Sentipensando the Violent Pasts of Guatemala:

Pluriversal Examinations of Teacher Learning through Historical Inquiry

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Abstract

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History and social studies teachers are often shouldered with the daunting task of teaching polarizing, contested histories in communities still grappling with the legacies of fear, persecution, and violence—without the knowledge, skills, or community support needed to transform learning about the past into a path for teaching about violence, colonialism, and conflict. In Guatemala, where public discourse remains constrained and legal reckoning with past atrocities is limited, educators are affectively entangled with charged, fragmented memories inherited from family and community. This dissertation investigated the frameworks, experiences, memories, and discourses that inform processes of teacher learning about Guatemala's 36-year Internal Armed Conflict. Walking alongside educators through a professional development program, I examined the pedagogical openings and foreclosures of weaving disciplinary historical inquiry with pluriversal encounters with violent, controversial, and often conflicting memories. I argue that the task of preparing to teach about violent histories demands educators loosen the fearsome grip of silence around the past, peel back layers of distrust, and confront a culture of fear grounded in practices of survival and resistance. Moreover, it entails that educators enact a *sentipensante*, felt-thinking examination of the intersections, contradictions, and affective repercussions of conflicting accounts of the past that interrogates who carries responsibility for the violence and atrocities and who and/or what can be trusted.

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what it means to engage in thoughtful, courageous, and contextually rooted educational work. It was an honor to collaborate with you and witness your daily commitment to justice, memory, and community well-being.

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Dedication

A ellos y ellas quienes no están

To the teachers and colleagues from IIARS who graciously invited me into their classrooms, shared their wisdom, and helped me grow as an educator.

To the community of friends, family, mentors, and colleagues who have supported me in this doctoral endeavor. It has truly taken a community to help me get here.

Acronyms

CEH	*Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico* or Commission for Historical Clarification
CAI	*Conflicto Armado Interno* or Internal Armed Conflict
CEH	*Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico* or Commission for Historical Clarification
CNB	*Currículo Nacional Base* or National Curriculum of Guatemala
FHAO	Facing History and Ourselves
GIZ	German Corporation for International Cooperation
IIARS	*Instituto Internacional de Aprendizaje para la Reconciliación Social* or The International Institute of Learning for Social Reconciliation
MINEDUC	*Ministerio de Educación* or Ministry of Education
ODHAG	*Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispo de Guatemala* or The Office of Human Rights of the Archbishop of Guatemala
PAC	*Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil* or Civil Defense Patrols
PNUD	*Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo* or United Nations Development Programme
REHMI	*Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica* or Recuperation of Historical Memory
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
URNG	*La Unidad Nacional Revolucionaria Guatemalteca* or Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity

Prologue: Irruptions of a violent past as I unravel the research archive…

First swatch…

During the first round of the elections in Guatemala in 2023, the military was brought in to restore order in the town of El Paredon Buena Vista, a small beach community that has been a tourist hub in recent years. I was surprised that my sister-in-law and her family were able to get through to where she was staying, but she had waited at a restaurant outside of town until she got word the road was open again. As they drove over the speed bump that marks your arrival to town, the smell of burnt tires still lingered, remnants smoldering in the middle of the road where outraged citizens had constructed makeshift roadblocks. They made their way to the house, unnerved by the silence and darkness. Everything was shuttered; nothing was open, and no one was walking around. They locked the gate and door behind them, kept the lights off and noise down, and anxiously went to bed. Throughout the night, police pickups and military vehicles patrolled the streets, shining flashes of blue and red lights through door cracks and shrouded windows. After a night of restlessness, they drove back to the city even before the sun had come up the next morning. And yet, I can't find a single news article, or even story on social media to document that this happened.

Second Swatch…

As I listened to her story, and the measures she and the neighbors around her took to be safe that day, I realized I had heard this story many times before. The silence on the streets after dusk, hushed voices of families huddled in their houses in the darkness, with the sounds of patrols circling on foot or in vehicles creeping in from outside. I had visualized this scene many times before when the teachers with whom I was working spoke about what they remembered

and had been told about what it was like to live during the Internal Armed Conflict. The stories of fear, of going out after dark, or needing to keep the lights down or having the lights shut off by the military when they would enter a community to detain someone, came out in group discussions during the workshops, as part of the inquiry group process and during the individual interviews I conducted with focal participants. One participant, Jazmín, described growing up with a persistent sinking feeling of *zozobra*, of uncertainty and anxiety:

> A nosotros [el conflicto armado interno] no nos afectó, pero sí el lugar donde vivimos, manteníamos zozobra. Había veces que venían soldados y no sabía si eran soldados o eran guerrilleros y así, situaciones así, que uno vivía con mucho temor y uno no podía salir de noche, porque no sabía uno qué podía suceder.[1]

Another female participant, Marta, echoed the fear of being in public spaces at night, and how keeping their house in darkness served a survival tactic to not attract the attention of those patrolling outside:

> La gente ya no podía salir de sus casas en la noche, ya a las 6 de la tarde, todos adentro. Nosotros teníamos dos casas, una en el parque y la otra acá, de este lado, atrás de la iglesia, entonces no salíamos de la casa del parque, porque ahí vivíamos, pero en las noches íbamos a dormir a la otra cosa por miedo.
>
> CH: ¿Por qué?
>
> Porque siempre ahí en el parque, como habían policías, podían llegar otra vez, entonces a nosotros nos daba miedo eso, pero ya cuando nos llegábamos a la otra cosa, mi mamá

[1] [The Internal Armed Conflict] didn't affect us, but it did in the place where we lived, we were constantly in a state of uncertainty / anxiety. There were times when the soldiers came, but you didn't know if they were soldiers or guerrillas and so, in situations like that, one lived in a lot of fear and you could not leave at night, because you did not know what could happen.

ponía velas, no encendía la luz y tapaba para que no saliera la luz, porque era mucho el miedo que se tenía.[2]

Hushed voices, drawn curtains, darkened windows. These strategies of invisibilization in the face of volatility and violence are woven into the tattered social fabric inherited by post-Armed Conflict[3] generations still waiting for peace.

Third swatch…

After writing a version of the above reflection in August 2023, I found myself checking my Instagram feed to follow the surprising second round of Presidential elections on Guatemala between Bernando Arevalo, the son of the democratically elected president from the 1940s, from the social-democratic party Semilla and Sandra Torres, a former first lady who is denying her previous left-leaning tendencies and swung hard to the right in a last ditch attempt to capture votes. As Arevalo closed out his campaign in the city on August 16, 2023, his supporters held up placards with enlarged photos of his father and other leaders from Guatemala's brief democratic spring, who were later forced into exile after the CIA-backed military coup in 1954.[4] These temporary embodied memorials functioned as an intergenerational weaving of the past into the present. The physicality of larger-than-life historical photos enabled a moment of public

[2] People could no longer leave their houses at night, already at 6 pm everyone inside. We had two houses, one in the park and the other here, on this side, behind the church, so we didn't leave the house in the park, because we lived there, but at night we went to sleep in the other place out of fear.
CH: Why?
Because always there in the park, since there were policemen, they could come again, so we were afraid of that, but when we got to the other thing, my mom put candles, she didn't turn on the light and covered it so that the light wouldn't come out. Because the fear was great.

[3] I follow Arriaza and Arriaza-Roht in using the term post-Armed Conflict in reference to Guatemala "to highlight the fact that no society is without conflict, even if this no longer takes the form of armed actions" (p. 153).

[4] The images can be found at this link:
https://www.instagram.com/p/CwBpFXUMG01/?igshid=NTc4MTIwNjQ2YQ%3D%3D

pedagogy, which then was reproduced and amplified online in the reels of those following progressive media accounts in Guatemala (Radio Urbana Radio Station, 2023).

Just an hour before seeing these images online, I heard a truck drive past my house blasting pro-Sandra Torres propaganda through the loudspeaker imploring people to vote for her because Arevalo was an *enemigo del pueblo* (enemy of the people), a charged turn of phrase to employ given its echoes of the language used both by the military to justify the elimination of the internal enemies during the Armed Conflict and also by the guerrillas to justify their attacks on wealthy land-owners and the military regime (Epe & Kepfer, 2014). The fear-laden term harkens back to discursive mechanisms of dehumanization weaponized to sew distrust and validate acts of violence. As the campaign message echoed against my patio on repeat, the truck having paused at the corner by my house, its archaism jolted me into a past I had only read and heard about. The peculiar unfolding of the election season had summoned the specters of hope and fear from the past to make their presence known in the constitutional crises of the present.

Chapter 1: Introduction

I have a hard time not seeing how the past irrupts (Wilde, 1999) into the present and the memory systems of the present cultivate and curate the past in the ways that serve particular socio-political interests and needs (Jelin & Lorenz, 2004). My research and work with teachers in Iximulew[5]/Guatemala investigated the frameworks, experiences, memories and/or discourses that inform processes of teacher learning about and inquiry into difficult histories related to Guatemala's 36-year Internal Armed Conflict (IAC).[6] Walking *with* educators (Sundberg, 2014) during a teacher professional development program, we explored the pedagogical openings and foreclosures of weaving disciplinary processes of historical inquiry with pluriversal encounters / collisions with violent, controversial, and often conflicting memories and histories of the Armed Conflict. Collaborating with teacher educators and educators in the program, we analyzed the

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[5] *Iximulew* in K'iche' and Kaqchikel means Land of Maize, and is the ancestral Maya name for Guatemala (Keme, 2021, p. 4). Its more recent use by Indigenous social and political movements connotes a call for pluri-nationality that would recognize the autonomy and right to self-determination of Indigenous peoples (Monzón et al, 2021), which Guatemalan elite have rigidly resisted given its implications for land rights and resolution of thousands of territorial disputes: "That is precisely the crux of the profoundly counterhegemonic nature of the Maya demand for recognition of their legal system: it is a right that creates rights (Rocha, 2017, The right to their own rights system section).

[6] The 36-year period from November 13, 1960, when a group of junior military officers initiated a failed rebellion against the authoritarian government of General Ydigoras Fuentes, the survivors of which formed the first guerrilla movement known as MR-13 (Revolutionary Movement 13th of November), until December 29, 1996 when Rolando Moran, Director General of URNG, the umbrella organization for the guerrilla movements, signed the final peace accord with President Álvaro Arzú, has been given many different names. The use of terms like Internal Armed Conflict, civil war, genocide, armed resistance, or terrorism invokes particular historical narratives and can, with just a few words, situate the speaker ideologically and orient the listener to the potential precarity or affinity of this discursive terrain. The organization and its facilitators implementing the course with teachers within which my research was situated used the term Internal Armed Conflict given its significance in international law, as stipulated within the four Geneva Conventions signed in 1949 (Ntoubandi, 2020). Whereas the term civil war has no legal meaning in international law, the term noninternational Armed Conflicts (NIACs) is included within the Geneva Conventions, and is further articulated in Article 1(1) of Additional Protocol II (AP II) of 1977 which states a NIAC must "take place in the territory of a High Contracting Party between its armed forces and dissident armed forces or other organized armed groups." As explicitly narrated in the online materials provided to teacher participants of the teacher training program, the use of the term Internal Armed Conflict recognizes the actions of the guerrillas as part of a revolutionary movement, which in itself remains a contested assertion by some who would rather downplay the organized nature of the armed resistance to the Guatemalan Armed Forces, and the disproportionate use of state-sponsored violence against rebel groups and civilians over a sustained period of time.

complicated work of how to prepare to pedagogically grapple with the legacies of racialized discrimination, violence, and conflict in classrooms.

History and social studies teachers are often shouldered with the daunting task of teaching polarizing, contested histories in communities still grappling with the legacies of fear, persecution, and violence without the knowledge, skills, and community support needed to transform learning about the past into a path for teaching about violence, colonialism, and conflict (Cole & Barsalou, 2006; Freedman, Weinstein, Murphy & Longman, 2008). Moreover, within the context of constrictions on public discourse and limited legal reckoning of past atrocities, educators remain affectively entangled with/by charged, fragmented memories inherited from their family and community that complicate encounters with conflicting accounts that call into question home learning.

The research was situated in Guatemala, a country whose attempts to confront the hauntings of colonization, civil war, and genocide must contend with the immediacies of high levels of interpersonal violence, judicial dysfunction and impunity, and corruption at both the local and national level (Adams, 2017; Benson, Fischer & Thomas, 2008; Brands, 2011; McAllister & Nelson, 2013). From 1960 to 1996, Guatemala endured one of the most brutal Internal Armed Conflicts in Latin America's history, with over 200,000 people killed, of which 83% identified as Mayan (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico [CEH], 1999) by the time the Peace Accords were signed. Yet, the work of grappling with recent histories of violence and trauma remains tethered to the colonial legacies of racialized political and economic structures, mapped onto historical palimpsests of violence, conflict, and instability. The wreckage of more recent Armed Conflict and human rights violations sits wedged into the structural legacies of racialized, gendered colonial violence and discrimination (Del Valle Escalante, 2009; Ystanes,

2016). The erosion of community networks and fomentation of a culture of mistrust undergirded the state-sponsored campaign to rid the country of the so-called enemies during the Armed Conflict (Epe & Kepfer, 2014). Yet, the strategies the military governments adopted both leveraged centuries-old colonial strategies of repression and exclusion, while also borrowing from 20th century practices of counterinsurgency and extermination (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico [CEH], 1999).

For educators working in communities plagued by chronic violence and encumbered by a fragile state system, the task of teaching the past often gets framed as part of the work of providing young people with the knowledge and skills needed to confront the myriad problems before them (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Cole & Barsalou, 2006; Freedman, Weinstein, Murphy & Longman, 2008). Social studies educators in Guatemala are more than ever being asked to take up the precarious task of traversing the tattered landscape of the past in ways that build the attitudes, skills, and behaviors necessary for the cultivation of sustainable peace and democracy in the present and future (Bellino, 2014; Oglesby, 2007a; 2007b). While some educators offer students opportunities to explore outside the pernicious narrative of the Armed Conflict as a battle between the "two devils," the military and the guerrillas, many students still fail to encounter critical historical analyses in their classrooms, needed to make sense of the complex political, economic, and social issues before them (Bellino, 2014; Barton & McCully, 2010). Gradual openings in the public sphere have allowed taboo topics such as human rights, genocide, and the Armed Conflict to slowly find their way into the classroom as teachers endeavor to introduce controversial topics from the national standards into their curriculum. Nonetheless, short-term or absent opportunities for teacher education and training about teaching the Armed

Conflict and other controversial histories have encumbered whether and how teachers broach difficult topics in their classroom.

The task of preparing to teach about violent histories demands educators loosen the fearsome grip of silence around the past, peel back layers of distrust, and confront a culture of fear grounded in practices of survival and resistance. I argue that it entails that educators enact a *sentipensante*, felt-thinking (Escobar, 2014; Espinosa, 2020; Espinosa & Guerrero, 2022; Intzín, 2021b; Rendón, 2009) examination of the intersections, contradictions, and affective repercussions of conflicting accounts of the past that interrogates who carries responsibility for the violence and atrocities and who and/or what can be trusted.

As such, this research study explored how Guatemalan educators engaged with the learning and inquiry about difficult histories during a professional development opportunity offered by a Guatemalan non-profit, with funding from GIZ, the German international aid organization, and support from the Guatemalan Ministry of Education. I centered the research on the following questions:

1. What frameworks, experiences, memories and/or discourses do teachers draw upon during learning encounters with difficult histories?
2. How might spaces of teacher learning shape and be shaped by teachers' encounters with difficult and contested histories in ways that interrogate the frames, discourses, histories and material conditions that perpetuate violence, discrimination and inequality?

The professional development program, or *diplomado* program[7], wove together myriad strategies and approaches for learning, investigating, and discussing polemical topics from the past and

[7] In contexts like Guatemala where formal education is weak or difficult to access, professional development opportunities offered by international and local nonprofits that provide some sort of certification are highly valued, and a frequent mechanism for accessing on-going education instead of degree programs. A *diplomado* program

present. A reflection of the diverse pedagogical influences of the facilitation team, we thread 1) somatic engagements that centered the body as a site of learning and knowledge, 2) affective invitations to encounter a multiplicity of memories and perspectives of difficult histories, and *sentipensante* (felt-thinking) approaches to historical inquiry that invited educators to evaluate the reliability and veracity of sources of information about the past, and attachments and economies of fear and mistrust that influence the processes of inquiry. The collaborative process of developing and facilitating the curriculum and engaging in historical inquiry with educators explored the possibilities of decolonial, pluriversal pedagogical spaces for educators grappling with difficult histories in order to nourish discussions within the English-publishing fields of historical education and transitional justice.

I have taken up analytical quilting as a decolonial practice that endeavors to enact an ecology of knowledges (Santos, 2009), stitching together swatches from the data using analytical threads from both Indigenous epistemologies and affect theory to examine the co-presences of multiple worlds circulated and interacting within the research realm. Quilting as a personally familiar practice enacts the on-going process of *walking alongside* (Sundberg, 2014) woven "texts" articulated by Indigenous intellectuals (Worley & Palacios, 2020). The scrapwork allows for divergent stories and memories from the research and of the research (Peach, 2024) to put themselves in proximity, and explore areas of resonance and continuity, or pieces of incommensurability that stumble on the tongue and defy translation (Costa, 2020).

Chapters 2 through 5 align with the process of building a quilt pattern, in that they map out the scope and parameters of the research inquiry and literatures it engages with, articulating the epistemological and ontological threads that will be used to tie the scrapes of data together.

---

provides a diploma, or certificate of completion or participation if participants meet key criteria, which often is one of the motivators for participating in and completing the necessary course work.

Chapter 2 outlines the literatures on approaches to history education as a tool for transition justice within post-conflict contexts, while Chapter 3 begins to speak back to these literatures with decolonial thinking, articulating the ontological and epistemological underpinning of decolonial challenges to transitional justice and liberal approaches to reckon with past atrocity and foster democratization. Chapter 4 articulates the theoretical framing of the writing/quilting as an epistemological ecology of knowledges that places conceptualizations of affective stickiness (Berlant, 2011; Ahmed, 2015; Franklin-Philips, 2020) and attention to the discomforts and affective intensities of learning and teaching difficult histories (Ohito, 2016; Millner, 2023; Zembylas, 2014; Zembylas, 2018; Zembylas, 2022) into conversation with epistemologies of the South the center the body, "warm up reason" through *corazonando* or "heartening" (Santos, 2018, p. 98-102; Intzín, 2015; Albarrán Gonzalez, 2022; Hernández-Castillo, 2021), and think-feel (*sentipensar*) (Rodriguez Villasante, 2017; Rendón, 2009; Intzín, 2021a) through the work and research with teachers. Chapter 5 explores the possibilities and limitations of decolonial thinking as research methodology, situating the analysis of the work with educators in a pluriverse that is explored with an ecology of knowledge and articulates the methodology of quilting as a frame for the analysis and presentation of "becoming-claims" (Tuck & Yang, 2014, p. 814) in the remaining chapters.

Interlude: Framing the Literature

For educators working in contexts reeling from conflict and atrocities, grappling with individual and collective memories scarred by violence can make for a treacherous endeavor (Cole & Barsalou, 2006; Freedman, Weinstein, Murphy & Longman, 2008). How teachers approach difficult histories and deal with their appearance in classrooms can affect whether schools function as sites of transformative justice or reinforce social divisions and structural inequalities (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2004; Tawil & Harley, 2004). In societies grappling with the legacies of colonialism and Armed Conflict, social studies[8] educators are often tasked with the precarious task of traversing the tattered landscapes of the past in ways that attend to challenges of the present and future (Cole, 2007a; 2007b; Cole & Murphy, 2010; Korostelina & Lassig, 2013). Yet, the use of history education as a tool for transitional justice and post-conflict reconstruction places enormous pressures on educators. They often lack adequate training and the institutional and/or community support to broach the controversies surrounding contested histories in educational spaces (Cole & Barsalou, 2006). Moreover, they are often teaching in environments with fragile state institutions where the challenges of everyday criminal activity and high levels of "ordinary" violence demand urgent attention, centering public security as a priority over processes of transitional justice that failed to meet public expectations and deliver peace (Mack & Leonardo, 2012; McGill, 2022).

The literatures that I drew upon for the conception of the research project focused on the role of history education in processes of transitional justice (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Cole, 2007a; Cole, 2007b; Cole & Murphy, 2010; De Baets, 2015; McCully, 2011; Ramirez-Barat & Duthie, 2015; Paulson, 2009; Popovska, 2012; Torsti, 2008), and the pedagogical practices that

[8] In Guatemala, the course that includes history education is called *ciencias sociales*, or social sciences.

might support processes of peacebuilding, democratization, and social rearticulation in the wake of human rights violations, atrocities, and genocide (Weinstein, Freedman & Hughson, 2007; Bar-On, 2009; McAndrew, 2012; McCully, 2006; Gross, 2015; Gallagher, 2004; Han, Kondo & Yang, 2012). For the dissertation, I have put those literatures in conversation with decolonial thinking, as visualized below in Figure 1, and with authors who have critiqued the ability of a transitional justice framework to address coloniality and colonial violence, calling attention to the hesitance of the field to align itself with epistemological and material decolonization (Durdiyeva, 2024; Park, 2020; Grewal, 2023; Jamar, 2022; Matsunaga, 2016; Samset, 2020; Vieille, 2012; Yusuf, 2023).

