once again in my flesh and in our family's flesh we understood how rationally barbaric was the defense of racialized colonial and economic privilege. I had begun to witness this when I was young and saw the hacked-up body of Don Pablo Vasquez, a dear friend of my father. Agents of the militarized state kidnapped Don Pablo in the middle of the night. His kidnappers lied to and manipulated his family by sending them a picture of Don Pablo showing him clean-shaven and wearing clean clothes; this picture created the hope that he was still alive. This hope was subsequently shattered by words written on a piece of cardboard box sent to them, indicating the place where perpetrators left his dead body. Some parts of Don Pablo's body were wrapped in plantain leaves, and so metaphorically simulating a "*tamal*," a Guatemalan's traditional food made from corn flower, chicken, or other meat. The tortured body of my father's dear friend was left at a place named La Conora, a place that had become a clandestine, yet public, cemetery—clandestine because the tortured bodies of thousands women and men who were kidnapped, made "disappeared," and then murdered by military and paramilitary state forces, were left there with *XX* in-

scriptions that meant they were *nobodies.* They were treated as if they did not deserve to be identified and to have proper funerals. Because, according to the state-military-Western powers, especially the United States, people like my father's friend did not deserve to live, and in death he did not deserve to be grieved. But places like La Conora served also as *public* cemeteries, because they were horrific symbols of what politically and socially conscious women and men should expect if they actually put into practice the right to demand a better world and to oppose rampant social injustices. A biophysical place became a space for the teaching of state terror as the punishment for the act of fighting for a dignified life.

The personal and collective pain I felt and witnessed on account of the cruel death of my father's friend was only the beginning of what lay ahead in our "national" future: widespread genocide under conditions of state terror, combined with increased poverty and unemployment and the exorbitant profits of the more than three hundred transnational corporations in Guatemala, corporations mostly from the United States, but also from Canada, Germany, and Italy (Martinez-Salazar 2005). There was also a widespread network of socially progressive movements, including some engaged in armed struggle; there was resistance, a complex resistance that cannot be explained simply as the product of the Cold War, or as "vernacular," for it was indeed the collective hope of millions. As my grandfather, Juan de Dios, used to say, "It was the putting into practice of our democratic dreams for true social justice and not of the justice of paper, of good words." And as my father said: "When a people are treated like garbage for centuries, those people are entitled to rebel, to organize and to struggle for what is fundamental: to be respected as human beings."

It is the teachings of my elders, and the histories and visions of Maya women and men I have interviewed and informally conversed with, that constitute the backbone of the voyage described herein, for books are also travelers. One such woman was Doña Zoila,[2] whom I interviewed at her home in 1999 as part of my fieldwork—which is to say, as part of my concrete learning from Indigenous epistemologies. Doña Zoila's words introduced key issues addressed in this book—including racism, genocide, neoliberal democracy, poverty, education, language, sartorial discrimination, citizenship as exclusion and repression, the racialization of place-space through state terror, economic exploitation, coloniality of gender, and the vilification of memory—but most importantly, the desire for a better future for the children of Guatemala:

> It is simply unjust that there are people who feel they have, like, a right given by God to treat many of us worse than animals . . . to hunt our children . . . to keep us poor and illiterate. And then they tell us that it is our fault that we are poor. In my case, some think that because I cannot speak "good" Spanish and

> wear my *traje* [Maya clothing], I am somehow less than the rest of people. . . . It is because [of] all of this that I continue this struggle initiated by my husband, kidnapped forever. . . . Perhaps one day the lives of our children will be better, who knows. (Interview 1999)

In 2002 and 2008 I again met and talked to many Maya and Mestizo women and men who, despite being victimized by interlocking heteropatriarchal, capitalist, state terror, and racist practices, believed that if now many are quiet about the horrors of the past, it is not because they do not aspire to a better life; rather, they are silent because they have lost so many people and have been repeatedly beaten up—but not beaten down. With straightforward, yet profound, words, many women, such as Alejandra María, a former community worker and a survivor of state terror, reflected on the reworkings and reconfigurations of national and transnational ruling relations of power. She said:

> I was taught that Mayas existed up until the conquest [of the Americas]. . . . Some of my teachers said that civilization was brought to Guatemala, to us, including our "dear" language, Spanish. . . . They said that "*indios*" before the Conquest were bad people . . . and they and others [still] say that "our national fathers" gave us a "free nation." In the meantime they killed our grandmothers and grandfathers. Now they say we are equal citizens. (Interview 1999)

The teachings of my mother, father, and grandparents, and the voices, social experiences, and visions of women like Doña Zoila and Alejandra María encapsulate the main argument of this book: Those whose humanity is protected through force and economic power have influenced and even determined who counts as human—and so whose lives count as lives and whose deaths deserve mourning and remembrance. These determinations constitute socio-political and economic expressions of the coloniality of power: the colonial/modern world system within which capitalism, racism, and heteropatriarchy are constitutive of each other and are contemporaneous phenomena. Fundamentally, these phenomena cannot be researched and theorized as either "past" or "post," as the past is deeply interwoven with the present (Quijano 2000; Mignolo 1995; 2007; De Sousa Santos et al. 2007).

The diverse, oppressed, usually silenced, yet resilient Guatemalan lives, voices, histories and knowledges brought together in this book show how the process of inventing and treating human heterogeneity as a symbol of inferiority, while imposing race and gender thinking *as tools for social classification*, dates back to the conquest of the Americas in the late fifteenth century, and to the subsequent period of colonization. This process created a hierarchical ranking of humanity, which represented and treated the lives, cultures, and knowledges of the colonized/exploited "Others" as disposable, and therefore as not deserving of life. In this ranking, the lives of persons who

were privileged through class position, race, and gender locations were deemed to be deserving of often extreme protection through the law, economics, religion, and organized violence, including state terror. Accordingly, a second argument in this book is that violence consists not only of the "extreme" acts that we commonly deem exceptional, cruel, or irrational (or indeed all three), but also of the many ways in which cruelty is rationalized and sanctioned through law, religion, education, and economics. As Goldberg has pointed out:

> [V]iolence is conceived usually as the invocation and use of instruments (in the case of the state, state apparatuses) to implement the effects of power's exercise at the expense of those upon whom it is exercised. But we might think of violence more extensively also as the dispersal throughout the social arrangements that systematically close off institutional access on the part of individuals in virtue of group membership, and indeed that render relatively hidden the very instrumentalities that reproduce that inaccessibility. (2002: 131)

My aim is not to equate these two manifestations of violence, but to see that they are relational, despite the fact that many of us have learned to see violence only as harming and/or destroying bodies in a mode that can be measured and quantified. However, the destruction caused by ongoing and "extreme" violence is multi-dimensional and unquantifiable, especially its individual-social long-term impacts.

A third main argument is that societies in the colonized global South are not small islands whose patterned inequality is due only to internal and local incapacities, a prevailing notion within hegemonic circles of knowledge. This way of thinking includes the view that societies in the global South are only now becoming increasingly interconnected via the benefits of globalization, which is also conceived of as being a new phenomenon. Further, proponents of "globalization as a new phenomenon" tend to affirm that globalization is yet another inevitable linear sequence, and therefore a "natural" outcome of progress and evolution—the core concepts of the Eurocentric myth of modernity (Quijano 2000; Dussel 2000; Mignolo 1995, 2000; Escobar 2007). Another twist in the designation of societies of the global South as localities, and the global North as the true representative of the "global," is the entrenched belief that a study based on research in a global South nation cannot possibly contribute to the production of "universal" knowledge. This book challenges this myth, and invites readers to see that global southern societies have been interconnected with the global North since the introduction and consolidation of capitalism through colonial projects that opened up new routes of trade, created linguistic interrelations, imposed Christianity as a hegemonic religion, and Western science as the only valid science (Mignolo 1995, 2000; Quijano 2000). Here it is important to recognize that intensive

intercommunication between pre-colonial/pre-Conquest societies also existed not only for trade purposes, but also for artistic and other knowledge-based activities. Conflict was, of course, another way in which these societies interacted with each other.

These analytical insights from Others' ways of knowing (Mignolo 2007; Escobar 2007) are guiding tools for this book, alongside analytical and theoretical insights I have borrowed from critical anti-racist and anti-colonial feminisms, the analysis of the colonial/modern gender system,[3] and the modern/coloniality of power approach.[4] Part of this book is based on data I collected while doing my doctoral degree in sociology, a time when I also re-encountered Mariátegui, Freire, and Maya women intellectuals like Emma Chirix, Irmalicia Velásquez, and Mestizo intellectual Severo Martínez-Peláez. At that time I also drew upon theoretical insights from certain post-colonial studies. But I came to feel that something was missing in post-colonial studies, for these tended to focus on French and British colonial projects, and conceived of colonization as a movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries only. They thereby tended to leave out the earlier modernity project of the invasion and conquest of the Americas by Spanish and Portuguese colonial powers. Post-colonial studies also could not coherently address what several Indigenous scholars and movements were stating loudly: that it is almost impossible to talk about "post-colonialism" when colonial projects and their perspectives still shape global power in our time; and that for Indigenous Peoples across the world the prefix "post" is unacceptable, because colonialism is not a "thing" of the past. Thus, while finishing my doctoral studies, I decided to embark on another learning journey, and this journey brought me to the modern/coloniality of power school of thought that understands the current, global, Eurocentered capitalist system of power relations as simultaneously infused by coloniality and modernity. And, as mentioned above, for this school, coloniality and modernity are not "post" or "past" phenomena, but rather reworked power relations that increase economic, racial, and gender gaps between nations and within these nations themselves. Coloniality, therefore, survives colonialism.

SPECIFIC THEORETICAL INSIGHTS FROM THE MODERN/COLONIALITY/DECOLONIALITY APPROACH AND CRITICAL GENOCIDE STUDIES

The modern/coloniality of power approach argues that the establishment, consolidation, and perpetuation of the current global power structure were achieved through two interrelated processes. The first was the use of the idea of race as a powerful tool to classify people as superior and inferior, through

the invention of social identities such as "Indian," "Black," and "White," and also through related geopolitical categories such as "Europe" and "America"; these became fixed realities, which have been embraced by both the colonizers and the colonized as "naturalized" forms of interacting and being. The second process went as follows:

1. [T]he constitution of a new structure of control of labor and its resources and products. This new structure was an articulation of all previous historically known patterns of control of labor, slavery, serfdom, small independent commodity production, and reciprocity, together, around and upon the basis of capital and the world market (Quijano 2000: 534).
2. Therefore, and according to Quijano the new historical identities produced around the foundation of the idea of race in the new global structure of the control of labor were associated with social roles and geohistorical places. In this way, both race and the division of labor remained structurally linked and mutually reinforcing, in spite of the fact that neither of them were necessarily dependent on the other in order to exist or change (2000: 536).
3. The dispersion of race thinking and the myth of Western cognitive superiority that fed practices of racism were made possible by the spread of capitalism.

As Mignolo (who draws upon Quijano) notes:

> The expansion of Western capitalism implied the expansion of Western epistemology in all its ramifications, from the instrumental reason that went along with capitalism and the industrial revolution, to the theories of the state, to the criticism of both capitalism and the state. (2002: 59)

Mignolo adds:

> Capitalism, an emerging civilizational ideal in tension but not in conflict with Christianity, needs racism: first to assert its identity and to justify its will to power, second to justify its expropriation of land and exploitation of labor. (2008:1738)

This exploitation of the labor of Indigenous women and men, and the stealing of their lands, was reinforced and complicated by the violent conversion of a heterogeneous population from Africa into a human commodity through the establishment of slavery. Both peoples were then conceived as lacking epistemic creativity. As Mignolo points out, racism has been central to the coloniality of power, therefore of capitalism and heteropatriarchy regimes, because

> as an epistemological and ontological construction of imperial knowledge (Christian Theology and Secular Egology (e.g., secular philosophy and secular science) . . . has been construed as *epistemic colonial difference* by devaluing knowledge beyond Greek, Latin, Christian Theology and Secular Egology . . . and as *ontological colonial difference* (Maldonado Torres 2007) by devaluing non-Western People in relation to the ideal of Man both in the European Renaissance and European Enlightenment (e.g., consider for example the declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen). (2009b:71)

Thus, the modern/colonial matrix of power has had, as common denominators, the control of knowledge to impose and reproduce a devaluation of the imperial adversary—the enemy that had to be kept at bay or eliminated if necessary, as has been the case with those represented and treated as collective communists and terrorists—and the domination (Mignolo 2008: 1739), and subjugation of the rest of "unruly Others."

Furthermore, gender, which has generally been conceived of as more benign than race in terms of the oppressive impact of its social classificatory role (and theorized by many Western feminists as the "original" oppression, which has existed since humanity appeared on earth), is in actuality another system of oppression introduced through violence to the global South. It was only after its introduction that it became naturalized and universalized as a fixed binary through which we "know" who is a "man" and who is a "woman." As María Lugones (2007) has shown through her extraordinary scholarship, both race and gender have been crucial to the introduction, establishment, and consolidation of the global, Eurocentric capitalism that prevails in our world. Gender is also a powerful tool for classifying certain females and males as superior, and others as inferior. On the one hand, the colonial/modern gender system conceived of bourgeois, white, Eurocentered womanhood as "feminine, soft, delicate, submissive, and above anything else, respectable"; on the other, it imposed a definition of colonized womanhood on the "dark side" as "aggressive" in some contexts, "noble and docile" in others, and above all else, heterosexual. And this imposition happened through the persecution and criminalization, even extermination, of other practices amongst women and men in societies that had more open, flexible, and democratic relationships between women and men. Lugones rightly points out that

> global Eurocentered capitalism is heterosexualist . . . [and] as we understand the depth and force of violence in the production of both the light and the dark sides of the colonial/modern gender system, that this heterosexuality has been consistently perverse, violent, and demeaning, turning people into animals and turning White women into reproducers of "the (White) race" and "the (middle or) upper class." (2007: 202)

The insights of critical gender analysis, which Lugones and other scholars like her are putting forward, have been discussed by diverse women social activists, including Indigenous, peasant, refugee, and exilic ones, in several contexts in which I have been immersed, long before my return to academia to continue my education.

I was one of those women who always felt very uncomfortable when I was told by older feminists that I had to be proud of my "gender identity as a woman," a position I refused to adopt, because I was not only a "woman," but also a working class-peasant woman with Indigenous ancestry. I was taught by the agents of dominant social worlds that I had to be ashamed of that ancestry, for it was better to be "poor" than to be "Indian." The basis of this refusal was a rather commonsensical connection I made with the race thinking I had imbibed, as taught to me by my many teachers—all of them formed under the Eurocentered educational system prevalent in many societies in the global South—who said that Europeans, and the knowledge they brought to us in terms of language, religion, science, and so forth, were the pinnacle of civilization, and that we, as "backward" people, had to learn how to become "civilized." At bottom, I was gradually being trained to be proud of my "ancestral race" because, according to the official history of European conquest, the subsequent assumption of North American cultural and physical superiority, and the social classification of the invisible Guatemalan state and society, I had to be "part European and White."

These socialized experiences are important theoretical tools because they provide an entry point into the production of other ways of knowing. For example, when I talked to Maya leader Ana Isabel, and she said that gender ideology was strange to her and unrelated to feminism, she was referring to colonial and imperial gender theory that imposes a Western, White, bourgeois, and very individualist world view. This world view reifies the modern/coloniality of power by seeing and treating global southern women as minors, and/or as trapped in, and subjugated by, "tradition." Ana Isabel emphasized that her feminism, as she put it, "includes many elements of the Maya Cosmovision, of the Maya philosophy in which the masculine and the feminine energies are present in men and women." She also added that "to receive prescriptions of who we should be, even if these prescriptions come from those with money [she meant international aid agencies], is not healthy for many of us whose lands and cultures were invaded and whose people were killed, not only with guns, but with the power of the word—religious words, scientific words, military words, technical words" (interview 2002).

The imposition of the coloniality of gender is a long and cruel process that has utilized different modalities, especially the animalization, raping, and mutilation of "promiscuous and polluted bodies." Race, gender, and sexuality have become so inextricably linked that, in many contexts, they are masked under the guise of equality and democracy. And this disguise further

perpetuates the modern/coloniality of power by dividing the societies of the world into binaries of developed/underdeveloped, violent/peaceful, and gender equal/gender unequal. These binaries, in the end, facilitate the justification of genocides, wars, and imperial invasions in the name of liberating non-Western, Brown, Black, and Indigenous women. Thus, the result is that gender becomes an isolated category that allows imperial agents, feminists, and non-feminists to say that women in the global South are oppressed by their cultures—assumed to be inherently violent—while women in the global North are assumed to be liberated because they have reached gender equality. Lugones further explains this history:

> Females excluded from [the Eurocentric, colonial, bourgeois womanhood] description were not just [Western] subordinates. They were also understood to be animals in a sense that went further than the identification of white women with nature, infants, and small animals. They were understood as animals in the deep sense of "without gender," sexually marked as female, but without the characteristics of femininity. Women racialized as inferior were turned from animals into various modified versions of "women" as it fit the processes of Eurocentered global capitalism. Thus heterosexual rape of Indian women, African slave women, coexisted with concubinage, as well as with the imposition of the heterosexual understanding of gender relations among the colonized—when and as it suited Eurocentered, global capitalism, and heterosexual domination of white women. But it is clear from the work of Oyewumi and Allen that there was no extension of the status of white women to colonized women even when they were turned into similes of bourgeois white women. Colonized females got the inferior status of gendering as women, without any of the privileges accompanying that status for white bourgeois women. (2008: 13)

These are profoundly aggressive and violent processes, both epistemically and physically. Modernity can no longer be taught and understood as separate from coloniality, since coloniality is modernity's violent underside, and has included genocide, racialized feminicide, and torture as constants, even though most of these phenomena continue to be treated as exceptional.

Scholar Jasbir Puar observes how discourses of exceptionalism are reproduced in the present, not only to justify imperial invasions, but also to produce moral subjects (the invaders), and barbaric, closed, uncouth, and even homophobic objects, and sometimes quasi-subjects (the invaded and abused) (2007:113). Exceptionality discourses not only facilitate the eviction from humanity (Razack 2008) of the already constituted "outsiders," but also make "normal" the continuing reproduction and perpetuation of the human hierarchy. The long-term impacts on shattered lives are erased in lieu of the conception of perpetrators as extraordinary, patriotic citizens who defend "civilization" from pre-modern criminals. Drawing on Agamben, Puar captures this succinctly in the case of Abu Ghraib by observing that

> despite the actions of those in charge of Abu Ghraib, perversity is still withheld for the body of the queer Muslim terrorist, insistently deferred to the outside. This outside is rapidly, with precision and intensity, congealing into a population of what Giorgio Agamben has called *homo sacer*, those who "may be killed without the commission of a homicide," as their lives do not register within the realm of legal status. (2007: 113)

The reduction of Muslims to the status of a collective inhuman in today's world has a long list of precedents. Dussel, Quijano, and Mignolo, applying a complex decolonial approach, refuse the "familiar" conclusion that modernity is basically an evolutionary and peaceful step towards progress and democracy, with exceptional violence usually called "just wars." Dussel notes that the belief in modernity and capitalism as peaceful is a well-crafted myth (2000: 470-1) because

> as the civilizing mission produces a wide array of victims, its corollary violence is understood as an inevitable action, one with a quasi-ritual character of sacrifice; the civilizing hero manages to make his victims part of a saving sacrifice (I have in mind here the Colonized indigenous people, the African slaves, women, and the ecological destruction of nature). (2000: 472)

Dussel adds that part of the myth of modernity as peaceful is based on the Western belief that violence will be exercised only as a last resort, when barbaric people oppose the civilizing mission because they oppose modernity. And this justification has been made by perpetrators from the "Colonial Just War" to the Gulf War (2000: 472). Dussel recognizes that modernity has emancipating elements, but the problem is that these elements and how they are theorized conceal modernity's genocidal aspects (2000: 472).

Quijano goes further, by naming modernity's violent side, coloniality, as integral to the expansion of capitalism and Western epistemology, characterized by the bifurcation of the mind and body, authorizing the categorization of Indigenous Peoples, Blacks, and colonized women as "body," and therefore closer to "nature" (2000). This process of naturalizing non-Western peoples has been used as the basis for the eviction of several groups from the category of humanity, thus sanctioning their expendability. And when those named as not fully humans rebelled, organized, and resisted, they became, in the eyes of the perpetrators, not only expendable, but politically abject, a "social cancer" that must be put to death to "allow the flow of progress, technology, and democracy" to continue. As Mignolo notes, modernity and coloniality go hand in hand, so much so that progress, development, many technological advances, and all the marvels of modernity need coloniality, which means that a people, a political group, or a culture has to die for biotechnology, to extend "life" and "democracy" (2007; email correspondence 2008).

Much of the rationale given by proponents of the extermination of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas who got in the way of the European civilizing mission and fought back to defend their territories and cultures, is not very different from more contemporary justifications of "otherizing" groups considered "pre-modern," "too cultural," and "too religious," especially if they are located in the global South, or are minoritized in the global North. The difference between the "old" colonial framing, and the "new," which justifies the persecution and massive destruction of the "Other," is perhaps in the concealed ways in which the new framing works to destroy. Today, not even the most blatantly racist establishments and their agents admit in legal and other texts that their goal is to destroy "ethnic," religious, national, or racialized groups. Instead, they change legal orders to include justifications for torture and imperial interventions. With regard to the power of law, divine and otherwise, Aldama points out that, against the partial defense of Indigenous Peoples launched by Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, who unlike Sepulveda lived in the "New World" and owned slaves, Sepulveda legitimated genocide against Indigenous Peoples (2001: 13-14) as a "Just War" against pagan barbarians. According to him, the Indigenous Peoples were non-humans lacking any potential to acquire "civilized humanity" through Christian conversion, something for which De Las Casas argued. Sepulveda de las Casas said war was justifiable if carried out under the following principles:

1. To subject by force of arms men whose natural condition is such that they should obey others, if they refuse such obedience and no other recourse remains.
2. To banish the portentous crime of eating human flesh, which is a special offense to nature, and to stop the worship of demons instead of God, which above all provokes His wrath, together with the monstrous rite of sacrificing men.
3. To save from grave perils the numerous innocent mortals whom these barbarians immolated every year placating their gods with human hearts. War on the infidels is justified because it opens the way to the propagation of Christian religion and eases the task of the missionaries (Todorov in Aldama 2001: 13-14).

As Aldama notes:

> The material effects of Europe's encounter with the Other, the "savage," are devastating. The genocide that occurred is by any standards a violence unmatched by the brutality of all the world wars and civil wars in the history of human societies. However, neither the intensity of colonialism in the Americas nor the intensity of resistance has ever fully been addressed in an official history of a nation-state. (2001: 14)

Aldama adds that "in the master narratives of the United States, Canada, and Mexico (and in other Latin American countries), America was discovered by Europeans and its inhabitants were either lost to diseases or to manifest destiny or subsumed into the dominant culture" (2001: 14). These colonial master narratives rationalize the linking of epistemic and material violence that has been perpetrated on the bodies, as much as on the territories and resources, of those converted into colonial subjects (Aldama 2001: 16) and legal objects (Mignolo 2009b). Justifying colonial domination as a "Just War" allowed the conquistadors to transcend the brutality of their slaughterhouse violence, setting patterns of denial and amnesia that continue to resonate in the militarized U.S.-Mexico borderlands of the early twenty-first century (Aldama 2001: 16). Genocides, thus, are not isolated phenomena solely rooted in cultural and ethnic conflicts, as many tend to believe. Mamdani observes that in the case of the 1994 Rwanda genocide, there was a long and complex political, social, and economic history that involved racialization by the Belgian colonizers, among whom the Catholic Church set the conditions for thinking of, and treating, the political identities of Hutu and Tutsi only as cultural identities (2001).[5]

My use of the term genocide here follows an emerging line of research and analysis that seeks to address silences, exclusions, and other shortcomings in mainstream genocide studies by emphasizing, amongst other things, that genocide is a planned and articulated process that includes different modalities of terror in which states and other powerful actors target groups and populations previously defined as "enemies of the people." Targeted groups include political groups and communities, in addition to racialized, ethnic, religious, and national groups (Feierstein 2007, 2010; Gomez-Suarez 2010; McSherry 2010; Garzón 1999; Rozanski 2006). Genocide is committed not to attack individual persons, but destroy the parts of a given society that those people represent; it is an attempt to murder a group, not a collection of individual persons (Rozanski 2006: 119). Perpetrators retain the power to name and define which groups are "dangerous enemies" and "threats" to national security.

More specifically, my use of the term genocide follows Gomez-Suarez, who draws insights from Shaw (2007) in pointing out that genocide is "a particular form of warfare against the social power of civilian groups, which usually takes place in the midst of a broader conflict" (Gomez-Suarez 2010: 153). In Guatemala, there *was* an insurgent movement, but as many have shown, the genocidal establishment focused on persecuting, kidnapping, torturing, raping, and killing groups and collectivities of civilians, organized and non-organized in social and community movements, especially Mayas (Sanford 2003; Figueroa Ibarra 1991; CEH 1999; ODHAG/REMHI 1998). I also draw on Feierstein's notion that genocide is a social practice constituted by hidden purposes that go beyond the physical elimination of targeted

groups (2010: 44). Mamdani also provides insights through seeing genocides as historical and contextual and not exceptional—and therefore as linked to colonialism and its legacies (2001). And from the Maya Cosmovision, I apply the central principle that life belongs not only to one individual. Life is articulated within a collectivity. This principle led many Mayas to insist that what the militarized powers supported by the West were perpetrating against them since the late 1970s was not only state terror, torture, and rape, but also genocide as a state policy supported by transnational and national bourgeois classes. This reality has not yet been fully recognized (Iximché Declaration 1980).[6] The CEH acknowledged some acts of genocide, but did not recognize them as a state policy (Sanford 2003), because these acts did not comply with the UN Convention of 1948, which emphasizes intent as directly and clearly outlined by perpetrators, and which excludes political groups as targets of genocide.[7] However, as the emerging, critical genocide studies show, there have been different historical processes that constitute genocide, although they have not been recognized as such because of the active work of epistemic, political, and economic elites that exercise the power of naming, including, excluding, and denying (Feierstein 2007; 2010; Rozanski 2006; Garzón 1999; McSherry 2010; Roy 2009a). Critical genocide studies also recognize that genocides are not all identical. Rather, their

> "structural elements"—polarization into "us and them," the demonizing of the enemy, modality of operation, the concentration camp system, dehumanization of otherness, destruction of social relationships, among many other symbolic processes—are all very similar. (Feierstein 2010: 60)

Feierstein adds that all genocides have another connecting thread explained by

> a technology of power based on the "denial of others," their physical disappearance (their bodies) and their symbolic disappearance (the memory of their existence). The disappearance of the victims is intended to have a profound effect on the survivors: it aims to suppress their identity by destroying the network of social relations that makes identity possible at all (a particular type of identity defined by a particular way of life). In short, the main objective of genocidal destruction is the transformation of the victims into "nothing" and the survivors into "nobodies." Unlike war, genocide does not end with the deaths it causes, but begins with them. (2010: 61)

To understand various silences and exclusions in studies of genocide, I also draw on the notion of organized silence coined by Aymara Bolivian scholar and activist Fausto Reinaga (1969 [1981]), who explained it as a long process of epistemic domination that sanctions which "truths" deserve to be produced and reproduced as valid knowledge and history by the agents of Euro-North

American-centric knowledge; which histories and cultures must be excluded, diminished, persecuted, and distorted; and which peoples must be dehumanized. Reinaga says:

> It was this . . . Christian West that judged the humanity of Indigenous People and bestialized them. . . . Spain denied the condition of being human to "the natural" of this continent; it believed and thought that the Indigene was a species outside of the human species. (1969 [1988]: 61)

The most dangerous impact of organized silence is that it has planted a general doubt about the creative capacity of Indigenous Peoples, to the point that they have been collectively named with several pejorative terms that construct them as eternal minors. Reinaga noted that this derogatory naming became an institutional practice in law, medicine, religion, formal politics, mass media, and education (1969 [1988]: 63). He cites several academics, journalists, and politicians who all expressed, in different forums, the notion that original peoples needed to be kept under tight control, because of their hatred of Whites, and foremost, because "Indians" are obstacles to progress. Sociologist Bautista Saavedra, for example, said in 1954:

> The community of Indians, who exploit and enjoy their lands, is a communism without basis, without organization and roots. Indians absolutely impede the improvement of the Indian race—they impede any attempt at reform and progress, so they keep latent the hatred of Indians against the white race who they accuse of usurpation and oppression. . . . Indians are blood thirsty orangutans. (Reinaga 1969[1988]: 63)

Exclusions, silences, and distortions that Reinaga analyzes have affected many populations and groups, and I argue that they have created conditions for the perpetration of genocide, because to persecute and kill entire groups there must be a long process of denigrating and dehumanizing them as "enemies of the nation, state, and humanity." Organized silence helps in the analysis of the dynamics of genocide in Guatemala, because there genocide was fueled by structural and cultural racism, by a well-entrenched gender system, and by the geopolitical, anti-communist crusade—the heart of the U.S. National Security Doctrine.

Feierstein rightly says that genocide does not end with the deaths it causes; rather, it begins with those deaths (2010). This is because genocide does not end with the physical killing, and partial or total destruction, of collectivities. As a strategy of counterinsurgency and national/transnational security, genocide sets up conditions for the establishment, and further development, of impunity as a culture that aims to paralyze survivors' and other marginalized groups' political will for achieving social justice. As a culture,

impunity justifies the social, political, and cultural vilification of the exterminated, and the criminalization of those who survive genocide, as well as exonerating those who implement these processes.

My research and analysis is also informed by insights from critical political economy that link state terror and genocide with capitalist practices, albeit with important discursive and analytical changes, especially around two major influences in Latin America: the imposition of the National Security Doctrine, primarily by the United States, and reworked in Guatemala, and neoliberalism (Gomez-Suarez 2010; Klein 2007). For as Klein pertinently asks, is neoliberalism an inherently violent ideology, and is there something about its goal that demands this cycle of brutal cleansing followed by human rights cleanup operations (2007: 151)?[8] She also poignantly reminds us that "free market ideologies and policies" reconfigured by the Chicago Boys, who militarized economic adventures in Latin America, are not tangential, but central, in genocide and other modalities of state terror.[9] As Klein's observes:

> The Chicago Boys' first adventure in the seventies should have served as a warning to humanity: theirs are dangerous ideas. By failing to hold the ideology accountable for the crimes committed in its first laboratory [Latin America], this subculture of unrepentant ideologues was given immunity, freed to scour the world for its next conquest. These days, we are once again living in an era of corporatist massacres, with countries suffering tremendous military violence alongside organized attempts to remake them into model "free market" economies; again the goals of building free markets, and the need for such brutality, are treated as entirely unrelated. (2007: 152)

To sum up, genocide in Guatemala, as in other Latin American countries, has not occurred in isolation from conquest, colonization, and late capitalism—also known as neoliberalism—and it is not just a partial extermination of racial, ethnic, religious, and national groups. It is the partial or total destruction of political groups, especially those that have challenged deeply exploitative, racist, and gendered systems.

THE PRAXIS OF DECOLONIAL METHODOLOGIES

The Maya Cosmovision I define as an epistemology based on a set of philosophical, social, economic, political, and spiritual principles, the main axis of which is the articulation of the human and non-human worlds without any supremacy allocated to humans. In this vision, as in other Indigenous ways of knowing, epistemology and the way we conduct research are seen as interrelated *activities.* The modern/coloniality of power approach takes this per-

spective as a central principle in order to question the bifurcation between mind and body introduced by Descartes. As a binary, it has had negative consequences for marginalized people in the global South, Indigenous Peoples all over the world, and other populations categorized as "minorities" in the global North (Quijano 2000; Mignolo 1995; 2000; Lugones 2007). In this book I take a similar approach. I not only see, but also apply, epistemological, theoretical, and methodological approaches and strategies as interconnections that must be contextualized and historicized. Furthermore, these perspectives and strategies must be decolonized. This, however, is not an easy undertaking, for it implies a constant re-evaluation of how much we have embraced Euro-North American-centric knowledge as a universal truth applicable everywhere. Thus, I am in concordance with scholar Ramón Grosfoguel when he emphasizes the following three points as central to the process of decoloniality:

1. that a decolonial perspective requires a broader canon of thought than simply the Western canon (including the Left Western canon);
2. that a truly universal decolonial perspective cannot be based on an abstract universal (one particular that raises itself as universal global design), but would have to be the result of the critical dialogue between diverse critical epistemic/ethical/political projects towards a pluriversal as opposed to a universal world;
3. that decolonization of knowledge would require us to take seriously the epistemic perspective/cosmologies/insights of critical thinkers from the global South and with subalternized racial/ethnic/sexual spaces and bodies. (2007: 212)

Hence, social research should not be the application of formal methodological procedures, neatly foreseen before the collection of data, in order to "probe" on the basis of predetermined theory, theory which is also seen as "neutral," a conception still prevalent in many domains of hegemonically "validated" knowledge. Rather, social research is a social process in which the researcher is part of the "field," is part of knowledge production, and is also part of relations of power as domination. As such, both social science research methodologies and insights from research are social in origin (Bhavnani 2004). Furthermore, research as a process is contingent and challenging, especially for those who take very seriously the fact that knowledge can be epistemically violent; in consequence, there must be an obligation to become epistemically responsible and accountable (Code 1994). In light of this, it is important to recognize that doing research in places where people have lived under conditions of genocide, in the context of state terror and other forms of patterned violence, can present challenges for which even the most advanced courses on theory and methodology could not provide adequate insights and

practical skills. In fact, in these contexts, doing research may not be a possibility at all, or else, at best, may require a reformulation of design in practice if researchers want to go beyond surface appearances. On the other hand, the contexts and histories of genocidal state terror deeply challenge the endless regulation of academic ethics review committees, especially their idea that it is possible and sufficient to "respect" peoples' lives by asking them to sign consent forms. The point here is not to demand more rigid applications of Westernized conceptions of ethics, but rather to affirm that ethics are not constituted by forms and regulations. If they were, then how is it that these regulations have allowed for the continuation of the mythical, Euro-North-Centric representation of many marginalized communities and peoples, especially from non-Western societies, as "underdeveloped," "less developed," "more patriarchal and violent," and so forth, regardless of the fact that some of these representations have become increasingly sophisticated and masked in the language of "diversity," "multiculturalism," "protection," and "security of citizens"?

While I have kept in mind relevant insights from various research methodologies such as institutional ethnography (Smith 1987, 1990a, 1990b, 1999; Campbell and McGregor 1997), grounded theory (Charmaz 2001; Strauss and Corbin 1994), and participatory research (Morgan and Ramirez 1984), I have also kept in mind the need to decolonize these strategies in practice, as stated above. This is because in "normal" circumstances, marginalized and oppressed peoples, especially Indigenous ones, are very skeptical of research in general (Tuhiwai Smith 2002). In environments turned violent by decades of genocide, rape, and torture, as in Guatemala, research participants are without a doubt extra cautious about what they say, and some are often deeply fearful of talking openly about their experiences. Fear of talking has been reinforced among many of the marginalized in Guatemala since the post-Peace Accords period of 1996, due to the fact that state terror, although not a massive state policy in "peacetime" Guatemala, was still very evident in people's lives. Several reports from social movements and progressive organizations have documented this (Maldonado Guevara 2005; Guatemalan Human Rights Commission/USA, 2005; Frente Nacional de Lucha 2008; Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009). This is a subject that I continue to research. Critical textual and content analysis is another strategy I apply in this book, especially in the collection of data for the chapters that examine genocide, bureaucracies of death, the criminalization of progressive social agency, securitization, and the issue of whose deaths deserve to be grieved and whose memories deserve to be honored and remembered. In analyzing whose deaths deserve to be grieved, a military document called the "dossier of death," a document which was smuggled to grassroots organizations and later kept in the National Security Archive (a research center of Georgetown University), is the central methodological research artifact.

Dealing with texts such as the "dossier," a military operational log named Plan Sofía, the report of *La Comisión del Esclarecimiento Histórico* (CEH, The Commission for Historical Clarification) (CEH 1999), and the four volumes of *El Proyecto de Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica* (REMHI, The Research Project for the Recovery of Historical Memory) (REMHI 1998) demonstrate that engagement with structural and everyday suffering involves the difficult task of dealing with unquantifiable suffering coded in different textual and visual material, as well as engaging very respectfully with people who have survived and/or witnessed genocidal and bureaucratized torture and death.

Despite all the contingencies I have faced, and perhaps because of them, the most important sources for this book come from fieldwork conducted in Guatemala from the early 1990s to 2008, and from group interviews with 154 Maya and Mestizo women and men, including survivors of state terror, as well as fieldwork I conducted from 2007 to 2010 in North America with families from Guatemala,. The age range of the participants was from eighteen to eighty-nine years, and their socio-economic backgrounds were primarily working- class and peasant, the latter doing part-time agricultural work, and/or part- and full-time weaving work, combined with domestic work. Others were low-income, living in suburban and urban places, or else from middle-class backgrounds, which means, in Guatemala, having a professional full-time job or owning a small business. Taped and non-taped interviews and conversations took place in different settings. In carrying them out, I took into account the insights and suggestions of several collaborators—whose roles are usually labeled as "research assistants," especially of three Maya women, Antonia, Mercedes, and Concepción. My life partner has been a crucial mentor who has taught me much about Maya Peoples and Indigenous ways of knowing, and has been strict about making clear the violence of language, and the power of knowledge vis-à-vis physical violence. Fieldwork settings included parks, Catholic Churches, restaurants, small coffee shops, flea markets, women's houses, agricultural fields, a boat—wherever women's groups were meeting—and even city buses, which are unregulated and often crowded and poorly maintained.

Finally, I would like to point out that despite all the critiques of conventional social-scientific thinking, researchers seen by academic, government, and policy-making circles as "normal" producers of knowledge—especially White males, and more recently, White females doing research in the global South—become the "prototypical accepted markers" of a universalistic knowledge, while other researchers' work becomes particularized (Bhavnani 2003: 73). In the end, the "Other" conducting research on the "Other," as in my case, can become subject to additional scrutiny, and demands to produce more "credible evidence" to prove her or his research skills and capacity to be "objective and neutral." However, no researcher can escape the influences

of social locations and, as Harding has argued, the more researchers recognize this and work it through, the more accurate will be the knowledge they produce (2004).

These insights and challenges are the background of the organization of this book, so chapter 2, by applying a genealogical analytical strategy, contextualizes and examines specific moments within major events that have shaped Guatemala, such as the Conquest and invasion; colonial racial, gender, and class hierarchies and relations; and the introduction of the concept of race, and its actualization in practice that we call racism. Chapter 3 treats the roots of racism in the coloniality of power and its constitutive place in the hierarchy of inequality, which is very much linked to the global conditions of social injustice produced by capitalism. Derived from key thematic insights from life histories of Maya women, many of whom are also survivors of state terror, this chapter analyzes the prevalence of racism in Guatemala and its links to transnational practices of racism. Without explaining these social and cultural formations and their links to a transnational world dominated by Euro-North American-centric political, military, and cognitive power, it would be almost impossible to understand how modernity and coloniality got structured in a particular geography—Guatemala—to then unfold in the perpetration of genocide, and the organization of sophisticated bureaucracies of death. Chapter 4 examines genocide as a tool to eliminate Maya peoples, including children. It applies data from fieldwork and insights from critical genocide studies, as well as from texts such as the *Plan Sofia* log, a military document from the Guatemalan army. It also analyzes racialized feminicide and its specific dynamics within the context of genocide under conditions of state terror. Chapter 5 uses interview data and *the death squad dossier*, as well as other documents, to analyze bureaucracies of death influenced by doctrines of national security, and the role of torture as a way of using human subjects to advance research. This chapter shows for example, how doctrines of national security, coined in the United States under the conditions of the so-called Cold War, were in Guatemala reworded and then fully implemented, with barbaric rationality, against those previously invented as politically abject.

Chapter 6 focuses on citizenship as a terrain of inclusion/exclusion that has been not only coercive but also directly violent. Thus, contrary to what is generally assumed in scholarly and popular knowledge, the introduction of citizenship and its ongoing historical development was an introduction to Guatemala of Enlightenment values as a continuation of the institution of coloniality, *which can also be a space where progressive struggles, resistance, and alliances can be forged*. Finally, chapter 7 ties up the main arguments and analyses presented in each preceding chapter. In the conclusion, I argue that it is important to see the Guatemalan case comparatively, as a window on how events and power struggles commonly viewed as isolated

and new—such as the current "war" on terror, security thinking, racial profiling, and the criminalization of those who demand meaningful social change—are patterned. Recycled and mystified, these global issues are the result of centuries of different forms and processes of coloniality and modernity.

NOTES

1. According to my paternal grandfather Juan de Dios, the paternal side of my family comes from Xinka Peoples who, before Conquest and colonization, lived in what are now the Guatemalan departments of Jutiapa, Santa Rosa, and Jalapa. Although there are very few studies on the Xinkas, the little that is recorded by colonial and imperial anthropologists and linguistics establishes that Xinkas were not conquered by Pedro de Alvarado; it as a Spaniard that came after de Alvarado who fragmented Xinka families and communities by selling many of them as slaves (Brinton 1884). Brinton records that "On account of their obstinacy, numbers of them were sold as slaves and branded with a hot iron, and hence was derived the Spanish name of the river on which the Xinkas lived, *Río de los Esclavos, Slave river*" (1884:2), a name still in use and whose origins nobody interrogates. The maternal side of my family comes from Pipiles, a people who lived at the borders of what are now known as El Salvador and Guatemala, in El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. For millennia, both Xinkas and Pipiles communicated through commerce, cultural festivities, and navigation. In places like Yupiltepeque, Xinkas and Pipiles formed one community, especially after the genocide killed most of them, and that is why some contemporary people in the area quietly recognize their ancestry as both Xinka and Pipil (fieldnotes 2002).

2. All research participants' names are pseudonyms.

3. See Anzaldúa 1987; Mohanty 2003; Hill Collins 1998; Davis 1983; Lugones 2007; Razack 2004, 2008.

4. See Quijano and Wallerstein 1992; Quijano 2000; Mignolo 1995, 2000; Anzaldúa 1987; Tuhiwai Smith 2002. The modern/coloniality of power perspective was introduced by Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano, who was influenced by critical Marxist thinking and by other Latin American scholars such as José Carlos Mariátegui (1894-1930).

5. As Mamdani observes:

> The racialization of the Tutsi/Hutu was not simply an intellectual construct, one which later and more enlightened generations of intellectuals could deconstruct and discard at will. More to the point, racialization was also an institutional construct. Racial ideology was embedded in institutions, which in turn undergirded racial privilege and reproduced racial ideology. . . . As a process both ideological and institutional, the racialization of the Tutsi (as descendants of the Aryan race in a dark skin called Hemites, and therefore, more civilized than Hutus) was the creation of a joint enterprise between the colonial state and the Catholic Church. . . . Soon after colonization, the Belgian state ordered a reflection on Rwanda from the White Fathers. The purpose was to elaborate and implement "race" policies. . . . It took Belgian rule a little over a decade to translate its vision of a civilizing mission in Rwanda into an institutional imprint. Central to that translation was the Hamitic hypothesis. . . . Belgian power turned Hamitic racial supremacy from an ideology into an institutional fact by making it the basis of changes in political, social, and cultural relations. The institutions underpinning racial ideology were created in the decade from 1927 to 1936. . . . Key institutions—starting with education, then state administration, taxation, and finally the Church—were organized (and reorganized, as the case may be) around an active acknowledgment of these identities. The

> reform was capped with a census that classified the entire population as Tutsi, Hutu, or Twa, and issued each person with a card proclaiming his or her official identity. (2001: 87, 88)

This institutionalized matrix of power placed the Tutsis "in a contradictory position, privileged in relation to the Hutu but oppressed in relation to Europeans" (Mamdani 2001: 88).

6. Beginning gradually in 2002, some progressive circles began to acknowledge the perpetration of genocide. However, within the hegemonic discourse of mainstream media and most international and national non-governmental organizations, in Guatemala there was only a "civil war," or an "internal armed conflict" (field notes 2002, 2006, 2008).

7. Moreover, the U.N. Declaration does not acknowledge that a national group can simultaneously be a political group.

8. Klein refers to the process by which several North American and European human rights organizations scrubbed out references to the root causes of genocide, torture, and other state terror methods, and imposed a legalistic and narrow view, by simply asserting that "everyone has the right to a fair trial and to be free from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment" (2007: 143-44).

9. In a nutshell, the "Chicago Boys" is the name given to a group of economists trained by Milton Friedman at the Chicago School of Economics, University of Chicago. Friedman and his disciples are the ideologues of neoliberal shock therapies that include privatization, and deregulation of corporations and other capitalist entities; an incremental increase in the powers of police to persecute and control social movements; a reconfiguration of the role of the state to serve the needs of the global capitalist class; and the commoditization of nature, amongst other things (Klein 2007; Bartra and Otero 2007).

Chapter Two

Genealogical Backgrounds of Power

Critical genealogical analysis traces interlocking relations of power as constitutive of each other, as contextual and contingent, and therefore as anchored in localities under the dominance of modern/colonial/global agendas (Isin 2002; Mignolo 2000). These genealogies are crucial in trying to grasp the epistemic and socioeconomic violences of global coloniality of power, and how they are structured and deployed in different societies. More importantly, as Mignolo has asserted, critical historical genealogies engage in a critique of history's "complicity with empires" (1995: 126). And since empires are established and perpetuated through both ongoing (structural-quotidian) and "intermittent" violence, including genocide, torture, rape, and so on, critical genealogical scholars encounter different types of violence, regardless of whether they purposely address them within their work.[1] My use of the term "intermittent," to refer to what others call "extreme" violence, derives from the acute analysis by Guatemalan social historian Severo Martínez-Peláez, who conducted research in Guatemala, as well as in Spain's archives, for over two decades (see 1982, 1985, 1991).[2] Martínez-Peláez recognized that it is ahistorical and inaccurate to see and treat violence only as "extreme" acts of physical destruction, for this conceals the ongoing materiality of violence manifested as exploitation or poverty, or both. While he did not define this binary of everyday and exceptional violence further, Martínez-Peláez outlined its inherent tensions when he pointed out that while the oppressor exercises violence, the oppressed feel it most of the time. What the oppressed feel is a silent violence, one that operates in a continuous, almost invisible, way. Those who belong to dominant classes can escape this pervasive violence, because it is perpetrated against the working and peasant classes. The other violence, said Martínez-Peláez, appears in an intermittent form to feed silent violence, and it is widespread (1985: 47). The two forms

of violence are interrelated—although at some moments, and in some contexts, one is more salient than the other. Although Martínez-Peláez did not apply a gender and anti-racist analysis to "extreme" and ongoing violence, his contribution provides elements to build a more complex approach.

Quijano, a Peruvian sociologist, similarly notes, in relation to the dynamics of different frames and expressions of violence:

> The vast genocide of the Indians in the first decades of colonization was not caused principally by the violence of the conquest nor by the plagues the conquistadors brought, but took place because so many American Indians were used as disposable manual labor and forced to work until death. (2000: 538)[3]

The genealogical approach to Guatemala I develop here pays attention to specific moments within major happenings—such as the Conquest, colonialism, and the social organization of racism, as well as to cyclical patterns that have shaped Guatemala as *internally* exclusionary, at the same time as the country has been cast as colonized and dependent within the colonial/modern world capitalist system. This genealogical analysis also pays critical attention to citizenship, class, and heteropatriarchal relations that, at different key moments, and while rearticulated in different ways, also created conditions through which Guatemala became deeply and violently unequal.

THE COSMOVISION OF PRE-CONQUEST GUATEMALAN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The main purpose of including an overview of a thousands-years-old genealogy and epistemology of Indigenous Peoples in Guatemala, is to disrupt a history-telling pattern that conventionally starts with the Spanish Conquest, or represents the First Peoples of the Americas either as "etnies" (*etnias)* that have not made important contributions to world history and knowledge production, or as *Pueblos* that were "tribes" or "clans"[4] and lacked complex, sociopolitical organizations. Even though in some academic circles this myth has been rejected, in others it is reproduced using more sophisticated scholarly language. Representations of Indigenous Peoples and their ways of knowing and living as being somehow frozen in time, also prevail in mainstream media, and have devastating economic and psycho-spiritual consequences for many, not only in the global South, but also in the global North. Canadian researcher and activist Anita Holsen Harper (2006) notes that long-standing representations of Indigenous women and men as an inferiorized people are currently more sophisticated, but that in the end these representations make Indigenous Peoples themselves responsible for the deplorable socioeconomic

conditions in which most are forced to live. The still low numbers of Indigenous Peoples participating in academia, and the large percentages who are in jail, are presented as consequences of their individual faults, and not as the result of systemic conditions of oppression (2006). Mythical representations of Canadian Indigenous Peoples as a threat to the nation's law and order prevail in policing and judicial conceptions and practices. For instance, the "Stolen Sisters" report by Amnesty International (2004) found that "many police have come to view Indigenous people not as a community deserving protection, but a community from which the rest of society must be protected" (cited in Holsen Harper 2006: 35). "The nation" in these representations is European-based and White, a product of "civilization."

Colonizing, racialized views of Indigenous women and men and their ways of knowing also reify the myth that before Europeans came to the Americas, these lands were empty of civilizations. Historically, however, rich civilizations preexisted and existed alongside the European. Over millennia, these civilizations developed a complex set of philosophies, forms of knowledge production, and political systems. In what is now Guatemala these civilizational ways of knowing are referred to by many contemporary Mayas as *Cosmovisión* (Cosmovision).[5] Based upon such usage, I, along with many Mayas, see the Maya Cosmovision as a dynamic world view, an epistemology and a body of knowledge which has been generated, transformed, and developed by Maya Indigenous Peoples—a world view that ultimately originates from before the Conquest. Today, many Maya women and men, as well as others, are rearticulating this knowledge as a living force in order to provide meaning to their lives, and to fuel individual and collective action for social change, especially in their struggles for social justice for all. It is Maya women who are more critically working with this Cosmovision, as a living practice that also includes a productive, yet socially tense, space through which gender relations of violence and inequality are challenged and redressed within homes, communities, social movements, and the "nation." Although many pre-Conquest societies in the Americas were stratified to varying degrees, their populations did not suffer the systemic exploitation they experienced after the European invasion (Jonas 1991: 13).[6]

The knowledge produced by Indigenous Peoples included an interrelation of mind, body, and spirit, and an ecological vision in which the earth and its ecosystems were always changing. This knowledge also included an interlocking relationship between the feminine and the masculine energies, and an acceptance of diverse sexualities and ways of being women and men, which were penalized and vilified by conquerors and their heirs, and are now denied by many Maya women and men (field notes 1999, 2002, 2006). Within the Maya Cosmovision, for instance, the feminine principle *Alom* is as central and as relevant as *K'ajolom*, the masculine one[7] for they constitute dual opposites.[8] The ecosystem is thought to be constituted by an intricate web of

systems in which life and death interrelate. Thus, Mayas see human, social, and biophysical forces and environments as dynamic, interacting energies. Humans are not superior to other components within this equation. For many Mayas, especially women, *Ixmucané*, the original grandmother-energy, represented and still represents the earth's labor that produces food, water, fire, and air to keep the human race alive. According to ancient Mayas, it was only through this labor that humans, made out of corn, appeared on earth (field notes 1999, 2002). Mayas also developed an intricate and complicated account of the active, dual, negative and positive forces as parts of the same equation. Instead of binary elements, they saw a synergy between opposed forces such as death/life, and good/bad, which are considered separate in other cosmologies. Within this world view, *Xibalbá* represented the negative energy, as well as the struggle between right and wrong (Cabrera 1992: 32; field notes 2002, 2008). Thus, in the Maya Cosmovision, wrong and right, negative and positive, are not separate, but rather are simultaneous energies existing throughout the entire cosmos, and within humans, as a potential force that can be unleashed given the proper conditions.

Another relevant principle in the Maya Cosmovision is the conception that heaven and hell do not exist as a supranatural space in which a remote, distant, and punishing god resides. Consequently, spirituality within the Maya Cosmovision is not the same as organized religion. Rather, it is a set of inner and outer principles that induces social solidarity and a constant energy to improve and change. Therefore, even though ancient Mayas did not have a concept of social justice (a concept perhaps invented in the West), they possessed a strong principle of right and wrong, referred to by many Mayas as the common construction of well-being, or the communal good, a process that requires individual and collective contributions called community services. Victoria, a university-educated Maya woman and political leader, observed that within the philosophy of the Maya Cosmovision,

> each individual has his or her own uniqueness but also has a common thread that connects them to other beings, human and non-human. It does not mean that everything is perfect; on the contrary it means that people and realities are very complex, thereby demanding social organizations that do not oppress and create individual and social sufferings. (Interview 2002)

The normative principles of the Maya Cosmovision interlock with practice within which spirituality can be seen as active and social, and not only contemplative and individual, a feature that contemporary, critically engaged Maya women and men are trying to apply, often in combination with popular Catholicism (participant observations 2002).[9]

Ancient Mayas also believed that the coexistence and struggle of negative and positive forces made possible the emergence of *Ixmucané* and Ixquic, the grandmother and mother-principles of creation from which the first corn human beings were born. The same forces enabled the transition from nomadic to sedentary life achieved through agriculture. (Cabrera 1992; field notes 2002, 2008). Interestingly, the feminine and masculine energies are located in both males and females, which is consistent with the existence of non-binary ways of being woman and man—of gender relations—in many present-day communities, and in pre-colonial times. This has been documented in other Indigenous contexts for the last thirty years or so, but remains largely unknown around the world, because this knowledge has been kept in the "ivory towers" of many universities. Recently, and through the application of the coloniality of power's insights, and critical Queer theory, more details about the existence of several sexualities, masculinities, and femininities are being analyzed (see Horswell 2005; Lugones 2007, 2008). Due to the influence and perpetuation of what Lugones calls the "gender modern colonial system," very few Guatemalans from all ethnicities are willing to admit or recognize this. [10]

The Cosmovision reveals how ancestral Mayas had a deep regard for the acquisition of systemic, scientific knowledge, and its application to a better life on earth. Their astronomical and mathematical studies helped them improve agriculture and expand relations with other Indigenous cultures. Architectural and mathematical studies assisted them in building lasting monuments and irrigation canals. A deep knowledge of plants enabled many Indigenous Peoples to develop balanced health care. Thus, the Maya civilization was not closed or tribal. It is this history that constitutes Guatemalan Indigenous Peoples, in particular Mayas and their civilization, as *un Pueblo, una cultura, un pensamiento* (a people, a culture, and a thought) and not as an ethnicity or set of tribes (Cabrera 1992: 226). Theirs was a body of thought as complex and contradictory as found in any other civilization or culture.

Ancient Mayas had complex systems of individual and communal legal and social norms for redressing injustices, including the abuse of power. Dialogue and teachings preceded severe punishments in what was called customary law. Ancient Mayas were acute observers of time, and their observations of the constant movements of the sun, the moon, stars, and planets made possible the invention of the calendars that served socioeconomic and cultural purposes. *Ab* and *Cholq'ij* are perhaps the two most important calendars. *Ab* is the solar year of 365 days divided into 18 months (*winaq*) of 20 days each, with one month of 5 days (*Uayeb* or *Ruwayab'*) (Guorón Ajquijay 2003: 7, 15). *Cholq'ij*, the sacred calendar, is used for philosophical, psychological, and spiritual purposes. It has 260 days that are distributed over 13 months of 20 days each. This calendar was, and is, very much linked to everyday life, because each day is sacred and has positive and negative

cosmological energies. Positive energies might help control a bad temper, go through mourning with ease, and assist in the seeking of protection, as well as finding inner peace. This calendar also serves as the basis for the community work that Maya priests and guides, called *Ajq'ijab'* (Guorón Ajquijay 2003: 12), must undertake. The Maya Cosmovision was enacted in and through large and small cities surrounded by networks of smaller towns, a use of space that contrasts with the colonial city and the *Pueblos de Indios* imposed by conquerors and colonizers.

However, the Spanish conquerors named the knowledge and social formations the Mayas had created as pagan and primitive. Cyclical episodes and reversals also transformed the systems of knowledge and life that enabled Indigenous Peoples to develop complex civilizations. These systems are relevant in a genealogical approach, especially as those deemed as "incapable of producing systemic knowledge," and as "lacking history," are reconfiguring, with many contradictions, ancient teachings as sources for contemporary mobilization towards social, progressive change. For example, the reconfiguration of the Maya Cosmovision by many Maya women in this study, as well as by others, is an active process that at times is tense and paradoxical. As Magdalena, a Maya-Tz'utujil community leader and survivor of state terror, says:

> We have to practice our beliefs with discretion or combine them with some teachings of the Catholic Church because this is what we are and have nowadays, and many women who are widows have found some comfort in this mixing. I prefer the teachings of my ancestors, my grandmothers; for they have given me strength to survive after my husband was kidnapped. (Interview 2002)

Hence, many Maya women and men are heightening their demands for the recognition and validation of their knowledge in the face of a global force that keeps reproducing the discourse that what Indigenous and other marginalized people produce is no real knowledge; that it is only beliefs, opinions, intuitive or subjective understandings, which, at most, may become objects or raw material for scientific inquiry (De Sousa Santos 2007). Teachings from the Maya Cosmovision are avenues for Maya Peoples to produce meaning and to act against oppressive rule in "peacetime" Guatemala. These are struggles that seek to benefit the entire society, for I argue that, while Indigenous Peoples make relevant their rights as peoples, theirs is a struggle for material and social justice for all. Their struggles constitute a "rejection of the biologist terms of representation that provides the opening for indigenous subjects to constitute political exchange through a de-essentialized trope of citizenship" (Saldaña-Portillo 2001: 412).

THE SPANISH COLONIAL PROJECT

Invasion and First Genocide

The Spanish invasion of Guatemala in 1524 was the beginning of the first genocide suffered by Indigenous Peoples in the Americas.[11] It was cruelly implemented through the destruction of bodies, cultures, epistemologies, and spirits. It set the pace for the institutionalized terror that persists to the present day, and has been one of the hallmarks of Guatemala's history, even if transformed in ideology and in practice. The Conquest/colonial experience was not only an imperial economic project, but also an identity and cultural one in which Otherness as inferiority was created through a system of classification of peoples and lands as either civilized (conquerors) or primitive (Indigenous Peoples). As Omi and Winant observe:

> The representations and interpretation of the meaning of the indigenous peoples' existence became a crucial matter, one that would affect the outcome of the enterprise of conquest. The "discovery" raised disturbing questions as to whether all could be considered part of the same "family of man," and more practically, the extent to which native peoples could be exploited and enslaved. (1994: 612)

Both colonized femininities and masculinities were denied to have gender, for they were considered as subhuman. The sexual exploitation of Indigenous women gave birth to a new social population and condition, Mestizos and Mestizaje, alongside the institutionalization of slavery.

Drawing on Omi and Winant (1994), Mignolo (2005, 2007, 2009) and Lugones (2008, 2009), I contend that the conquest and colonization of the Americas is not only one of the greatest racial projects in history, but also a project of gender and class formation. It was an unnecessary and avoidable intersectional project of oppression, subordination, and exclusion. As Omi and Winant note, the expropriation of Indigenous lands and goods, the institutionalization of Indigenous slavery through *encomiendas* and *repartimientos* (forced and free Indigenous labor), as well as the organization of the African slave trade, presupposed a world view which distinguished Europeans, as children of God and full-fledged human beings, from nonhuman Others (1994: 62). Furthermore, and as Quijano has brilliantly shown,

> the racial classification of the population and the early association of the new racial identities of the colonized with the forms of control of unpaid, unwaged labor developed among the Europeans the singular perception that paid labor was the whites' privilege. The racial inferiority of the colonized implied that they were not worthy of wages. They were naturally obliged to work for the profit of their owners. (2000: 539)

The European invasion, using physical, religious, and cultural weapons, organized not only the implementation of the physical genocide of millions of Indigenous Peoples, but also the persecution and destruction of their knowledge, which had been preserved and transmitted by teachers, spiritual leaders, women healers, and midwives. It was a knowledge embedded in ceremonial and educational centers, in temples that were living museums, and in written books and documents, particularly those named *Códices* by some "experts." Scientific, occidental knowledge served as the backbone for inventing and naming Indigenous Peoples, their cultures, and knowledge, as a "tradition" of pagan primitivism. In keeping with this, colonizers destroyed most of the written knowledge of Indigenous Peoples, only later to assert that they were irrational barbarians lacking lettered knowledge (Mignolo 1995).

Indigenous women and men among the K'ichés, Tz'utujiles, Pipiles, Xinkas, and others, fiercely resisted the Conquest. Martínez-Peláez traced many of these struggles, in what is now Mexico and Central America, but did not consider them to be an organized resistance; rather, he interpreted them as movements motivated by exhaustion and desperation, describing them as "*motines de indios*" (riots of Indians) (1985, 1991). It was these very movements that made possible the survival of Indigenous Peoples and their key documents and oral histories. Moreover, Indigenous Peoples' resistance to European colonizers planted the seeds for the collective memory of resistance among contemporary Mayas, Xinkas, Garífunas, Mestizos, progressive Ladinos, and *Criollos*. Nevertheless, conquest and colonialism hit hard the social, cultural, and natural scientific knowledge of the Maya civilization in the fields of astronomy, medicine, linguistics, philosophy, literature, poetry, and textile production, to name a few (Cabrera 1992). Despite the deliberate and planned destruction of Maya knowledge, the Maya Cosmovision has survived as a strong practice of oral history, and recently in its written form it has been translated into Spanish. This survival was due in part to the "discovery" of a Christianized version of the Sacred Books of the K'iché, the *Popol Wuj*, that has been adopted and is respected by most Mayas.[12] Although the exact date of the "discovery" is unknown, many think that it was found approximately a century after the Spanish invasion of 1524 (Cabrera 1992: 16).

Christianity, together with economic and political laws, was one of the main instruments of domination that established and reproduced the modern/colonial system in Guatemala, with the help of a group of elite, Indigenous men from the surviving pre-Conquest Indigenous leadership. The majority of surviving Indigenous Peoples were forced to relocate to Pueblos de Indios, places named and established by the invaders, while the conquerors and their heirs built cities based on reinventions of their Spanish, Greek, and Roman

heritages. The forced, spatial reconstitution of Indigenous cities and towns laid the basis for the severe social, military, and political control of Indigenous Peoples. But it also set the framework for their resistance.

The Introduction of Racialized and Gendered Citizenship and Security

Colonial rule imposed a heteropatriarchal and racist economic, political, and cultural system. It also established the institution of citizenship and the regime of security, although no student of Guatemala has yet recognized the latter. By digging into the historical investigations of Mestizo social scientist and historian Martínez-Peláez,[13] I have found interesting data and reflections that shed light on the practice of citizenship in the colonial period, even before the conquerors and their heirs had named it in a coherent discourse. As Isin points out, class, capital, and territory act as conditions that inform citizenship and give form to ideal types of citizens, self-identified to govern and own property (2002). Because as Isin further notes, "dominant groups have always been inclined to naturalize their 'superiority' and the 'inferiority' of the dominated, interpreting the struggles that resulted in their dominance as epic struggles against transitive and distant alien and barbarians" (2002: 5).

As in ancient Greece and Rome, the practice of "being a citizen" in colonial Guatemala was related to living in cities. Cities were conceived of as European inventions, which Indigenous People were incapable of formulating even as an idea, despite the fact that within the Maya civilization, as already mentioned, there were many small and large cities—including Xelajú, Gumarcaj, and Iximché—which were simultaneously ceremonial centers and places for trade, knowledge, and the arts.