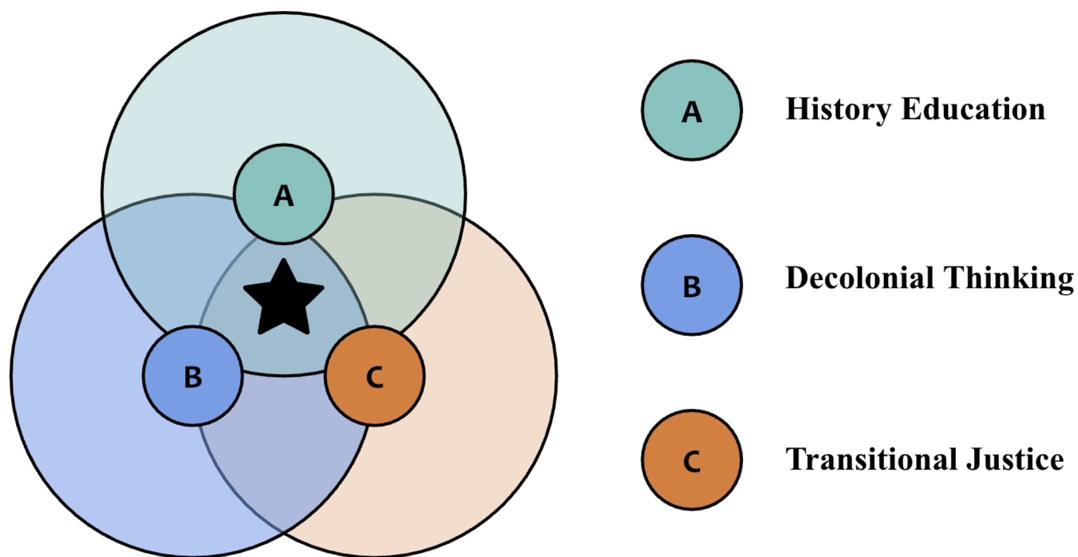

Figure 1: Situating the Dissertation at the Intersection of the Literatures

Chapter 2 maps out the literature on history education in contexts recovering from violence, atrocity, and socio-political rupture. It examines the entanglements that educators face when grappling with the recent past in their classrooms with students. Diverse and often conflicting epistemologies and discourses circulate and (re)produce the ways that educators (and

those who train them) approach the teaching of history of recent violence and conflict. The review interrogates how these literatures articulate the purposes and goals of teaching the difficult past in post-conflict contexts and how they recommend educators embark on this politically saturated and socially complicated work with their students. It articulates how the literature on transitional justice describes the role that history education might play in processes of reconciliation, truth-telling, and democratization. It then delves into the pedagogies and mechanisms teachers might actualize in classrooms to engage with contested and traumatic histories. It examines the tensions and intersections between disciplinary approaches that privilege the development of cognitive inquiry skills and remembrance approaches that recognize the affective and emotional reverberations of learning difficult histories.

Chapter 3 contrasts these literatures with those who critique the Western, liberal assumptions of "paradigmatic" transitional justice (Park, 2023). I outline the epistemological and ontological foundations for decolonial thinking, considering the implications of delinking from Western epistemologies (Mignolo, 2007) on the goals of transitional justice, the alternate societies it might dare to envision, and the role of history education (itself a colonial / imperial invention) in struggles for epistemic and material decolonization.

The literature reviewed includes contexts undergoing transition and (re)construction since the 1990s, with particular attention to regional nodes in the literature that have emerged around the teaching of history in Northern Ireland, Rwanda, former Yugoslavia, South Africa, Cyprus, and Central and South America. The review focuses on contexts where diverse and previously conflicting groups must come to live together under one polity, as has been the case in Guatemala. Inquiries about the uses of history education as a mechanism of transitional justice in

on-going conflicts, in the wake of inter-state conflict, and in settler colonial states are outside of the scope of this review.

In addition, the review gives little attention to the relatively large body of work analyzing textbooks in post-conflict settings, given that my own research focus is on pedagogical practices and how teachers take up the work of learning about the violent past. Textbook-oriented and pedagogical-oriented justice projects are inherently intertwined; strong teachers can build effective lessons from limited materials, while even the most well-constructed textbooks won't find much traction in a classroom with a teacher who is unprepared or unwilling to use them. Instead, this review focuses on how educators curate and present historical texts and narratives in the classroom for young people.

Lastly, I wish to add an asterisk to the inclusion of the widely used term *post-conflict.* It is generally used to describe nations currently grappling with past internal conflicts, genocides, and/or oppressive governmental regimes which are ostensibly transitioning towards liberal democracy. The prefix *post-* problematically implies the absolute cessation of conflict or violence, which rarely characterizes messy processes of political transition. Moreover, the term (and much of the transitional justice literature that employs it) fails to capture the legacies of colonial oppression that so often beget identity-based violence. The frames, systems and structures that enable ethnic cleansing, persecution, and violence have foundations that long predate more recent eruptions of violence and social division. When referring to Guatemala, I will use the term post-Armed Conflict, as previously noted. In the literature review, my language will mirror that of the authors cited and discussed.

Chapter 2: History Education as Transition Justice

The work of history and social studies educators in contexts grappling with current and past violence and conflict is imbued with the weight of negotiating the presence (or absence) of the recent past in their curricula. Educators act as memory workers (Dryden-Peterson & Siebörger, 2006; Jelin, 2003) whose treatment or avoidance of contentious histories positions them as critical actors in how societies recovering from conflict reorient themselves to address difference, violence, and injustice. Transitional justice endeavors have increasingly leveraged spaces of learning as mechanisms for confronting the legacies of violence and forging democratic societies based on justice, acknowledgement of victims, and peaceful coexistence (Davies, 2017; Bellino, Paulson & Worden, 2017; Keynes, 2019; Russell, Mantilla-Blanco, Romero-Amaya & Cordero-Romero, 2024). Yet, the discourses and practices of transitional justice are a complex set of political, social, and pedagogical mechanisms with diverse and at times conflicting aims.

The field of transitional justice[9] has undergone several waves of re-evaluation and re-orientation since its "murky beginnings" as victor's justice in the Nuremberg and Tokyo tribunals in the wake of World War II (Teitel, 2014; Durdiyeva, 2024). Emerging as the dominant framework for reckoning with past violence, the field has expanded its framework from primarily legal and political measures to support countries (generally in the Global South) transitioning to democracy to include local or victim-/survivor-centered initiatives that foster

[9] In 2004, the United Nations Secretary General published a report on the use of transition justice in post-conflict societies, which it defined as "the full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society's attempts to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation. These may include both judicial and non-judicial mechanisms, with differing levels of international involvement (or none at all) and individual prosecutions, reparations, truth-seeking, institutional reform, vetting and dismissals, or a combination thereof." (p. 4)

democratization from the grassroots level (Arriaza & Roht-Arriaza, 2008; Robins, 2011; Shaw & Waldorf, 2010; Clark, 2012; Jamar, 2019).

National and community projects for transitional justice have increasingly turned to schooling as a means of fostering social cohesion in the context of diverse and multicultural national communities (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2004; Gallagher, 2004; Ramirez-Barat & Duthie, 2015; Smith & Vaux, 2003; Tawil & Harley, 2004). Given the intergenerational impact of the educational programs on both young people and their families, schools have the potential to disperse the impacts of transitional justice measures beyond the elite enclaves in which they often emerge. As Murphy (2015, as cited in Ramirez-Barat & Duthie, 2015) argues:

> Education is a sector that simultaneously reaches multiple generations. While many transitional justice measures are temporary and focus on the first generation, education has the potential to reach both the first generation emerging from the conflict and subsequent generations that become increasingly responsible for nurturing and protecting civil society and, in some cases, democracy and democratic institutions. (p. 5)

The linkages posited between education and democratization often present schools as key forces in helping both educators and young people take up their role as citizens participating in and contributing to democratic life (Quaynor, 2011).

Despite the many structural and political challenges to employing education as an element of transitional justice (Cole & Murphy, 2010), post-conflict education reforms hold the potential to counter the legacies of conflict and oppression through the reconstruction of school systems, disseminating reconciliatory narratives articulated in truth commissions, or employing access to schooling as a form of reparations (Ramirez-Barat & Duthie, 2015). In a report for the International Center for Transitional Justice, Paulson (2009) suggests the notion of "postconflict

educational *(re)creation*" as a conceptual frame; she calls for explicit attention to and disruption of the educational systems and structures that contributed to conflict. She claims that transitional justice and education have overlapping aims in the wake of conflict, outlining how the educational goal of meaningful participation of all learners can be "mutually reinforcing" with the key goals of transitional justice: "the recognition of victims and the promotion of civic trust" (Paulson, 2009, p. 13). Though she does not specifically take up the work of history education, her use of the notion of *(re)creation* is generative in terms of highlighting the need to counter the institutional legacies of violence that often persist and undermine schools' abilities to serve reconciliatory goals.

The often-cited report by Bush and Saltarelli (2000) entitled *The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict* proved highly influential in reshaping views about the relationships between education and conflict. The report explored the role of schools in the formation and management of ethnic identities, illustrating the potential for education to both foment conflict or foster peace-building. It specifically spoke to the potential misuse of historical narratives/textbooks to cultivate intolerance and mistrust, and also the corresponding possibility for schools to help "disarm history" (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000, p. 19). They argue for the teaching of "critical historiographic skills" because "only when young people realize that histories are constructed rather than given, can they even begin to contemplate challenging and changing the behaviour that poisons inter-group relations" (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000, p. 20). Moreover, they call for history classrooms to engage with multiple perspectives as a mechanism to help legitimize and celebrate the multiple identities within nation-states, instead of reinforcing singular national identities.

Though confronting the violence of the past serves as the foundation for many elements of transitional justice processes, less empirical attention has been paid to the potential role of history education to contend with the politics of memory in post-conflict settings, and in particular the complex process of preparing teachers to take up this work. As Cole (2007) remarked, these fields have remained largely siloed until recently. Much of the literature on transitional justice and education has looked at the intersections between conflict and education generally, with more recent examinations of the role of specifically history education (ej. Ahonen, 2014; Bellino, 2011; Bellino 2014; Keynes, 2019; Paulson, 2015; Teeger, 2015). The field of social studies and history education has long grappled with issues related to democratization, social change, and citizen formation, which often overlap and resonate with the stated goals of what Park (2020, 2023) calls "paradigmatic" transitional justice endeavors that view truth-telling, peacebuilding, prosecutions, and reconciliation measures as means of transitioning to and consolidating Western, liberal democracies.

The Goals of History Education in Paradigmatic Transitional Justice

The following sections examine how different authors articulate the purposes and goals of history education in post-conflict contexts, particularly in terms of how history classrooms might contribute to processes of transitional justice. Cole and Murphy (2010) position history education within the forms of transitional justice that facilitate "psycho-social healing" (p. 337) and pursue processes of reconciliation between groups in conflict who must live together within one nation-state. They view the pedagogical processes of meddling in difficult histories as part of the process of identity transformation that needs to happen in post-conflict contexts. How teachers confront painful histories has the potential to disrupt ingrained polarized identities and forge "new intergroup relationships or resurrect older positive ones, to (re)build civic trust, or to

build democracy, which requires a high degree of trust and citizen participation" (p. 339). Though they provide a disclaimer that not all forms of reconciliatory practice can overcome the solidification of difference that accompanies polarizing identity formations, they ponder the goals and possibilities for positive identity transformation through learning about the recent past in post-conflict contexts. Though they don't utilize this terminology, they argue for history education that fosters both negative and positive peace (Barash, 2009; Galtung 1996), that is both the cessation and negation of violence and the cultivation of the practices and attitudes of democratic co-existence.

Given the hesitance by many transitional governments to even take up the teaching of past violence of conflicts, Cole & Murphy (2010) and other scholars (Popovska, 2012; Torsti, 2008) make the argument for why to pedagogically meddle in these difficult histories. Many nations have explicitly imposed a moratorium on the teaching of history, ostensibly as a form of avoiding the recurrence of conflict. De Baets (2015) reviews fifteen cases since the end of World War II where governments have opted to temporarily suspend the teaching of history and explores the various state-sponsored mechanisms to turn classrooms into spaces of "social forgetting" (p. 24). He explores to what extent these formal measures form part of a "mediation-induced" or "censorship-induced" strategy (De Baets, 2015, p. 24), that is exploring whether limiting history education forms part of a deliberate strategy to repress discussion or rather allows diverse actors to intentionally think through and plan the articulation of difficult histories in schools environments.

Weinstein, Freedman and Hughson's (2007) multi-site research (focused on the Balkans and Rwanda) with teachers, students, administrations and parents highlighted the tensions and pressures of broaching the question of the "truth" about the recent past. Their conversation with

key stakeholders surfaced both an *amnesia* approach that advocates turning the page on the past and a *truth recovery* approach that argues that confrontation with violent pasts helps prevent their future recurrence (Minow, 1998). Drawing on the case of the former Yugoslavia, they argue that "suppression of historical events does not produce a common history – it serves only to reinforce the social identities of those who fought against each other" (Weinstein, Freedman & Hughson, 2007, p. 66). Similarly, Freedman, Weinstein, Murphy and Longman (2008) draw on a teacher training project in Rwanda to highlight the challenges of post-conflict history education related less to questions of narratives and pedagogy and more with "timing and context" (p. 686). In the wake of a 10-year moratorium on history teaching and in the face of a government staunchly committed to building a single unified Rwandan collective identity, their project encountered both political resistance and fear among teachers that the practices of perspective-taking and democratic inquiry might get them in trouble in the current environment. They argue that attention to socio-political contexts can help practitioners find openings for curricular and pedagogical change and disrupt movements for social forgetting. Nonetheless, the notion of social cohesion as resulting from homogeneous national identities continues to dominate both public policy and dominant social discourses in many societies recovering from conflict or violence (Tawil & Harley, 2004).

History education has long been employed as a mechanism to bolster the stability of the nation-state, producing narratives of the past that reinforce glorified tellings of the past and monolithic identity formations (Carretero, 2011; VanSledright, 2008). Cole (2007b) identified several trends in education globally that might serve to undercut the nationalist tendencies of history education, especially in post-conflict contexts. The growing internationalism of historical content gives young people access to a diversity of perspectives and narratives of suffering and

resistance. The distance of studying the movements for change and responses to suffering in other contents “provid[es] a comparative framework and, perhaps, some way to approach issues in their own communities that are too sensitive to tackle directly” (Cole, 2007b, p. 133). The “triangulation” approach forms the foundation of how Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO) have used materials from the Holocaust and the American civil rights movement to provide teachers (and their students) in post-conflict contexts with means to tackle the themes of their own difficult histories at a distance.

Additionally, a process of curricular “social-scientization (an increasing focus on contemporary history and on society as opposed to the state)” (Hyman, 2005, in Cole, 2007b, p. 132) potentially shifts the focus away from nation-building ideologies and narrative and towards studies of society, economy, and culture. The impact of social history in academia and its focus on “history from below” has the potential to allow personal testimonies of the past into the classroom instead of universalizing narratives of state power. The risk however, as Oglesby (2007b) notes has been in the case in Guatemala, is that a focus on the social sciences can stymie inquiry into the past and shift attention away from the state’s role in recent violence and toward future-oriented discourses of social change. For example, in Guatemala, generalized information about the conflict often serves as a short precursor to civic education or lessons that promote “a culture of peace” – a term borrowed from UNESCO and diffused throughout the country as a superficial framework for solving the country’s ills (Oglesby, 2007b). The past becomes fuzzy and poorly defined, allowing for homogenizing and optimistic projects for peace and tolerance to emerge that shift the attention away from the role of the state and toward consensus building.

Yet, one of the key goals of transitional justice initiatives is to forge spaces of civil dissensus, where diverse groups can engage in constructive discussions, and even disagreements,

about past injustices (Osiel, 1999). Mouffe (2013) argues that the cultivation of dissensus has critical implications for processes of democratization. She warns against the tendency to forge stability during transitional processes by imposing consensus from above in ways that stifle difference. The cases of both Chile (Wilde, 1999; Loveman & Lira, 2000; Richards, 2004) and Rwanda (Freedman, Weinstein, Murphy & Longman, 2008; Hintjens, 2008; Weldon, 2009) illustrate how consensus-oriented politics can serve to undermine democratic practices by silencing conflicts that often resurface in the future. Mouffe (2013) instead promotes a model of *agonistic politics* that reinforces democratic pluralism by conceiving of conflict not as an antagonistic "struggle between enemies" but an agonist "struggle between adversaries … [that] share a common allegiance to the democratic principles, … while disagreeing about their interpretation" (p. 7). Agonistic political spaces allow for dialogue about divergent narratives of the past in ways that both humanize participants and the groups they represent and also reinforce peaceful and democratic forms of conflict resolution.

The notion of dialogue as a force of democratization appears in the literature as both applicable to civic and peace education (Hess, 2009; Boler, 2004, Bar-On, 2009) and also broader projects of conflict transformation (Allport, 1954; Galtung, 2001; Saunders, 2001). Hess (2009), for example, asserts the critical importance of dialogue in democratic societies, arguing that discussion with people who hold different points of view can foster political tolerance and can produce learning about both one's own and another's ideas. McCully (2006) echoes this affirmation of the democratizing potential of deliberative dialogue in classrooms in his research with teachers in Northern Ireland who were involved in a project to introduce discussion of controversial, sensitive issues in their classrooms. Yet, as Boler (2010) writes, pedagogical spaces are imbued with issues of power and status, especially in environments

where the weight of violence continues to shape how young people read and interact with one another. These hierarchies and tensions shape classroom talk and demand that educators both develop a heightened attention to how certain voices get valued over others and actively work to disrupt the silences of those voices that have been historically marginalized.

Many dialogic processes of encountering difference through personal storytelling, historical analysis, and problem-solving aim to engender cognitive and affective shifts that (re)humanize those previously perceived as inferior, different or the enemy (Bar-On, 2009; McCully, 2006). Torsti and Ahonen (2009) explores how deliberative dialogue in history classrooms can function to "promot[e] moral development and social agency" (p. 216) in post-conflict settings. Their research was situated in Bosnia & Herzegovina and examined how deliberative dialogue was introduced to undermine the "us vs. them" mentality presented in textbooks. They argue that deliberative dialogue allows for multiple stories of history to be told in the classroom setting, instead of having hegemonic narratives reinforced. It avoids placing people's stories in opposition to one another, calling instead for listening and thoughtful questioning.

These encounters with the Other through dialogue and storytelling can produce tensions and discomfort as participants are forced to contend with points of views and personal experiences that clash with their own identities or frames of reference. This "cognitive dissonance" (Fisher, 1997) has pedagogical manifestations in that when the inconsistencies and emotional weight of contested histories spill into learning spaces, educators and students must move outside of their comfort zones. The cultivation of dialogue in history classrooms forms part of what Gross (2015) calls a *culture of contestation* that "neutralises the negative aspect of contestation and addresses its positive and productive potential to promote contestation as a

constructive way of managing conflict" (p. 23). Within the context of fragile societies characterized by both weak nation-states and fragmented social structures, the cultivation of contestation in pedagogical spaces functions as a mechanism for building tolerance for conflict. Instead of avoiding conflict and seeking solutions, pedagogical engagements with the past should acknowledge the complicated nature of conflict and find mechanisms to address and mitigate it, not seek out resolution. This agonistic view of deliberative dialogue invites students not just to have contact with difference, but to interrogate the frames that shape how they think and feel about the historical past and construct social identities based upon it.

Despite internal debates in the literature described in this section, the intentions and aspirations of employing spaces of history education as paths towards peacebuilding, reconciliation, and demarcation do align in terms of liberal conceptions of governance and envision a world centered on the human. As the field of transition justice reckons with the unmet promises of the processes of democratization of the 1990s and early 2000s, scholars and practitioners are reframing their aspirations as transformative justice or decolonial justice. Yet, these shifts in the purported outcomes carry implications for the role of schools, which pasts get brought into the classrooms, and how educators might approach them.

Approaches to Teaching and Learning the "Difficult" Past

The work of history/social studies teachers in supporting the goals of transitional justice work in post-conflict settings is often plagued with similar debates as those that occupy the field of history/social studies education at large. Should educators endeavor to build a common set of knowledges about the past, foster key inquiry skills to help students evaluate the past, and/or read the past into the present? In what ways should the study of history inform citizenship formation and prepare young people to participate in democratic processes? The framework of

transition justice often inclines either towards an approach focused on truth recovery and the teaching of silenced histories or a more politically tenable approach that attends to the needs of the present and takes up the moral lessons of a violent past – often under the mantle of citizenship education. Critics worry that these approaches can either stray too far from the disciplinary work of history by either privileging memorialization over inquiry or by watering down what students actually learn about the past (Cole & Murphy, 2010; Bauer, 2015; McCully, 2011; Schweber, 2004).