In order to build colonial cities, it was necessary to restructure entire Indigenous places and ways of living, through a security regime. Contrary to much scholarly and "popular" knowledge, this regime was not a product of the Cold War, but dates back to the sixteenth century, when it was implemented in order to exterminate many Indigenous Peoples in the Americas, and to control the lives of those who survived. Later it was imposed on African slaves and impoverished Mestizo populations. While Agamben (2001) is correct in pointing out that security as a leading principle of state politics dates back to the Enlightenment in Europe, he ignores how colonialism and slavery constituted one of the first expressions of "the camp." Colonial security regimes served as a workshop for the Europeans, who later applied what they had learned, in order to control the politically and socially "undesirable" in Europe.

After genocidal "pacification" in the mid-1520s in what is now Central America, priests, especially the Dominicans, came up with the plan, in accordance with the Crown's authorities and other colonizers, of creating *Pueblos de Indios* as enclosed places to control Indigenous Peoples' labor, taxation, and spiritual and religious practices. The rationale of the Dominicans was to convert Indigenous Peoples to Christianity, and thereby to upgrade their existence into the realm of humanity and "civilization." As Mendoza (2006) has pointed out:

> In other words, the restrictive conception of humans as only including "pure-blooded" Christian Europeans needed to be formally expanded to tame the violence that was unleashed against the peoples of the New World, since an extermination of the Amerindian would end up destroying the economic base of the New World. (2006: 938)

Pueblos de Indios were also created as polar opposites to cities. The creation of cities defined as *lugar de los españoles* (places of the Spanish, i.e., the conquerors and colonizers) implied the violent destruction of the remaining Indigenous cities and towns, and the forceful displacement of Indigenous Peoples. To be faithful to the rule of law, as the conquerors said they were, their creation of *Pueblos de Indios*, carried out simultaneously with the introduction of Black African slaves and Spanish women, required the passing of *Leyes Nuevas* (New Laws) in 1542.

To further control Indigenous women and men within *Pueblos de Indios*, they were marked with special symbols as if they were cattle, and registered in special censuses aimed at exacting "tributes," their forced taxation, to the crown. This mathematical quantification of Others also served to control Indigenous Peoples' labor power, so that colonial landowners and their wives and children could use it freely. For three hundred years, from the sixteenth to approximately the end the nineteenth century, Indigenous Peoples were not entitled to live in cities—with the sole exception of a few, noble Indigenous men who allied with the colonial state (Few 2002). Moreover, they were kept isolated from each other (while remaining connected to the colonial/modern world system) in *Pueblos*, in cultural and linguistic communities, or both.

Spanish conquerors and colonizers recreated citizenship in colonial spaces by calling themselves Patricians and Vassals of the King, in a move intended to emulate the core of Roman citizenship, a subjectivity that was also based on conquest of territory, lands, and peoples (Isin 1997). But, unlike the Romans, the Spaniard-Patricians did not practice voting, nor did they create a debating senate. Even though the Western Roman Empire ended long before the Conquest of Guatemala, these Spanish conquerors and their heirs chose the imperial Roman citizenship identity as their model.

They did so to define themselves as civilized, or as carriers of civilization, in contrast to the so-called barbarians. We could reverse the argument and say that indeed *they* were the barbarians, for they invaded Indigenous Peoples' societies. Unlike the Greeks, the Romans had increasingly thought of themselves as the natural rulers of aliens and barbarians (in Isin 2002: 94-8). In the new world of the Americas, the Spanish conquerors and colonizers—the distant, conquering Others—became citizens, and made K'iché's, Tz'utujiles, Chortis, and so on, into barbarian Others. By rendering Indigenous Peoples as distant as possible, these Roman-like citizens identified Indigenous Peoples as remote and alien, and therefore as usurpers of their own land. Citizenship under direct colonial rule became the conquerors' self-aggrandizing institution of the "natural ability" to govern and own the lands of Others, and dominate the Indigenous Peoples.

The conquerors also invented their own version of nature by physically restructuring Indigenous cities, towns, and lands. They appropriated the landscape and the ecosystems of the volcanoes, rivers, lakes, hills, and valleys they found on Indigenous lands. For example, Fuentes y Guzmán, author of the late seventeenth-century *Recordación Florida* (*Picturesque Remembrance*), wrote as if he had spent his childhood in Spain, even though he was born in the Americas. By doing this, he collapsed place and time with space, and made them malleable to serve his colonial nostalgia. Fuentes y Guzmán resented *Peninsulares* (Spaniards born in Spain but living in Americas' Spanish colonies), yet at the same time imagined that he was himself a *Peninsular*. This colonial mythmaker, for instance, narrates that Santiago de los Caballeros de Guatemala, built in the Valley of Panchoy and surrounded on two sides by volcanoes, was an actual Spanish city (Martínez-Peláez 1982). Imperial nostalgia was somehow mitigated when conquerors replicated Spanish cities and homes on the land of others. Although Spanish cities began to be constructed three years after the Conquest had started, it was during the decade in which *Pueblos de Indios* were settled (1542-52) that the bulk of colonial cities were built, twelve in total (Martínez-Peláez 1982). Spatially, these cities were thought of as the center of the colonial project and as replicas of cities in Spain, especially Santiago de los Caballeros de Guatemala, Guatemala's capital at that time. As the chronicles of Fuentes y Guzmán demonstrate, the emphasis on cities as being the center of the colonial project meant that "the city" was the invention of Europeans. According to the colonial imaginary, Indigenous Peoples lived in dispersed villages and small towns populated by "tribes." Furthermore, to insist on "the city" as the heart of the colonial kingdom, as Martínez-Peláez names colonial rule, also meant to make it clear that the first colonizers had to be remembered, by Criollos and their children, as the facilitators of the abundance in Criollos'

lives (Martínez-Peláez 1982: 139-41). Simultaneously, the labor of Indigenous, Mestizos, and African slaves was simply denied. As Martínez-Peláez notes:

> Indios under the pressure of *repartimiento* [the distribution of Indigenous workers, preferably males, who were forced to work in larger farms owned by Spaniards, including Catholic priests] worked in the city infrastructure and Mestizos did it under the pressure of misery and growing unemployment that provided cheap labor to build and maintain cities. (1982: 419)

Martínez-Peláez poignantly observes that in Guatemala, conquerors and their heirs, the Criollos, created their own fatherland in which neither Indigenous Peoples nor Mestizos, especially the poor they called plebeians, had a place they could feel to be their own (1982). For the first conquerors and for Criollos, Indigenous and Mestizo Peoples were simply the necessary labor required to maintain the colonial system, inside and beyond Guatemala.

As self-appointed citizens, Spanish Conquerors and their heirs "materialized themselves in place and space by creating new configurations of buildings, arrangement patterns, and symbolic representations of these arrangements" (Isin 2002: 42-3). They also created a deep material distance between themselves (as presumed carriers of noble and clean blood) and the conquered and colonized, whom they deemed to be dirty and contaminated (Martínez-Peláez 1982: 24). This distance was sternly guarded by security measures, including the formation of private militias and the force of the rule of law, the main purpose of which was to impose a culture of terror, primarily on Indigenous Peoples (Martínez-Peláez 1985).

Although subjugated in many ways, Indigenous Peoples sustained resistance through the continuing use of Maya languages and the maintenance of their knowledge, languages, dress, and spirituality. At times they adopted some customs of the Catholic Church in order to survive. Academics and intellectuals, however, too often deem this survival to be a symbol of how conquest and colonialism transformed Indigenous Peoples into submissive, passive, and backward beings. Martínez-Peláez, for example, sees the retention of Maya languages and customary dress as a strategy used by colonizers to control Indigenous Peoples (1982). Nonetheless, using Martínez-Peláez' own findings, I gather that in many instances where Indigenous Peoples lived outside of the colonial gaze, and where Christianization was consequently less effective, the Indigenous Cosmovision (which Martínez-Peláez calls "paganism") remained powerful, and that Indigenous resistance here was more pronounced. Fuentes y Guzmán, for instance, recorded how the statue of an Indigenous spiritual deity, located on a hill, was ignored by colonizers until it was seen as a barrier to building a road. Prior to that, no conqueror had paid attention to the secretive veneration of the Indigenous spiritual

power represented in the image. Once identified as an obstacle to colonial "development," the same Indigenous workers who venerated this deity were forced to take it down and throw it into a deep abyss. Nonetheless, the following morning the deity was again standing in the same place. This destructive, colonizing ritual took place more than five times with the same results; then, in the presence of the silent pain and despair of the local Indigenous Peoples, the deity was completely smashed. The conqueror explained this act of resistance as coming from the "Devil . . . that helped these superstitious customs survive to the point that even the most zealous priests have not been able to persuade [these people] to the safe road toward Christian faith" (in Martínez-Peláez 1982: 211).

Most *Pueblos de Indios* were built in what is currently called the Guatemalan Maya highlands. In other parts of colonial Guatemala, other *Pueblos de Indios*, such as those populated by Xinkas, were created. But due to the high rate of extermination of Indigenous Peoples, and the rapid and violent assimilation of survivors into the categories of Mestizo and Ladino (as with some of my direct ancestors), these Pueblos became places with no "Indigenous inhabitants." This transition was more apparent by the end of the eighteenth century. The gradual decrease in the numbers of Indigenous Peoples surviving in the eastern region was not achieved through massacres, but by the most direct, daily imposition of Catholicism and the Spanish language, another form of genocide. For example, in Esquipulas, now part of the Department of Chiquimula, there were no indications of the presence of *mestizaje* in the mid-seventeenth century. However, by 1810, it had 865 Indigenous, and 652 Ladino and Mestizo persons. Jutiapa's and Jalapa's situations were similar: in the seventeenth century, neither had any *mestizaje*, yet, by the eighteenth Jutiapa had 612 Indigenous and 410 Ladinos, and Jalapa had 870 Indigenous and 652 Mestizos (Martínez-Peláez 1982: 429). By the eighteenth century, according to Criollo counting, these numbers corresponded to a society that had 40,000 Spaniards and 1.5 million Indigenous and Mestizos (Martínez-Peláez 1982: 164). This knowledge, however, has been erased from the collective memory of Ladinos and Mestizos, and, for that matter, of Mayas.[14] Beginning with the modern, liberal, nation-building project in 1871, the schooling system taught that the eastern part of Guatemala has "always" been "Ladino" territory. Prior to this it was said that this region was a Spanish or European territory par excellence*;* indeed, this is a myth still believed today. The violent re-spatialization of Indigenous Peoples and their cities and towns was pivotal to starting the process through which citizenship became a regime of exclusion, Othering, and repression. This was also the foundation that enabled the colonial state and its economic forces to name conquerors and their heirs as citizens "naturally" destined to govern and to possess Indigenous Peoples and their resources.

Colonial Racist Taxonomies

The invention of racist, gendered, and classed taxonomies has been one of the most powerful methods for controlling colonized societies. The deeply structured, social taxonomies of the past have a continuing effect in contemporary Guatemala. While colonial rulers invented different ways of classifying people, their favorite procedure was a detailed invention of racist categories that legally segregated and divided society. Another classificatory system, based on class and ownership of resources, existed in practice, and was not directly legitimized by colonial rule of law. This latter has escaped the analysis of most students of Guatemala—and for that matter of Latin America, since similar systems were also in place in other colonized Latin American societies. Both classificatory systems were engendered and influenced by then current European scientific knowledge. As Goldberg says:

> Classification is basically the scientific extension of the epistemological drive to place phenomena under category. The impulse to classify data goes back at least to Aristotle. However, it is only with the simplistic spirit of the seventeenth century and the Enlightenment that classification is established as a fundament of scientific methodology. So the seemingly naked body of pure acts is veiled in value. (1993: 49)

Its creators thought that this racial hierarchy reflected a "natural" hierarchy. In actuality, it embedded racialized, gendered, and classed values. At the top of the colonial classification were the Spaniards, thought of as a pure race, and at the bottom were Indigenous Peoples, named *indios*, also a pure race, yet paradoxically one that was conceived as polluted and inferior. In the middle of this hierarchy were countless sexual-cultural mixings, which conquerors named Mestizos, mixings that gave birth to *mestizaje*, a condition that became classed and racialized throughout colonial rule. Equated with it were certain "innate" characteristics such as lying, laziness, an inclination to vices, manipulation, and dirtiness (Martínez-Peláez 1982). Except for those males in the first generation of Mestizos, considered to be a vigorous "stock" by colonizers because they had some "pure" European blood, the rest of the *mestizajes* were seen as corrupted and contaminated, a process of characterization that few contemporary Ladinos and Mestizos recognize.

For just under three hundred years, between 1524 and 1821, all offspring of interracial and intercultural marriages were lumped together under the category of Mestizo. Legally, and in practice, there were three principal mixed groups: a) Mestizos, descended from an *india* woman and a Spanish man; b) Mulattos, from a Black woman with a Spanish man; and c) Zambos, from an *india* woman with a Black man (Martínez-Peláez 1982: 267). A

more specific classification was discovered by Martínez-Peláez in documents he consulted in the Archivo General de Indias (AGI) in Seville, Spain, one of which reads:

> White with *indio* results in mestizo and if [mestizo] is mixed with white it results in *castizo*, which is closer to whites as it is his family. It is a step backward, the mixing of mestizo or castizo with another race. The white woman with a black man results in mulatto and a black man with *indio* results in zambo. These are the accepted and commonly known races in the country. . . . subsequent mixings of mixed persons are countless and unnamed. (1982: 263)

In this classification, the offspring of a Spanish woman with an Indigenous man was not recognized as Mestizo. It is also interesting to note that, up until the seventeenth century, all mixed people were known as Mestizos, and not as Ladinos. Conquerors occasionally used the term Ladino to name those Spaniards who had become impoverished. The term Ladino was already commonly used in sixteenth-century Spain to indicate Jews who spoke Castellano (Spanish) with an accent that identified them as Jewish. The term also had a second connotation related to the ability to do business, again in reference to entrepreneurial Jews. Dealing with a Jewish, "Ladino" man meant dealing with a skillful but marked man, in a European society that tolerated but did not accept Jews (Martínez-Peláez 1992: 122). Thus, the term Mestizo had negative meanings from its inception, but under the racist colonial classification it was less pejorative than being named and treated as an *indio*. Mestizos were located below Criollos, but above Indigenous Peoples and Blacks.

Colonizers categorized Mestizos and Mulattos as *pardos* (brownish), a common name in Guatemala, usually given to cats and lions. Mestizos who constituted rural landless and mobile cheap labor were racialized as degenerate, dangerous classes, contrary to what many believe today, that is, in their being "predisposed to progress and civilization." The general view that Mestizos and non-elitist Ladinos are "inclined" to progress due to their "European" heritage is a myth carefully constructed by the enlightened Criollo and Ladino intelligentsia of the nineteenth century. Since then, it has been replicated by later generations of elitist Ladinos and other less privileged Mestizos (see Asturias 1923; Martínez-Peláez 1982).

The racialization of landless Mestizos living in poverty led me to reconstruct another type of classification, one relevant to understanding and explaining the reinvention of social inequality in Guatemala: the Othering of people based on class and resource ownership, and their public stigmatization. At the top of this classification were Peninsulares, holders of the most prestigious and well-paid crown bureaucracy jobs, and also the largest landowners. In second place came Criollos with land and education, holding

secular urban jobs, but also religious ones; as such, this category included priests, clerks, accountants, and teachers. Some of these teachers were elite Spanish women (both peninsular and Criollo), as these were the only women allowed to be literate under direct colonial rule. They remained higher-up Others under the "protection and tutelage" of male colonizers, but above Mestizas and Indigenous women. Peninsulares and Criollos were seen and treated as clean, healthy, and well-mannered. Indigenous Women became the "Other" of the "Other," and were ranked at the bottom of the colonial social order.

After printing presses were brought to Guatemala around 1633, those who became involved in the printing business were also part of the colonial ruling class, including Criollos. Below all these sectors were Criollo artisans, carpenters, shoemakers, and other skilled workers. Bourgeois Criollos stigmatized the latter as less clean, less healthy, and less intelligent than themselves. In public, and in front of Indigenous and Mestizos, these lesser Spaniards were seen and treated as superior. They themselves felt proud of their European roots which, within the colonial classification scheme, elevated their humanity. In fact, these lower-class Spaniards were given better paid jobs, especially as carpenters. They were put in charge of making cribs for the first generations of male Mestizos, something I will discuss below. Further down in the colonial race-class-gender hierarchy were Mestizos living in the city, who held occasional jobs, but were mainly unemployed and lived on the periphery of cities, especially of the capital. These groups were named plebes, and they were treated and represented as breeders of criminality, promiscuity, and prostitution. In this way, the Roman citizenship model was transplanted to colonial Guatemala, but reconfigured so as to acquire an intersectional, racialized, gendered, classed, and also Christianized character.

Impoverished Mestizos, already seen as polluters of the assumed whiteness of Spaniards (conceived by other Europeans as not "pure" Whites), were further classified as plebeians, and therefore thought of as inclined to vice and violence. Archbishop Cortés y Larráz, a colonial chronicler, wrote at the end of the eighteenth century that plebeians lived in a "fortress of the devil, and with the shame and rejection of Christianity, all natural, divine, religious and real laws are violated" (in Martínez-Peláez 1982: 263). Below city plebeians were rural Mestizos, further stigmatized as "breeders" and reproducers of an obscure underworld. These Mestizos were thought to live within an immorality that predisposed them to a wide variety of illness. It was immorality and not poverty that was considered the main cause of their situation. Next were Black slaves able to buy their freedom—this was another Otherized group that was not able as a collective to acquire land and other resources. However, as "free" men and women, they had freedom of mobility, much as the Mestizos had. Following the "free" Blacks in the classification scheme came those Blacks who remained slaves on large Spanish farms and

in households. Even though this sector was landless, in racial and cultural terms they were still considered to be above Indigenous Peoples, who were located at the bottom of the racialized class hierarchy. The latter constituted the majority of the labor force and of taxpayers, and they were the most brutally treated on a daily basis.[15]

COLONIAL RULE AND INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S WORK

Within the colonial hierarchy, Indigenous women's work was not recognized as work, while Indigenous men's forced labor was deemed despicable, but important, by colonizer chroniclers. Nevertheless, Indigenous women's work was fundamental to the reproduction of the colonial system.

For most of the colonial period, Indigenous women were forced to produce thread from cotton harvested by Indigenous men on colonizers' large-scale *haciendas.* This cotton was traded by *corregidores* (employees of the colonial regime, usually Criollos, but also some Mestizos) who travelled to Indigenous towns. Raw cotton was transported by horses and mules owned by Indigenous men. If these men refused to participate, they were severely punished and sent to prison. This provides further evidence to debunk the well-entrenched myth that Indigenous women have only undertaken domestic work, whether inside or outside their household—work considered in most national accounting systems to be no work at all.[16]

At the beginning of the colonial regime, a piece-work system was introduced in which *corregidores* distributed raw cotton only once a year to Indigenous women living in *Pueblos de Indios*, who then produced cotton-derived material for candles and rope. As the colonial system became more consolidated, *corregidores* gave four large packages of cotton to Indigenous women, instead of one, and demanded greater productivity through the intensification of labor, a typical form of over-exploitation. Ignacio de Mendía, a Franciscan priest, reported the following conditions under which Indigenous women were forced to work:

> [T]he daily work demanded in *repartimientos* every three months is uninterrupted and the only way [women] can finish this work is by working days and nights even when they go to Mass. In the Church, they are cleaning and preparing the cotton to make clothing and threads, so they cannot take care of their parents. . . . Because Indigenous men have to carry out what women make every four months, they also lose time to go and work in their [small] plots and this contributes to the impoverishment of *indios*. (in Martínez-Peláez 1982: 529)

For the most part, this arduous work was unpaid, and on a few occasions women received nominal payment in small amounts of pennies. These women worked until they were exhausted, because they were continuously terrorized by *corregidores*, and by male members of the Indigenous nobility who were allied with the colonizers. Mestizo men in low-ranking positions as mayors of *Pueblos de Indios* also exercised cruel authority against Indigenous women, especially when these women could not meet the increased production quotas. In order to force the compliance of women with these quotas, male colonial agents often used physical force, such as beatings or incarceration, regardless of whether or not their victims were pregnant or breastfeeding (Martínez-Peláez 1982: 527-43). Several other Indigenous women, especially those living in *Pueblos de Indios* near the capital city, had to work in large Criollo houses and estates, preparing food for hundreds of male, Indigenous, agricultural workers and for Criollo women, in addition to their husbands and children.

The racist heteropatriarchal system that was introduced following the Conquest has influenced contemporary gender-sexuality relations, a foundational, yet changing, feature of the complex and unequal Guatemalan formation. Conquerors transferred the heteropatriarchal regime prevalent in the Spanish metropole to the colonies, and planted firmly the seeds for an ongoing, structural heteropatriarchy, what Lugones names as the modern colonial gender system (2007, 2008). This is a system in which women were thought to be categorically inferior to men, especially men at the top of the racialized and classed hierarchy. Heterosexuals within this regime are represented as superior to persons of diverse sexualities and genders (in spite of the latter being normal and acceptable within several colonized societies, as already noted). This rigid colonial gender regime changed some of its dynamics through the birth of *mestizaje* from the rape of Indigenous women by conquerors during the first two decades of the Conquest; it constituted what I name as gendered genocide/racialized feminicide. As a medal of courage for their services to the Crown, conquering troops were "awarded" as many Indigenous women as they wanted, although troops usually did not have "access" to women from the Indigenous nobility; military leaders reserved this right to themselves. Pedro de Alvarado, the commander-in-chief of conquering forces in Guatemala, violently took eight women as concubines while he was married to a Spanish woman, who soon after reunited with him in Guatemala (Martínez-Peláez 1982: 695). He also left countless fatherless Mestizo children in the many places that he conquered.

It is too often assumed that Indigenous women were more easily deceived and more obedient than Indigenous men. One of the difficulties, for example, in revising and revisiting Martínez-Peláez's helpful historical investigations, is being able to overcome his deeply racialized interpretations of Indigenous Peoples in general, and of women in particular, while keeping in mind that

what he does is not unique to him, but rather a pattern of Eurocentric knowledge production, present today even in some feminist circles (see Young 2007; Mohanty 2003; Lugones 2007). For example, in some of his accounts, Martínez-Peláez digs deeply into and rejects the representations of Indigenous women as creatures that pleasantly opened their legs to welcome the White colonizers—a myth perpetuated by the Criollo and Ladino intelligentsias for centuries. However, Martínez-Peláez falls back into the same pattern when he assumes that the conquering and colonizing experience, as well as inferiority, turned Indigenous Peoples, especially women, into lesser beings. This is reflected in the following two quotations:

> The *india* women learned how to bow their heads and their whole selves in front of the white man who was supposed to have faculties that made him closer to God; she learned to render cult to European religious images; to white bleeding Christs and martyrs that were naked and consumed by passion and who were anatomically stupendous. (1982: 357)
>
> We must understand that the initial *mestizaje* was the result of an act realized within the context and as a consequence of the inferiority and disadvantage of the woman of the serf class in front of the man from the dominant class. . . . (1982: 359)

We can interpret Martínez-Peláez as accepting that the rape of Indigenous women, from which *mestizaje* emerged, was perpetrated without any resistance, because the victims had internalized the idea that white men were closer to God, and that they themselves were inferior to Spanish males and disadvantaged by their position as serf laborers—an analysis that reflects the pervasiveness of racialized, heteropatriarchal ideologies in many circles of scholarly "communities."

Racialized and classed heteropatriarchal practices and ideologies were enacted daily through use of the law. During the first years of genocide (beginning in 1524), a law was passed to limit the cost of cribs. It was an unusual event, given the fact that colonizers had not brought their families with them, or formed new ones with women from their background in the colonized lands, and that they raped Indigenous women, the mothers of the first Mestizo generation. Indeed, the first shipment of Spanish women came to Guatemala only in 1543. The law concerning cribs was related to another article of colonial legislation, which established Patrician fathers as "citizens," the same fathers who demanded that their male Mestizo children be taken away from their Indigenous mothers and placed in their father's households. The purpose was to educate the first Mestizo boys as "persons with some value," because part of their inherited blood was noble. Special militias and *corregidores* went to look for these babies, and many were brought to their fathers. The final destiny of these male children is unknown, for little has been documented. However, given the context in which this law was

enacted, it can be assumed that they grew up as Mestizos holding privileges, and could later study and gain access to lower-ranking positions under the colonial system and during the liberal period that followed. On the other hand, their sisters were not important to their conquering fathers, and they grew up as Indigenous girls and women. There is little documentation on their Indigenous mothers, other than statements such as: "The rape of indigenous women during conquest was as frequent as the stealing of indigenous food, jewellery and other goods" (Martínez-Peláez 1982: 261). Second and third generations of Mestizos, who were the offspring of Spanish men and Indigenous women, were not looked after by their colonizer fathers, and were left with their mothers. Not enough research has been undertaken on this issue either, but it can be argued that many of these Mestizo children grew up as Indigenous Peoples, something very few Mestizos, Ladinos, and some Mayas would nowadays accept.

With the introduction of Spanish women to colonial life, the colonizer family began to settle in cities. These women were classified and treated as superior to Indigenous and Mestizo women, but far below their male counterparts, especially around issues of land ownership and access to political power. Spanish women, however, became strong upholders of the legal, racist regime, and implemented in full the principle that a great distance must be kept from Indigenous Peoples, a "pure" race, but "inferior" to Peninsulares and Criollos. This distance was fundamental to the continuation of notions of imaginary, "pure" whiteness, and civilized culture. It was Spanish women who kept their children from moving physically closer to the very few Indigenous children who accompanied their parents when they brought food to colonizers from their small plots (Martínez-Peláez 1982).

Gradually, Mestizo women also adopted the belief that they were below Criollos, but above Indigenous men and women, and made every effort not to be seen as Indigenous persons or to be associated with them (Martínez-Peláez 1982). The colonial regime institutionalized this belief and viewed rural Mestizo women and city plebeians as a menace to *Pueblos de Indios*, and to the "order" and "cleanliness" of cities. Police forces, for example, went out every night to arrest Mestizo prostitutes and imprisoned them, because the authorities wanted to portray the city as a disciplined, aristocratic, Christian, and uncontaminated place. While "the city" was also a space for recreation and pleasure, this discursive pleasure did not include "sexuality" and sexual pleasure, especially for Indigenous and Mestizos and women. Only colonizing men were entitled to enjoy the pleasures of their city; colonizing women were allowed constrained recreation and display within strictly assigned strict roles, which entailed playing with their children. Colonial, hegemonic women were considered only as appendages to "patrician citizens," and as necessary to the reproduction of the social life of self-appointed

citizens. Despite different discursive practices, racist, colonial taxonomies have been so powerful that they remain entrenched in current expressions of structural and cultural racism.

INDEPENDENCE AND/OR THE FORMAL SEPARATION FROM THE SPANISH CROWN

Entire generations of Guatemalans have been educated to believe that formal independence from the Spanish Crown in 1821 brought into being a modern nation-state, as well as a civilized religion, culture, and language. Independence is documented and taught as an event that brought the rejection and elimination of racism, which in turn is recognized as only having existed during direct colonial rule (1524-1821). However, by the time of independence, the colonial regime had established visible patterns of unequal citizenship rooted in racism, capitalism, and gender oppression. Furthermore, by this point, inequality was institutionalized through the formalization of a rule of law that granted formal equality to all, while, in practice, social relations of domination were reinforced, especially against Indigenous peoples and against impoverished Mestizo women and men.

With independence, the bases of a colonial/modern capitalism had also been established: mono-export; extreme concentration of wealth juxtaposed with extreme poverty; decapitalization through the channeling of the economic surplus abroad, or to a tiny local minority, which was tied to overseas interests; and an attendant lack of infrastructure (Jonas 1991: 16). This formation was itself tied to a repressive state, and a polarized, racialized, and gendered class structure in which a systemic oppression of Indigenous Peoples' cultures and their Cosmovision was a daily signifier of colonial life.[17] "Modernity" brought a powerful army into a salient role alongside "private" militias, whose main job was to guard the interests of the bourgeoisie under a more sophisticated security regime, at such time as security came to be the core business of the state, as Agamben says for Europe (2001).

Independence from the Spanish Crown did not lead to socioeconomic improvement for most poor Mestizos and Indigenous Peoples. It did, though, open up a political and cultural terrain for a reconfiguration of the dominant classes, who reinvented themselves through economic restructuring and a new discourse of citizenship: the liberal rule of law and order. It also presented Indigenous Peoples and Mestizos, living in poverty, with new challenges and opportunities to organize and resist. Beyond their control, their lives were disrupted and reorganized by local and translocal changes, in particular by the introduction of a violent, capitalist model of development (Grandin 2004; Figueroa Ibarra 1991). Perhaps the most important change brought

about by independence, in terms of class, citizenship, and cultural reconfiguration, was the integration of an elitist sector of Mestizos (who later became Ladinos) with the Criollo colonial class, a move that transformed class and racial relations. Another important transformation, not accorded relevance in most studies, was the introduction of *Ladinization*, and the official erasure of *mestizaje* and Mestizos from the new, emergent, nation-building project led by Criollos.

Despite the rhetoric of formal equality and the inclusion of elitist Ladinos into the dominant class, Criollos were the political and economic leaders of this new "fatherland." Criollos stopped calling themselves Patricians, and instead became the national prototype for citizens. Independence also planted the seeds for the imposition by Criollos of the concepts of Ladino and ladinization (the aspiration to become Europeans) throughout the entire society, and so discursively erased a whole sector of Mestizos, most of whom lived in poverty during direct colonial rule (and afterwards). Ladino and ladinization became institutionalized with the liberal reforms of 1871. Criollo men involved in Independence publicly rejected the blatant racial hierarchy prevalent in colonial rule, and began to ride the currents of the Enlightenment by declaring "all" Guatemalans formally equal, and nominally naming them "citizens." This notion of citizenship as including the status of formal equality is considered to be the "origin" of citizenship in Guatemala, for it is assumed that, with Independence, Guatemala introduced citizenship as a "civilizing" tool that indicated that the society was geared towards "progress and civilization." It was also assumed by these Criollos that colonial regimes lacked citizenship. Independence also laid the basis for another myth, namely, that independence had eliminated racism forever. Racism came to be seen as something belonging to the distant past of colonial rule—a myth very prevalent in contemporary times, as I analyze in the chapter on racism.

Ladinos did not accept being second-in-command, nor being considered mutant strangers whose biological and cultural mixing raised doubts about their entitlement to belong to the dominant class. However, in the eyes of Criollos, they continued to be "*pardos*" (polluted darks). So strongly White and European was the demarcation of colonial citizenship that when colonial rulers implemented a *cédula real* (royal law) authorizing the sale of "cards of whiteness" (*cédulas de blancura*),[18] countless Mestizos (*pardos*) frantically lined up to buy them. The demand became so high at the end of the seventeenth century that the same colonial authorities who had implemented the sale of cards of Whiteness had to end it through another *cédula real*, enacted in 1804, that read:

> The general Attorney of the Council of the Indies advises that the selling of cards of whiteness should not be exaggerated because *pardos* can attempt to generalize this [expression of] grace and on its shadow they would believe that

> they are equal to whites with no difference but their accidental color. [They can] begin to believe they are capable to achieve our destinies, jobs and the right to get involved with legitimate families, pure and clean of any mixing . . . consequences that are necessary to avoid in a monarchy, where classification of classes contributes to a better order, security and good government. . . . *pardos* or dark-skinned coming from infected mixtures constitute inferior species and for their inclination to vice, their vanity and inclination to licentiousness, have been and are less welcome to our government and nation. (in Galeano 1984: 116)

The purchase of these cards might have served impoverished, unemployed, Mestizo women and men, as well as those engaged in sex work, as a way to avoid severe punishment at the hands of colonial militias and other authorities.

Indigenous Peoples' struggles for independence are rendered invisible in most studies. They frequently ignore, for example, Atanasio Tzul, a Maya leader who was a strong participant in local politics as a mayor and principal (being a principal/leader was one of the most important positions within Indigenous organization), and led an important challenge to direct colonial rule. Tzul formed an alliance with Lucas Aguilar, a Maya man who was a laborer and who, according to some historians, had more charisma and better organizing skills than Tzul. Their movement, which began in 1820, and coincided with the Criollos pro-independence movement, had as its main objective the stopping of the taxation of Indigenous Peoples by Crown and the Church, which had been reintroduced by King Ferdinand VII, and had been abolished in 1811 by the Courts of Cádiz, but persisted in the colonies (Asociación para el Fomento de los Estudios Históricos en Centroamerica, AFEHC, n.p.). This movement was brutally repressed by the mayor of Quetzaltenango, who sent a thousand militia to put it down; they killed many and jailed others. Tzul survived with reduced power, although he kept politically active for another two decades, defending Indigenous prisoners as well as Indigenous communities (AFEHC, n.p.). Significantly, Atanasio Tzul's and Lucas Aguilar's movement was perhaps the root of today's Maya movements, for in addition to rejecting over-taxation, it also demanded the return of land that was originally Indigenous, and the removal of repressive laws that did not allow most Indigenous Peoples to create their own economic projects.

THE LIBERAL NATION-BUILDING PROJECT

The liberal reforms, launched in 1871 by the emergent rudiments of what later became the Ladino bourgeoisie, forced its inclusion within the dominant class led by Criollos, and consolidated Guatemala as a capitalist, racist, and heteropatriarchal nation-state. These reforms can also be considered as the beginning of a new dependency towards the United States, which was about to become the new, imperial, capitalist power. Thus, what began in 1871 established patterns that persist in Guatemala to this day. As we have seen, even though citizenship was introduced in Guatemala through conquest and subsequent colonialism, it has latterly been taught and narrated as a product of the liberal reforms of 1871. "Modern" citizenship in Guatemala is a narrative inspired by the 1789 *Rights of Man and the Citizen* and the 1776 *Declaration of the Good People of Virginia* (Reyes Prado 2001). Within this discursive practice, members of controlling groups, markedly male ones, have identified themselves as citizens *par excellence*, blessed with "natural" right to be political, and therefore having the right to govern.

For Indigenous Peoples, the liberal reforms of 1871 meant a land expropriation even more drastic than that which occurred after the Conquest and the imposition of colonialism (Gálvez Borrel and Esquit 1997). After the 1871 reforms, the bourgeoisie reinvented Indigenous Peoples as the formally equal Others of modernity. The bourgeois, liberal intelligentsia used their power in the press to convey the notion that the primitivism and the ignorance of Indigenous Peoples made them unsuitable candidates for citizenship. Part of an editorial in the influential *Gaceta de Guatemala* (*Guatemalan Gazette*), from June 21, 1848, stated that Indigenous Peoples

> were called to the common participation in the splendid banquet of citizenship whose special dishes they have not digested, and they [conservatives] persisted in governing them by laws they [the Indigenous] do not want and do not understand. (in Taracena 1999: 314)

This editorial was published at a time when coffee barons were accumulating military and political powers, and were also heightening their already embedded racism against Indigenous Peoples. Another, deeper reason for this modern increase of public racism was the supportive role of the media for the bourgeois ideology that invented Indigenous Peoples and their resistance as a "national" threat that would pollute, and so prevent, the introduction of Guatemala into membership in the European Enlightenment. The Indigenous leadership at this time was also beginning to articulate historical demands for land, and was representing Ladinos as "thieves that came from other lands"

(Taracena 1999: 334). In contrast to Taracena, who sees this discourse as ethnicist, I read it as the initial formulation of Indigenous demands for social justice, especially around territorial and land rights.

The 1871 liberal reforms constituted one of the greatest, negative transformations for Indigenous Peoples since the beginning of colonial rule. This liberal reform movement, which captured state power, consolidated the dependency of the Criollo and Ladino bourgeoisie on the power of the modern/coloniality of world system, and also planted the seeds for the militarization of the state, which was to be fully implemented in 1954. It was Barrios' 1871 liberal, reformist, state administration that created the national army and the *Escuela Politécnica*, the military academy. Indigenous men were excluded from both the state and the army, and were only integrated later by forced draft after violent, heteropatriarchal, masculinist indoctrination. This is a key to understanding the participation of many Maya men in the military and paramilitary establishment in the peak years of genocidal state terror during the 1980s, when many of them perpetrated rapes, torture, kidnappings, and massacres upon other Mayas and activist Mestizas/Mestizos and Ladinas/Ladinos. Of course, heteropatriarchal ideologies and practices cannot be fully explained only by forced, military indoctrination. It is much more complex, because these practices also involve individual and collective patriarchal agency, through which most men have been socialized to exercise power and control over women's bodies.

In terms of the politics of place and space, the liberal, reformist state declared the term *Pueblos de Indios* illegal some years after formal independence. These *Pueblos* were named *municipios* (municipalities) (Rodas and Esquit 1997), a move that definitively opened the doors for many Mestizos and Criollos to renew an assault on Indigenous lands. However, not all Mestizos could get access to land, even though, in theory, they formed part of the new national identity, that of being Ladino. In class terms, the victory of elitist Ladinos meant their incorporation into the domineering class previously constituted by Peninsulares and Criollos. Jonas (1991: 17) notes that the stimulus or opportunity for this adjustment in the internal power structure came not only from internal pressures—from elitist Ladinos—but also from changes in the world market that gave coffee barons an economic base, predicated upon the expanding coffee economy.

In terms of citizenship, the first clearly written and practiced state-bourgeois assimilation policy sought formal equality through compulsory (and, in actuality, racist) ladinization. Ladinization became a dominant ideology taught as "national identity" through the schooling system, religion, families, and on the street. Under this articulation of relations of power, the self-appointed citizen was a coffee baron. This was the new nation-state builder who secured his domination through state authority and internal and external capitalist changes, such as the turn to an economy that was organized to

require exports of raw material from the global South to the North, and the production of crops such as coffee, cotton, and bananas. Proponents of the second modernity (see Quijano 2000; Mignolo 2000) did not deny the existence of a soul for Indigenous Peoples. Instead they discursively stated that Indigenous Peoples' "brutishness," "laziness," "passivity," and lack of vitality resulted from the impact of colonial ruling. In the end, Indigenous Peoples' cultures, languages, and philosophical views were made responsible for Guatemala's presumed backwardness.

Meanwhile, their land continued to shrink, due to ongoing Criollo and Ladino theft and legal manipulation. The majority of the rural, impoverished, Mestizo population also remained landless, and their status as free laborers gradually transformed them into an element of the rural proletariat. They shared this status with most Indigenous women and men, but both sectors remained segregated by institutionalized state and bourgeois racism. Criollos, new "Ladinos," and landless Mestizos all of a sudden became the "Ladino" inhabitants of the eastern and central part of Guatemala, where Indigenous Peoples just as suddenly discursively "disappeared." In this period, impoverished Ladinos began to embrace the dominant ideology that they were culturally superior to Indigenous Peoples, regardless of how much they remained in part Indigenous themselves, and how they as an element of the majority also remained landless, jobless, and impoverished. The common, contemporary expression, "I am poor but not Indian," succinctly expresses this ideology, perhaps the most successful, divisive device designed and imposed by the powerful Criollo and Ladino elites.

Poor, landless Mestizos were no longer officially named as plebeians as they had been under colonial citizenship. Under this second modernity, they were given various pejorative names like *chusma*, a classist term that has marked the working-class sectors in Guatemala ever since, alongside other local, Spanish slang words. This process of Othering impoverished Mestizos is a condition that has been ignored by most students of Guatemala, including those using Marxist, political-economic epistemology and methodology, and by various related schools of thought, as well as by scholars in other disciplines (see Figueroa Ibarra 1991; Jonas 1991; Lovell 2000; Schirmer 1998; Smith 1990; Grandin 2000, 2004; Manz 2004).

Under liberal reforms, the representation of women as mothers intensified, although universalized motherhood was valued differently according to the class and *Pueblo* (as ethnicity) that women belonged to. This distinction is important for a critical decolonizing and materialist gender analysis, since gender oppression, especially in the global South, is often theorized as a classless and raceless phenomenon in relation to such sophisticated rationales as the defense of women's rights as human rights, sustainable development, citizenship and civil society, and so on. In her analysis of the modern-colonial gender system (2007, 2008), Lugones traces this persistence, and

notes that while some women thinkers of color are cited and/or included as obligatory readings by some White, Euro-North American, female policy-makers and feminists, critical scholars of color are placed at the margins of feminist scholarship. Razack also documents the intricate interlocking between gender relations, race thinking, and the practice of racism in the current "global war on terror." These connections are demonstrated by the invoking of the human rights of Afghani and Iraqi women to justify both racial profiling of Muslims in the global North, and the occupations of Middle Eastern countries (2004, 2008).

In Guatemala, bourgeois Criollo and Ladino (as of 1871 just Ladino) womanhood and motherhood represented the feminine model of respectability and moral decorum that all women were to aspire to. Indigenous and Mestizo women's motherhood and womanhood were seen as reproducing the working class, and therefore the culture of poverty. However, due to systemic and everyday racism, poor Mestizos' womanhood and motherhood were positioned a little above that of Indigenous women's, the latter invented as the worst, and perhaps most degenerate kind. This is an ideology that interacted with fundamentalist anti-communism and racism during the genocidal campaigns of the last four decades of the twentieth century, and fuelled unspeakable levels of hatred and disdain towards Maya women. This critical gender analysis does not figure in most studies on Guatemala, especially historical ones, where Indigenous women are seen as included within the term Indigenous Peoples, and Mestizo women as part of the Ladino subject.

The concept of Criollo disappeared from official vocabulary, without its cultural and racist domination disappearing from practice. As Taracena notes, this took place because, in the

> collective memory of the Criollos' heirs—a sector to which not all oligarchs belong as it is commonly assumed—their cultural differentiation from ladinos, a differentiation that gradually entered the political and economic [spheres] of power, from independence to the present, has been kept alive. (Taracena 1999: 347)

This differentiation did not stop Criollos from forming strategic alliances with bourgeois Ladinos for economic and political party reasons. Taracena notes that, through the effect of a range of laws and policies, the term Ladino gradually lost what reference it had to Indigenous heritage: *mestizaje*. In other words, from the 1870s liberal reforms onward, Mestizos were named Ladinos, and ladinidad became a symbol that put Mestizos close to White and European blood and culture, and as distant as possible from Indigenous ancestry, knowledge, and spirituality. In official statistics, the Guatemalan population has been counted using two variables: Ladinos and "*indios*" (Taracena 1999: 348).[19] These data have served to represent Indigenous Peoples

as responsible for the "underdevelopment" of Guatemala. If previous, episodic events gradually reinforced racial, gender, and class inequality through the use of persistent violence, it was the liberal reforms of 1871, and the subsequent sixty-three-year liberal rule, that provided the basis for the corporate and state militarization of society. In parallel, as Figueroa Ibarra (1991) points out, this also set the basis for a continuity (although the movement was almost decimated in some periods) in grassroots resistance, in which Indigenous women and men, impoverished Mestizos and Mestizas, and progressive, middle-class Ladino and Ladina intellectuals have played a crucial role. Bourgeois forces reconfigured the "nation," their aspiration being to cross a threshold into White and Euro-North American culture. By imposing the notion of Ladino as representing Guatemala, this move reinforced, at all levels, racism as structure and culture. It therefore ideologically erased the strong Indigenous ancestry of Mestizas and Mestizos, and created these as the symbol of shame currently prevalent in Guatemala.

Another large, socioeconomic, cultural, and political transformation began in 1944 with the triumph of a democratic revolution. This movement proposed legal, social, and land reforms that were either not carried through, or were reversed in subsequent years by a militarized, extremely violent, and authoritarian state in alliance with local and international bourgeois powers (see Figueroa Ibarra 1991; Jonas 1991, 2000; Handy 1984, 1994; Grandin 2004). The injustices, which sparked the early quest for structural and cultural reforms, still exist, as do current efforts to pursue these reforms.

From 1944 to 1954, Guatemala experienced a period of democratization during which a more self-reliant "development" model was implemented. During this period, known as the October Revolution, a moderate land reform was launched by the government of Jacobo Arbenz Guzman through Decree 900. Other students of Guatemala reject this view. They argue that the revolutionary land reform was a radical policy that shook the basis of an entrenched colonial and capitalist system (see Handy 1984, 1994; Figueroa Ibarra 1991).[20] The land reform decree legislated the expropriation of some unused, privately owned land that had been given to transnational corporations such as the United Fruit Company, but, at the same time, these companies were compensated by the Guatemalan state. The October Revolution put in place other initiatives, such as the right to freedom of association, which facilitated the organization of several unions and peasants' federations and associations. Social security was also legislated, and elementary public education became a constitutional right. Voting rights were expanded on a limited basis, and given to illiterate Indigenous and Mestizo men and to literate Ladino women; illiterate Indigenous and Mestizo women were left out (Figueroa Ibarra 1991; Jonas 1991, 2000; ODHAG/REHMI 1998; Handy 1994; Grandin 2004). Bourgeois Criollos and Ladinos who were against the Revolution fiercely opposed this expansion of voting rights. They argued that, in

Handy's words, "Liberal dictators had driven thousands and thousands of illiterates carrying a portrait of the candidate to deposit docilely their vote" (1994: 24). Indigenous Peoples in general did not get the full benefits of the Revolution, although Indigenous movements and revolts helped to shape the popular uprising of 1944. In Santiago Atitlán, many Tz'utujiles sympathized with the Revolution and contributed to its triumph.[21] An elder remembers that even though many could not read or write, and most did not have radios to listen to the news, they became aware of the revolutionary movement nonetheless. He said:

> If the revolution would have been consolidated, we could have saved the blood of so many people killed in recent times. . . . Unfortunately, the army which supported the revolution eventually betrayed it and the army buried forever its morality. (Don Juan, Interview 1999)

Racism, and assimilation theories and ideologies, did not disappear with the Revolution, although the liberal, racial exclusion of Indigenous Peoples through forced labor, justified as the elimination of vagrancy, was abolished. As Handy (1994) notes, miscegenation, and assimilation to European civilization, embodied in the Ladino, bourgeois mentality, permeated both the urban middle and the organized working classes during the October Revolution.

The ideas of Antonio Batres Jauregui, author of *Los indios, su historia y su civilización* (*The Indios: Their History and Their Civilization*), published in 1878, and Miguel Angel Asturias,[22] author of *El Problema Social del Indio* (*The Social Problem of the Indio*), published in 1923, both heavily influenced by European scientific knowledge, guided the revolutionary government and its policies. Asturias, for instance, claimed that Ladinos with education and resources were more civilized than poor Mestizos, and these in turn were more civilized than Indigenous men and women. He also argued that Indigenous men were predisposed to violence against Indigenous women, whom they beat to death; however, he was silent on Criollo and Ladino violence against women (Asturias 1923).

Batres Jauregui and Asturias both proposed a policy of whitening Guatemala by bringing in, from Nordic societies, people from races considered physically whiter and more intelligent (Batres Jauregui 1878; Asturias 1923). Following in the footsteps of European thinkers, these Criollo-Mestizo intellectuals proposed that the development of reason and rationality was a premise for civilization and modernization. According to these thinkers, this was something Indigenous Peoples lacked (Rodas and Esquit 1997), for they were trapped by superstition, laziness, alcoholism, and social passivity, as well as physical degeneration. This current of thought was deeply heteropatriarchal, for within it was the notion that the only absolute truth was that

societies are reproduced when strict religious and moral codes are imposed in order to create good families. Criollo and Ladino women were thought of as the ideal type of womanhood. They were considered morally better equipped to educate sons and daughters with the Christian, European, bourgeois, heterosexual, and masculine "family values" deemed more appropriate for governing. Prostitution was expected of poor Mestizo women living on the peripheries of cities, and sexual promiscuity and massive, demographic reproduction were expected of Indigenous women.

Although Ladino and Mestizo revolutionary leaders from the middle and organized working classes refuted the bourgeois ideology, which had included a social policy on respectability, they did not question ladinization as a racist and segregationist policy. On the contrary, they considered it the culturally appropriate response to the "*Indio* problem." The education system served to implement assimilation policies through *Misiones Ambulantes de Cultura* (Mobile Missions of Culture), a concept borrowed from the Mexican Missions of Culture. The main purpose of these Mobile Missions was to teach Indigenous Peoples the value of the national symbols of the flag and the national anthem, as well as the historical values of the nation inherited from independence (Handy 1994: 51).

The revolutionary nation was once again conceived of as culturally homogenous, but now represented by a revolutionary, Ladino male citizen, rather than a bourgeois Ladino citizen. It was during this time that the first seeds of what would become a dominant idea in revolutionary Ladino circles of the 1960s onwards were planted. This idea was that Indigenous Peoples must become proletarians in order to truly become a revolutionary subject, and that therefore they must reject their own cultures and Cosmovision. As Mexican university professor Graciela García, one of the few women writing during the Revolution, pointed out:

> The population in Guatemala is basically Indigenous. About 50 percent belong to this sector, which has a primitive cultural level, constituting for this reason a heavy burden that blocks the progressive work of the current government. . . . The neglect into which Indigenous masses have been held has as a result that they are negative forces on the nation's economy. . . . The situation of the *indio* represents a drawback and the nation will not prosper in due form as long as its main classes do not attempt to elevate their living standards. (1952: 8-9)[23]

During the revolutionary period, the "woman question" began to be seen as somewhat important, but not central. One limited change was the revolutionary state's and other social organizations' conceptualization of Ladino women as workers, and not just as wives and mothers. However, as workers they were not permitted to attain and hold upper leadership positions. At home, heteropatriarchal ideological practices prevailed as the most appropriate for social production and reproduction. Indigenous women were seen as being

less capable of being workers than Indigenous men, but both were basically treated and legislated as a backward population, incapable of intellectual and artistic creation, not to mention incapable of leadership in working-class organizations. Historically, however, the Revolution also instilled in Indigenous women and men the idea that social change was possible. Although there is no specific and "national" historiography written about the participation of Indigenous women and men as leaders of community, regional, and national working-class movements, of university and high schools' student movements, and in the insurgent movement, many, in fact, did participate.[24] Even so, many were forced by their social environment to hide their Mayaness and Indigenous heritage, and to highlight being workers and proletarians, especially in front of urban, revolutionary Ladino and Mestizo cadres.

In 1954, the American CIA, alongside the Guatemalan bourgeoisie and military forces, intervened to destroy the Guatemalan revolutionary experience. This event was crucial, for it instilled national security as the main function of the state, a doctrine firmly supported by national and international economic and political powers. During the U.S. intervention, the Guatemalan state began to undergo a deep transformation into a counterinsurgency state, a state based on widespread terror. The steady implementation of state terror, including genocide and the bureaucratization of death through torture as forms of governance, changed the social fabric of the country. Through the use of technologies of military, political, and social intelligence, the state exercised repressive discipline and control to a degree unparalleled in "modern" history. I analyze this repression in more detail in chapters 4, 5, and 6.

On December 29, 1996, the Peace Accord establishing a cease-fire was signed by state representatives and the leadership of the insurgent *Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca* (URNG, Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity). The URNG was an umbrella organization for four insurgent groups: The Army of the Poor (EGP); the Organization of People in Arms (ORPA); the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR); and a wing of the Guatemalan Workers Party (PGT). Indigenous, Mestizo, and Ladino women played a vital role in the decade-long peace negotiation process, but they did not figure as prominent public negotiators who contributed to the signing of the peace.

Most Guatemalans recognize the significance of a signed peace agreement, but they—and especially Maya women living in poverty—also know that peace is not just the absence of bullets. Peace without deep social reforms cannot be sustained by a contractual piece of paper, by discourses that are far removed from the daily struggles to survive amidst rampant privatization, or the further dismantling of already minimal state welfare social programs. Peace cannot be disguised as a discourse that brings democracy, while grassroots social agency is once again criminalized by various means, including "the rule of law." With varying degrees of emphasis, post-peace govern-

ment administrations have put forward aggressive, neoliberal policies, and have generously financed the military and paramilitary apparatuses. At the same time, they have not been able or willing to establish meaningful security in the daily lives of citizens. The Arzú government (1995-1999), for example, launched an aggressive "free market" plan by selling vital national resources, such as water, electrical power, and telephone and postal services, to transnational companies. It was under the Arzú government that Bishop Juan Gerardi was killed on April 24, 1998, two days after he presented the report *Guatemala: Never Again* to grassroots, human rights organizations, unions, the Catholic Church, the national and international press, survivors of genocidal state terror, and the relatives of those murdered and forever disappeared. Gerardi was a committed human rights advocate and leader of *El Proyecto de Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica* (REMHI), the Catholic Church project to recover historical memory as part of the study of state terror crimes.[25]

One needs to ask a pointed question at this point: How could the world in the 1980s pay such scant attention to what was happening in Guatemala, given the levels of genocidal state terror inflicted on its relatively small population? This has yet to be satisfactorily explained (Lovell 2000: 162). Some Maya leaders have told me that one of the reasons for this indifference is that the majority of the victims were Indigenous Peoples, Mestizos, and also Ladinos, already demonized and discarded as "Communist" enemies of the state, and as enemies of society in general (field notes 1999, 2002).

Political peace is important; no Guatemalan I interviewed or informally talked to denied this. However, peace is more than formal democracy. Peace must include social justice, or at least a serious commitment to profound economic reforms aimed at raising the living standards of the majority. In Guatemala it cannot be ignored that the main reasons for which thousands organized in a national revolutionary movement was to bring some kind of redistributive justice, in particular around land ownership. As the late Guatemalan Ladino writer and political analyst Mario Monteforte Toledo asked:

> How is it possible that people with political and economic power, as well as ordinary folk in our cities, can ignore the explosive reality generated by unjust land tenure? How is it possible for them to believe that all is well in our country just because in fashionable Zone 10 [a bourgeois area in Guatemala city] restaurants are always full, shops busy, and streets jam-packed with cars? And yet it is so, just as it is that we grow accustomed to all the killings, all the people begging in the streets. (Lovell 2000: 156)

The interlocking, genealogical approach presented here has traced the conditions upon which violent social inequality was born, structured, broken, reinvented, and expanded through repressive citizenship, capitalism, and gendered and classed racism, as a culture of the everyday world and genocidal

state terror. And this genealogy also shows how violent social inequality has been contested and resisted, even by means of collective survival itself (perhaps the most foundational form of resistance), by peoples whose humanity and creativity have been persecuted to the point of extermination.

NOTES

1. The late Iris Young noted how violence has been a silenced issue in philosophy, but this argument can be made in general for most scholarship. Young, drawing on Arendt's analysis, points out that one of the reasons why violence is absent from theory relates to an ideology in which violence is irrational. In my view, another reason is that, because violence is seen as irrational, it is invented as an exception to a norm, which is peace. Young saw violence as "acts by human beings that aim physically to cause pain to wound or kill other human beings, and/or damage or destroy animals and things that hold a significant place in the lives of people. Active threats to wound or kill also fall under a concept of violence" (2007: 82). This explanation, however, does not deal with economic, racial, and political power that makes it almost impossible for "all people" to inflict the same kind of pain and wounds inflicted by organized or institutional powers such as states and corporations, or paramilitary organizations such as vigilante groups (e.g., those helping U.S. state powers to act against both undocumented immigrants and documented diasporic populations). Despite its shortcomings, Young's definition of violence does provide a view that creates some room for including ongoing structural violence as equally important to "extreme irrational violence." After all, capitalism and colonial—modern racism are not peaceful.

2. To revisit and utilize Martínez-Peláez's work is a challenge in today's Guatemala, as he has been identified as the intellectual leader of a Marxist, racist-oriented, revolutionary praxis. Indeed, Martínez-Peláez is difficult to read because his interpretation of Indigenous Peoples (whom he calls "*indios*") as being a docile workforce, a product solely of colonialism, is highly problematic academically, and also insulting to past and current Indigenous Peoples. In his long chapter entitled "The Indio," Martínez-Peláez affirmed that the only possibility for the active participation of Indigenous Peoples in a modern revolution was for them to give up their Maya, Garifunas, and Xinkas identities (and therefore their social being), and in place of this to become a proletariat, the already constituted revolutionary subject. He also affirmed that racism and ethnic belonging do not have anything to do with class relations and positions; on the contrary, they are dangerous distracters to the real and only cause—a proletarian revolution (1982). Martínez-Peláez has influenced countless Ladino and Mestizo revolutionaries and thinkers who, up until the late 1980s, denied any equal importance to culture, identity, and gender relations in social change, as well as in everyday life.

3. "American," as used here, does not refer to people from the United States, but rather to all inhabitants of the Americas—North, Central, Caribbean, and South.

4. Although the terms tribes and clans are used by many Indigenous Peoples in North America and in Latin America, in Guatemala especially these terms are racist, for they denote "backwardness" and an almost intrinsic inability of Indigenous Peoples to be politically active through the constitution of strong organizations and/or social movements, and as leaders, thinkers, and creators.

5. Regardless of Euro-North American-centered knowledge production, which insists on affirming that contemporary Indigenous Peoples in Guatemala are not descendants of ancient Mayas, Indigenous movements and leadership from different cultures, such as the Mames, Tz'utujiles, K'iches, Chortís, Pocomchies, Queqchies, etc., name themselves as Mayas. Xinka-Pipiles and Garífunas are peoples who, although recognizing themselves as Indigenous, do not name themselves as Mayas. Many Garífunas see themselves more as descendants of intermarri-

ages between African slaves and Indigenous Peoples, rather than as Indigenous Peoples per se (field notes 2002). Hence, in this book I use the term "Mayas" in the same way that many contemporary Indigenous Peoples and their movements do.

6. Pre-Conquest societies also manifested different levels of violence. After wars, the victors often made some defeated people their slaves (as seen in the *Popol Wuj*).

7. In many expositions of the Maya Cosmovision, the main creating and influential principle is currently named *Ruk'ux Caj, Ruk'ux Ulew* (Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth) and also as *AJAW*. However, a group of critical Maya women and men are finding other knowledge that points to the inclusion of the feminine and masculine principles as equally important forces (observations 2002; follow-up conversations 2003, 2004). In fact, Don Manuel, a Maya Ajquijab, observes that many years ago spiritual guides invoked the feminine principle (Mother Earth) first, and only then the masculine (Father Sky), because the earth was respected in practice and in theory as the giver of life. Don Manuel says that the teachings of colonial patriarchal ways of being and thinking have been instilled in many Mayas and non-Mayas alike; therefore, they see and represent the sky as the symbol of male power, whereas the earth represents the mother, who in patriarchal thinking and practice is secondary. Don Manuel also points out that in ancient times, and even during the period of colonial rule when Maya spiritual guides named the sky first and the earth second, this order did not represent levels of relevance as it currently does (interview 2006).

8. For many Maya women, the notion of dual opposites is more congruent with the current realities of exclusion they face than complementarity.

9. In contemporary times, many who practice Maya spirituality within the terms of the Maya Cosmovision include aspects of Christian (especially Catholic) teachings and see no incompatibility in this. Christian evangelicals from almost all denominations in Guatemala tend to dismiss the current resurgence of the Maya Cosmovision as witchcraft. However, as several *Ajquijab* told me, many evangelicals do consult them, but in secret (observations and informal conversations 1999, 2002; follow ups in 2003, 2004, 2006, 2008).

10. The specifics of this issue are beyond the scope of this work, but the general principle is relevant here for explicating the contours of systemic domination and resistance. The encounter with several, democratic, gender practices (if democracy is understood to apply beyond voting procedures) shocked European colonizers, who named these practices and their practitioners as sodomy and sodomites. Such bodies, according to Christian moralizing and criminalizing, were classified as inferior, and therefore as infrahuman, subhuman, or not human at all. In *Decolonizing the Sodomite*, Horswell states that:

> Those subjects that did not conform to hegemonic discourses of cultural foundation, especially those that betrayed a binary gender system, were demonized through rhetoric of Christian morality. . . . The transvestite, so-called sodomites were unintelligible subjects who mis-signified, perverting the orthodox signification of sexuality, given that the Spanish marginalized the sexual Other deemed effeminate or sodomites. (2005: 15)

11. Most studies of the Conquest say that the genocide lasted only four or five years. However, Cambranes (2004) challenged this assumption and determined that a genocide lasted until 1697, with "the almost total extermination of the Itzaj from Petén" (2004: 97). These are people who Cambranes, following Euro-North American scholarship, sees as the "unique Guatemalan *pueblo* that directly descends from ancient Mayas" (2004: 97).

12. The *Popol Wuj* in this Spanish version shows the effect of the imposition of Christianity and Spanish, for it was translated by a noble Indigenous man who learned Spanish from priests; this issue is being debated amongst many Mayas without the participation of "Western experts." I was reminded of this by a Maya mentor, community researcher, and *Ajquijab* who was educated by elders within the practice of the Maya Cosmovision. These elders taught the spiritual leader I talked to that the Maya philosophy did not have the idea of god, least so of a monotheistic and punishing god that seems to prevail in some Christian Churches and other settings. This *Ajquijab* also noted that while nobody can deny the influences of Christianity on Maya conceptions and practices of spirituality and religion, this is not an indication that the

Maya Cosmovision had or shares the origins and postulates of Christianity. It is one thing to recognize processes of change in philosophies and ways of knowing, and another entirely to validate subjugated knowledges only if they accept Eurocentric influences, including progressive ones, or if they resemble knowledges thought and taught as superior. And this is so even when a legion of Northern scholars has said the contrary, and when the knowledge they have produced is taken as the "norm."

13. In Guatemala and outside academia, Martínez-Peláez is known as either a sociologist or as a social investigator interested in critical history, but not as a historian per se. On several occasions in Mexico City, where he participated in conferences and seminars organized by the *Centro de Estudios Integrados de Desarrollo Comunal* (CEIDEC) on different sociopolitical and historical issues, he often presented himself and was referred to as a sociologist very much interested in critical history (field journal on several events in Mexico, 1984-1992).

14. Contemporary Criollos, who do not name themselves Criollos in public, recognize in private that they are not Ladinos because their blood is "pure." They also commend their ancestors for preventing any blood "impurity" through mixing with dirty blood (Casaus Arzú 1992). Members of a Criollo family interviewed by Casaus Arzú, for instance, said that they "do not have even a drop of 'Indian' blood. This is proved by our certificate of blood impurity, and the fact that all of us have blood type O-negative" (Casaus Arzú 1992: 118).

15. Under and within this racist hierarchy, there were elements of the pre-Conquest Indigenous leadership who allied with the conquerors and colonizers and were given certain relative privileges in *Pueblos de Indios*. Some of them, perhaps the most Christianized, were permitted to live in cities. And some in this group are perhaps the seed of what anthropologist Irmalicia Velásquez Nimatuj calls the contemporary Maya petty bourgeois sector (2002). Grandin (2000) has also studied this class's sector.

16. This myth also includes the belief that impoverished Mestizo women worked only in the domestic sphere of their homes and/or in other households, but never held other jobs. Few (2002) has traced historical records of the colonial period that show how Mestizo women, including *Mulatas* (offspring of Black women and Spanish men) worked in guilds, the sex trade, and as sorcerers. However, she names all these different women, including Indigenous and Spanish ones, as colonial women, rather than as different women living under the colonial social organization of patriarchy, mercantile capitalism, and state racism.

17. However, it is important to notice that Indigenous men belonging to a tiny elite owning land and other resources found fluid ways to engage with the colonial regime and later with the embryo of the "modern" nation (see Grandin 2000). On occasion, they also engaged in rebellions; however, leaders and members of Indigenous rebellions were men and women from the majority of the population who endured severe conditions of exploitation and racism.

18. This law was effective in the region that nowadays is known as Latin America. In other words, it was not only "*pardos*" from Guatemala who were the frenetic buyers of whiteness.