The transitional justice work of truth recovery contends with the tensions between memory and history; as Minow (1998) admits, truth recovery endeavors – be they judicial or pedagogical - tend to cater to "psychological but not historical truth" (p. 127). The memory work of truth commissions or judicial processes carries a rigor and authority, but the narratives that emerge have yet to pass through discernments of historical inquiry (McCully, 2011). Seixas (2006) explores the overlaps and distinctions between collective memory, described as "the study of how ordinary people beyond the history profession understand the past" (p. 8) and historical consciousness, which he defines, citing the journal *History and Memory,* as "the area in which collective memory, the writing of history, and other modes of shaping images of the past in the public mind merge" (p. 10). Yet, as Chinnery (2010) notes, Seixas adopts a cognitive approach to the teaching of historical consciousness that "include[s] the ability to read and analyze primary source documents, to take different historical perspectives, and to understand the moral obligations this new knowledge brings to bear on our present lives" (Chinnery, 2010, p. 398). Alternatively, Simon draws on poststructural and psychoanalytic perspectives to posit a version of historical consciousness based on "a destabilization of the subject, an experience of

being called into question, and of being called to unconditional responsibility to and for the other" (Chinnery, 2010, p. 398).

The following sections explore both cognitive and affective approaches to teaching difficult histories, which I have termed here disciplinary and remembrance approaches. Disciplinary approaches prescribe learning the skills of historical thinking as a means for developing critical habits of minds, including historical empathy skills, that support participation in pluralist democratic societies. Remembrance approaches consider the affective and emotional elements of learning about traumatic and contested histories, with particular attention to how testimonies and other encounters with narratives of suffering might engender obligation to the memories of the suffering of historical peoples.

Disciplinary Approaches

This section explores the possibilities of engaging students in the disciplinary-oriented practices of historical inquiry of recent violence, atrocity and conflict in post-conflict contexts. Some of the literature considered below does not specifically take up the teaching of history in post-conflict contexts; this section puts key contributions by North American authors about historical thinking and analysis in conversation with several cases where cognitive approaches to history inquiry have been adopted in post-conflict settings. The literature explored below manifests how historical inquiry into difficult histories gets actualized in the classroom, providing a level of specificity about how teachers might broach the cognitive entanglements of historical thinking with difficult histories.

Historical thinking, as articulated by educators, involves a valuable set of cognitive skills around sourcing, contextualizing and corroborating that build students' ability to think critically about both the past and present (Wineburg, 2001; Wineburg, 2010a; Reisman, 2012b). Teachers

are encouraged to incorporate historical controversies and multiple accounts of events to engage students as both budding thinkers and citizens. Wineburg & Reisman (2012) make the argument that the "skills of disciplinary reading – the ability to read and interpret written text; the ability to evaluate and reconcile competing truth claims; and the ability to temper one's rush to judgment in the face of competing worldviews – constitute the heart of participatory democracy" (p. 172). They specifically speak to the use of student-generated document-based discussion as a site for the cultivation of skills of deliberative communication. The process of interrogating how present worldviews shape the readings of voices and texts from the past challenges young people to encounter the past as unfamiliar. It invites them into spaces of discomfort where they can leverage historical empathy to contextualize "unusual" customs, behaviors, or actions of historical peoples, and fight the urge to react quickly with deficit-oriented judgment. Yet, the creation of participatory and engaged spaces of classroom discussion with in-depth and rigorous historical analysis that disrupts the habits of presentism proves difficult to actualize. Nonetheless, Wineburg and Reisman's (2012) articulation of the relationship between rich historical inquiry and democratic forms of engagement concretizes how particular disciplinary ways of engaging with the past might engender important forms of analysis in societies struggling to (re)create democratic cultures. Inviting students to acknowledge the contextual specificities of their ways of knowing might make possible a "framing the frames" (Butler, 2009) whereby young people must interrogate themselves as a way to make sense of the past.

In Northern Ireland, school systems have approached the teaching of contested and controversial histories by developing students' historical thinking skills (McCully, 2011; McAndrew, 2012). Though teachers have a great deal of flexibility in how and to what extent they broach controversial topics, historical study in Northern Ireland generally involves teaching

the skills of the historical method such that young people have the tools to evaluate the partisan historical narratives they may encounter in their communities. Students are regularly exposed to diverse narratives about past conflicts and tensions, and invited to evaluate and interpret evidence, instead of simply absorbing a singular official narrative of the past. However, schools rarely take up the implications of the past in the present, using historical analysis as only a tacit challenge to dominant narratives of the past that circulate in the public sphere (Barton & McCully, 2010).

The predominant use of historical thinking skills as an explicit and widespread curriculum intervention in response to past violence and conflict presents Northern Ireland as a rich environment for researchers to explore how young people encounter and respond to narratives of the past both in and out of formal learning settings. Barton and McCully (2010) found students engaged in a complex and open-minded process of grappling with multiple and conflicting narratives in order to reach "informed and independent judgments" (p. 170) and not just adopt the politically-infused narratives they encounter in their communities. While few denounced the partisan views of their communities, students recognized how politics can influence the creation of historical narrative and thus they allowed for multiple perspectives to co-exist and complicate their conceptions of history. The researchers attribute the complexities in students' historical thinking to both the particular context where competing historical narratives have a strong presence in public debate and also to the curricular reforms since 1991 that have "encouraged students to consider multiple perspectives on all historical topics, to compare conflicting viewpoints, to differentiate their own ideas from those of people in the past, and to base their conclusions on evidence" (Barton & McCully, 2010, p. 172). Students are offered the tools with which to challenge totalizing narratives and identify the contextual contingencies of

their construction, though they resisted giving up their allegiances to particular identity groups. Yet, Kitson's (2007) study that included both textbooks analysis and interviews with teachers and students found that many students selectively drew from classroom resources to align with community narratives. Teachers varied in their alacrity to forge connections between past and present, though the author found overall balanced depictions of historical narratives through the case sites. The study indicated perhaps the history curriculum does not totally fulfill its intended contribution to processes of reconciliation. Nonetheless, the case of history education in Northern Ireland offers possibilities for the uses of historical thinking to foster a culture of inquiry based on tolerance of multiple perspectives and acknowledgement of the human construction of historical narratives.

In post-apartheid South Africa, curricular reforms have also explicitly pushed disciplinary approaches to history education as a mechanism for confronting past injustices and critically examining diverse historical narratives. Weldon (2009), who was involved in the creation of skills-based history curriculum, argues that the official history constructed by curricular reforms in fact promotes a diversity of historical narratives that, using the analytical tools of historical inquiry, can be analyzed to create a fuller, "truer" picture of South Africa's history. The new curriculum promotes dialogic forms of historical inquiry that employ both classroom discussion and oral history projects as mechanisms for gathering and analyzing diverse historical narratives and challenging the legacies of one-sided historical narratives (Weldon, 2009; Ahonen, 2014). Drawing on Giroux's idea of border pedagogy, Weldon (2009) asserts that the disciplinary skill-based approach engages students "as border crossers who challenge, cross, remap and rewrite borders as they enter into counter discourse with established boundaries of knowledge, assisting those deemed 'other' to reclaim their own histories and

voices" (p. 182). The skills of historical inquiry help build a "common language, a democratic language" (p. 182) instead of a common history based on a unified historical narrative.

However, other studies of history education in South Africa have identified several challenges to the curriculum's effective implementation, particularly in terms of teachers' ability to foster the types of border crossing pedagogies that Weldon (2009) describes. Geschier's (2010) micro analysis of one teacher's attempts to employ primary sources to teach about apartheid and the Holocaust illustrate the limitations of disciplinary curricular materials when teachers used methods that shutter rather than foster discussion. Teeger (2015) described how South African teachers would tell "both sides of the story," (p. 1176) moving outside of the narratives appearing in the official curriculum to assert that not all whites supported apartheid and not all blacks were victims. This framing of apartheid history was employed as a mechanism for mitigating or diffusing conflict in the classroom, creating a discursive gap between the narratives in the curricular materials and those that actually circulated in the classroom. Cole and Murphy (2010) assert that teachers need support in learning how to transform curricular materials into classroom practice and must grapple with the controversies and emotional reverberations in the content before they invite students to encounter them, which is the work they take up with teachers through workshops with the organization Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO).

The FHAO approach utilizes a particular model for history inquiry that connects case study analysis to engaging with issues of membership, belonging, ethical decision making, reconciliation and civic participation (Cole & Murphy, 2010; Murphy & Gallagher, 2009). The FHAO model leverages cases such as the Holocaust and the struggle for civil rights in the United States to create some distance for learners but still provide entry points to make connections and

engage in historical inquiry about their own contexts. Unlike the vision of disciplinary inquiry espoused by Wineburg and Reisman (2012) that focuses on cultivation of disciplinary analysis skills, the FHOA approach engages more with the tensions and possibilities of learning from multiple narratives in order to spur dialogue about identity construction and transformation. The program makes explicit the links between learning and analyzing history and processes of identity transformation that might enable young people to contribute to broader processes of reconciliation. As Murphy and Gallagher (2009) describe in reference to their work training teachers in Northern Ireland in the FHAO model, study of the past is used "to challenge passivity and fatalism in the present, and restore a sense of activism, with a more finely tuned sense of the moral consequences of the choices we make" (p. 167).

Barton and Levstik (2004) articulate three purposes for implementing what they term the "analytical stance" to teaching history: learning about the present, learning the lessons of history and learning how historical accounts are created. The FHAO model attends more the first two elements in conceptualizing the usefulness if the past in its ability to help young people learn the lessons from the wrongs of the past, use them to make sense of the present, and effectively diagnose and prescribe solutions to the problems they face in the present. As Barton and Levstik (2004) argue, "without knowing what produced an issue under discussion, students would be doing little more than debating in the dark" (p. 73). Moreover, they assert that civic participation in the present and future is predicated on young people's ability to leverage the lessons of the past as they engage with their communities in the present. The discourses of citizenship formation are increasingly prevalent in literature about post-conflict educational reform as Quaynor (2011) documents in her systematic literature review. Though history education is strongly linked to the construction of national identities that tether together multiple ethnicities

under the banner of shared historical narratives (Berger, 2012), the majority of the texts reviewed by Quaynor (2011) notably did not provide detailed analysis of the linkages between historical learning and citizenship formation. The review did find across regions and contexts an overall avoidance of controversial issues and an inclination in some contexts towards authoritarianism, especially in school environments. Though the review did not focus on history education specifically, the increasing tendency to grapple with the past in spaces outside of history classrooms, such as civic classrooms (Cole & Barsalou, 2010), makes the findings about the challenges to engaging with recent violence and conflict particularly relevant.

Disciplinary approaches to history education additionally delineate historical empathy development as a crucial skill for historical understanding (Davis, Yeager & Foster, 2001) and peaceful and just engagement in democratic processes (Barton & Levstik, 2004). Barton and Levstik (2004) identify two levels of empathy development in history classrooms: "historical empathy as perspective recognition" (p. 206) and "empathy as caring (p. 228). They envision the empathetic work of " imagining the thoughts and feelings of other people from their own perspective" (p. 206) as a process that is both cognitive and emotional, one that bolsters young people's ability to participate in pluralist democracies when they can both engage in complex cognitive shifts that enable encounters with historical difference and participate in a pedagogy of caring (Noddings, 1992) with the historical other. Their consideration of affective contours of historical empathy work breaks from those who espouse historical empathy as strictly a cognitive process of inquiry (Davis, Yeager & Foster, 2001; Foster & Yeager, 1998) and aligns with the growing body of texts on the emotional entanglements of encountering the historical other (Bryant & Clark, 2006; Endacott, 2010; Grant, 2001; Metzger, 2012).

Barton and Levstik (2004) delineate the cognitive tasks of historical empathy as processes of recognizing the "otherness" in historical people's ways of knowing and being, acknowledging that, though different, their beliefs and decision made sense within the contexts in which they live, learning about the multiplicities of perspectives within a given historical moment, and lastly contextualizing our beliefs in the present. Presented as the "most crucial for deliberative democracy," young people must recognize that "our own perspectives depend on historical context" and our beliefs reflect what "we have been socialized into as members of cultural groups" (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 219). The following section on remembrance approaches will explore how Barton & Levstik (2004) and others envision the affective elements of encounters with difficult histories and possibilities for ethical and empathetic engagement with difference.

Remembrance Approaches

The conceptualization of history education as remembrance engages similar concerns about pedagogical formulations of democratic life to disciplinary approaches. However, centering remembrance recognizes the contingencies of our engagements with the past, its affective burdens on learners, an acceptance and even welcoming of the past's potential to disrupt and disarm, and an obligation not to forget the past in hopes of avoiding conflict, but to rather "remember it otherwise" (Simon, 2005, p. 9). Roger Simon has been a guiding voice in articulating "remembrance/pedagogy" as an intertwined concept and practice that functions as a social endeavor to incite and develop a form of critical historical consciousness that transcends the communication of facts and events to meddle in the "disturbances and disruptions inherent in comprehending these events" (Simon, Rosenberg & Eppert, 2000, p. 2-3).

Simon's (2005) work conceptualizes remembrance as a "form of indeterminate critical pedagogy, a practice of inquiry and learning in which the logos interrelating one's past, present, and future social relations are subject to critique and re-formulation" (p. 3). He situates the work of remembrance within practices that constitute and catalyze democratic life, conceived as:

> a framework for sociality that recognizes the fact of human plurality and … make[s] possible a sense of agency and futurity through forms of communication that enable learning about and from the lives of others and the consideration of the transformative actions necessary for living in a changing, increasingly interdependent world. (p. 2)

His work troubles the limits of historical practices that endeavor for social cohesion and reinforce collective presumptions of shared values, histories and futures. Instead, remembrance as transformative democratic practice involves attending less to "consolidating identificatory effects" and more to the "eruptive force" of the "difficult inheritance" (p. 4) of the past. Communities struggling with the legacies of social and political fracture often gravitate towards those narratives that bring coherence and unity in the wake of trauma and disaster. Simon (2005) urges for uses of the past that preoccupy themselves not with the consolidation of national identities, a strategy often employed in the wake of internal conflict, but rather with the cultivation of democratic co-existence based on the discomforts of mutual vulnerability, on-going critique and reformulation of ways of being in public life, and an engagement with the difficult inheritance of difference. The past makes claims on the present and informs the shaping of "democracy still to come" (p. 8). The unspoken and often acknowledged agreements between the past and present demand more than articulations of historical truths through inquiry, evaluation, and analysis; "it also means apprehending these words and images as a transitive bearing of witness, the constitution of testament as a gift, a provision of the possibility of

inheritance with all its disruptive risks and possibilities" (Simon, 2005, p. 8). The following sections examine how Simon and others have explored the work of remembrance/pedagogy, especially as it pertains to "difficult knowledge" and the responsibilities and discomforts of bearing witnesses to histories of violence, conflict and trauma.

The notion of difficult knowledge emerged from the work of Deborah Britzman (1998, 2000) and refers to "both representations of social traumas in curriculum and the individual's encounters with them in pedagogy" (Pitt & Britzman, 2003, p. 755). Pedagogical encounters with difficult knowledge involve learning experiences and materials that challenge people's pre-existing conceptual frameworks, provoke some sort of emotional response, and put the learner in an often-uncomfortable situation of identifying with victims, perpetrators or bystanders. These experiences have an "affective force" with corollary coercive implications for thought (Simon, 2011). They demand that learners "attempt to name and clarify the range of emotions that one is feeling and … compel thought as to what within the [encounter] (or within oneself) has provoked these feelings" (Simon, 2011, p. 195). The provocative nature of cognitive and affective reactions to difficult knowledge challenges educators to consider how to leverage both elements in productive and transformative ways in the teaching of contested histories. Though my research does not share Britzman's psychoanalytical approach to encounters with difficult knowledge, I want to acknowledge the reverberations of her work and how it has traveled and found resonance in other contexts and frameworks.

Zembylas (2014) takes up Britzman's work on difficult knowledge and argues for a "political and activist orientation" to the teaching of traumatic histories; he draws on Butler's (2004; 2009) conceptualization differential grievability as a lens for positioning issues of "empowerment and resistance" at the center of pedagogical engagement with difficult

knowledge. Schools often mirror or reproduce frames constructed outside of the classroom, both in how teachers understand the task before them and in how students approach knowledge and difference (Bekerman & Zembylas, 2014). The questions that Butler raises about how to promote an ethical and caring recognition of others' suffering are relevant to educators that struggle to combat the destructive potential of education to foment conflict in order to enact peace pedagogy in their classrooms (Naqvi & Smits, 2012; Zembylas, 2014). As Zembylas (2014) argues, "Butler's politically oriented work offer[s] us a critical analysis of vulnerability and how it can become a point of departure for an action-oriented solidarity" (p. 403). Moreover, the pedagogical implications of interrogating frames of war invites learners to engaged in what Simon (2005) articulated as "remembering otherwise" which "includes the production of a historical imaginary within which it is possible to rethink as sensible and justifiable those practices that establish one people's exploitation, domination or indifference with regard to others" (p. 9). The practices of remembrance of violent histories rebuke the consolidation of group identities based on nationalism or closed ethnic identities, and instead invite in the memories of others and treat them as though they matter (Simon, 2005).

The pedagogical invitation to bear witness to the stories of others' suffering serves as one of the key entry points for encountering difficult histories and allowing the "touch of the past" to put one at "risk of being disposed of one's certainties" (p. 10). Approaching difficult and contested histories from the posture of witnessing shifts how learners are invited to cognitively and emotionally engage with the past; it invites disruption of established frames and provocation of empathetic engagement. Laub (1992) argues that witnessing can have a transformative effect on the listener as narratives of trauma collide with pre-existing conceptions of the past: "The relation of the victim to the event of the trauma, therefore, impacts on the relation of the listener

to it, and the latter comes to feel the bewilderment, injury, confusion, dread and conflicts that the trauma victim feels" (p. 57-58). Witnessing can spur an affective response that can transcend intellectual encounters and open emotional engagements that allow for "the possibilities of ethically responsible and politically liberating affects such as love and empathy" (Zembylas, 2006, p. 313). Within the learning environment, witnessing becomes a collective endeavor, where students forge connections with one another through both historical inquiry and narrative exchanges. Reflections on the past and the narratives that have forged students' understanding of it must move from individual writing assignments into shared dialogic spaces. What Zembylas (2006) terms pedagogic witnessing (p. 322) depends on the collective in that students must act as witnesses to one another and develop relationships based on dialogue about the ethical implications and political nature of testimony.

In classrooms, witnessing can appear through a variety of mediums, including the re-telling of stories by members of burgeoning communities of memory, which Simon & Eppert (1997) describe as "structured sets of relationships through which people engage representations of past events and put forth shared, complementary, or competing versions of what should be remembered and how" (p. 186). These relational spaces are characterized by both an acknowledgement of the worth of the Other who performs their testimony and also a culture of deliberation around the shared negotiation of what the members deem worthy to be remembered. However, if students enter a learning space enacting inherited frames that trivialize the suffering of Others, they might struggle to embody the affective and cognitive dispositions needed to take on the responsibility of the listener to trauma. Laub (1992) argues that the listener to trauma cannot just sit as a passive observer to testimony; rather the listener "comes to be a participant and a co-owner of the traumatic event: through his very listening, he comes to partially

experience trauma in himself" (p. 57). In order to become a participant in the process of witnessing, the student must be both intellectually invested in the experiences of the Other and also emotionally open to the affective reverberations of another's experience of loss and trauma.

Damico and Apol (2008) propose the use of testimonial response as a pedagogical mechanism for facilitating learner's encounters with "risky historical texts" (p. 142). Drawing on Eppert's (2000) conceptualization of narratives of historical witness, they present a broad notion of pedagogical testimony that includes the many narratives that give students access to histories of genocide, war, and atrocity. They argue that testimonial response engages the ethical and affective reverberations of narration through multiple points of engagement including "historical engagement, emotional investment, and a collectivist orientations" (Damico & Apol, 2008, p. 144). Testimonial response invites historical sense-making that gives shape to distant historical events and people and connects them meaningfully to learners' present worlds. These tethers between past and present are forged through emotional engagements where learners are provoking into spaces of discomfort where they must face the linkages between past suffering and their implications in the present. Damico and Apol (2008) echo Boler (1999) and Simon and Eppert (1997) in asserting the collective nature of pedagogical witnessing, in that "collective reading or witnessing is fundamentally relational, requiring readers to engage with texts and see each other in relation to broader social identities and histories" (p. 146). Moreover, they argue that in addition to personal or textual responses to testimony, learners should be invited to engage in critical readings that "look at the ways authors, contexts, and literary elements attempt to bring about a desired effect in the reader" (Damico & Apol, 2008, p. 153). Witnessing in this formulation moves beyond affective reverberations on the individual and invites learners to

analyze the “sensate regulation” (Taylor, 2012) of how testimonies differentially are framed and allotted worth and value.