19. Taracena, however, repeats the same mistake by not recognizing his homogenization of the term Ladino; it is culturally assumed to reflect the class position, status, and political visions of White Criollos, those who call themselves Ladinos and who in actuality are biologically and culturally mixed Mestizos. Middle-class Ladinos and those few Mestizos who create knowledge are also assumed to be the interlocutors of poor Mestizo and Ladino women and men. He is not alone in this, for this has been a practice in foreign and national social sciences and history scholarship on Guatemala (see Smith 1990; Jonas 1991, 2000; Grandin 2000, 2004; Lovell 1992, 1999; Nelson 1999).

20. In political and cultural terms Decree 900 was indeed a landmark and a radical measure—radical meaning a positive development and favorable towards the impoverished landless majority. My grandfather, Juan de Dios Martínez Gregorio, a Mestizo peasant leader, indeed believed that the revolutionary decade was meaningful for the poor in Guatemala who, for the first time, saw that positive change was possible, and not only an ideal. He used to narrate in rich detail how hopeful many peasant families became after the Revolution, both in the outskirts of cities, as well as in the countryside of eastern Guatemala. This hope was brutally shattered by the American political and economic power in collusion with the Guatemalan bourgeois and the middle classes that supported the violent 1954 intervention of American forces. In the old cemetery of Jutiapa there is a "national" tree (the *ceiba petandra*) that still

bears the bullet holes made during the public execution of dozens of men accused of being supporters of the Revolution. In 2002 I went there for the first time in many years and felt the presence of these men who defied the state in a fashion in keeping with that of Maya women and men over the centuries.

21. For a comprehensive analysis of the revolutionary gains, see Jonas (1991, 2000) and Figueroa Ibarra (1991).

22. Asturias retracted his views, expressed in 1923, when he won the Nobel in literature in 1973 (Rodas and Esquit 1997).

23. García's account and analysis of the Revolution's gains is full of vivid examples of these gains, and is a good resource to acquire an understanding of the complexities of this Revolution and of the people who carried it out. See also Piero Gleijeses' analysis of the Revolution and the United States' intervention, in his book *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944-54* (1991).

24. Grandin (2004) has started to document and analyze the participation of (mostly) Maya men in Alta Verapaz during the revolutionary period. There, some Maya men openly adhered to Marxist ideals, which they re-interpreted and explained in a more dynamic way than was the case with the dogmatic material taught to them by city Ladinos and Ladinas.

25. On the basis of 6,500 testimonies gathered by 600 trained researchers, the REMHI report (ODHAG 1998) provides detail on 55,000 human rights violations, of which over 25,000 resulted in death. Some 60 percent of the testimonies were given in one of the fifteen Maya languages, with Q'eqchi', Ixil, and K'ich'é most represented. Almost 50,000 of the incidents recorded are attributed to state security forces, the army, the police, civil defence patrols, military commissioners, and paramilitary death squads. Guerrilla insurgents are held accountable for the remainder, less than 10 percent of the total atrocities (ODHAG/REMHI 1998; Lovell 2000: 158).

Chapter Three

Structural and Everyday Practices of Racism

Ideologies and practices of racism around the globe abound, despite the persistent and sophisticated discourses of their denial. Systemic and everyday global racism, however, cannot be explained in isolation from other past and present social inequities based on class, gender, geopolitics, sexuality, and so forth. Global racism exists in deeper interconnection with unprecedented levels of poverty and wealth, exacerbated by a neoliberal globalization that has benefited the already privileged. Ironically, global racism is becoming more refined and naturalized in the very period when human rights as a discourse of formal and legal equality is gaining prominence, both in the global North and in the global South. Human rights have become very much the language of progressive politics around the globe, as well as a powerful tool to justify increased weaponization, militarization, global racial profiling, and war, amidst unprecedented levels of poverty, social inequality, and accumulation of wealth in fewer hands.

This is happening when global, racialized, capitalist, and militaristic heteropatriarchy uses the excuses of national security, and of the need to protect women and children under a renewed logic of global masculinist protection, to legitimize the invasion and occupation of other countries, and in order to roll back fundamental social justice gains all over the world. As the late Iris Young, a feminist political philosopher from the United States, has convincingly demonstrated, global patriarchy is being renovated as part and parcel of the logic of masculinist protection. This ongoing project helps account for the rationale leaders give for deepening the security state and for the acceptance of this rationale by those living under their rule (2007: 133). The logic of masculinist protection (which I think is imperialist and racist), Young argues, "constitutes the 'good' men who protect their women and

children by relations to other 'bad' men liable to attack. In this logic, virtuous masculinity depends on its constitutive relation to the presumption of evil others" (2007:130). The "good man," Young adds "is one who keeps vigilant watch over the safety of his family and readily risks himself in the face of threats from the outside order to protect the subordinate members of his household" (2007:120). "Protected" women within this logic do not make important decisions, and instead remain distant from decision-making processes, especially when the household lives under a threat, for under these circumstances there must be no divided wills and arguments (Young 2007:120).

Young draws on Hobbes's ideas about the constant and natural state of alertness caused by the fear of strangers who rob or kill good citizens, but she provides an alternative account when she observes:

> We can imagine that men and women get together out of attraction and feel love for the children they beget. On this construction, families have their origin in a desire for companionship and caring. In the state of nature, however, each unit has reason to fear the strangers who might rob or kill them, each then finds it prudent at times to engage in preemptive strikes, and to adopt a threatening stance toward the outsiders. On this alternative account, then, patriarchal right emerges from male specialization in security. The patriarch's will rules because he faces the dangers outside and needs to organize defenses. Female subordination, in this account, derives from this position of being protected. (2007:122)

In arguing that global racism is becoming more sophisticated and deeply entrenched in combination with other social inequalities, I am not asserting that racism is expressed in the same way everywhere, or that the targets of racism are the same in every context. We know that the global is constituted by many localities, including in Europe and North America, and that these localities have been socially structured by larger relations of power, identified by Quijano as the global modern/colonial system of power (2000). As I stated in the introduction, within this system, race, along with gender (Lugones 2007), has been a powerful tool for the social classification of peoples as "superior" or "inferior," and as such it has been relevant in organizing the exploitation of labor and natural resources. These were two fundamental processes for the expansion of capitalism throughout the globe, beginning with the conquest of the Americas in late fifteenth century (Quijano 2000; Mignolo 1995, 2000; Lugones 2007). However, the interconnection of systems of unequal power that organize different societies is ignored by many scholars and policy-makers, who put forward culturalized analyses[1] that emphasize a supposedly universal "clash of civilizations."

Race and racism persist in our contemporary capitalist world through reworkings of the culture-civilization binary. As Quijano explains:

> The racial classification of the population and the early association of the new racial identities of the colonized with the forms of control of unpaid, unwaged labor developed among the Europeans the singular perception that paid labor was the whites' privilege. The [assumed] racial inferiority of the colonized implied that they were not worthy of wages. They were naturally obliged to work for the profit of their owners. . . . As the center of global capitalism, Europe not only had control of the world market, but it was also able to impose its colonial dominance over all the regions and populations of the planet. . . . Europe's hegemony over the new model of global power concentrated all forms of the control of subjectivity, culture, and especially knowledge and the production of knowledge under this hegemony. (2000: 6, 7, 8)

This is a process highly gendered, because it naturalizes relations of domination, inferiority, and superiority (Lugones 2007: 186). Thus, the complexity of gender should be understood as a pillar of the modern/colonial world system of power. It is in this line of analysis that I suggest ideologies and practices of racism must be contextualized and historicized, keeping in mind that "from the sixteenth century on, epistemic and ontological constructions of racism had two major devastating consequences: the economic and legal/political dispensability of human lives. Dispensable lives were and are either assumed (naturalized "feelings") or established by decree (laws, public policies) (Mignolo 2009b:73-74)."

DYNAMICS OF RACISM

Systemic and everyday racism in Guatemala is deeply embedded in national culture, and interlocked with one of the most skewed systems of wealth and income distribution in Latin America, which makes racism all the more painful and complex. The primary target of racism in Guatemala is the majority population, comprised of Indigenous Peoples in twenty-four *Pueblos*,[2] and Afro-Guatemalans who self-identify as Garífunas. After formal decolonization, or separation, from the Spanish Crown in the eighteenth century, Indigenous Peoples in Guatemala, as in other Latin American countries, became

> invisible citizens in their own countries, strangers in their own lands. They were denied legal and formal recognition as collective entities and were expected to disappear as such and conform, each person individually, to the dominant cultural norms handed down by hegemonic groups—when Indigenous Peoples were not actually hunted down and exterminated during the land grabs of savage capitalist expansion in the nineteenth-century, as occurred in a number of countries (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Uruguay, etc.). (Stavenhagen 1999: 13)

Millions of Indigenous peoples perished. What is remarkable is the survival of contemporary Indigenous Peoples, when colonial powers and their followers and allies, as well as many scholars both in the past and present, predicted their extinction.

For anyone treated as inferior, as an uncivilized Other, regardless of their class, education, religion, or gender, the experience of racism in all of its myriad forms causes deep pain and long-term spiritual wounds. Nonetheless, rather than seeing gender as secondary, my approach treats it as central to the dynamics and impacts of racism. One of my main arguments is that Indigenous Maya women in Guatemala, especially the most socio-economically exploited and marginalized, are among the most racialized and depreciated people in the world; yet they are not passive, docile victims in need of "civilized rescue," nor are they trapped in "culture and tradition." Maya women live in what Anzaldúa (2007) and Lugones (2007, 2008) call "in-between worlds," worlds full of uncertainties, ambiguities, and contradictions. Given that I further argue that racism is structural and cultural, it therefore creates and reinforces genocide and other material and cultural-symbolic violences and injustices. Following the lead of other researchers,[3] this chapter addresses systemic racism through an examination of the *el mundo cotidiano* (everyday world) of Maya women. A decolonial analysis of the everyday world as interlocked with social relations of ruling also makes it possible to document and analyze how racism has interacted with state genocide, supported by Guatemalan dominant classes and Western powers under the conditions of state terror, to make concrete an imagined homogenous, bourgeois, and heteropatriarchal nation. In this nation, self-appointed citizens have invented Indigenous Peoples, women, and those living in poverty as non-citizens and alien Others. Observation of the daily social experiences of heterogeneous Maya women, an observation that takes their lives as important sites that contribute to the production of critical analyses, demonstrates how social relations transcend their immediate surroundings and articulate their lives. The aim is to learn how the ruling practices that invent these women as the prototype of passivity and submission, thereby discriminating against and excluding them, arise from a mix of heteropatriarchal, racist, and class-based power.[4]

Using research data, including thematic life histories,[5] I examine how racism and processes of racialization of all aspects of life in Guatemala have invented powerful, but derogatory, representations of Indigenous peoples, their (especially women's) bodies, their clothes, and their land as spaces that breed "primitivism" and "social and political passivity." I approach my examination through selected sites of labor, tourism, and education, and thereby through an analysis of the paradox of discounting of Indigenous lives while admiring their clothes. The examination of racism from these sites draws attention to the complexity of Indigenous women's lives, as exem-

plified by those Maya women who participated in my research. It similarly draws attention to the reasons why dominant forces in society depreciate these women, and characterize them in terms of deficits—lack of intelligence and creativity, for example—in contrast to the concrete reality of women's lives. This chapter also treats the different ways in which Maya women have resisted racism through social engagement and/or everyday praxis. It includes some analysis of direct collective action and small, yet relevant, acts of defiance, such as refusing to abandon their languages, customary dress, and demands for education, to name few.

RACIALIZING BODIES AND CLOTHING

"Racism always appears *renewed* and *new* at the same time" (Stoler 1995: 89, emphasis in original). With this capacity to adapt and transform, racism has become an integral part of the "normalization" of social exclusion, Othering, and of social suffering in general within transnational societies. Under this "normalization," class, gender, and sexual powers sanction the elimination, criminalization, exclusion, exploitation, and segregation of others deemed "degenerate" and "abnormal." Hence, in societies that normalize in such ways, "racism is the condition that makes it acceptable to put [certain people] to death" (Foucault cited in Stoler 1995: 84-5). Death here does not refer only to the physical elimination of the Other, but also to social death through exclusion in its more abject forms. This includes perennial deprivation, when entire segments of populations cannot be exploited, as there is no wage employment for them; they are made "disposable" through what De Sousa Santos calls "social fascism" (2006b). This is one of the globalized faces of racism, capitalism, and heteropatriarchy. Therefore, those who survived colonial genocide, and the war machinery of repressive states, are all too often physically alive, but socially "dead." They have been pushed to the far margins of life; in Agamben's (1998), and Mignolo's (2009) terms, they are excluded from "political life" and reduced to "bare"[6] and dispensable lives.

The racialization of bodies, clothes, cultures, and lands of those constructed as subhuman via demeaning images and practices entails the naturalization of the arduous conditions to which the excluded, gendered, "abnormal," and submissive Others are confined. In this process, the racially subjugated are viewed as living in conditions for which they are themselves responsible; it is their inferiority that explains their poverty and marginality. Maya women are particularly subject to this kind of blaming-the-victim racialization. But when Indigenous Peoples collectively organize and mobilize, dominant classes, imperial military powers, and other groups blame them for

promoting ethnic-racial and class conflicts, rather than recognizing how Indigenous social and political practices are founded very much on a *critique* of racism and its pernicious effects. For example, the U.S. National Intelligence Council's report, *Mapping the Global Future* (NIC 2004), raises the specter of Indigenous Peoples' movements in Latin America as threats to global security, alongside concerns about the rising numbers of Muslim adherents to Islamic fundamentalism (NIC 2004; cf. Radcliffe 2007).

For a long time, the bodies of colonized women have been constituted by capitalist and heteropatriarchal power as spaces of domination. And, according to the interests of dominant forces, these bodies are thought of as "naked" and thus "primitive," as under colonial direct rule, or as "covered and subjugated," as in the contemporary politics of the "global war on terror." Either way, excluded women's bodies are regulated, controlled, commercialized, and policed. In this context, the state, the hegemonic classes, and foreigners (especially as tourists) commoditize and publicly celebrate Guatemalan Maya women's *trajes* and *huipiles* (long skirts and blouses specially woven and embroidered with cultural and ecological motifs) as the "authentic" symbol of Guatemala's "vernacular folklore." On an everyday basis, Maya women wearing their customary clothes become the targets of various racist expressions, both overt and covert. The contrast between Maya women as valued symbols, and as objects of everyday exclusion, is dramatic, but it is nothing new. Nor is the contrast actually based on an inconsistency: a customarily dressed Maya woman may be appreciated as an image, while being largely depreciated and excluded as an inferior human within a racist society.

Actual Maya women are made to disappear through the social normalization of racism, becoming the collectively named *las Marías* and *las inditas* (the "Marys" and "little female Indians"). These terms are deeply entrenched in the Criollo-Ladino imaginary, and are constantly used as symbols of, and for, the humiliation and degradation of Maya women's humanity. The label *Las Marías*, for instance, implies that all Maya women are named María, even though the reality is otherwise; through a denial of their individuality, the label suggests that Maya women are not entitled to the kinds of proper names given to Criollas, Ladinas, and Mestizas.[7] The illusion that all Maya women are named *María* also means that Maya women are symbols of backward Catholicism, for they are supposedly blind devotees of this religion, and are therefore held responsible for the "underdevelopment" of the nation. Juana Vásquez, a longtime Maya political and spiritual leader, pointed out:

> They call us "María." María is the campesina María, the indigenous María, the María who doesn't know anything. When we used to go to the market with our onions and tomatoes [to sell], it was "María, how much is this?" "María, how much are the tomatoes?" "Ten," "Five, give them to me!" They set the price they want. (in Smith-Ayala 1991: 57)

Irma, a Maya female participant in Chirix García's study,[8] stated:

> It was hard for me to get used to the constant mistreatment and humiliation of Ladinos in different places because I had never been treated like that and it was not just that in the bus they scream at you: "María, María! Do not be stupid, María you are like a donkey! Look at this *india*!" There are days you are, like, more sensitive and this gets at you more. (2003: 141)

As Chirix García acutely observes, "María has been a name historically constructed to identify and homogenize indigenous women; it reflects segregation as a policy of exclusion. It is an indicator that illustrates ethnoracial difference and inequality to legitimize domination" (2003: 141). The plural "Marías" thus denotes being "poor, illiterate indias."[9]

Maya women are also referred to as *envueltas* ("wrapped-up women"). This denotes that the clothes Maya women wear are not "real" clothing, but pieces of worthless fabric. María Alejandra, a former community leader and a member of a women's community group, mentioned to me an instance of verbal abuse at the hands of Ladinos:

> They [Ladinos] have called me, more so in the past than recently,[10] "You, *envuelta* . . . who do you think you are to respond [to] me in this manner. . . ." What happened was that I did not agree to give up my seat on a bus and told the Ladino passenger that I had paid the same money he did, so I did not have to move. He was furious and could not believe I could use my mouth and my head. . . . You see, for him I was only an *envuelta*. (Informal conversation 2002)

By objectifying Maya women's existence under the category "María," and by belittling their clothes as if they were unprocessed fabrics, Maya women's bodies are made to symbolize a stage of perennial "primitivism." According to the Criollo-Ladino imaginary, it is in this stage that Indigenous Peoples perpetually live. Maya women wearing their *trajes*, then, become the archetypal images of the past frozen in the present.

All the female Maya participants in my research wear their *trajes* every day, everywhere.[11] They attach profound meanings to their communities, lands, and clothing, in obvious contrast to the ways in which they have been officially represented. María Elena, who comes from the Ixil Triangle (one of

the areas hardest hit by the state terror genocidal campaigns of the recent past), and was a community leader within the revolutionary movement of the late 1970s, explains:

> My *abuelita* [little grandma] told me a story her ancestors told her. It is a story of how the Spanish tricked our people. . . . My *abuelita* said that the Spanish covered their valueless things with the color of gold, but a brilliant gold, and our people gave them real gold. Then the Spanish raped our women and laughed at our *trajes* because for them our *trajes* were not real clothes. . . . You see our skirts are very comfortable for us but different from the clothes the conquerors brought. So they called as "*indios*," later *inditos* and *inditas* [i.e., diminutive forms: little male "Indians," little female "Indians"]. But for my *abuelita*, our *huipiles* are pretty, with nice colors . . . with many images of our volcanoes, birds, mountains, pyramids. . . . I know [that] Ladinos call us *envueltas*, *envueltitas*, and *refajaditas* behind our backs and to our faces, but I am not an *envuelta*. But if I am, so are they; the difference is that their wrapping is different. [Laughing, she added:] After all, we as humans want to cover our naked bodies. . . . Those who say we Maya women are *envueltas* do not have different or better organs on their bodies, I mean, eyes, legs, feet, nails, or blood. I used to cry when I was little and Ladino children and teachers insulted us. [But] I [have] told myself that if I survived the torture and insults of many army officers who also called me *india refajada hija de puta y guerrillera* [daughter of an "Indian" bitch, wrapped-up guerrilla woman], I can survive other things, but not in silence. Does it mean I like being called names, being insulted? No, of course not. (Interview 2002)

No expert could have ever been more poignant than this community leader in conveying how racism arising from the voyages of "discovery" has dehumanized the bodies left in their wake. She explains the configurations of a system of coercion and subjugation which, as her grandmother said, used vulgar, cheap trickery and mockery to convert her ancestors' biophysical and social environments into objects of subjugation and surplus extraction. She also highlights, through her grandmother's teachings on self-dignity, how the value of Indigenous women as human beings, and their surroundings, are discounted by Ladinos as being a product of barbarism. The teachings of María Elena's grandmother exemplify how, on an everyday basis, and in the face of internally occupying military forces allied to and supported by transnational Western powers, small acts of defiance constitute significant social actions—actions that contest and resist the legitimate aura that imperial colonizers and terrorizing states attach to their domineering, coercive, and subjugating practices.

María Elena counteracts the racialization of her social being as "the *envuelta*," an act of resistance that echoes the voices of most Maya women in my investigation. For example, Doña Esperanza said: "I do not have big words to say that my *traje* is beautiful; I can just say that it was born with me

and will be with me forever, even in my grave" (interview 2002). Even those who do not use the term Maya to name themselves, and who say that they only belong to their local cultural and linguistic community, assert that, for them, their clothes are important. Catarina, a member of an evangelical group, who was struggling with her child's severe disability, and who does not belong to any women's group, told me: "Listen, I do not know what Maya means, but what I know is that I like my *traje*, it is like my child; it is with me everywhere. It says that I am from here, a Tz'utujil from Santiago Atitlán" (interview 2002). On the same issue, Dona Esperanza said: "Look *seño* [for señorita, miss], it is the Ladinos who do not like our clothes. They tell us that our clothes do not have the same value as do their own clothes and it hurts deeply, deeply" (interview 2002).

Guatemala is a land where the dominant culture sees Westernized clothing, especially in the form of well-known brands, as an important symbol of bourgeois respectability, honor, cleanliness, good taste, and "high" culture. In contrast, Maya clothing is seen as an artifact to be preserved in tourist images and museums as a symbol of the national, folkloric past. Maya clothes are a "vernacular representation of culture," whereas Westernized clothes represent "civilization," no matter how worn out they are. This distinction was used in the past, and is used in the present, to make it clear that Mayas who dress in traditional clothes are culturally inferior, poor, and powerless.

RACIALIZED CITIES AND PAID WORK

Socioeconomic pressures and the search for means of survival, including education, have led many Maya women to temporarily or permanently move outside their communities, to commute to other sites, or both, especially to larger cities and the capital and the global North. Expanding capitalist markets and wealth, combined with broader socioeconomic and political changes, have generally reinforced exploitation and oppression for the majority of Maya. These changes have led to transformations in the lives of Indigenous Peoples, refuting representations of them and their cultures as "traditional," (i.e., static and frozen in time, or worse, as peoples who want to return to an idyllic past). In my years of research with and about Indigenous Peoples, I have never actually heard anyone verbalize such a desire.

Domestic Workers

The bourgeois and "respectable" womanhood, constructed since the time of colonial rule, excluded Maya women as not being "real women," yet included them as wombs for the incubation of inferior Others. This process

became more prevalent with the advent of the liberal, reformed capitalism of the 1870s. At this time, bourgeois Ladinas began to share, with affluent Criollas, easy access to a cheap, racialized labor force, that of Maya women domestic workers. This first incursion of numerous Maya domestic workers into the prohibited space of the city somewhat disrupted the already racialized, classed, and gendered sociocultural geography of urban areas, areas not used to sheltering for long periods an increasingly large population of Maya women in their *trajes*. In the middle of the twentieth century, Maya women increasingly migrated in order to work as maids in upper- and middle-class Ladino households. Being trapped in such employment proved to their employers, and others, that Maya women were only suited to do menial jobs at the bottom of the labor ladder. Alicia, who worked as a domestic worker in Guatemala City for several years in the late 1970s, and who remembers her Ladina employer with affection, recalls that she "taught me how to clean the house and use the stove . . . because, she said, I had to learn how to be a good maid, for that was the work good *inditas* like me were suited for" (interviews 1999, 2002).

With rising poverty, and the expropriation, erosion, and further division of small Indigenous plots of land over the course of the twentieth century, Maya women increasingly entered this most exploitative zone of capitalism, an exploitation made worse by restrictions against union organizing, the latter a path taken by other workers in Guatemala despite state terror. They entered a zone which also allowed for the perpetration of sexual crimes such as rape, harassment, and verbal abuse, with no prospect for the prosecution and punishment of perpetrators already well protected by the rule of law (Taller Casa de Unidad del Pueblo 1990; Vásquez and Vásquez 1990). Juana Isabel, a national Maya leader with long educational and organizational experience, recognized that

> there is a silent issue that happens not only to impoverished Maya women who work as domestics but also to poor Ladinas. It is how they face rape and sexual harassment by their male patrons [and] it is Maya women who can speak little Spanish and are single mothers who are less protected. And because many have no option but to be domestic workers, they have to endure this in silence. In my work, I have come to the realization that, unfortunately, in many Maya families and communities it is shameful to talk about these issues. Can you imagine how a woman could tell her relatives that her patron or the patron's sons raped her? Listen, the truth is that most Ladino men, especially the rich, still have the mentality that Indigenous women are promiscuous and that we "want" to have sex with them because they are "superior." (Interview 2002)

Domestic work has helped to sustain capitalism and heteropatriarchy, at the same time as it is not registered *as* work in society generally, and in national employment statistics in particular (see Programa de Naciones Unidas para el

Desarrollo Humano, PNUD 2001). Consequently, it is difficult to know with precision how many Maya women have worked as domestics over time; the point is simply that, as a forced socioeconomic condition, waged domestic work has served to facilitate the construction of the image of any Maya woman wearing her customary clothes as being a maid. This construction is so entrenched that many Mayas themselves, especially men, have internalized it. In 1999, for example, when one of my Maya research assistants and I were shopping in a well-known tourist flea market, a male Maya vendor asked her in their mother tongue: "Is she your boss [referring to me]? So you are working again. I did not know that." Sandra's face was tense and she replied "I am not a maid and it is insulting that you think that before asking me what I am doing. She and I are good friends, we are equals, I am not her maid" (field notes 1999).

Official national statistics include only the work women do in what is conventionally categorized as the productive sphere, usually meaning waged jobs outside of households or families, and thus in such fields as industry, agriculture, and some services. Hence, the work Indigenous women do in the informal economy and in their homes is either under-reported, or not reported at all (SEGEPLAN in Mesa Nacional Maya [MENMAGUA] 1998). What is known from non-official statistics is that from 1950 to 1988, the majority of work by Indigenous women, without specifying if they were Mayas, Garifunas, or Xinkas, was concentrated in agriculture, handicraft jobs, and domestic work. For that period, total waged female labor was performed by 32.5 percent Indigenous women, and 67.5 percent Criollo, Ladina, and Mestiza women. For the Central American region, Guatemala presented the lowest percentages of female waged work, primarily due to the underestimation of Indigenous women's work (García and Gomáriz 1989: 198).

It is not only national, official statistics that underestimate women's work (and especially impoverished, Indigenous women's labor). International governmental and intergovernmental institutions do the same. The United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) reported that by 2001, 71.5 percent of poor women were economically unproductive, in contrast with 56.8 percent of women who were not poor (PNUD 200l: 71). In both cases, the fundamental reason given for this apparent "economic non-productivity" was the fact that household domestic work, already conceived of as non-productive, was not counted. Edwin Flores, director of the Ministry of Labor's statistics department in 2003, noted in the early 1990s that the Ministry of Labor had not segregated labor patterns by sex and ethnicity (Hernández Alarcón 2003: 3).[12] Hence, it is even more difficult to know the extent of the participation of Indigenous women in the paid national labor force, as well as the full incidence of unemployment broken down by gender and ethnicity.

If we take into account that the majority of Maya women live in poverty, are non-formally schooled (MENMAGUA 1998), and that they constitute the bulk of those widowed by state terror, we can also infer that Maya women are frequently to be found employed as domestic workers, and/or unemployed. In addition, impoverished Maya women, as well as those working in agriculture as seasonal workers, are not subject to legal protection under current labor legislation (Hernández Alarcón 2002: 3). Furthermore, the racialization of labor, pivotal to the expansion and perpetuation of capitalism (Quijano 2000), leads to Maya workers in general, and domestic female workers in particular, being more exposed to bodily and cultural injuries and injustices. One of these injuries involves forcing domestic workers to wear "ladinized" (Westernized) uniforms. Several Guatemalan and foreigner scholars or not have assumed that the wearing of such clothing by Maya domestic workers is an expression of their fervent desire to become "modern." Even given that some Maya women themselves probably have this desire, it should not be assumed as a general, social tendency. On their "free" weekends, most domestic workers return to wearing their Maya clothing, and many used to go to Central Park in Guatemala City as their favorite, and perhaps their only available space for recreation and social bonding with other Maya women and men. Perhaps without realizing it, they are symbolically taking over a space that was historically available only to the dominant Ladino population; indeed, the Park is located in front of the National Palace, the locus of power in Guatemala. It has also been a place for expressing resistance, having witnessed large, grassroots demonstrations.[13]

In cities, the very presence of Maya women clad in Maya clothing, and their employment as domestic workers, has presented, and still presents, a paradox for the dominant order. On the one hand, their work freed affluent Criollas and Ladinas from their gendered domestic toil, helping to enable the fulfillment of the latter's household goals as reproducers of the status quo. On the other hand, Maya women were subjected to new forms of harsher exploitation, and their domestic work became "private," even though it was done in the space of other people's homes. Both groups of women were placed in the "private" sphere, understood as entirely separate from the public world, although both worlds are intimately connected. The ideology of Ladino respectability implied that Maya women domestic workers would be safe and protected in Criollo and Ladino households. Unfortunately, different practices and outcomes were very common. Sexual abuse of Maya domestic workers has been widespread, with rape occurring as an everyday affair in these "respectable" households. Many Criollo and Ladino men have viewed sexual intercourse with Maya women domestic workers as a "ritual of sexual initiation," and Maya women have too often been silent about this in order to survive. Thus, sexual abuse has persisted as a silenced reality, which to this

day makes domestic work one of most unsafe occupations women can take on (Vásquez and Federico 1990; Juana Isabel interview 2002; Hernandez Alarcón 2003).

Urban domestic work was also the breeding ground for new, pejorative namings against Maya women by those who historically felt they owned the city. Phrases like *india cholera* ("Indian underclass maid"), *cholera refajada* ("underclass wrapped maid"), or *bajada de los cerros* ("damn half-breed from the hills") became commonly used. *Cholera* comes from the word *cholo*, which in many South American countries denotes a poor, dark-skinned person, especially a "half-breed" and an uncivilized "Indian," and a cowardly one at that. *Cholera* in Guatemala does not mean *Mestiza-Mestizo* ("half-breed"), even though it may have these racialized connotations as well; rather, the term is used to imply a plebeian background, a peasant or poor, working-class origin. *Cholera* is also used as a pejorative word to label poor Ladinas and Mestizas who are obliged to find employment as domestic workers in more affluent and upper-class Criollo and Ladino households. Like their Maya counterparts, many poor Ladinas and Mestizas have also been subjected to class and sexual harassment and abuse (observations 1999, 2002). When the term *cholera* is compounded with racist expressions such as *india* or *indio*, it thereby acquires triply exclusionary meanings.

INVISIBLE IMPACTS, AND RACISM AS A (NON-) CONCEPT

One of the consequences of the imposition of coloniality, the violent side of modernity, on the colonized and excluded, is the profound sociological and psychological wounds it has caused. Frantz Fanon was one the earliest scholars to notice the complex and very often intangible effects of the daily racist humiliations of, and insults on, those construed as negatively different. He called these people the *damnés* (the cursed, the damned, the wretched). Fanon reflected on the contradiction of colonial Christianity's threatening the *damnés* with hell for bad or "sinful" behavior on earth, when they were already living in hell (in Maldonado-Torres 2006). In Guatemala, systemic and everyday racism is not solely focused on skin color and other physical features, as it is "commonly" thought and practiced in many European and North American sites. Most Mestizos, Métis, or other "half-bloods" "look like" Indigenous Peoples, and Maya women and men can pass as Ladinos or Mestizos if they become fluent in Spanish and stop wearing their Maya clothing. Many Mayas have passed themselves off by not using their languages, and hiding their clothes and spiritual-religious beliefs, as well as their communities of origin. Others have felt so ashamed of their parents and relatives that they have refused to be seen with them when the latter wear

Maya clothing. This is especially so in more urbanized public spaces (and usually changes once they return to their home communities). Passing as a Ladino or Mestizo has become a matter of survival, a dangerous one given the possibility of being caught out by forgetting to speak without an accent. K'iché leader Juana Vásquez, who comes from a peasant family living in poverty, graduated as a nun and teacher. She reflects on the intimate ethical dilemmas and the shame about one's relatives, created by racialized structures, and experienced in educational settings. Students are not simply students, itself a neutral term that encompasses many inequities and injustices. As Vásquez observes:

> It reached the point—and I'm so very ashamed of this, but it's the truth—that I felt embarrassed because of my parents. That was when I was graduating from teacher's college. I didn't want them to come. They were so simple—they were campesinos, and everyone else was going to arrive in suits and ties. I felt bad, and I even told them not to come. I remember once—and now it hurts me so much—I said to my mother: "Don't talk to me in Quiché." My mother didn't speak Spanish and I didn't want it known that I was *indigena*. Without realizing it, you get sucked into it and you change. (in Smith-Ayala 1991: 46)

Maya women who have been forced to assimilate have walked a path of shame, self-denial, and self-punishment, very often in silence. Many have also lost their language or languages. They did not freely choose to become assimilated Ladinas; rather, the systems in place obliged them to feel ashamed of their origins and identity, and their families, communities, and culture. After years of living like Ladinas, it is difficult for many to become Mayas in public, but in some intimate spheres many of them have never stopped being and feeling Maya. Currently, and perhaps as a result of long anti-colonial and anti-imperial revolutionary struggles, Indigenous Peoples in Guatemala are exercising self-determination through the individual and collective process of identification, of naming themselves as Mayas, as Maya-Tz'utujil, Maya-Kiché, and so on.

However, the U.S. National Intelligence Council (NIC) has seen this development as one of the global terror threats; they would prefer that Indigenous Peoples remain silent and accepting of whatever identities others have deemed convenient to attach to them. According to the NIC's "security experts," the increasing numbers of the population identifying themselves as Indigenous People will demand not only a voice, but potentially also a new social contract. By so doing, they will destabilize the Latin American region, because they are easily manipulated by populist leaders, and thus will become "terrorists" (see NIC 2004). Scholar Sarah Radcliffe calls attention to the dangers of associating Indigenous Peoples' struggles with terrorism (2007). This association has been commented upon by numerous scholars (and is something I also observed in my interviews with Maya women);

further, the association of Indigenous Peoples with "communism" and "terrorism" was a deliberate strategy of the Guatemala-United States ruling coalition (Jonas 1991; Figueroa Ibarra 1991; Schirmer 1998; Grandin 2004, 2006). Radcliffe points out that

> geopolitical discourses misrepresent racial tensions and weak states, blaming Indigenous people who in effect have organized against political violence, marginalization, and exclusion. . . . [These] discourses erase an account of subaltern populations' fears based on many years of epistemic and material violence against them. (2007: 385-86)

Furthermore, Radcliffe adds, "Antiterror talk about 'ethnic mobilization' retrenches an identity gap between Indian and non-Indian, even as it fails to examine the racialization of nation-building, political systems, and everyday encounters" (2007: 388).

The majority of Maya women coming from impoverished backgrounds, who lack the opportunity to enroll in the schooling system and speak only their Maya languages, including those who participated in my study, have said repeatedly that they did not know the word *racismo* (racism). However, the same women recognized and provided rich testimony about how they, their ancestors, families, and communities, have endured more than five hundred years of suffering, humiliation, and bad treatment, as peoples/Pueblos and as Indigenous/Maya persons. One of the patterns women recognize as extremely devastating, individually and collectively, is the discourse that characterizes Maya women and men as *indios*. This is true even when this term is used by "sympathetic" Guatemalan Criollo and Ladino scholars, as well as by Euro-North American ones. Carmen Julia, for instance, said:

> When I am called *india* I feel like I am a piece of the dirtiest garbage, and I do not get why it is that those who say they are in solidarity with us also call us *indios*. Nothing, absolutely nothing, is good about this word. . . . They must learn this once and for all. Once a *gringa* who said she was a university professor repeated many times that *indios* are very smart and have been humiliated by Ladinos. She, however, felt she was different and superior. . . . [S]he never got it that when she was saying we were *indios* she was being like the Ladinos she criticized. A year ago [2001] I went to a professional Ladino woman's house; she said she is revolutionary and feels in solidarity with "people like you." Later, she had to introduce me to a foreigner who wanted to meet "real *indias*" wearing "colorful" "*Indian*" dresses. . . . [W]ell, you see, this Ladina said to the man: "Here, I introduce you to an *india* of today's Guatemala." Sometimes this same woman called us Mayas when she was among other Mayas, mainly men. . . . When I was alone with her, she even made me cry once when I, by accident, broke one of her plates. . . . She was angry and exclaimed: "These *indias*, they never learn how to appreciate the good things in life." (Interview 2002)

Impoverished Maya women also recognize that poverty is the basis for daily racist humiliation—the expressed belief that the poor are less worthy of respect, and perhaps not worthy of respect at all—and that this experience is integral to being an Indigenous person.

The application of an interlocking, decolonial analysis of power based on race, class, and gender in colonized societies, helps us to analyze the interconnectedness of simultaneous oppression and resistance. Estela, who grew up in extreme poverty, experienced hunger, and was a member of a local revolutionary resistance movement for a dozen years, poignantly noted this interrelation when she said that:

> It is not only the fact you do not have food, good food, shoes, or that you do not go to school that hurts deeply, but also what accompanies these experiences: the words, the deadly words they [Ladinos of all classes and genders] speak to you, that you are a dirty and stupid *indo, india*. And the problem is that many of those who swear they are on your side, that they are your comrades, do the same, but in other forms. . . . I often feel and think that this way of being and doing will never end . . . but at the same time I have hopes and remain in this women's group. Now, when I am with other Maya women like me who wear our *trajes* everywhere, I tell myself: They can continue calling us *indio, india,* dirty *indios, indias* . . . but we will continue to be Mayas . . . in their faces . . . in the streets, in parks, in restaurants, in plazas . . . everywhere. If they do not like our faces, our colors, they cannot make all of us disappear. Like our grandparents said, "They could cut off the leaves [symbolizing a tree] but they will never cut off our roots." (Interview 2002)

Language is a powerful social and political tool, not only a set of symbols and words. Discursive language does not create conditions of exclusion, exploitation, and marginalization, but it certainly provides symbols and meanings that back up and reproduce practices of exclusion and reproduce. Words are tools to name, categorize, and analyze the social world. At the same time, words are embedded in the broader system of power relations. The fact that non-formally schooled Maya women from backgrounds of poverty do not use the word "racism," or do not recognize it as a way to understand how they are Othered, does not mean that racism does not exist, and that it does not affect their lives. As Alejandra María observes:

> We know how hurtful it is to be named "dirty and stupid *india*"; when many tell you that your brain is as small as a rat's brain . . . that you and "your people" are primitive because we do not even know how to dress properly . . . it hurts because it is like a drop of water dripping onto the middle of your head day by day until it makes a huge hole . . . a hole of pain, sadness, and rage. (Informal conversation 2002)

Thus, what are the conditions that lead many Maya women to ignore or reject the concept of racism, while recognizing the daily practices of what I call deeply structured, commonplace, race-based exclusion? Not one of the twenty-two Maya languages found in Guatemala has an explicit word or words denoting a concept of racism. The Tz'utujil and other Maya languages have no specific words for race-based discrimination. Some national and international "experts," as well as most Criollos, Ladinos, and Mestizos, therefore believe that racism does not exist, because Mayas do not use the word. In an informal conversation I had with a self-defined, progressive social scientist, he stated:

> To say that racism exists in Guatemala, and for that matter in Latin America, is an imposition by some intellectuals who read about these theories in places like the United States [i.e., and then think they are applicable in a different context]. What *indios* suffer here is not racism, it is rampant poverty. We cannot invent issues just because they are fashionable in the North. Furthermore, when I talk to my *indio* friends, they talk about misery, about poverty, not about racism. (Field notes 2002)

Because racism in Guatemala, as in other places, is only recognized by the dominant culture as a thing of "the past," belonging to the time when it was legitimated by science and the rule of law, persistent, and also more recent and more sophisticated forms of racism, are denied. Public denial of racism is a powerful contributor to its silencing, even on the part of many who suffer from it. These dynamics have been studied in other contexts. Van Dijk, who examined racism as discourse in Europe, found that

> political, media, academic, corporate and other elites play an important role in the reproduction of racism. They are the ones who control or have access to many types of public discourse, have the largest stake in maintaining white group dominance, and are usually also most proficient in persuasively formulating their ethnic opinions. . . . Although there is of course a continuous interplay between elite and popular forms of racism, analysis of many forms of discourse suggests that the elites in many respects "preformulate" the kind of ethnic beliefs of which sometimes more blatant versions may then get popular currency. (1992: 88)

The invisible social prevalence, power, and seeming validity of the ideology of racism can penetrate all sectors of a given society, including those self-identified as progressive, contributing to the internalization of racism by those who suffer from it, and who thereby develop self-hatred and lack of self-esteem. This does not mean that anti-racist struggles for social justice are invalid or unnecessary. On the contrary, learning more about the new forms of denied racism is imperative to forging new initiatives against racial, gender, and economic injustices.

Eduardo, a longtime activist, elementary teacher, and community worker, also reflected on why it is that many Mayas do not use the term racism, and how this can be misconstrued as an affirmation that Indigenous Peoples believe there is no racism in their lives:

> It is simply absurd [that] "experts" do not have enough imagination to think that maybe we have different ways to name things; maybe we do not have exact words but [instead we have] rich explanations and descriptions. You have to forgive me but sometimes I get very upset at these experts when they feel they have the right to say that because some of us do not use particular words, so we do not suffer a particular pain, in this case racism. What do they know about racism? Do they live with us every day to affirm such a stupidity like racism does not exist in Guatemala;[14] that in Guatemala what exists is ethnic discrimination? Who do they think they are to even say that because some women did not go to school and do not use the word racism they do not suffer racism? Give me a break, it is simply unbelievable. Please write this down if you are really respecting not only what we say but most importantly what we live, what our ancestors have lived for centuries. Other experts, especially those who speak English, think that when they say "Indians" in English that it is not racist—I am sorry but it is insulting, and many, many of us are deeply offended by their lack of care. I do not know much English but in my ears the word *indio* in Spanish and the word "Indian" in English are very much the same. (Interview 2002)

Some Maya women who are community leaders also point out that many Maya women's limited access to education, and the banning of Indigenous ways of knowing from the curriculum, also play a role in their not learning conceptual tools applicable to the experience of racism. The Guatemalan schooling system does not recognize the systemic existence of racism, nor its role in perpetuating it. In 2002 I had the opportunity to work with some Maya teachers involved in struggles for educational reforms, which were required steps for fulfilling the Peace Accords of 1996, and for the building of a less unequal Guatemala. "Interculturality"[15] was the most "advanced" term the Ladino experts, appointed to write the final version of the new elementary curriculum, came up with for denoting the importance of knowing Maya languages. When I asked Maya teachers the reasons for the silence on racism, and the insistence on the notion of interculturality, they referred to these experts' rationale that in the Guatemala of the Peace Accords, "we should look for ways to build brotherhood and sisterhood among Guatemalans from different origins instead of separatism" (field notes 2002).

Throughout Guatemalan history, state and Christian-based schools that have reasons for downplaying racism as one of the foundations of oppression and exclusion in Guatemala have shaped the Maya vocabulary and worldview. Since the 1960s, efforts by the Catholic Church, by practitioners of liberation theology, and by some progressive members of evangelical

churches to challenge the hegemonic oppression of the past did not include an in-depth analysis of the ways Mayas and other Indigenous Peoples have been subjected to racism and racialization. Thus, these efforts, although important in raising social consciousness about poverty and state violence, had limited scope and impact. The assessment of Alejandra María, a Maya-Tz'utujil, is that

> one of the powerful reasons for many of our people ignoring many words and ideas is the fact that they have not gone to school. Sometimes the only knowledge they have is the one they get from churches and how good or bad the content is. Well, it depends on the kind of priests, pastors, or other people's politics and ideology, I mean of the priests assigned to churches. In all the time I have gone to masses, I have never heard any priest mention racism and the pain it causes. Some who care about how many of us live in poverty said some things about injustice in general but not the word racism. (Informal conversation 2002)

The schooling system, its agents, and many in organized Christianity have taught countless generations of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people that Indigenous Peoples live in squalor, do not eat in a civilized fashion, and are monolingual, because it is in their nature to be this way. This overall framework sends a powerful message, one that has been repeatedly heard by Maya peoples during the long history of colonialism and neocolonialism. Gloria Estela, a Maya university student and community leader with a strong gender and anti-racist analysis, categorically attacks such thinking:

> Of course, many of the houses of Maya Peoples do not have the right conditions to be clean. Many cannot afford proper sanitation like flush toilets. Other women are so busy taking care of children, selling herbs in the market, doing the laundry, etc., that they do not have the energy to clean their houses. Of course, there are others who simply do not clean, but Egla, this happens in every society, don't you think? So what is this obsession of many so-called experts, and here I include teachers, priests, social workers, and development planners, lawyers, to insist that we are dirty by nature. Some Maya professionals also say and believe that we are dirty if we are poor. They have classist beliefs in the sense they believe what they were taught in schools that the poor are dirty and smelly, so they also include here poor Ladinos and Mestizos and their Maya sisters and brothers. The most terrible thing is that many of us believe it because it is difficult to fight all the bad teachings all the time. You do not have time and at the end we internalize these horrible ideas . . . but these are social situations, not elements of "our culture."[16] (Informal conversation 2002)

Alejandra María recognizes the impact these hegemonic teachings have had on her life; she understands that she internalized these ideologies for a long time, and only began to question some of their affirmations when she started

to participate in the revolutionary resistance movement in the early 1980s. She pointed out: "I believed for many years and I still feel that in some aspects I am less [of a person] in comparison with Ladinos" (interview 2002). The internalization of racism, and all the racialized representations it facilitates, is a very complex phenomenon, for it does not mean that those invented as less human believe everything negative taught to them, let alone about them. Rather, the internalization implies that the repetition of these inventions justifies unequal conditions, and to some extent instills a sense of inferiority, in the hearts and minds of those categorized as less human than others, even when they actively struggle against social oppression. Alejandra María exemplified this paradox when she said:

> We [i.e., the Indigenous] are taught daily that we are the problem—that we create all the hardships in which we live, instead of teaching us that there are things like racism, like extreme poverty, illiteracy that make people poor and illiterate. We are taught that speaking our own Maya languages is a sign of backwardness, and that is not all. We are also accused by many, including teachers, journalists, television programs, priests, pastors, nuns, the very rich, that we are responsible for how Guatemala is seen by the world, as a backward nation. Our languages are made guilty, our dresses, our ways of being, our own existence is made guilty. So if you hear this every day in direct forms or in masked ways, it gets sickening and almost unbearable, and on top of it you have to smile, you have to be nice because "*indios* used to be obedient and happy people." In the end we are made to believe that we are responsible for all the problems we have. (Interview 2002)

Carmen Julia, another longtime resistance leader and community advocate, affirms that there are many women left widows by state violence who do not frame racism as a separate condition, but as one that is interlinked with daily hardships. She observed:

> Many women here, especially those who [were] left widows by the military violence, do not talk much about racism as their only problem. And it is true that the word racism does not exist in our language but it does not mean that many of us ignore what has been done to us just because we are Tz'utujiles as well as Indigenous Peoples more generally. (Informal conversation 2002)

RACISM, ECONOMIC INJUSTICES, AND PATRIARCHY AS EVERYDAY, INTERLOCKING PRACTICE

For several women widowed as a result of genocide under conditions of state terror, racial and cultural discrimination cannot be separated from state violence and from economic injustices that have been aggravated after their relatives' kidnappings, torture, and violent deaths. Marta Concepción, a widow, pointed out:

> Yes I hate the army; I hate with all my heart what they have done to us, how they killed many of our people with such disdain as if we are dogs or pigs. If you ask me what discrimination is for me I will tell you that for me it is what the army did to my husband. . . . They [the military] came to my home one night in the 1980s, violently opened the door, dragged my husband out of bed, and shot him in front of me. I was seated on our bed, I saw everything and I will never forget. Yes, now my children and I are poorer than when my husband was alive, that is discrimination to me. (Interview 2002)

For older women, the humiliating behavior, the insults, and poor treatment on the part of local Ladinos are old problems; at times these are blatant, while at others it is less obvious, but such problems are always present. The past, then, is not something that has passed and which is to be placed in a box of antiquities. The past is actively connected to the present, especially within contexts having strong legacies of colonialism, racialized feminicide, genocide, and magnified economic exclusion and exploitation.

One relevant pattern, found amongst older Maya women, is the devastating impact the word *cocha*, pig, has had when used by Ladinos and Ladinas as an insult against them. Its roots possibly originate in the constant use of the word against Mayas by the first generations of Ladinos and Ladinas who came to their communities after the liberal reforms of 1871. Whereas this word is frequently used by Ladinos-Ladinas and Mestizos-Mestizas themselves as a way of commenting on something which is either not polite, or unclean, for older Maya women, one of the most degrading forms of humiliation is to be told that they are "pigs." Josefina, an elder, recalled:

> To me the worst thing is being named and treated like a pig. To be compared to one of the dirtiest animals is more than painful, but that is how we have been treated in this town, as "'Indian' pigs." It means that if we are pigs for Ladinos, they are the opposite; they are clean, educated, not animals. It infuriates me, even though when I first heard it, I did not know any Spanish. . . . When Ladinos humiliated me, I memorized one word, *cocha*. And I later asked some Tz'utujiles who knew Spanish the meaning of this word and they explained it to me. . . . When I confirmed the first thought in my head when they called me pig [i.e., that it was among the worst of insults], I was more angry and hurt. I felt Ladinos were telling me something bad because of their ges-

> tures and the hatred in their eyes. You know sometimes . . . you do not need to know the words in which you have been humiliated. . . . Eyes and gestures are their own words. (Interview 2002)

Maya women who do not interact with Ladinos, especially in the countryside, often say they do not feel racism. Nonetheless, by observing their body language, and listening to their words carefully, one can see that many Ladino teachers, authorities, landowners, and owners of small businesses very often have reproduced national segregation at the local level, directly and indirectly encouraged by the racist culture and the state. Several Maya women who participated in my study identified many Ladino teachers in particular as direct agents in the perpetuation of racism in communities. Cristina, a mother who survives doing other people's laundry, says:

> If a Ladino woman sees me on the street, she changes sides, does not look at me; if she is a professional, a teacher, the situation is worse. She can be a teacher of my children, but on the streets she does not see me. So, I think Ladinos do not insult me. I do not deal with them, I do my own things and manage my own life quietly, in silence, and furthermore I do not know Spanish and they just talk in Spanish, it does not matter if they have been in our town for more than twenty years. (Interview 2002)

Linguistic racism, an almost invisible expression of structural racism, is an integral obstacle that hampers Maya women's ability to improve their and their families' lives, because all activities in contemporary Guatemala are structurally organized in Spanish; not knowing Spanish becomes a central marker for racial oppression. Hence, the Mayas' monolinguism is severely attacked and degraded; Spanish monolinguism is taken for granted, and celebrated as symbolic of "civilization," and thus, of being "modern."

Linguistic racism is systemic and is enacted daily. Common activities such as going to a hospital, school, court, and so on, remind monolingual Maya women that they are the "problem." Not only do these women have to find translators—usually men—but also many must take time off of work in order to travel to larger cities and towns, where they wait long hours to be seen by administrative and medical personnel in health centers and hospitals. In many instances, it is hard to find someone who can serve as an interpreter, especially in the case of health emergencies when a translator is required quickly. In many cases, looking for and waiting for available translators has resulted in further health complications or deaths, even leaving aside the fact that the two-tier health system has left the majority without access to proper health care. Zoila, a widowed mother and weaver, remembers:

> In 1998, one of my children got very sick and needed quick attention in a hospital. I went to ask a man, who sometimes helps women who do not speak Spanish. He said he could not go with me because he had to work that day. I did not know what to do. So I went to a *curandero* [medicine person, healer] with whom I could speak my own language and he gave me some *hierbas* [medicinal herbs]. My poor boy got sicker and sicker until I convinced another man to go with me to a hospital, located in the *cabecera departamental* [similar to a state capital]. When this man explained to the nurses and doctors that my child was ill, the doctors were upset with me and said I was an irresponsible mother for letting my child get that sick. They will never imagine how it is when you do not know Spanish, because they were born knowing it. (Informal conversation 2002)

Maya women's insistence on the importance of knowing the dominant language is not usually shared by many formally educated Mayas, who sometimes, with some nostalgia, theorize the ability of Maya women to be guardians and keepers of the Maya culture. This is because it is mostly Maya women who teach Maya languages to younger generations. In fact, the daily teaching of Maya languages was recognized by many participants in my research as their contribution to the collective validation of the Maya Cosmovision, and to the permanence of their rich cultures. These participants saw themselves as guardians and promoters of Maya languages and other customs, but at the same time they categorically stated that they would be doing a better job if they had access to formal education, which for them does not consist solely of literacy classes.

Literacy campaigns and their very small gains are very much celebrated by "peacetime" governments that see themselves as champions of bringing "the light of knowledge" to "remote" and Indigenous peoples. For instance, on a morning television program called *Viva La Mañana* (Cheer the Morning), the Ladino man in charge of the National Office of Literacy (CONALFA) said that Guatemala has substantially improved its levels of literacy, and that his office has been doing excellent work since 1996. At that time, he added, the national level of illiteracy was 52 percent, and now is 22 percent (2008). He did not explain that, for his office, illiteracy is not measured by development in the actual ability to read and write, but on how many people are registered in literacy programs. And measuring by registration ignores the number of people who are unable to *complete* a given literacy program, something that was emphasized by several Maya-Tz'utujil women who actually enrolled in these programs, but were forced to leave on account of lack of financial resources and problems with transportation. Of course, the statistical decline of illiteracy during peacetime is promoted as an indication of how much peacetime governments care about Indigenous Peoples. It appears that "postwar" governments have made an ideological and political decision to show that peace is working, by inflating the numbers of people who, all of

a sudden, have become "literate." This sudden decline seems suspicious, because substantial reforms in education and health have not been implemented, and there has been no creation of decent jobs. Moreover, the emphasis on IMF-mandated structural adjustment policies (SAPs), which result in the privatization of state assets, and further cut already scarce state resources, are increasing poverty both in the countryside, and in the peripheries of urban spaces. All of this has been aggravated by a food crisis that again affects the most impoverished sectors of the population, especially women, children, and the elderly. Unemployment and other structural conditions that perpetuate high levels of poverty and malnourishment are now exacerbated by the aggressive production of biofuels. Corn, for instance, is now massively produced by the national and transnational corporate class to feed the global North's "hunger," for biofuels reduce their dependency on oil.[17]

This sudden increase in literacy rates is also reported by some international agencies such as the *Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo* (PNUD), the local office of the United Nations Development Program. The latter affirms that, as of 1996, the year that the peace accords were signed, illiteracy had declined from 75 percent to 69 percent (PNUD 2001, 2003). Yet, even this United Nations institution recognized that Indigenous Peoples, primarily Mayas, remain unable to read, write, and speak in Spanish (PNUD 2003). It is difficult to see how concrete and positive the "sudden" decline in measured illiteracy is, and what positive impacts it is having on many Maya communities, especially on those that are the poorest and were the hardest hit by genocidal state terror.

In the case of Maya women left widows by genocidal state terror practices, the educational situation is more complicated. In towns located around Lake Atitlán several foreigners, especially from North America, own Maya crafts businesses, employ Maya girls and women, and pay no taxes. In a community close to Lake Atitlán, for example, many of the children of these Maya employees do not attend school. They must work beside their mothers, making crafts and carrying firewood for cheap sale in local markets. Many girls from the age of six on are employed by a North American man, who runs a craft business and who pays these girls and many women less than five or six quetzals per day, which is far less than the legal minimum wage (fifteen quetzals, which equals US $1.94 per day). There is also a North American woman, who runs a similar business, but she employs only adult women (field notes 2002), and it was difficult to know how much she paid her employees.

In the tourist town of Panajachel, foreigners from North America and Europe, as well as wealthy Ladinos, are the owners of the best businesses. Over the decades, they have displaced the Maya population, who now live on the periphery of the town (field notes 1999, 2002). North American as well as Ladino employers often demand complete silence from the girls they

employ, and from their families, regarding wages and working conditions. Socioeconomic daily hardships, ignored by the well-off in these communities, by the state, and by foreign aid programs, result in many Maya women regretting their monolingual (and widowed) status; rightly, they express anguish about, and anger against, the system, the Ladino world, their husbands, and Maya professionals. The following case narrated by Catalina is highly illustrative of this:

> When the army killed my husband, I was left with eight children, many [of whom] were minors. I cannot speak or write Spanish and so cannot even find a job as a maid in Ladino houses, so I have done laundry for Ladinos and Tz'utujiles. In one day I have to wash dirty clothes for three or four families in the lake [Lake Atitlán] to earn Q15.00 (USD 1.94). I [have begun] to feel sick and very weak but I cannot complain for I have to feed my children. *Mis pobres criaturitas* [My poor little babies] started to work by my side at a very young age doing [crafts] when I returned from doing the laundry. The two elder daughters had to watch their siblings cook and clean our poor house while I was working outside. Some teachers, including those who are Indigenous like me, have approached me and recriminated for not sending my children to school—for them, I am preventing my children from having a better life than mine. They do not understand my situation because they do not live it. . . . I want my children to be educated but I cannot afford the costs of the school. This year [2002], the enrolment cost Q60.00 (USD 7.76) per child; uniforms [cost] more than Q100.00; books, notebooks, pencils, and other things cost more than Q60.00. (Interview 2002)

Many Maya women are suspicious of what they see as empty celebrations of culture, especially on the part of the international aid establishment, scholars, and some circles among the Maya leadership, for these representations ignore impoverished women's lives and their intricate survival strategies. Catalina, a widow and mother of six children, presents a rich illustration of this complexity:

> You can tell me how beautiful and important it is for me to speak my language, but truly speaking, if I only know my language, and continue to be poor, it will mean [that] I will be stuck in my town forever, won't it? The truth is that my language alone does not put food on my table, nor does it provide for medicine, clothes, etc. Look at the men here . . . who are alive and were guerrilla fighters. Many know some Spanish but many are like me, they did not learn how to speak, read, and write Spanish. . . . The difference is that they are men here in this town and so they can work in agriculture or doing other things and earn at least Q15.00 [USD $1.94]. And they are now married; so they do not have to cook, do laundry for their kids, etc. But I have to work to put some food in my children's mouths and in addition I have to do the rest of the work. . . . And there are other men, big ones, Ladino men who were guerrilla commanders who now have good jobs in the capital. Many are even working with the government; they betrayed us, and they betrayed all the

> women who risked our lives to feed them. We do not count now because now they do not need us . . . others just come when there is time for elections. . . . They say our votes are important and that if we vote for them they will change our lives . . . yeah! Lies again . . . pure lies. So if people tell me that my language is beautiful, maybe it is but it does not put food in my children's mouth . . . this is what I think . . . this is my life. (Interview 2002)

RACISM IN PROGRESSIVE SPACES

As in other contexts where there has been a long history of systemic racism, in Guatemala there is a myth that, by their nature, social movements and progressive and revolutionary circles actively oppose racism, or that they are actively engaged in daily self-reflection in order to purge racist beliefs and practices. This myth has been further reinforced in "peacetime," when almost nobody talks in public about the continuation of racism in progressive civil society—a generic name given by non-governmental organizations' representatives, community leaders, and journalists to the range of social movements, non-governmental and community-based, which have remained active since the late 1980s, or emerged in the 1990s. The primary goal of these movements is the construction of a more just, demilitarized, and democratic society.

Historically, it has been less difficult for many revolutionary and progressive peoples around the world to recognize structural racism derived from a rigid class formation and implemented by the ruling class (a ruling class that has clearly imitated the culture and lifestyle of the elitist West, especially the North American one), than it has been to acknowledge progressive people's direct and indirect perpetuation of racism, and the benefit they have received from it. Guatemala is no exception in this regard. However, these dynamics in Guatemala are also distinctive in many ways, as each colonial and capitalist project is different from all others. As pointed out by Elvira, a longtime Maya activist and former member of a revolutionary organization:

> Many of us Mayas have talked among ourselves and have said that the impact of racism on our souls and spirits is the same no matter who is committing it, but we have also recognized that it is very simple to just trash everyone in the revolutionary movement for perpetuating racism. Because in all the social movements of resistance, especially those we know, from the late 1970s onward, there were many of our sisters and brothers and countless Ladinos who were truly committed to the cause of a socially just society. So, we have to balance our views and sometimes doing it is difficult, especially when one has constantly been at the receiving end of racism. But now it is clear to me and

> many others I have talked to, that there is no justification, no excuse, for racism, the least so from those who should understand the deep dimensions of class oppression, of poverty, of state terror. (Informal conversation 2002)

Belj'e Imox, also a former member of a revolutionary organization, who saw how many Mayas and Ladinos, both women and men, fell in different sites of social struggle, painfully reflects on the effects of racism he and other Mayas experienced within revolutionary movements and in other organizations. He reflects:

> There were so many painful things. It is hard to remember them all . . . I, for instance, expected racism from the killers, from the wealthy and their allies, fuck. . . . But . . . I never expected racism from revolutionary *compañeros*, who wanted to construct a just Guatemala. . . . I never expected that from them, and I lived it for more than fifteen years. . . . I swear that many Ladino middle- and upper-class political cadres created rules and a sophisticated discourse to justify even the denial of computer training and other technological skills for us Mayas. . . . In a project I worked on, no Maya person was authorized to touch the computers, only Ladinos could do so. We were told that the Indigenous did not know how to operate those machines, but how many of us could know how to do it since we were not given a chance to learn? I did not believe that our being Maya should prevent us learning how to use technology. I was pretty sure other Mayas and I were very capable of learning how to use computers but I also knew that I could not risk being caught by the revolutionary bosses, so I developed an elaborate system to use some computers left locked. I did it when the Ladino *compañeros* were sleeping. And this is only one example of many of the daily humiliations we had to bear in the name of the "revolution." (Interview 2008)

A review of key documents of major, politico-revolutionary movements demonstrates that many members of these movements, including the leadership, were aware of the complexity of Indigenous Peoples' lives and histories, including how their lives had been negatively impacted by racism, at least in theory. Two of the four major organizations were influenced to a greater degree than the others by revolutionary thinking, including Marxism-Leninism, namely, the Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo (PGT, Party of Guatemalan Workers, founded in the 1940s) and the Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes (FAR, Revolutionary Armed Forces, founded in the 1960s) They argued that most Indigenous Peoples were excluded and exploited only as members of the working classes—as peasants, rural proletariat, domestic workers, seasonal field workers, and so forth. In *La Cuestión Indígena* (The Indigenous Question), the PGT pointed out:

> The indigenous poor are exploited by Ladinos and by the wealthy indigenous people in a manner identical to the way poor Ladinos are. They are not exploited due to their ethnic origin or their culture, in other words, not because they

> are indigenous. They are exploited because they are dispossessed and live in a society in which true antagonistic classes exist. They are exploited because they occupy a defined position within a system of relations of production, within a unique economic structure for the whole Guatemalan society. The number, the proportion, and the ownership are larger amongst the Ladino exploiters than the indigenous exploiters but these quantitative differences in no way alter essential facts. The exploitation which the dispossessed Guatemalans are victims of, whether they are indigenous or Ladinos, makes revolution necessary. (PGT n.d.)

When the PGT did recognize that Indigenous Peoples were discriminated against, it downplayed the fact, arguing that it was not the main contradiction in Guatemalan society:

> Within the system of exploitation and injustice in which the larger indigenous mass as a group live, it is exploited and discriminated against. But this cannot drive us to ignore the process of class differentiation that goes on in the whole society and to replace a class struggle by a supposedly antagonistic ethnic contradiction between indigenes and Ladinos. (n.d.)