Becoming “touched by the past” (Simon, 2005) also suggests the actualization of some sort of obligation in response to encountering and affectively engaging with the suffering of others. Some scholars couch this call to action as part of the project of witnessing, whereby the listener/reader of trauma narratives engages intentionally with the first-order witness as the “empathetic listener [and] addressable other” (Laub, 1992, p. 68) and enables the learning through testimony. Ethically witnessing the pain of another demands active engagement both in the moment of narration and in the aftermath when the listeners must see and own their obligation to the witness and their testimony. Simon and Eppert (1997) argue that, “witnessing is completed not by merely enduring the apprehension of difficult stories but by transporting and translating these stories beyond their moment of enunciation” (p. 178). Witnessing brings along with it an ethical obligation to take action based on the historical and affective content of what is seen and heard. It demands in some way the re-production and re-transmission of testimony, or else it risks falling into the trap of passive voyeuristic receivership (Simon & Eppert, 1997). Similarly, Boler (1999) calls for readers/listeners to take action in response to testimony, taking up a posture of testimonial reading and the task of “co-producer” (p. 166) of the messy, dynamic and contingent process of “truth-telling.” The pedagogical implications of their arguments suggest that students should in some way re-present testimonies of the past, allowing the stories to shape how they move through the world and become implicated in knowledge in the present.

The cultivation of obligation builds from the students’ (and teachers’) affective engagements with stories of trauma, which in the literature is often framed around the notion of empathy. Empathy development involves rigorous pedagogical processes of (re)humanizing

victimized groups. However, the notion of empathy remains a contested topic as researchers from divergent fields differ in how they define it and conceptualize its emergence. Kaplan (2011) distinguished different types of empathetic responses to others' trauma and described the conditions that might engender them. She warned against vicarious trauma response where an empathetic helping response is obstructed by the overwhelming strength of the person's own emotional reaction. Similarly problematic is empty empathy, which refers to when initial empathetic responses become diminished with excessive exposure to images of violence and suffering. This argument mirrors Sontag's (2003) concern that "our capacity to respond to our experiences with emotional freshness and ethical pertinence is being sapped by the relentless diffusion of vulgar and appalling images (p. 108-109). Exposure to images or textual accounts of injustice or human suffering does not intrinsically imply a moral response or serve to prevent violence in the future.

Despite these limitations and risks, Kaplan (2011) argues for a third type of empathetic response: ethical witnessing. Given the potential for proximity and overexposure to limit a viewer's proclivity to take action to help those who are suffering, she recognizes the value in some type of cognitive or emotional distance. This distance might occur in a classroom or other learning space where students see images or read texts about those whose struggles lack either geographic or temporal proximity. As such, ethical pedagogical witnessing, which would combine deliberate exposure with the emotional safety of distance might "produc[e] a deliberate ethical consciousness through empathetic affect not related only to specific person or character" but to the larger collective experience (Kaplan, 2011, p. 275). Though the story of an individual might captivate attention, empathetic witnessing involves extrapolating the collective situation out of the individual story and identifying the actors and conditions responsible. It entails the

critical readings of testimonial response that Damino and Apol (2008) argue can help young people both engage with both testimonial texts and in the contexts in which they are created and made meaningful.

Chinnery (2010) questions the "performative and pedagogical force" (p. 401) of testimony, wondering whether the younger generations with their enhanced technological access to intense personal narratives on a regular basis have "become somewhat immune to the power of testimony" (p. 401). Her reflections emerge from interactions with North American students who responded more intensely to policy documents than personal testimony about the Holocaust. She aligns herself with Simon's (2005) conceptualization of a critical historical consciousness that provokes affective engagement and an acknowledgement of responsibility to the past. Yet, she suggests that pedagogical witnessing might not be the only route to such entanglements with the past. Her queries beg the question about the borders that the literatures set on what provokes the "touch of the past" (Simon, 2005). They invite educators to consider the contextual forces at play in young people's lives and develop multifaceted entry points to the weight and burdens of the past and its hold on the present. Pedagogical discomforts (Boler & Zembylas, 2003) and disillusionment with the loss of certainty (Farley, 2009) might emerge in the face of policy documents or critical interrogations of archives where young people are asked to frame the frames that regulate how they think and feel about others (Butler, 2009).

The way that Barton and Levstik (2004) articulate empathetic caring in history classroom combines affective reactions to the voices and narratives of the past ("caring about") and the sense of obligation and responsibility that emerges in response to stories of suffering or loss ("caring for" or "caring to change") (p. 229). The notion of caring becomes a mechanism for cultivating social and political participation based on rigorous inquiry and affective engagements

with injustice and oppression. Yet, the affective dimensions of historical learning are conspicuously absent from the teaching of the difficult past in Northern Ireland. Barton and McCully (2010) question, based on the strict inquiry approach to historical empathy in Northern Ireland, whether "developing rational thinking and balancing points of view, alone, will enable young people to overcome those cultural influences which prevent them seeing beyond their own community perspectives. The latter are deeply held and emotionally protected" (McCully, 2012, p. 153). They call for the inclusion of caring into spaces of historical inquiry, while also acknowledging the challenges for teachers who feel ill-equipped to manage the emotional reverberations of traumatic histories in their classrooms.

Zembylas (2007) links empathy with processes of reconciliation, arguing that the relational and collective aspects of reconciliation necessitate the development of empathy "for the Other's humanity and the process of transforming polarised trauma narratives of the past is initiated. In this sense, empathy is an expression of being in relationship with the Other" (p. 215). Zembylas conceptualizes empathy as the ability to both consider the perspectives of the other and also try to view the world from their ways of thinking and feeling, and draws on Halpern and Weinstein (2005) to argue for how empathy development serves the goals of reconciliation. It helps imagine the lives and ideas of the Other whose ways of being and thinking largely get suppressed and negated in situations of conflict and genocide. Moreover, by opening a willingness to consider divergent ideas of others, young people develop their ability to tolerate uncertainty and show resilience in the face of the discomforts of conflicting narratives of the past. As such, Zembylas (2007) argues that empathy development must transcend facile articulations of empathy and engage in critical emotional literacy whereby learners "built their

ability to question cherished beliefs and presuppositions, thus emphasising different perspectives that present us with the possibility of thinking otherwise" (p. 218).

Empathy gets conceptualized as a pedagogical production that affectively ties learners to others' experiences, pricking their ethical engagement and spurring moral action. However, Boler (1999) warns about the creation of passive empathy that fails to "implicate [students] in the social forces that create the climate of obstacles the other must confront" (p. 159). Craps (2013) launches a similar critique, challenging Laub's (1992) conception of testimony where the listener empathetically responds to a witness, becomes "a participant and a co-owner of the traumatic event [and] through [their] very listening, [they] come to partially experience trauma in [themselves]" (Laub, 1992, p. 57). Empathy alone fails to provoke "critical self-reflection regarding [the listener's] own implication in ongoing practices of oppression and denial" (Craps, 2013, p. 42). Empathy does not necessarily entail critical consciousness, nor expose the hierarchies of power embedded in relationships between agents of testimony of their listeners and readers. While acknowledging the potential emotional reverberations of encountering narratives of suffering helps prepare educators for students' affective reactions, it positions students as "vicarious victim[s]" (Craps, 2013, p. 42) and potentially deflects opportunities for critical self-reflection about their own complicity in systems of injustice. Moreover, Craps (2013) warns of the limitations and risks of applying Western, psychoanalytical notions of trauma and witnessing in (post-)colonial contexts. He argues that trauma theory provides frames of analysis for traumatic events, such as genocide, war or massacre, but fails to address on-going daily structural violence inflicted on "non-western" bodies enduring oppression. Indeed, the difficulty in engaging with the history of violence in contexts like Guatemala lies both in facing the culpability of armed actors in acts of violence and atrocity, and also in connecting these

events to larger structures of oppression that build on the legacies of colonialism and reproduction of racialized inequalities. As such, the literature's overarching attention to recent bouts of violence and genocide demands a reformulation that considers how moments of social and political rupture are deeply intertwined with the oppressive nature of the modern/colonial project.

An approach to encountering difficult histories that invites students to engage beyond empathy and seek to listen in the face of differences that challenge their beliefs and worldviews could constitute what Boler and Zembylas (2003) call a pedagogy of discomfort. They argue for pedagogical practices that interrogate the "deeply embedded emotional dimensions that frame and shape daily habits, routines and unconscious complicity with hegemony" (p. 111). The discomfort arises when learners are challenged to upend their pre-existing beliefs and assumptions, often embedded in the discursive practices of the dominant culture. Farley (2009) suggests that learning history demands grappling with uncertainty and "offers a theory of historical pedagogy that is less about settling the questions of the past along a line of chronology or rational explanation and more about tolerating the disillusionment of reason to give us the answers it promises" (p. 539). Moreover, she highlights some of the difficult emotional processes at work for teachers in engaging with difficult histories, especially when they are confronted with questions from learners that they cannot answer. Yet, she argues for the possibilities for radical hope in learning spaces when educators and learners embrace meaning-making not in rational explanation but in moments of uncertainty.

Zembylas (2009) argues for the cultivation of critical emotional praxis (CEP) – "critical thinking and action that questions the emotional, ethical, political and pedagogical implications of our identification with different ideologies, such nationalism" (p. 184) – as a path to

negotiating pedagogical spaces of discomfort. He positions CEP as a tool for reflection of "cherished beliefs and comfort zones" so that educators and students alike question how they have learned to see, interpret and act in the world. This allows people to see how ideologically based curriculum (through nationalism) teaches people to feel (and not feel) in certain ways, which Zembylas calls the politics of emotions. Yet, the discomfort of learning about violence or injustice does not automatically get provoked when young people encounter representations of trauma or suffering. They easily can perceive and react to these narratives through hegemonically constituted frames of reference that have normalized and even justified violence. The challenge for educators – and the teacher trainers that work with them – is to prepare learning communities for the discomfort and to value and celebrate the difficult personal and collective efforts to bring new and disruptive lenses to learning about the past.

Dryden-Peterson and Siebörger (2005) examine the role of teachers as "memory makers" who bring their testimonies into the classroom to create dialogical spaces of learning that combine the personal with the historical. Drawing on ethnographic research with teachers from 16 schools in South Africa, the authors examined how teachers used testimony in their classrooms to personalize the atrocities of apartheid and foster spaces of deliberative discussion. While many teachers cited a lack of other resources as a reason for using personal testimony as a teaching method, the study asserts the powerful role teachers can play in cultivating communities of memory (Simon and Eppert, 1997) within the classroom.

Before they can engage their students in such problematic learning endeavors, educators must wrestle with their own emotional responses to encounters with difficult histories, particularly when their families and communities are implicated. Teachers must embark on a study of a past riddled with complexity and ripe for affective reactions that defy the boundaries

of clean, fact-based learning about histories of violence and suffering (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008; Garrett, 2011; Simon, Rosenberg & Eppert, 1999). Supporting teachers in post-conflict contexts as they teach traumatic histories requires preparation beyond the technical strategies of classroom practice; it demands teachers themselves meddle in a "pedagogy of discomfort" that urges learners to transgress their comfort zones, interrogating their "emotional investments" in particular ways of reading the past "that by and large remain unexamined because they have been woven into the everyday fabric of what is considered common sense" (Boler & Zembylas, 2006, p. 111). It suggests an approach to teaching and learning difficult histories that traverses cognitive and affective ways of knowing and learning.

Traversing the Cognitive and the Affective?

The division in the literature between disciplinary/cognitive and remembrance/affective approaches fails to capture the ways that educators, both of teachers and of students, traverse and weave together multiple modes of encountering and interacting with the past. My research queried how educators might leverage the entanglements between the two as they investigated and constructed pedagogical engagements with narratives of trauma, violence, and repression. However, looking at the entanglements and movement between cognitive and affective modes of inquiry still reflects an Western epistemological assumption of a binary that separates cognition and feeling and divides the heart and the mind. Entanglements and traversals still conceptually visualize disciplinary historical inquiry as an analytical, scientific process to construct the truth about "what happened" and memory work as a sensorial, felt engagement with past traumas. Instead, what I learned from my collaborations with teachers and facilitators muddies these divisions, in that learning and inquiring about difficult histories and memories is felt-thinking, felt-knowing, though the use of hyphen in English undermines the conceptualization of a unified

experience. Chapter 3 describes in more detail this concept of being *sentipensante*, feel-thinking, as a decolonial epistemological and pedagogical frame for reading my work with teachers. However, first Chapter 2.2 provides a conceptual foundation for decolonial thinking and its applications for transitional processes, asserting the importance of disrupting colonial epistemologies and ontologies that partition the body and instead allowing ancestral knowledges to guide processes of reckoning with the palimpsestic marks of violence.

Chapter 3: Decolonizing Transitional Justice

Swatch…

Valeria and Ignacio came into the inquiry process with significant skepticism and disillusionment about the efficacy and impact of the Peace Accords signed from 1994 and 1996[10], between the coalition of guerrilla organizations, la *Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca* (URNG, Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity), the Government and the Army, with participation from civil society through the Civil Society Assembly (Álvarez Castañeda & Sarti Castañeda, 2019). Valeria remembers the feeling of hope as an adolescent when the accords were signed:

> Decía mi mamá, por fin vamos a ser libres, por fin vamos a ser libres, ya basta de tanta matanza, decía en este entonces, porque como ella vivió todo ese proceso. Entonces ella decía, por fin vamos a poder salir de noche. Vamos a poder porque no se podía salir de noche, era prohibido, los patrulleros ya avisaron que no podía salir de noche.[11]

The repetition by Valeria and/or her mother of the phrase "*we are finally going to be free*" was coupled with the familiar story of the restrictions on their ability to leave their homes at night because it was unsafe and/or not permitted by the civil patrol units. The optimism of the moment sparked an audible expression of relief interrupting the oppressive silences at night.

Yet, the yawning gap between the promises of peace, social and economic equality, and political stability from the final Agreement for the Firm and Lasting Peace in 1996 and the

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[10] The various documents and agreements can be accessed here: https://www.usip.org/publications/1998/11/peace-agreements-guatemala

[11] Translation: My mom said, we are finally going to be free, we are finally going to be free, enough of all the killing, she said at this time, since she lived through that whole process. Then she said, we are finally going to be able to go out at night, we will be able to because you couldn't go out at night. It was forbidden, the patrolmen already warned that you couldn't go out at night.

realities of "ordinary violence," blatant political corruption, and growing economic stratification had inculcated for Valeria and Ignacio, and many other teachers in the diplomado, a sensation of disappointment and futility. Starting from a place of disconnection from the results of these high level negotiations (Lederach, 2005, p. 56), they examined the content and language of the various agreements, which established protections for human rights, a process for resettling refugees, the creation of a truth and reconciliation commission, an agreements on the rights and identity of Indigenous population, social and economic rights, particularly in terms of agrarian reforms, and the role of civilians and the military in democratic society (Amnesty International, 1997). Though recognizing the significance of the agreement stipulating the rights of Indigenous population, both were struck by the extent to which the agreements had failed to be implemented. Valeria argued:

> quizás en papeles está firmado, pero paz no hay, porque si hubiese, no necesitaríamos tener soldados y policías en las calles, en las fronteras, podríamos salir a cualquier hora de nuestra casa, pero no podemos, sólo por la guerrilla ahora o estos grupos que se están armando ahora, que ya no se llaman guerrilleros, son bandas o maras como les podemos llamar, siempre atacando y ¿de dónde viene esto?[12]

She weaves the threats of the past and present together, exposing temporal and conceptual slippages in the feeling of being under attack as she elides the guerrillas and gangs. While the language of transition has fallen out of public discourse and the framing of international development projects no longer draw on the logics of transitional justice, the teachers in this

[12] Translation: Maybe it is signed on paper, but there is no peace, because if there were, we wouldn't need to have soldiers and police on the streets, on the borders, we could leave our homes at any time, but we can't, only because of the guerrillas now or these groups that are arming themselves now, who are no longer called guerrillas, they are gangs or maras as we can call them, always attacking and where does this come from?

project chose to delve into the unresolved mechanisms of transition, and through their inquiry project, urge a rethinking of the concept of transition and how pedagogical spaces might attend to its promises.

Challenges to Normative Transitional Justice Models

Researchers and practitioners in the transitional justice field have increasingly questioned whether the concepts and practices of transitional justice can endure the ontological and epistemological upheaval of decolonization (Sesay, 2022; Grewal, 2023). The framing of transitional justice measures as a pathway for peaceful transformation to democracy has come under increasing scrutiny as an exportation-imposition of Western, liberal institutions that fails to recognize its colonial logics and address the root causes of violence (Durdiyeva, 2024; Grewal, 2023; Sesay 2022; Gready & Robins, 2014). Critics argue that the field and the mechanisms of change it promotes problematically presume the universality of the Western model of liberal governance, focusing on violent events instead of the violent conditions, structures, and systems of coloniality. Moreover, they critique the epistemological blindness to pluriversal ontologies and epistemologies that are incommensurable with Western visions of peace and democracy (Lykes & Murphy, 2023; Sesay, 2022). Instead, critics argue that transitional justice measures should cast aside linear, legalistic Western constructions of socio-political change and embrace transformative, pluriversal processes of justice that engage with the colonial structures that reverberate through the waves of past and present violence (Gready & Robins, 2014; Forencia Librizzi, 2015; Devin & Hana, 2021; Sesay, 2022; Lykes & Murphy, 2023).

A decolonial examination of the practices, measures, and theory of transitional justice implies an examination of its coloniality, which Maldonado-Torres et al. (2023) stipulate "includes modern colonialism but also exceeds it, because it can continue to reproduce colonial

logics even after the end of formal colonial relations" (p. 535-6). Similarly, Pauls (2024) joins Maldonado-Torres et al. in shunning conceptualizations and discourses that situate colonialism as as an artifact of the past: "the concept of coloniality underscores the pervasive influence of colonial continuities (rather than legacies) across various aspects of society, including culture, labor relations, personal interactions and knowledge production" (Azarmandi & Pauls, 2024, p. 3). Examining and destabilizing the foundations of transitional justice signifies an examination of its intended outcomes, both in terms of the institutions and socio-political contours of the nation-state it pretends to stabilize, but also the corollary conceptualizations of peace and peacebuilding.

Epistemological and Ontological Foundations for Decolonial Critiques

The concept, discourses, and practices of decolonization and decoloniality are by no means monolithic in their origin, ontological and epistemological assumptions, or applications. My work gravitates towards Latin American strands of decolonial thinking, while recognizing that thinking and acting decolonially remains a contentious endeavor, even as it has gained traction through the publication of southern epistemologies in the geographic north. Bolivia scholar and activist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2012) has called out some of some of the most recognized scholars who have gained significant traction with English-language academe for failing to recognize and cite work by authors from the Global South who came before them: "Walter Mignolo and company have built a small empire within an empire, strategically appropriating the contributions of the subaltern studies school of India and the various Latin American variants of critical reflection on colonization and decolonization" (p. 51). As such, I have endeavored to both recognize the reverberations of more widely published decolonial

scholars like Mignolo, while heeding Rivera Cusicanqui's warnings about citational occlusions, particularly as decolonial thinking gets woven throughout the dissertation.

The following sections function as a glossary of sorts, outlining concepts, frames and ways of knowing and being related to decolonization and decolonial thinking. The *coloniality of power and gender* provide theoretical anchors for analyzing the racialized and gendered structural violence formed in the colony and carried insidiously into the present. They also speak to the *epistemic violence* of modernity/coloniality, which has dismantled, obscured, and demonized the existence of the *pluriverse* and a multiplicity of worlds, realities, and ways of knowing and being that modernity has frames as multiple cultures within one universe. These concepts serve as the foundation for the theoretical framing of my research around the enactments of pedagogical ecologies of knowledge and *sentipensante* (felt-thinking) historical inquiry, which I discuss in Chapter 4.

Decolonial Thinking

Mignolo (2011) asserts that decolonial thinking demands a delinking from modernity/coloniality and the local European histories, ideologies and epistemologies that through force have been made into universal ways of thinking and being. His work demands an interrogation of the universality of disciplinary history practices that dictate certain "objective" practices of interacting with evidence and making sense of voices from the past. The decolonial unlocks foreclosed ways of knowing, learning, and moving in the world, demanding transgressions of the rules of valid scientific inquiry: "epistemic disobedience" (Mignolo, 2011, p. 273). Defiance of modernity/coloniality entails a rejection of pre-defined ways of thinking, feeling, and acting and an exploration into border thinking, which "is by definition thinking in exteriority, in the spaces and time that the self-narrative of modernity invented as its outside to

legitimize its own logic of coloniality" (Mignolo, 2011, p. 282). Reconsidering the primacy of the nation-state as the guiding unit of analysis for the pedagogical project of transition justice might engender the type of epistemological disobedience that Mignolo (2011) claims is required for decolonial thinking.

Coloniality of Power

The implications of Mignolo's (2000) central argument about how local European histories and epistemologies were projected globally and conflated with universal knowledge entails an epistemological delinking that situates European "global" theories in the localized contexts in which they were created. It also entails questioning their relevance and benefit for those submitted to the *coloniality of power* (Quijano, 2007), which introduced "race as the key element of the social classification of colonized and colonizers" (p. 171).