Class was also given primacy in FAR's analysis of Guatemalan social structure. They did timidly recognize that Indigenous Peoples had their own grievances and demands arising out of their historical experience, though they did not go into detail about particularities. In *Organo Informativo de las FAR* (FAR's information bulletin), for example, the organization's position was that

> the indigenous masses pose demands and struggle from the perspective of their structural situation, which is not different from that of the peasants, proletariats, and semi-proletariats from the Guatemalan countryside.[18] But they also pose, and this should not be forgotten, demands and aspirations born out of their shared past elevated to a conscious level. (Galeano cited in Corona Godinez 1991: 80)

The other two organizations, El Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres (EGP, Guerrilla Army of the Poor) and La Organización Revolucionario del Pueblo en Armas (ORPA, Revolutionary Organization of the People in Arms) emerged in the 1970s, and both explicitly recognized the need to integrate Indigenous Peoples into the struggle for revolutionary change. Theoretically, however, both organizations paid more attention to dimensions of oppression other than racism. The EGP recognized the primacy of class, but contrary to the PGT's almost absolute emphasis on this dimension, the EGP gave stronger weight to the oppression of the Indigenous as Indigenous Peoples (whom they called by the supposedly synonymous terms *indios* and indigenous). In *Compañero*, the EGP's organ, the analysis was that

> the indigenous as indigenes are part of the driving forces of the revolution. But as peasants, agricultural proletariat, semi-proletariats, and [as] industrial workers, the indigenes provide the largest number of workers to the working classes constituted by workers and peasants, who are the central driving force of the revolution. On the political strategic level . . . [the fact that Indigenous people are the majority of the working classes] means that the alliance of peasants and workers must be completed by the great unity of the indigenous and ladinos. The dual conditions of the indigenous as exploited and oppressed . . . [means that] the position of the ethnic-national contradiction [is] a fundamental complement to the class contradiction. . . . [So] the correct approach and solution to these two contradictions is key to the revolutionary strategy that gives specificity to the Guatemalan revolution. (in Corona Godinez 1991: 83)

ORPA, however, named racism more clearly, in print, as one of the most relevant characteristics of Guatemalan social structure. In two documents titled *Racism I* and *Racism II*, different aspects and impacts of racism were analyzed (see Corona Godínez 1991). ORPA named Indigenous Peoples *pueblo naturales* (natural people), already a highly racist definition, for it implies that Indigenous Peoples are not social and political beings like others, and that they belong to nature in an objectifying way; they become "things." In *Racism II*, ORPA stated:

> The problem of racism is very complex; its roots are clearly defined in society and perpetuated through practice but at the same time racism is not static, it changes all the time. Racism's complexity makes it an integral problem that not only affects the exploited and discriminated against, but it spreads into other sectors of the exploited who also participate willingly or unwillingly in its reproduction. In other words, the exploited classes who are not natural participants in the dominant class's ideology of racism can also be racist. When racism spreads, it begins to have very destructive effects on natural people because those who experience exploitation through racism gradually become easier subjects to exploit. . . . Racism therefore is not an isolated event; it is reinforced by all manifestations of power. . . . Thus, racism cannot be located as a marginal phenomenon as it is frequently analyzed. . . . It is necessary to re-evaluate [these] ideological problems, for the first excuse to exclude racism from the revolutionary problematic is to say that it is a superstructural category and that therefore there is no value in considering it [important]. (1980: 13-15, 33-35)

A brief overview of these organizational positions makes ORPA and EGP appear to hold to a clear idea, within a political framework, of how racism is as important as economic exploitation in the organization of society, and in the lives of those discriminated against. One can even go further and say that, at least rhetorically, ORPA views racism as a fundamental pillar of Guatemala's dependent capitalism, thereby challenging the analysis of FAR and PGT. However, can we therefore draw a conclusion that ORPA and EGP were

actually less racist than their counterparts, since they perhaps held less racialized views of the role of Indigenous Peoples and their history of resistance? According to some Maya women activists today, it is difficult to pinpoint which revolutionary and progressive movement and/or organization was, or has been, more racist in its practice.

Carlos, a former member of ORPA, although he recognized that this organization produced documents on racism, noted that it was curious how the upper- and middle-class Ladino leadership demanded that Mayas read these documents, while not making the same demand of Ladinos/Ladinas. He recalls:

> There was a university-educated Ladino with high credentials as a revolutionary who used to say he was very special, for he was not racist and he truly understood Indigenous Peoples. But he was more racist than the conquerors [the Spanish ones] because he said that we did not need further education, as our work was not as important as his. . . . After all, he used to say: "You give testimonies of the tragedies of our country and that's not hard work. I, on the other hand," he said, "have to plan and strategize many important things." I remember another thing. . . . The leaders used to say to us that we should read *Racism*, a great book "written by our great commander." . . . When I asked if he and others really knew what racism is, not from books but from life, the leaders did not know how to respond, because many of those who had ordered us to read *Racism* had not read it. . . . We could not complain about racist, humiliating treatment because it was our word against theirs as chiefs, as executive decision-makers. . . . In the end, the whole thing was organized to make us and them believe that racism did not exist inside [i.e., our organization], just outside. . . . Racism was committed just by the state, the wealthy, and the army. That was the constant message. . . . (Informal conversation 2002)

In addition to doing "testimonial work," some Maya women with no or little formal schooling had to do domestic work for wives and partners of the middle- and upper-echelons of the revolutionary leadership. Mayra, a working-class Ladina, notes:

> When I asked why Indigenous women were doing domestic chores for middle-class revolutionary Ladino women, I was told that because these Ladina women and their husbands who held high positions within revolutionary organizations lived in residential neighborhoods, to which poorer Indigenous women will never have access, Ladino revolutionary families had to present Indigenous women living with them as their "maids" to better *pass* as middle-class families. However, when I asked some of Maya women if they were in fact doing domestic work for those Ladinos, they said: "Of course, we do everything because they say that is our revolutionary duty, and if we contribute to our revolution doing just that, well, we do it." To cap it all off, these Ladino women said that Maya women, "their maids," had to dress poorly to be more

> convincing in their roles as domestic workers. While the former had to dress with brand-name clothes, they also had to play their roles better, all in the name of revolution and justice. (Informal conversations 2002)

It may be that the primary reason racism was, and still is, not openly discussed within progressive circles, is the fear that conservative and right-wing forces could potentially use the issue to discredit the important work of many social movements. Yet, continuing to justify racist practice in the name of a greater cause only contributes to its perpetuation, and to silencing its victims, and will further alienate progressive and democratic Mayas. As Juana Isabel says:

> We cannot put a veil over our eyes and say that racism has been eradicated from progressive movements and from other democratic instances . . . no, no, no! Now, in the name of our struggle for true peace and social justice, many Ladinos and Ladinas, some from the old movements but many from the new, and with more subtlety, are perpetuating racism in many ways. Some are not as overt as they were but racism has many faces. . . . One is that they are calling Maya women to join their projects and agencies just because some international organizations are demanding the inclusion of Maya women. Others still think we are the *obreras* [workers] of the movement and they are the conductors. Others call us reverse racists when we point out hot issues and their discrimination, especially when we have equal or similar qualifications. . . . But there are some, though few, who are truly changing and are becoming our partners. . . . The rest, well, they just do what they have sucked since they were children [i.e., racism]. [So, it is] hard to change, isn't it? (Interview 2002)

Several female Maya national leaders are noticing new, racialized waves within the recently founded women's movement and feminist organizations, led mostly by middle-class Ladina women, not only in Guatemala, but throughout Latin America. These latest patterns are very disturbing and disappointing for Maya women, who say demands are being made on them to become "true feminists," and not women with "double positions"—one position within their own Maya organizations, and another within the national, Latin American, and international women's movements. The general category "women" is too often used as a universal umbrella term, as if "all women in Guatemala and in Latin America are positioned in the same way and have the same histories behind our lives" (Victoria, informal conversation 2002); this is a covert way of reproducing racialized practices amongst feminists and women's rights activists. Some of these activists have even criticized the use of terms like "Maya" and "non-Maya women," because they say these are discriminatory against Ladinas. Instead, they argue that the term "diverse women" should be employed, because the women's movement must be "inclusive." An unidentified source remembered that

> in a recent gathering when we Mayas proposed the need to depart from our experiences and identities as Maya and non-Maya women, I can tell you that there was strong opposition to it. Before anything else, it is good to recognize that these women are very good, very intelligent, and at least they say they are open to continuing this dialogue. However, their opposition to the term non-Maya is very strong because they say it is hegemonic and exclusionary. According to them, we cannot talk in Guatemala about Maya and non-Maya women, but only of diverse women, because we are diverse. We responded that to talk only in terms of all women being diverse results in the histories and experiences of Maya women being again made invisible and that is precisely what we have struggled and are struggling against, not only within Ladino society but also within the Maya world. Just talking about diversity erases us as actors, as protagonists. Racism—no way, this is not even mentioned; it is obvious that for these *compañeras* racism is a point that does not even deserve to be taken into account, first because they do not see themselves as culturally privileged. (Informal conversation 2002)

In an environment where racial, economic, and gender inequalities are deep, and interlinked with state terror and unfettered capitalism, are alliances among the culturally heterogeneous possible—something many recognize as a necessary step towards rebuilding a broad social movement for anti-racist social justice? This issue was addressed by some Mayas I talked to. Juana Isabel, for example, said:

> Alliances are possible only if they are based on principles and in conditions whereby our work is respected and performed under conditions of mutual support. Lately, international aid agencies are forcing alliances between Maya and Ladino organizations just to fit these international organizations' agendas and meet their objectives. These forced alliances do not last because organizations with more resources always impose their views. So the logic of the system is followed; those who have more [resources] win and those with less financial, technical, and human resources lose. The capitalist and racist system does not support those who have less. I believe that in general, as women's movements, Maya movements, human rights movements, and others, we must find ways to launch platforms together as a component of coalition building. That is our only chance. But if these alliances continue to reproduce old patters of exclusion, our objectives will not prosper. (Informal conversation 2002)

NAMING RACISM IN THE CITY: A CASE

On June 5, 2002, Irma Alicia Velásquez Nimatuj, a K'iché Maya anthropologist, researcher, journalist, and women's and Indigenous rights advocate, was prohibited from entering the *El Tarro Dorado* [The Golden Jar] tavern in the capital city. Two security guards told her that she could not enter the establishment because she was wearing her Maya clothes. Velásquez Nimatuj was

with a group of Ladino colleagues from an organization called *Plataforma Agraria* (Agrarian Platform), which had just submitted to diplomats and state representatives a document containing realistic proposals on alternative ways to deal with land rights and the current agricultural crisis. Astonished by the blatant prohibition, and by the racist remarks made by *El Dorado*'s employees, Velásquez Nimatuj and her colleagues demanded an explanation. A lawyer with them told the guards that they were committing a criminal offence. The guards stood firm, stating they were following orders. In fact, they were implementing a long-standing, unwritten policy that sanctions racism by keeping Mayas out of places "reserved" for "national citizens." These employees were enforcing racialized codes masked as acceptable business rules of discretion.

One of these employees, with the forceful tone that comes with the certainty of doing nothing wrong, told the Maya woman and her companions that he was following his superiors' orders. In this place, women wearing Indigenous clothes were not allowed. Velásquez Nimatuj publicly denounced this racist act. She was closely supported by a couple of Ladina feminists, one of whom wrote an article reporting the incident and the continuing racism in Guatemala (field notes 2002; see also Cofiño 2002). What Velásquez Nimatuj was subjected to is not an isolated case of racism, contrary to what mainstream Ladino journalists argued through their denial that structural and everyday racism is a long-standing reality in peacetime Guatemala. As Velásquez Nimatuj reflected:

> This violation reaffirmed that the social imaginary of the Guatemalan elite about the role of Mayas in the country continues with few changes. Here it remains a colonialist, slave-based and servile scenario. [Thus,] I tried to see that this violation would not be represented by mainstream media, also racist, as an individual act against me but as a reflex of the collective indigenous life. (2005:41-42)

What Velásquez Nimatuj experienced was a quotidian experience of dehumanization, lived by millions across the globe. What is changing in "peacetime" Guatemala is that Maya women who are socially and politically active in different sites are gradually refusing to remain silent about the incidence and impact of racism. On the contrary, they are naming it as such against the preferred term, "ethnic discrimination," used by analysts, and by Criollos and Ladinos more generally.

Thus, Velásquez Nimatuj's act of resistance and the solidarity she received from other activist Maya women, organizations, and some Ladino feminists, points to a new development. A privately owned business was forced to publicly apologize to those offended, but was able to deny any responsibility for the racist acts of its employees. The apology came after Velásquez Nimatuj refused an offer of a "private apology" in exchange for

her accepting that low-ranking employees were solely responsible for the racist act. Through this public apology, the owners of the *El Tarro Dorado*—who are members of the Criollo and Ladino business class—washed their hands of any public accountability for their racism. However, the security guards who denied entrance to Velásquez Nimatuj were fired. Some Ladino feminists think that these employees, despite their claim to be following orders, had sufficient discretion to make their own decisions. Racism and its social and psychological consequences cannot be erased with public apologies, but the fact that members of the economic elite had to publicly apologize to a Maya woman is in itself an unprecedented event.[19] It was made possible by Maya women's and men's historical and contemporary resistance and organization.

Velásquez Nimatuj's case is also important because it offers some "peacetime" readings of racist expressions and actions, and Maya women's resistance to them. On one level, this event foregrounds highly educated Maya women who continue to wear their customary clothing in "postwar" Guatemala, only to find upon arrival that they are confined to new, racially guarded spaces. In some of these "newly contained places" Maya women are welcome if they fulfill particular job descriptions within the discourse of interculturality, a prominent framework of the peace agenda, especially in the first years of the twenty-first century.

The implicit assumption of this peacetime invitation to Maya women to join the Ladino urban world is to show that "hard working and educated" Mayas can share in Ladinos' prosperity, in their world, and their dreams. The peace discourse of Indigenous rights and "ethnic" integration rhetorically acknowledges that Maya women wearing Maya *trajes* are changing, moving in and out of Maya communities. In practice, however, the myth that Maya women only live in communities which are remote, "underdeveloped," and uncivilized, remains stronger than ever. So, for the majority of Criollos and Ladinos, the place where Maya women live or must live is what they call the *campo* (the countryside). Furthermore, because some Maya women seldom go to restaurants and bars in their communities, the racially and economically privileged have assumed that they will never do so in urbanized places, especially in the capital city. In addition, if some Maya women have frequented city restaurants and taverns, they must have done so in "modern" attires, not while wearing Maya clothing, and certainly not in oligarchy-oriented establishments of the capital city, "historically" reserved for the bourgeoisie and upper-middle class.

The fact that a Maya woman was prohibited from entering a privately owned business which, according to neoliberal capitalist principles and the peace discourse, is supposedly a space where everyone becomes "an equal consumer" if one has the means to pay, exemplifies that the rhetoric of a peacetime "free market" does not erase racist and sexist ideologies As Hill

Collins, who draws on Minnich and Torgovnick, has noted, racist practices "fail to wither away when the political arrangements that created them change" (1998: 45). On the other hand, the ruling powers in Guatemala continue to exploit and dominate the majority of Indigenous Peoples, especially Maya women, in economic ways (i.e., as paid and unpaid workers), and also continue to promulgate images of them as representing "national cultural authenticity." As Velásquez Nimatuj pointedly reflects:

> Maya Peoples are tired of the double moral standard that exists in Guatemala; on the one hand, we are utilized to promote the beauty and products of this country—we are made into a folkloric product. And on the other hand, internally, there is a sector that sees Indigenous Peoples as the cause of Guatemalan's social and economic backwardness. (2002)

Velásquez Nimatuj's refusal to remain silenced also signals the presence of a new voice that rejects remaining trapped in the public-private dichotomy within which, too often, women's voices and actions have been placed. This ideology insists on assigning the "home" as the "natural" place for women, and the "family" as the "normal site" wherein women should feel realized, without any desire to be in "unconventional and prohibited" public spaces such taverns, bars, and night clubs. The latter sites, of course, have been traditionally constructed as spaces for male recreation.

This ideology is more burdensome for Maya women than for Guatemalan women in general. Historically, the former have been subjected by both Protestantism and Catholicism to enclosure in their homes, families, and communities. Maya women have had to bear the "cultural" work of being "models" of their culture, by avoiding the consumption of alcohol in public places. This heteropatriarchal, Christian ideology is so entrenched in the whole society, that most Maya men have internalized it, often demanding that Maya women "behave" as "proper representatives" of Mayas, while as men they apply the code to themselves more loosely. In "private" places such as families, many Maya women can drink and dance as long as they want. Gloria Estela, for example, said: "My parents do not make a scene if they see me drinking a beer at home, but they and my brothers will say no if they see me in a restaurant in my town" (informal conversation 2002). Graciela, a member of a community women's group, said: "Oh God! I do not even go alone to a restaurant here in my town to drink a refreshment . . . women are not supposed to do this . . . it is men who go to restaurants and *cantinas* [local bars] and drink, and it is seen as customary" (interview 1999). Others, such as Ladinas, especially those who are Protestant evangelicals, must follow strict codes in this regard, reinforced by the churches through their usually male-based councils.

There is another angle to Velásquez Nimatuj's case. Her airing of racism in peacetime Guatemala brings to the public arena the reality that racism is also gendered and, therefore, has specific characteristics that apply to Maya and other Indigenous women. This fact is not always appreciated by the male Maya leadership and by other formally schooled Maya men. This was so much so that some male Maya leaders implied that Velásquez Nimatuj "was feminizing racism to become a national protagonist," forgetting or ignoring the long struggle that some Maya men have been involved in against racist practices. Others, however, criticized her for going into a tavern in the first place (field notes 2002). Consequently, Velásquez Nimatuj had to put up, not only with the ruling-class machinery backed by the state and other Ladinos-Ladinas, but also with accusations made by some Maya male leaders, according to whom Velásquez Nimatuj was prioritizing herself as an individual woman, instead of placing her social being as a Maya at the forefront.

As the situation of Velásquez Nimatuj and other Maya women and intellectuals (who organized a press conference to reject "peace racism") shows, Maya women do not want to become visible only when the ruling powers decide to make profits from their culture through, for example, tourism. They demand sociopolitical visibility, recognition, and practical respect for their humanity, cosmology, and culture. They know they have been the invisibly visible in a "nation" that has objectified and commodified their lands, their bodies, and their culture. Without a doubt, the gradual upsurge of Maya women as more public subjects, even as they continue to be denied substantive citizenship—the practical recognition of personhood and all the rights it entails—strengthens other liberation struggles fought by many Mayas and Ladinos/Ladinas. Velásquez Nimatuj's case highlights the absence of a formal citizenship that promises equal treatment everywhere within the space of the nation, including within privately owned restaurants and taverns. It simultaneously provides a legal foundation for her human rights and for her legal demand, which was dismissed by the state through the argument that, given the absence of specific legislation against racism, there could not be racial discrimination against Velásquez Nimatuj (2005: 43). She demanded that the state be accountable for allowing the continuation of racially exclusionary practices on the part of private businesses, contrary, for example, to the stipulations of the Peace Accords (2002). In her lawsuit, Velásquez Nimatuj established that

> the rights protected by the political Constitution of Guatemala that were violated include the rights to liberty, equality, right of movement, and liberty of action as well as Article 66 that stipulates that the state must promote respect towards indigenous *traje*s, and last but not least, the letter and spirit of the Peace Accords, particularly the Accord on Identity and Indigenous Rights. . . .

> [She added:] in my case there may be some reparation from the personnel of the private business, but what happens with the rest of the indigenous women who suffer daily discrimination? (Velásquez Nimatuj 2002:43)

Although Velásquez Nimatuj refused to perpetuate the silence around the culture of racism in Guatemala, the kind of blatant racism perpetrated against her is a reminder that expectations raised by the peace agreement regarding the recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples have become an empty promise.

Accordingly, when some self-identified democratic and non-racist journalists wrote that they were shocked by the "troglodyte" act, as they called the racist act against Velásquez Nimatuj (see Fernández 2002: 16), one can only think of how conveniently short the memory of those who belong to the racially and economically privileged sectors is—those who should know full well that a structural and historical exclusion cannot be eradicated by decree, in this case by the Peace Accords of 1996. The same press that condemned the racist action against Velásquez Nimatuj gave ample coverage in 1999 to those—-led by wealthy and middle-class Ladino men backed by many Ladino women from all social classes—who were opposed to constitutional reforms. As Jonas records:

> The NO campaign was rooted in the workings of Guatemalan society, through small everyday circles of influence, and it showed a deep understanding of the social fabric of urban ladino Guatemala (across classes). I heard countless stories about why Guatemalan staff members at friendly nations' embassies and UN organizations or maids (poor Ladinos) working in people's houses voted NO. (2000: 202-3)

The case of Velásquez Nimatuj, a highly educated Maya woman, is paradigmatic. It shows how concrete are the interconnections of racist actions and expressions with unequal and oppressive gender relations, in a context of deeply structured inequalities that has emerged from genocidal state terror. This is a context wherein Maya women with more economic and cultural capital than the majority of their sisters continue to be used as "cultural," profit-making commodities, while rejected as women and as Mayas.

Racism as discursive practice has hampered, and continues to hamper, all aspects of life for Maya women, and the life of all Indigenous Peoples, and indeed of Guatemala as a country. So, it is important to reiterate that what is changing in contemporary Guatemala is how Maya women and Mayas in general are responding to and publicly naming racism, as well as organizing against it. As Velásquez Nimatuj poignantly affirms, "[We] Mayas will continue to walk the road of resistance, which is painful and slow, but it can and will produce collective gains for all Mayas, indigenous, White and Black people, all of whom belong to this country" (cited in La Cuerda 2002: 10).

NOTES

1. Culturalization is an exclusive focus on culture, understood as frozen in time and separate from systems of domination (Razack 2004: 131).

2. The term Indigenous Peoples serves to replace racialized expressions such as "minority," "Indians," tribes, and ethnic groups, and the term itself constitutes an achievement of Indigenous Peoples around the world, and of Latin American Indigenous leaders and social movements. The concept of Peoples originates in the Spanish term *Pueblos* which, according to the Guatemalan Maya leadership, is more appropriate than "minority," given its recognition that Maya are not a minority. In Guatemala, there are currently twenty-four Indigenous Peoples, of which twenty-two are descended from the Maya. They include the Awatekos, Q'anjob'al, Q'eqchí, Ixil, K'iché, Jakalteco, Popti', Mam, Kaqchikel, Achi, Poqomchí, Chuj, Tz'utujil, Chorti', Poqomam, Sakapulteko, Akateko, Uspanteco, Mopan, Itza', Sipakapense, Tektiteko, and Chalchiteco peoples. Their names also reflect the Maya language they speak. The remaining Indigenous Peoples are Garífuna and Xinka (Coyoy in Comisión Paritaria de Reforma Educativa 1998: 128). By 1997, according to the General Secretariat of the National Council of Economic Planning (SEGEPLAN), the Guatemalan population by Pueblos (in the sense of ethnicity) was: Mayas, 60.88 percent (6,403,548 persons); Ladinos, 39 percent (4,101,805); Garifunas, 0.11 percent (11,569); and Xinkas, 0.005 percent (596) (in Mesa Nacional Maya [MENMAGUA] 1998). However, these numbers have been altered in keeping with state agendas that have generally lowered the numbers of Mayas in the population; for many Mayas, the actual numbers are higher (field notes 1999, 2002). Intriguingly, statistics on Criollos have "mysteriously" disappeared; Criollos, however, emphasize their "blood purity" in private, as many did to Casaus Arzú (1992; see also Nelson 1999 for an analysis of Casaus Arzú's findings). Unfortunately, Nelson does the same by using the term Ladino as inclusive of Criollos, impoverished Mestizos, and middle-class and bourgeois Ladinos. Moreover, Nelson implies that Ladinos and Ladinas are White, even though, in a footnote, she sees this as a "slippage" (1999: 213).

3. Among whom are Harding (1991, 1998, 2004), Naples (2003), Hill Collins (1990), and Mohanty (1991, 2003).

4. Based on my findings, racism in Guatemala is mostly understood, both socially and in scholarly works, as an issue of the colonial era, despite racism's history, persistence, and expansion (Batres-Jauregui 1878; Asturias 1923; Martínez-Peláez 1982; Hernández 2002; field notes 1999, 2002). It is also denied as a deeply structural, cultural, and contemporary phenomenon (Citrón 1999; Hernández 2002; Casaus 1992; Camus 2002; field notes 1999, 2002). Alternatively, racism is seen as only derivative of the capitalist economic structure (Martinez Peláez 1982; URNG 1988; 1992; FAR 1968; ORPA 1978; Figueroa Ibarra 1991; Jonas 1991; Handy 1994), or as belonging exclusively to the realm of culture in which it is mostly named as "ethnic discrimination" (Smith 1987; Casaus 1992; Camus 2002; Lovell 1998). Many students of Guatemala use the term racism, but most do not study its dynamics, persistence, and daily impact, nor do they analyze its gender implications (see Crosby 1999; Block 1999; North and Simmons 1999; Smith 1987; Jonas 1991, 2000). As I showed in chapter 2, many Maya intellectuals do not define "ethnic discrimination" as racism, with notable exceptions such as Colop (2000, 2004), Chirix (2003), and Velásquez-Nimatuj (2002). They have deeper reasons for not doing so, because when some like Colop have attempted to do it, they have been named "reverse racists" (Warren 1998). Following my fieldwork in 2002, and perhaps due to the public courage of activist and intellectual Irma Alicia Velasquez-Nimatuj in denouncing a racist act to which she was subjected, the term racism is becoming more public; there are Maya organizations being formed to struggle against racism as such, and not as "ethnic discrimination," where "ethnic" is attached exclusively to Indigenous Peoples.

5. Thematic life histories are genealogical sets of transformational events in peoples' lives, which help to describe and explain larger social phenomena as seen and analyzed by individuals themselves, their relatives, and others. They differ from conventional life histories in that themes are not chronologically organized by concepts such as childhood, puberty, youth, etc.

Thematic life histories very often share with testimonials and political storytelling a strong social and political dimension, without ignoring or erasing the individuality of each life described.

6. Agamben points out that since the Greeks, life has been divided into natural, or "bare life," and a noble and political life. With modernity, the state constituted as the sovereign power perpetuated this valuation, setting the basis for a paradox that has continued to this day, a paradox which lies in the power to protect life while allowing death, without that death being deemed a homicide. This, Agamben says, became truly evident with the rise of Nazism and fascism under which the lives of Communists, Jews, people with disabilities, and Gypsies were categorized as "bare lives"—therefore as lives that did not deserve to be lived. He argues that World War I and the Holocaust show that the link between one's birth and nation, on which the declaration of 1789 had founded national sovereignty, had already lost its mechanical force and power of self-regulation. On the other hand, the nation-states became greatly concerned with natural life, a life lacking every political value (1998: 131-3).

7. In contemporary Guatemala, the use of the collective and pejorative term "Las Marías" is less common in public settings, but the mentality that conceptualizes Maya women wearing customary clothes is deeply entrenched, and expressed in intimate circles. Often, the preferred reference in today's Guatemala is "inditas" (little "Indians") or "envueltitas ("little wrapped up women") (fieldnotes 2008).

8. Chirix was not studying the dynamics of racism, but rather focusing on the different ways through which Maya women express affection, and the obstacles women face in being loved and expressing love in their lives. She notes that the negative impact of racism in Maya women's lives is so intense, that when Maya women feel they can talk openly and without being judged, the consequences of racism appears in their structured and non-structured conversations (2003).

9. This is so, even though, as Velásquez-Nimatuj has observed, there is a small sector she calls petty commercial bourgeois Maya. But in this sector, women are also relegated to secondary roles, due to a powerful patriarchy; while having managed to obtain some financial resources, they have not been able to escape the impact of racism (2002).

10. María Alejandra clarified later that, currently in her town, it is less common to hear explicit verbal expressions of racism, but the "degrading treatment" of Indigenous Peoples is present in other forms, such as looks of superiority, "when people look at you over their shoulders and laugh at you" (informal conversation 2002).

11. However, this does not mean that clothes make a cultural identity, or that only Maya women who wear their Maya clothes can be named Mayas or seen as the only "authentic" Mayas. The issue here is that their clothes had been a component of state and bourgeois class efforts in the colonial period, to control them for taxation purposes and for free labor, and these clothes were expressively prohibited with the advent of modernity, especially under the liberal reform movement beginning in 1871. Later, under conditions of state terror, their clothes served to identify them as "guerrilla" and/or "guerrilla sympathizers," and in peacetime it also serves to devalue and humiliate them, as analyzed in this and the following chapters. Thus, it is important to keep in mind that there have been instances in which Maya women wearing non-Maya clothes—and who are politically active in Maya movements and organizations—have been labeled as "less than Maya," especially by certain Maya men in positions of leadership, even when many of these men do not wear Maya clothes (observations 1999, 2002).

12. In official discourse, the concept of ethnicity is not used, but rather that of "*etnia*," as in ethnic groups.

13. The Maya men interacting with domestic workers in the Park have usually been soldiers who had been forcibly recruited from their communities by a military establishment, practically using hunting techniques to catch them, since most did not want to be conscripted. These men, in contrast to the women, did not return to wearing their Maya clothes while on leave, but wore Ladino ones. During the peak years of state terror in the 1980s, the use of this Park diminished, as it was remodeled for the sake of counterinsurgency; security was tripled, and historic trees and other vegetation were cut, features that were not only ecologically important, but which gave the park beauty. When it was remodeled, it became what it currently is: a treeless and concrete-dominated space.

14. Even some of the few contemporary students of Guatemala who have begun to analyze race and class in Guatemala from a political-economic angle, directly and indirectly contribute to diminishing the recognition of racism by seeing it as a derivative of capitalist relations of production rooted in colonialism. Grandin, for example, affirms that in his approach he does not "reject K'iche' nationalism as 'ethnic,' [and he] also do[es] not dismiss the ideology of Ladino reformers and revolutionaries as racist" (2000: 9), as if revolutionary and reformers' struggles within colonized and racist societies can escape the reproduction of racism.

15. "Interculturality," in the Criollo Ladino imaginary of peacetime, means "different cultures interacting" towards a "national unity in diversity," but without first addressing systemic and everyday racism.

16. When she is not talking about culture and racism, Gloria Estela says that monolingual Maya women, especially those who are widows of state violence, are getting used to extending their hands to receive donations, but do not do enough to improve their lives. When I pointed out some of the contradictions in her explanations, she remained silent for a moment; then, she said: "*Guau* [a Spanish expression voiced when one is surprised], see, you caught me in my own trap. *Guau*, how powerful are things you have sucked in everyday . . . but one is only human" (informal conversation 2002).

17. Monsanto, the transnational corporation that has introduced genetically altered seeds for crops such as corn, bought the Guatemalan corporation Cristiani Burkard Seeds in June 2008, purchasing with it the "right" to legalize the selling of genetically altered corn, soy, and other seeds to ten Latin American countries. While Europe rejected the use of genetically modified seeds, Guatemala used free market laws to open the doors to corporate interests that have historically been against the majority of Guatemalans (El Observador 2008; Asociación CEIBA 2008). The Guatemalan mainstream media has not addressed any of these issues, nor has the government that praises itself as being social democratic.

18. "Semi-proletariat" denotes workers who do agricultural labor on part-time basis, especially on plantations, and who at the same time may own a small plot in rural areas.

19. In this case, the owners of this tavern are members of the Guatemalan bourgeois class, and not middle-class business people as they may be in other societies. Velásquez Nimatuj notes that the class status of those apologizing made the apology important, because "for the first time in Guatemalan history the elite assumed their racism by making an apology through the three main national newspapers" (2005: 42).

Chapter Four

Genocide as a Tool to Eliminate the Racialized and Politically "Undesirable"

From the late 1970s to the mid-1990s,[1] genocide was perpetrated against Maya peoples in Guatemala. They were represented as "culturally unfit for a modern nation's advancement to modernity" and as "politically undesirable," because of their long-standing anti-colonial/decolonial, and anti-capitalist resistance, as well as for being Maya. Mayas were also targeted because of their creativity in surviving as people, amidst the most adverse conditions turned more exploitative by the latest expression of coloniality of power, that of racist and gendered neoliberalism. Systemic and day-to-day racism was reactivated in extremely violent forms, and played a central role—though not directly expressed—in the conceptualization of Mayas as potentially violent, and as wanting to destroy the "Christian and democratic" Guatemalan "nation." As a people, they were supposedly against development and modernity. Gender as a system supported the perpetration of genocide, for it punished subjugated Maya femininities and masculinities already represented and treated since the Spanish conquest, first as lacking gender, and later as possessing an inferior Western womanhood and manhood; in other words, as belonging to the darker side of the coloniality of gender (Lugones 2007, 2008).

In the context of genocide, gender as a system enabled the perpetration of racialized feminicide—the torture, rape, and killing of Maya women—to target Maya womanhood and motherhood as reproducers of "communist guerrillas." According to the Trinity of Death (the militarized Guatemalan state, the local bourgeoisie, and U.S. power), communism, coupled with Maya peoples' survival and resistance, had as one of its main objectives the

corruption and destruction of the "national family," from which Maya families had been discarded for centuries. By attacking Maya families, the planners and executioners sent the message that Mayas did not live in "real" families, but rather in "living arrangements" that constituted breeding spaces for "international communist indoctrination." This indoctrination, according to the executioners, would trigger "latent Indian hatred" towards those who gave them civilization and Christianity, a myth that runs deep within the Criollo bourgeoisie class and important sectors of the middle class (Tischler Visquerra 2010; Martínez Salazar 2005). In the frontal attack on the Mayas as a group, pueblo, and culture, the perpetrators sought to destroy and severely alter Maya families, as well as their capacities for physical reproduction and childbearing, the latter not only through the mass murder of children, but also through the forced transfer of surviving Maya children to military and paramilitary families. In sum, one of the genocide's ultimate goals was to obliterate the very existence of Maya families, especially in entire communities identified as long-term "troublemakers." By attacking Maya men of all ages, the perpetrators carried out the elimination of complementary breadwinners[2] in communities that, although forced to live in poverty, were making strides in the creation of more sustainable and communal livelihood projects. Many of the Maya men killed were also spiritual guides and community artists fighting without resources to recover the best of the Maya arts, while educating future generations about how vibrant Maya epistemologies were before conquest and colonization. Maya women, in particular those who were tortured, raped, and killed in the more than six hundred massacres, had been represented and treated for a long time as the Other of an already Otherized collectivity. Mayan women's reproduction was viewed as "breeding an inferior race." Consequently, Maya women had to be severely controlled through forced sterilization and collective rape, and also through extermination. As a group within a broader Maya collectivity, Maya women became a direct target of genocide as women, as Maya, and as a majority of the ones who have been forced to live in poverty. This complex and interlocking system of power violently articulated what I call—drawing on Lugones' insights—a racialized, classed, and heterosexualized femininity (Lugones 2007, 2008).

There was another dimension of this genocidal gender system, that is, the intentional practice of destroying Maya children, conceived by agents of genocide as "bad seed" that needed to be eradicated even from the wombs of their mothers, as hundreds of cases testify (ODHAG/REMHI 1998, CEH 1999; Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala [ODHAG] 2006). Conceptualizing Maya children as "bad seed" was not casual or invented in a hurry. It was intended to instill not just fear towards the military, but perhaps more importantly, to penetrate the heart of Maya communities, for which seeds are cosmologically and spiritually significant in that

they represent the beginning of life on Mother Earth. In several Maya cultures, when the term "bad seed" is employed, it means to cut off something that is against life and that will ruin the human and non-human world. Axwan, a Maya teacher, noted that perpetrators through their ideas and actions against Maya children were saying to the Indigenous Peoples:

> You should not be on this earth because all of you constitute evilness. And when they killed our children, it has left us perplexed, and it has created a deep wound in all of us although we do not talk to strangers about this. That is why so many Maya women have told you that killing children is simply unbelievable, simply indescribable. (Interview 2008)

Thus, when agents of genocide named Maya children "bad seed," and then killed thousands of them, they were sending the message that these children were symbols of evil.

Perpetrators constructed Maya childhood as part of the flexible concept of "internal enemy," defined in the 1983 *Manual de Guerra Contrasubversiva* (*Manual of Counter-subversive War*) of the Centro de Estudios Militares del Ejército de Guatemala (Centre for Military Studies of the Guatemalan Army), as:

> All those individuals, groups, and organizations who through illegal actions want to break the established order . . . who following directions from international communism develop so-called revolutionary war and subversion in the country. Those individuals, groups, and organizations that are not communist but that want to break the established order are also considered internal enemies. (in ODHAG 2006: 14)

Maya childhood was not a secondary casualty of state terror, but a clear subject of destruction within the context of genocide. As a former "civil patroller" testified to the Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH):

> Well, my sister was told by a military officer and through a translator who spoke our language that it was necessary to eliminate all men and children because just by doing that it was possible to finish with all guerrillas. My sister asked him, "Why? Why are you killing children?" "Because those sons of bitches one day will get revenge and fuck us up." That was their intention, to kill the little [children]. (in ODHAG 2006: 16)

Thus, genocide in Guatemala deliberately sought to persecute and eliminate Mayas because they were Mayas and collective agents of anti-colonial/decolonial transformation. Their sociopolitical and cultural agency was represented as an "enemy of the people," in tune with the Western, anti-communist crusade led by the powers within the United States. This crusade was introduced into Guatemala in 1954 with the overthrow of the democratic govern-

ment of President Arbenz, and staunchly reenacted, during the period of the Reagan administration, against social and revolutionary movements and individuals in several Latin American countries (Gomez-Suarez 2010; Nairn 2008; McSherry 2010). This anti-communist crusade, as well as introducing and later expanding neoliberalism, also served to reconfigure the West's geo-historical location as culturally, politically, and epistemologically "superior." As Mignolo points out:

> The West was, and still is, the only geo-historical location that is both part of the classification of the world and the only perspective that has the privilege of possessing dominant categories of thoughts from which and where the rest of the world can be described, classified, understood, and "improved." (2005: 36 emphasis in the original)

Maya anthropologist Ba'Tiul adds that the persecution and denial of Indigenous epistemologies and Cosmovisions has been carried out hand in hand with capitalist development models—the first of which was imposed in 1492—that violently disrupted the civilization that the Indigenous Peoples were building as owners and administrators of their territories (2006a). Morales and Ba'Tiul further observed that colonial capitalism converted the Indigenous Peoples into slaves, semi-slaves, and cheap labor for those who invented legalizing tools to justify the stealing of resources from Indigenous territories (2009: 58). The Crown and the Church, the first international institutions of capitalist penetration in the invaded and colonized territories, sanctioned the dispossession of Indigenous Peoples' resources by inventing categories such as "the civilized and the barbarian." (Morales and Ba'Tiul 2009: 58). Thus, since its inception in the Americas, capitalism was not only racialized and gendered, but also genocidal.

Guatemala, as with Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil, El Salvador, and Colombia, amongst others, was dually represented as a democratic nation defending and promoting free-market capitalism, and therefore progress, and also as a violent space invaded by the international "communist cancer" (Gomez-Suarez 2010). President Nixon, at the beginning of the 1960s, celebrated the overthrow of President Arbenz in Guatemala, and named this nation as exemplary in the fight against communism (ODHAG/REMHI 1998); Friedman did the same thing with regard to Chile after Pinochet and his allies overthrew Allende (Letelier 1976); and after 1978, U.S. presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan both saw Colombia as the perfect ally in South America, in spite of the sharp increase in state terror crimes (Gomez-Suarez 2010: 154). Furthermore, as Gomez-Suarez points out:

> Bush senior and Reagan visited Colombia in August and December 1982, respectively. They "scripted" Colombia as a free society that, according to Reagan, had a "profound tradition of law and liberty" but was endangered by

> insurgency movements; according to Bush, it was hence necessary that "the United States build a military base in Colombia to monitor the country's insurgents." (2010: 154)

Genocide, then, is not just a domestic policy (Gomez-Suarez 2010), but is linked to geopolitical, economic, social, and military powers, and to better understand its complexities it is necessary to learn the role played by the anti-communist crusade that preceded today's "global war on terror." This crusade was the concrete expression of the U.S. National Security Doctrine, a doctrine that gave the Latin American military and police forces not only training and economic support, but also the rationale for persecuting, controlling, and exterminating Indigenous communities such as the Mayas in Guatemala, and various social movements, as well as individuals, struggling for social justice. For, as Gomez-Suarez observes, the term "communist" was an enormously flexible category that could accommodate almost any critic of the status quo (2010: 158). Genocide as the partial or total annihilation of a group was carried out in Guatemala against Mayas as Mayas, but also as a national group, because the Guatemalan state and its powerful national and transnational allies defined them and progressive Ladino and Mestizos as "subversive communists" posing a threat to Western, Christian, and capitalist values.

Despite the thousands of concrete bodies and communities obliterated, genocide in Guatemala continues to be denied. Who benefits from this calculated, epistemic, and therefore political imposition of what genocide is? And moreover, when law is given the ultimate say about who has suffered genocide and who has not, are not the bodies, spirits, and histories of suffering of the victimized, being further muted and revictimized in the name of the rule of law? And who benefits from the obsession with conflating legality with legitimacy, and thereby reducing social justice to juridical justice, and then believing that this legality and formal equality have profound positive consequences for the lives of the victimized?

Axwan, a Maya teacher, taught me that "it is completely sad, ironic, and unbelievable that more than five centuries had to pass, from the first genocide against Indigenous Peoples [sixteenth century] to be recognized, and only by a very few people in Guatemala and abroad" (interview 2008). He added, "The few I was talking about have been finally convinced that what the Spaniards did against our ancestors was deliberate mass murder to steal our lands and resources and to implant their religion, culture, economy, law, and education" (interview 2008). Axwan continued his analysis by saying:

> And now in our time, I mean from the late 1970s to the early 1990s, when we as Mayas have been massively killed as if we were pests or disposable things, it seems that our dead have to come up from their clandestine graves and scream: "It was genocide, damn it!" During the first genocide Europeans used

> powerful weapons, including gunpowder and horses and torture methods using the breaking wheel they attached to our ancestors to force them to accept their God and accept that they were pagans. In the latest genocide, the colonizers' heirs used the most technologically advanced methods to absolutely destroy a human body and then champion this savagery as symbols of progress because they, those who decide who has the right to live and who has to die, do not name this as *matanza* [mass killing], as it actually is—brutal genocide, torture, rape . . . a war against people who they have already condemned as the wretched of the earth, like Fanon said. (Interview 2008)

Axwan indicated that most experts on human rights with whom he has come in contact through their texts, or face to face, do not recognize genocide as a state policy:

> They say or imply that because many Mayas organized and resisted that they were not killed and tortured because of their ethnicity, a term I do not agree with but that is for another time. My point is that because they [the experts] have been educated in a certain way they repeat what is already in the law; when they see different issues in different contexts, they simply discard them because they do not fit with their learned schemes . . . fuck it . . . pardon my language, but I get enraged when I read or hear this, for who gave these people a license to not only name everything for us but to deny what is undeniable. . . . Here there was another genocide, period. But no, it is Mayas, the ones who have to prove we suffered physical, political, economic, and what I call spiritual mass killing. It gets even worse when we are told we have to be careful with our words when some of us have the guts to tell another truth: that the United States is co-responsible for the genocide here. You know I have been told I should use the word "allegedly" when talking about these issues because these issues have to be proven in a court of law. So, it does not matter that thousands were brutally and collectively killed, including Maya children, now we have to prove in court and under the rule of law that they are in fact dead. . . . What a crime this is for God's sake, what a crime on top of the one already committed. (Interview 2008)

Denying and/or making it extremely difficult to "prove" genocide as a national policy supported by transnational powers has devastating effects, and has created more frustrations for the affected communities.

The practice of genocide also destroyed Indigenous Peoples' livelihoods, and their cooperative projects, which possibly constituted the most profound challenge to racist capitalism. As Axwan reflected:

> On top of probing, we have been victims of genocide; we have to respond to the interrogation of nationals and foreigners who say that we were not persecuted and killed because we were Mayas but because we were "subversives." I mean, this is unbelievable because in order to qualify as *victimas de verdad* [true victims] we are supposed to remain passive and quiet in the face of not just exploitation but racism and brutality against women and children. What

> kind of people expect those who have been beaten up, scorned, hated, vilified, and spat upon not just for one day or one year, or two years, but for more than five centuries, to remain eternally grateful to their masters? To the mass killer, to those who in the name of God, Christianity, development, freedom and democracy, you name it . . . trained privileged and non-privileged men to rape women, to mutilate their bodies in mass numbers? We were persecuted and killed like ferocious animals because we dared to survive and create our own livelihood projects while the powerful were convinced we would perish as a collective. We challenged savage capitalism on an everyday basis and because of that thousands of my brothers and sisters were mass murdered. Would white North Americans and Europeans tolerate this treatment for five centuries? Would their inheritors accept this horrible life for centuries? So why is it that when people who have been scorned and humiliated for centuries rise up and fight back with what is available to us, including arms, they become the evil, the savage, the beast, the communist, the terrorist, the rapist? And yes, when we, through our struggles finally force the opening of narrow spaces now called "human rights," their experts remind us that we should be grateful to their grace; because due to their efforts in creating these human rights we now have the "freedom" to speak; yet we are the ones who must "prove" we have been cowardly killed in great numbers. (Interview 2008)

Indeed, many women struggled alongside men to build hundreds of communal cooperatives. Most of these cooperatives were destroyed, and their members harassed, persecuted and/or massacred. In Ixcan, K'iche, cooperatives were so dynamic and successful that in some there was an advanced technical specialization around the production process. Many cooperatives were large-scale agricultural projects involving coffee, husbandry, and cardamom, and many had large storage facilities, medium-sized retail centers, electrical power plants, dryers for coffee beans, radio equipment, health centers, and schools (CEH 1999, field notes 1999, 2002, 2008). Even though there are no exact numbers on how many cooperative projects were destroyed, the CEH has identified that in the Ixcan region alone, more than 20 cooperatives, with more than 3,300 members, were obliterated, including one in *Cuarto Pueblo* that lost more than 100 million quetzales (at that time USD 100 million) in assets. They lost seeds, machinery, and different types of agricultural equipment. This destruction has had long-term consequences, because on top of deepening poverty for Indigenous Peoples, it reduced and, in many places, destroyed future possibilities for community sustainability. Thus, Maya women and men were not lazy, backward, and against "progress," as they have been portrayed, but rather, they were and are productive and creative people targeted by genocide and other modalities of state and corporate terror.

Axwan's analysis, therefore, reminds us of the effects of regimes of truth, especially in an already racist, heteropatriarchal, and classed context where the ideology of us and them further influences who is a "deserving" victim.

Victims must be quiet and passive to qualify for this status, because as soon as they exercise their active and dignified (yet inferiorized) humanity by rebelling against exploitative atrocities, they cease to be "good victims."

As Axwan explained, the Guatemalan case clearly shows that genocide is a process that does not necessarily start with mass killings, but rather with the teaching of a mentality that denies humanity to groups whose humanity has been questioned for centuries, if not overtly denied. If we do not take genocide as a long process of vilifying those thought and treated as racially inferior "Other" and the politically abject, we will not be able to analyze the consequences of genocide and how it has become a social practice, because we will place it in the category of the exceptional, one-time event. Axwan's poignant observations align with those of scholars in critical genocide studies who, while recognizing the importance of the Convention of Genocide approved in 1948, point out that it omitted the protection of political groups. The Convention was approved amidst power struggles between the nations that defeated Germany and its allies in World War II—struggles in which the United Kingdom, the former Soviet Union, and the United States staunchly defended their interests, for they had "a recent history of domestic and/or colonial repression and had insisted on the exclusion of social and political groups as targets of genocide" (Feierstein 2010: 48-49). The Convention entered into force in 1951. The former Soviet Union ratified it in 1954, as did the United States in 1986, with a long list of reservations (McSherry 2010: 111). McSherry notes that U.S. conservative senators, including Jesse Helms, supported by right-wing organizations such as the Liberty Lobby, "had launched strong lobbying efforts to resist ratification for thirty-five years, arguing that the United States could be prosecuted under the treaty for segregation, for the lynching of blacks, and/or for the treatment of Native Americans, or for United States acts in Korea or Vietnam during those wars" (2010: 111).

Under the current convention, genocide means the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, national, ethnical, racial, or religious groups, by: a) killing members of the group; b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about physical destruction in whole or in part; d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; e) and forcibly transferring children of the group to another group (UN Convention 1948). Thus, what the current Convention includes and excludes is a product of transnational power struggles, and we must ask what the concrete impacts are of protecting only some groups at the expense of so many others who have been victimized by social, genocidal practices. The exclusion of political groups from the 1948 Convention is part of what Reinaga calls *organized silence*,

because in 1946 the United Nations General Assembly called upon member states to define genocide as a new and international criminal category, stating in Resolution 96 (I):

> Genocide is a denial of the right of existence of entire human groups, just as homicide is the denial of the right to live of individual human beings; such denial of the right of existence shocks the conscience of mankind, results in great losses to humanity in the form of cultural and other contributions represented by these groups, and is contrary to moral law and to the spirit and aims of the United Nations. Many instances of such crimes of genocide have occurred when racial, religious, political and other groups have been destroyed, entirely or in part. The punishment of the crime of genocide is a matter of international concern. (in Feierstein 2010: 49)

The 1946 resolution, in addition to making it clear that genocide is a crime against a group, recognizes that groups are not static and cannot be "fixed" within one category or another; in other words, that a targeted group can be simultaneously persecuted, controlled, and exterminated if the perpetrating powers—state, corporate, or otherwise—decide that a collectivity is a threat to national security. The 1946 resolution does not require that a victimized group fit strictly into one of the four categories accepted by the current Convention. In this regard the 1946 resolution is better, for it provides some space to analyze genocide as a social practice (Feierstein 2010), and goes beyond legal considerations by giving room to historical, contextual, and epistemological conditions. As Feierstein argues:

> In legal terms, a homicide is always, in principle, a homicide. For the social sciences, however, some homicides are so extraordinary that they justify the development of a specific name to label them. Sociologists use the term Holocaust or Shoah to refer to the systematic annihilation of Europe's Jewish population under Nazism because of the unique characteristics of this historical tragedy. Nevertheless, just as the 1948 Convention's definition of genocide is insufficient to explain the nature of the Shoah, the specific characteristics of the Shoah do not in themselves define the limits of the term "genocide." (2010: 57)

It is in this sense that Feierstein (2010), Garzón (1999), Rozanski (2006), and the Argentinean survivors (many of whom are organized in social movements and human rights organizations) have challenged the misleading notion that what happened in Argentina during 1976–1983 was a "dirty war," or just "violations of human rights." It was genocide, it was a state policy, and it was not just sporadic, genocidal acts. This is relevant to Guatemala, as there the UN-appointed Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH) only recognized that certain genocidal acts had taken place. Genocide as a state policy was not present, according to the Commission, because Mayas were

not persecuted and killed for being Mayas, but rather because they were named as "subversives" by state security forces (CEH 1999; Sanford 2003:150-51). Although it was an advance to acknowledge that genocidal acts had taken place, given the decades-long denial of genocide in the Guatemalan context, this partial recognition did not contribute to social and juridical justice. Vast sectors of Guatemalan society, including the mainstream media, continue to deny the perpetration of genocide, and to name the mass murder of Mayas and political groups as "civil war" or "internal armed conflict" at best, or as "excesses of war" at worst (field notes 1999, 2002, 2008).

Sanford notes that the United Nations, the Organization of American States (OAS), and experts such as Hilde Hey "had made their determination (i.e., of not recognizing genocide as a policy) prior to the CEH's investigations, and without the benefit of the immense data amassed by the CEH" (2003: 151). Furthermore, Sanford explains that, according to an internal CEH document, it was believed there was a relationship between Mayas and guerrillas, as Mayas constituted guerrillas' social base, and for this reason to be indigenous was to be stigmatized as a guerrilla or communist (2003: 151). Thus, the CEH concluded that "the Mayas who died were not [killed] for their membership in an ethnic group, but for being considered 'subversives'" (2003: 151). Sanford, who correctly critiques this short-sighted view for not taking into account the historical context and complexity of the Guatemalan case, then recognizes only that Mayas were targeted and killed because of their ethnicity. Again, her conclusion leaves out the fact that Mayas were persecuted and killed because they were Mayas, and because they were named as political enemies of "the nation," as communists and subversives whose diverse, active, and challenging social agency included the creation of communal livelihood projects.

In the first of three sections that follow, I provide a brief analysis of the structure of genocide in Guatemala, for example, in the creation of geographical spaces named as "zones of conflict," and the establishment of strategic hamlets called "development poles." These hamlets aimed to "reeducate" survivors of genocide to become obedient and passive people. This section also includes a brief analysis of *Plan Sofia*, an operational military log that documents genocide against Mayas in some areas of El K'iché, especially the Ixil region, during a military offensive launched on July 16, 1982, and under the regime of General Efraín Ríos Montt (Doyle 2009). The second section focuses on racialized feminicide, and the third examines the collective punishment of Maya childhood.

THE CARRYING OUT OF GENOCIDE

To carry out genocide it was necessary to organize it—to plan it as a process. This process, which began with the kidnappings, torture, and killing of key leaders of community organizations and social movements, escalated into massacres such as the one perpetrated in Panzós in 1978. It then grew in to a full-blown policy, combining massacres and scorched-earth campaigns in the Maya highlands with attacks on union leadership, students, peasants, members of other organizations, and their friends and relatives. It is this combination, of technologies of destruction with a gendered and racialized narrative of salvation, which should not be forgotten.

Guatemala became a geographical space divided into so-called "conflict zones," in which the level of "dangerous communities" was represented through color-coding. Areas marked "Red" were the most dangerous; these just happened to be areas that were populated by the most impoverished Mayas, and they were the most brutally attacked. These were also places with histories of organized, Indigenous resistance, and organized creativity, as exemplified by the multiple struggles of the Maya-K'iche and Maya-Ixil people in defense of their territories, resources, and cultures. For example, in 1924, Maya-Ixiles from Chajul rose up against Lisandro Gordillo, a landowner from Mexico who attempted to expropriate their lands. During the Ubico regime (1931–1944), Maya-Ixiles from Nebaj rebelled against vagrancy laws that obliged Indigenous Peoples to undertake forced labor on large farms, where they worked as semi-slaves. The army arrested two hundred, publicly executed eight leaders, and expelled five hundred into the jungle of Petén. It is from this time that Maya-Ixiles have been represented as hostile to the army and disrespectful of authority, which is a narrative that was reenacted in the 1980s (ODHAG/REMHI 1998). Maya-Ixiles were also the most numerous Maya group that actively participated in the national strike led by sugar plantation workers (CEH 1999). A witness told the CEH that when the plantation owners realized how conscious the Ixiles were, and how committed to peasant struggles, they did not want to hire them, because in their minds all Ixil people were "insurgents" (1999: T.C. 336). As the collective testimony of the inhabitants of Pexla Grande attests, Indigenous Peoples were accused, without their knowledge, of being guerrillas, and sentenced to death: "We did not even know who the guerrillas were, but all of us and our houses were burnt. They killed our fathers, our families, our ancestors, our grandmothers, and children and pregnant women. They killed our animals and then ate these animals" (CEH 1999: T.C. 335). In February 1982, 125 were killed in this massacre.

These examples demonstrate that the campaigns of genocide sought to destroy the Maya sociopolitical agency through several military and political campaigns, divided into plans such as Operation Ixil 1981; Victoria 82; Firmness 83, and Security, Development and Stability. The plans were implemented in three national programs: 1) Pacification (1981–1982); b) Security and Development (1983–1992); and c) Stability, Development, and Democracy (1993–1996). Each national program was carried out through several military and intelligence operations, which combined intense, psychological warfare with the annihilation of human and animal lives and the paramilitarization of most Maya men, who were forced to participate in the killings of other Mayas. The planning of the extermination also included the setting up of concentration camps, euphemistically named "Development Poles." And, as Feierstein indicated for the Argentinean case, in Guatemala the concentration camps "combined the worst horrors of the Nazi concentration camps, the French camps in Algeria, and U.S. counterintelligence practices in Vietnam" (2010: 46).

The Guatemalan case includes other modalities of refined cruelty, such as forcing Maya men as young as fifteen to "patrol" their people and communities in Civil Self-Defense Patrols (PACs), which were a national, paramilitary force. These patrols functioned as a guarantor of impunity for the military establishment because, as representatives of this establishment have argued, Indigenous Peoples killed and raped each other. Generally in Guatemala, the planners of genocide were very careful not to leave written records of their intent to destroy the Mayas; however, systemic racism, a central pillar in the organization of society, was too deep of a reality. Racism could not be left out of the narrative of subversion. It was its hidden backbone, supported by the United States through action or omission. For example, in a declassified U.S. Department of State memorandum dated October 1981, General Lucas Garcia, the initiator of a fully implemented policy of genocide, said that he believed the extermination was the measure of the success of his policy of repression. The United States personnel writing this document added, "The well-documented belief by the army that the entire Ixil Indian population is pro-EGP (Popular Army of the Poor, an insurgent organization) has created a situation in which the army can be expected to give no quarter to combatants and non-combatants alike" (Sanford 2003: 153). Another secret CIA document from 1982 affirmed: "When an army patrol meets resistance and takes fire from a town or village, it is assumed that the entire town is hostile and it is subsequently destroyed. An empty village is assumed to have been supporting the EGP, and it is destroyed" (Sanford 2003: 152). For the United States, the Guatemalan army was telling the truth about the Mayas being subversive communists. This was a truth that the powers within the United States accepted because it served imperial, geopolitical purposes, and the protection of corporate capital.

General Rios Montt, who overthrew Lucas Garcia through a coup d'état in March 1982, established PACs as a national counterinsurgent tool, in addition to refining and expanding the Development Poles and creating special military tribunals. By calling them the water that enabled the guerrillas to swim, he named the Maya and their communities as potential collaborators and members of guerrilla groups. Without Maya support, according to Rios Montt, the guerillas could not succeed. Rios Montt said, "Naturally, if a subversive operation exists in which the Indians are involved with the guerrillas, the Indians are also going to die. However, the army's philosophy was not to kill Indians, but to win them back, to help them" (June 2, 1982). Rios Montt brought another element to ongoing genocide, that of blaming the Mayas for being against God, especially the communities that had been organizing different projects of resistance, including cooperatives, peasant associations, women and youth groups, and community radio stations. This collective blaming has had devastating effects on many Maya peoples. For instance, Don Pedro, a Maya-Tz'utujil elder, told me:

> I do not know where to start telling you how much of an effect the military's ideas of us as being against God have had inside many of us. What I mean is that when they said that the Indigenous person was guerrilla because he did not believe in God they were justifying their destruction of us. The Spanish did the same a long time ago when they said we worshipped false Gods; idols. But back then our fathers and grandfathers did not know about the Church, but now we know about the Church that's why many blame themselves. I don't do that but let me tell you thousands do and this is deeply sad, deeply disturbing, and I think that not many people are paying attention to this. There was a crazy man, Rios Montt. Sometimes I think he is the worst because he said he was sent by God to pacify Guatemala or in other words to control us, Indigenous people, or to get rid of us. (Interview 2002).

Educator, author, and activist, Lucrecia Molina Theissen[3] notes that

> Ríos Montt, who named himself as God's anointed, launched an apocalyptic war between good and evil, under which rebellion was a sin and misery was the product of the absence of values. . . . And in this black and white world, a world of sin and submission, of deep authoritarianism, blind, irrational and non-critical obedience was the correct behavior. (2012:3)

In the world imposed by Ríos Montt and the Guatemalan bourgeoisie, supported by Western powers as Molina Theissen points out,

> sons and daughters were tortured, disappeared and/or assassinated because they were behaving badly; because they were not obeying their parents, which in turn were failing as parents because they were incapable of controlling and invigilating their children. These children then rebelled against the mandate of God, the omnipotent father. (2012:3)

As Molina Theissen rightly analyzes,

> paradoxically and from this holy war–that recurred to extreme cruelty and under which horrible crimes were perpetrated—battled by this disciplining and protecting father [Ríos Montt], who was protected by a punishing God, another Guatemala had to emerge. A Guatemala of obedient people with values that were supposed to be attached to a conception of an honest and peaceful family. . . . However, and while the General preached on Sundays, dressed as civilian and with the Bible in his hands, calling to Guatemalans to obey illegal laws, one of his men on the field told [Mayas]–under the policy of *fusiles and frijoles (fusils and beans)* that: If you are with us, we will feed you, but if you are against us, we will kill you. (2012:4)

Militaries were not the only makers and implementers of genocidal plans. So, too, were powerful civilians belonging to the dominant classes, who actively provided ideas to "save the nation," as did some foreign businessmen (ODHAG/REMHI 1998; field notes 1999, 2002). Francisco Bianchi, a Christian fundamentalist, often declared nationally and internationally, in conferences, church circles, and in the media, that "since the guerrillas have gained many collaborators among *indios*, therefore *indios* were subversives, and because the insurgency needed to be defeated, clearly *indios* must be killed since they are collaborating with subversives" (ODHAG 2006: 27; CEH 1999). Alfred Kaldschmitdt, a prominent businessman linked to right-wing evangelism, played a significant role in the counterinsurgent "civic action" of the military apparatus during the Rios Montt regime. He also, as a director of the nongovernmental organization *FUNDAPI*, linked to the Gospel Church, indirectly helped to carry out the genocide against the Maya-Ixil people (*El Observador* 2003). Manuel Ayau was for many years the president of Marroquin University, a private and very conservative institution, and financed the ultraright-wing party *Liberation National Movement* (MLN), a party that self-identified as the party of organized violence. In peacetime, Ayau formed the Pro-Fatherland League, which promoted the candidacy of Rios Montt, and when Rios Montt's party governed after the Peace Accords of 1996, from 2000 to 2004, this league was one of its active supporters (*El Observador* 2010).

Genocide does not only bring about massive numbers of deaths; it is also a social reorganizing process that involves "reeducating" survivors, and people in targeted communities who were not severely affected by the genocide, but who for centuries had been considered as not being capable of assimilation. Reeducation was spelled out as a goal in military documents such as the *Ixil Operation Manual*, in which it was formulated as "an intense and profound psychological campaign to rescue the Ixil mentality to make it part of the Guatemalan nation" (CEH 1999). This reeducation, centered on Western and Christian values of patriotism, individualism, and obedience to God,

purposefully punished grassroots Catholicism inspired by liberation theology, which many Maya people practiced, as well as Maya spiritual teachings, which many Mayas kept alive as an underground tradition, albeit very much demonized and persecuted. For instance, in communities where the national security apparatus had accumulated information about the strong presence of spiritual guides, perpetrators paid special attention to finding these "communist sorcerers," and when they were found they were publicly tortured and executed (field notes 1999, 2002, 2008).

It is for these reasons that, in general, evangelicals had an easier time than Catholics in the Guatemala concentration camps. To survive, thousands of Catholics became Protestants, a conversion encouraged by the national security apparatus. As many survivors testified to the CEH, "To be an Indigenous Catholic was synonymous with being an armed Indian" (1999), because Catholics were named as responsible for the violence that the army and its allies were carrying out. Protestantism was so interrelated with the genocidal structure that, even in 1986, when state terror campaigns had been reduced in the Maya highlands, civil patrol commanders who were evangelicals in daily life gave or denied permission for burials. In Jocopilas, El K'iche, for instance, Toribio Ajbac, an evangelical pastor and civil patrol commander, used to go house by house and force people in the community to convert to evangelism. Through his God's Assembly Church, he appointed himself as the only person who could write permissions for burial sites, and he favored those who were evangelical or declared they were willing to convert to evangelism. Additionally, Ajbac demanded that the new converts become part of the civil patrols. Many who did not comply with Ajbac could not properly bury their beloved dead. Many others were killed by the military and the Civil Patrols (CEH 1999). Without the context of genocide, Ajbac could not have achieved the kind of power he had because, as Judge Rozanski said, concerning the Argentinean case, in the context of genocide, higher echelons of power control what is going on in every community. This is done through the use of an organized structure of power, a circumstance that makes those in control accountable for criminal actions, because low-ranking security agents and military personnel do not operate on an individual basis, but are gears within a system regulated and monitored by those in control (2006: 74).