Quijano (2000a) situates the dynamics and patterns of power in the present in the conquest of the Americas and the racialized classifications and exploitative structures that undergirded its logic and practice:

> One of the fundamental axes of this model of power is the social classification of the world's population around the idea of race, a mental construction that expresses the basic experience of colonial domination and pervades the more important dimensions of global power, including its specific rationality: Eurocentrism. The racial axis has a colonial origin and character, but it has proven to be more durable and stable than the colonialism in whose matrix it was established. (p. 533)

The codification of racial difference by the colonizers translated both legally and scientifically into a global framework for the control and distribution of labor, resources, and the relations of production within a capitalist economic structure (Quijano, 2000a). The racial stratification of

labor created rigid hierarchies that stripped Indigenous populations of their personhood, framing them as expendable manual labor whose bodies had little value beyond what they could contribute to the production of capital.

The mechanisms of global domination between Europeans and the rest of the world moved into the symbolic and epistemological realm as well, through the monopolization of the production of knowledge and systemic repression of "colonized forms of knowledge production, the models of the production of meaning, their symbolic universe, the model of expression and of objectification and subjectivity" (Quijano, 2000a, p. 541). The Indigenous populations of Spanish colonies in the Americas suffered from some of the harshest policies that left them "condemned to be an illiterate peasant subculture stripped of their objectified intellectual legacy" (Quijano, 2000a, p. 541). The conceptualization of the coloniality of power provided a tool that, in Quijano's (2000b) words, helps understand and analyze "that sort of permanent dissociation, often conflictive, between our predominant cognitive perspective and our experience. In other words, between the Eurocentrist perspective of knowledge and the specific history of Latin America" (p. 215). It allows for an examination of the incongruities and dissonances that emerge from that which has survived and resisted the totalizing intentions of the coloniality of power.

Coloniality of Gender

However, Quijano's (2000a) conceptualization of the coloniality of power centers race as the predominant lens for examining colonial modes of subjugation, ellipsing other forms of domination, including gender: "[race] has proven to be the most effective and long-lasting instrument of universal social domination, since the much older principle—gender or intersexual domination—was encroached upon by the inferior/superior racial classifications" (p. 535). Lugones (2007/2024) contested that narrowing of the category of gender in Quijano's work,

articulating a complementary conceptualization of the *coloniality of gender*. Lugones argued that:

> Gender is a cornerstone for understanding the transformations imposed by the colonizers in the colonization process, which introduced gender positions for the colonized that were very different from those of the colonizers, and gender itself as a colonial category" (Roth, Otero Quezada & de Sousa Lima, 2024, p. 19).

Lugones drew from the work of critical race theorists, in particular from Crenshaw's (1991) conceptualization of intersectionality, and put them in conversation with the coloniality of power. With the aim of strengthening Quijano's conceptualization, she asserted that gender and race functioned as mutually constituting elements in the colonial/modern model of power. Moreover, she challenged the heteronormative and patriarchal understandings of sex and gender implicit in his conceptualization, asserting the importance of decolonizing the fictions of sexual dimorphism (p. 43) and colonial constructions of gender and sex outside of the coloniality of heterosexual cis-gender relations (p. 41).

Quijano and Lugones' writings on the coloniality of power and coloniality of gender have functioned as critical analytical frames for the growing movements and literatures that have taken up the mantle of decolonization and its implications for exploring and embracing what "hegemonic discourses about the real had previously deemed inexistent or else implausible alternatives to what exists" (Escobar, 2020, p. 4). Naming and espousing the intersectional mechanisms, structures, and campaigns of colonial domination that have been universalized into progress creates space for bringing to the fore the communities, bodies, and ways of knowing, learning and being that have survived and resisted the violent erasures of Eurocentrism and coloniality / modernity. It opens up the multiplicities of proposals for "'worlding' life on new

premises, … for constructing other worlds" (Escobar, 2020, p. 4) that can confront the global crises that modernity has borne and/or proven unable to fix.

Pluriverse

While my research and the teaching training program in which it was embedded explicitly endeavored to address and disrupt violent colonial legacies, the epistemological frames and relational habits of modernity/coloniality (Mignolo, 2000) often proved difficult to dislodge, not just for me but for the participations and facilitators as well. The epistemologies of the North and the access to power they promise to award remained in constant negotiation and tension with Indigenous cosmologies, Catholic or evangelical dogmas, and hyper localized manifestations of syncretism. The epistemic implications of the coloniality of power and the power-laden negotiations of ways of thinking, knowing, and learning with teachers has informed how I have grappled with one of the research questions: What frameworks, experiences, memories and/or discourses do teachers draw upon during learning encounters with difficult histories?

The question has ultimately led me to engage with the *pluriverse*, which de la Cadena and Blaser (2018) describe as "heterogeneous worldings coming together as a political ecology of practices, negotiating their difficult being together in heterogeneity" (p. 4). Recognizing the pluriverse has led me to reconsider the ontological underpinnings of the question that invites inquiry into the plurality of ways for reading and becoming in the world, but does not allow for an "understanding that reality is constituted not only by many worlds, by many kinds of worlds, many ontologies, many ways of being in the world, many ways of knowing reality, and experiencing those many worlds" (Querejazu, 2016, p. 3). The shift from exploring the multiplicities of worldviews to the multiplicities of worlds has epistemological ramifications, but more fundamentally opens up ontological tensions and possibilities as the interconnections and

incommensurability between anthropocentric and relational worldviews get brought to the fore (Querejazu, 2016).

In conceptualizing the pluriverse, and the alternate realities that inhabit it, Escobar (2012) highlights the co-existence of Indigenous relational worlds that center the connections between the human and non-human and rupture modern delineations and hierarchies between the human, natural, and spiritual world (Querejazu, 2016). A modern, Western conception of a singular universe carries a series of assumptions, including:

> la primacía ontológica de los seres humano sobre los no-humanos (la separación de la naturaleza y la cultura) y de algunos seres humanos sobre otros (la brecha colonial entre el Occidente/ moderno y el resto/ no modemo); la separación del individuo autónomo de la comunidad; la creencia en el conocimiento objetivo, la razón y la ciencia coma los únicos modos de conocimiento válido; y la construcción cultural de la "economía" coma un reino independiente de la vida social, con el "mercado" como una entidad auto-regulada. Los mundo y saberes construidos sobre la base de estos compromisos ontológicos devinieron en "un universo."[13] (Escobar, 2012, p. 47-48)

As a social construction, a singular universe of reality holds hegemonic sway and political implications, endeavoring to subsume the multiplicities of being and knowing into the frame of multiculturalism and globalization that values tolerance and acceptance of diversity under one tent. Yet, as powerful as the idea of one universe, one reality might be, it does not allow for the co-existence of worlds that are fundamentally incommensurable, though interconnected

[13] Translation: the ontological primacy of human beings over non-humans (the separation of nature and culture) and of some human beings over others (the colonial gap between the West/modern and the rest/non-modern); the separation of the autonomous individual from the community; the belief in objective knowledge, reason and science as the only valid modes of knowledge; and the cultural construction of the "economy" as a realm independent of social life, with the "market" as a self-regulating entity. The worlds and knowledges constructed on the basis of these ontological commitments became "a universe."

(Querejazu, 2016). The pluriverse allows for realities where non-human and the natural world has agency (De la Cadena, 2010) and the "myths," "legends," and stories of colonized peoples shred their exotified shells and become powerful sources of knowledge and learning. The pluriverse is not something that is or needs to be created; rather thinking and learning in the pluriverse involves a recognition of the multiplicity of worlds and realities that have lived in the shadows of the modern/colonial ontological project.

An attention to incommensurability between worlds helps add to the urgency of deconstructing the myth of modernity and the assimilation of difference and diversity under a singular universal framework. But there are limits to the difference in ways of knowing and being, in that "dissidence or other voices are allowed to believe whatever they like as long as those beliefs are not contrary to what the Northern West knows about the world" (Querejazu, 2016, p. 8). Recognizing incommensurability as part of decolonial thinking has ontological, epistemological, and material ramifications. Tuck and Yang (2012) argue that anti-colonial and social justice movements are fundamentally incommensurable with decolonization, which entails an overhaul of the fundamental order of the world. The material effects of decolonization are incommensurable with the goals of reconciliation, a term that in the Canadian context that makes reckoning with the violence against Indigenous people accessible for settlers and has similar effects in other settings that prioritize the needs and possessions of the colonizers over Indigenous futures (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Recognizing the incommensurability between worlds from a colonial perspective is discomforting in that it requires *giving*, as per Mignolo (2019), and the "relinquishing of settler futurity" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 36). The possibilities of decolonization stems from other worlding, from pursuing that which was made not to fit within the confines of reality and seeing

other configurations that have been made to seem impossible: “Decolonization offers a different perspective to human and civil rights-based approaches to justice, an unsettling one, rather than a complementary one. Decolonization is not an ‘end.’ It is an elsewhere” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 36). The elsewhere demands recognition of the pluriverse.

Epistemic Violence and Translation

In arguing for *Epistemologies of the South*, Santos (2009) challenges the terms of Western-situated scenes of deliberative dialogues and discussions of difference when “se ha realizado un epistemicidio masivo en los últimos cinco siglos, por el que una inmensa riqueza de experiencias cognitivas has sido perdida”[14] (p. 191). The epistemic violence of modernity/coloniality (Spivak, 1988; Dotson, 2012; Grosfoguel, 2018; MacDonald, 2002; Brunner, 2023) that has deemed marginalized, repressed ways of knowing and being as unintelligible or unrecognizable has warped the conditions of debate. Citing the many linguistic markers noted by Santos (2009) that cast Mayan epistemologies to the margins of recognition and knowledge production, Tseltal Mayan scholar Juan López Intzín (2021a) makes a call for their recovery:

> For positivist Western rationality, our beliefs are “magic,” “esotericism,” “customs,” “traditions,” “folk crafts,” “beliefs,” “witchcraft,” “traditional medicine,” “shamanism,” “exoticism,” etc. By pointing this out, we do not seek to discredit scientific knowledge or accredit the “non-scientific”, as Santos says (2009, p. 115). Rather, we agree that we must use the tools of this rationality and counteract its prevailing hegemony. We must make visible the knowledges hidden or negated by the hegemonic rationality of scientific,

[14] Translation: a massive epistemicide has taken place over the last five centuries, whereby an immense wealth of cognitive experience has been lost.

objective, and patriarchal truth, and give space and recognition to other heartalities and rationalities—the epistemologies of Maya peoples, in this case.

Intzín exposes the challenges of rescuing knowledge from the realm of mythology and situating them in a pluriversal dialogue with Western scientific/academic debate. Santos (2009) asserts the need for practices of *translation*, not just in a linguistic sense, but an exploration of compatibility and incommensurabilities between different worlds and realities.

Translation, as situated within the genre of Feminist Translation Studies (Castro & Ergun 2017; Thayer et al., 2014), has emerged as a critical tool for navigating difference, movements, and migrations in feminist thought and organization among Latin/a Américas (Alvarez, 2014). With reverence for the primacy of situated knowledges born out of power-laden social and political constellations that converge into a particular spatio-temporal moment, translocal feminist praxis demands translation in the face of epistemic migration. It endeavors to forge dialogue across difference and combat the *emblanquecimiento* of feminist epistemologies, which Alvarez (2014) translates as the "possessive investment in whiteness" (p. 3). Costa (2020) asserts "translation - based not only on a linguistic paradigm, but more importantly, on an ontological one - becomes a key element for forging alternative, decolonial feminist epistemologies" (p. 174) and putting them into conversation with Western hegemonic analytical models. Translation in this reading does not necessarily involve a search for common ground or warping the ontologies and epistemologies of other worlds so they are recognizable within one's own. Instead, it "emphasizes equivocations that stem from our multiple realities" (Costa, 2020), p. 175), while considering whether "la inconmensurabilidad no impide necesariamente la comunicación y que incluso permite insospechadas formas de complementariedad"[15] (Santos, 2009, p. 175).

[15] Translation: incommensurability does not necessarily prevent communication and even allows for unsuspected forms of complementarity

The recognition of the pluriverse and the politics of translation implicated in its centering have driven decolonial critiques of processes of transition and democratization and anchor my analysis of the co-presences of multiple epistemologies (Santos, 2007; Miles & Nayak, 2020) circulating within the spaces of learning and in how educators grappled with violent histories and memories. I aim to delink from the rigidity of disciplinary cognitive lineages, and expose cracks, smudges, contradictions, and overlaps in the multiplicity of frames, knowledges, and ways of being in negotiation in processes of change and transition.

Implications of Decolonizing Transitional Justice in Guatemala

Despite the ten-year presence of a United Nations mission (Stanley, 2013; Wilson, 1997), significant investments in the growth of civil society from international organizations and development agencies (Howell & Pearce, 2001; Palencia Prado, 1997), and the publication of two truth and reconciliation reports documenting the abuses committed by all parties during the Armed Conflict (Sanford, 2012), one mandated in the Peace Accords (CEH, 1999) and another published by the Catholic church (Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispo de Guatemala [ODHAG], 1998), trials for high level officers (Burt, 2016, 2022), and a reparations program for victims (Viaene, 2010b), the transition to a stable democracy and consolidation of positive peace (Barash, 2009; Galtung 1996) has remained elusive for Guatemala (Burt, 2016; Grandin, 2005; Oglesby & Nelson, 2016; Caxaj Álvarez et al., 2017; González Riera, 2024). The growing cacophony of voices from the Global South finally seeping into Western academia on the infiltration of coloniality into liberal practices of peacebuilding, justice, and democratization provides a useful lens to examine the disjunctures and dissonances in transitional justice in Guatemala and other fragile states.

Helen Chang Mack, an outspoken human rights activist whose sister Myrna Chang Mack was assassinated by the Guatemalan military in 1990, teamed up with security and transitional justice expert Mónica Leonardo to warn about the consequences of a narrow framing of transition justice in Guatemala (Mack & Leonardo, 2012). They astutely argued that the focus on the "larger questions" of how to reckon with political violence and atrocity from the Armed Conflict and leverage high profile trials to restore faith in the rule of law would not be sufficient. Instead, they asserted that the everyday experience of violence and criminal activities must be folded into the discussion of transition justice, or else risk exacerbating an already gapping divide between the activities of politicians in Guatemala City and the realities of everyday experiences (Mack & Leonardo, 2012, p. 175-176). Critiquing the disciplinary divide between security and justice, they argue that:

> Typical transitional justice approaches thereby run the risk of creating widespread and ultimately unmet expectations of justice without delivering real, present-day peace for citizens. This undermines the transition itself. While postconflict crime may not be politically motivated, its implications become political when crime rates reach a certain level, because the demands of citizens for greater security inevitably permeate postwar political debates about justice. (p. 176)

Their calls to both attend to the local experiences of violence and approaches to justice and "redress" have since been joined and reinforced by others who share their concerns about the limitations of Western formulas for transition (Gready & Robins, 2014; Forencia Librizzi, 2015; Devin & Hana, 2021; Sesay, 2022; Lykes & Murphy, 2023). An-Na'im (2013) decries the linearity of a transitional justice model, calling for "a practice of justice" that follows an "indigenous process of trial and error" (p. 199). He argues that "the process must be homegrown,

emerging out of local context and adapted by the people themselves to the specific conditions of their country, through practice, and not as normative ideals imposed from above" (An-Na'im, 2013, p. 199). Moreover, using the case of resource-driven conflicts in South Sudan and Sudan as reference for his critiques, he questions the application of high-level judicial processes in "a region that lacks any presence of state law enforcement in terms of human or material resources." (An-Na'im, 2013, p. 202). While the precarities of the material conditions in South Sudan and Guatemala differ significantly, the extremities of isolation and separation from the state in rural, remote communities does not feel dissimilar. The Prosecutor's Office, the entity responsible for responding to and investigating crimes in Guatemala, only established a presence in each municipality in 2021 (Bolaños, 2021). The police had been run out of Cunén, one of the research sites, because supposedly the wife of the police commissioner was kidnapping children (Cordero, 2020). Beyond the debility of state institutions lies the strength of parallel powers, a toxic entanglement between (ex)military, business, and narcotrafficking interests that govern in the absence of state institutions (Mack & Leonardo, 2012; McAllister & Nelson, 2013; Sanford, 2013).

The disconnect between state-level, national transitional justice processes and the diversity of local realities and universes has shifted efforts in the field, both academically and in practice, to local initiatives emphasizing broad community participation and agency (Brehm & Golden, 2017; Clark, 2012; Lundy & McGovern, 2008). Beyond challenging transitional justice measures to involve and reverberate throughout all levels of society, local approaches center victims/survivors and their agency and needs (Robins, 2011; Shaw & Waldorf, 2010). The tensions emerge from ontological assumptions about trauma and healing, and to what extent psychoanalytic processes of working through trauma that garnered traction in the wake of the

Holocaust (Baelev, 2018; Caruth, 1996) can cross borders and promote healing across the pluriverse (Lykes & Murphy, 2023; Nagy, 2013).

Though focused on the application of transitional justice mechanisms in settler states, Park (2023) proposes a set of principles to radicalize transitional justice (Park, 2020), which demands an embrace of indeterminacy and uncertainty and "requires settlers to accept an uncomfortable uncertainty in facing the challenge to settled futurity" (Park, 2020, p. 278). Reframed to include applications in "post-conflict" contexts, Park (2023) asserts that transitional justice can be decolonized by 1) *decentering the state*, refusing the primacy of its conception of the problems and solutions, 2) "*inter-nationalizing the justice relationship"* so as not to foreclose recognition of Indigenous sovereignty and systems of justice, 3) "*delegitimizing the ... state"* and forcing recognition of on-going colonialism systems and structures, and 4) "*abandoning liberal teleology and embracing indeterminacy*" (p. 407, author's italics) in refusal of the liberal nation-state as the final goal of processes of change. The uncertainty of delinking from universalized liberal conceptions of democracy opens space for alternative, pluriversal notions of peace (Fitzgerald, 2024; Azarmandi, 2023). The multiplicities of meanings of concepts like peace, justice, transition, and reconciliation (Viaene, 2010a), and the exploration of how they translate across worlds and their potential incommensurabilities demands pluriversal dialogue (Fitzgerald, 2021; Paulson, 2018) and engagement with the ecology of knowledge (Santos, 2009), which is taken up in greater detail in the following chapter.

In Guatemala, researchers, journalists, and civil society organizations have tried to untangle the failed promises of transitional justice, calling attention to the disconnection between national politics and local realities, both materially and culturally, echoing critiques from other contexts (Willard, 2021; Viaene, 2010a). Viaene's (2010a) linguistic, anthropological project

with Mayan Q'eqchi' survivors explored the incommensurability of their conceptions of justice and reconciliation, and the pluriversal logics that led many in the community to not advocate for formal justice for perpetrators. Instead, "the internal logic of the cosmos, through invisible spiritual force, fosters social and spiritual repair at a community level, contributing to the lack of demands [for justice] by Q'eqchi' survivors" (p. 287), which challenges assumptions by transitional justice practitioners that all survivors might desire to seek justice through the courts. Within the cosmovision of the communities she worked with, legal impunity "is not the end of accountability nor truth recovery, reparation or reconciliation" (p. 306), but instead these goals (or a version of them that defies translation) are reached through other forces in the cosmos. While other Indigenous communities, such as the Ixil in Quiché, have opted to pursue the route of legal justice, making space for pluriversal iterations of "justice" (the word sitting as a placeholder for incommensurable paths of reckoning) may help shrink the gap between national transitions and local worlds.

The recognition of pluriversality within processes of transitions, repair, and redress in the present has implications for the acceptance of pluri-nationality and Indigenous law in the future, a vision of the nation-state that has thus far been stifled because of its implications for Indigenous rights (Rocha, 2017). The cascade of authoritarian governments both before and during the Armed Conflict undermined the autonomy of Indigenous authorities and mechanisms of conflict resolution and restitution. The totalizing authority of the military during the Armed Conflict, expanded locally through the creation of paramilitary armed civilian patrollers in the 1970s, succeeded both in functionally eliminating any remnants of Indigenous self-governance and asserting the military as the actor tasked with resolving local conflicts using force and violence (Rocha, 2017). Sieder and Flores (2011, 2012) have explored the tumultuous relations

between positive and Indigenous law in Guatemala, particularly in terms of attempts at coordination between parallel legal systems in the wake of the Peace Accords and the Agreement on the Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples[16] adopted as part of the Guatemala constitution in 1995. Given the systematic attacks on Indigenous authorities, cultures, and communities (CEH, 1999) and the cooptation and manipulation of Indigenous principles by the military to justifying their violent practices (Viaene, 2010, p. 295), Sieder and Flores (2011) noted the challenges to resuscitating the autonomy of Indigenous authorities after the Armed Conflict:

> Con anterioridad, las autoridades indígenas comunales resolvían disputas sobre tierras, herencias, conflictos intrafamiliares u otros problemas locales. Sin embargo, la violencia contrainsurgente dejó a las personas sin mecanismos pacíficos y culturalmente apropiados para regular su coexistencia.[17] (p. 27)

The resurgence of Mayan nationalism and cultural movements (Del Valle Escalante, 2009) in the post-Armed Conflict period combined with international initiatives to bolster Indigenous authorities (Rocha, 2017) and the fragility of state institutions at the local level has cultivated increased collaboration between Indigenous and positive justice authorities (Sieder and Flores, 2011). Even the informational website for the Ministerio Público (MP, Prosecutor's Office) includes seeking help from Indigenous authorities as one of the three options for victims of a crime, the other two being reporting the crime to the MP and seeking support from a network of civil society organizations.[18]

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[16] The text in English for the Agreement can be found here: https://ucdpged.uu.se/peaceagreements/fulltext/Gua%2019950331.pdf

[17] Translation: In the past, Indigenous community authorities resolved disputes over land, inheritance, intrafamily conflicts, and other local issues. However, counterinsurgency violence left people without peaceful and culturally appropriate mechanisms to regulate their coexistence.

[18] See: https://ayuda.gt/p/acercate-a-las-autoridades-indigenas

Applying decolonial thinking to transitional justice shifts the vision of society "in transition," as Park suggests, away from the failed promises of the liberal nation-states, and towards plurinationality, as Ecuador and Bolivia have done. Moreover, a realignment of the goals of transitional justice towards the self-determination of Indigenous peoples (and the resulting rights it affords them) also shifts the framing of educational initiatives away from citizenship formation and the inculcation of democratic rights and responsibilities (a common coupling in Guatemalan classrooms). This dissertation aims to explore the pedagogical possibilities of how shifting away from the nation-state and citizenship formation and towards relational ontologies and epistemologies might invite alternate narratives, memories, and artifacts of the past into learning spaces as teachers and their students consider alternate futures. While the current prospects of plurinationality in Guatemala remain challenging to say the least in this moment, teachers can plant the seeds of alternate worlds with their families, students, and communities, catalyzing the unlearning of colonial/imperial habits of mind and heart (Zembylas, 2024) and relearning of relational ways of reading the past into the present towards the future.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework

First Swatch …

An extension of the *diplomado* process, the Instituto Internacional de Aprendizaje para la Reconciliación Social[19] (IIARS) coordinated a retreat on the practices of Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) with students of participating teachers. Conceived as an endeavor to help students situate the problems of the present in the violences of colonial continuities, the retreat included a visit the ruins of Iximché, the capital of the Kaqchikel Mayan kingdom from 1470 until it was abandoned in 1527 under threat of Spanish invasion. I had accompanied a group of students from *tercer básico* in Cunén, the students of some of my focal teachers, as they toured the site with the only female guide, a Kaqchikel woman with a commanding presence and clear vision of her role with the young people seated before her. Many of her colleagues curated what I would describe as an informative encounter with the space, which I gathered as snippets of their narratives fell within earshot when groups briefly intersected or overlapped as we were threaded through the space. They tended to narrate what each space was used for and by whom, and how the space, its organization around the seven directions, and ceremonial uses reflected Mayan cosmology. Conversely, our guide wove all of the above into an upheaval of the stories of the past and colonized identities they - she and the students - had inherited. Her tour engaged with the politics of memory (Brito, González Enríquez & Aguilar Fernández, 2001), asking

[19] The organization rarely uses its full name except for official documents given the rejection by much of the human rights community to the concept and discourse of reconciliation. In workshops, IIARS staff members advised me not to use the full name because people could react negatively. Though frequently used in transitional justice projects, the concept of reconciliation implies a prior moment of conciliation, an ahistorical assumption given the history of colonial domination, slavery, and brutal repression of Indigenous populations in Guatemala. Moreover, the National Reconciliation Law signed into law as part of the negotiations of the Peace Accords allowed for limited immunity for crimes committed during the Armed Conflict, with the exception of forced disappearances, torture and genocide, and crimes without a statute of limitations. The law allowed members of the guerrilla to re-enter society, enraging those in the military and political right, and the immunity granted for all but the worst of crimes made the notion of reconciliation a mockery and synonym for impunity (Popkin, 1996).

students to question the silences in their education and why they had been deprived of the richness of the wisdom in mathematics, astrometry, and writing of their ancestors. As we gathered, seated in a circle in grass at the center of the site, excavated mounds encircling us, she asked the students to remember and honor their Mayan grandmothers, and not the Spanish grandfathers who raped them.

Second Swatch …

Beckoned by the aroma of incense and pom that had begun to disperse through the encampment as the sun fell behind the hills in Técpan, the students, teachers and retreat facilitators trickled towards the early flames of a ceremonial fire growing under the watchful eyes of the *aj'q'ij,* Mayan spiritual guides, also called counters of time (Oxom, 2022). As the ceremony began, and the *aj'q'ij* moved from their introduction in Spanish to an invocation in Kaqchikel, I looked around the circle at the different expressions from students lit up by the flickers in the flames. The older students with whom I had traversed Iximché sat in rapt attention to my left. On the other side of the circle, I noticed some movement, as several of the Cunén teachers were pulled away from the ceremony by students. As one of the organizers of the event, I went to see if they needed anything or if there was a problem. I was met with a hint of frustration and annoyance from Daniel, a K'iche' teacher participating in the *diplomado,* and panic and tears from several of the younger students from *primer básico*, who might have been 13 or 14 years old, all of whom identify as Indigenous. Their pastor had told them that Mayan ceremonies and spirituality were sinful and the work of the devil, and they expressed worry that if they participated, they would be going to hell. Given that the students were not obligated to participate, and detecting Daniel's desire to participate in the ceremony, I brought the students into a nearby meeting room where they could be supervised. I had assumed that once away from

the ceremony, their emotions would quiet and they would occupy themselves with other activities or games. Instead, they remained huddled together whispering among themselves, seated on the floor in lament and fear as the smells of the fire continued to waft into the room.

Discomforting Co-presences and Ecologies of Knowledge

The tensions and conflicts in the enactments of Indigeneity, woven into the pressures of religious and socio-political identities, create fault lines in the recognition of the pluriverse and the articulation of multiplicity in knowing and being in spaces of learning (López López, 2017). The affective proximity and intensities of religious and home learning, when compared to the muted messaging from educational and political institutions, can overshadow encounters with alternative narratives, discourses, and forms of inquiry. Yet, despite resistance to recognition of Indigenous cosmologies by teachers, students, and facilitators, I observed an ecology of knowledges (Santos, 2009) in the *diplomado* process nonetheless, where the multiplicities of frames and worlds enacted by a diverse group of facilitators grew in relation to the syncretic, pluriversal memories, stories, and ways of knowing introduced by the teacher participants.

The analysis and writing of the dissertation has taken the recognition of the pluriverse (Escobar, 2012) and enactments of the ecology of knowledge (Santos, 2009) as ontological and epistemological anchors for how I have read, interacted with, and written about my research. My research performance straddles processes of *walking with* educators (Sundberg, 2014) guided by the principles of Zapatismo's "insurgent political imagination" (p. 39) and confrontations with epistemological blindness (Gaitán-Barrera & Azeez, 2015; Santos, 2009; Taressa, 2023) in the process of unlearning imperial logics and affectivities (Andreotti, 2010; Sundberg, 2014; Zembylas, 2024).

The conceptualization of an ecology of knowledge (Santos, 2009) provides a framework for imagining and enacting practices of "sustituyendo monoculturas por ecológias"[20] (p. 113), calling into question the singular, hegemonic logics of scientific rigor, while opening up space for the "identificación de otros saberes y de otros criterios de rigor que operan creíblemente en las prácticas sociales"[21] (p. 114). Within an ecology of knowledges, the idea of general wisdom or general ignorance is discarded, and instead Santos posits that "todo ignorancia es ignorancia de un cierto saber y todo saber es la superación de una ignorancia particular"[22] (p. 114). An ecology of knowledge endeavors to create spaces for horizontal relationships between Western scientific knowledge and its protagonists and other forms of knowledge and those who voice it, with the aim of creating:

> "igualdad de oportunidades" a las diferentes formas de saber envueltas en disputas epistemológicas cada vez más amplias, buscando la maximización de sus respectivas contribuciones a la construcción de 'otro mundo posible', o sea, de una sociedad más justa y más democrática, así como una sociedad más equilibrada en sus relaciones con la naturaleza.[23] (Santos, 2009, p. 116)

The goal is not to accept all knowledge as valid, but to broaden the frame and shift the criteria for which ways of knowing, inquiring, and learning are considered valid and, in this case, worthy as anchors for analyzing the past into the present and formulating responses to violence and injustice. Addressing the epistemic violence of coloniality/modernity serves as a means to

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[20] Translation: replacing monocultures with ecologies

[21] Translation: identification of other knowledge and other criteria of rigor that operate credibly in social practices

[22] Translation: All ignorance is ignorance of a certain knowledge and all knowledge is the overcoming of a particular ignorance.

[23] Translation: "equal opportunities" to the different forms of knowledge involved in increasingly broad epistemological disputes, seeking to maximize their respective contributions to the construction of 'another possible world', that is, a more just and more democratic society, as well as a society more balanced in its relations with nature.

disrupt the coloniality of power, with an intention to transcend the discursive realm and enable material changes.

My work recognizes the destructive, “abyssal” (Santos, 2009) effects of the globalization of Western epistemologies, and follows Santos, Nunes and Meneses (2007) in “proposing an alternative epistemology that, far from refusing science, place the latter in the context of the diversity of knowledges existing in contemporary societies” (p. xx). It follows in the path of those who enact and “exemplify the promises, possibilities, and difficulties of bringing together and staging dialogues and alliances between different forms of knowledge, cultures, and cosmologies in response to different forms of oppression that enact the coloniality of knowledge and power (Santos, Nunes & Meneses, 2007, p.xlv). Based on the assertion that “global social justice is not possible without global cognitive justice” (Santos, Nunes & Meneses, 2007, p.xlix), the dissertation endeavors to enact an ecology of knowledges through moves in the analysis process to pay attention to pluriversal elements in the data and in the writing to bring Indigenous cosmologies and knowledges into conversation with Western binary and individual-centered logics.

In *Epistemologies of the South: The Reinvention of Knowledge and Social Emancipation*, Santos (2009, p 195-196) poses a set of questions to guide the collective work of creating and putting ecologies of knowledges into practice. Posited as signposts for inquiry, the questions invite reflection and investigation about 1) how different knowledges and their configurations might get identified and distinguished from one another, 2) what structures of relations might enable inquiry into the “incommensurabilidad, incompatibilidad, contradicción, y complementariedad”[24] (Santos, 2009, p. 195) of diverse knowledges and open possibilities for

[24] Translation: incommensurability, incompatibility, contradiction, and complementarity

translation across difference, and 3) how can the perspectives and knowledges of the oppressed get translated into "real world" interventions that do not reproduce the systems of oppression and domination that an ecology of knowledge aims to upend? He ends by posing a question specifically for educators: "¿cuál sería el impacto de una concepción postabismal del saber (como una ecología de saberes) sobre nuestras instituciones educativas y centros de investigación?"[25] (Santos, 2009, p. 196). How might places of learning, and in particular schools when are steeped in pernicious, colonial patterns of social relations and knowledge production, reimagine themselves in opposition to a colonial grammar of schooling (Tyack & Cuban, 1995) and invite a "constellation of knowledges" (Santos, Nunes & Meneses, 2007, p. xlviii) into the classroom?

The conceptualization of an ecology of knowledges, and attention to the socio-political colonial relations of knowledge it seeks to challenge, functions in this research endeavor as a lens through which to read, listen, and analyze the research data, as a tool for imagining different ways of knowing and being in learning places, and as a model for the writing practice that enacts a dialogue between diverse knowledges realities. It has proven a critical catalyst for an iterative process of remedying "la incapacidad para reconocer formas alternativas de conocimiento y para interrelacionarse con ellas, desde el inicio, en términos de igualdad"[26] (Santos, 2009, p. 115). The difficult practice of constructing an ecology of knowledges entails a process of translation as knowledge moves and crosses borders, both symbolic and territorial (Santos, 2009; Costa, 2020), without explaining difference away (Verran, 2015) by "translat[ing] difference back to their image and thus cancel the difference" (de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018, p. 7).

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[25] Translation: What would be the impact of a post-abysmal conception of knowledge (as an ecology of knowledge) on our educational institutions and research centers?
[26] Translation: the inability to recognize alternative forms of knowledge and to interact with them, from the outset, on equal terms

Enacting an ecology of knowledges takes inspiration from Zapatista communities, who "have dialogued and 'epistemologized' with people in the hard sciences, bringing them together to issue a challenge: celebrating the two consciousnesses" (Intzín, 2021b, Fields of Cultural Knowledges section), allowing those worlds relegated into the margins, discarded as irrational or undisciplined, to equally sit in conversation with Western epistemologies (Santos, 2007). Grounding his articulation in Mayan cosmologies, Intzín (2015) calls for spaces to:

> Compartir la palabra cosechada y charlada en el camino, en la milpa, en la comunidad, en la ermita, en la fiesta… Compartir las filosofías de vida, los saberes del corazón, las constelaciones del pensamiento de nuestras madres-padres, el arco iris de saberes son los principios de nuestro andar e incursionamiento en estos espacios. Tomamos en cuenta, también, los destellos de luz que iluminan nuestro veredear en estos caminos, observando otras miradas, reconociendo otros pensamientos y sentires, y junto con esos resplandores construir otro mundo desde distintas lógicas y visiones.[27] (p. 77-78)

In the research practice and subsequent analysis and writing, the concept of an ecology of knowledge has grounded my analysis of the multiplicity of frameworks, epistemologies, and worlds curated by facilitators and enacted by educators, while also challenging me to put the literatures traversing cognitive and affective engagements with violent histories (outlined in Chapter 2) in conversation with relational ontologies (Blaser, 2013; Blaser & de la Cadena,

[27] Translation: Share the word harvested and conversed on the road, in the cornfields, in the community, in the chapel, at the party... Share philosophies of life, the knowledge of the heart, the constellations of the thoughts of our mothers-fathers; the rainbow of knowledge are the principles of our journey and incursion into these spaces. We also take into account the flashes of light that illuminate our wandering in these paths, observing other perspectives, recognizing other thoughts and feelings, and together with these gleams of light we build another world from different logics and visions.

2009; Escobar, 2012) that recognize interconnections that defy the Cartesian separation of thinking and feeling:

> In the ontologies of the Indigenous peoples of Abya Yala, these separations do not exist. The body is not separate from the spirit, nor is the mind from the body. That is why you pray by dancing and you dance by praying. The body is imbricated with the earth and connected in turn with the four directions of the universe, and with the sun, the moon, the water, and the wind. … This notion is the substance of the feeling-thinking-acting [*sentipensar-actuar*] of the Indigenous peoples of Abya Yala (Cariño & Montenegro, 2022, p. 552-553)

Sentipensando: Felt-Thinking of Knowledge, Learning, and Being

The research focused on the multiplicities in how educators engaged with difficult histories, paying attention to the intersections, overlaps, and smudges between affective, cognitive, and somatic learning, and (returning to one of the research questions) to the frameworks, experiences, memories and/or discourses that teachers draw upon during these learning encounters. Yet, the research question as posed does not explicitly acknowledge the pluriverse, nor the multiplicities of worlds creeping into the *diplomado.* As such, the writing of this dissertation pulls away from considering just frameworks and discourses, and draws on Mayan cosmologies and relational ontologies to explore that Khanna (2020) calls the *visceral:* "this embodied interface [that] confounds distinctions between thought and feeling, habits of mind and the habituated reflexes of the body, the ideological and the intuitive, the involuntary and the desired" (p. 2). My attention in the research process focused on the sensorial and affective elements of encounters with divergent, conflicting, controversial or otherwise disconcerting historical engagements with violence while *preguntando caminamos,* asking we

walked (Sunberg, 2014, p. 39) through and around historical inquiry. I draw on the literatures and practices of *sentipensando,* felt-thinking[28] to contingently describe and make sense of teachers' encounters with difficult histories and articulate decolonial moves for historical inquiry in contexts like Guatemala grappling with violent colonial continuities and tears in the social fabrics post-Armed Conflict.

Sentipensar is a concept brought into academic discourses by sociologist Orlando Far Borda, who in the 1970s collaborated with a collective of academics to buck the colonial binds of traditional research methodologies to live, work, and learn alongside coastal fishing communities in Colombia, and put into practice what they termed at the time *investigación militante*, militant research (Bonilla et al., 1972), which would come to be known as participatory action research (Robles Lomeli & Rappaport, 2018). Though never named, he attributes the concept to a fisherman with whom he was conducting research: "El sentipensante que aparece en mis libros, eso no inventé yo. … Se le ocurrió algún pescador que iba conmigo. Dijo, mire, nosotros sí en realidad creemos que actuamos con el corazón pero también empleamos la cabeza y cuando combinamos las dos cosas así somos sentipensante"[29] (Rodriguez Villasante, 2017). Though many cite Fars Borda for the term itself, definitively describing or defining the practice of *sentipensar* remains elusive, given the multiplicity of ways that it has been conceptually applied within decolonial literatures and/or connected to Indigenous relational ontologies and epistemologies.

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[28] I note that the hyphen is included for readability, though its presence reinforces Western binaries, and exposes the challenges of articulating Mayan cosmologies within Romance languages.
[29] Translation: The feeling-thinking that appears in my books, that was not invented by me. ... Some fisherman who was with me came up with it. He said, look, we do indeed believe that we act with the heart but we also use the head and when we combine the two things we are feeling-thinking.

A *sentipensante* approach has gained particular traction within social movements (Cariño & Montelongo González, 2022; Escobar, 2014; Botero, 2015) and as a pedagogical framework that can disrupt neoliberal, utilitarian, or standards-driven models that reinforce Western, colonial frameworks for knowledge production (Barone & Díaz, 2023; Cándida Moraes & de la Torre, 2002; Espinoza, 2020; Espinoza y Guerrero, 2021; Meschini, 2020; Rendón, 2009). Intzín and other Indigenous writers and collectives (Méndez Torres, López Intzín, Marcos & Osorio Hernández, 2013) have argued that the concept of *sentipensar* refers to the understanding within Mayan and other Indigenous cultures that thoughts, knowledges, and reflections pass through both the mind and the heart, with wisdom created by employing the heart and the mind, love and reason: "Sentipensamos para sentisaber, por lo tanto somos sentipensantes" (Intzín, 2015, p. 184). With knowledges, reflections, and thoughts emanating from and passing through the heart as well as the mind, Intzín (2015) argues that the enactment of "el sentir-pensar y el sentir-saber" (the feel-think and the feel-know) within Mayan cosmologies signifies a belonging otherwise that sits outside of Western ontologies (p.184). It speaks to the ability and actions of all beings, human and non-human, to feel-think their actions, knowledges, and movements.

Excavating the Pluriversal

My research attends to the interactions between relational and Western ontologies in the work with educators, while enacting an analysis that explores the (in)commensurability of reading the data through relational felt-thinking alongside affective epistemologies, grounded in Ahmed's (2015) writing on sticky feelings and Berlant's (2011) theorizing of the cruelty of optimistic affective attachments. Following Sundberg (2014), I find disconcerting the silences in the scholarship on affect theory, post-humanism, and the new materialisms around Indigenous relational ontologies that, "treat Anglo-European theory as the only body of work relevant to

ontological questions about nature and culture… [These] texts enact universalizing claims, and as a consequence, reproduce colonial ways of knowing and being by further subordinating other ontologies" (p. 42). This work centers decolonial, Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies, while putting them in conversation with Berlant and Ahmad to explore alternate approximations of teachers' sticky attachments to particular ways of remembering and making sense of the past.

While I have continued to spend time with many of the epistemological travel partners whose words and theories I brought with me into the research process, they now must give space and converse with Indigenous scholars, feminist collectives, sacred Mayan texts, the scripts of autochthonous dances, and other pluriversal sources of knowledge that circulate and inform spaces of learning, research, inquiry and analysis. Yet, as Guatemalan anthropologist Aura Cumes (2009) argued in reference to legal pluralism and the implementation of Mayan law, the assumption of some pure, uncontaminated, or homogeneous idea of Indigenous epistemologies has risks. She outlined the continuities in the violences of the coloniality of gender that continue to differentially mark the resolution of conflicts and the punishments doled out by Indigenous authorities, particularly in cases related to "domestic disputes" or violence against women (though these cases technically should get referred to the Prosecutor's Office). The mark of coloniality / modernity precludes any pure representation or resuscitation of ancestral knowledges.

Their vestiges have traversed contested terrains of sublimation and resistance, defiantly surviving through the careful transmission of secrets across generations and the appropriation of the tools of the colonizers as needed. The sacred, foundational text called the *Popol Vuh* (2007), or the "Book of the Community," colloquially called the Mayan Bible, was created in secret in 1524 by three young K'iche'' scribes or "framers of the word" who were between fourteen to

eighteen years old in defiance of the attempted extermination of their reality, culture, and community by Spanish conquistadors (Keme, 2021). The Spanish priests who had kidnapped, shamed, and attempted to indoctrinate these young people and scores of their peers underestimated their resilience: “The contents of the *Popul Wuj* reveal the K'iche'' authors' sagacity and creativity in their struggle to defend the memories, knowledge, and values of their people tenaciously” (Keme, 2021, p. 3). Recognizing the violent closure of spaces to enact and transmit Mayan cosmologies, they took pen to parchment and created “the text as an *ilb'al* (instrument of sight) by which the reader may “envision” the thoughts and actions of the gods and sacred ancestors from the beginning of time and into the future” (Christenson, 2007, p. 11).