If the planners and direct agents of genocide punished Maya Catholics, the victimization of Maya spiritual guides was more tangibly a cultural-political punishment, in that they represented more clearly the capacity of Mayas to be producers of autonomous epistemologies, and because these spiritual teachers made possible the survival of Maya spirituality, a key component of the Maya Cosmovision. This is especially so in the case of communities that organized to survive as a group while they were relentlessly hunted by air and on the ground, for they refused to live in concentration

camps and escaped to the mountains. Survivors named these groups, which were constantly accused of being the civilian arm of the guerrillas, "Communities of People in Resistance."

While many engaged with human rights organizations and international aid agencies have emphasized the role of grassroots Catholics leaders in these communities (field notes 2002, 2008), less is known about the extraordinary role played by many spiritual guides who served as medicine people, midwives, teachers, and counselors. It was the teachings of the Maya Cosmovision, and the relentless resistance of their ancestors, that told the Mayas that their fate was not sealed and that they had to resist. What else can explain the fact that, from 1981 until 1990, Communities of People in Resistance remained autonomously organized, even after witnessing the slaughter of their families and neighbors, and the attacks on their cultural and spiritual symbols and leaders (the *Ajquijab*)?

The sadism in the annihilation of the Ajquijab was not random. In a community in the Ixil area, a military platoon supported by helicopters arrived with a list of individuals who had to be killed before the platoon would commit mass murder in the community. On that list was the name of a spiritual guide, who was hunted down and then killed in front of the community, including children. Some children refused to watch; their mothers were forced to make them. This spiritual leader was accused not only of being "subversive," but also of being a sorcerer who served "Satan," who therefore had to die a traitor's death like Judas. The officer said he had the power to send him to Hell. The leader's body was left in the plaza, while the army proceeded to separate men from women, after forcing them to gather in the church. More than a hundred were killed, and the few who survived fled to the mountains and came back when they believed the army had left. They returned to bury the body of their spiritual leader, who was very much respected in the community. Survivors buried him in an improvised grave and then left; the army returned, dug up the body, and fed it to their dogs. Apparently, he did not have the right to be buried, for even in death he was a national security threat (field notes 2002). Although cases like this can easily be interpreted as expressions of irrational and barbaric cruelty, killing Maya spiritual leaders is a collective punishment of knowledge and spiritual practices that do not conform to dominant ones, especially to those of colonial Christianity. In 1980, in a community of El K'iche, before scorched earth and mass killing became the national policy, a military officer and several soldiers arrived and forced people to gather in what the military already knew was a ceremonial place. The officer brought in an elderly Ajquijab with five of his assistants and decapitated them, because they were accused of practicing "magic rites." The survivor who testified about this to the CEH noted that the decapitation of the leaders symbolized the decapitation of the community, which was left practically without "heads" to lead them. Through this

act, the witness added, fear had been instilled in the hearts and minds of the people, and since that time they had stopped participating in cooperatives and other grassroots projects (CEH 1999). This case refers to another chain of destruction: the killing of elders. These killings resulted in the disruption of the intergenerational transfer of experiences and teachings.

General Gramajo, the master of combining human rights and democratization discourses with genocidal killings and intelligence, inserted Maya professionals allied with the army to spy on several communities. In 1998 he implied to Schirmer, a U.S. scholar, that what the army did, they had learned from the Indians. The army was implementing social exorcism, the general added, as they were killing the bugs that were infecting the body, which was the nation (Schirmer 1998: 115). The general explained that taking the evil out was a process that started with pacification, followed by the reorganization of the nation through security, until national stability and development were achieved in the 1990s. According to Gramajo, he was not perpetrating genocide, but rather getting rid of the "communist national cancer"; thus, when his troops and paramilitary groups were massacring Maya women, men, and children, and destroying their livelihoods, Gramajo referred to this as the army's "recuperation" of the Mayas for Guatemala. Mayas and all Guatemalans, he said, needed a rebirth—which meant a strengthening of the status quo, this time with a renovated notion of civic obedience violently distorting Maya teachings in the name of "national salvation." The narrative of rebirth validated the thesis of national stability and development, manipulating several Mayan symbols and legends to demonstrate that the military respected Indigenous Peoples. As Schirmer points out, the thesis and related documents were "mayanified" (1998: 14).

"Mayanifying" genocide was a common military practice, and a major affront to the Maya peoples, because names such as Kaibil Balam were given to soldiers trained by U.S. Green Berets and retrained by former general Otto Perez Molina, a powerful politician in post-genocide Guatemala (*El Observador* 2010). Kaibil Balam was a Maya warrior and strategist whom the Spanish conquerors could not capture, and so became a symbol of resistance for the Maya. The military also appropriated the figure of Tecún Umán, the K'iche warrior who fought against the conqueror Pedro de Alvarado, and who embodied the *Popol Wuj*'s main philosophy, "That everyone must be called to rise up; that there is not a group, nor two among us, that stays behind" (Schirmer 1998: 114-115; field notes 1999, 2002).[4] How, then, is it possible to say that the campaign of genocide was not intended to exterminate the collective social agency of the Maya and that of organized and revolutionary Mestizos and Ladinos?

Plan Sofia, a military operational log the army was forced to disclose in 2009,[5] is part of the campaign *Victoria 82*, and it reveals through carefully coded language—despite having several pages erased or altered—how de-

stroying the Maya was indeed the true objective of the national security apparatus. As Doyle states, "Plan Sofía demonstrates that the Guatemalan army, under the direction of military ruler Efraín Ríos Montt, carried out a deliberate counterinsurgent campaign in the summer of 1982 aimed at massacring thousands of indigenous peasants" (2009). Doyle adds, "We have determined that these records were created by military officials during the regime of Efraín Ríos Montt to plan and implement a 'scorched earth' policy on Maya communities in El Quiché. The documents record the military's genocidal assault against indigenous populations in Guatemala." (2009)

Plan Sofía begins by naming all the people in the Maya highlands as "subversive," and therefore as a military objective to be destroyed. Then it lays out the organization of this destruction, along with the required human and technological resources. We need to keep in mind that *Plan Sofia* was a continuation of genocidal campaigns launched in 1981, and thus thousands of people had already been killed, towns and crops burnt, and survivors forcibly displaced (to the mountains, Mexico, Honduras, and so on), when this plan was carried out. Others were already in concentrations camps.

Plan Sofia was a tool to intensify operations, from psychological warfare to the destruction of Maya social agency, as quickly as possible, which required additional training and inspiration for soldiers who, according to the log, got tired of killing. A military officer reporting to the highest military authorities, the Presidency, and the Ministry of Defense, for instance, wrote: "The personnel must receive a psychological bombardment equal to that received by the population, for example, through war movies, to elevate their morale and initiative" (n.p: 1982: 148).

Plan Sofia does not state that all Mayas had to be killed. However, it contains elements of the military establishment's representation of Mayas as terrorist guerrillas. For example, all the inhabitants of areas in K'iche and the Huehuetenango departments, the main target areas of *Plan Sofia*, were called local forces of liberation (FIL), and guerrilla supportive populations. Their homes were called caves, and mailboxes places where subversives stored maize. The entire targeted space, including countless ceremonial and sacred Maya places, came to be labeled as a guerrilla operational area. However—and this is perhaps the most salient evidence of the military establishment's intent to destroy the Maya—it is stated in several passages of the military log that the "subversives" had been defeated, and that "the enemy just hid itself because we did not find any serious organized group" (1982: 158-61). Another passage reads:

> In the different populations where we worked, no civilian personnel were found in the houses; people were found in ravines and in the surrounding fields. In some areas their crops were destroyed because it was calculated that these crops belonged to the enemy. (1982: 190)

How the military determined whose crops were enemy crops, and which were friendly, is not mentioned at all in the *Plan Sofia* log; however, a telling element is that the military indirectly affirmed that the Maya people and their communities did not constitute an armed threat to the "nation." By saying that in most communities people were hiding, *Plan Sofia* shows that the real objective of the national security apparatus and the bourgeois class was to root out any expression, present or future, of an active social and political agency of Maya people, under the accusation that they constituted an armed menace. At the same time, *Plan Sofia* details the persecution and killing of Mayas as "guerrillas," for they went to "live in the mountains." This continues to this day in the way "post-peace" governmental administrations, in collusion with Canadian mining corporations and other global businesses, are further dispossessing Indigenous Peoples of vital resources, while destroying the ecosystems that surround them. Today's dominant discourses do not invoke saving the nation from a "communist menace"; they now accuse Mayas of being an obstacle to globalization and modern development.

The general misery and exploitation in which most Indigenous Peoples have been forced to survive was so visible to the implementers of *Plan Sofia* that even a commander admits that these conditions made "communist indoctrination" more fertile in Indigenous communities, even while he simultaneously reaffirms his commitment to punish Indigenous Peoples for daring to challenge the Guatemalan nation. These are his words:

> Artillery and aviation are useless in these areas; the main weapon to alleviate subversion is to stimulate development . . . if we do not do this we will have to eternally chase these people, and each time the poor people will hate us more and more because, and as a general rule, their hens and cows are stolen and their houses are burnt out. The final result of all of this could be another Vietnam or Nicaragua. . . . I recommend that these people be punished and militarily combated and then, they should be provided with a better life. (1982: 161, 162)

The actual term "killing" is not mentioned, except in few places in which the killed are blamed for being killed. For example, on one occasion it is said that "an individual was eliminated because, when he observed the platoon, he tried to escape—he carried only groceries (fruit juices, rice, and salt)" (1982: 168).

The dozens of massacres perpetrated under *Plan Sofia* are completely silenced in the log. Instead, the creators use language such as "operations were successful because we took away 80% of the guerrilla support" (1982: 284), or "psychological operations were conducted by burning the enemy's houses" (1982: 284). Although *Plan Sofia* names massacring entire Maya populations and their pets as "killing the enemy," in order to conceal the military establishment's true actions, the log demonstrates that the plan was

actually another tool both to kill "subversives," and to plant the seeds for a racist reorganization of the entire social fabric of the nation. As Levy points out, genocides in Latin America sought to destroy not only the essence of contesting groups, but also what they could produce (2004: 156). This is explained in the *Plan Sofia* log in this manner:

> After the Sofia operation, we did not achieve any military objective in relation to the guerrilla but we recuperated lots of civilian personnel to the point we can reorganize a population . . . and this will need hard work that will involve a long time but we can achieve this if we help all the people the guerrilla has in their hands. . . . We need to increment or create a more specific type of psychological operations that teach the indigene that have fled their villages to reintegrate normal life without fearing the army. . . . Because the army's motto is progress and peace. (1982: 161, 163, 279)

To destroy collective political will, according to the formulators of the genocide, military operations had to include unimagined levels of cruelty expressed in the torture of pregnant women and the macabre killing of peoples' domestic animals and pets. For example, an entry in *Plan Sofia* provides the following details: "On August 11, 1982, after a house of an enemy family was burnt down, we killed their pigs by putting grenades under their bellies" (1982: 287). Another entry succinctly says that to teach the subversives a lesson, "their dogs were killed and left hanging in their houses" (1982: 287). When populations used their survival skills, and defended their communities by improvising homemade traps, troops placed mines in entire communities (1982: 146, 147).

Plan Sofia demonstrates the high level of coordination between security forces and the Presidency, and the structure of genocide that seeks to redesign an entire society; accordingly, it was not only implemented to destroy direct sociopolitical actors and movements, but was also formulated to crush the very will to change on the part of entire populations (Levy 2004: 157). *Plan Sofia* documents that the ultimate goal of the trinity of deadly powers in Guatemala was the reintroduction of a colonial restructuring of the Maya highlands and territories into a militarized, terrorizing model, in order to keep Indigenous Peoples controlled and contained. As Grandin poignantly says:

> The point was not just to eliminate the guerrillas and their real and potential supporters but to colonize the indigenous spaces, symbols and social relations military strategists believed to be outside state control. Terror was made spectacle. Soldiers and their paramilitary allies raped women in front of husbands and children. Security forces singled out religious activists for murder and turned churches into torture chambers. "They say that the soldiers scorched earth," one survivor told me, "but it was heaven that they burned." (*The Nation*, September 27, 2010)

THE ROLE OF THE U.S. AND OTHER WESTERN POWERS

The structure of the Guatemalan genocide cannot be fully understood without recognizing the role and complicity of Western powers, especially the United States, which had replaced earlier conquerors. The United States allied itself with the colonizers' heirs, and, as Marta Casaus found out, "tolerated" the "Indians" if they remained passive and segregated. She writes:

> Many of them [colonizers' heirs] agree with keeping socio-racial segregation and avoid integration by reinforcing apartheid mechanisms. Others would like to see a racial improvement through techniques of artificial insemination and others are inclined towards ethnic cleansing . . . between four and ten per cent want drastic solutions and are deeply intolerant towards the indigenous population. This sector has expressed on many occasions that they agree with the extermination of the indigenous population and with their physical and cultural disappearance. (in CEH 1999)

The United States had centuries of experience in the institutionalization of racism (Hooks 1984; Hill Collins 1991; Davis 1984), although this fact has been silenced in most studies on U.S. foreign policy. Thus, the American National Security Doctrine has to be understood as a geopolitical and legal tool of planetary racism, designed to defend capitalism in Latin America, which is defined by National Security Doctrine ideologues as America's backyard. In Guatemala, as with most Latin America's economies, U.S. corporations began to dominate at the end of the nineteenth century, through alliances with dominant classes in the area. As Salvadorian poet and leader Roque Dalton said, "The main strength of U.S. foreign policy . . . is its ability to use local governments and armies for the protection of its own interests" (Barry, Wood, and Preusch 1982: 68).

Barry, Wood, and Preusch have noted that "The United States hasn't been fussy about its Central American dictators as long as they looked out for U.S. interests; and it hasn't hesitated to send Marines to the shores of Central America if those interests were substantially threatened" (1982: 5). These authors have also highlighted how the securitization of foreign policy was clearly formulated in 1927 when Undersecretary of State Robert Olds declared:

> We do control the destinies of Central America and we do so for the simple reason that the national interest absolutely dictates such a course. . . . Until now Central America has always understood that governments which we recognize and support stay in power, while those we do not recognize and support fail. (cited in Barry, Wood, and Preusch 1982: 5)

The structure of genocide in Guatemala operated with the full support of Western powers, especially the United States. While the United States has been more blatant in its support for militarized democracies, other powers like Canada, and institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, have also supported genocide and other crimes against humanity by proxy. Chossudovsky provides compelling data and analysis for the underlying socioeconomic causes of the Rwandan genocide, which seem comparatively appropriate for the Guatemalan case, because in both cases, and at different times, some in the "international community" were shocked by the massacres, but silent about the invisible complicity of free-market shock therapies. Chossudovsky contends that "The deliberate manipulation of market forces destroyed Rwanda's economic activity and peoples' livelihood, fueled unemployment, and created a situation of generalized famine and social despair" (1997: 119). In Guatemala, hundreds of cooperatives in the Maya highlands were obliterated under the accusation that they were supportive of the guerrillas, but what is behind the narrative is the violent prevention of livelihood projects, which had enabled them to provide their own food, and to achieve the social sovereignty integral to self-determination (Tischler 2010).

Letelier, a Chilean economist and a member of Salvador Allende's cabinet, assassinated in the United States in 1976 by a Chilean commando in an action sanctioned by the CIA, pointed out that it should be a common sense observation that economic policies are conditioned by, and at the same time modify, a social and political situation in the country where they are put into practice:

> The violation of human rights, the system of institutionalized brutality, the drastic control and suppression of every form of meaningful dissent is discussed (and often condemned) as a phenomenon only indirectly linked, or indeed entirely unrelated, to the classical unrestrained "free market" policies that have been enforced by the military junta [of Chile]. This failure to connect has been particularly characteristic of private and public financial institutions, which have publicly praised and supported the economic policies adopted by the Pinochet government, while regretting the "bad international image" the junta has gained from its "incomprehensible" persistence in torturing, jailing and persecuting all its critics. (1976: 1-2)

Disconnecting politics, and the politics of state terror, to be more precise, from capitalist policies and institutions, has been paramount in justifying genocide and other crimes against humanity on the part of transnational corporations, multilateral lenders, and powerful Western institutions. The hegemonic idea is that genocide, torture, rape, and forced disappearances are independent of "free markets," since they belong to the realm of "politics." This explains how, after a visit to Chile amidst widespread state terror, the

U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, William Simon, congratulated Pinochet for bringing "economic freedom" to the Chilean People, while regretting some of the "excesses" of the Pinochet regime (Letelier 1976). As Letelier pointed out:

> This particularly convenient concept of a social system in which "economic freedom" and political terror coexist without touching each other, allows these financial spokesmen to support their concept of "freedom" while exercising their verbal muscles in defense of human rights (1976: 44)

Klein notes that what frustrated Letelier was the obvious contradiction of the world being horrified at reports of summary executions and electroshock in the prisons, but remaining silent in the face of economic shock therapies—or, in the case of international banks, of their "showering the junta with loans, downright giddy about Pinochet's embrace of 'free-market fundamentals.'" (2007: 116-77). Klein adds:

> Letelier rejected a frequently articulated notion that the junta had two separate, easily compartmentalized projects—one a bold experiment in economic transformation, the other an evil system of grisly torture and terror. There was only one project, [Letelier] insisted, in which terror was the central tool of the free-market transformation. (2007: 117)

Letelier forcefully critiqued the elasticity of Milton Friedman's conception of "freedom," arguing that only classical economic liberalism can support political democracy in Europe and North America. However, Letelier said, when Friedman talks about "freedom" in Third World societies like Chile, he "can now so easily disentangle economics from politics when the economic theories he advocates coincide with an absolute restriction of every type of democratic freedom" (1976: 45). Letelier continued:

> One would logically expect that if those who curtail private enterprise are held responsible for the effects of their measures in the political sphere, those who impose unrestrained "economic freedom" would also be held responsible when the imposition of this policy is inevitably accompanied by massive repression, hunger, unemployment and the permanence of a brutal police state. (1976: 45)

To make this point more compellingly, Letelier paraphrased the story of a Latin American dictator who, at the beginning of the twentieth century, ordered the closing of all public schools when his advisers told him the country was suffering from a very serious educational problem. Currently, Letelier said, there still remain disciples of this dictator who think that the way to eradicate poverty is to kill the poor (1976: 50).

Bohoslavsky and Opgenhaffen argue that the result of ignoring the financial and economic dimensions of state terror and other crimes against humanity is that "corporations today enjoy a variety of protections and access to justice that are not available to human rights victims" (2010:179). In the case of Argentina, these authors note that,

> Banks played a significant economic and political role . . . both by supporting the macroeconomic ratios of the Argentinean dictatorship and by financing the growing military expenditures meant to ensure what the junta deemed "internal security," which translated into the regime's capacity to perpetrate crimes against humanity on a mass scale. (2010:202)

Disconnecting genocide from capitalist "free market" policies has been very common in discourse in Guatemala, as in other countries, except among survivors of genocide and other crimes who organized precisely to demand and create "other ways of living and being in the world. A world with enough good schools, hospitals, decent jobs; a world in which we could live, not only survive" (Belje'Imox, interview 2002). Regarding convenient disconnections between corporate powers, Western states, and state terrorism, the Argentinean ambassador in the U.S., Hector Timerman, raised the following compelling question to the U.S. representative Carolyn B. Maloney, who was worried about the impact, on global finance and the U.S. economy, of the 2002-2005 Argentinean default:

> Why would somebody lend money to a regime that threw out people alive from airplanes, among them two nuns? Perhaps we should ask ourselves why the victims must pay to bankers and investors who lent money to genocides. Well, it may be that for them it is business as usual." (May 28, 2008, in Bohoslavsky and Opgenhaffen 2010:202)

Although most experts on Guatemala, including many Guatemalans themselves, emphasize the sole responsibility of the military and the Guatemalan state for crimes of terror, it is crucial not to forget the serious complicity of Western states and corporate powers. Western powers should also be accountable for the aftermath of genocidal destruction.

Because they challenged its dominion in Central America, the United States was so determined to support the elimination of peoples' power to organize, and the erosion of their livelihoods, that Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Enders warned: "The United States is not going to allow the military triumph of the guerrillas. It has the means and the desire to do so, irrespective of the political cost" (Barry, Wood, and Preusch 1982: 68). Barry, Wood, and Preusch argue that American aid and humanitarianism are empty discourses aimed at concealing the true purposes of foreign policy:

> The first hard truth of foreign aid is that its main purpose has never been to help the world's starving masses or to develop the underdeveloped world. The nation's first food aid law didn't include even a hint of humanitarian concern. . . . From John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress to Reagan's Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) the U.S. government has always protected the interests of the private sector. (1982: 82)

The ideologues of U.S. and other Western foreign policies in the region have failed to recognize that "the roots of revolution are sustained by the desire of people for a better life and reach deep into the history of injustice in Central America" (Barry, Wood, and Preusch 1982: 68).

The planners of genocide, and their bourgeois allies, were defending a predator, capitalist system which, in the late 1970s, further deregulated capital, and reinvented the role of the state as punisher of the people through sophisticated security apparatuses. Don Diego Samuc, a Maya-Tz'utujil who generously talked to me, indicated that he and many other small farmers had to stop the harvesting of coffee and various seeds because, when they were returning from their fields located on the shores of the volcanoes in Santiago Atitlán, many of their peers were brutally murdered by the military. Don Diego remembered a popular interrogation technique used on small farmers by Ladino military officers loyal to the U.S. National Security Doctrine and their military and intelligence training. One day, one of Don Diego's friends was asked trick questions that appeared straightforward, such as: "Do you know the mountain?" "How do you feel when you are inside the mountain?" "Do you know other people who know the mountain?" The constant mention of the term "mountain" was not gratuitous; it implied acceptance on the part of those being interrogated that they knew of the "mountain"; it implied that they were guerrillas or guerrilla sympathizers, and therefore, internal enemies and traitors of the fatherland. If a small farmer responded affirmatively to those questions, he was signing his own death warrant, and if his answers were negative, he was also in trouble because it was, on the face of it, not believable that a farmer did not know the land, which included the mountains and volcanoes. Don Diego's friend, panicking and with a trembling voice, told the officer that since he did not speak "*la castilla*" (Spanish), he did not understand the officer's questions, and he continually repeated this point until the officer let Don Diego's friend go.

The United States supported the Guatemalan genocide, because "increased arms transfers to Central America through either foreign military sales or commercial sales meant higher profits for U.S. arms manufacturers" (Barry, Wood, and Preusch 1982:74). The following is just a sample of the U.S. corporations with large contracts in Central America during the peak of state terror:

> Cessna Aircraft

Chamberlain Manufacturing
Colt Industries
FMC
Hercules
ICI Americas
Morton Marietta Aluminum Sales
Olin
Polak, Winter and Company
Remington Arms
Sentinel Electronics
Smith & Wesson
Sperry Flight Systems
(Barry, Wood, and Preusch 1982:74)

If Central America as a whole was a political and military playground for the United States, Guatemala played a more central role in this geopolitics. Lt. General Wallace Nutting told the *New York Times* in August 1982 (when the genocidal campaign Victoria 82 was being declared a success) that the situation in Guatemala was potentially more serious than in El Salvador, because, "The population is larger, the economy is stronger, the geographical position is more critically located in a strategic sense" (Barry, Wood, and Preusch 1982: 78), adding that "the implications of a Marxist takeover in Guatemala are a lot more serious that in El Salvador" (1982: 78).

As I further analyze in chapter 5, the United States has intervened in other ways. For example, it has supported the widespread presence and influence of fundamentalist evangelism. This has contributed to the further fragmenting of Maya communities, especially those places hardest hit by genocide.

RACIALIZED FEMINICIDE: THE UNDERSIDE OF GENOCIDE

Feminicide[6] is the process through which the bodies and spirits of women are mutilated, raped, and tortured, primarily because of how their gender is violently interconnected to the racialization of their class location and their labor. These violent interconnections make feminized labor, such as assembly line work in *maquiladoras*, some of the most denigrating forms of work (Schmit-Camacho 2005). I speak of the interconnections of racialized and gendered class relations. In feminicide, these interlinkages constitute a hyper-sexualized expression of social misogyny, connected to economic exclusion and exploitation, which has reached unprecedented levels of occurrence in the period of late capitalism, also known as neoliberalism. Schmidt Camacho says that the denigration of working women as prostitutes is not merely an expression of class hostilities, or patriarchal retrenchments against women's incursions into the public sphere. Rather, the feminization of labor—

devalued and detached from any concept of labor power—is just another expression of a global neoliberal project of governance that has created new modes and spaces for income generation, through the commodification of poor women's bodies, and delimited citizenship (2005: 266). Thus, in this global context—with degrees of difference according to specific places—"the moral discourse linking *obreras* (women laborers) and prostitutes both masks the state's interest in sexualizing female labor and legitimates subaltern women's exclusion" (2005: 266) from the formal protected sphere of citizenship. Disposability of impoverished and racialized women's bodies and labor is therefore a systemic practice that contributes to the creation of conditions for the perpetration of feminicide. Hence, feminicide is not a regressive cultural manifestation of masculine aggression, as several international observers maintain, especially when it happens in the global South.

This gendered, classed and racialized violence is "perhaps better understood as a *rational* expression of the contradictions arising from the gendered codes of neoliberal governance and development" (Schmidt Camacho 2005: 267; emphasis in original). Further,

> The combined processes of economic restructuring and political transition have had the perverse effect of increasing the state's stake in the denationalization of poor women's citizenship precisely at the moment of their emergence as new political and economic actors. The global economies that convert subaltern women into commodities interrupt women's purchase on the most basic right to personal security. The *feminicidio* represents an assault on this bodily agency in the extreme. (2005: 267)

Feminicide plagues almost every society in the world, including those usually categorized as "developed" and "industrialized." In the global North, it is usually Indigenous, immigrant women of color, and Black women, who have been trapped into cycles of poverty, unemployment, racism, and drug use and dealing, as well as increased incarceration (Smith 2005, Sudbury 2002). The explosion in racialized women's incarceration in the global north, as Sudbury explains is,

> the hidden face of neoliberal or "corporate" globalization and cannot be understood without reference to three overlapping phenomena. The first is the fundamental restructuring of national economies and social welfare provision that has occurred as a result of the globalization of capital. The second and related phenomenon is the emergence and subsequent global expansion of what has been labeled a 'prison industrial complex' made up of an intricate web of relations between state penal institutions, politicians and profit-driven prison corporations. The third is the emergence of a US-led global war on drugs, which is symbiotically related and mutually constituted by the transnational trade in criminalized drugs. . . . These new regimes of accumulation and

> discipline, build on older systems of racist and patriarchal exploitation to ensure the super-exploitation of Black women and women of color within the global prison industrial complex. (2002: 58,59)

Some global, southern feminists such as Lagarde argue that it is a northern stereotype to believe that economically, racially, and sexually marginalized women are targeted more for feminicide than are their northern sisters.[7] However, documented cases in Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Canada, and the United States show that there may be a further and more violent female subalternization, wherein histories of systemic and everyday racism, colonial imperial capitalism, and misogyny are more actively enabled by increased neoliberal and militarized poverty (Mendoza 2006; Schmidt Camacho 2005). This is especially so in contexts that in recent decades have undergone genocidal state terror and imperial interventions, such as occurred in Guatemala.

While feminicide as a concept and practice is becoming a less marginal topic within some academic circles, its connections with genocide, racism, and state terror have been obscured, erased, or conveniently forgotten, even by many feminists interested in gendered violence, especially those who isolate gender from other relations of power and social injustice (see Lagarde 2010; Schmidt Camacho 2005; Fregoso and Bejarano et al. 2010). But in many contexts, it is almost impossible to ignore these connections, which might be explained in terms of racialized feminicide. Entrenched, racialized, and gendered practices and ideologies that are hegemonic in "peacetime" get interlocked with genocidal narratives and representations of racialized and political groups as a "national threat," to justify the persecution and killing of racialized and impoverished women. Indigenous women's bodies are particularly seen as dangerous, for they are represented as incubators of future violent men and overtly breeding women. And this mentality has been present–with some changes in different times—since the Conquest of the Americas, and is central in the perpetuation of the coloniality of gender (Lugones 2008). As Lugones notes, coloniality of gender has violently suppressed non-Western femininities and masculinities. It subordinated not only women, but also men, in that the ideal of maleness was attached to the imperial civilizing mission, wherein being a White European, and later North American heterosexual, man meant, at all levels, being citizens and owners of land, natural resources, and peoples' lives. Clearly, these rights could not be held by many men in subalternized societies. This also meant deciding who was naturally a full human, and who could, through violent assimilation and Christianization, become barely human. Thus, one can argue that feminicide, as one of the most "extreme" forms of torturing and killing colonized women, has been central in the imposition and perpetuation of modern-global/coloniality of power.

The violence of gender as a colonial system was first enacted through the rape and impregnation of millions of Indigenous women in the Americas, acts out of which Mestizo peoples were born, as I outlined in chapter 2. And when Indigenous women organized and rebelled, their punishment was severe, to teach them that they should remain submissively in their place. In the imperial imaginary, to be political was not a capability they "deserved." So, when they organized resistance, they were treated and represented as violent beings opposed to modernity, and as communist and terrorist reproducers of criminals. This is the discourse countless Maya and non-Maya women heard from their kidnappers, rapists, and torturers during the four decades of genocidal state terror in Guatemala. The following example serves as an illustration of this long process of construing Maya, and politically active, femininities as inhuman and expendable.

In 1983, at a large farm called Santa Teresa, located in Nentón, Huehuetenango, military personnel systematically raped insurgent and other women accused of being members of guerrilla forces. Most of the women were young. Some men and children were also publicly raped and then killed. The army also forced several young Maya men—obliged to patrol and serve as human shields to protect the military from insurgent attacks—to rape a thirteen-year-old girl, vaginally and anally. They were then forced to kill her (CEH 1999: C. 15686).

Scholar Maldonado Torres calls such a process a much skewed vision of humans (2008: 238). This kind of vision, Maldonado Torres adds,

> combines claims for autonomy and freedom with the . . . systematic differentiation between groups taken as the norm of the human and others seen as the exception to it. The so-called discovery of the New World became a crucial point in the establishment of this vision: it oriented Western humanism in a radically dehumanizing direction. From then on, Western humanism argued for the glory of Man and the misery of particular groups of human beings simultaneously. Indeed, Man became the most glorious as he was able to claim relative independence from God and superiority over the supposedly less than human others at the same time. (2008: 238)

If all women's bodies are de facto sinful in Christian doctrine, then the body of the colonized woman (the Other) is not only sinful, but also deeply polluted. As Smith notes, the pollution of Indigenous bodies is very present, and is described as sexual pollution:

> Theorists Albert Cave, Robert Warrior, H.C. Porter, and others have demonstrated that Christian colonizers often likened Native peoples to the biblical Canaanites, both worthy of mass destruction. What makes Canaanites both worthy of mass destruction in the biblical narrative and Indian peoples supposedly worthy of destruction in the eyes of their colonizers is that they both personify sexual sin. In the Bible, Canaanites commit acts of sexual perversion

> in Sodom (Gen. 19:1-29), are the descendants of the unsavory relations between Lot and his daughters (Gen. 19:30-38), and are the descendants of the sexually pervasive Ham (Gen. 28:21-22, Deut. 28:18, 1 Kings 14:214, 2 Kings 23:7, Hosea 4:13, Amos 2:7). (2005: 10)

Attaching pollution to racialized and colonized women's bodies was indeed reenacted in the Guatemalan genocide, where the sociopolitical agency of Maya women was so severely punished with racialized feminicide as to teach future generation of women that being political, as well as being creative, was not compatible with being Maya and a woman.

In another instance of brutality, living pregnant women's wombs were opened with bayonets and their unborn children thrown to rivers and smashed on trees and rocks. This was practiced more frequently on the bodies of Maya women from communities in the "Red zone," for they were seen as faster reproducers of future "communists." The following case illustrates this point:

> In Rabinal, Baja Verapaz, where the Maya-Achi live, the army came in to a family's house and immediately killed the husband when he tried to escape. His 18-year old wife, who was six months pregnant, was raped by a platoon of 40 men. They raped her for three days and nights, in front of her mother and when some soldiers refused to do it they were punished. Then this woman was dressed up in military gear and was brought to the military commissioner's house where she continued to be raped. When she was half dead, she was brought to the top of a hill where she was killed. (CEH 1999: C.13004)

A soldier who testified to the CEH narrated how an officer to whom he was subordinated organized groups of assassins and taught them how they had to kill. Sometimes, this officer said,

> you have to strangle or hang people with cables and you have to rape the women. These orders were given long before they were executed. After they raped women, they ordered these women to open their legs, lie on their stomachs and place their hands on the floor, then they inserted guns into their rectums or vaginas and shot them. Another time, a group of 20 or 30 soldiers raped a woman. (CEH 1999: C. 87)

Another witness also testified that:

A woman was raped by who knows how many soldiers who pricked her tongue, took her ears off, and took out her eyes [and] took her breasts off and placed them on a rock, and then peeled off the skin beneath her feet. . . . Her entire body was wounded, and they left what was left of her naked body hanging from a tree. She was carrying her three-month-old baby who was also killed. (CEH 1999: C 2595)

In genocide, rape is a collective weapon used against women and girls reduced to absolute, concrete, and symbolic nakedness. Rape, torture, and massacres in which women become public trophies of "free market" colonial and patriarchal hetero-masculinity—a masculinity that was, and is, defending an exploitative conception of nation, family, and femininity—occur because, as Feierstein notes, genocide does not end with the deaths it produces; rather, it *begins* with those very deaths (2010).

Animalization, a long-standing tool of coloniality of power, was exacerbated in the context of genocide, and attached to socially active women from communities that were developing vibrant livelihood projects such as in the Rio Negro, Baja Verapaz. This community was destroyed in 1982, when 107 children and 70 women were executed. Many of these women were raped, and some were pregnant, as the following testimony by a survivor makes clear:

> The army forced women to gather. They played marimba and obliged the women to dance . . . they accused these women of dancing with guerrillas. Women were set apart and were raped, then they forced them to walk up to the foot of a mountain and they hit the women while telling them that they were cows; they treated these women as if they were driving cattle to a field. Most of the women were naked and were raped; there were women who were reaching the time to give birth. (CEH 1999: C 10)

This was a ritual of racial and heterosexualized violence. In this sense, and as Razack points out, "sexualized racial violence does double duty: it provides the sense of power, control and mastery and, at the same time, it offers an intimacy to what it is forbidden to desire or to see as human. . . . Sexualized violence accomplishes the eviction from humanity" (2008: 71).

The accusation of "subversion" was a well-elaborated excuse to cut from its roots not only Maya social agency in general, but also the emergent sociopolitical agency of Maya women who defended their culture on an everyday basis, while fighting the reproduction of patriarchal ideologies and practices in their communities. Maya women were struggling for their fundamental entitlement to forge families and to live in families. The more I study this genocide, the more I am convinced that, even without the insurgent movement, Maya peoples and their communities would have been subjected to genocidal state terror, because of the deep, revolutionary challenge they represented to the coloniality of power, and because their struggles did not conform to conventional frames of social justice and liberation. Maya women were integrating a decolonial perspective on gender, and against racial, capitalist, and patriarchal domination, even if they did not use these terms.

Maya community organization included a strong defense of Maya teachings and culture, including exercising the entitlement to generate and reproduce Indigenous epistemologies and spirituality, in which many women were

very active.[8] Genocidal state terror targeted female leaders, who were hunted down with sexualized cruelty when the perpetrators discovered that these women were also spiritual guides. In 1980, in Nebaj, K'iche, Juana Marcos, who was the first mayor in a *cofradia* (Indigenous organizations that combine popular Catholicism with some Maya spiritual practices) and an active Catholic, was arrested by military forces; later, her breasts had been cut off, and her neck and her back were covered with knife wounds (CEH 1999). It was an act of patriarchal punishment of the community to leave Juana Marcos' body in a public place and without her breasts. Her neighbors and relatives knew she was a leader and a spiritual guide. Her death was a signal of what was coming to the Maya highlands: genocide. Her death was also a demonstration that Mayas, and all who organize for revolutionary social justice, were seen and treated as expendable. The hacking of Juana Marcos' body into pieces crossed the threshold of this discourse, and in Maya communities it literally meant "if they can kill women, they can kill everyone; our fate is sealed."

In the perpetration of racialized feminicide within the context of genocide, not only were women's bodies targeted, but also their Maya clothes.[9] This was especially so in areas marked as "Red" conflict zones such as the Ixil area, where the *cortes* (long skirts) most women wore were red, a color capitalist ideologues perceive as representing "communist danger." When the army came into the community and saw dozens of *cortes* hanging out to dry, they immediately shot at these Maya females' clothing, as if they were killing the women who wore the *cortes* (witness cited in ODHAG/REMHI 1998). This community had been a target of a massacre, and most of its inhabitants had fled to safer places; the few remaining survivors could not believe the soldiers' action, because these *cortes* were clothing, and why shoot at clothing? The clothes, however, were symbols of the presence of Ixil women and, as I explained in chapter 3, Maya women have also been harassed, persecuted, and demonized for wearing their customary clothing. In this regard, and others, Maya women have been accused of collectively blocking "development and modernity." This accusation lingers in the minds of many Maya women long after the 1996 Peace Accords. Ana Isabel, a Maya national leader, made a significant point in this regards when she said that

> some of us even talk about the stigma put on the word "Maya" by the killers of our people because, year after year, in churches, municipalities, schools, newspapers, radio news, and so on, they repeated that "indios" were guerrillas, subversive delinquents, criminals thirsty for blood who one day would rise up against Ladinos. Therefore, they needed to be extirpated as if they were cancers in society. So when our children listen to these insults, they cannot say anything out loud—but they are learning how we are collectively named. So, some of us think it is so difficult to do triple work now: against this awful

> memory of shame and criminalization, while at the same time being hopeful that through our struggles we will come up from the ashes and be respected as fully human at the same time as we mother our children the best we can. (Interview 2002)

Racialized feminicide is not a collateral product of war and internal armed conflicts, but a deliberate genocidal logic that has sought to instill a long-standing, deep culture of social and political paralysis. As the authors of *Breaking the Silence* rightly observe, "In Guatemala, sexual[ized] violence constituted a counterinsurgent instrument the final goal of which was to subjugate and further oppress victims' sexual identity by degrading it in its most intimate forms and by so doing, destroying communities through the damage perpetrated on women" (Consorcio de Actoras por el Cambio 2007: 9). Racialized feminicide in the context of genocide is not only about simple control, it is about racist, heterosexist, and misogynist control of racialized women who dare to challenge interlocking systems of oppression. This is why the perpetrators of racialized feminicide could torture, mutilate, and kill women and girls they already imagined as inferiorized beings, while the same planners and executioners could be, at the same time, good fathers, brothers, lovers, and protectors of their imagined, homogenous, capitalist nation.

THE ATTACK ON MAYA CHILDHOOD

When agents of genocide named Maya children as "bad seeds," and then killed thousands of them, they were sending the message that these children were symbols of evilness because they were Mayas, and because, according to the anti-communist crusade, they were sons and daughters of families conceived as society's cancer. Maya childhood, therefore, was not a secondary casualty of state terror, but a clear object of destruction within the context of genocide. Children, as young as toddlers, were condemned to torture, and/or to witness it as it was perpetrated on entire communities. Many children were forced to witness their mothers' and sisters' rape, mutilation, and death. This factor helps us to understand that the attack against Maya childhood was one of the most pervasive, yet well-planned, strategies of collective punishment.

It is true that two types of childhood were named as components of the "internal enemy": children of Ladino and Mestizo progressive and revolutionary families, and children of Maya Peoples. However, while Mestizo and Ladino children were attacked as members of a national group (those active in social movements), Maya children were attacked both as members of an already racialized culture victimized by racism for centuries, and as members

of a group named by the perpetrators as "enemies of the people." Each case is different, and yet they both belong to the same phenomenon: genocide against children. This is perhaps the clearest evidence that the justification of subversion was an invented mantra. The following case is only one example among thousands that show that eliminating "subversion" was indeed a justification for a deadly assault on Maya life. In March 1982, in the community of Chiché, K'iche, when the army came there had already been a chicken pox epidemic that forced most children to remain in bed. Many adults, upon noticing the military presence, fled to the gullies, but most of the sick children were left in their homes because it was difficult to carry them out. Most importantly, the adults believed that the military would not hurt children, let alone very sick children. Still, there were some adults who stayed with the children. Contrary to what the parents believed would happen, the army tortured and decapitated all of the children, but before this they made the women, who had stayed behind to take care of their sick kids, cook for the army. Pigs, chickens, and hens were served as food for the perpetrators. According to a witness who survived in the bushes, the military said they could not do their work on empty stomachs. The army brought some civil patrollers and made them decapitate some of the children and their caretakers, and ordered the patrollers to leave the bodies hanging at the front of some houses. The CEH identified forty-two victims of this massacre (CEH 1999).

If all parents who lose their children in violent ways are left with deep sorrow, those who survived the massacre described above carry this sorrow more profoundly because they blame themselves for leaving their sick children behind. Several parents have lost their minds (CEH 1999). Others have reorganized to seek justice. Attainment of the latter is, however, illusory. In 1997, with the support of the National Coordination of Widows in Guatemala (CONAVIGUA)—whose leader, Rosalina Tuyuc, was the only public voice in the 1990s insisting that what happened in Guatemala was genocide—surviving relatives of the Chiche massacre brought a lawsuit demanding the exhumation of the victims' remains, and a thorough and independent investigation. They also demanded that the courts order the Ministry of Defense to disclose the names of the officers, soldiers, and Civil Patrol members responsible for killing the sick children and their caretakers. To add insult to injury, the Ministry said, "I declare to you that according to archival information for the date you mentioned, there is no record that any military patrol had operated in that area" (CEH 1999). These Maya children were brutally assassinated as part of the vilified Maya collectivity, and, beyond that, their assassination has been erased from history. By denying their lives and their deaths, the perpetrators and courts are telling the Maya that their pain and their victi-

mized children are a product of their fantasy. I name the courts of law here because, overall, they have operated to the benefit of the economically and racially privileged classes.

To begin to grasp the hidden goals behind the conception of Maya children as "bad seeds," one must first de-link one's analysis from hegemonic, and even critical, analytical frameworks that affirm that the rational brutality, exercised in the context of genocide, against thousands of toddlers and young girls and boys, is beyond explanation, since it is the ultimate expression of barbarism and cruelty (ODHAG 2006; field notes 1999, 2002, 2008). This argument derives from the theorization of the genocide against Jews in World War II, and more specifically, as Lentin notes, from the discursive legacy of Auschwitz, a name that has become "a metaphor, a 'code,' invoked in relation to all 'unspeakable' catastrophes" (2006: 463-64). Lentin argues that this discursive legacy overshadows other genocides, for it makes them less important, or not qualified, as genocide; and in the end, this representation "does not help us remember the extermination and its victims, but rather erases that memory" (2006: 463-64).

Lentin's analysis is helpful in the case of Guatemala, where most human rights reports represent atrocities against children in general, but especially against Maya children, as beyond rational explanation (field notes 1999, 2002, 2006, 2008). However, as several Maya survivors have told me, Maya children were seen as "bad seeds" because they were Maya, and they were the sons and daughters of thousands of massacred parents who were treated as internal enemies (field notes 1999, 2002, 2008). Many of those I interviewed could not talk openly about this because they did not feel safe.

There were others who dared to share what they lived, heard, and saw during the peak years of genocide. Through their courage, some of us know about the grassroots organizations, named Communities in Resistance, formed by survivors of genocide, which were pivotal to their collective survival, despite relentless attacks by the Trinity of Death. There were other acts of community bravery, such as the Maya-Tz'utujil organization's forcing of the army out of Santiago Atitlán in 1990, the same year in which Communities in Resistance publicly appeared and denounced the atrocities to which they were subjected. The work of the extraordinary scholar Myrna Mack, brutally assassinated on September 11, 1990, just after these communities came out their hidden places, also contributed to making this historical denunciation possible.

Acts of community bravery included elders covering their ears in order to avoid hearing the endless indoctrination sessions held by civilians and military experts in psychological warfare (field notes 2002). A young Maya-K'iche woman, Luz, remembered an event that happened when she was about ten years old. An elder told her and other children that plastic was not only for protecting people from the rain, but that it also helped them not go

crazy and forget who they were as people. The elder, who escaped the concentration camp and joined Communities in Resistance, said, "When I cover my ears, I imagine what the military are telling us is a storm from which I need to be protected, so the plastic bag covering my ears works and helps the rain slip down my body without getting me wet" (field notes 2002). Luz's mother and two siblings were killed when their town was scorched in 1981. Part of her family went with Communities in Resistance, but she and others were captured by civil patrols and obliged to live in a concentration camp. It was indeed very hard for Luz to talk about her individual suffering, especially when all that is occurring in survivors' surroundings is senseless, and because in Guatemala, the legacies of genocide are ever-present. A woman who was a child when her family was killed said:

> I am still afraid to tell what I know; it is possible there might be some people who could use what we say. I am not sure if I could if I can trust people because we might not think alike. . . . We have resisted for so many years because we have known to be discrete, how to not talk. (ODHAG 2006: 71)

However, it is the ethical and epistemological responsibility of those doing research and activist work, not to reproduce analytical frameworks that descend from discursive legacies that say survivors' testimonies of genocide and other unspeakable crimes are beyond explanation. This interpretation can further contribute to what Feierstein and Levy name the death of the possibility of thinking that survivors, and those who struggled for social justice, are contributors to history, as well as makers of their own histories (2004: 16). This is true especially of those who live, or lived, in contexts where genocide was the instrument for silencing the political will of people demanding a dignified life.

Many Maya children who survived genocide were given to military and paramilitary families, as if they were colonial trophies, because it was not enough to kill their parents and to force these children to watch genocide as a public spectacle; it was necessary, according to agents of domination, to "reeducate" these children. This was the situation in the case of eighteen Maya-Achi children of the community of Rio Negro, a place where the World Bank and the Guatemalan state built a dam. Its inhabitants have endured massacres, and the assassination of their community leaders, since 1981. On February 13, 1982, civil patrollers from a neighboring village, Xococ, killed seventy-four people from Rio Negro (fifty-five men and nineteen women) when they went to renew their identification cards. A month later, on March 13, 1982, a military platoon and fifteen civil patrollers returned to Rio Negro and killed 177 people (107 children and 70 women). The military leadership forced these women and children to walk up to a hill that had spiritual meaning for them, ordered the soldiers to bring ten women and

ten children to the very top of the hill, and killed a child and a woman each time, forcing the rest to witness until almost all were eliminated. Eighteen children escaped. Some of these survivors carried their younger siblings on their backs, which made them easier targets of the military. One of these escapees was killed, and the rest were captured by the army.

The seventeen captured children grew up in environments of extreme abuse, including religious abuse, for they were converted to evangelism. One was given in adoption to an American couple, and grew up as a U.S. citizen under the name of Denise Becker. Later, she discovered that she was also Dominga Sic, whose story of survival and courage is told in the video-documentary *Discovering Dominga* (2003). The other Rio Negro people who survived the massacres and subsequent persecution were placed in a development pole named Pacux. These survivors were stigmatized as guerrillas, and humiliated by neighbors and the military; their mobility was extremely restricted (field notes 2002; Rights Action 2008).

There is a relevant fact, hidden in the information about the destruction of Mayas, that reveals the long-term goals of socially reengineering Maya life, and Guatemala as a nation. In 1984, the mayor of Rabinal (to which the community of Rio Negro belongs), the provincial capital of Baja Verapaz, ordered his auxiliary mayors to bring all children between the ages of five and ten to an orphanage managed by the evangelical church of Nazareth of San Miguel Chicaj. Twenty children were practically kidnapped from their families and kept in this orphanage for four years, until their parents overcame their extreme fear and contacted a Catholic priest. After several months of negotiation, these children returned to their homes. Many were already deeply indoctrinated into fundamentalist evangelism and showed signs of extreme selfishness and individualism, which were not common traits in their original community. But in time, and through collective effort, they came to be part of the community (CEH 1999: C. 3213). The case of the surviving children of Rio Negro shows, amongst other things, that genocide is not only the physical killing of humans, and the destruction of crops, homes, and animals, but it is also a process through which those who survive, especially children, are required to "re-birth" as "new" citizens, for the restructuring of a more controlled society.

Maya girls were subjected to interlocked and violent racial, gender, and class oppression. Heteropatriarchal, racist masculinity explains the sexualized pleasure troops and paramilitary men exhibited while raping girls in front of entire communities and, of course, in front of their parents. Masculinity, in the context of genocide, not only reduced women to things, but also served to frame colonized masculinities. Maya and revolutionary men were cast as incompetent to "protect" their women, a central role of dominant masculinity. At the same time, many Maya men were taught, as Krishnaswamy points out, that "the real goal of feminization is effeminization—a pro-

cess in which colonizing men use women/womanhood to delegitimize, discredit, and disempower colonized men" (in Razack 2008: 63). In the Guatemalan case, the colonizing genocidal apparatus forced many Maya men to become accomplices of sexualized racial violence, while at the same time it offered these men temporary membership in dominant masculinity. These interlocking systems of power-in-action debunk the explanation that some "bad apples," in otherwise healthy institutions, are responsible for cases of rape, torture, and kidnappings, especially within the context of genocide. As Razack states:

> The sense of self that is simultaneously required and produced by empire is a self that is experienced *in relation* to the subordinate other—a relationship that is deeply gendered and sexualized. . . . [An] interlocking approach requires that we keep several balls in the air at once, striving to overcome the successive process forced upon us by language and focusing on the ways in which bodies express social hierarchies of power. (2008: 63)

In a community of El K'iche where most of the inhabitants were killed in a massacre, two girls, Juana and Francisca Sales Ortiz, who were coming home after school, saw the military. Terrified, they ran to their *temascal* (a symbol of Maya spirituality and healing, similar to a sweat lodge) to hide, and were shot and killed. The soldiers grabbed these girls' bodies, cleaned any traces of blood, and placed them against a wall close to the kitchen. Then they turned the family's radio on and played dancing music for hours, while other soldiers were preparing food they later ate in front of the bodies of the girls they had just killed (CEH 1999). Juana and Francisca's mother, father, and a sister survived because they were not in the house when the army came. As soon as the army left town–or so they believed—the mother returned to look for her daughters, but could not get back to their house because the community had been mined by the army. Juana and Francisca's relatives waited until it was dark and discovered the girls had been killed. They quickly dug a hole and put the bodies in it. They knew it was an improvised grave that could be opened by the army, but that was the only option they had, and to this day—and after several exhumation attempts—Juana and Francisca's remains cannot be found. As her sister Carmen Jimenez says, "They are not resting in a proper grave; their bodies remain underground as if they are clandestine" (CEH 1999).

The planners of genocide taught for decades, through violence, that those who organized were the very symbol of evilness, and that as "communists" they were atheists acting against God. The killing of Juana and Francisca, and the spectacle of terror it was made into by the military, was not random. In the minds of the perpetrators, these Maya girls represented the cancer that needed to be brutally removed; by killing them and then playing music and

eating in front of their dead bodies, the perpetrators were sending the message to the rest of society, and fundamentally to Mayas, that the fatherland had to be cleansed of "social parasites."

Thus, and to reiterate, children under genocidal state terror do not constitute "collateral damage"; they are directly targeted in order to destroy the social fabric of entire groups and societies. The report "Demos a la Niñez un Futuro de Paz" (We Must Give Children a Future of Peace), by the Human Rights Office of the Catholic Church in Guatemala, states that children were seen and treated by the state as "bad seeds," and that attacking them constituted "a war objective in itself, or, in other words, children were not casual victims of state terror" (2006: 16). Maya children, and children of politically active families, were treated as "internal enemies," defined in the Guatemalan Centre for Military Studies' manual of countersubversive warfare as

> all individuals, groups, and organizations which through illegal actions want to break the established order . . . [and] who by following international communism develop so-called revolutionary war and subversion in the country. Those individuals, groups, and organizations who are not communist but who try to break the established order are also considered internal enemies. (quoted in ODHAG 2006: 13)

The recorded outcome of this ideological practice is that out of more than two-hundred-thousand killed, most of them Maya, 17.07 percent were children between the ages of one to seventeen (CEH 1999). Fredy Pecerelli, director of the Forensic Anthropological Association, and who has worked tirelessly with a team to exhume the remains of those buried in clandestine cemeteries throughout Guatemala, says that the percentage of children killed, out of the total number of known deaths, is at least 25 percent. He made this point after finishing eight-hundred exhumations in which 22 percent were women (in Trejo, Alba 20l0).

Reinaga, an Aymara scholar and activist, was correct in showing that organized silence anaesthetizes and cleanses the widespread violence of colonial and imperial projects. Simultaneously, imperial projects have invented the colonized as "innately" passive, and as defeatist, if they do not rebel, affirming that because these groups belong to "tribes," they cannot bring about long-standing, progressive political change. Either way, to the agents of imperial powers, the colonized and oppressed are not capable of self-governance and self-determination and, like eternal minors—like their children—they need the wise guidance of their fathers. Nevertheless, they speak, they create, and they continue to resist.

NOTES

1. Contrary to what established scholarship on Guatemala–including the CEH report--affirms, namely that some genocidal acts took place during 1981-1983, I argue that genocide is a long-standing process, which started in 1978, and ended with the massacre in Xaman in 1994, two years prior to the signing of Peace Accords.

2. I say "complementary breadwinners" because Maya women have played a central, complementary role in the reproduction of household economies, not only by undertaking unpaid housework, but also through community gardening, weaving, doing other peoples' laundry, and working as small vendors, in addition to holding paid jobs on large farms and as domestic workers. Of course, as I explained in chapter 2 on genealogies, since the 1970s a sizeable number of Maya women are obtaining college and university degrees, while others own small business in their communities and in cities. In this chapter I am more concerned with women who survived genocide, and with others who were killed and who had belonged to the most impoverished sectors of Maya Peoples.

3. Theissen lost several relatives at the hands of agents of genocidal state terror, and she has dedicated her life to making visible what happened to her dear brother, Marco Antonio, who was only fourteen years of age when he was violently kidnapped and forever disappeared. Theissen writes about this unspeakable tragedy:

> My brother, a child, was detained and disappeared by agents of the secret military intelligence apparatus, G2 on October 6, 1981. Defenseless and gagged, he was dragged from our house despite our mother's pleas. It was noon and since then we have never heard of his whereabouts. . . . We do not expect his return alive. Perhaps the only thing that could be close to a reparation would be to find his remains and that justice is served; my words seek to remember him and to express our vast and visceral desire to find justice for him and for all victims of state terrorism, imposed on Guatemala during the most hardening years by the criminals in uniform, who, together with the ruthless oligarchy, never doubted to kill, torture, and disappear thousands of people, especially boys, girls, women and the elderly. (2011)

4. This is a well-known passage from the Popol Wuj, and so many Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are very familiar with its meaning.

5. This log was smuggled out of a secret military archive, and given to Kate Doyle, an analyst of the National Security Archive, a research centre of the Georgetown University. This center made Plan Sofía public after a lengthy authentication process (Doyle 2009; Willard 2012). This log contains 365 pages, and although the military claimed the document was a fabrication, a team of experts led by Doyle was able to establish its authenticity. The logbook has been accepted as official, authentic evidence by the Inter-American Human Rights Commission (Doyle 2009).

6. The term was coined by Mexican anthropologist Marcela Lagarde, who defined it as misogynist crimes, based on the level of tolerance in societies towards gender violence, and in which the state plays an active role as a contributor to impunity. I see feminicide as a more complex and intersectional phenomenon, but find very helpful Lagarde's use of the term in distinction from femicide, a legalistic and individualist term, which focuses on individual crimes against women, as isolated from socioeconomic and political conditions.

7. Moreover, Lagarde asserts that feminicide is primarily caused by the inequality between men and women, and the greater power for violence that men have, based on this inequality (2010). In this approach, gender acquires a deterministic role, and gets divorced from historical and current structural ideologies and practices of coloniality in which racism, capitalism, and heterosexism make deeply marginalized women a more direct target of both structural and intimate violence.

8. This, of course does not pretend to argue that women had an easy time overcoming the penetration of colonial, patriarchal relations, which existed as they do in almost all societies around the world, though expressed differently according to contextual histories. The point here is that genocide severely disrupted and interrupted the collective and individual, emergent, female collective agency.

9. Entire communities were also accused of witchcraft, and women in particular were forced, in order to survive, to stop wearing their Maya clothes. In Santiago Atitlán, many women had to carry around a set of Westernized clothing to put on as soon as they left their community, because their Maya dress was identified not simply with their being "witches," but with being "subversive witches" (field notes 1999, 2002).

Chapter Five

The Bureaucracy of Death and Vilified Memories

> If only the killers [would] tell us where they buried a finger, or a piece of my brother's leg . . . even this bit would be good for us. . . . We could properly bury him.
> —Rosario, Maya woman, 2009

The bureaucracy of death consists of a set of state and corporate apparatuses whose agents employ various violent methods for one primary purpose: the "thingification" of those who organize and fight for revolutionary and progressive change. It is this reduction of organizers and fighters for sociopolitical change—women, men, their families, and communities—to simple objects, which constitutes necropolitics and necropower (Mbembe 2003). Necropolitics and necropower have industrialized and mechanized death, enabling the operation of everyday coercion and repression in parallel with mass killing, all under global, imperial designs. As Mbembe puts it, necropolitics and necropower are notions that account for

> the various ways in which, in our contemporary world, weapons are deployed in the interest of maximum destruction of persons and the creation of *death-worlds*, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of *living death*. (2003: 40, emphasis in original)

By so reducing sociopolitical organizers, as well as entire racialized and gendered collectivities deemed expandable, bureaucracies of death aim to further dehumanize people whose humanity has been questioned on a regular basis, if not already overtly denied. Thus, thingification means a deep dehumanization, a process that goes beyond saying that those who perpetrate

genocide, torture, rape, and forced disappearances, do it because they have impunity. The process of thingification also goes beyond disconnecting "extreme genocidal violence" from the daily invisibility of economic exploitation and poverty, because in many contexts of the global South (and the North as well), the struggle for a dignified life—decent jobs, affordable, quality health care, housing, education, social insurance, and support to people with disabilities—goes hand-in-hand with the struggle for political and cultural liberties and the integral defense of sustainable livelihoods and ecosystems. Most heterogeneous women and men invented as enemies of states and "capitalist prosperity," whose lives are demonized, and whose deaths are vilified and then justified on the grounds that they, the dead, were "agents of terrorism and communism," make the above connections on an everyday basis, even if they lack the technical vocabularies to name those crucial links. And because they have refused to be the passive, colonized, and barbaric, and to be classified as "deserving, innocent victims" of their supposedly backward and blighted condition, contrary to what colonial, imperial, and capitalist democracies and charities prefer, full memories[1] of them are prohibited even in countries where peace treaties have been signed, and where some elites have pledged to respect those fallen in "internal armed conflicts." This is certainly the case in Guatemala, the primary site of my research.

When many Blacks, Indigenous Peoples, Palestinians, Tutsis, Hutus, Muslims, and Queers of Color (to name just a few)—who are collectively targeted as undesirables, and evicted from the ideal humanity constituted by White, heterosexual, bourgeois, and able-bodied persons—organize, struggle, and present alternatives for another, possible world, they are rendered collective enemies of "civilized citizens," who are, in turn, construed as the prototype to be defended by national security agents and apparatuses. Sociopolitically active members of demonized collectivities are persecuted, controlled, and even exterminated, with the full force of the rule of law and the most advanced technologies of death; and many who belong to racially and economically privileged groups endorse this persecution, even when they do not openly express it.

While the process of evicting lives from humanity has been made more visible by some critical scholars (Kapur 2003; Razack 2004, 2008; Grandin 2004; Figueroa Ibarra 1991; Martínez-Pelaez 1982, 1991; Jonas 1991), what remains less well examined and researched is the fact that those vilified and demonized in life are re-vilified, and further evicted from humanity and its history, after death. Their deaths are deemed not to count as deserving to be mourned and remembered with dignity and respect. In Guatemala this is especially so, despite dominant textual and verbal rhetoric to the contrary in the period after the signing of the peace agreement in 1996. The deaths of those demonized as politically abject, as were their lives, have been severely criminalized to the point that most of their relatives are not allowed to mourn

in public, or inside the private and intimate spaces of their homes. Mourning in environments made violent, and where the dead and disappeared are vilified as "Communist cancers" and "terrorist menaces to family values and democracy," is prohibited through direct action, omission, and/or self-induced censorship. Self-censorship of grieving, and of the integration of the vilified into family life, is a survival strategy. In the end, vilifying those struggling against capitalist and state terror, and the systems of injustice their agents fiercely defend, is also a process that denigrates all members of surviving families and communities. Thus, the process of vilifying, criminalizing, prohibiting, and silencing the memories of agents of decolonial and progressive change perpetuates the human hierarchy in which only certain lives and cultures are deemed deserving, while the remainder are construed as disposable and inferior. This process also seeks profoundly to deter current generations from organizing revolutionary and progressive, structural and reformist change—and especially to deter women and men from racially marginalized collectivities, as well as those who are born within privilege but become politically conscious, from transforming this consciousness into active, decolonial, and anti-racist solidarity.

Since the signing of the peace agreement in 1996, several Maya widows, and their now grown-up children, have indicated that they have been "encouraged" by local and national state representatives, and by many officers of various "international cooperation" agencies, to "participate" in the democratic process by exercising their franchise every four years. It is a bitter irony that those vilified as dangerous to society were killed, raped, and made to disappear forever because, as the sister of engineer Saul Linares—kidnapped, tortured, and then killed in 1984—says, "they wanted to live in a real democracy" (in CIDH 2007). For many survivors, democracy in the global South is a process in which repression goes hand in hand with discourses of freedom. This is, as Mbembe points out, one of the central tenets of modernity (2003). The representation of voting for, and participation in, "accepted" political parties as symbols of democracy, is part of an endless manipulation of the needs of those forced to live in racialized and gendered poverty. Candelaria, a Maya-Tzutujil widow, for instance, put it this way:

> It is not only being forced to vote and supporting political parties of the rich that I have to endure. It is also other things. For example, let me tell you that a Maya professional who works for these people came to my home one day and he said that if I wanted to get *resarcimiento* [reparation] for my husband's killing by the army, I needed to vote and to support the party of General Rios Montt. But then, others came and said that I needed to support another rich man; I cannot remember his name [she was referring to Criollo businessman and former president Berger]. And then there were other men who came and said I should vote for . . . let's see if I remember . . . yes, the *botudo* [an expression that refers to military personnel as men with boots, in this case

> former general Pérez Molina]. Then still others came and said I should vote for the one who is now president [i.e., Colom]. You see, it is like a chain, their chain of luxuries for them, and one of misery and fear for us. I did not continue with *resarcimiento* because I felt that the killing of my husband was not enough suffering for them; they were putting dirt on his life and his *recuerdo* [his memory]. (Interview 2006)

Vilifying, demonizing, and criminalizing those who organized to bring about meaningful change, especially for impoverished, racialized, and gendered Others, has devastating and painful material and symbolic sociohuman impacts that cannot be measured by "advanced" quantification models and other "sophisticated" technologies of counting and discounting, because it is impossible to capture the complexity and nuance of human suffering with numbers (Martinez 2009). That is why intellectual Gloria Anzaldua named these impacts "colonial wounds," (2007; Mignolo 2005, Mignolo 2009a) and not simply trauma or traumatization, which are the hegemonic ways of categorizing and psychologizing the immense pain and suffering caused by agents of power.