I center this foundational text in how I conceptually framed my analysis because returning to it has has helped illuminate for me the pluriverse in the research space and recognize Mayan cosmologies and the poetics of resistance (Keme, 2021) woven into discussions by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators. Yet, rarely did the appearances of relational ontologies get named or acknowledged as such by participants; instead, the non-human elements made their presence known anonymously, so as to avoid the guilt by association with the sinful *brujería* (witchcraft) of Indigenous spiritual practices. Chapter 6 in particular explores the patchwork of presences of ontological alternity within the research and inquiry spaces, and the implications of their recognition for curating situated historical inquiry with educators.

The temporal distance between the work with the teachers and the writing of this dissertation has allowed the pluriversal moments I did not understand or recognize in the moment to germinate. Over the intervening years, I have returned in stops and starts to the data, and to my memories and stories of the data (Peach, 2024). Anchoring my analysis in decolonial thinking and spending time with those thinking and writing (about) the ecology of knowledge

and the pluriverse has fostered an iterative analysis of both the stories in the data and my methodological memories, documented in field notes, memos, sprints, recordings of musing on my phone, and early version of these chapters. In addition to returns to the voices of the teachers, my stories of the data have become data themselves, evidence of the process of recognizing the pluriverse and translating the multiplicity of worlds, particularly when walking through the contested terrain of memories and histories of violence and atrocity (Peach, 2024). As the work of epistemological unlearning and relearning is on-going, I consider this production a tenuous resting place, situated in the contingencies of the constellation of knowledges in circulation in the research and that I have gathered in this moment to quilt this writing.

Chapter 5: Methodology and Methods

Walking Alongside the Loom of Historical/Mnemonic Weaving

When I came (back) to Guatemala in 2014, I found myself on the radio. Radio studios are a familiar space for me, growing up with a stepmother who ran a radio news company and would throw me on the radio to discuss or debate some current event with a talk show host (generally both male and Republican) for a local radio station from Montana or Guam. She had sent me out to cover an event on Capital Hill and produce a bit many times before. So I admit when a new acquaintance asked me to play a small role in a radionovela I was a little excited. But when he sent me the script, I was a bit confused. I had one line.

Doña Toya (Se escuchan sonidos de puertas)

Pues si señorita, usted decide, es una habitación amplia y con buena luz. Usted me dice si se queda con nosotros.

Extranjera

Oh, necesito un espacio justo justo como éste.

I was the *extranjera*, the foreigner, asking for a room from Doña Toya. I went to the studio to do the recording nonetheless, curious to learn about the larger project that these two lines lived within. When I got there, I think they took pity on me that I had come all this way to only read a line, so they wrote a few more for me on the spot - which did not leave the studio, and survive in my Whatsapp archive, which I was shocked to find still contained the excerpt above. I had only seen my line before I arrived, but once I got in the sound booth, they handed me the page from the larger script, and I realized why they had cast me for the role. Upon reading what followed my small scene, an uncomfortable laugh crept out. It was the type of laugh that erupts from that pointed jab of embarrassment or shame, one where I cover my face

for a moment. In the script, after the *extranjera* inquires about a room for rent and leaves the scene, Doña Toya, the landlady, wonders out loud if she is another foreigner that has come to study them and write her thesis.

I am one of many *extranjeras* that traipse through Guatemala, embed themselves in local communities, find a favorite tortillería, and perform research. In fact, I recently found out that I am upholding family "tradition" in that my grandfather, who was a professor of education at Memphis State, traveled to Guatemala in 1968 to set up an exchange program and advise the still-standing Colegio Maya on how it might add Grades 9-12 ("Bound for Guatemala," 1968). Though I have lived, studied, and worked in Guatemala for over a decade by the writing of this dissertation, my work contends with long history of outsider storytelling with Euro-Western facing citational chains that mark the pages of publications worldwide, but often fail to make their way back to the communities who contributed to the research. Echoing Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) arguments about the harmful nature of extractive research practices implemented by Western academia, Batz (2019) described the critiques by Ixil leaders in Guatemala of the many foreign researchers who come to Guatemala to conduct field work, gather their research data and leave, publishing overly-theoretical articles and books in English that neither make their way back to the communities where they worked, nor would the products be of much use if they did (p. 105-107). Indeed, there have been so many of us over the years that we have become a trope for Guatemalan artists and activists.

The process of analyzing and writing has entailed a dialogic engagement with the literatures that informed how I came to the research and a process of giving up their primacy as I have narratively quilted the discussions of my encounters with teachers and teacher educators. Both my research engagements with teachers and the process of returning to the archives of that

research has contended with a growing citational and epistemological upheaval as I confronted the damaging effects of thinking primarily with theories from the Global North, despite intentions to think otherwise. For the dissertation, I have sought to write and create in the ecology of knowledges (Santos, 2009) as I pulled together multiple threads from the pluriverse of ways of knowing-being-feeling (Escobar, 2014) and overlap, (un)stitch, and bind together epistemic and ontological multiplicities informed by Indigenous and particularly Mayan researchers, philosophers, and educators to *sentir-pensar* (feel-think) (Intzín, 2015; Escobar, 2014) how the educators and I encountered and grappled with Guatemala's violent history.

While the research methods included practices of traditional qualitative research, such as interviews, collaborative inquiry, and participant observation, I also sought to infuse the work with decolonial practices of *walking alongside* (Sundberg, 2014) teachers and facilitators as we negotiated and transversed the relational intersections, meandering, and entanglements of epistemic pluralities in learning spaces. As Tuck and Yang (2019) argue:

> Indigenous research methods are distinct from other research methods not because they are so vastly different—many Indigenous methods include interviews, focus groups, surveys, archival research, and other tried-and-true methods of social science—but because of the theories that guide them. (p. xi)

The notion of *walking alongside* Indigenous communities was articulated by Sundberg (2014) based on her work with Zapatista communities as a challenge to the Eurocentric work of geographers who have leaned into the posthumanist turn, centering Anglo-European thinkers without acknowledging Indigenous epistemologies which have long contemplated the agency and interactions between human and non-human entities. She outlined several core practices for decolonizing inquiry that support the disruption of asymmetrical power relations in the

production of knowledge: "locating the self, learning to learn, and *walking with*" (Sundberg, 2014, p. 41, author's emphasis).

The process of what Sundberg (2014) calls *locating the self* (p. 41) involves "locating our body-knowledge in relation to the existing path we know and walk" (p. 39), while doing the homework of *unlearning* (Andreotti, 2010; Sundberg, 2014). The "homework" (Spivak, 1990) of identifying my location has entailed discomforting self-reflexivities (Andreotti, 2011) and an on-going confrontation with my epistemological and ontological assumptions and exploration of the silence and elision of Indigenous and/or feminist contemporaries (Todd, 2016; Grosfoguel, 2018). I have had to confront the limitations of the *translation* (Costa de Lima) and application of affect theory - recognizing that the term implies a conceptual assemblage, more than a coherent, unified theoretical framework (Seigworth & Pedwell, 2023) - to my research, given its erasure of parallel philosophical articulations from Abya Yala.[30] The unlearning also meant paying attention and pivoting away from "moves to innocence" that both I and the educators I worked with employed to placate feelings of guilt, avoid the material realities of asymmetric relations of power, and pursue more comfortable forms of social change (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Mignolo (2011) insists that for those who benefit from the privileges of the body/politic of modernity/coloniality who are attempting to engage in decolonial work, "for a white European body to think decolonially means to give; to give in a parallel way to the way a body of colour formed in colonial histories has to give if that body wants to inhabit postmodern and poststructuralist theories" (Mignolo, 2011, p. 280). Given the multiply situated literatures that

[30] "Abya Yala is a term used to refer to the American continent. Its origin can be traced back to the time before European colonization. It is a word from the Kuna language which means "land in its full maturity" or "land of vital blood". Nowadays, the term is widely used by Indigenous movements across the region." (Roth, Otero Quezada & De Sousa Lima, 2024, p. 9)

informed how I came to spaces of teacher learning and inquiry of the past, the practice of research and analysis has grappled with the tensions of perceiving and unlearning the damaging effects of colonial practices of speaking, learning, and being that haunted my work with facilitators and teachers. The process has been one of giving, particularly in terms of giving up the comforts of Anglo-European literatures that underpin extractivist methodologies that have been normalized as research, and investing in decolonial research theories that prioritize "relational validity" and the accountability and obligations of researchers to the communities they work with (Tuck & Yang, 2019, p. xi) and non-metaphorical reparation of historical damages inflicted by those who come to study the subaltern Other (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

I also invite my Anglophone readers to give a bit as well; the decision to place transcriptions of participants' words and some of the scholarship in Spanish into the body of the text and translations in the footnotes reflects the intention to invite the non-Spanish speaking readers to experience the disjunctures and discomforts of working between languages, and a refusal to fully tame the words spoken by participants for the ease of the Anglophone reader. The movement between languages, or *plurilanguaging* (Mignolo, 2003), follows Anzaldua's (1999) "deliberate practice of speaking in tongues / multiple registers to defy the reader's colonial attempt to (textually) master subaltern subjects" (Costa, 2019, p. 179). I also recognize what gets lost in my translations. Though I am interpreting and framing what participants say in my writing in myriad ways, I assert the importance of centering the words spoken in Spanish over my translation.

The following sections outline several conceptual anchors that have informed my analytical approach and its citational prioritization of voices in the "epistemological, nongeographical South," which "concern the production and validation of knowledges anchored

in the experiences of resistance of all those social groups that have systematically suffered injustice, oppression, and destruction caused by capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy" (Santos, 2018, p.1). As (un)method, I have endeavored to unravel myself from the colonial confines of coding and traditional qualitative methods (St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014; St. Pierre, 2019), and taken up *quilting* (Flannery, 2001; Ortega et al., 2023; Kelsch, 2012) as a decolonial practice of epistemological *encuentro* (encounter) that allows me to continue to walk alongside educators as I analyze and narrativize the complex interactions between and translations of epistemologies of the North and South within the learning spaces of the research. The analytical practice of quilting endeavors to performatize an *ecology of knowledges* (Santos, 2009), explore the *pluriverse* (Escobar, 2018b) of epistemologies and cosmologies being stitched together and torn at the seams as teachers took up Guatemala's violent past, and trouble the asymmetrical, power-laden patchwork of knowledges in *translation* (Costa, 201) in our inquiry efforts.

Contextualizing the Research Project

The research study was situated in Guatemala, a country whose attempts to confront the hauntings of colonization, civil war, and genocide must contend with the immediacies of high levels of interpersonal violence, judicial dysfunction and impunity, and corruption at both the local and national levels (Adams, 2017; Benson, Fischer & Thomas, 2008; Brands, 2011; McAllister & Nelson, 2013). From 1960 to 1996, Guatemala endured one of the most brutal civil wars in Latin America's history, with over 200,000 people killed by the time the Peace Accords were signed, of which 83% identified as Mayan (CEH, 1999). The geo-politics of the Cold War played a significant role in the escalation and perpetuation of the conflict. The United States government catalyzed political upheaval in Guatemala at the behest of the United Fruit Company with its support of a military coup in 1954 against democratically elected President

Jacobo Árevalo, who had begun to implement agrarian reforms and other left-leaning policies that threatened US economic interests (Cullather, 1999; Jones & Bucheli, 2005). Moreover, the leftist ideologies adopted by some of the guerrilla movements in the 1960s further placed Guatemala in the crosshairs of larger geo-political conflicts. With tacit and explicit US support, the regimes that followed the 1954 coup implemented a one-sided, large-scale counter-insurgency campaign that systemically employed forced disappearance, massacre, terror and atrocity to eliminate opposition forces and those labeled as their supporters (CEH, 1999; Immerman, 1982). The peak of the violence was seen under General Efraín Ríos Montt's 17-month brutal regime in the early 1980s, which employed a scorched earth approach to eliminate Indigenous support for the guerrilla movement, ramping up to new levels the use of forced displacement, public massacres by the armed forces and/or those forcibly conscripted into civil patrols, and the systematic use of rape as a tool of war (Sanford, 2003).

I first came to Guatemala in 2003 as an election observer with the Guatemalan Human Rights Commission when General Efrain Rios Montt decided to run for president nearly 20 years after leaving power. Though he forged an electoral campaign on a platform riddled with veiled threats and bolstered with handouts to the poor, he did not win the election. Instead in 2012, the former dictator was charged and then later found guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity, though the ruling was shortly overturned for politically motivated technical reasons. Nonetheless, the case was significant in that it was the first time a domestic court found its own former head of state guilty of genocide (McDonald, 2013).

When I first arrived in Guatemala in 2003, I was embedded in Guatemala's complex web of human rights organizations, which meant that I tended to read the problems of the present through the lens of the sustained campaigns of violence and fear wrought during 36 years of

conflict. The human rights movement has in many ways leveraged international human rights regimes and discourses that emerged in the wake of the Second World War to pursue judicial means of holding the authors and perpetrators of these human rights violations accountable and transitioning to democratic forms of governance. However, since I began to collaborate with the civil society organization, el *Instituto Internacional de Aprendizaje para la Reconciliación Social* (IIARS), I have been challenged to take up what Craps (2013) has called a postcolonial approach to witnessing that contextualizes events of violence within longer colonial histories and examines both the trauma of particular events and of everyday oppression and structural violence. Since its founding in 2007, IIARS only began to broach the history of the Armed Conflict after spending years teaching the larger history of ethnic relations in Guatemala that created the conditions for genocide against Indigenous populations during the 1980s. The legacies of Spanish colonial rule, which spanned from Pedro de Alvarado's 1524 conquest until the region's independence from Spain in 1821, and the racial demarcations it codified continue to seep into Guatemala's present. Tensions between conservative land-owning and liberal political elites subsequent to independence did little to immediately disrupt the practices of indentured servitude and racialized forms of citizenship and state-building. Martínez Pelaez (1970/2009) has argued that the persistent discourses and structures that position Indigenous populations as inferior and even subservient to *Ladinos*[31], a term taken up in Guatemala to describe mestizo or mixed-race persons, represent "colonial products" that were reinforced by the limited and exclusionary forms of citizenship articulated in post-independence constitutions

[31] The term *Ladino* in Guatemala is a complex socio-cultural category that refers to Guatemalans who are not Indigenous, but may have mixed heritage. While the definition makes it appear synonymous with the term *Mestizo,* in practice has a distinctly anti-Indigenous connotation. The growing use of the term *Mestizo* to self-identify instead of *Ladino* can mark a political disposition to recognize and not erase Indigenous ancestors. The differentiation between Indigenous and *Ladino* identities has historically framed discriminatory practices and discourses (Vásquez, 2003).

(Instituto Internacional de Aprendizaje para la Reconciliación Social [IIARS], 2011). What Quijano (2008) termed the "coloniality of power" to describe the intersection of racial difference and residually exploitative conditions of labor continues to characterize the economic and political structures in Guatemala that reinforce ethnic and racial inequality and cater to the needs to global neoliberal economic interests (Doughterty & Rubin, 2016).

These colonial configurations shape contemporary schooling in Guatemala, reinforcing Eurocentric worldviews and epistemologies to the exclusion of Indigenous languages, identities, and ways of knowing (Del Valle Escalante, 2009; Rubin, 2016). Indeed, the first draft of the revised social studies curricular standards in Guatemala eliminated any pre-colonial history from the curriculum, and began the country's history with the Spanish conquest. One teacher I interviewed as part of my pilot study in 2016 lamented that Spanish had not arrived earlier and been more successful in stamping out the country's primitive ways.

The postwar period in Guatemala has seen the proliferation of education projects that strive to create a "culture of peace," a more sanitized means of teaching the Armed Conflict that shifts the focus from examining the legacies of war to building effective citizens for the future (Oglesby, 2007a). While some educators offer students opportunities to explore outside of the pernicious narrative of the conflict as a battle between "two devils," many students still fail to encounter critical historical analyses in their classrooms that many claim are needed to make sense of the complex political, economic, and social issues before them (Bellino, 2014; Barton & McCully, 2010). Gradual openings in the public sphere have allowed taboo topics such as human rights and the country's 36-year Armed Conflict to slowly find their way into the classroom as teachers endeavor to introduce controversial topics from the national standards into their curriculum.

The organization IIARS has been at the forefront of developing training opportunities to help in-service teachers grapple with these difficult issues with their students and employ pedagogical strategies that cultivate dialogue and problem solving. I have been involved with this organization since I arrived in Guatemala, but more intensively so during the 2017 school year when I conducted my pilot research about how social studies teachers took up and/or resisted new learnings introduced during teacher training workshops organized by the Ministry of Education and facilitated by IIARS. I conducted participant observation and group and individual interviews with teacher participants to explore the frames, discourses, and memories that they brought into the training space. The teacher training project represented an attempt to disrupt patriotic versions of civic education that emphasize an unquestioning love of country and participation as the individual enactment of values. Instead, it adopted a rights-based approach to citizenship education that encouraged dialogue and deliberation in the classroom about historical controversies and current social problems.

The dissertation research was deeply informed by my research interactions with teachers and IIARS staff members during the pilot study, but also by the additional ways that I have endeavored to contribute to the organization's work. Per requests from IIARS staff, I facilitated participatory photography workshops with teachers and students during a retreat in October 2015, helped design a teacher observation and coaching protocol, edited and revised the Citizenship Formation teaching guides that accompanied the workshops from the pilot research, and wrote and edited various funding proposals. In addition, I collaborated on a research project with the IIARS staff member charged with curating the organization's interactive exhibition called *Why are we the way we are?* in which we explore the spatial contours of the pedagogical curation of Guatemala's history of ethnic relations. These multi-layered engagements have

challenged me to pay attention to elements that sit at the edges of my intelligibility and comfort. They have demanded I expand the historical framing of this project to see beyond the massacres and acts of genocide committed during the 1980s, and pay attention to the complex historical legacies of racially delineated social hierarchies, political violence, and land dispossession that both spurred multiple waves of armed resistance and set the stage for the institutionalization of violence against Mayans as the internal enemy during the Armed Conflict (Epe & Kepfer, 2014).

Preparing teachers to teach contested histories and controversial issues in Guatemala demands attention to the complexities of a diverse, segregated, and often polarized national community that struggles with the very notion of democracy. Despite the official signing of the peace accords over 20 years ago, Guatemala has remained plagued by chronic violence, making use of the term “post-conflict” an inappropriate descriptor for the unstable state of affairs that have characterized social and political relations in the country. Given the fragility of state institutions and judicial practices, the chaotic proliferation of parallel powers, and widespread violence and impunity, investment in active democratic citizenship remained muted among the teachers I worked with during the pilot study. A culture of violence and fear remains the norm, shrinking social relationships and forcing communities into insularity (Adams, 2017). Nonetheless, teachers are expected by families, students, and educational officials to counter the rising tide of youth violence and engender a sense of belonging that might foster greater engagement with the democratic enterprise (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2009). While various scholars have explored how young people respond to and/or engage with past and present violence during the post-war period in Guatemala (Bellino, 2014; Kurtenbach, 2014; Winton, 2004; Rubin, 2016), my research focuses on teachers as complex, social subjects negotiating the messy interface of peace and violence with young people.

Research about how teachers broach difficult histories and negotiate the uncertainties and discomforts of teaching and learning about trauma, violence, and injustice could be situated in any country or community. Yet, what makes teaching and learning about the past complicated for teachers depends on a complex constellation of contextual and situated factors. A conversation about teaching about colonial violence, genocide, and state-sponsored terror in Guatemala must contend with the tensions around teaching the violent past in the midst of a violent present. It must consider how the weight of the "depoliticized" violence enacted by gangs, narcos, and other non-state actors in the present (Epe & Kepfer, 2014; Levenson, 2013; Smyth, 2011) might inform how teachers negotiate the discomforts and uncertainties of learning about contested histories and dangerous memories. Moreover, it also must meddle in the complex, fragmented, and polarized discourses about indigeneity, collective identity, and difference that silhouette the country's histories of violence and exclusion.

Research Embedded in a Teacher Professional Development Program

The research activities centered around the in-person learning experiences of a cohort of primary and secondary teachers in the department (province) of Quiché in 2018, who participated in a year-long *diplomado*, a professional development course ending in certification. Though the intended target audience was social studies teachers, several of the secondary teachers, including some of the focal participants taught other subjects, such as natural sciences, art, or K'iche' language, but they were offered the opportunity to join the course when the social studies teacher in their school declined to participate. Though the group started with about 57 participants, 49 teachers from four municipalities in Quiché completed the program: 11 from Cunén, 13 from Pachalum, 15 from Patzité, and 10 from Santa Cruz de Quiché. The majority (32 teachers) were primary school teachers, while the remaining 17 were secondary school teachers

(13 taught *básico*, 7th to 9th grade, and five taught *diversificado*, 10th and 11th grade). The group was split evenly by gender: 24 women and 25 men.