Bureaucracies of death are able to make terror their central element of governance because the planners and executioners of this terror act with total or near-total levels of impunity, either by bending the rule of law, or by creating other rules of law that abandon those who have been conceived of as politically and racially undesirable, and as economically expendable. Several thinkers, such as Mbembe, have made excellent contributions to the understanding of terror as the product of colonial regimes, and of terror as having been born in the colonies—a space of terror formation (Mbembe 2003: 23-4). Mbembe also says that it is in the colony, above all, where all the controls and guarantees of judicial order can be suspended (2003: 23-4). However, how can this order be suspended if it did not apply to infrahumans, to savages, in the first place? Is it not more productive to realize that the Western-centric rule of law contains in itself so much flexibility for powerful lawmakers to create other laws that will make legal, if not legitimate, the persecution, harassment, and extermination of undesirables, rather than simply to suspend the rule of law? To continue to affirm that "exceptional horrors" are the product of the suspension of the rule of law is to believe that the rule of law is intrinsically just. Mbembe provides a solid analysis of this issue when, drawing on Arendt, he notes that: "The savages are, as it were, 'natural' human beings who lack the specifically human character, the specifically human reality, so that when European men massacred them they somehow were not aware that they had committed murder" (2003: 24).

In contemporary times, when machineries of death are killing not only "natural savages," but also "political savages," a similar line of analysis can be applied, with the addendum that, in these times, the planners and execu-

tioners of corporate and state power know that they are not committing murder, because they are killing those their systems have already gradually dehumanized. After all, and as Mignolo reminds us, "racism as we sense it today, was the result of two conceptual inventions of imperial knowledge: that certain bodies were inferior to others, and that inferior bodies carried inferior intelligence" (2009a: 178). Those racialized are therefore more easily killed, and/or forever disappeared. Doña Soledad, an impoverished Mestizo woman left widowed by state terror policies, illustrates this point very well:

> My husband was a true political person who never discarded the possibility of change through honest elections and with honest presidents like [Jacobo] Arbenz, someone who stood up to the wealthy and to gringos who believe they are our owners and the owners of the air we breathe. (Interview 2002)

> The gringos' intervention in 1954 marked my husband forever, because he lived the imprisonment and torture of his father; his father, like thousands of others, was marked as a Communist forever, something that our family has carried like a living wound inflicted on us for a long time. (Interview 2008)

Impunity is crucial in the functioning of bureaucracies of death—an impunity that includes not only those working in state apparatuses, but also those in the capitalist world more generally, since they can buy and/or evade justice. However, impunity alone does not explain why some aspects of the ideologies and practices of genocide, torture, rape, disappearance, and the harassment of organizers and activists, get recorded and filed with precision, nor why imperial powers such as the United States, for example, have accumulated detailed information about their support of these crimes against humanity, information labeled as top secret, and portions of which have just recently begun to be declassified thanks to grassroots organizing.

To begin to understand the above contradictions, it is imperative to dig into the process of dehumanization of entire populations, including political activists, a process organized through necropower—the necropolitics of capitalism, which creates, when convenient, a sophisticated infrastructure of daily, securitized terror. Exceptionality and explanations of barbarism are palliatives that calm guilt, especially in those who have been silent or who have accepted and/or supported necropower as a way of life, since the imposition of the latter occurred in places constructed as geographically, geopolitically, and emotionally "remote," and therefore as distant as possible from their gated residences, while they went about their daily lives.

In spite of the terror of necropower, people resist and create alternative life projects, while envisioning new political and economic ways to reorganize societies that would be more equitable and just. Seen by transnational elites as a Communist cancer, and reduced to things, political subjects resist

dehumanization by refusing to die paralyzed socially and politically. And many declare that they would rather betray well-taught social cynicism and capitalist individualism, and choose life, not death. Tischler Visquerra, a sociological theorist and researcher, rightly notes that those who organized, struggled, and were killed, did not choose death; the idea of freedom that guided them was in relation to the struggle, and they thought that to live was indeed to struggle against the machinery of death. He adds:

> For many militants war was a moment of extraordinary liberty. That was not a celebration of death but a brave daring to domination through armed struggle. The kind of subjectivity that made that possible does not exist anymore [in Guatemala] because what constitutes the self, which is always in permanent contradiction, expresses in different ways and in different circumstances. . . . [In other words,] we are constituted by power while at the same time we challenged power. Sometimes the daring part in us is more radical because there are circumstances that allow us to be like that, and at other times we step back from our selves. The self in contradiction but also in solidarity explains in part, the political will of many Indigenous Peoples to get involved in the popular armed struggle. (2010: 4, 6)

Tischler Visquerra goes on to say that becoming politically active is a difficult decision, especially if the political activity is revolutionary armed struggle. Such a decision is not made in the abstract; it is pushed by sociopolitical circumstances.

> There was no other way to survive. State terrorism largely explains the ways to struggle. . . . The ways to struggle choose you, they are not freely chosen, although at certain historical moments a certain level of political will is allowed, but at other times, history is determinative, so what appears to be a pure personal act of political will is not so much so. (2010: 4, 6)

Claudia Maria, a "social fighter" (as she calls herself), Rafael, a lawyer, and Vanesa, a "revolutionary fighter" (as she refers to herself), who also self-identify as grassroots intellectuals, illustrate Tischler Visquerra's point. Rafael said:

> My father was an extremely quiet and peaceful guy who dreamt of a true democracy where neither poverty nor impunity would be the norm of everyday life for the majority. He did not join any revolutionary organization but collaborated with them because, as he told me several times, in the face of domination that sinks not only us as individuals but the entire country, it was absolutely necessary that there be a strong response because the wealthy and their gringos will not cede power nicely and just because they are good people. My father wanted to live in a country with good schools and universities for anybody who desired to get a higher education; with good and affordable houses and hospitals where medicines are no longer accessible only to the

> privileged few. And because of this he was killed. Of course, the accusation that he was a Communist was made to discredit him as a human being, as a thinking man, and to mark us, his family, forever. My uncle, who was a guerrilla commander, understood after the assassination of my father that the Guatemalan oligarchy with the support of the United States closed all the doors even for a minimum reform to this horrible system of inequality; they closed the doors to the real democratic struggle through honest political parties; that is why he never believed in the electoral system imposed here by foreign capital, by transnational corporations that have sucked the best out of us and our lands for centuries. Was my uncle militaristic or a born killer? No, he was not. Was he a war lover just because he was part of the armed struggle? No he was not, he was a defender of life and of freedom; that is why he was able to make sacrifices, to give his life to the struggle for dignity for all. (Rafael 2008)

Here is Claudia Maria:

> My father was a quiet man who loved music and poetry; he did not belong to any revolutionary organization but agreed with several Communist or socialist ideals: to have access to quality education at all levels, to have access to the arts in all their forms because, as he used to tell me many times, revolutions need souls and great spirits—and what better than music, theatre, and poetry to express the language of the revolutionary soul? He could not get any more education than grade 6, but he taught himself all the time and through this self-teaching he learned the criminal code, the civil code, and many other laws that he then used to support several peasants in their eternal fight to defend their tiny plots from voracious landowners, police chiefs, and military officers. And he was brutally killed under the accusation of being a Communist, a mortal stigma in a place called Guatemala that parallels the current global stigma of being a terrorist; these two have ironic similarities. (Claudia Maria 2008)

And Vanesa:

> We were obliged to rise up in armed struggle. Listen, had we won the struggle and reorganized society along the lines of socialist principles, I would have wanted to be part of a revolutionary army because I am attracted by it, but not by war and repression, because wars are always cruel. But my dear sister, no way, she was not attracted in any way by armed struggle because she hated wars with her ovaries, as she used to say. But the conditions of domination, of oppression, were those that forced us to struggle. It is absolutely absurd to say that we sought death, that we wanted to die because we were adventurers; frankly, those who think this way have never transcended their little selfish lives; the great human beings are those like my sister because they were less selfish when they fought not only for dignity for themselves but for others, for the construction of a dignified life, a just life for the dispossessed and oppressed. (Vanesa 2010)

The obsession of the U.S. and other Western powers with marking, as Communist, all socially and politically organized expressions that seek basic social justice and a dignified life— rights which most of their White and middle-class citizens have enjoyed for centuries—is not only a justification used to criminalize dissent; it is a mentality that casts as "barbaric" any desire for liberation from below, and that names as "freedom fighters" agents of power who, in the name of freedom, perpetrate crimes against humanity. The Guatemalan case clearly shows the working of this mentality, and how it has served as a model for the training of military and paramilitary personnel, who have plotted coup d'états and the assassination of leaders, developed torture manuals, implemented them, and so on. The saddest part is that while these national security experts plan the persecution and extermination of people invented as politically abject, the lives and livelihoods they destroy are erased from their conceptions and narratives. It is deeply worrisome that the construction of individuals, collectivities, and entire societies as Communists/terrorists is often groundless; however, this was the main justification for U.S. interventions during the Cold War era. In the case of Guatemala, for example, a declassified CIA document, made public by the National Security Archive, has revealed that Nicholas Cullather—a historian hired by the CIA in the early 1990s to write a brief history of the operations that culminated in the violent intervention of the United States in Guatemala—discovered, after gathering one hundred and fifty thousand documents from the ousted Arbenz's administration, that the presence of self-defined Communists and socialists was minimal and had only "local significance." Cullather notes:

> Few of the papers concerned "the aspects that we are most interested in, namely the elements of Soviet support and control of communism in Guatemala." Nor did the documents identify individuals vulnerable to exploitation. Ronald M. Schneider, an outside researcher who later examined the PBHISTORY[2] documents, found no traces of Soviet control and substantial evidence that Guatemalan Communists acted alone, without support or guidance from outside the country. (Cullather 1994: NSAEBB4)

What if Cullather had found "evidence of Communist influence"? Would that have been enough justification for invading a country? It is clear that having, or lacking, Communist influence did not matter in the Guatemalan case, because the U.S. in alliance with Guatemalan elites had decided to destroy the promising, democratic process that began in 1944.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE BUREAUCRACY OF DEATH

I was carrying out fieldwork in a Maya town in 1999, when Bill Clinton arrived in Guatemala. The corporate media was not clear about the objectives of his visit, but somewhere in the middle of it Clinton apologized to Guatemalans for what he thought were "*improprieties*" (my emphasis) in the relationship between the two countries. "Improprieties" was Clinton's word for what was indeed the United States' support and assistance to the Guatemalan military. Clinton called this a mistake that could not happen again. Many celebrated the "courage of the U.S. President" for saying this, and believed that his statement was a firm signal of honest regret. But is a verbal apology a symbol of true justice, and an indication that the person who apologizes considers those victimized by genocidal state terror to be his or her true equal as human beings? And even if a person does not further dehumanize the wretched of the earth, what about the mentality of superiority that underlies imperial and capitalist interventions? In any case, Clinton's apology meant almost nothing for Dolores, the Maya woman with whom I was conversing, who had been left a widow by the U.S. "improprieties." The Guatemalan army, supported by the U.S., had killed her husband, and she and her kids had been forced to survive in extreme poverty.

"Who is this Clinton?" asked Dolores. "The President of the United States," I replied, and although the individual's name was unfamiliar, the geographical and geopolitical location was not. Dolores had a clearly connected picture of those who were responsible for her husband's death: "the rich here; the soldiers and their foreign friends." Dolores remembered how her grandfather wanted to defend the revolution and president Arbenz, but did not have the tools to do so.

It is true, as I have explained in previous chapters, that most Maya and other Indigenous Peoples in Guatemala did not directly benefit from the October Revolution of 1944. But it is also undeniable that this movement was a powerful symbol, for many Mayas, of the possibility for bringing about crucially needed and revolutionary change. Dolores and I—who were also listening to a radio program about Clinton's apology— noted that all the radio commentators appeared to be happy with the apology, but when a caller said she was not, because Guatemala had been made into a large, clandestine cemetery, the commentators were clearly angry. They were not alone; most in the corporate media claimed that Clinton was not responsible for what other presidents ordered, and besides, a female journalist said, he was handsome (field notes 1999). The level of ignorance of the "educated" should not

surprise us, because one of the strategies of the United States, the local bourgeoisie, and the military, was to teach that the 1954 coup d'état saved Guatemala from the claws of communism and atheism.

This is a narrative that has become hegemonic in North America, as well as in many Guatemalan circles, and it is expressed in different ways. For instance, a declassified CIA memo, which ironically recognizes that Arbenz was popularly elected, employs the salvation narrative, while, at the same time, it psychologizes and individualizes terror as a vernacular phenomenon. It reads in part:

> As early as 1952 US policymakers viewed the government of President Arbenz with some alarm. Although he had been popularly elected in 1950, growing Communist influence within his government gave rise to concern in the United States that Arbenz had established an effective working alliance with the Communists. Moreover, Arbenz's policies had damaged US business interests in Guatemala; a sweeping agrarian reform called for the expropriation and redistribution of much of the United Fruit Company's land." (Haines 1995: NSAEBB4)

While such declassified documents are adding pieces to a reality that hundreds of thousands of Guatemalans and Latin Americans know in their bones, such documents are textual gatekeepers of more crucial evidence of American involvement, and the Guatemalan elites' participation, because large sections of these documents are censored. Entire pages are blacked out, with the words "not relevant" written in the margins. Not relevant to whom? And who decides which secrets are not relevant for the survivors of these genocidal policies? Moreover, in the long history of imperial securitization of foreign policy, Western powers have trained killers for clandestine operations, including murder, without leaving a documentary trace.

Among the documents found in the training files of Operation PBSUCCESS, and declassified by the Agency, researchers Doyle and Kornbluh discuss a "Study of Assassination" (Doyle and Kornbluh n.d.). A how-to guide book in the art of political killing, the nineteen-page manual offers detailed descriptions of the procedures, instruments, and implementation of assassination:

> The assassin needs the usual qualities of a clandestine agent. He should be determined, courageous, intelligent, resourceful, and physically active. If special equipment is to be used, such as firearms or drugs, it is clear that he must have outstanding skill with such equipment. (Doyle and Kornbluh n.d.)

For killing with efficacy and certainty, the manual says that using bare hands is not recommended, because "very few are skilful enough to do it well." The manual recommends using whatever is at hand for a weapon:

> A hammer, axe, wrench, screw driver, fire poker, kitchen knife, lamp stand, or anything hard, heavy and handy will suffice. A length of rope or wire or a belt will do if the assassin is strong and agile. All such improvised weapons have the important advantage of availability and apparent innocence. (Doyle and Kornbluh n.d.)

And for an assassin using "edge weapons," the guide clinically indicates that "puncture wounds of the body cavity may not be reliable unless the heart is reached." This is something that the Guatemalan security apparatuses learned extremely well, as I will detail below. In terms of not leaving any trace, the manual teaches that

> decision and instructions should be confined to an absolute minimum of persons. Ideally, only one person will be involved. No report may be made, but usually the act will be properly covered by normal news services, whose output is available to all concerned. (Doyle and Kornbluh n.d.)

As a teaching tool, the manual states that murder is not morally justifiable, and therefore "persons who are morally squeamish should not attempt it." On the other hand, it provides a patriotic rationale for the murder of political leaders, for some leaders "present danger to the cause of freedom." The manual gives scientific reasons why doctors and nurses are the most appropriate agents for the use of drugs in assassinations: "If the assassin is trained as a doctor or nurse and the subject is under medical care, this is an easy and rare method." As grotesque as it is to know the precision with which assassins are trained in the name of democracy and freedom, to some extent their work is horrifyingly straightforward for the bureaucracy of death. But what about the work of those who type countless reports in the basements of imperial embassies, giving an account of kidnappings, cases of torture, and so on? What about the tedious clerical job of opening alphabetical and topical files to record murder, rape, torture, and genocide, as well as archiving this work in military and police office headquarters? And going page by page to erase crucial information from mountains of documents that are being forcibly declassified?

My point is to call attention to the fact that the training of assassins is only the tip of an iceberg, and that this "job" requires a series of highly organized, institutional, and transnational operations through which actual human beings, previously dehumanized, are further abstracted and reduced to things to be reported on or erased from memory—and that this work is done not only in the "darker and violent" spaces of the global South. It is also done in sanitized offices in the global North, and there is a dynamic relationship being enacted between the maintenance of "prosperity and democracy" for

"civilized citizens," and the harming and destruction of those invented as undesirable, and therefore expandable. This is something to keep in mind when learning about a Guatemalan dossier of death, to which I now turn.

THE GUATEMALAN "DOSSIER OF DEATH"

This dossier, which should more properly be named "the dossier recording calculated murder and torture," is perhaps the document that best encapsulates the goal of necropower and necropolitics: to make efficient, through text and visuals, the recording of rational and planned strategy for the destruction of the political will of those who pursued life as a project of solidarity and social justice. It reveals the continuum of colonial terror and of slavery, which, contrary to hegemonic knowledge, do not belong to a distant past, but are contemporary practices wrapped in a more sophisticated rhetoric. And a more precise utilization of technology and capital to manufacture institutional terror is characteristic not only of state power, but also of corporate power.

In light of Mbembe's analysis of slavery and contemporary global wars, the death squad dossier reveals that institutionalized state and corporate terror combines a plurality of functions. It has the features of both a political organization, and a mercantile company. It operates through capture and depredations, and can even coin its own money (2003: 32). In order to control, persecute, and kidnap those invented as enemies, necropower not only follows transnational guidelines for how to kill and torture, but reinvents these guidelines with more precision, repressiveness, and deadliness. For example, in Guatemala many of those kidnapped and tortured were leaders and members of social, political, and community organizations, their relatives, their colleagues, and on several occasions, their friends. The death squad dossier is only a tiny portion of the process of recording violent death in files; who knows how many of these files existed in the past, and how many have been destroyed?

Technically, the death squad dossier is a fifty-four-page log from a section of Guatemalan police and military intelligence, a log that contains information on 183 women and men who were kidnapped, assassinated, and/or disappeared by agents of the state during the government of Oscar Mejia Victores, from 1983 to 1985 (Fundación Myrna Mack n.d.). The dossier has six parts, with lists of names alphabetically ordered; names of some members of the Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo (GAM, the Mutual Support Group); a listing of furniture and other household items; and a list of insurgent organizations. But the most important section is the one containing the daily registration of kidnappings, assassinations, and transferals of detainees to other state secur-

ity forces, which shows the level of networking in the execution of terror. For each entry there is a full name, with a photograph and a demonizing description of the "subversive delinquent" activities of the victimized (Fundación Myrna Mack n.d.). The document was smuggled out and provided to human rights advocates on February 20, 1999, just two days before the CEH, a UN-sponsored truth commission, released its report on the country's state terror (National Security Archive 1999a).

Viewing the dossier's pictures of the abducted provoked questions in me, both as a researcher, and as a human being. These questions stemmed from the fact that, while this document is important evidence of genocidal state terror, it is also an instrument that reifies power as brutal domination. The intelligence apparatus and its agents did not disclose the locations from which, and the processes through which the victims were abducted, how they were killed, and where their bodies and remains are located. I recognize that viewing the pictures of their relatives in this dossier may provide some comfort to survivors, because this is the first time the militarized state and its agents have been exposed as perpetrators of state terror, after decades of blatant denial; however, the pictures also reenact powerlessness and political frustration, because in "peacetime," the killers and rapists, in particular those who planned these acts, remain at large. Thus, what we know through this dossier is a controlled knowledge. The pictures in the Guatemalan death squad dossier are "sanitized" in comparison with those of tortured Iraqis at Abu Ghraib, where we can see the profound marks of torture on the bodies of people punished for being Muslim. Behind this sanitization, however, lies torture, rape, and humiliation, forms of violence central in the conversion of captive people into what Mbembe names the living dead (2003).

Texts like the death squad dossier are also tools, which show how genocidal, heteropatriarchal masculinities are inflicted on the masculinities of men reduced to things, and on racialized, classed, and objectified women, subject to rape. Both men and women, under these conditions, become what I call disposable objects of terror. This is not to deny political resistance and solidity in those tortured, for indeed they are exemplary of the will to survive, as recognized even by the torturers. The perpetrators' description of Alfredo Cifontes Navarro, a university student kidnapped on October 11, 1984 (see Figure 1), demonstrates this kind of recognition: "Despite his young age he is an individual deeply committed to his ideals; he undertook courses in other countries and is 80% ideologically prepared; it was probable he would take a major responsibility."

It is not clear, however, how the 80 percent ideological commitment of Cifontes Navarro was calculated, and what kind of responsibilities he would have taken on if he had not been kidnapped and disappeared. Certainly, his implicit categorization in the death squad dossier as a "subversive delin-

quent," deserving to die, is not erased by the perpetrator's recognition that he was an intelligent and highly educated young man, nor did this recognition stop them from killing him and making his body disappear.

In many cases, the death squad dossier provides coded responses concerning the killing of some detainees through use of the number 300, or local expressions such as "*se fue con pancho*" (which literally means "he/she is gone with Francis," but sociologically it also means "death"); in most cases, the document leaves doubt as to the final fate of the tortured, making torture not only a brutal act to extract information, but more importantly, tying the killings "intricately . . . to the wielding of power" (Philipose 2007: 1064). Thus, torture is not an exceptional act, but rather a part of what Razack names as the ordinariness of violence (2008), it is used in the name of defending "normalizing" conceptions of nations and sovereign power. It is perpetrated by "normal citizens." Torture has the purposeful intention of inflicting great amounts of pain, either for its own sake, or as a method of obtaining information, but also of propagating fear, whether inside or outside the bounds of law. As Philipose observes, "The veracity of the information elicited is far less important than the fact that prisoners surrender to coercion." (2007: 1064). Sironi and Branche also argue that "intelligence torture," is a "euphemism for violence intended to destroy a culture and a nation" (539-40 in Philipose 2007: 1064), because "through a tortured victim, the aim is to reach the group to which the victim belongs. . . . It is the collective dimension of the individual that is attacked, the attachment to a group" (Sironi and Branche in Philipose 2007: 1064-5).

Paraphrasing Philipose, it can be said that in Guatemala it was the collective dimension of the resisters, expressed in their involvement in revolutionary and progressive organizations, which was severely punished, as well as the long-standing practice of seeing and naming sociopolitical, community, and familial solidarity together, as outlawed. The case of Willie Miranda, a prolific poet, university student, and political leader, illustrates this punish-

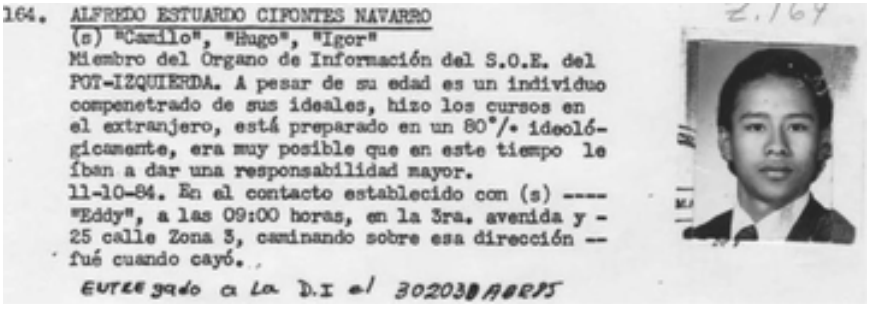
164. ALFREDO ESTUARDO CIFONTES NAVARRO
(s) "Camilo", "Hugo", "Igor"
Miembro del Órgano de Información del S.O.E. del POT-IZQUIERDA. A pesar de su edad es un individuo compenetrado de sus ideales, hizo los cursos en el extranjero, está preparado en un 80%/+ ideológicamente, era muy posible que en este tiempo le íban a dar una responsabilidad mayor.
11-10-84. En el contacto establecido con (s) ---- "Eddy", a las 09:00 horas, en la 3ra. avenida y - 25 calle Zona 5, caminando sobre esa dirección -- fué cuando cayó.
ENTREGADO A LA D.I el 302038 ABRIS

Figure 5.1. Cifontes Navarro

ment. In the dossier, his entry is 155, under the name of Jose Rodolfo Reyna Lopez. His brother, Roberto Miranda, who was forced to leave Guatemala as his life and his family's were in danger, told me that, for safety reasons, Willie had a different name in the dossier. Willie had been planning to leave Guatemala for Mexico on June 8, 1984, the day he was killed and his body disappeared (Roberto Miranda, informal conversation 2010). Willie, from childhood, was very creative, and was an avid learner throughout his life. Roberto remembered that, while growing up, Willie developed a strong sense of social responsibility, combined with a genuine concern for the elders, children, and the sick. Despite the seriousness of his social and political commitment, Willie never lost his hope and his sense of humor, even in the face of the crude repression of his comrades and friends. It was this deep sense of social responsibility that led Willie to become a leader in the university students' movement. Willie, Roberto remembered, had another outstanding quality: he never forgot to be a gentle and respectful son, in particular in relation to his beloved mother, whose life was forever shattered when Willie was killed.

How could it be, Roberto repeated many times, that such a great and humane person could be so easily reduced to a "subversive delinquent,"[3] when his most precious dream was to bring universal health care and education, as well as decent jobs, to the most marginalized and oppressed (informal conversation 2010)? In the death squad dossier, the perpetrators claimed that Willie resisted "arrest" and was 300, the horrendous code referred to above. It was abduction that Willie resisted, not "arrest," for he knew that if he were abducted, he would be tortured before being killed. So he was shot, and his body was taken away by the killers. Their inability to provide him with a funeral was very painful for his mother and entire family. Celebrating Willie's revolutionary commitment and life, therefore, became fundamental for Roberto's life; a commitment that made Roberto very much admired by those who knew him in Guatemala, as well as in Canada. Roberto repeated that the best tribute to Willie, and the thousands of disappeared, was to practice solidarity, and to smile even in the face of adversity.[4]

In the minds of the agents of state terror, the murder and disappearing of politically active women and men was not sufficient punishment. Surviving relatives of the dead and disappeared have also been persecuted, and represented as Communist and subversive sympathizers, and several have had to leave Guatemala to save their lives. Many have enacted what scholar Walter Mignolo calls border thinking. This entails the creation of a liberation epistemology, and decolonial thinking. Border thinking originates in the experience of being represented and treated as incapable of creating knowledge, and from the colonial view that thinking is supposed to be done *for* Indigenous Peoples, Blacks, peasants, and those forced to live in poverty, because, according to hegemonic, Euro-North American-centric epistemology, they

lack creativity (Mignolo in González Garcia 2006). Usually, survivors' knowledge is taken only as "testimonials" for others to analyze, or as "personal" experience, liberally understood. But both the fallen and the survivors' epistemic and advocacy practices constitute border thinking, because they seek to counteract the vilification, demonization, and dehumanization of those who have dared to organize and struggle for socioeconomic, political, and cultural decolonial liberation.

Although many thinkers in the last two decades have critically analyzed the process through which non-Western and non-White people, their cultures, histories, and epistemologies, have been dehumanized (see Mignolo 1995, 2000, 2006, 2007, 2009a; Quijano 2000; Maldonado-Torres 2006; Razack 2004, 2008; Tuhiwai Smith 2002), there has been little analysis of how political collectivities have been dehumanized and demonized through construction as "Communists" and "terrorists"—and therefore, by implication, as "outlaws." The Guatemalan death squad dossier is one expression of this dehumanization, which unfortunately is not limited to this country, for it is part of a venerable, Western tradition of punishment of anti-colonial/decolonial, and anti-capitalist, liberation movements and individuals. As Porras has observed:

> The communist, the religious fanatic, the nomad, the invader, and the Islamic fundamentalist have all had a place in terrorism studies. Since the fall of the Soviet system, images of the Arab terrorist have been ubiquitous in U.S. terrorism studies and in media representations, occupying a place in the U.S. discursive imagination once reserved for those of the Soviet Union. (in Philipose 2007: 1054)

In Guatemala, the label of "Communist" was interchangeable with the labels "guerrilla" and "subversive delinquent." Tracing several documents, life histories, interviews, and other data, I ascertained that this vilifying terminology was also spatially differentiated. For example, it was common to use the term "Communist" in the capital city and in eastern Guatemala, whereas "guerrilla" and "subversive delinquent" were most frequently used to criminalize individuals and entire communities in the Maya highlands, as well as in other hinterland places such as villages and towns like El Petén. The Communist and the Terrorist as social constructions have both been used by corporate media, nationally and internationally, on a regular basis. Thus, they have penetrated the hearts and minds of millions, who express this imperial penetration in everyday sentences such as: "If he was kidnapped or killed, it is because he was doing something bad and illegal," and "If she was raped and tortured, it is because she was not a woman of her house and was involved in illegal activities" (field notes 1999, 2002, 2008). After the Soviet system

came to an end, communism as an international enemy was replaced by terrorism—but only extra-state terrorism, since a state, in conventional analysis, cannot be a terrorist institution. As Porras notes:

> Terrorism has come to be the thing against which liberal western democracies define themselves. . . . [T]errorism has come to be the repository of everything that cannot be allowed to fit inside the self-image of democracy; and . . . the terrorist has become the "Other" that threatens and desires the annihilation of the democratic "self" . . . an external force against which democracies therefore must strenuously defend. (in Philipose 2007: 1053)

It is against this epistemological violence that Aura Elena Farfán—a professional nurse, mother of two, and the sister of Ruben Amilcar Farfán, who was kidnapped by Guatemalan state security agents, and who appeared in the death squad dossier as record #134 (see Figure 2)—has relentlessly contended, to dignify the life and struggle of her brother, and the more than forty-five thousand people forever disappeared by the security apparatus.

Amilcar, Elena says, was a dedicated son and brother who worked tirelessly day and night, with thousands of others, for workers' justice and for real democracy; he never stopped learning, inside and outside of schools, and in 1984, when he was abducted and disappeared, he was studying in the faculty of humanities at San Carlos University. He was also a leader of the university workers union. His political beliefs and practices were vilified. Amilcar's case, and others from the dossier of death, are illustrative of the sovereign power that can kill millions, in the name of the national security of the global southern elites, and of the societies in the global North.

Survivors, through their struggles, have produced other knowledges, which I call *wisdom in resistance*. This is wisdom, not only because survivors face the daily demonization of their relatives' political commitments, and the erasure of their relatives' public lives, which intensify a pain that is compounded by the fear of losing their own lives, but also because they enact mature and critical hope when they create complex conceptualizations and

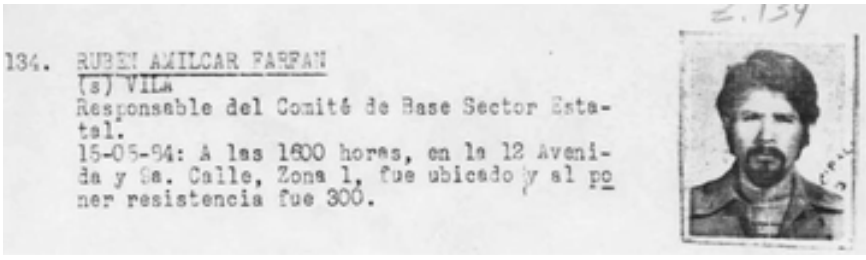

Figure 5.2. Amilcar Farfán

explanations of social, epistemic, and historical injustices that go beyond their individual pain. The representation of the progressives and political revolutionaries as enemies of the "family and democracy," deepens the colonial wound, because many relatives, including Farfán, are not allowed to acknowledge that their relatives were entitled to believe in communism and in socialism if they so chose. Freedom to choose one's political orientation is guaranteed in Articles 18 and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In an era of unfettered capitalism, technologically sophisticated repression, and epistemic violence, survivors who are openly demanding juridical and social justice are left with no choice but to "clean" their relatives' political participation because, in the language of the rule of law, communism and socialism have been declared enemies of freedom. This point is structural, an integral part of the hegemonic rights paradigm where, for instance, freedom of association is "protected" when it remains "legal" under an already illegitimate rule of law. Why is it that one becomes a freedom fighter when one is a strong defender of capitalism, of imperial military interventions, and neoliberal policies, but an "illegal" when one refuses to accept the violent order in which a minority of racially and economically privileged people are declared fully humans, and the rest as disposable? This process of criminalization includes the law, but goes beyond it. Those in the dossier of death who were converted into "subversive delinquents" were true patriots,[5] and their deadly categorization as traitors to the "nation" has added insult to injury, and led many relatives to want not to be associated with their beloved ones. The dossier, which is an irrefutable proof of the machinery of death, which destroyed thousands of lives, is at the same time a sword that deepens the colonial wound, because the fundamental entitlement to struggle against injustices, and to embrace knowledges that have at their epicenter the liberation of the oppressed, is reduced to criminality. In a 2009 interview with the Forensic Anthropological Association (FAFG), Farfán names Oscar Mejia Victores, the president of Guatemala when her brother was kidnapped, as directly responsible for the abduction and assassination of the people who appear in the dossier. Mejia Victores said the following to Aura Elena and other female survivors:

> The army captures the Communist-Leninists and not decent workers and students; if your relatives are Communists or guerrillas, definitely the army captured them. . . . "If they are guerrillas, they are Communist . . . and if my mother were a Communist or guerrilla, I would capture her as well." (Aura Elena Farfán 2009)

Mejia Victores' words embody the ideological practice of violence as physical and epistemic, not only because such practices completely disregard any human being's entitlement to freedom of thought and opinion, but more fundamentally because they construct communism as an umbrella term. The label of communist results in a death sentence for any kind of social and community movement struggling for basic entitlements such as decent housing, potable water, public education, and decent jobs. As an umbrella construction, communism became so elastic a framework that it has not only influenced, but in many ways determined, Western laws about containment, control, and persecutions of politically active people deemed threats to capitalist democracies. We should not forget how the anti-communist crusade was carried out in Canada and the United States (Kinsman and Gentile 2010; Kovel 1997; Davis 1989). Thus, terrorizing the bodies, minds, and spirits of those marked as communists has been the work of national, genocidal military perpetrators, transnational businessmen, and corporate media owners and agents. University authorities and researchers are also implicated (see McCoy 2006; Price 2008, 2010; Kinsman and Gentile 2010).

National systems of necropower respond to global capitalist and colonial designs. For decades these systems have denied societies the right to know, by keeping their wrongdoings *top secret*. In the case of Guatemala, thousands of documents generated by the CIA, the State Department, the Pentagon, and other bureaucracies, including embassy personnel, and now declassified, constitute a chilling example of how necropower has worked hand in hand with both the social and natural sciences. As McCoy notes:

> In retrospect, the agency's alliance with behavioral science seems marvelously synergistic, placing mind-control research at the apex of the academic agenda and providing patronage that elevated cooperative scientists, particularly psychologists, to the first rank of their profession. Indeed, of the billions expended on mind-control research in the 1950s, the intelligence community allocated $7 million to $13 million annually for behavioral studies at major universities by channeling funds through private foundations, some legitimate and others fronts—including the Ford and Rockefeller foundations. (2006: 31)

Latin American societies have served as social laboratories, both for implementing mind control projects, and for keeping these and other similar practices *top secret.* And it can be argued that these practices served as a precedent for what is now being carried out as the War on Terror. The United States introduced the ideology concerning "internal enemies" within mind control projects, through its different military and intelligence training programs, from which hundreds of military officers have graduated since the late 1950s. Internal enemies in Guatemala were made into external enemies of the global, racialized, and gendered status quo, and kidnapping and torturing these "enemies" was a vital teaching and learning endeavor. It was both

teaching and learning, as imperial agents trained many in the global South in methodologies of state terror, from the rudimentary to the most sophisticated, and at the same time these teachers learned which methods worked better, by observing the application of this knowledge by their pupils. In Guatemala, the pupils in many ways surpassed their teachers. And this teaching-learning has been carried out through different modalities. For example, under "Project X," intended to control "Communists" in Latin America in particular, the U.S. Army Intelligence Center and School in Arizona spread torture techniques simply by mailing out manuals to selected foreign students, chosen by missions, military groups, attachés, and other U.S. military agencies (McCoy 2006: 78). One manual that circulated widely in Latin America was the 1983 Honduran *Human Resource Exploitation Training Manual*, which detailed with precision the application of different torture methods, some of which were euphemistically called "non-coercive." These "non-coercive" methods are based on psychological pressure; thus, "When a questioner uses threats, it should always be implied that the subject himself is to blame by using words such as 'You leave me no other choice but to'" (cited in McCoy 2006: 89). These methods are relevant to an understanding of the Guatemalan death squad dossier, which only provides glimpses of the torture suffered by the abducted.

Aura Elena Farfán, Amilcar Farfan's sister, narrates the excruciating pain evoked by the sight of countless, tortured, mutilated, dead bodies, commonly buried as XX.[6] In her words:

> Nobody gave us any information; we felt morally and psychologically very bad because we watched the cruel disdain with which people, women and men, were tortured. They had their faces disfigured from acid or by beatings; the soles of their feet were mutilated; it appeared they were cut with razors and then the wounds were sprinkled with salt or salt and lemon juice. They were left in the *Verbena* [a public place that became a dumping ground for victims]; this had a great impact on us. For six months I went every single day to all the morgues around the capital city, because every day we heard on the radio that more bodies of women and men assassinated through torture had been found. When this information gave details about the colors of the clothing [my brother] was wearing when he was kidnapped, I rushed to the *Verbena*, to the courts [i.e., courtyards], and to a park called United Nations. (2009)

The death squad dossier describes when, and where, the military, paramilitary, and police abducted 183 students, university professors, agricultural workers, teachers, and children, including both Maya and Mestizo women and men. Many were captured in their homes, in front of their children, at night or early in the morning; some of these methods were learned from U.S. manuals of counterinsurgency. As McCoy notes, the *Honduran Manual* states that "Among many possible techniques, the subject can be arrested at a

time selected to 'achieve surprise and the maximum amount of mental discomfort,' particularly in the early morning when 'most subjects experience intense feelings of shock, insecurity, and psychological stress'" (2006: 89).

A careful reading, including reading between the lines, of the Guatemalan dossier of death, shows how these methods were applied to abductees, some of whom were used to finger others as guerrillas and Communists. As the result of torture—though not directly specified in the dossier as such, but rather as the result of "good interviews"—several men, and some women, became informants who provided the names of other "subversives." And they admitted to the charges of being "traitors to the nation," for spreading, according to their torturers, international Communism. In entry #136, for instance, it is said that teachers Godofredo Bravo Velasquez and Melida Isabel Ramirez were accused of being Communists by a person named Braulio, "after a good interview."

Thus, through the practice of torture, bureaucracies of death exist, not only to collect information (the least of their successes), but also to turn fully sociopolitically active human beings against each other, in order to destroy their sense of, their commitment to, and their practice of collective solidarity. By so doing, these machineries of necropower intend to break the will of entire nations and cultures for liberation. Turning women and men (who perhaps, before capture and torture, knew and respected each other) into deadly informants of one another's "subversion and communism," is not the action of barbarians who, as torturers, belong to an "exceptionally brutal" group. Rather, it is part of a master plan carried out by "ordinary," well-trained men and women with a central, long-term goal: to destroy the collective will that aims for sociopolitical, economic, and cultural liberation, through the immediate breaking down of committed and caring individuals. And, to obtain this goal, various necrostrategies are applied, such as genocide, rape, racialized feminicide, militarization, and securitization of everyday life; internment of survivors or of whole communities (a counterinsurgency strategy discussed in a previous chapter); the killing of individuals; and the mass kidnapping, torture, and disappearance of thousands of people who "vanish" from the face of the earth. These strategies have been experimented with in different settings and thus "improved" over time, through the use of technology, medicine, and other scientific tools. For example, Hebb, a Canadian psychologist, "discovered" in 1954 that isolation and sensory deprivation broke down the resistance of even the most physically and psychologically strong individuals. Hebb paid graduate students from McGill University

> to lie . . . in a lighted cubicle 24 hours a day with all sensory stimuli muted—with light "diffused" by translucent goggles, "auditory stimulation" limited by soundproofing, and "tactual perception" blocked by thick gloves and a U-shaped foam pillow about the head. (McCoy 2007: 35-6)

Hebb and his research team found that after just four hours of isolation, participants in his experiment could not follow a connected train of thought, and even twenty-four hours after their release, their motivation for academic study was seriously disturbed. Forty-eight hours of isolation resulted in some participants having hallucinations (2006: 36-7). When these techniques were put into the hands of the CIA, they were further developed, with devastating consequences for the human psyche subjected to these techniques (McCoy 2006: 37).

The descriptive labeling, in the Guatemalan death squad dossier, of torture as "good interviews," embodies the sinister objective of reducing many of the tortured to cowards who, in order to save themselves, gave up others. This move pretends to place the responsibility of necropolitics on the victimized, in order to cleanse the structure of terror. The implication that some detainees just "gave in" their colleagues after "talking" purposefully, might trigger not just distrust and outrage, but also hatred amongst relatives, as well as against those very ones who broke down, for in the same dossier the perpetrators enact the binary of bravery and cowardice. When bravery is remarked upon, the death squad dossier' admission of torture becomes more visible. Entry #92 of the death squad dossier, for instance, narrates how Silvio Matricardi Salan, "a highly educated man with a revolutionary and notable mentality . . . did not give up any information or anyone and when he saw an opportunity to escape he did; we reacted quickly by immediately killing him" (Guatemalan death squad dossier). The point here is not to deny the noble humanity, revolutionary commitment, and physical endurance of professor Matricardi, but to expose the poison embedded in this narrative, in which agents of necropower can simultaneously recognize and "value" the courage and education of those they have tortured, and then proceed to kill them. Instead of accepting at face value the accusations against women and men who were equally courageous and dignified, we must ask more poignant questions such as: What kind of torture methods did they apply to the bodies and psyches of the abducted and disappeared? For how long did they torture them, and what kinds of threats were made by the torturers against the abductees' families to instill more terror and guilt? Who ordered the kidnappings and who carried them out?

Naming torture sessions "good interviews" demonstrates that torture is also a research method, from the collection of data, and the targeting and designing of cover-up campaigns, to the use of the bodies and psyches of the tortured as a space to test endurance of pain, the effectiveness of drugs, and

the "productivity" of methods for extracting information. The U.S. non-profit organization Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) recognizes the use of people in torture as research subjects throughout history, and, more recently, the use of torture in Iraq and Afghanistan with the objective of deriving generalizable inferences to be applied to subsequent interrogations (2010: 3). Focusing on the participation of health professionals in torture, this organization notes:

> The knowledge obtained through this process [torture] appears to have been motivated by a need to justify and to shape future interrogation policy and procedure, as well as to justify and to shape the legal environment in which the interrogation program operated. (2010: 3)

Thus, prior practices of torture not only injure people physically and psychologically; sadly, they also advance necroknowledge, because the fact that some survive is seen as evidence of the efficiency of the torture methods[7] — and their potential applicability to other people. The Guatemalan death squad dossier is an expression of how the violent extraction of knowledge through torture is not a tool to gain solid information, but a strategy to further impose the coloniality of power, and to aim at social and political paralysis.

In the 1980s, when the people featured in the death squad dossier were kidnapped, all Guatemalan security forces had been undergoing training by U.S., Argentinean, and Israeli personnel, in addition to their own internal schooling (Barry, Wood, and Preusch 1982). To protect Western corporate and imperial interests (including Canadian ones), not only has implicit support for state terror policies been "accepted" through alliances with predatory governments of the global South, but such policies have also been actively promoted. Using tortured women and men as objects of research has almost always been accompanied by the making of huge profits through military and commercial "free" trade.

As a high functionary of the U.S. State Department put it in relation to Central America:

> If the flames of resistance spread any farther through the isthmus, the United States may again decide to call out the Marines. The United States is not going to allow the military triumph of the guerrillas. It has the means and the desire to do so, irrespective of the political cost. (Barry, Wood, and Preusch 1982: 58)

The dossier uses the term "capture" to mask the actual illegality of violently detaining and confining citizens who were in their workplaces, schools, homes, and other sites of daily activity when they were abducted.

The use of the term "capture" is a component of what I call networked violence, because it affected not only the person being detained, but also those who witnessed the detention (especially children and the elderly), and others in the social and political network of the person being abducted. Mirtala Linares, a lawyer and sister of Sergio Linares, a university professor and engineer kidnapped on February 23, 1984, and numbered 74 in the dossier, testified to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) in 2007 that just an hour after Sergio was kidnapped, her mother's home where Sergio lived was brutally raided. There were three women there: Sergio's partner, who was pregnant, a domestic worker, and Sergio's mother, who was physically tortured. Linares declared how the regime sent two heavily armed men to kidnap her brother, but apparently felt it necessary to send armored cars to her mother's house. Despite all this abuse, Sergio's mother and Mirtala searched for Sergio in the midst of constant persecution and intimidation. There were witnesses to Sergio's kidnapping who were not relatives, but they could not say anything to the police or courts out of fear of sharing Sergio's fate. Terming the action that leads to such impunity as "capture" cleanses the material and symbolic dynamics of necropower—symbolic, because Sergio's family followed the law and reported the kidnapping to the police. But when, in 2006, they needed a certified copy of this crime, they found that, in an official state document, Sergio's "capture" was not registered. He had not only been physically disappeared, but also made into someone who had never even been born. Even a military officer who is a friend of the family, and who saw Sergio in a wheelchair—of course, after Sergio had been tortured—has his lips sealed, because he still works in the army. As Mirtala points out, "There is no willingness to bring about justice; silence and impunity are eloquent in my country. There is not any commitment in the judiciary and related institutions to reveal the whereabouts of my brother despite undeniable proof and precise documentation that it was the state during Mejia Victores rule who detained, tortured, and killed my brother" (CIDH 2007).

The use of armored vehicles during abductions met yet another objective for the maintenance of necropower: the terrorizing of children who were forced to watch how their mothers, and in many cases their fathers, were brutalized.

Wendy Mendez was only nine years old when her mother Luz Haydee Santizo—entry #83 in the death squad dossier—was kidnapped, and both of them raped. Wendy and her brother came back as usual from school, and noticed a car parked in front of their home. Wendy and her brother were surprised to see how their home had been destroyed, as if a "hurricane had passed through inside." More than a dozen soldiers in full gear were in the house, and some of them forced the children to sit down; the interrogation, as

Wendy recalls, began with questions such as: Who are your parents? What are your names? Where do you parents work, what do they do? Wendy continues:

> We responded that the names of our parents are "mom and dad" and to the rest of the questions we replied, "We do not know, we do not know." The soldiers got angrier and yelled more and more and took my brother and I to separate rooms. I was in my parents' room, and to return to some normality I attempted to do some homework. Then a soldier forced me into the bed and put his body on top of me; then I felt an incredible pain in my private part. I could not believe what was happening. . . . I was not sure if he was penetrating me or if it was his gun. I fought back but he was heavy; I tried to yell but his body suffocated me. Then I could go to the bathroom and realized I was bleeding; I could not comprehend that the soldier had raped me. After this, we were forced to go outside the rooms to the backyard where soldiers simulated shooting at me while they said to me that they would kill my brother if I did not tell them what I knew. At the same time they told my brother they would kill me. This lasted all day until my mother Luz Haydee appeared in one of the rooms. Her face was disfigured but she continued to fight back; then, they began to remove her nails in front of us with pincers; when we turned our faces away, the soldiers forced us to watch. After a while they took my brother and I to the backyard again and this time they wanted to kill me, but my brother fought back and was beaten on his head and at this time my mother came out yelling and crying. This did not end here, for they put my mother in one of the cars and my brother and I in another and took us to a police station named Bolivar. And when in there they grabbed us and took us to the basement where they gave my mother and I electric shocks. I do not like to remember this . . . but I remember there were other detained people there and that my brother and I were drugged. When we woke up we decided to escape, and it helped that when we opened the door children were coming out of school so we hid among them. (ODHAG 2006: 49-50)

The narrative of the death squad dossier about the abduction of Wendy's mother conceals the family's silent torment in their home, a place that is supposed to be "safe." By annotating this cruelty as "capture," the death squad dossier sanitizes the different levels of violence perpetrated on Luz Haydee, the abducted mother, and to Wendy and her brother.

The narrative of the abduction of Wendy's mother is also gendered and sexualized, for it enacts anti-Communist masculinity alongside patriotic heterosexualism. The latter, as Lugones reminds us, has been a constant practice applied to colonized women and men, especially to those who have opposed colonial and imperial invasions since the Conquest of the Americas (2007, 2008). Luz Haydee, for one, was tortured and raped, as Wendy's and her brother's testimonies attest, because, for the defenders of capitalist state terror, she embodied a Communist threat, and also posed a threat to a hetero-patriarchal, politically passive, and domesticated masculinities and feminin-

ities. She was invented as a symbol of a danger that was anti-national, and therefore she and her children could be tortured inside the "safe" walls of their home, all the while that Guatemala was being represented as a democratic nation threatened by "international communism." In the immediate neighborhood of Luz Haydee's home, no one dared to intervene, because the entire street was surrounded by hundreds of paramilitaries and by armored cars. People were cowed by the presence of a car with tinted glass and lacking license plates—signs that became common knowledge in the entire country.

But Wendy continues to fight back, as she did when she was only nine years old. After being in Canada for some years, she returned to Guatemala, and with other young women and men formed the organization H.I.J.O.S. Guatemala (Hijos e Hijas por la Identidad y la Justicia Contra el Olvido y el Silencio—Sons and Daughters for Identity and Justice against Forgetfulness and Silence). As an organization, H.I.J.O.S mission is: "We do not forget, we do not forgive and we do not reconcile." H.I.J.O.S is indeed a bearer of thousands of silenced lives and memories, and a fighter against the "peacetime" vilification of those who struggled for workers' rights, and opposed discrimination against Indigenous Peoples. For, as Wendy says:

> My brother and I knew about the war that was taking place in the country; our parents made sure to talk about this to us in a language we could understand. They talked to us about how workers were treated and of the discrimination against indigenous people and of the impossibility of us expressing ourselves freely. They also talked about their participation in the revolutionary movement to change this situation, but they said their participation had to be secret due to the risk of persecution and assassination, and although we had little idea of what this meant, nothing prepared us for what happened on March 8, 1984. (ODHAG 2006: 49)

WHEN THERE IS NO FAMILY LEFT TO FIGHT ON YOUR BEHALF

From the perspective of our everyday knowledge about "the family," we commonly overlook the persecution, surveillance, and annihilation of revolutionary families. Perhaps the "naturalization" of living according to the hegemonic, heterosexual, and bourgeois prescription, conceals the historical reality of millions in the global South who have resisted domination, and for whom building, and living within, a family has been flagrantly denied through torture, disappearance, and death. Sometimes those who survive bureaucracies of death fight back, organize, and demand justice, like some of the relatives of those who appear in the death squad dossier analyzed here. This resistance is not easy, for these relatives face constant persecution, but

such resistance is absolutely necessary to make collective and historical memories integral to the survival of humanity. However, in many cases, either most or all members of entire families have been exterminated, and there is no one left to search for remains, and if there is, they do not want to talk about the revolutionary relative, due to fear of being persecuted and killed, and/or because they were against the ideals and principles for which their relative stood.

The death squad dossier conceals familial extermination, and renders the abducted as if they had existed without these social relations—or as if their families did not constitute regular families, for they challenged the family ideal that was before anything else national, heterosexualized, and "racially normal," in addition to being patriotic. Such a construction of the family was a discursive practice accompanied by anti-Communist rhetoric, to the effect that the "Communists and the guerrillas" wanted to destroy "the Christian family," and that "Communist women" were sexually promiscuous and innately whores. Claudia Maria recalls how her sister Mariana, kidnapped, tortured, and raped by several military men, tearfully told her about the degrading treatment she received at their hands. In the late 1980s, Mariana was abducted from her house by soldiers dressed as civilians, in front of several members of her family, and brought to a military base where she was kept for several days. This is what Mariana told her sister Claudia Maria about her experience, first, as she remembered some of the deeply misogynist insults uttered by the military who were raping her, and then, as she recognized how the brutalities suffered at the hands of her torturers had left her socially dead:

> Now you will know, Communist bitch, who are the real men because you love to be fucked by many men, don't you. You will see that your Communist faggot men will not save you because they do not give a fuck about you. They have hundreds of women, damn whore . . . do you like it?" I passed out several times and almost died after each torture session and developed a severe hemorrhage and multiple infections and could not comprehend why I was degraded so intimately; I will never forget this, ever, for it is a constant presence in my life, something that makes me feel dirty, deeply ashamed, and dead in life. . . . I am a living dead because these criminals took away my life, my meaningful life, and made me be barely alive. I think I am socially dead. (Interview 2005)

Implicit in this racialized and gendered degradation is the ideology that the revolutionaries, progressives, and democrats did not live in national, Christian, and patriotic families, and that the main people responsible for this practice were women identified as Communists and guerrillas. Thus, all forms of violence against revolutionary and progressive families were legalized, as integral to the defense of national security. Hill Collins notes how

violence against marginalized and racialized groups is not only minimized in Western national narratives, but also becomes a silent routine for defense of the nation (2000:160). Furthermore, she states:

> In the same way that wife battering and childhood physical and sexual abuse become part of the "family secrets" of far too many families, so does the routine nature of violence, targeted against women, gays, lesbians, and children within distinctive racial and ethnic groups. (2000: 160)

In the same fashion, the most dreadful forms of violence are perpetrated against politically active families, in the name of defending and protecting the "modern families" of local elites in the global South, and the racially privileged ones in the global North. This is something that is overlooked even by incisive, critical thinkers like Hill Collins. Through foreign policy, transnational state and corporate terror not only supports ongoing genocide, torture, and rape, but also actively promotes these in defense of "national families."

The case of the Samayoa Morales' family illustrates this in an eloquently tragic way. The dossier begins with the "detention" and vilification of Teresa Graciela Samayoa Morales, as entry #1. The description of her violent detention attests to the participation of many Guatemalans in heteropatriarchal denunciations, and in the defense of genocide and state terror, especially on the part of many fundamentalist evangelicals belonging to sects financed by U.S. denominations. The dossier's account states that "capturing" Teresa was made possible because an evangelical man contacted the army to let them know that there were two single women living together in a neighboring apartment. Young, single women living together is viewed suspiciously by devoted evangelicals who have been taught that they have to guard women's sexuality to keep intact the "purity" of the family, not only theirs but "the national family" as well. To further understand the motives of the evangelical who made the report to the army, thus facilitating the kidnapping of Teresa Graciela Samayoa Morales, it is important to recall that in the 1980s, under military ruler Rios Montt, the ongoing, fundamentalist, Christian penetration into Guatemalan society was aggressively ramped up. This process had begun right after the U.S. invasion in 1954, through the infusion of millions of dollars from conservative and fundamentalist American groups such as the Iglesia del Verbo (Gospel Outreach), and Club 700, directed by Reverend Pat Robertson. It was Francisco Bianchi, presidential advisor to Rios Montt and an active member of Gospel Outreach, who, in 1982, organized a meeting with Robertson, William Middenford, the representative of the United States to the Organization of American States (OAS), and Fred Chapin, U.S. ambassador to Guatemala (Escorcia Polanco 2005). After the meeting, Chapin's involvement with the Rios Montt de facto administration grew. It was Chapin

who kept the State Department abundantly informed of what was going on in Guatemala through the U.S. embassy, which in many ways acted as a branch of the CIA and the Pentagon, as CIA declassified documents attest (National Security Archive 1999b). It was during the Rios Montt regime that unattached women and single mothers became the symbols of the "loss" of family values and of the degradation of "national morality"; therefore, their everyday lives were subject to greater scrutiny than previously. To be socially and politically engaged, in addition to being an unattached young woman, was the maximum sin, and one that had to be severely punished. It is in this context that Teresa Graciela Samayoa was kidnapped and forever disappeared.

Teresa Graciela was in her early twenties when she was abducted on August 29, 1983. She was kept by agents of the presidential intelligence office, euphemistically called "The Archivo" (The Archive), for over three months, and then transferred to another equally terrorizing military unit known as the DI (Directorate of Intelligence) (see Figure 3). In her case—as in the case of almost her entire family—there is nobody to demand justice, because her mother, Graciela Samayoa de Morales, was brutally kidnapped from her home on September 13, 1982, when she was with two of her sons. Teresa Graciela's older brother, Sergio (entry #60 in the dossier) (see Figure 4), was sadistically kidnapped from a public hospital. While walking in a central street of the Capital City, Sergio and his political *compañero*, Allan Gatica, realized they were being followed by men from the deadly Guatemalan military intelligence, and attempted to flee. Both were shot. Allan died instantaneously, and Sergio was severely injured in the head and left for dead. Later, an ambulance transported him to a hospital. Perpetrators belonging to two security agencies, the *Archivo* and the DI, then violently entered the hospital's emergency ward, disarmed the policemen on duty, and questioned the duty physician about the whereabouts of Sergio (who was then in a preparation room for surgery). Enjoying absolute impunity, the perpetrators took Sergio, still on a stretcher and attached to a bottle of intravenous fluid, out to their waiting vehicles (National Security Archive 1999a).

A detailed record, kept by the U.S. embassy, of this family's life and its persecution, was sent to the Secretary of State by ambassador Chapin. The ambassador added disrespectful comments, such as that the University of San Carlos, where Doña Graciela [Doña Grace], mother of Sergio and Teresa Graciela, worked, was a "suspected hotbed of subversive activity," and that "the kidnapping of the gravely wounded Samayoa from the hospital recalls scenes from 'The Godfather,' but in the movie, the victim survived" (National Security Archive 1999a).

After I decided to do more research on the death squad dossier, Teresa Graciela's picture grabbed my attention. She reminded me of Sergio, whom I had met twice—once at an oratorical contest in which he was participating,

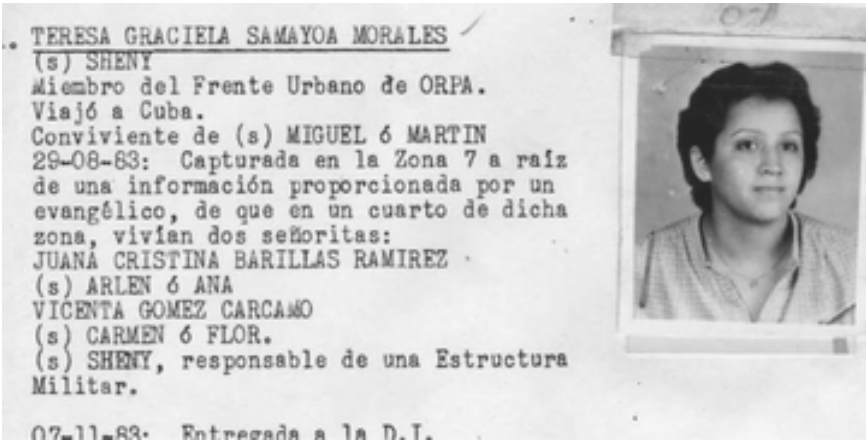

Figure 5.3. Teresa

representing the private college where he studied, and a second time at a play he had helped to organize, because he loved the arts with the same intensity he brought to his commitment to bring about social justice for all Guatemalans, especially for Indigenous Peoples. Doña Grace, as Teresa Graciela and Sergio's mother was called by her children's friends, worked at the University of San Carlos. She was a remarkable woman, who taught her children how to practice solidarity with the impoverished and the racially and culturally oppressed, without practicing what Tuhiwai Smith calls positional superiority, an attitude common within some progressive circles. From the perspective of positional superiority, the racialized and impoverished need to be represented and spoken for, because they lack proper political language and creativity. (I analyzed this attitude in chapter 3, while addressing the dynamics of racism in progressive environments). Tuhiwai Smith reminds us that this mentality is very typical in the conceptualization and treatment of Indigenous Peoples (2002). The Samayoa Morales family belonged to the upper middle class, but instead of living an insulated life, as was common for the elites, they not only risked their lives for the cause of decolonial social justice, but indeed sacrificed that which is most precious to all of us, their lives. After I had realized that this family was obliterated, and that there was nobody available for an interview to at least document their passage from this earth, by chance I had the privilege to learn more about Teresa Graciela's life from Camila, a friend of hers, who generously accepted my invitation to talk about her revolutionary compañera's daily life (and unintentionally her own life as a great and courageous woman).

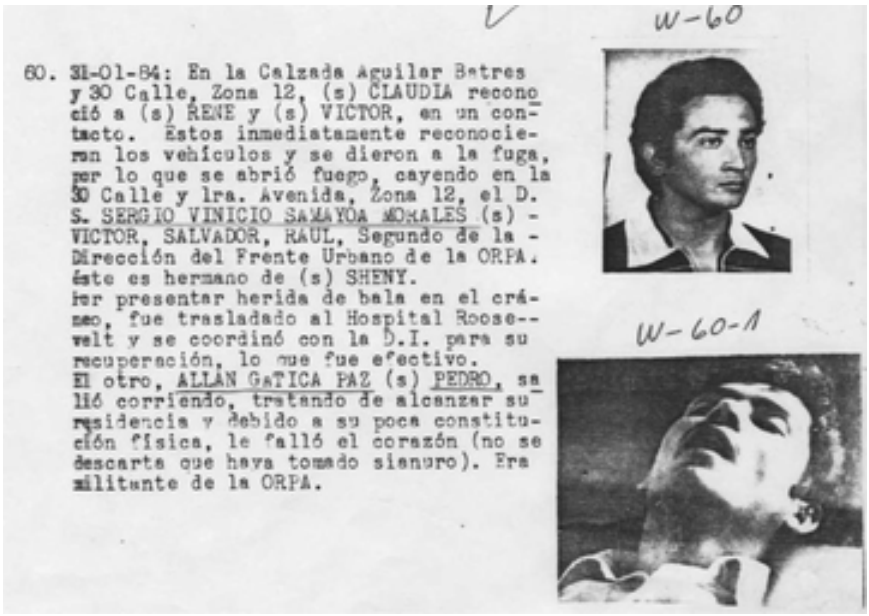

Figure 5.4. Sergio

Teresa and her kidnapping did not come up in our conversations for several years, however; she only entered into our dialogues when Camila started to remember quotidian revolutionary life as a composite of several weavings, like those so beautifully woven into Maya *guipiles* (blouses). These threads of complex life histories of resistance constitute what Stone-Mediatore calls political storytelling, in that they contribute to the destabilization of the authority of official knowledge, by telling the story of what is absent from this knowledge (2003: 116). Political storytelling is important because it does not play down or erase participation in revolutionary resistance movements, and does not try to portray politically engaged people as passive victims. Political storytelling uncovers hidden censorship in official knowledge (2003: 116), and also challenges dominant and expert knowledge that overlooks the dynamic links between people, places, and resistance (Roy 1999).

Thus, the life moments the sufferers and oppressed share with us are treasures of wisdom, which can help us disentangle, to some extent, the organization and work of bureaucracies of death, while grounding in us the living memories of those invented and treated as politically abject. When we enter into the lives of those who have been prohibited from experiencing what, in "normal contexts," is named the "normal" period of mourning, we might unlearn what we have learned, namely, that there is a "normal period

of mourning." Accordingly, we learn that mourning in cases of the disappeared may last a lifetime—and that it is not always debilitating, although it remains painful. Thus, political storytelling can help us to disentangle how imperial capitalism has been a constant force behind necropower and the bureaucracies of death in several contexts. Life histories, however, are not only testimonial experiences of the fratricidal culture of national security; they are also fountains of border thinking, and of wisdom in resistance. Thus, political storytelling can help us to disentangle how imperial capitalism has been a constant force behind necropower and the bureaucracies of death. Life histories, however, are not only testimonial experiences of the fratricidal culture of national security; they are fountains of border thinking and wisdom in resistance. The lives of those who cannot even be named today as revolutionary insurgents who struggled for social justice have indeed taught me that their memories have not only been sanitized, as has happened in the case of those who were not insurgents, but that they have been completely erased from the national, official knowledge of remembrance, and from official, revolutionary histories that sometimes reify only certain people and events.

Camila calls herself an "always revolutionary" woman. She lost many relatives at the hands of agents of death, and has survived incredible pain and near-death experiences. Camila knew Teresa personally, and shared shelter, food, and dreams with her. Camila says that Teresa was like a beautiful and smiling butterfly, always full of life. As a revolutionary woman, Teresa, despite her young age, was very disciplined and committed; she was, without a doubt, very conscious of the injustices under which people have lived for centuries. Camila recalls how she was impressed with the way Teresa handled the tragedy of losing her mother and siblings when she was not even twenty years old. She was not an adventuresome, upper middle-class person. Camila remembers a time when they went to buy groceries, and there was a news program on a television reporting that the subversive delinquents, found in several houses in 1981, had been defeated after long hours of resisting military attacks. News anchors, and some of the people watching the news, were practically celebrating. Teresa had a tear in her eye, which she quickly forced back, saying, "Even if only one of us ends up alive, that one must continue the struggle, even if it is only one of us standing still." Camila said that Teresa had the ability to make us laugh even in tense moments, because all of us were fighting a monstrous and well-armed enemy, an enemy that hated life and loved death, imposing death on the youth, the women, and the Indigenous people. Teresa used to say that we should not lose our love for life and music, so she was the one singing almost all the time; she loved romantic ballads, because they were the music of her father. Her brothers meant a lot to Teresa; Sergio was one of her models, because he was respectful and disciplined, while tender and kind.

"In the home in which we lived with other revolutionary brothers and sisters," Camila said, Teresa met her partner, Juan Ramiro Orozco Lopez (entry #2 in the death squad dossier). Camila said that, in watching both of them, she understood that they were soulmates. She also remembered the commitment of Estelita:

> With us there was a dear friend, Estelita, who was very thin and who had an athletic build; her roots were Mestiza peasant from the *oriente* [eastern Guatemala]; she gave all what she had to revolution. She told me she was a maid in a rich Ladino family, a family that treated her like a slave; therefore her greatest dream was for all peasant and poor women and men to have an education, to attend university, to have affordable and decent housing and jobs. In her flesh she endured the silenced humiliation of being a domestic worker, something Estelita took as an inspiration to fight for revolution. We had problems and disagreements, of course, like other human beings, but more than anything else we learned how to be self-critical. Teresa, Estelita, and I, we learnt how to practice women's strength and how to exercise power without making the mistake of imposing on men another type of oppression. Our brothers in revolution, those with whom we sometimes shared shelter and food, sometimes had a hard time accepting that we as women were equally capable of being authoritative, as being capable of discipline and organization. We did it, and this is often not recognized in the stories that so-called experts write. Sometimes, so-called feminists from the [global] North had the audacity to say that revolutionary women were subordinated to men, as a blank statement; I ask myself, Did they know us? Did they meet and live with some of us at that time to make such a statement, and who authorized them to write these things? (Interview 2010)

Camila said that Teresa did not have much time to mourn her mother and brothers, as she would have if there had not been persecution or a struggle for a revolution: "I also did not have too much time to cry for my siblings who were kidnapped and killed," Camila stated, adding:

> Perhaps this is difficult for researchers from the North to understand, to grasp this complexity of the context, because I am not saying that we did not have permission to cry and mourn; what I am saying is that in this context, the context of the struggle and the persecution and terror under which we daily lived, created the conditions that make public mourning almost impossible. We could not name our fallen in public because by naming them we would be writing our own deaths. All these years have been difficult, but I always try to remember the ideals for which Teresa and Estelita gave their precious lives; yes, sometimes I cry for them, for all of us, but Teresa's smiling gives me some comfort. (Interview 2010)

Soon after the document was made public, relatives of twenty-eight women and men, vilified in the death squad dossier, launched a campaign demanding justice inside Guatemala. However, they were threatened and further perse-

cuted, all the while the legal case was delayed and neglected. This legal abandonment of the *homo sacer*, in Agamben's terms, and of the *femina sacra*, in Rentin's[8] —the abandonment of those who can be killed without their killings becoming a crime (Agamben 1998; Lentin 2004, 2006)— obliged these courageous people to seek some kind of transnational, juridical justice through the presentation of their case to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHRI) in 2007. They were supported by the Myrna Mack Foundation. Families of the disappeared are suing the Guatemalan state for violations of the right to life, of personal integrity, personal liberty, judicial guarantees, freedom of thought and expression, children's rights, and the right to judicial protection, all in accordance with the American Convention on Human Rights of 1969.[9]

The relatives of the disappeared, through their transnational efforts, are de-vilifying the lives and struggles of their beloved ones, while destabilizing the coloniality of power; for amidst fear and despair they reclaim the fundamental entitlement of their relatives, and of themselves, to resist domination and state terror and fight for social justice. They are also disrupting the demonizing narrative that represents their relatives as cold-blooded criminals, irrespective of their age. A clear example of this is the case of Maya siblings Juan Pablo and Maria Quirina Armira Lopez (at the time thirteen and sixteen years old). In the death squad dossier, they are portrayed as subversive delinquents who belonged to a deadly Communist cell. Juan Pablo for instance, is described as helping the army to abduct his sister Maria, but unlike other cases in the dossier, the Quirina Armira siblings' final fate is not identified through the codes that indicate the killings of abductees. As minors, Juan Pablo and Maria Quirina had not been issued official identification cards, from which the agents of death could obtain pictures, as they did with the rest of the abducted adults; thus, in legal terms, they were not citizens, and yet they were depicted as being against the "nation" from which they, as members of the Maya People, were excluded to begin with. Reducing their young lives to a representation of "anti-nationalism" is, as Roy brilliantly notes, a theft of language, a "technique of usurping words and deploying them like weapons, of using them to mask intent" (2009a: 6). This theft of language allows oppressors, and direct agents of state terror, to marginalize those who oppose their plundering of land, territories, cultures, and, of course, lives. Through this theft of language, oppressors deprive progressive and revolutionary movements and people, including children, of "a language in which to voice their critique, and [so] dismiss them as being 'anti-progress,' 'anti-development,' 'anti-reform,' and of course 'anti-national'— negativists of the worst sort" (2009a: 7).

THE MOST VILIFIED AND PROHIBITED MEMORIES

Mignolo's analysis of the need to understand and situate the colonial wound on a scale (2009a), in terms of contexts, histories, and levels of impact on differentiated, yet commonly colonized, peoples, serves to complexify the reality of the lives, deaths, forced disappearances, and memories of all those who organized for revolutionary change, and who have been vilified and reduced to things. Relatives of those thingified, of those who joined the insurgent movement and/or were accused of being sympathizers of this movement, have been ostracized in small and medium sized towns in Guatemala, to the point where their relatives could not mention their names in everyday conversations, and had to hide family photo albums. Those who know that their children belonged to the revolutionary movement are prohibited from proclaiming their children's dignity in public, except in a few Maya communities that have a more open tradition of community organizing (field notes 1999, 2002, 2008). This everyday culture of terror and fear is not a thing of the past, and does not belong only to the period called internal armed conflict. It is a present-day reality for many survivors, now complicated by widespread delinquency, a reality aggravated by misery, poverty, unemployment, and the rise of organized crime, with deep ties to the masters of state terror.

In smaller cities and towns, relatives of the fallen have to face military and paramilitary torturers and killers, as well as narco-traffickers that have close ties with the military and many wealthy families, at both the local and national levels. In eastern Guatemala, several of today's organized crime members were intelligence agents, army informants, or civilians with ties to state terror. In these eastern towns, many talk about these networks as "*po-*

Figure 5.5. Quirina Armira siblings' picture

deres ocultos" (hidden powers);[10] this reflects the fact that powerful military and civilian men, and some women, act in "darkness" to accumulate fortunes and even to influence electoral decisions. Peacock and Beltrán note that these hidden powers constitute

> an unresolved legacy of Guatemala's 36-year internal armed conflict. They act at the behest of members of an inter-connected set of powerful Guatemalans . . . [which] oversee and profit from a variety of illegal activities that they carry out with little fear of arrest or prosecution. (2003: 1)

In eastern Guatemala, where most of the army informants, and the military officers who tortured civilians, originated during the period of state terror, there was an important, popular social movement in the 1960s, but it was intensely repressed by the Mendez Montenegro and Arana governments. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, there were women and men who organized both public and underground social movements, but these were different than those in the Maya highlands. In eastern Guatemala, there was no tradition of widespread community organizing. This factor contributes to the isolation and deep fear that currently run high among many relatives of the tortured, raped, and killed. Some of these families lost several members, which explains why there are not many community human rights groups actively demanding juridical justice. By this term, I mean what Doña Soledad, who lost several children, said to me: "Juridical justice is what we dream about because real justice—which includes eradicating poverty, poverty in which families were left—we will never achieve. Rich lawyers dictate what people can dream about, not our real lives" (interview 2008).

In many eastern towns, the power within military zones has been experienced on an everyday basis ever since 1954. This power has been reproduced in part by wealthy landowners; they have traditionally financed death squads like *La Mano Blanca* (the White Hand), and extremely violent, right-wing political parties. These conditions persist, masked by the language of democracy and peace, and many relatives of the executed and disappeared know this well, and are rightly afraid to talk and to organize. Those who talked to me did so under conditions of full anonymity, and with my promise that I would not describe situations, or use names, that would put them at risk. There were some who talked to me about why they could not speak about what happened to their relatives. An elementary teacher, for instance, said:

> I wish I could talk about what happened to my father, but I know where I live and who holds real power here; they can fire me. Do you see that I do not even have the right to speak to the four winds what I lived through while growing up, after what they did to my father?" (Interview 2008)

Peacock and Beltran speak about the hidden powers this teacher refers to, when they write:

> The abused are clearly targeted; while many appear on the surface to be acts of common crime, the number and patterns of the cases point to a systemic targeting of civil society actors and others involved in anti-impunity initiatives—both those who seek justice for past abuses (human rights groups, forensic experts, judges, lawyers, witnesses, etc.), and those who denounce present day-corruption by state agents. (2003: 2)

Nyers is correct when he signals that "the experience of fear, in other words, can have a silencing effect, making once eloquent political dissidents mute" (2006: 60).[11]

In this sense, these survivors are not only people without any entitlement to political identities; they are also objectified subjects who are "allowed" to speak only if they favor local military and economic elites. Their being politically mute calms the anxieties of the "national" citizen, represented by those holding political, economic, military, and epistemic power, and who exercise their rights in established, democratic institutions—namely in right-wing and neoliberal parties. As Nyers argues, drawing on Burroughs: "Fear does indeed work: it works to stabilize anxious subjectivities, discipline disordered identities, and gives the citizen-subject political coherence" (2006: 55). Survivors are de facto constituted as political outcasts within this polity, as were their revolutionary relatives, who were converted into politically abject traitors, and so reduced to things. Doña Soledad, Doña Clara, Rafael, and Vanesa are quoted below talking about this past-present condition of imposed fear, all the while reclaiming the humanity of their relatives, for these relatives were not "stones or things thrown on some remote road . . . they were here on this earth, they were made of flesh and blood just like everyone else, and they fought for real democracy and justice" (Doña Soledad 2008).

Doña Soledad

> I was born in a town with a long history of poverty, a history of everyday people who are also political, really political, because the poor also think, you know. But many of us think politically without being in *politiqueria* [dirty politics]. I am a sixty-nine-year-old widow. I make clear to my children that their father was killed because he was an authentic political person, because he dedicated his life to support others, to struggle for them here in these beautiful lands where for many centuries others dominate; first there were the Spanish and then *gringos*. Joaquin, my husband—I use this name because I cannot say what his real name was; they can still kill my children and their children—Joaquin never discarded the possibility of real change through honest elections and with honest and dedicated presidents like Arbenz, who stood up to the rich

and the gringos who for so long had believed they were our masters, the masters of our dreams and of the air we breathe. I stopped talking about the October Revolution [of 1944] a long time ago because Joaquin's family was accused of communism. They were called "reds" with disdain, so when I married him I soon learned I had to keep silent about this topic. But it was Joaquin who taught me about this revolution, for he was a teenager when Arbenz was president; his father was a peasant leader. And he was jailed and the military staged his mock execution more than three times. They joked with his life as if he was a vicious and rabid animal, but this was routine inside and outside the jails. My husband used to say that what we needed was a president like Arbenz, but there are not any left like him. Joaquin said for now we have allowed ourselves to be eaten by a world of mirages. Joaquin's family is poorer than mine; we got married when he was twenty-one and I was seventeen, and had eight children; two were killed and one died from pesticide poisoning, which happened on a large cotton farm we had to work on in order to barely survive. Through hard work, Joaquin educated himself and at the same time held several badly paid jobs until he learned how to type and read the law. He would become a good lawyer, very honest, but he did not have the money to get a law degree that would enable him, perhaps, to get better jobs. I come from a family headed by a strong woman who did not put up with male abuse and who did not think women had to be attached forever to those who hurt them, and I am talking about late 1930s and early 1940s when in the entire world women were taught by everybody that they had to bow their heads to their husbands, their masters. My mother did not accept this and preferred to survive on her own.

I am telling you this because I want you to write in your book that we, the poor, think and love—in other words, we are normal and we love knowledge; that is why we struggled. My husband, for example, even learned some words in English on his own because he wanted to know why Coca Cola was a transnational, and it was he who taught me about transnational companies stealing the best we have. He learned the law because he did not believe in it. He used to say that the law was the letter to defend the rich and their companies. He had an expression, that: "The law is like toilet paper because the rich, the wealthy, and their allies clean their butts with it." Joaquin was a truly human person, because he did not preach how to be in solidarity with others, he practiced it. I remember once, it was raining and he came home without a shirt, and when I asked what had happened, he simply responded: "Ah, that, well, I gave it to a prisoner accused of being illegal in the country." Another time, he brought home two young guys who were accused of stealing horses from a rich farmer, but they were in jail because they had the courage to denounce this landowner as a land thief, which means he was extending his land by putting its boundary on the land of these men. Joaquin said, "These guys are innocent and have been blamed for their honesty, and they deserve food." This simple humane work was enough for civilian and military authorities to listen to the landowners who accused Joaquin of supporting guerrillas and communism, an accusation that meant death in the 1980s. He was killed in 1981 when military personnel dressed as civilians shot him thirty times. I am saving for later the most horrific details of his death because I want to continue without tears.

Joaquin taught his kids the other history, not the victors' or conquerors,' but of the conquest, of the killing of Indigenous People of the highland and of those here. His father had taught him that in the east there were Indigenous Peoples massacred during the first genocide, and those who survived like our ancestors were forced to be "*Ladinos*." Joaquin said to her kids that they had to be alert to what they were taught because many teachings poisoned the soul and make people forget that poverty is not a thing sent by God to punish us. He was very critical of the educational system, but loved knowledge and believed that everyone, not only the rich, had to be educated. He suffered knowing that many scientists and professionals were serving the rich and the gringos, for he could not understand why intelligent people support the killings of millions through hunger and with guns.

He loved music, all music, and was a good singer and guitar player, though he was never trained. When the Cuban revolution triumphed, Joaquin jumped for pure joy like a little child, and his eyes were illuminated with deep hope for Latin America. He saved some money to buy a cheap radio and we used to listen to Radio Habana Cuba [the international Cuban radio station]. After he was killed, the whole family was gradually destroyed because we were left in extreme poverty; misery is the right word. We lost our home because a woman tied to military intelligence stole it, and now her daughters are the owners. We could not say anything because who would you go to when those who are supposed to protect citizens order them to be killed? Joaquin's face and chest were completely destroyed because the killers hated him so much that they wanted to completely destroy him as if they wanted to erase the fact he was present on this earth. They did that to teach others that authentic human beings are not allowed in this land.

After his killing, one of our daughters had to leave the country because the killers were hunting her down as if she was a hyena; this happened the same day we buried him. A month after he was killed, the army sent a couple of men to my little, newly rented room to threaten me; they said, "If you talk to anybody about your husband, all your children will show up dead on some road." I could not cry for him in public, so in order to cope I accompanied any funeral that passed nearby, and I did this for several years until I had to find work in Mexico to feed my kids. There, I worked as a maid, because doing others' laundry was not enough to survive here. I did not know where my daughter was; she was a revolutionary and joined the resistance. Thank God she is still alive. As much as I could, I gave all my children an education to honor Joaquin's memory.

Some years after my husband was killed, my oldest daughter was brutally kidnapped when she was just sitting outside our home. She was a single mother already, and very sick. What hurts the most in her case is that she was not in the organized resistance, but was kidnapped and raped and died as result of this. I did not know about her multiple rapes until my other daughter told me. One of my younger sons, a brilliant one, whom I will name Alejandro—who saw the car in which his father's killers left town and who was like his father, I mean a truly humane person—after struggling in student organizations and in other community efforts, to save his life, joined the guerrillas. I did not know about his decision, for he had said that he had left for the north. A year and a half after his death, which I do not know anything about, I was

told this horrible news. I fainted and thought I did not have any life force in me, but here I am, ill, poor, but living. I think that fighting for my survival is the least I can do to honor the great memory of my people, my husband, my daughter, and my son. I have cried, yes, so many times, but I have tremendous faith in God who has given me strength to continue.

I could not join any group to demand justice because I am very poor and live in a town where military and civilian informants and torturers live, many of whom are now active with narco-traffickers, and they keep us in fear. My nervous system was altered forever, but I am not crazy as some have said, because how could you be crazy when what you have is sorrow and pain?

The immediate killer of my family was the army, but I always think that in these lands there is somebody else behind these things. The executioners killed my husband and kidnapped and tortured my daughter, but who gave the orders? Who planned this destruction? I say that many of those with knowledge, those who study, also study to kill; if not directly with their hands, they kill with their power, their ideas. How did the killers know about where to attack and how to destroy my family? They studied people, good people, and they were trained by other countries to do this; in other words the killing, the kidnapping, and torture did not happen suddenly, it was planned; it was calculated.

What happened to my family almost kills me because the planners took something great from me; when they killed my husband they killed a part of me; whey they kidnapped my daughter and raped her, my soul was raped and I could not be with her; when I lost my dear Alejandro, one of my best sons, another part of me died again. They destroyed a family that took a lifetime to form; they destroyed my family because we have not been able to be together again. Yes, we survived because we had to, but that does not compensate for the horror we were forced to undergo; and what about the silent pain in my children and their damaged spirits? These are wounds that will never close, but our memories bring my kids and my husband to life again and again.

Doña Clara

I am going to use the name Clara, and I am seventy-three years old. And I worked as an elementary teacher for more than thirty-six years. Why some of you may think that I earned a decent salary as a teacher—that is far from the truth. I retired earning thirty quetzales (CND $21.35) every month, which does not help me with basic groceries. The good thing is that my mother allowed me to live in her house when my husband Mario was kidnapped and then assassinated after being brutally tortured in the late 1960s. He was one of the first to receive what became a national doctrine: the killing of those who oppose cruel inequality. I came from what you might consider a broken family, because my father left my mother with several children whom she brought up on her own and under strict rules. She was deeply religious, so I grew up with evangelism, which for me served as a catalyst for the pain I had to endure since my early adulthood. I was in my early thirties when I lost my husband, and although we did not have a great relationship, for he fell in love with another woman, I strongly believe that children need a paternal figure, espe-

cially when they are accused as mine were of being children of a Communist guerrilla. You cannot believe the consequences of this accusation; it damaged my children, their spirits, and their little souls; yes, they survived, but the price of suffering has been extremely high and I do not wish this on my worst enemies.

But why was my husband accused of communism? Well, because he disliked the exploitation of the weak: those who did not have any opportunity to go to school; the unemployed, the sick, the blind, and those who cannot walk properly. See, my husband came from a very intelligent and sharing family, and he loved reading and educating himself. With one of his great friends, who was also killed but much later, in the 1980s, Mario organized people in many villages and encouraged them to participate in the democratic process of electing Julio Cesar Mendez [1966-1970, and the one who made a pact with the army to "cleanse Guatemala of Communists"]. Mendez not only betrayed my husband, his friends, and millions more, but during his government, my husband was assassinated. The economic impact of his killing was so great that sometimes I think that it robbed me of the ability to properly cry for him, because I had more than five mouths to feed, literally speaking. Plus, I had to deal with the resulting harassment of my children in school and on the streets. In our case, there were not only the soldiers, secret agents, army informants, and police officer who harassed my children, but also my neighbors. I remember once, my son Rafael and his sister came crying home after school, and when I asked what had happened, both looked at each other and did not say anything, until several days later. They did not want to go to school, for they were insulted as being children of a Communist by the teacher; this became a kind of a horrible chorus and to this day, my entire family is insulted as "red" whenever a quarrel erupts.

My widowhood insulted many married women who told me that because I was a single mother, my children would become drug addicts and prostitutes, to which I replied that I was a hard-working woman who did not feel ashamed for who I was, because it was not my fault, and besides, I told them, I do not need a man who will treat my children in only god knows what way, especially my girls. Today I walk with my head up and proud of my work because as a teacher and as a mother I have received many blessings in the midst of fear, deep fear, to the point of having a nervous breakdown and developing diabetes. One day, for instance, long after my husband had been killed, when I was walking on a main street, someone touched me on my back and I was very frightened; it was a young soldier, son of peasants, who said: "Thank you with all my heart, because you gave me the best gift on earth, you taught me how to read and write, and for that I am very grateful."

I could not cry in front of my children and decided for their protection that I would never talk to them about how their father was killed and all the accusations against him. We began to talk less than ten years ago; even with the peace agreement, we did not talk [about all of this] because in this town there are many army informants and ex-civil patrol members; although there was never an open conflict here, everything was underground for several years until students organized again in the 1980s to fight for educational reforms and for keeping high school education public. Look at how we have been forced to bury our pain, such that now more than forty years later I am crying for all that

happened to me, to my children, to my husband, but also to my brother, who was a revolutionary and brilliant teacher, also killed. A dear cousin and revered teacher, he was also brutally shot here in the 1980s, and what is more troublesome for me is the fact that his widow lives with a military officer. How could she? I ask, but only God knows.

My nights have been lonely, and there are no words to say how it feels and what it means when the person you loved is taken away so suddenly and so violently. I reached a point when I told myself what I would not give up right now to have Mario alive, even if he would be with another woman. One Christmas, or Good Night as we call it, all the people were celebrating, yelling, singing, and I was crying. I remembered the loneliness of my life; I did not remarry for fear that my girls would be abused by any man who replaced their father, for I had seen so many of these things. I have dragged with me this buried pain for more than 35 years; it got accumulated. Because I could not speak up, I could not cry. I seek refuge in my silence; I also knew I could not trust anyone at all.

To open old wounds is hard, and I do not talk about this with my children and they do not do it either. These wounds did not kill me or my children, because we had to live, but they leave unspeakable traces on your soul.

Rafael

One of the things that bothers me the most is the denial of the meager reparations the state is obliged to give to the relatives of the repressed—and the politics of constructing the "internal conflict" as something that began in the 1980s and only occurred in Indigenous communities and in the capital city. I say this because it is something that is not expressed or denounced in the human rights reports of the international and national agencies. For example, I was interviewed two years ago by an Indigenous guy and by a foreigner, and both said: "We drew a map of the internal armed conflict and here there were no victims; on the contrary," they said, " the assassins came from here." How could they actually believes this shit, I told myself, but here in Guatemala one sees so many unexpected and incomprehensible things that it is better to get used to it without buying into the whole lie that this country has been turned into.

We as a family were forced to live in what I call implicit silence; it is survival silence. You know that if you ask questions about your father you can be the next victim. Because we did not talk about the killing and torture of my father; we closed off the theme of death in my family. We were deeply stigmatized as guerrillas; it reached such an extreme that an army reservist named this street where our house is located "the Moscow street"; another woman told any mailman bringing mail to us, "Ah . . . yes, this is the house of the red; only guerrillas live there." It was the culture of silence, but this culture did not come through a direct order; what I mean is that we were not told that "You should not speak of this," or that through law or decree we should keep silent, but it was a factual reality; it was a matter of survival, and under those conditions one had to know how to keep quiet. One of my ways to repel this imposition and repression was to stubbornly work and go to university, and I

did. My mother used to walk me to the bus station at four in the morning, for she was so afraid she would lose me too. She is still afraid, for at the human rights office where we had to go and be interviewed about the abduction and killing of my father, she told me my father was kept in a military barrack, but she had never said this before, ever. Then she added, "I am still in fear, so here I still live in a culture of fear, so what I mean is that culture becomes fear itself."

My *physical* father—the one with flesh and bones—is not with me; I do not remember much about him and how he was on daily basis with me, but he was my *father of ideas*, of a philosophy of life, of revolution. He is with me all the time; his principles, his revolutionary ethics, have been a guiding force in my life. Sometimes I think that in my case it is almost genetic that I am a revolutionary because I cannot get rid of a wealth of ideas about social justice, about what is right for the poor, for those of us thrown into the margins of society. One cannot forget who is ultimately responsible for what we have been forced to endure: transnational capitalism in bed with national elites. To reflect on the fact that only a tiny minority own the media and through it manipulate entire masses of people; that it feeds into a deeply corrupted system where even elementary teaching positions are sold and the best educators who do not belong to the middle classes cannot obtain a job because they cannot buy these positions—this is nauseating. My sisters are a clear example of how political stigmatization works; one only got a position through merit four years ago when she was 50, can you believe it? The other is just working on temporary contracts. The ghost of communism has followed us all our lives.

In today's politics of human rights, there is another type of preferential corruption, as I call it. It works by allocating large amounts of money in reparations to a handful of "golden cases," which is a classist move because the relatives of poets, journalists, medical doctors, and university professors are the first chosen and we, the sons and daughters of people like your father and mine, are not given a damn, because our parents were working-class, men of calloused hands and great hearts. We are the forgotten in practice but included in nice human rights and development reports written for international agencies, but the widows of the people, the children of the people, have not received basic support in real reparations, including good psychological support, and not the kind that treats people as if we are ill. We are not sick, we are not mentally ill; we were oppressed and persecuted even for our ideas. So who are the real sick ones here?

The causes that generated the armed conflict—poverty, exclusion, exploitation, all of that—they are more evident now than ever; they are more rooted in the now than before because at least before you could see a strong social and revolutionary movement, you had an alternative, an organized national alternative, and not discourses of fake peace and human rights. If I were younger I would organize again, actively organize, but you know the powers were victorious in one thing: Through steady terror they made people passive and deeply afraid; here in the east this is what is happening. And the issue is complex because, for example, in my family, this culture of fear grabbed you during your best years, when you absorb many things. For example, my sister, the one who did not want to talk to you out of fear, was older than me when my father

> died. She practically swallowed fear and the impotence of the environment; she was the one who saw our mother crying, also in silence, behind closed doors, so she has been marked, so to speak.
>
> Another consequence of the culture of terror, which is insidious, is that it makes you feel guilty for what the killers and torturers did to your relatives. My mother, for example, feels guilty that we grew up without a father; she did not share with us her pain and the details of my father's abduction, torture, and death out of fear we would blame her. This is moral violence.
>
> I miss my father deeply, I miss a friend. And in my adolescent years I missed a mentor and also a protector. I remember once when an older guy bullied me for no reason whatsoever, just the pleasure of inflicting pain on me; every afternoon for a year, I think, he beat me up until my grandfather shook me and said that I could not allow this guy to own me, to own my soul, and that even if he would beat me up I had to fight back. With a lot of fear I confronted him, for I knew my grandfather was watching from a hiding place; when I was beaten up, how much I wished my father was with me, you cannot imagine how much I desired his presence. I have no idea how I am alive, how I escaped state terror striking me directly, because all my university friends and revolutionary comrades were shot and died or were disappeared forever.

I talked briefly to Claudia, one of Rafael's sisters, and I immensely appreciate that she agreed to see me just a couple of weeks after she was diagnosed with breast cancer. On her bed and in a lot of pain, she said the killing of her father changed her life forever, and it was a contributing factor in her current illnesses. "Pain, the kind of pain we have been forced to live with in this country, kills people, E.," Claudia said. I insisted we talk about other things and introduced other topics, and she even apologized for not being strong and healthy enough to talk about her father. However, she did say: "He was my sunshine and I loved him deeply."

Claudia resembled her father, so even if she wanted to escape from what was done to him, she could not, because people constantly told her she looked like him, and she was named after him. Claudia died at the beginning of 2009, when she was still young and still trying to enjoy her first permanent teaching job. As a human being and researcher I felt empty again, and powerless, for I knew that state terror and the culture of fear were contributing factors to her fatal illness—as well as a two-tiered health system that attends to and protects upper classes, but not working-class women who, even when they have jobs, live in poverty. Her passing was another painful blow to Doña Clara, who said to me, "Mothers should not bury their children, ever, but here it has been like daily bread."

Elizabeth: A Life for Revolution

Vanesa, a great revolutionary woman, remembers her younger and beloved sister Elizabeth as an illuminating spirit, and one of the most committed women she has ever known, despite her sister's young age when she joined

the revolutionary movement. They came from a family engaged with education and hard work in a lower-middle-class neighborhood in the capital city. Elizabeth was surrounded by brothers who went to university, and who became involved in the struggle for social justice in the early 1960s. This is what Vanesa says about Elizabeth:

> Elizabeth was a very intelligent girl, precocious. She grew up in a family that was united, that supported each other even during quarrels and disagreements. Our family was Elizabeth's first school about injustice and racism; one of our grandmothers was Kackchiquel, and this taught Elizabeth her first great lessons about history and tradition. She was the youngest of all and suffered the most from the disappearance of our brother, who was a university student and detained by death squads in the mid-1960s. It was at this time that a revolutionary consciousness began to grow inside Elizabeth. The combination of our brother's disappearance and the influence of many women and men who surrounded her were crucial elements in how she became an extraordinary woman and an exemplary revolutionary person.
>
> She was a student leader when she was studying to become an elementary teacher and it was through this leadership that she came to interact with the union and other social movements, including their leaders. She was very, very, smart, to the point that I think had she been born nowadays—and in a more egalitarian society—she would not have been involved in a revolutionary movement, I mean directly involved, but instead she would be a scientist or a university professor. Her intellectuality would have brought her to struggle in other ways, but she was disappeared. And this act is not only an act of state terror, but perhaps it reflects mistakes in the direction of the revolutionary movement, for the leadership did not foresee the capacity for cruelty on the part of the wealthy classes and their army. They did not measure well the level of involvement of external powers either.
>
> Elizabeth's deep participation grew out her consciousness, but it was also precipitated by the conditions of racism and exclusion in our society. There was no other alternative either, because the forces of power had closed other venues for us to struggle for a dignified life for all and not just for the few. Our family, let me tell you, did not live in abject poverty; we had our house and my father worked many jobs, good jobs, to give us an education and good food on the table, but we did not grow up to be narcissistic persons, looking at our own well-being only, to be selfish. For us it was an absolute moral principle to be revolutionary, and this consciousness was not brought by Cubans and Russians as the system affirmed through its propaganda machine. This is something that is tragic in Guatemala, because now many repeat that we fought because Communists taught us to; if by communism they mean watching hundreds of children not having any good food to eat and watching hundreds be unemployed and die from preventable illnesses, then, we were Communists. This is something that Elizabeth was very clear about long before she read the big books she loved, like *Les Misérables*, and several books about World War II, as well as the *Little Red Book* by Mao. She also loved good fiction and was an avid reader of the news ever since she was a girl.

Elizabeth joined the revolution as many women did, women who had to leave their homes, their families, their children, to live a life of sacrifice—like many women who very few are actually willing to understand. What was the meaning of struggle for Elizabeth, a sacrifice? Yes, but she took this sacrifice consciously and firmly, with the confidence that the struggle was necessary and just. She was the leader of many women and men whom she loved and took care of, many of whom were older than her. She died for me to live; she died for others not to fall; she was a truthful woman whom I admire very much. She was humble and respectful in times of learning and disciplined despite her youth. She believed that being in a position of political responsibility required confidence and good active caring for others because this responsibility had to be earned through hard and constant work. She said it was something that is earned by example. In the last moments of her life, there were several emergencies to deal with in a sector of the country where a light-skinned woman with a lot of freckles, as she used to describe herself, could not go unnoticed. The place where she was abducted, inferring from the scarce information we have, was already very dangerous, so it is very hard for me to understand what those who sent her there were thinking. That was a catastrophic and deadly mistake. She could have been given other types of work, you know, for she was a natural intellectual leader, but also because she had great humane qualities and demonstrated political and organizational experience that made her a true revolutionary cadre capable of undertaking any political responsibility in less compromising places.

I met several women who did good work in the city, but as the repression escalated, and as the revolutionary work demanded more responsibility, they could not cope. Thus, to give someone leadership status, to promote someone, it is necessary that she or he loves the cause with such a passion that it is projected into the people, forgetting about any personal benefit or celebratory recognition; someone like Elizabeth, capable of constructing a long-term project through small daily deeds and by providing a good example for others. I am not exaggerating just because she is my sister; I say this as a person who fought for more than two decades in a revolutionary organization and who was close to the big male leadership, which in many ways betrayed us, but only at the end of the day. And when I remember Elizabeth and hundreds of others I saw fall, I know that my sister and I did not join the revolution because of the leadership. The leadership cannot tell the full story of the thousands of now faceless revolutionaries who came from all walks of life and who loved the cause with such a passion that we took it as our life.

Elizabeth was a woman who knew how to be strict while being able to show deep love for others, because revolution is before anything else an act of love for those who are not there for any personal benefit or out of hunger for power. It was love that seduced many women to become involved in the revolution; love made them sacrifice their lives, their families, and even their children, a deep love for *nuestro pueblo* [our people]. Our struggle was not perfect, because it was made up of humans; all struggles for liberation are similar, in big countries and in small ones like ours. For a woman like Elizabeth it was not easy to understand that she had to leave her family, her friends, her dreams as a young person, but as she used to say, “Here every day is lived with such an intensity, at the edge of death; and that becomes the maximum

expression of life." I remember I once became sick and could not see her for a while, but when we finally met, she said, "I know you have been sick but I want you to know that *nuestro pueblo* are worried about you and want you to get better." At that time I did not understand very well the meaning of the popular and collective subject, and it caught my attention that she expressed her feelings about my illness in such a collective way, but it was a great teaching for me. Another time Elizabeth told me, "If I do not live to experience a revolution in the time that is left to me on this earth, I already experienced what it feels to live a revolution, because one does not know the future." We also talked about torture and being captive and she said that it was our obligation to "respect the fallen in any circumstance because no one who has not experienced this knows what they go through, the pain they are forced to endure. So we cannot judge them for we cannot put into doubt their consciousness in the face of irrational methods like torture."

Not knowing anything about her abduction, not even the exact place where it happened, is something that cannot be named, cannot be spoken, for it is indescribable. I have a cross on my chest because we do not know what happened to her after she was abducted, and perhaps because she was our baby sister, it is an even deeper pain. She is with me and one day when I work more through this suffering, through the practice of my own spirituality, I will perhaps be able to talk to her spirit more and more. It is my own spirituality, a combination of my search for strength and love amidst despair and pain, which has brought me to a place where I have discarded almost completely the work of Western psychologists and therapists. Long ago when I went into exile was the first time I yearned for revolutionary explanations or something that could ease my pain and the pain of my family, but I just got absurd responses, like, I have been traumatized since childhood because all humans are. What nonsense this is, and how dare this Western-trained psychologist make me out to be a traumatized person by blaming my childhood, which I and my siblings enjoyed. It was not our parents who made us suffer; it was an imperial, brutal system of power supported by the comfort of most in the West. My father did not become mentally ill despite the fact he went to every morgue in the city to search for my sister and so saw hundreds of mutilated female and male bodies. Those who organized this terror and who supported it directly and indirectly did this to my father, to us, so we are not the sick ones.

I have very sad days of course, when the disappearance of my sister comes to me so vividly, but now I am engaging with her life more than with her abduction and remember what music she loved, the books she liked and movies she enjoyed, for I need to re-humanize her life, her political and social revolutionary commitment, and render honor to her loving sacrifice.

WISDOM IN RESISTANCE: POETRY, PROSE, AND MUSIC

Vanesa's decision to rehumanize Elizabeth's political life, and to work through the pain caused by the atrocity of the coloniality of power, is a thread in the narrative of many survivors and relatives of the fallen. Vanesa, and

others who have worked with me so generously, said that poetry, prose, and music have been supportive channels over the years to honor the life and memory of their beloved ones, because not everything can be said through "factual" information, and because even the best, expert treatise on torture and social justice cannot possibly cover what relatives and survivors go through when the turmoil of daily life unfolds. Sometimes, Vanesa says, the poetry of Pablo Neruda places her with her sister and comrades in struggle. In some of our many conversations, we remembered the resisters through a poem by Neruda, sung by Joan Baez, entitled Canto XII, "Alturas de Macchu Picchu" ("The Heights of Macchu Picchu"). Vanesa and I listened to this poetic music for hours while she continued remembering her sister Elizabeth and held her pictures close to her heart.

Wendy Mendez, in a letter-poem to her mother, Luz Haydee Mendez, who appears in the death squad dossier, rehumanizes the woman who brought her up and taught her to continue the struggle that she herself could not continue.

Beautifully interconnecting despair with hope, Mendez elevates the life and memory of her mother to a dignified place—a place that begins at her home, and then extends out into the world through an intersectional move, in which silence under torture becomes a symbol of endurance. Here is Mendez' letter (ODHAG 2006: 52, my translation):

> Mother
>
> Where are you?
>
> So many things have happened since they disappeared you 22 years ago; other things have grown in me that have changed me, but I have never forgotten March 9, 1984.
>
> Whereas in other parts of the world millions of women took to the streets to break the silence about this ancestral oppression of silencing, your silence in the face of the executioner was the biggest protest I have ever known.
>
> Each interrogation of the torturers was rehearsed over and over again but they were not capable of breaking the remembrance of the whys and becauses about trees and the wind we had since childhood.
>
> Each electric shock over your body could not erase the memory of your joy riding in the mountain.
>
> Each nail they tore off from your hands could not break your faith that we will transform this system that oppresses us.
>
> Each threat against your children could not break your love for life and justice; these are the strength of your struggle as a woman.
>
> Be strong!!
>
> These were your last words.
>
> And now I am strongly in love with life, with people, with my son, with my partner, and the revolutionary struggle that we women build on a daily basis.

We are pushing the defense of the earth which feeds and shelters us and we fight for public education that will be in charge of the formation of new human beings; we are launching our voice and through radial waves; we are confronting the police when it does not respect the people's will; we struggle because we know that we must be strengthening Resistance, but because we also know that people must be educated, so that when women are liberated the people are also liberated.

Now I remember so many things about and from history, the history we women are writing, and I understand why those arms, your arms that could sustain a book and embrace a daughter to breastfeed her heart, also learnt how to carry a gun.

I have the premonition I will encounter you on a fresh morning around a fountain and with your firm eyes you will finally inscribe a smile with the name: liberty.

Your daughter

To all women who have been forcibly disappeared

No to forgetting

No to forgiving

Linking familial pain—caused by the works of the agents of necropower through kidnapping and torture— with the practice of solidarity, also gets expressed through poetry, sometimes in the face of one's own imminent death. In June of 2010, Roberto Miranda, suffering from a deadly form of cancer, wrote a poem, which he shared on his listserv, to his brother Willie, entitled "Here We Are Again, Brother Willie":

Brother Willie
Here were are again
Challenging the clouds of forgetfulness
Facing down all the traitors
The years have broken
the forgotten tracks of time
the steps have not wandered
while storms rage
Twenty-six years
dear Brother
your voice and that of many martyrs
is still heard
in the dark corners of the continent
Peoples once masters of their lands
Resist the unending plunder
of lands still sacred
while new colonizers
extend their grasping tentacles
to lay waste the land
Twenty-six years
Yet there are still among us

those who struggle
for justice in the land
Yes, there are new colonizations
treachery
surrender
submission
But my brother
Twenty-six years long gone
We can still see
all is not lost
Twenty-six years
your memory grows
and flowers in May
as your presence is once again
remembered in the unforgettable month of June
Willie Miranda lives!"
(translated by Jordan Bishop)

The struggle to reclaim the humanity of those converted by necropower into the politically abject is intense in practice, even when it has been missed or badly interpreted in analyses, but, under challenging circumstances, this intensity is very often expressed through poetry. Camila, in a very kind gesture, shared with me a yellowish sheet of paper on which she had written a poem to Teresa Samayoa Morales, immediately after she knew of Teresa's abduction (an abduction detailed above). Camila said:

> Because I knew her body would be fragmented and mutilated so as to negate her existence, I needed to bring her to humanity; because her smile would be denied and her life made criminal, I needed to bring her to life as she was being born from the womb of our Mother Earth . . . I kept this poem even when I was in dangerous places where I could be caught by those who took Teresa, but I need it as my eternal companion and as my expression of deep love for her and what she stood for. (Interview 2009)

Here is Camila's poem: Little, Thin Butterfly You Will Be Here Forever!!

My heart aches as if it were an immense giant with a painful structure, armed with pure tears that run over the earth like seas;
a giant with a beaten flesh, ripped up with strong contractions of melancholy in an abyss illuminated with sadness in the face of your wounded and silenced beauty.
Ah yesterday—one must remember.
We cannot forget your dear and beloved sister.
The strongest force turns small from your childhood because from it you began to grow with a strength that became magic and red from so many battles.
You, always mature, you always joyful, you who constructed with determination and transformed with your singing the multitudes that now follow you,
you with your proletarian flags of war.

For you my dear heart with flowers and warrior butterflies, I send my words and if they reach your ears welcome them, embrace them like the day I encountered you with your usual smile.
Because you will be breaking stars to illuminate mountains of streets and houses, tracing vultures, winning combats; wounding killing gazes, in silence, serene and satisfied with your clean forefront.
I wrote this today when I knew of your departure.

Bureaucracies of death, as machineries having the mission to carry out necropower, have as their main goal the dehumanization of those invented and treated as politically and socially expendable. In a word, their goal is to make them *things*, not only in life, but also in death. If entire populations—like Blacks, Indigenous Peoples, Muslims, the impoverished, the disabled, and people of color—have been denied full humanity because of who they are, when they decide to organize to refuse death through passivity, they become pariahs of a world more and more consumed with neoliberal individualism, where everything is commoditized, where, as Arundhati Roy rightly puts it, there is an ongoing theft of meaningful language, where words like progress and development have become interchangeable with economic "reforms," "deregulation," and "privatization" (2009a: xvii). It is a world, Roy adds, where freedom has come to mean "choice." It has less to do with the human spirit than with different brands of deodorant (2009a: xvii). Market, she says, no longer means a place where you buy provisions. The market is a deterritorialized space, where faceless corporations do business, including the buying and selling of "futures." Justice has come to mean "human rights" (and of those, as they say, "a few will do") (2009a: xvii).

In trying to capture the apparently unsolvable contradiction of living with hope amidst despair, and in an effort to listen carefully to what survivors and relatives confided to me, and to what other sources have spoken to me, I close this chapter with a thought from Roy that I feel is pertinent for respectfully honoring the memories of women, men, and children in the dossier of death, and for honoring the lives and struggles of those vilified and demonized because they resisted as best they could. As Doña Soledad said to me, "My son was left with no other choice but to fight with the tools available to him under the most unimaginable terror" (interview 2008). Or, as Tischler Visquerra notes, "One does not create the tools to struggle or the conditions under which one organizes" (2010: 6).

I am in agreement with Roy when she beautifully writes:

> To love. To be loved. To never forget your own insignificance. To never get used to the unspeakable violence and the vulgar disparity of life around you.
> To seek joy in the saddest places. To pursue beauty to its lair. To never simplify what is complicated or complicate what is simple. To respect strength, never power. Above all, to watch. To try and understand. To never look away, and never, never to forget. (Roy 2009b)

NOTES

1. By "full memories," I refer to concrete and symbolic ways that constitute rich, complex, and contradictory life, and also ways in which people--in this case, active and politically organized people--are kidnapped, tortured, raped, and killed. But, in this context, life and death should not be interpreted as binaries, but rather as asymmetric relationalities. Full memories, therefore, refer not only to remembering and remembrances, but, as I have said, to other complex processes.

2. The CIA intervention in Guatemala was named "Operation PBSUCCESS," where PB stands for Presidential Board.

3. Roberto used this expression, very conscious of the fact that it was one of the ways preferred by the agents of state terror in Guatemala to refer to revolutionary and progressive women and men.

4. On February 17, 2011, Roberto Miranda "left his body," as many of his friends said. He was fundamentally a human being in love with life, even though he and his family, like thousands, if not millions, in Guatemala, knew first-hand the devastation of state terror, which began with the killing of Willie Miranda on June 8, 1984. Roberto's death—although expected, for he was diagnosed with one of the most aggressive cancers—struck a chord in me as a researcher, and especially as a person whose family, like Roberto's, had felt the direct, deadly work of genocide in the context of state terror, particularly if we see genocide not just as a juridical term defining the planned killing of an ethnicity, but also as the persecution and killing of a political collectivity. During a long conversation at his home in December 2010, Roberto reminded me, with his large smile, that his best legacy to all of us, and to the world, would be his refusal to be defeated by the killers of hope. He said:

> I know my final days are close. I have accepted it with dignity; for I lived a life of struggle for what is right. If those who ordered the killing of Willie—and their powerful foreign supporters—thought for a moment I would feel defeated, they are completely mistaken. I am going with the great satisfaction that I did what I could, not only to demonstrate the injustice of killing Willie, and thousands more, but to keep his struggle alive, his memory alive, through a principled commitment to everyday justice, without forgetting to smile. (Conversation 2010)

5. I introduce this term here, for it was mentioned several times by many relatives of the massacred and tortured to counteract its claimed ownership by the military and bourgeois establishment, who have used it to demonize the progressive and revolutionary as national traitors. Some of those who shared part of their knowledge and reflections with me were critical of the term patriot, due to its historical, exclusionary, and nationalistic meanings, but agreed that in some political contexts and moments it is important to reclaim it with a different set of meanings, to flip conventional scripts (field notes 1999, 2002, 2008).

6. XX became a signifier, not only for those who vanished forever, but also for those whose very existence was denied. To name someone XX in Latin America has been a symbol of what Razack calls the eviction from humanity (2008), which has been the fate of countless social and political organizers and activists, as well as of women murdered because they belong to particular groups of women deemed as disposable, such as impoverished *maquila* workers, and sex workers (see Mendoza 2006 and Schmidt-Camacho 2005).

7. In some academic circles the idea is still prevalent that the efficacy of research, especially scientific research, is its capacity to be repeatable and applicable to other contexts and subjects. Thus, in this sense, and as the authors of the Physicians for Human Rights report named here say, torturing methods applied previously, and in other contexts, can be seen as successful if those tortured were able to endure more and more sessions of torture. This is also registered by Carmen Rojas, the Chilean woman, and former member of the Manuel Enriquez Revolutionary Movement, in her excellent and terrifying account of the torture she was subjected to for more than three years, in the infamous, clandestine jail, Villa Grimaldi. Her book is called *Recuerdos de Una Mirista* (1981).

8. In Agamben's analysis, the *homo sacer* is genderless and raceless.

9. Recently, however, this international demand for justice was returned to the Guatemalan courts. At the time of writing, the outcome remains unclear.

10. In Guatemala, and within the context of state terror, when people talk about "hidden powers," they do not refer to something that is secret per se, but to something that is a "public secret," which means that those in power, including the mass corporate media, hide the truth about who perpetrated genocide, torture, and other state terror crimes. For example, while the militarized Guatemalan state, the United States, and others, have denied for decades their responsibility in massacring Mayas and abducting, torturing, and killing others in a more selective way, most people, especially in the Maya highlands and in the eastern towns, knew who the killers were, and who designed these crimes. In a similar way today, in many places, many people know who the drug lords and other narco-traffickers are, but they cannot name them publically, out of fear that they might be killed.

11. Though Nyers refers to the institutionalized silence of refugees in global, Northern societies, and to the fact that refugees are silenced in invisible ways even by those who are "humanitarian," his analysis is applicable to the everyday fear imposed on survivors in eastern Guatemala.

Chapter Six

Citizenship as Repression and a Space of Inclusion-Exclusion

Citizenship has always been a terrain of deep conflict and struggle, in which material, symbolic, and cultural inclusion and exclusion run parallel, influencing or determining who does or does not "qualify" as a citizen, and so, for entrance into full humanity. As Arendt noted in her essay "The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man":

> The conception of human rights, based upon the assumed existence of a human being as such, broke down at the very moment when those who professed to believe in it were for the first time confronted with people who had indeed lost all other qualities and specific relationships—except that they were still human. The world found nothing sacred in the abstract nakedness of being human. (1968:179)

Arendt, as Nyers indicates, gave a clear articulation of the paradox of contemporary claims of human rights, when she said that to possess rights one has is to be other than human; one has to become the human's other; one has to become a citizen (2006:37).

In the Americas, this has been especially so since the conquest and invasion at the end of the fifteenth century. Thus, the European conquest and invasion of the "New World" constitute global events that set the basis for establishing citizenship above humanity, particularly the already questioned humanity of Blacks and Indigenous Peoples. As Mignolo points out:

> In the sixteenth century, the colonial difference was located in space. Toward the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, the measuring stick was history and no longer writing. "People without history" were located in a time "before" the "present." People with history could write the history of those people without it. (2000: 1)

This determined who qualified as being fully human, and so who qualified for full citizenship, a ranking that was part of a violent, deeply racist, and gendered process that resulted in the preeminence of citizenship over humanity through the power of sovereignty, and more specifically, state sovereignty. Here I draw on Nyers' analysis, which argues that sovereignty provides the very conditions of possibility for what is commonly understood as human identity. For Nyers, the principle of humanity must be conceived of as an inherently political concept; thus, the "human" is by no means an innocent, neutral, or impartial category (2006: 32-3, 37). The trade-off between humanity and citizenship, with priority assigned to the latter, has made possible the heroic narration of the occidental citizen as the one blessed by birth with the virtues of governance (Isin 2002). In many contexts, this has implied decisions about who belongs and who does not, about who lives and who dies. It is these relations of power that generate and reproduce the conditions in which the majority are reduced to bare life, and so can be abandoned by law in the name of the rule of law, be placed outside of definitions of humanity, and then be killed without this killing becoming a crime (Agamben 1998; Lentin 2006; Mignolo 2009b).

As I analyzed in the introduction, this hierarchical ranking of humanity was made possible by the introduction of the ideas of race and gender as classificatory strategies to evict non-Western and non-White peoples from humanity, by creating systems that have determined who counts as human, whose lives deserve "protection" and whose deaths deserve to be mourned (Quijano 2000; Lugones 2007, 2008; Razack 2008). This became a powerful tool for social classification of humans and their cultures, a ranking which facilitated the extraction of labor, and the use of women from colonized societies as rapeable and/or reproductive tools. In a similar line, but coming from a different school of thought and research context, Razack reintroduces Hanna Arendt's notion of "race thinking" as a way of understanding the division of the world between the deserving and undeserving according to descent. Razack draws on this notion to analyze the contemporary casting of Muslim peoples out of the category of humanity in Western societies (2008: 8). Silverblatt reminds us "how a relatively innocent category (like color) could become virulent, how politically defined characteristics (like nationality) could so easily become inheritable traits" (in Razack 2008: 8). The powerful idea of race, and/or race thinking, as well as gender, I argue, also enables us to grasp how citizenship has been a tool for the further exclusion,

inclusion, and Othering of racialized and marginalized peoples. This multidimensional ranking has had devastating consequences, because it has justified the enactment of institutional surveillance, genocide, the building of border-walls, and the deep militarization of everyday life, especially the lives of non-citizens. This situation, as Cornel West has argued, created social and civic death as a collective phenomenon (2006); however, social movements and community organizations around the world have challenged this reality, despite the most sophisticated and deadly forms of repression by state security apparatuses, private death squads, and police forces, especially those that protect corporations. It is important, therefore, to recognize that contemporary, hegemonic ideologies and practices such as equality, democracy, citizenship, human rights, and peace, are indeed deeply contested terrains, for they create nominal equality from practical, social inequality.

The contradiction between humanity and citizenship, as enunciated above, is a deeply violent process. Violence, as I have stated before, but it is worth repeating, consists not only in "extreme" acts, wherein expressions of cruelty are salient and blatant, but also in the many ways in which cruelty is rationalized and sanctioned through law, religion, education, and economics. Violence, as Guatemalan Maya leader Belje' Imox (a pseudonym chosen by him) rightly points out,

> cannot be seen only as physical, but [also] as painful paths that gradually destroy and kill people spiritually, what we were and what we have been over many centuries. We can see the result of this in many Maya communities of the present. The practical effects of Christian indoctrination, the division and fragmentation of peoples onto little pieces . . . so this physical but more so spiritual destruction is used and re-used by political and economic powers against us. (Interview 2008)

Part of what Belje' Imox was reflecting on are the invisible ways in which violence is also *epistemic*, because it has invalidated and persecuted other ways of knowing. On this issue, Tuhiwai Smith states:

> One of the supposed characteristics of primitive peoples was that we could not use our minds or intellects. We could not invent things, we could not create or produce anything of value, we did not know how to use land and other resources from the natural world, and we did not practice the arts of "civilization." By lacking such virtues we disqualified ourselves, not just from civilization but [also] from humanity itself. In other words we were not "fully human"; some of us were not even considered partially human. (2002: 25)

As Goldberg has pointed out:

> Violence is conceived usually as the invocation and use of instruments (in the case of the state, state apparatuses) to implement the effects of power's exercise at the expense of those upon whom it is exercised. But we might think of violence more extensively also as the dispersal throughout the social arrangements that systematically close off institutional access on the part of individuals in virtue of group membership, and indeed that render relatively hidden the very instrumentalities that reproduce that inaccessibility. (2002: 121)

My aim here is not to equate both manifestations of violence—that is, the spiritual and the physical—but rather to indicate that they are interrelated, especially in contexts that have witnessed long decades of colonial, and modern state terror, forms of governance.

In Guatemala, for example, various transnational powers have been directly responsible, alongside internal elites, for keeping the entire nation deeply unequal on the bases of race thinking and practice, patriarchal ideological practices, and the entrenched system commonly called, by many in Guatemala and Latin America, *capitalismo salvaje* (savage capitalism). First came the Spaniards, then the Germans and Italians, and later the North Americans. For example, from 1954-96, the four decades of state terror and genocide, more than three hundred Western transnational corporations, primarily from the United States, were actively profiteering (Martínez-Salazar 2005).

Canadian mining companies, for one, have long benefited from genocidal state terror and corruption, yet their involvement in Guatemala is not well known. Following upon the CIA-supported military coup, backed by the United States in 1954, the Canadian International Nickel Company (Inco) and its subsidiary Exmibal became notorious in Guatemala for manipulating the country's political instability to their benefit, and for effectively condoning the state violence and killings that were unleashed to silence opposition to their practices (Astritis 2003). The Canadian state, as well as other Western nations, remained silent regarding the successful coup against the democratic government of Guatemala, presided over by Colonel Jacobo Arbenz.

Inco, through Exmibal, tacitly supported state terror, because it promoted a more "stable" climate for foreign investment. As one Inco executive put it:

> The military will continue to rule Guatemala for the foreseeable future. . . . It is the only basis of stability, really. It will rule even with a civilian government in power. . . . The political prospects are good. . . . [The military is] one of the best prospects in terms of realism and pragmatism regarding foreign investment. (cited in Astritis 2003)

Since the formal end of direct, European, colonial rule in Latin America, the heirs of the colonizers, in alliance with North American powers, have dictated the meaning of democracy. In Guatemala, for instance, elections have

been combined with military coups, and this became the preferred formula for the region after the American intervention of 1954. Why did the United States and the Guatemalan bourgeoisie choose this combination of military coups with elections, when in fact this ruling coalition could have exercised its repressive and exclusionary powers through personalized, military dictatorship without elections? One reason, not often appreciated, is that the only way to legitimize an imperial intervention against a progressive, democratic government like that of Arbenz in Guatemala, was to construct it as a "Communist" dictatorship, the leaders of which were against God, Christianity, democracy, and individual rights—all elements of the new, sacred, civil religion after World War II.

Coming back to the democratic revolutionary period of 1944-1954, it is important to emphasize that the 1945 and 1949 elections witnessed the two largest voter turnouts in the country's history. In 1949, President Arbenz Guzman received 63 percent of the popular vote, a number that included the votes of many Indigenous women and men who, for the first time, exercised that (currently still limited) right (Jonas 2000; Sistema de Naciones Unidas/ PNUD en Guatemala 2001). The lack of parliamentary representation was not a problem during the period of the 1940s and 1950s. The Guatemalan bourgeoisie, its military allies, and transnational corporations such as the United Fruit Company (UFCO), which were opposed to progressive change, knew that a more participatory democracy was working in Guatemala alongside a parliamentary one. These groups and their global allies labeled the Guatemalan government a Communist dictatorship, and justified imperial intervention in the use of rhetorical freedom and democracy. Consequently, one of the fundamental goals in implementing the formulaic strategy of elections and military coups, a strategy cynically called democracy, has been the destruction of the memory of anti-colonial and anti-imperial resistance. This resistance was first undertaken by Indigenous Peoples who opposed the European conquest, and then by countless generations of Guatemalans since. In short, a state of exception became the rule, rather than the absence of the rule of law, the latter being what many perceive. As Agamben points out, this state of exception is "not the chaos that precedes order but rather the situation that results from its suspension" (1998: 18), which well describes the situation instituted by the ruling powers in Guatemala: "The exception does not subtract itself from the rule; rather, the rule, suspending itself, gives rise to the exception and, maintaining (itself) in relation to the exception, first constitutes itself as a rule" (Agamben 1998: 18).

In this geography of a modern/coloniality of power, Indigenous Peoples as a collectivity and Maya women within this collectivity have been denied "the right to have rights" (in the phrasing of Arendt 1973: 226) within a "nation-state," where rights are conferred only upon those who have constituted themselves as citizens. Although Arendt's insight is important, it ig-

nores the defining of who was "human enough" to deserve entrance into the family of man. which occurred within the long history of imperial, Western-centric knowledge. This issue gained prominence in the sixteenth century in Valladolid, Spain, after the debate between Bartolomé de las Casas and Juan de Sepúlveda, and after that in the legal-theological scholarship of the School of Salamanca. This school was devoted to finding the place of American Indigenous Peoples in the Great Chain of Being, and in the social order of an emerging colonial state (Mignolo 2000: 53). In Bolivia for example, Aymara scholar Rivera Cusicanqi points out that the model of citizenship that became hegemonic was

> in fact a cultural "package" of behavioural prescriptions designed to turn the unruly but "passive" Indian into an active mestizo "citizen": property-owning, integrated into the capitalist market, and "castil-ianized" (speaking Spanish). Invariably, this citizen was an urban young male, dressed in a tailored suit, imitating the behavior of the Westernized elite. (2010: 34)

Rivera Cusicanqi adds, that Indians as a constructed collectivity in the legal discourse "were the inhabitants of a conquered space, the subjects of a colonial state that deprived them of rights and overburdened them with obligations" (2010:35).

In other words, the "rights of the people" is the forerunner of the "rights of man and of the citizen"; thus, the rights of the people are in part a product of direct, European colonial rule, and so it can be argued that the rights of man and of the citizen originate in the colonial projects of Europe, which later became consolidated with a new, contemporary empire led by the United States. In earlier modern/-coloniality of power, the introduction of the rights of the people is an effort to provide a resolution to the debate concerning the invention of Indigenous Peoples as subhumans lacking souls. This debate is carried on in terms of the boundaries between different levels of humanity, an issue that was significant for Indigenous Peoples' possible conversion to colonial Christianity. The colonial roots of the rights discourse, and its subsequent shifts (rights of man and citizen and human rights), are relevant to an understanding of what scholar Ratna Kapur refers to as the darker side of human rights, viewing human rights as part of modernity's universalist, dehistoricized, and neutral narrative of progress, within which there is an insular, liberal subject, along with correlated assumptions about the "Other" who needs to be cabined or contained, lest she destabilize or undermine this subject (2006: 665). As Breny Mendoza notes, those colonial roots form the necessary background for a discussion of the undemocratic foundations of democracy; a discussion which must include the powerful role played by colonial Christianity. Mendoza observes that the Church needed to create a normative, yet paradoxical, notion of humanness, consistent with

theological doctrines that could simultaneously justify the wholesale slaughter of Indigenous Peoples *and* their entrance to "Christian and European humanity" (2006: 936). According to Mendoza, these legal-theological debates have not received the attention they deserve from current thinkers. Analysis of these debates can assist us in arriving at a more complex understanding of a range of contemporary phenomena, including the feminization of the labor force and the political economies of Latin America; mass feminicide; and the incomplete citizenship of Indigenous Peoples, women, the impoverished, and those categorized as "sexual deviants" (Mendoza 2006). And, of course, such analysis can shed light on the consequences of state terror through genocide, torture, rape, and epistemic violence.

Maya women have experienced citizenship as a powerful tool for the denial of their humanity. During colonial rule, as argued in chapter 2, this denial was accomplished in the name of the colonial rule of law, even after 1537, when the Spanish Crown formally declared its acceptance of "Indians" as humans. During genocide under conditions of state terror of the contemporary period, Indigenous Peoples and those accused of being Communists were nominally citizens and humans, with the difference that Indigenous Peoples in the social, national imaginary continued to be at the bottom of the domestically reworked, Euro-North American-centric hierarchy of humanity. For Guatemalan Maya women (and indeed for the revolutionary and politically active in general), citizenship has been a state of law and order that has fiercely defended those whose lives have counted as lives—the racially, economically, and gendered privileged—in concert with Western, transnational, capitalist powers that, having global impunity, have plundered the wealth of an entire nation in the name of democracy and the rule of law (REMHI 1998; CEH 1999; Jonas 1991, 2000; Figueroa Ibarra 1991).

In Guatemala, Indigenous women have been terrorized and persecuted for being women, for being Indigenous, and especially for becoming politically active, and so challenging the exclusionary and repressive character of citizenship. While any type of organizing for social justice in Guatemala, as elsewhere, has resulted in persecution and criminalization, it is important to make the lives and histories of Indigenous women salient, because too often these women remain absent from, or peripheral to, accounts of genocidal state terror. But, this being said, it is important to recognize these histories as complex, heterogeneous, and contradictory. With this in mind, I argue that Maya women's bodies and spirits were gradually reduced to both social and civic death: social death, because as a continuation of imperial racism they were constantly reminded that their humanity had been bestialized, even while their labor was central to keeping vampiric capitalism going; civic death, because they were treated as chattels and reduced to bare life and therefore evicted from the polity. This eviction from the polity, and from humanity more generally, was reenacted with greater technological sophisti-

cation during the period of the contemporary genocide and other forms of state terror. Both evictions were perpetrated through institutional terror: the first under the colonial state, and the second under the democratic nation-state.

It is in this sense that accusations of being Communists and terrorists, as made against whole communities of Maya, constitute them as "communities without the right to have rights," Razack's apt phrasing for the contemporary treatment—eviction—of Muslims from the polity, through discourses that represent them as inherently violent and terroristic. As with the Maya, Muslims are

> significantly different from communities who are merely discriminated against. They are constituted as a different order of humanity altogether by virtue of having no political community willing to guarantee their rights, and whatever is meted out to the "rightless" becomes of no concern to others. Indeed, their very expulsion from political community fortifies the nation state. (2008: 7)

Thus, as Hanson and Stepputat observe:

> The expulsion of someone who used to have rights as a citizen, or simply to categorize some individuals in a society as a form of life that is beyond the reach of dignity and full humanity and thus not even a subject of a benevolent power, is the most elementary operation of sovereign power—be it as a government in a nation-state, a local authority, a community, a warlord or a local militia [and I would add, a transnational corporation]. (in Razack 2008: 7)

Yet, citizenship as a technology of repression and death could not completely defeat grassroots struggles and the desire to resist and contest social injustices amidst the culture of terror and fear in Guatemala. As Isin poignantly argues, "behind constructions of glorious and timeless images of the victorious citizen"—in the Guatemalan case, the Criollo and Ladino bourgeois male, and the imperial capitalist—"there lies an intense and constant history of resistance" (2002: 7).

Therefore, contemporary, hegemonic practices and ideologies such as equality, democracy, citizenship, human rights, and peace cannot be isolated from the modern/colonial matrix of power and its concurrent violences; they are, indeed, deeply contested terrains, for *they create nominal equality from practical social inequality*. As Quijano has aptly observed, juridical equality, justice based on the notion of formal citizenship, and the reduction of democracy to voting by individuals, as important as they are, could not and will not bring a continual expansion of social equality, of individuality, and of social solidarity, the three pillars of democracy (2003: 49-52).

CITIZENSHIP AND NATIONAL SECURITY

In the aftermath of the frustrated October revolution of 1954 and the subsequent intervention of the United States in the same year, the Guatemalan state was deeply transformed into a counterinsurgency machine, in part through the introduction of population control under the National Security Doctrine. This was not state family planning (which also occurred), but rather control measures based upon computerized data collection and intelligence, using technology donated by the United States government (Jonas 1991; REMHI 1998; CEH 1999). The security measures arising from this included the gathering and storage of information on all women and men suspected of being Communists.[1] Special laws were implemented to justify the denunciation and smashing of unions (and indeed other organizations) as supporters of communism and terrorism. It was during this time that it became compulsory to carry residence cards and citizenship identification documents, requirements that had been introduced as instruments of social surveillance and political control.

These practices and their consequences led U.S. sociologist Susanne Jonas to name Guatemala as the first counterinsurgent laboratory of the American hemisphere (1991; see also Grandin 2006). The counterinsurgency techniques learned in the space that Grandin calls "empire's workshop" (the title of his 2006 book) were later extended to Latin America in general, and then to Africa and Asia, and now serve as a model for the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. The learning and polishing of counterinsurgency strategies in Latin America make this region very relevant to globalizing politics, yet this is usually overlooked in conventional foreign policy scholarship. As Grandin notes, intellectuals invoke ancient Rome, nineteenth-century Britain, and the postwar reconstruction of Germany and Japan in their search for historical precedents to the United States' imperial moment, while ignoring places where the United States has projected its influence for more than two centuries (2004, 2006).

As a pilot project, the counterinsurgency techniques developed in Guatemala were continually improved from 1954 on. In the late 1970s, state strategies of identification, surveillance, and control were transformed into instruments and symbols of state terror, which, instead of signifying some kind of state "protection," were intended to be artifacts of a widespread culture of fear, as the experience of many female Maya participants in this study, and in others, reveals (Sanford 2004; Flynn 2003; REMHI 1998; CEH 1999; Jonas 1991; Schirmer 1998; Manz 2004). These strategies helped to forcibly displace many communities most affected by genocide who, out of legitimate fear for their lives, abandoned their homes and territories. The same strategies led to collective dispossessions in less affected areas, such as the *Franja*

Transversal del Norte, now owned by several military officers and wealthy Criollo and Ladino families. As Abu-Zahra points out "territory can be acquired by depopulating areas and using population registries, identity cards, and permit systems to zone population movement. In other words, the manipulation of forms of (non-) citizenship, to displace and dispossess some people, thereby gains territory for others" (2008:303).

The citizenship card and the residence card raised societal fear to high levels. An apparently innocent request by security forces for identification documents came to represent possible death, or disappearance forever. Dolores, a Maya widow, remembers how Jacobo, her husband, was always careful to carry his identification papers with him, hoping that these would demonstrate that he was a working, family man, as she recalls him saying. The day Jacobo was kidnapped by military men, he was coming back from the fields after a long day at work; he was with four other colleagues when the military patrol approached the group and demanded their identification papers, which they all produced. After about ten minutes, and after closely reviewing Jacobo's papers, the military commander said, "You [Jacobo] have to go with us. The rest go, go quickly." Jacobo's family never found out where Jacobo went, and whether he was alive or dead (field notes 2002, 2006). Mayas already deprived of their rights were treated as dangerous subhumans and non-citizens, in the name of "national security," the prevailing framework for defending the right to private property and protecting capitalism masked as a "free market," the central tenet of political rights in general, and hence of citizenship. In this climate, the carrying of citizenship and residence cards was aggressively enforced as a legal mechanism of surveillance, which deepened the militarization of daily life. These cards were also instruments used to force people to vote. And on many occasions, security forces demanded these documents in order to locate individuals on the "black lists," the lists of death (field notes 1999, 2002).

For many Maya women living in poverty, citizenship is not associated with social, economic, civil, political, and cultural rights at all. When I asked marginalized Maya women about citizenship, often their first reaction was to identify it with the cards that had been used as an instrument of repression. Carmen Julia, a survivor of state terror and a longtime community resistance leader, pointed out:

> The only thing we heard about citizenship before, in the times when the military were the kings of Guatemala and the rich their brothers, was that you must have your identification cards, your citizenship card and your residency card. Many Indigenous men who were kidnapped, tortured, and then killed had those papers with them, but they were killed anyway. (Interview 2002)

Carmen Julia also noticed that many Maya women, especially those who spoke only a Maya language, did not know about "that thing" called democracy; but what many knew was that politically active Maya women and men "were fighting for the poor, for having humble houses at least, to have food, to get a job." Like other women who gathered together in their community when the army occupied it, Carmen Julia connected the kidnapping, torture, rape, and killing of people in her community to the struggles against social exclusion, militarism, and the humiliation of Indigenous Peoples simply for being Indigenous—her way of describing racism. She says:

> You see, for that [i.e., for fighting on behalf of the poor] many people were killed. My brother-in-law was brutally assassinated. More than two hundred soldiers came one night [in 1983] and surrounded our house; my brother-in-law was not there. Then they came again and they found him while he was sleeping. The Ladino captain asked him his name and for his identification cards. My brother-in-law said his name and gave the captain his identification cards. And then the officer said, "This is the son of a bitch, the guerrilla that must be killed." I do not know how many bullets they shot into his poor body. He was accused of being a guerrilla because he wanted a better life for the peasants, for the Indigenous People, for women, for the poor. That was his "crime." Was he a citizen? Did he have citizen rights? You tell me. (Interview 2002)

Carmen Julia's testimony and reflection provide evidence that citizenship becomes an instrument to inflict further fear in the everyday lives of those Othered, of those invented as not deserving of citizenship, because their humanity has already been devalued to justify their punishment as "enemies of the state." Citizenship also serves to reinvent Indigenous Peoples' struggles as unrest that has been incited from outside the country, in order to reify the image of a sanctioned Maya—the image of a Maya as passive, obedient, and content with "his" life. This is an image that dominant groups love, and they advertise it as one of the "folkloric gifts" of the Guatemalan landscape. The representation of the sanctioned Maya is deeply gendered, and demands from Maya women submissiveness, obedience, passivity, and the fulfillment of their assigned racist, patriarchal duty: the reproduction of passive and patriotic beings, beings that will bow their heads to their "formally" elected masters, the citizens *par excellence* (Martinez 2008).

One of the main points arising out of my sociological investigation of citizenship is that for too many marginalized Maya women, citizenship means longstanding repression, poverty, and racial discrimination. It is not accidental, then, that these women associate citizenship with racism, and with the unspeakable pain and other traumatic consequences they have had to endure as survivors of genocide under state terror—the pain they carry knowing or thinking about the excruciating suffering their relatives went through

before and during their murder. These are concrete, local histories of citizenship as a process of exclusion-inclusion, which most global designers of domination and subjugation conveniently ignore when creating recipes for democracy in societies they describe as "postwar" or "post-conflict." Local state agents—and the many who embraced neoliberal democracy after peace was signed—manipulate, forget, and use misery and unemployment as a tool to evict Indigenous and Mestizo survivors from a more meaningful citizenship. These are the same forces which reduced meaningful citizenship to elections and voting. However, as Barndt points out with regard to the devastating consequences of NAFTA for female workers, these are realities "kept (carefully and consciously) from our view" (1999: 65).

Earlier modern/coloniality of power continues through more sophisticated languages of citizenship that promise freedom and equality, even while racialized and gendered injustice and inequality persist as concrete conditions. Thus, citizenship as an exercise of sovereign power evicts the impoverished and terrorized from humanity altogether. This was noted by Arendt when she reminded us that "from the beginning the paradox involved in the declaration of inalienable human rights was that it reckoned with an 'abstract' human being who seemed to exist nowhere" (cited in Schmidt Camacho 2005: 255). As María Concepción, a married, monolingual Maya woman living in extreme poverty, said in interview: "I do not know what the meaning of citizenship is, especially for us poor people. Look at us; look at our poor houses. [As if] these cardboard boxes and pieces of plastic can be called houses." Doña Soledad, another married and monolingual woman, who was orphaned at the age of five, said: "Citizenship here in Guatemala and in this town means this piece of paper [signifying a piece of paper with a gesture of her hands]. What is it called? Yeah! Citizenship card. It serves only for voting; it is only a card; a card, nothing else" (interview 2002).

Catalina, a widow whose husband was "stolen" forever,[2] said to me in tears that: "I do not know what democracy is and never think about having rights. How could you think about it when your children barely eat, when they are sick and do not go to school?" (interview 2002). Magdalena, also a widow and someone who was organized in the resistance before the kidnapping and final disappearance of her husband—and perhaps, of the Maya women I interviewed, one who best expressed profound belief in the strength of Maya Peoples—emphatically challenged me as a researcher when she said:

> How in the name of God could I talk about the rights of citizens and democracy when so many have been killed, tortured, and kidnapped? I am not talking about a few here. . . . I am talking about hundreds, thousands—perhaps we will never know how many. Where were the rights of those who believed and prayed to God for a better life and were killed by those with money and guns

> in the name of God? . . . You are the one who has to tell me what the meaning of rights is, not only on paper. I only have more questions about this thing called rights. What I can tell you is what happened here—what happened to my family, to our town. But this is not new either. Do you know what happened to our grandmothers and grandfathers? I do not want to hear about rights from anybody. But we can talk about the reality, the reality of us, the poor. You have been in my miserable hut, so tell me, why don't I have a decent house? And where is the body of my husband? (Interview 2002)

Magdalena's words were expressed with tears—tears that symbolize the complexities of the quotidian injustice in which Maya women survivors of state terror must live day after day. Her tears convey a profound message concerning the reasons why most of those who are living in poverty, and who are racially discriminated against, deeply distrust the empty rhetoric of rights and the statements that promise too much and deliver too little.

In the countryside, the military apparatus forced tortured men to collaborate. After their torture, they were taken to communities where, their identities masked by black hoods, they fingered men and women whom the triumvirate of power designated Mayas—and others struggling for social justice—as subversive criminals deserving death. Elisa, a Maya woman whose brother was used in this way, said:

> My brother was accused of being a guerrilla, was kidnapped by the army, tortured for days, and then forced to travel with a military unit to various towns to identify other people. He was a small merchant, so he knew people in the various surrounding towns. After a week of doing these terrible things, he was killed and his body dumped in the central plaza with a cardboard sign on it that said that he was a guerrilla and that this is the punishment for all "traitors to our fatherland." (Informal conversation 2002)

Ideologues rationalized these technologies for the daily surveillance of life in rural and urban spaces as the imposition of power for the well-being of the people. General Juan Leonel Bolaños once discussed these dynamics in the following fashion:

> Power means survival; [an] aptitude to impose onto others the methods and procedures of life congruent with their well-being and mutual understanding. . . . [It is] the capacity to dictate the law to those who lack it and the possibility to take away the opponent's basic entitlements, an opponent who has been previously weakened.
>
> The organizational strength of social life that the state has is national power. . . . [This] includes the organization of the population in such a way as to dominate the space and the human mass located within the limits of the state in order to impose its compliance with the will of the state. . . . Thus, survival

> constitutes the primary goal of the state, a goal that requires two fundamental objectives: development and security. (cited in *Iglesia Guatemateca en el Exilio* [IGE] 1989: 10)

The most brutal acts of extermination were called euphemistically called the "reduction of the opponent," and the relocation of people to model villages "the organization of the population for its well-being." General Rios Montt, responsible for developing and implementing the scorched-earth campaigns, declared in 1983 that democracy in "times of war" simply means "the imposition of the power and will of the stronger over the weaker" (in Yates 1983).

The imposition of identity cards was a deeply gendered activity, because it reproduced the hierarchy of womanhood, femininity, and masculinity rooted in the period of direct colonial rule. At that time, "native" women in many parts of the world were ideologically masculinized, especially if they did "men's agricultural work," and "native men" were feminized (McClintock 1995). This created subjugated femininities, but also subjugated masculinities, especially under conditions of genocide.

CITIZENSHIP AS DEHUMANIZING AND CRIMINALIZING DISCOURSE

The power of dominant discourses in colonial and neocolonial contexts lies in the use of language, images, and symbols to accompany the materiality of violence, which is simultaneously physical, spiritual, and epistemic. In these contexts, the concept of citizenship has become more important than actual people, through the use of multiple forms of violence. This constraint and destruction are what concern me here, for they have received little or no attention in most social-scientific scholarship.

"Epistemic violence" is Spivak's concept for examining how Eurocentric imperial and colonial projects have constructed their own narratives through the silencing of other knowledges. Here, I apply the term to the complex process through which non-Western knowledges, especially those of Indigenous Peoples, have been suppressed in order to further differentiate modern-colonial world projects. These knowledges, as Mignolo has aptly noted, are not only "counter or different stories; they are forgotten stories that bring forward, at the same time, a new epistemological dimension: an epistemology of and from the border of the modern/colonial world system" (2000: 52).

Hegemonic knowledges have been reworked to fulfill global security agendas enforced as local modernities, as has happened in Guatemala. There, military and civilian ideologues were helped, intentionally or not, by social scientists, especially anthropologists, who appropriated knowledge that the Maya had accumulated through the centuries. Through this appropriation, a

highly destructive and far-reaching discourse was produced, which not only justified state terror, but also fragmented and divided Maya communities. Additionally, it instilled a national-wide, securitized culture of fear and terror aimed at paralyzing the desire for progressive change. This same discourse also criminalized socially progressive agency (an issue I analyze in chapters 4 and 5), while simultaneously emphasizing the right of the powerful and their transnational supporters to persecute and exterminate all those who desired and fought for concrete expressions of egalitarian citizenship.

One of the tenets of the Maya Cosmovision, as expressed through the symbol *Noj* (knowledge/wisdom), is to view knowledge and wisdom as collective practices that get more complex with time—as different, yet interconnected, threads. Some Maya-Tz'utujil women survivors of state terror first led me to look more deeply into how these threads are made invisible to many experts and non-experts, and how those who have become aware of these threads do not want to engage with them. On one occasion, we had just finished participating in a focus group that was exploring how state violence and military control in these women's communities had economically affected them and their families, when Esperanza said to Marta, one of my research assistants, "Ask her [meaning myself] if I can tell you what really happened to my children and why two of them gave their lives so that their siblings and I could live." I said to Marta, "Of course," but asked why she thought she needed to ask for my permission. "Ah well," Marta responded, "because you are a woman of books, those big books that say that some of what we know is not true, that it is in our heads. She thinks that if she tells you the truth, you will not believe her. She also said that she once tried to tell these things to a Maya man who is professional, and who was putting together our testimonies, and this brother said: 'You are speaking nonsense; this is'—I do not remember the word." "*Superstition*," I said. "Yes, that is the word."

More than a hundred soldiers raided Esperanza's home, led by a person she says was a White man. Most of the soldiers appeared to be Mestizo, but there were some who appeared to be Maya. Following the White officer's order, these soldiers beat Esperanza and her sisters-in law, who started to cry for help. Her three kids (three months, two years, and five years old) were sleeping in the small family bedroom, when she heard a couple of soldiers saying the word "children" in Spanish, one of the few words she could understand. Although restrained by a soldier, she managed to break free, and ran into the bedroom in time to see them spreading a powdery substance. At that moment, one soldier, who was talking in her Maya language, said:

> You better hurry up because these people have their own beliefs and they will think that we bewitched their children. Well, we did not, but it is better they do not notice what we are doing. They will never prove this happened because, as our general says, they are idiots, *puros primitivos* [pure savages] living like monkeys. (Interview 2002)

Esperanza said:

> The soldiers laughed, and after threatening the entire family, they left. At midnight, Esperanza's baby died, but before this his entire body had turned purple. She thought her baby had been poisoned with a potion, perhaps provided to the soldiers by a local Maya sorcerer doing 'bad things.'"(Interview 2002)

A year later, in 1982, her two-year-old child died after exhibiting similar symptoms. But no one in the family ever discussed it; they were simply terrified. Overcoming her well-grounded fears, Esperanza talked to a woman leader she knew was a member of the local resistance. This woman said she had heard that Esperanza's children were poisoned not by a sorcerer, but with a lethal chemical brought in from the United States. Even so, many in the community believed, and still do, that it was the work of Indigenous *brujeria* (witchcraft).

I understood Esperanza's caution, in the form of her test of how much I would listen. Not only was I obliged to produce "scientific Western knowledge," but also, at that time, I did not ask specific questions about how symbols from the Maya Cosmovision were being used by security forces as they went about militarizing quotidian life and committing acts of genocide, torture, and rape. After the meeting of the focus group, I paid closer attention to words that denoted how Maya symbols were paradoxically deployed both as images of national salvation and patriotism, and as weapons to blame Mayas for being disloyal to their "nation." Several women I talked with commented on *Rilaj Mam*, a grandfather symbol worshipped by Maya and commonly known as *Maximón* in Santiago Atitlán. *Rilaj Mam* had begun to appear frequently on the shores of Lake Atitlán as the rapes, disappearances, and murders increased. He was deeply sad, it was said, because the dismembered bodies of his children were being dumped in the lake, in volcano craters, in fields, and so on. But Carmen Julia, a member of the resistance, as well as a devoted Catholic and a follower of Maya spirituality in equal measure, also said that *Rilaj Mam* and the Maya grandmothers were made even sadder by the army's use of words and symbols from Maya teachings, which she said was sacrilegious (field notes 2002). The women were commenting on something that many of the best "experts" were missing: the conversion of Maya symbols and knowledge into tools of witchcraft, in order to devalue them, and to vilify Maya spirituality and knowledge, while simul-

taneously using the same symbols to strengthen the culture of fear. For many Maya, this was analogous to the actions carried out five centuries earlier by conquering soldiers, priests, nuns, and missionaries who destroyed countless images of Maya spirituality, images that also symbolized knowledge and wisdom.

This counterinsurgency technique became more sophisticated in the mid- to late 1980s, when General Héctor Gramajo, then Defense Minister, increasingly drew on scholarly knowledge about Mayas to push for a change in strategy by the state and army. He argued that the army could not continue to use brute force alone to destroy the guerrillas and their supporters, the *indios*. Gramajo mixed the language of patriotism, development, and progress with that of democracy, to defend the "nation and God" against the evils of communism. His national policy combined the language of human rights, citizenship, and Western knowledge of psychological warfare with Maya symbols, in order to deepen state terror. Gramajo knew that using "pure, brute force" would increasingly damage the international image of the Guatemalan government and the economic elites; therefore, it was vital to introduce "softer," yet equally devastating, methods to control and destroy Maya social agency and further fragment their communities. Gramajo insisted on the need to

> "cleanse the mentality of *indios*" using Maya symbols, symbols that for him became "national." This "cleansing," which he described as an "exorcism," was the key to the army's project of being the ideologue and facilitator of the "birth of democracy." (Schirmer 1998: 114)

Gramajo was one of the large numbers of Central and South American military officers who had been trained at the infamous School of the Americas (SOA) in Georgia, training that for some included sophisticated techniques of torture (Harbury 2005; Grandin 2004, 2006). Euro-North American-centric knowledge was reenacted as race thinking, even when it was not explicitly delineated in Guatemalan state and military documents. It does however appear in the National Plan of Security and Development—a series of cultural magazines of the army (Schirmer 1998). Most importantly, such thinking was promoted in Maya communities through professionally designed posters and pamphlets, and in community radio programs, in both Spanish and Maya languages, during the period when genocide was being perpetrated and when surviving Mayas were hunted like beasts—a horrifying echo of the period of Spanish colonial rule, when Spaniards organized hunting festivals in which the prey were young Indigenous men forced to run naked until they were devoured by dogs (Galeano 1984).

During the peak of genocide, Maya ceremonies were prohibited because "witches and sorcerers" who were against "the fatherland" had to be killed, and their influence suppressed. The genocide, according to the state and its agents like Gramajo, was an "exorcism" performed to cure a possessed body via removal of the "worm" (meaning communism and terrorism); as such, the murder of individuals was conceived of as an act of exorcism performed on the Maya as a collective body. But General Gramajo and his advisers appropriated what he and most Guatemalans asserted was the "witchcraft" of "*indios*," especially ceremonies performed for millennia in medicinal and spiritual practice involving the separation of negative and positive energies. According to Gramajo, Indigenous sorcerers used an egg to remove the evil from the body of one possessed: the egg was passed over the body of the victim and then broken and dried (Schirmer 1998). The National Plan of Security and Development, which had been introduced right after the first phase of genocide, in a sense was the egg (but noting that this egg also possessed sophisticated foreign weaponry and torture technology) that had to be passed over the collective Maya body (as the evil ones, the enemy) to expel or evict the evil (communism and paganism) from it, by "drying" the entire collectivity, if necessary. And this was a national duty; this is why, when Schirmer interviewed him, Gramajo was absolutely proud of his accomplishments—he was doing the right thing. From his perspective, Mayas were not real citizens, just nominal ones, as they were subhumans who did not fit in with the "modern" nation. Thus, Gramajo believed they needed reindoctrination within the so-called development poles, which, I argue, drawing on Agamben's analysis, were camps, because even minimal judicial protections and a basic entitlement to subjecthood and personhood were absent. In these development poles, survivors, many of whom had witnessed the brutal murder of relatives, including children and neighbors, had to blame themselves and their relatives, in addition to being treated as criminals. As Agamben puts it: "Whoever entered the camp moved in a zone of indistinction between outside and inside, exception and rule, licit and illicit, in which the very concepts of subjective right and judicial protections no longer made any sense" (1998: 170).

The state combined violence against Maya spirituality with violence against their bodies, in the name of saving the "Guatemalan republic," and therefore of "patriotic and national citizenship." This was also a blessing for the republic's future, in that it allowed "primitive and violent *indios*" to have the opportunity to be rescued from their own "ignorance," and thereby come to feel membership in the nation (see Schirmer 1998: 114) through an illusory citizenship. As such, the logic proceeds in this way: Indigenous women are raped; children, women, and men are massacred; their towns are scorched and their harvests destroyed; the men are cremated in piles. All are accused of being guerrillas. They are killed to be saved from themselves, from their

barbarism, and their inability to become rational citizens, for they are thought of, and treated, as bare life. Those who survive are in need of rescue from their way of thinking, of believing, and of living. Most importantly, they need to be remade if they are to belong to the fatherland, but if they refuse to be "civilized," they remain animals. Thus, there are two dynamics running parallel here: the continuing infantilization of Maya that began with the colonial-period establishment of the racial hierarchy, and their bestialization when they become "unmanageable."

On February 22, 2008, a Maya-Ixil survivor, giving testimony to a Spanish court in a trial against perpetrators of genocide, said that after the army had raided his town (in the 1980s) and killed many of the residents, the survivors fled to the mountains to hide. From helicopters, the army dropped over the Ixil thousands of leaflets, which read: "You are animals living in the mountain, and we will treat you like animals" (Doyle 2008). Mayas who "behaved" in the camps—in Gramajo's development poles—were represented as "pets" through the symbolic re-creation in cartoon form of a supposedly Maya symbol of a pretty boy who was smiling all the time, content with being barely alive, and always polite. His name was "Polin Polainas" (Schirmer 1998: 116). This is not just mythmaking; this is epistemic violence.

The gendered and racialized Polin Polainas, an anthropomorphized mascot, has another trait: he is mute. Violent silence was an everyday reality during the worst years of the state terror. A Maya woman testifying in Spain recalled that when she returned from hiding out after the army burned to death many of her neighbors, she encountered a young woman, almost a child, who was walking slowly, her clothes torn. She asked her what had happened, but the young woman "just looked at me and did not speak, because they had cut off her lips. This poor woman had been raped" (in Doyle 2008).

The sanitized version of the terror articulated by the state through the mouth of General Gramajo (a Harvard graduate and the person directly responsible for the kidnapping, rape, and torture of Diana Ortiz) (Harbury 2005), and of cases like that of the Maya woman above, is that they are excesses of war (Schirmer 1998). Although the analysis of rape as a weapon of war offers innovative insights that have been relevant for highlighting rape as a grave violation of human and women's rights, it is also important to note some problems in this line of analysis. Addressing rape in the context of war does not necessarily include the complex and terrifying dynamics and impacts of genocidal state terror in most Latin American countries, and elsewhere, where rape has been perpetrated as a normal part of torture, especially on women accused of being enemies of the state, and on those racialized as inferior (see chapter 4). In my view, Gramajo, and others like him, use the analysis of war and of civil war to justify rape during genocide and state

terror, since in both war and civil war there are two clearly defined, opposed sides fighting each other, rather than an entire state apparatus, supported by dominant classes and international powers, acting against its citizenry. Here the point is not to create a hierarchy of pain in the case of rape, but rather to call for a more nuanced and complex analysis of rape and its long-term impacts (physical, psychological, and spiritual) during genocidal state terror and the securitized measures of peacetime. During peacetime, and in different societies, analysis tends to individualize rape as being the product of the erratic behavior of a few "bad apples" (Razack 2004) when the perpetrators are military and paramilitary men. And in cases where women are raped by men from their own national and cultural and political backgrounds, these men tend to be collectivized as inherently violent, and as a menace to an imagined cohesive nation, especially if they belong to Indigenous communities and other minoritized groups. In both cases, the bodies of already mutilated subaltern women are objectified, very often manipulated, and in most cases forgotten, because whatever crime against them is accepted as an excess of war, as the work of bad apples, or as something perpetrated by "inherently" violent men. Even in death, racialized women are not considered full citizens.

Consequently, and as I analyzed in chapter 4, the body of the Maya woman, raped, mutilated, and muted by state terror, is the expression of a gendered and racialized genocide that more than anything else has served to teach many Maya communities—especially those that were held captive in development poles—the high cost of the demand for social justice. Maya women, as important teachers of Maya languages and other cultural practices, were also punished for being alive when colonial Christianity, Westerncentric heteropatriarchy, and Ladino/Mestizo powers wanted them dead, as a collective subject.

Rape is the most effective weapon in practice for denying discursive, egalitarian citizenship. Alicia, a Mestiza woman who was politically active during the worst years of state terror, noted that, in "peacetime," many women who have talked to her have said that if military officers, police officers, civil patrollers, military commissioners, and any man with contacts in the army and government felt free to rape women, what can be expected from "normal" men so used to abusing women? (interview 2002, 2006). For Alicia,

> the permission to abuse women as if they are cleaning tools is a kind of top-down way of life. Look, presidents lie and abuse power, so in a sense they rape the country because they steal money and other things that could make the life of the majority who live in poverty better; the army, well, the army is used to kill, to steal, and now is also part of the narco-business. The military and paramilitary forces did not change their ideas, their training, just because of the Peace Accords; they continue to be the same and maybe now they are the

> trainers of groups that are killing and raping women. See, my point is that little boys learn that it is normal to treat women like garbage; to use their bodies, to beat them, to insult them, to tell them they are prostitutes, and so on. Why? Because they learn from the authorities, they learn from those with money, and they also learn that if you have the right contacts and a lot of money you do not go to jail if you steal, kill, and rape. So, the discourse of democracy and rights, well, they are beautiful for those with money and with connections with the rich and the government; for the rest, no way. . . . Pardon my language, but for the rest, well the rest is shit because in real life, here in the daily life of survival, well . . . we simply do not count. This whole thing is like a chain, a chain of horror, a chain of fear. And young women also learn that it is also normal to be treated like things, beautiful things sometimes, but less than men. But it is a chain that starts at the top. (Interview 2008)

Alicia provides a complex analysis of rape as a weapon of state terror, as a normalized way of being in peacetime, and as an individual expression of socially organized heteropatriarchy. The political economy of power in discourses of rights and democracies are just that—empty discourses.

DISMEMBERING NON-CITIZEN BODIES

Spanish conquerors and colonizers first brought the practice of dismembering bodies to the Americas. Hence, for Indigenous Peoples, genocide as state terror is not new, even when implemented within different discursive articulations—like citizenship—-at different times.

In 1781[3] the body of Tupac Amaru, the Inca Peruvian leader and warrior who organized a large resistance movement against the Spanish, was hacked to pieces, which were then dumped at various sites of profound significance for Indigenous rebels and peoples. José Areche, a colonial administrator and military officer, had tortured Tupac Amaru so as to extract information about "his accomplice terrorists" who had risen up against those who brought the food of "Christianity and civilization" to the savages. Tupac Amaru had remained silent, but before dying he said to his torturer, "I have no accomplices. The only accomplices here are you and I. You as an oppressor and I as a liberator both deserve to die" (cited in Galeano 1984: 72). While torturing him, Areche said to Tupac Amaru:

> We gave you the life of a white and you in return predicated hatred amongst races. We, your hateful Spanish, taught you how to speak and then, what did you say? Revolution! We taught you how to write, and what did you write? War! You have committed crimes, robbery, and blasphemy . . . you and your terrorist peers have brought hell into this land. . . . You deny the European blood that runs throughout your body . . . you say we treat *indios* terribly . . .

> but I have made their lives more pleasant. . . . Tell me who will continue the rebellion you have started? Where are your accomplices? If you tell me this I will give you the option to be hanged. (in Galeano 1984: 72)

Tupac Amaru's torso was thrown into the crater of *Machu Pichu*. His head was hung for three days in the town of Tinta. Later, his head was fastened to a wooden cross, and on it was placed a crown on which were hung eleven iron tips, which symbolized the eleven land titles stolen by the conquerors that Tupac Amaru and his followers had demanded back. Amaru's arms were sent to the towns of Tungasuca and Carabaya, and his legs to Livitaca and Santa Rosa de Lampa. All of this was to teach Indigenous rebels the price to be paid for opposing the "legitimate masters of the new world." All the houses in which Tupac Amaru had lived were burned down, his children and wife killed, and his lands cursed, in order to remove any last sign of the rebellion.

In 1980 in Chacayá, a village of Santiago Atitlán, the military massacred twenty-six Maya-Tz'utujil men who were agricultural workers. Afterwards, the military would not allow the bodies to be claimed and buried in town. A heavily armed helicopter picked up some of the bodies, and the rest were piled into military trucks, then dismembered, and the pieces thrown onto various roads and fields. Local army informants spread a chilling message, which ran through the town like wildfire: "Those who in any way are against the 'authorities' and sympathize with the guerrillas will end up like the guerrillas killed in *Chacayá*" (interview with an anonymous source 1999, 2002; field notes 2002). Such a display of military power had not been seen in Santiago Atitlán in recent times. Many women and other relatives rented cars in order to be able to follow the army, and some were able to retrieve pieces of their relatives' bodies. Many persons were never found; it was the beginning of what was to become the common practice of genocide in Santiago Atitlán. Numerous Tz'utujil men were kidnapped from their homes, brought to the military barracks, kept there for a few days, and then transported to other sites, where they were killed. One of these sites was Lake Atitlán, which for Maya-Tz'utujiles has profound significance as a sacred site, inspiring responses ranging from veneration and respect to fear. Otilia recalled the Chacayá massacre as

> a time of the first despair. The sky was grey as if it were crying; maybe it knew what was coming into our lives. I did not lose anybody that day. I did later, but I felt as if my husband or my son had been cut into little pieces. And the worst thing is this horrible thing . . . that you cannot stop what is going on. You want to kill those killers, if only you had guns. That is why I will never blame those who later took up arms and went to the mountains. When you see the bodies of

> innocent people like pieces of dog's meat, then you rethink your beliefs in God and forgiveness. When you see it, you think twice about many things. (Interview 2002)

Dismembering women's and men's bodies was a practice that occurred simultaneously with the launching of a new constitution in 1985, when life was guaranteed and protected—in writing, of course:

> Article 10.—Protection of the person. The State of Guatemala is organized to protect the person and the family; its supreme goal is the realization of the common good. . . .
>
> Article 20.—Obligations of the State. It is the duty of the State to guarantee life, liberty, justice, security, peace and the integral development of the person of all the inhabitants of the Republic. (Guatemalan Constitution 1985)

Survivors of genocide in the context of state terror, in particular Maya women living in poverty, are very distrustful of a notion of citizenship that purports to protect the rights of citizens via the constitution, because many of their relatives began a process of social *conscientization* through the study of that constitution, only to have those rights denied. This is an important aspect of Maya experience that has all too frequently been omitted from histories of social and political participation in Guatemala. Within the community movement that emerged in the 1960s, there was a strong tendency among Maya leaders to utilize the constitution as the basis for educating others, and themselves, on the rights that people born in Guatemala supposedly held. Given their historical experience, it seems incongruous to expect Maya women to embrace the discourse of citizenship, because this is precisely what their repressed relatives did, for which they were all too often fatally punished.

During my fieldwork, several Maya women recognized their entitlement to both an individual and a collective identity. Victoria, a national leader, observed:

> It is us Maya women who are retrieving the most important and relevant features of the Maya Cosmovision, which clearly stipulates the value of women as persons with their own individuality, their own uniqueness, at the same time that they belong to their communities and to the Maya *Pueblo* in general. (Interview 2002)

Evidently, then, it is a particular discourse of rights deployed by dominant groups for violent repression, including genocide, which has prevented Maya women from expressing their requirements for well-being in the language of citizenship rights. When many Maya women talk about the respect and dignity they deserve as human beings, as persons, they often prefer to use the

language of women's rights, human rights, and Indigenous Peoples' rights, but only if they must—for example, when interacting with state authorities or international aid agencies.

Maya women's strong reaction to the question of citizenship rights is not straightforward. It is, rather, a complex network of associations of actions and expressions, turned into powerful symbols and images. These in turn have infused a social subjectivity, which associates becoming active social agents with being severely punished. This subjectivity exists in a space in which written "permission," or the granting of rights, has been transformed into a deadly weapon. This weapon has then been turned against those who used precisely this "permission" to inspire in themselves, and others, collective hope for a people accustomed to being discarded on the grounds of their being non, or less-than, human.

Regarding this, Magdalena, a Maya-Tz'utujil whose partner was kidnapped outside Santiago Atitlán, reflected, "I do not understand why, if all of us have the right to live with dignity, those who were committed to fight poverty, illiteracy, and illnesses were killed? Did they have rights? Were they citizens?" (interview 2002). She also remembered how Ricardo, her husband, told her that in Guatemala there was a *thing* called the constitution, which declared that the poor had rights. Ricardo told Magdalena that, according to constitutional law, employers were obliged to pay workers good salaries, and that the laboring class and their children had the right to go to school. Magdalena was very surprised to learn all this, and bore it in mind when she asked her husband, "Why then do we not have education, are full of illnesses, do not have permanent jobs and live in misery?" To this, Ricardo said:

> Well, that is why the wealthy and the military do not want us to learn about these rights, about the constitution, because we are going to teach it to others, to hundreds, to thousands. We will fight back and stop bowing our heads as if our only destiny is to live like animals. (Interview 2002)

From women's reflections and testimonies, it is clear that the two most fundamental rights directly denied in Guatemala have been the right to life and the right to organize (i.e., freedom of association), but not as they have been narrowly defined since the 1940s in the West by citizenship and human rights theorists and policy-makers. Rather, they are understood here as extended entitlements that integrate social, economic, political, and cultural conditions, especially for those who were considered "not deserving to live." The right to organize in order to demand a better life is as crucial, individually and collectively, as the right to food, to life, to work, and to cultural identity. Maya women do not see it in the same way that the self-appointed citizens, the elites, and other beneficiaries of state terror do—that is, as an inherited right to govern and to own large private properties.

The "peacetime" Guatemalan human rights movements have been promoting primarily the denunciation and documentation of violations of the individual right to life, especially during the apogee of genocidal state terror. However, many local Maya women socially engaged in community projects, including resistance and revolutionary movements, do not attribute the same primacy to the right to life, understood only as an individualistic entitlement conceived and protected by national citizenship, human rights, and international laws. Under these instruments, *el derecho a vivir* (the right to live) is separated from another right considered by Maya women community leaders and survivors of state terror as basic: the right to organize at the popular level. This is a more developed understanding of the right to freedom of association, than what is considered paramount to civil and political life in liberal philosophy and conventional citizenship analyses. For those subjects socially engaged in the community, the right to live is not only the defense of human, biophysical existence, but also a complex relation of living conditions that make life full and dignified. These conditions include decent and affordable housing, education beyond literacy, good jobs, labor rights, salaried jobs, and access to quality health care, potable water, and electricity. In addition, it includes the right to freedom of movement, to organize in different ways, and to be equal but different as Indigenous Peoples and women.

In sum, life and living is a web of deeply interconnected socioeconomic, ecological, cultural, collective, and other civil and political rights, especially the right to popular organization. Those whose right to have rights has been denied, violated, and ignored, certainly do not rank some rights, such as civil and political rights, as higher than others. Esperanza, a member of the local resistance movement, cleverly encapsulated this relation:

> The right to organize has been one of the most persecuted rights in this country; that's why millions were spent on collecting information, buying weapons, and contracting foreign killers to further train those from here. That's why those with money and guns came to our towns, and acted as if they were kings, as they did in my town [Santiago Atitlán]. They persecuted and killed many of us. They did this because we organized and did not ask permission. The students, the peasants, the Catholics, many did many things to better our lives. Many went to the mountains and they fought back from there. They [the government] killed those who only wanted better jobs, who organized for decent houses, for sending our children to schools, to universities, for our right to wear our *trajes*, to believe in what we want to believe, to elect our own authorities. (Interview 2002)

If Maya women relate citizenship to the practice of the denial of rights, it is understandable that they now insist on locating it as the exertion that denies rights they, their families, and their communities should have according to discursive notions of citizenship that have prevailed in Guatemala since

1871. As Indigenous Peoples, they have been excluded from the Guatemalan "nation," but included as laborers, in order to keep neoliberal global capitalism going. This point was also brought up by Eduardo, an experienced Maya leader, who found no "inspiration" in citizenship as a discourse articulating present struggles for social justice, but who nonetheless thought that citizenship was worthy of a deep analysis. He stated:

> If I was an imaginary citizen according to my identification papers—which I had to carry all the time when state terror dominated life here—it meant that for those in charge of the state, I was not entitled to rights, but I bore countless obligations to my "fatherland," didn't I? As such, as a holder only of obligations, I had no rights, only the right to be obliged, to be forced, and finally to be persecuted and dead. Death was my ultimate right, not life. For Maya people, that is plain and blatant truth from whatever angle you would like to see it. Thus, it is more than reasonable that Maya women whose relatives were killed or kidnapped equate citizenship rights with the persecution of people who formally were holding of rights; even if it is not clear to many, for us it is clear that rights are a work of fiction in relation to the impoverished and the discriminated against. In other words, the first rights, those of the prosecutors, eliminate our rights, the majority. (Interview 2002)

The above reflections merit further analysis because of the poignant questions they raise concerning the notion of citizenship as the persecution of the rights of those whose lives were deemed as undeserving. First, the "nation," which the ruling powers imagined since the liberal project was forcefully introduced in 1871, also created an "imaginary citizen" who was only nominally a citizen. Formally speaking, all Guatemalans, by birth, fit the description of this imagined citizen, so there is no ranking attached to it; the "citizen" was, and is, anyone and everyone—conquerors, colonizers, their heirs, the mixed groups, and, of course, Indigenous Peoples. Consequently, the figure of the *human* was rhetorically equated in this discourse with that of the *citizen*. However, as we have seen, in practice the citizen has had considerably more value than the human. In concrete terms, the citizen has been the racially privileged proprietor whose humanity was never questioned or diminished. This concrete citizen has held rights in addition to obligations; amongst those rights is the right to live a "noble political" life, which in this case includes the implicit right to govern and decide which life is important, or, to be more precise, more important than others. Therefore, by ranking lives, the figure of the citizen takes priority over that of the human. This is why the leader quoted above declared, paradoxically and categorically, that the only right that Mayas have had is the right either to die, or else to "live" as subhumans, in silence—that is, as sanctioned Mayas. Their humanity was contested, despite being "protected" by existing laws, and the fact that they,

as human beings, in theory bear "inalienable" rights according to national citizenship and international law, the latter recognized in Guatemala since the 1940s.

In Guatemala, from the perspectives of survivors of genocide (and presumably of victims who did not survive, as well), citizenship has been a license to impose the law and order of a few onto a majority. The latter have been transformed into an internal, captive population, in the name of defending a "democratic nation." Citizenship, as the privilege of a minority, became in practice a license to perpetrate state terror, a license to kill, whose ultimate goal was the decimation and the annihilation of those constructed as "troublemaking others," as threats to an imaginary, homogeneous "nation." Thus, citizenship as equality masks the very inequalities that it institutionalizes.

NOTES

1. Intelligence experts from the United States were in charge of designing and implementing this data bank. The first contingent of these experts set up an intelligence service, which in turn compiled a list of more than thirty-two thousand names, addresses, and pictures of "suspected communists" (Jonas 1991; REMHI 1998; Grandin 2004).

2. "Stolen" is the literal meaning of the Tz'utujil word for kidnapping. It implies the action through which someone is taken, against his or her will, from the place she or he lives or works. Before the 1980s, the word was used for the practice of wife capture. However, in the late 1970s, the term began to be used in the more violent sense of being kidnapped by the army or paramilitaries. I became aware of the reasons why many in Santiago Atitlán used this word when talking about those who were kidnapped, when I directly asked a former community leader, who was a linguist and teacher, about the sense of theft contained in the word's lexical meaning. I also noticed the use of the word when I reread children's testimonies I had collected in 1991, five months after the massacre of the Tz'utujiles of Santiago Atitlán, perpetrated by the army on December 2, 1990. The children repeatedly said things like "Mr. So and So was stolen forever"; "They were stolen from their family"; "They were stolen from their work." Similarly, the Tz'utujil leader and teacher I consulted said that in the Tz'utujil language, people are "stolen" when they are taken against their will from their families, their work, and their community.

3. The year 1871 in Guatemala was the very year in which the second phase of the modernity project brought about the consolidation of Guatemala as a nation-state, one firmly based on private property, the rule of law, and the separation of Church and state. It is this project that continued to allow Criollos and elitist Ladinos to appropriate communal Indigenous lands.

Chapter Seven

Some Concluding Thoughts

This work aims to contribute to the decoloniality of mind, body, spirit, and epistemology in general. I understand decoloniality as a continuous struggle for economic, social, and cultural liberation, and ecological justice from processes of dehumanization, and from the reduction of politically active communities and people into things. It is central to my purpose to reinforce the discursive practice in which

> geo- and body-politics of knowledge has been hidden from the self-serving interests of Western epistemology and that a task of decolonial thinking is the unveiling of epistemic silences of Western epistemology and affirming the epistemic rights of the racially devalued, and decolonial options to allow the silences to build arguments to confront those who take "originality" as the ultimate criterion for the final judgment. (Mignolo 2009: 162)

While weaving together these concluding remarks, the wise words of my father concerning the right, of those treated as subhuman and politically abject, to struggle for a world of dignity and respect beyond abstract and empty notions of equality, were unforgettable. He taught me and others around him that "When a people are treated like garbage for centuries, those people are entitled to rebel, to organize, and to struggle for what is fundamental: to be respected as human beings."

Although the meaning of the term "humanity" is taken for granted in almost all circles as self-evident, this book demonstrates that this is far from a concrete reality, and that, on the contrary, human heterogeneity—especially that of non-Western peoples, lands, and cultures—has been treated and represented as a symbol of inferiority to justify the most unimaginable exploitation, persecution, and extermination—a violent process indeed. Since the Conquest of the Americas, when concerns about rights were first intro-

duced, until contemporary times, as Choudhury notes with reference to the post-Enlightenment period, "the old liberal hegemonic order of imperialism with its conflicting narratives of rights and oppression has been carried forward and sublimated into a human rights regime. And human rights are now deployed to justify violence against 'human rights abusers'" (2006:1). For example, Choudhury continues, in the current era of the "wars on terror," the succeeding line of universalist thought is that of human rights, which coexists with the overt and tacit support for violence that deprives some humans of their lives (2006:1). This paradoxical fusion of rights and repression leads Nyers to point out that violence can, and has, become "humanitarian" (2006).

Being human, therefore, has not entailed the inalienability of rights for all humans, especially for those who are racialized as the "Other," and/or have been treated as politically abject. The identity of the "Other" becomes criminalized, in contrast with the identity of the civilized, human rights defender, which the West reserves for itself. As Choudhury points out, the reification of the civilized-human, custodian identity forecloses the possibility of any serious consideration of occidental responsibility, because the "Other" is cast as everything that West is not: uncivilized, barbaric, irrational, and most importantly, guilty (2006: 9). This mentality of deep dehumanization has been propagated in Guatemala, where resistance of any kind against transnational occupation and oppression has been construed as an illegal criminal act, a construction that obscures the political legitimacy of revolutionary and progressive struggles organized by the Other (Choudhury 2006).

But violence does not consist only of physical actions that intend to create tangible and extreme pain. Perhaps we should not talk about violence in the singular, but rather about *violences* in the plural, as processes that generate and perpetuate power as domination and subjugation; processes that are always accompanied by epistemic violence, in that perpetrators—the planners, executioners, and enablers—must dehumanize their targets as "inferior Others" and as "less than human," in order to oppress, persecute, and ultimately kill them. Violences are also the terrain on which pain and cruelty get rationalized and sanctioned through law, religion, education, and economics, or through structural violence that has as a main characteristic its ongoing invisibility, especially in contexts that have been called "developed democracies."

In spaces such as Latin America and Guatemala, structural and "extreme" violence are more visibly linked as the result of a colonial and imperial capitalism that is deeply raced and gendered. But, as stated earlier, societies in the global South are not small islands that have only recently received the wonders of modernity through globalization; they have been part of the global coloniality of power for centuries. What is new in our contemporary world is the extent of this asymmetrical relationship. As Tlastanova and

Mignolo point out, and despite several important changes, the four, interconnected spheres in which the colonial matrix of power was constituted in the sixteenth century, and in which it has operated ever since, are the following:

1. The struggle for economic control (i.e., the appropriation of land and natural resources, and the exploitation of labor);
2. The struggle for the control of authority (the setting up of political organizations and of different forms of governmental, financial, and legal systems, or the installation of military bases, as happens today);
3. The control of the public sphere—among other ways, through the promotion of the nuclear family (Christian or bourgeois), the enforcement of normative sexuality, and the naturalization of gender roles in relation to the system of authority and the regulation of economic practices;
4. The control of knowledge and subjectivity through education and colonizing the existing knowledges, which is the key and fundamental sphere of control that makes domination possible. (2009:135)

The hegemonic worldview also invents the global South as "the local," and the global North as the true representative of the "global." According to this view, this book deals with only one "locality," Guatemala. But, in the same way that Escobar demonstrates for Colombia, each chapter in this book shows that Guatemala, since the Spanish conquest, has been integrated into the world economy through exploration, slavery, gold mining, and the subjection or elimination of indigenous inhabitants (2008: 4). Therefore, the world cannot be fully comprehended without the inclusion of Guatemala, and of Latin America as a whole for that matter, even if this inclusion has, in practice, become exclusion. For inclusion and exclusion are constitutive of each other, as are modernity and coloniality. Thus, global southern societies have been connected to the global North through the introduction and expansion of capitalism, through conquest and direct, colonial ruling, and through the geopolitics of knowledge. Capitalism, however, cannot be studied in isolation from the gender and race system, even if, for the sake of explanation, gender is at times more salient than class and racism, or vice versa; for these systems together organize our present world as a modern/colonial system of power—the coloniality of power (Quijano 2000; Mignolo 1995, 2005, 2007; Lugones 2007, 2008).

Our world, therefore, is simultaneously infused by modernity and coloniality, because neither is a "post-" or "past" phenomenon. Rather, they are reworked power relations, which increase economic, racial, and gender gaps and exploitation, both between and within nations. As stated at the outset, coloniality survives colonialism. This is a crucial point for understanding that contemporary, hegemonic practices and ideologies, such as equality, democ-

racy, human rights, and peace, are deeply contested terrains, for *they create nominal equality from practical social inequality*. And because, for many in the global North to enjoy the benefits of these contested terrains, millions, if not billions, not only in the global South, but also in the North, have been persecuted, controlled, and exterminated if they decided to organize and demand that which many in the global North enjoy. Inherent to this struggle is the fight to be human, which entails the capacity to be creative, something denied to Indigenous Peoples and Blacks in particular, despite the fact that they have contributed to world knowledges and to the growth of global Northern societies, both economically and epistemically. This is the case for the Maya Cosmovision, whose teachings one can find scattered throughout this book, and which I summarized earlier as a set of philosophical, political, social, economic, ecological, and spiritual principles, the main axis of which is the relationality of the human and non-human worlds, without supremacy attributed to humans. The Maya Cosmovision is a dynamic world view, an epistemology, and a body of knowledge, which has been generated, transformed, and developed by Maya Peoples in different spaces—although primarily in quotidian life—amidst constant demonization. For Kaqla, a Maya women's organization, the Maya Cosmovision and being Maya are also:

> The search for knowledge, for happiness and for the sacred. Our investigation and search for knowledge is reflected in the advance of sciences. For example, astronomy that describes the earth and sun's orbits; that estimates the size of planets and calculates the great cycles of time to create different calendars. Thus, this kind of being Maya is to be pragmatic [and to include as science] the knowledge of solstices, of moon's cycles; the cycles of light, of water, of air, etc. Therefore, the fundamental legacy of Mayas is the knowledge of the energies of calendars, and not a system of beliefs, as is for instance the legacy of Romans. Consequently, to be authentically Maya is to have a scientific spirit; to constantly seek knowledge, the knowledge of the universe. To this our ancestors were dedicated, so to construct real identity amidst the dominant imaginary that has told us we are other things is challenging. (2010:61)

Demonizing and persecuting other ways of knowing is integral to the generation and reproduction of global discourses and practices of racism, despite the sophistication of their denial. As Mignolo says, at work in the silencing and persecution of other knowledges is, "the coloniality of knowledge, which appropriates meaning just as the coloniality of power takes authority, appropriates land, and exploits labor" (2005:152). Although structural and everyday racism in Guatemala have their own particular contours, these cannot be explained in isolation from global racisms that make possible the enactment of capitalist exploitation, and the "light" and "dark" sides of the gender system. Ironically, global racisms are becoming more sophisticated and naturalized in the very period when human rights, as a discourse of formal and

legal equality, are gaining prominence, both in the global North and in the global South. Human rights have become very much the language of progressive politics around the globe, as well as a powerful tool to justify increased weaponization, militarization, global racial profiling, and war, amidst unprecedented levels of poverty and social inequality, as well as unprecedented accumulation of wealth in fewer hands, both locally and globally.

Global, racialized, and capitalist heteropatriarchy uses the excuses of national and transnational security, and of protecting women and children, as a mask for legitimizing the invasion and occupation of other countries, and to curtail fundamental social justice gains all over the world. Several feminist scholars have noted the reinvigoration of a planetary modern/coloniality of gender that now also includes the consolidation of renovated, imperial feminisms which, despite their emerging from different traditions, have "helped to restabilize the idea of Western innocence and its superiority, even if this innocence is presented as gendered" (Thobani 2010: 141). This is especially so in the so-called "global war on terror," in which a universalized, racial perspective represents "imperial subjects as vulnerable, victimized and threatened by the Muslim Other" (Thobani 2010: 141) (and, I would add, by Others like Indigenous Peoples, identified by the U.S. and its Western allies as the new threats for world stability, especially in Latin America).

Thus, what happens in a particular context such as Guatemala must not be analyzed in isolation from the global modern/coloniality of power which, as I have explained throughout this book, is deeply gendered and racialized. Long, historical connections, which began at the end of the fifteen century through the conquest of the Americas, set the stage for more sophisticated, racist structures and cultures, vital for the reproduction of predatory capitalism in the global South, and for an overall less violent capitalism in the global North, where many have benefited from this dynamic. Of course, in the global South it is the most impoverished and racialized people who suffer the worst consequences of this global order. In Guatemala, it is the female, Maya workers, both paid and unpaid, who are the most racialized and depreciated, and who experience these consequences; but they are not passive, docile victims in need of "civilized rescue," nor are they trapped in "culture and tradition." Thus, Guatemala can neither be explained nor understood without a deep analysis of racism as a structural and cultural pillar of savage capitalism; racism both creates and reinforces material and cultural-symbolic injustices.

On an everyday basis, language is a powerful social and political tool, and not only a set of symbols and words. But its power cannot be isolated from material conditions and histories in which languages are created and transformed. Therefore, it is crucial to grasp that discursive language alone cannot create conditions of exclusions, exploitation, and marginalization. It certainly does provide symbols and meanings that back up practices of excluding and

Othering those deemed as "too traditional," "uncivilized," and in need of "salvation." Language is also a space of contestation, resistance, and revolutionary creativity that envisions other, just worlds as possible. Words are tools to name, categorize, and analyze the social world. At the same time, words are embedded in the broader system of power relations. The fact that, in studies I have conducted since 1999, non-formally schooled Maya women from backgrounds of poverty do not use the word "racism," or do not recognize it as a way of understanding how they are "Othered," does not imply that racism does not exist and does not affect their lives.

For impoverished Guatemalan Maya women, victims and survivors of state terror, who speak only Maya languages, racism is felt and lived as deeply interwoven with their poverty, and with all the consequences such inequality creates. They may not name racism as such, but they can certainly explain the consequences of overt, and subtle, racialized practices as acts of humiliation, scorn, and hatred. And some Maya women with access to cultural and economic resources recognize the links between racism, economic injustice, and gender oppression. Correspondingly, many of them feel that racism is central in their lives and must be resisted directly through organized struggle. In Guatemala, as in other parts of the globe (especially in North America and Europe), racism as a structural and cultural practice, as a pillar of the national social fabric, continues to be denied as a reality. This denial has acquired particular relevance after the Guatemalan Peace Accords, in which some in the upper class, and some from the middle classes (including many progressive, revolutionary, and democratic Ladinos-Ladinas, Mestizos, and Mestizas) rhetorically acknowledge some Indigenous Peoples' rights in theory, but not in practice.

It does not matter how much longer the bourgeoisie, and the Ladino society in general, deny the role racism has played, and plays, in the historical and contemporary social exclusion of Indigenous Peoples, and of Maya women in particular. The fact is that racism as discursive practice has hampered, and continues to hamper, all aspects of life for Maya women, the life of all Indigenous Peoples, and indeed the life of Guatemala as a country. What is changing is that more Mayas and other Indigenous peoples are organizing and resisting structural and cultural racism, and this resistance—one that many link to a broader project of social justice and liberation—is what makes citizenship not genderless or raceless, but rather a contested terrain, deeply connected to coloniality. In the space of citizenship, both inclusion and exclusion run parallel, influencing or determining who does, or does not, "qualify" as a citizen, thereby controlling entrance into the status of full humanity.

The colonial roots of the rights discourse, and its subsequent shifts—from rights of man and citizen to human rights—are relevant to the interrogation of the dominant paradigm of human rights and its abstract and empty univer-

salisms. As Breny Mendoza notes, the colonial roots of citizen and human rights form the necessary point of departure for a discussion of the undemocratic foundations of democracy:

> Modernity, capitalism, nation building, and democracy are understood as organically linked with colonialism, as parts of the same historical movement of European expansion and domination over the modern or colonial world system, evolving from the "discovery" of America in 1492 by Spanish colonies to British and U.S. colonial regimes. (2006: 935-36)

This discussion must include the powerful role played by colonial Christianity. Mendoza observes that the Church needed to create a normative, yet paradoxical, notion of humanness, consistent with theological doctrines that could justify, at the same time, both the wholesale slaughter of Indigenous Peoples and their entrance to "Christian and European humanity" (2006: 936).

Maya women have experienced citizenship as a powerful tool for the denial of their humanity. During colonial rule, as I treated in chapter 2, this denial was accomplished in the name of the colonial rule of law, even after 1537 when the Spanish Crown formally declared its acceptance of "Indians" as being humans. During the genocidal state terror of the contemporary period, Indigenous Peoples, impoverished Mestizos, and people accused of being Communists were nominally citizens and humans, with the difference that, in the social national imaginary, Indigenous Peoples continued to be at the bottom of the domestically reworked, Euro-North American-centric hierarchy of humanity. For Guatemalan Maya women (and indeed for the politically active), citizenship has been a state of law and order that has fiercely defended those whose lives have counted as lives—those privileged by race, economics, and gender—alongside Western, transnational, capitalist powers which, enjoying global impunity, continue to plunder the wealth of an entire nation in the name of democracy and the rule of law (REMHI 1998; CEH 1999; Jonas 1991, 2000; Figueroa Ibarra 1991).

In Guatemala and in Latin America, citizenship is rooted in the coloniality of power, which has changed the faces and discourses of some powerful players, but not the foundations of citizenship itself. Thus, celebrating voting rights and elections every four or so years, as important as these rights and elections may be, contributes to social and political amnesia about how, since the Cold War, elections have been combined with military coups, and how this formula became the preferred one for the region following the U.S. intervention in Guatemala in 1954.

As a pilot project, the counterinsurgency techniques developed in Guatemala were continuously improved from 1954 on. State strategies of identification, surveillance, and control, introduced in the late 1970s, were trans-

formed in the 1980s into instruments and symbols of state and corporate terror, which engendered a widespread culture of fear. Through the use of multiple forms of violence, including epistemic violence, the concept of citizenship has become more important than actual people. These violences are used to maintain the identity of "national," racially privileged, gender-privileged, and class-privileged citizens, in order to constrain, transform, or destroy the subjectivity of the "citizen," and the "non-citizen Other."

From women's testimonies and epistemic reflections, it is clear that the two most fundamental rights directly denied in Guatemala have been the right to life and the right to organize (i.e., freedom of association), but not as they have been narrowly defined in the West since the 1940s by citizenship and human rights theorists and policy-makers. For many Maya Peoples and progressive Ladinos and Mestizos, rights as a concept are part of larger vision, that of social, epistemic, ecological, and historical justice. Therefore, rights are understood here as extended entitlements that integrate social, economic, political, spiritual, cultural, and ecological conditions. For instance, the right to organize in order to demand a better life, individually and collectively, is as crucial as the right to food, to life, to work, and to a cultural identity, and it is not seen by Maya women in the terms of the self-appointed citizens—that is, as the inherited right of those citizens to govern and to own large tracts of private property. Maya women's analysis of rights is a more developed understanding of the right to freedom of association than that which is considered paramount to civil and political life in liberal philosophy and conventional citizenship analyses. Citizenship, for the most marginalized, has become in practice the license to kill the abject "Other." This is the practice that was normalized under the conditions of genocidal state terror in the 1980s and early 1990s, in defense of a predatory, capitalist system, fiercely supported by Western powers, especially the United States. It is within this epistemic and political context that genocide must be located.

As a domestic and transnational policy of global, racialized, and gendered security, genocide against Maya peoples sought to persecute and partially exterminate Mayas as a collectivity, and as a people represented as "culturally unfit for a modern nation's advancement into modernity." Mayas have been treated and represented as "politically undesirable" because of their long-standing decolonial and anti-capitalist resistance, and their creativity in surviving amidst the most adverse conditions turned even more exploitative by neoliberalism. As a group within a broader Maya collectivity, Maya women became a direct target of genocide as women, as Maya, and as a majority of those forced to live in poverty. And this complex and interlocking system of power violently articulated a racialized and classed, subalternized femininity, or the "dark side" of the gender system, within the coloniality of power. Targeting Maya childhood as "bad seed" was part of a rational plan of

extermination and further control of survivors, control that included reproductive policing of Maya women's bodies, conceptualized and treated as incubators of future "terrorists and communists."

Thus, while genocide in Guatemala sought to persecute and eliminate Mayas because they were Mayas, it also simultaneously aimed to destroy their active, collective agency. This agency was represented as an "enemy of the people," in tune with the Western, anti-Communist, U.S. led crusade, which was introduced into Guatemala in 1954 with the overthrow of the democratic government of President Arbenz. Genocide is thus a domestic policy (Gomez-Suarez 2010) linked to geopolitical, economic, social, and military powers. In order better to understand genocide's complexities, it is necessary to learn the role played by the anti-Communist crusade that preceded today's global war on terror. The planners of genocide and other modalities of state terror did not, and do not, act spontaneously and solely on the basis of individual, racist and anti-Communist hatred; they are part of bureaucracies of death, which vilify the lives of those who struggle for meaningful social change, and which vilify their deaths as well. This is a politics that industrializes and mechanizes death under global, imperial designs that seek to reduce complex human beings to things.

Genocide affects entire societies, not only its direct targets. It acts in concert with neoliberal practices of starvation and super-exploitation to further divide and fragment families and communities. With regard to these impacts of genocide, along with those of other modalities of state and corporate power that do not end with mass killings, scholar Ricardo Falla observes that there is an ongoing, low-intensity form of genocide, especially in places hardest hit by scorched-earth campaigns (2011). Any form of genocide, however, continues to be denied by powerful sectors, including the media. As Cohen rightly puts it:

> The rhetoric of historical denial is prefigured in the accounts used by perpetrators at the time to hide from themselves and others the implications of their actions. Deceptive planning and implementation—by deliberate use of euphemism, commands that have an encoded double meaning, destruction of incriminating orders—live on long after the event. (2001:13-14)

The main purpose of genocide, torture, rape, and other forms of sociopolitical and institutional terror was to destroy people's long-standing will to resist and to bring about revolutionary and most-needed change, while simultaneously criminalizing collective agency. This process of criminalization of social and community movements has continued since the signing of the Peace Accords in 1996, and is becoming more acute under the administration of former general Otto Perez Molina, inaugurated as president in January 2012. He, a former member of the genocidal apparatus, is remilitarizing the coun-

tryside, especially the communities that are leading the struggle against Western, corporate mining and the Guatemalan state's mega-development projects. It is in the communities hardest hit by genocide that the new, military, globalized national security doctrine is being implemented. Maya women community leaders of several communities of El K'iché, for example, denounced, on February 21, 2012, the palpable, accelerated process of militarization of their daily lives, reminiscent of the conditions that led to full-scale mass murders and the control of El K'iché, in the late 1970s. Now the rhetoric employed is "the defense of national development" that requires global, "productive" competition, to which both Maya People and impoverished Mestizos who are politically active are the most important barrier. As Lolita Chavez, a Maya-K'iché leader, declared, she is

> a direct target of control and persecution alongside dozens of women and men from several communities that are defending human rights, the rights of the earth and Indigenous Peoples' rights. . . . [Because] the Guatemalan state only seeks to guarantee the interests of big businesses without consulting with the *pueblos* on whose territories it want to impose corporate mining, dams, agribusiness and cellular telephone companies. (2012)

Present throughout this book, directly and indirectly, is the desire for, and the practice of, individual and collective decolonial resistance, even if at times this resistance can only be expressed through bare survival in the face of a predatory, global order—an order that is based on an entrenched politics of individualistic consumerism, combined with an increased fear of those construed as inherently violent Others. This book has highlighted the enormous value of the ways of knowing of Maya peoples, and made visible some of the histories of struggle on the part of progressive and revolutionary Mestizo and Ladino women and men and their persecuted families. The knowledge of the oppressed cannot continue to be dismissed or regarded as only experiential in nature, for it is fundamental to the generation of decolonial theory and action. As Escobar trenchantly asks, "Whose knowledge counts?" (2008). I have raised this question in relation to the violence of power, and to peoples' struggles against the thingification of *both* worlds—the human, and the non-human. Hence, this book is concerned with the geopolitics of knowledge, and has endeavored to contribute to epistemic decoloniality.

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