As the region most impacted by the war, Quiché has received significant support from international organizations and nonprofits, saturating certain populations with trainings, projects, and opportunities beyond what they can manage beyond their full-time work. With financial support from the German aid organization (GIZ) and administrative support from the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), IIARS implemented a blended learning course focused on bolstering the teaching of the state-mandated Citizenship Formation course, formed based on recommendations from the CEH to include "la enseñanza de la memoria histórica, los derechos humanos y los principios y valores democráticos"[32] (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo - Guatemala [PNUD], 2019) as part of the *Currículo Nacional Base* (CNB), the standardized curriculum of Guatemala.[33] The notion of citizenship posited in the four two-day in-person workshops and four online modules worked to disrupt the tendency in Guatemala to teach citizenship through the lens of patriotic unification and celebration of the nation-state. Instead, the course encouraged teachers to explore the root causes of social issues, cultivate spaces of dialogue about controversial issues, and engage youth in efforts for social change (Cantero, 2008; Delgado Algarra, 2015; Vivas Piñeros, 2006).

Born out of a long-term research project on the history of ethnic relations in Guatemala by the Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamérica (CIRMA) that resulted in a

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[32] Translation: the teaching of historical memory, human rights and democratic principles and values

[33] The Citizenship Formation course has since gotten folded into one course: Social Science, Citizenship Formacion and Interculturality, information about which can be found on the CNB website: https://cnbguatemala.org/wiki/CNB_Ciclo_B%C3%A1sico/Ciencias_Sociales,_Formaci%C3%B3n_Ciudadana_e_Interculturalidad. The Internal Armed Conflict is explicitly addressed as part of the third year of *básico,* which is equivalent to 9th grade in the United States. The sequences included on the webpage for teachers are made up of resources created by IIARS, for example: 3.4.3. Causas y consecuencias del enfrentamiento armado - CNB.

collection of publications, ¿Por qué estamos como estamos? [Why are we the way we are?] (Taracena, 2004, 2009; Camus, 2006; Adams, Bastos & Taracena, 2004), the organization IIARS was founded by Tani Adams (2017) who was a leading voice in analyzing the conditions and characteristics of chronic violence and developed frameworks for social change in post-conflict contexts, including Guatemala. IIARS was founded in 2007 with the goal of sharing the findings of the ¿Por qué estamos como estamos? research and its resulting publications with the public and developing pedagogical resources and materials for teachers based on its contents. As such, the organization focused its efforts on curating an interactive exposition called ¿Por qué estamos como estamos?, which over 200,000 people had visited between 2009 and 2018 (Instituto Internacional de Aprendizaje para la Reconciliación Social [IIARS], n.d.), and also on the development and implementation of educational programs for teachers, students, and public officials. The origins of the organization deeply informed their pedagogical approach and logic, in that any discussion of the Armed Conflict was framed by the history of interethnic relations before and after the conquest, the power dynamics of diverse Guatemalan identities in the past and present, and mechanisms of conflict resolution inherited from previous generations. While the pandemic in 2020 forced the exposition to close and the organization to mostly disband, the arrival of a progressive government in 2024 with key partners installed in MINEDUC has placed the exposition under the shared auspices of MINEDUC and the Universidad Rafael Landivar, who have opened a smaller version of it on the Guatemala City campus of the university.[34]

Much of the funding allocated for the organization's program explicitly linked its work to transition justice and processes of democratization, though its approach has always situated the

[34] Information about the organization, its curricular materials, and the exposition still exist online: https://iiars.org/, including the materials developed to teach about the Internal Armed Conflict: https://iiars.org/pages/recursos-educativos/paquete-pedagogico-sobre-el-conflicto-armado.php. These materials served as a basis of the online materials presented to teachers on Moodle, and many of the activity plans were woven into the in-person workshops.

atrocities of the recent past within colonial violence and its continuities of violence, legalized segregation, and repression of Indigenous populations, which includes 21 Mayan linguistic communities, Xinca and Garifuna communities, which make up approximately half of population of Guatemala, though the negation of Mayan ancestry for fear of discrimination makes exact calculations a complicated endeavor. As such the content of the *diplomado* wove together analysis of interethnic relations in the present, inviting participants discuss and debate common refrains and arguments about interculturalism and diversity, the colonial foundations of a racially segregated society, and the thread of racial supremacy that carried into the execution of violence against the Indigenous populations before, during, and after the Armed Conflict. As a pedagogical project linked to transitional justice and democratization, under the framing of citizenship formation, both the content and methodologies of the program addressed many of the critiques of paradigmatic transitional justice initiatives discussed in Chapter 3. The thematic linking of colonial histories and more recent Armed Conflict, genocide, and chronic violence with pedagogical strategies that center the body to *sentipensar* [feel-think] the past sets the organization apart in its approach to transition and change.

Somatic and Affective Approaches to Learning Difficult Histories

The programs developed for teachers by IIARS center somatic and affective learning and felt experiences in the body as entry points to examining the history of interethnic relationships in Guatemala. With the support of several expert facilitators in the philosophies and strategies of the Theater of the Oppressed (Boal, 1992/2002), the IIARS team began incorporating the work with the body as a means of developing relationships of trust with teachers or other participants and fostering relaxation and calm as they took up controversial and emotionally charged topics like racism or the Armed Conflict. The process of *desmecanización del cuerpo* [demechanization

of the body] centers the body as the site of change and movement, where a loosening of the body, of inviting the body to change the way it normally moved and reacts, opens the heart and mind to movement as well. The body tenses and closes itself off when exposed to difficult and painful histories. The activities, like *El mundo al revés*[35] [The upside-down world], where participants walk around a room and have to do the opposite of the command called out by the facilitator, agitate the rigidity of the body and prepare the mind, body and heart to *sentipensar* [feel-think] the difficult topics from a different vantage point. One of the co-facilitators of the *diplomado*, Josué, who identifies as Mestizo, explained how learning and applying these techniques to his practice with teachers had shifted the dynamics in how he worked with educators, particularly in how demechanization allows the rational to co-exist with the complex emotional reactions that surface when broaching these topics in Guatemala:

> Para mí como facilitador me funciona que estas actividades ayudan a crear confianza en el grupo. Entonces cuando ya tenés la confianza ganada, yo siento que allí salen muchas cosas, más cosas de las que esperas con un grupo con el que todo el tiempo estás trabajando de manera racional. Es decir, no es lo mismo sentarte o tomar un taller de cinco horas en donde todos están sentado y vos solo estás transmitiendo el conocimiento, que empezar a trabajar con el cuerpo, trabajar estas actividades como más de meditación, de relajación; entonces yo creo que allí se crea un vínculo, se empiezan a acercar más las personas al facilitador y eso te da la oportunidad y te da el chance de que los temas, por

[35] This activity appears in the list of suggested activities in the national curriculum: https://cnbguatemala.org/wiki/El_Conflicto_Armado_Interno_y_la_transformaci%C3%B3n_de_conflictos_en_Guatemala/M%C3%B3dulo_1:_Descubriendo_nuestra_vivencia_sobre_el_Conflicto_Armado_Interno/El_mundo_al_rev%C3%A9s

muy complicados que sean, ya no te vean a vos como el que les está queriendo llegar a decir que el ejército es una mierda (risas). …[36]

Entonces que ellos ya no vean a alguien que llega a echar rollo, sino un espacio donde la mara se pueda sentir tranquila de reflexionar, de decir lo que piensa, sin esperar de que alguien les vaya a decir "no". … Así en el fondo de tu corazón ves que el maestro está o no tiene la razón o que se yo, escuchar porque es su reflexión, es su propio análisis de las cosas. … Pero yo creo que nosotros lo hacemos de una manera básica para crear confianza y para ponerle un poco de enmedio un poquito los sentimientos y que hay un poquito más de apertura para recibir las cosas que no necesariamente tienen que ser racionales creo yo. …[37]

¿Por qué es importante? Porque todos estos temas tienen que ver con las emociones, tienen que ver con los sentimientos, porque mueven cosas, mueven recuerdos, porque también te enojás digamos si no estás de acuerdo con el enfoque de la Formación Ciudadana, porque te están diciendo ahora que por qué no tenemos cantar el himno si eso yo lo he hecho veinte... Porque le ponés sentimientos, porque los maestros también son humanos.[38]

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[36] Translation: For me as a facilitator, it has worked for me that these activities help to create trust in the group. That is to say, it is not the same to sit or be in a five-hour workshop where everyone is sitting and you are only transmitting knowledge, than to start working with the body, to work with these activities as more meditation, relaxation; then I believe that a bond is created, people start to get closer to the facilitator and that gives you the opportunity and gives you the chance that the topics, no matter how complicated they are, they no longer see you as the one who is trying to tell them that the army is a piece of shit (laughs). ...

[37] Translation: So that they no longer see someone who comes to make a fuss, but rather a space where they can feel at ease to reflect, to say what they think, without waiting for someone to say "no" to them. ... So in the bottom of your heart, whether you see that the teacher is right or wrong or whatever, [you have to] listen because it is their reflection, their own analysis of things. ... But I think we do it in a basic way to create trust and to put feelings in the middle a little bit and that there is a little more openness to receive things that do not necessarily have to be rational, I think.

[38] Translation: Why is it important? Because all these subjects have to do with emotions, they have to do with feelings, because they move things, they move memories, because you also get angry, let's say, if you don't agree with the approach of Citizenship Education, because they are telling you now that why don't we have to sing the anthem if I have done it twenty times? Because you put feelings into it, because teachers are also human.

The playfulness of the activities facilitates a release of some of the fear, mistrust, and hesitance that many teachers carry when arriving to a training about interculturality, racism, and Armed Conflict. The ludic both disarms and activates somatic learning, where sensorial shifts felt in the body prime the heart and the mind, creating spaces for the feeling that accompanies learning about difficult histories. The facilitation of these activities at the start of a workshop also provides the facilitators with information about the participants, in terms how they react to invitations to move their bodies, and what their resistance or struggles to connect their body might suggest about their level of comfort or relaxation. Imelda mentioned a recent workshop with teachers where many really struggled:

> La ves con su cuerpo ni un movimiento. Recuerdo que la otra vez hicimos un ejercicio solo de mover las manos y no… No, la gente no puede hacer eso. Allí se quedan trabadas. No tiene esa coordinación con su cuerpo a hacer movimientos y entonces eso también, desde otra perspectiva, te da elementos de que aquí otro entorno, otro experiencia, y hay gente que no le es muy fácil moverse con su cuerpo, hacer ejercicios, pero sí es más como para relajarlos y estar dispuestos al aprendizaje.[39]

In general, the methodologies of the IIARS pedagogical team are constructivist, in the sense of contextualizing their pedagogical plan and approach in the histories, lived realities, and material conditions of the educators and then building conceptual frameworks and discussions based on teacher's prior knowledge: "Ir colectivamente construyendo cosas y siempre de empezar por los contextos de los docentes, de los conocimientos de los docentes y luego hacer nuestras

[39] Translation: You see them with their body and not a single movement. I remember the other time we did an exercise just to move the hands and no... No, people couldn't do even that. They get stuck there. They don't have that coordination with their body to make movements and then that also, from another perspective, gives you elements that here is another environment, another experience, and there are people for whom it is not very easy to move with their body, to do exercises, but it is more to [try to] relax them and [help them] be willing to learn.

propuestas conceptuales"[40] (Josué). The contentious nature of the topics that they broach with educators means that their approach is constantly in movement, responding to the frameworks, stories, and memories teachers bring to the learning spaces, and then adapting their curriculum and strategies based on their reactions.

Reconsidering "Data" with *Tz'iib'* as a Guide

The incorporation of historical thinking and document-based inquiry were curricular components that I and another German colleague developed, though we did so with an expansive conception of "document-based" that endeavored to invoke the concept of *tz'iib',* the K'iche' word which is often translated as letter, word, or writing, but, its broad signification is incommensurable with the Western conception of words, and includes any communicative object, including textiles, oral histories, murals, dance, ritual or other communicative practices that preserve the secrets of Mayan/Indigenous cosmologies without invasion from the supremacy of the Western text (Worley & Palacios, 2022; Creegan Miller, 2022; Otzoy, 1996). In framing their analytical framework for Mayan literature, Worley and Palacios (2022) assert:

> As ts'iib refers to a broad range of artistic production from painted codices and textiles to works composed in Latin script, as well as plastic arts, the authors argue that texts by contemporary Maya writers must be read as dialoguing with a multimodal Indigenous understanding of text. In other words, ts'íib is an alternative to understanding "writing" that does not stand in opposition to but rather fully encompasses alphabetic writing, placing it alongside and in dialogue with a number of other forms of recorded knowledge. This shift in focus allows for a critical reexamination of the role that weaving and bodily

[40] Translation: To go collectively building things and always starting from the teachers' contexts, from the teachers' knowledge and then making our conceptual proposals.

> performance play in these literatures, as well as for a nuanced understanding of how Maya writers articulate decolonial Maya aesthetics in their work. (Worley & Palacios, 2022, p. 3-4)

Throughout the *diplomado* and inquiry process, we endeavored to broaden the frame of what might be considered a source of information or evidence of the past. For example, the inquiry lesson on the massacre of Rio Negro included murals, a series of painting, a symphonic composition, and first-person testimony. Nonetheless working with the inquiry groups, the invisible boundaries of what knowledges are permissible in academic settings proved difficult to break down.

The inquiry group that investigated the history of Tecum Uman, the K'iche who fought the Spanish conquistadors, but was famously slayed by Pedro Alvarado, had spent months compiling all sorts of written, artifactual, musical and other sources. Well into the inquiry process, Daniel off-handedly mentioned that he coordinates the yearly presentation of the Tecún Umán dance at their town's yearly festival. Surprised that he had waited months to reveal these details, I began asking questions, and he shared that his family holds one of oldest handwritten scripts of the dance and that they had been responsible for the production of the dances each year for various generations.

In addition, he and his brother had conducted an investigation when they were at university on the various dances and published a book. Incredulous that this was the first time we were hearing about this rich family history, I exclaimed, "*¿Por qué no mencionó antes esta historia de su familia con este tema? {Risas} ¡Por eso lo eligieron!*" [Why did you not mention your family history with the topic before? (Everyone laughing). This is why you chose this topic!" Strangely enough, he had not been present when his colleagues chose this topic, and it

was just a coincidence. But again, I asked why only mention the document, the investigation, and your deep family connection to the yearly enactment of the encounter between Tecún Umán and Pedro Alvarado now. He responded:

> D: Lo que pasa, es que esto de igual manera, hace poco, en el año 2015 o 2016, me dieron la invitación para que fuera a ensayar el baile allá a San Andrés y sí, allá se fue mi papá conmigo y nos llevamos un grupo de señores, que fueron a hacer la música y yo fui guiando a los bailes y así. El 2016 igual me dieron una invitación y fui otra vez y así, pero nunca pensé en qué es lo que estaba haciendo.
>
> C: ¿Nunca pensaste en lo que estabas haciendo?
>
> D: Es que no pensaba que iba a ser útil para mi vida, era como si fuera a jugar fútbol, lo que terminaba, terminaba y así.
>
> C: ¿Y ahora?
>
> D: Hasta ahora que me estoy dando cuenta, que sí, todo lo que se escribe tiene una razón de ser.
>
> C: Esa información es súper útil para nosotros, porque el baile es una fuente, es una fuente primaria.[41]

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[41] Translation: D: What happens is that, in the same way, recently, in 2015 or 2016, I was invited to go to San Andrés to rehearse the dance and yes, my father went with me and we took a group of men with us, who went to do the music and I was leading the dances and so on. In 2016 they invited me again and I went again and so on, but I never thought about what I was doing.
C: You never thought about what you were doing?
D: I just didn't think it was going to be useful for my life, it was like if I went to play soccer, the thing I finished, it finished and so on.
C: And now?
D: Until now that I am realizing, that yes, everything that is written has a reason to be.
C: That information is super useful for us. Because dance is a source, it's a primary source.

Though my work with this inquiry group falls outside of the bounds of this dissertation, this moment captured for me the challenges of demechanizing the body, mind, and heart from the grammar of schooling and the corollary colonial boundaries erected to exclude and discount the wisdoms of Indigenous cosmologies and syncretic artistic creations of resistance and survival, such as the autochthonous dances of the conquest and Tecún Umán.

Folding Historical Thinking Skills into *Sentipensante* Learning

Within a culture of distrust, fragmented memories, and enduring silences about the Armed Conflict, the facilitation team of the *diplomado* wondered what teachers might make of weaving somatic and affective engagements with the violent past with the pedagogical strategies of *historical thinking*. We endeavored to contextualize and adapt strategies articulated by Wineburg (2001, 2010a) and Reisman (2012a, 2012b), who were both my professors at Stanford and trained me in their particular approach of disciplinary historical inquiry. The historical thinking framework developed by the Stanford folks evolved out of an psychological examination of how historians analyze and interpret the past, a way of thinking that Wineburg (2001) described as a break from the familiar and encounter with the strange, with ways of being, knowing, and moving through past worlds that may seem confusing the present. In considering the applications of disciplinary historical thinking to pedagogical endeavors, he argues for an approach that engages "the tension between the familiar and the strange between feelings of proximity and feelings of distance in relation to the people we seek to understand" (Wineburg, 2001, p. 5). The skills developed through this historical thinking framework briefly include the following:

> **Sourcing:** Think about a document's author and its creation. **Contextualizing:** Situate the document and its events in time and place. **Close reading:** Carefully consider what

the document says and the language used to say it. **Reading the Silences:** Identify what has been left out or is missing from the document by asking questions of its account. **Using Background Knowledge:** Use historical information and knowledge to read and understand the document. **Corroborating:** Ask questions about important details across multiple sources to determine points of agreement and disagreement. (Wineburg, 2010b, bold in original)

During the workshops, teachers were invited to analyze historical accounts and sources analyzing the perspective and possible biases of the sources / author, examine the context in which the source was created, consider possible omissions or silences, and examine how the purpose and audience of the source might influence its message and composition. Though he writes about making thinking visible to students in order to step back and see different ways of thinking through time and space, his assertions are contained within the confines of humanist thinking, Western epistemologies. Without fully delving into complex history of social studies / history wars that have plagued the field in the United States (Evans, 2004; Jenness, 1990), I recognize that the epistemological traditions in which these strategies and ways of doing history education are situated are marked by the disciplinary confines of colonial and imperial projects that normalize "ideas of of the primitive and the civilized [as] … part of a commonsense division of the world by race, culture, and nation" (Willinsky, 1998, p. 17). The imperial legacies of disciplinary historical analysis and the logic of the modern nation-state position the emotional and affective elements of social inquiry as unintelligible, assigning them to the margins where uncivilized and savage minds and bodies must live (Azoulay, 2019; Willinsky, 1998). Moreover, I argue that much of the curriculum developed to teach this particular strain of historical thinking has moved away from historical thinking as inquiry into the "strange and unnatural."

Nonetheless, I found pulling that original thread into the work with teachers to be generative in terms of facilitating inquiry that embraces uncertainty, disorientation, and difference, and their affective siblings.

I admit that I struggle to differentiate between the historical thinking strategies that Wineburg, Reisman and others (De La Paz, Wissinger, Gross & Butler, 2022; Fogo, Reisman & Breakstone, 2019; Monte-Sano, 2011) have written about academically and developed into public resources for teachers and the adaptations and tools developed with colleagues as we have sought to contextualize and apply document-based practices of historical inquiry in our classrooms. While teaching high school world history, which included significant curricular time allocated to colonization, the Holocaust, and war, I found that the technical aspects of the approach were not sufficient to respond to internalized colonization and the affective reverberations of learning about histories of violence. While Stanford folks would never claim that historical thinking strategies should be the only activities in a history classroom, I have endeavored in my own practice to traverse between (or perhaps quilt together) historical thinking and remembrance pedagogical approaches, as I refer to them in Chapter 2. As an educator, I have taken up historical thinking tools as part of how I have curated encounters for students and teachers with difficult histories of conflict, authoritarian, and atrocity, in contexts with various levels of affective and physical proximity to violence. I have found historical thinking skills as an entry point for framing the frames that historically have cast some lives as more valuable and grieveable than others (Butler, 2004, 2009), yet have had to re-envision their application to account for the deeply entrenched epistemologies, systems and structures, and affective configurations of colonialism and imperialism.

Focusing on Teacher Learning and Inquiry

There were three main methodological modalities for the research presented in the dissertation: a) participant observation / facilitation of in-person professional development workshops, b) participation in inquiry groups with teachers, and c) extended interviews with each of the eight (8) secondary teachers in the inquiry groups. I served as one of the four facilitators of the in-person workshops, and supported and collaborated with five (5) groups of teachers, two primary and three secondary, on a group inquiry project related to the topics explored in the course: human rights and democracy, historical memory of the Guatemalan Armed Conflict, interculturalism and histories of racism in Guatemala, conflict transformation, and the cultivation of a culture of peace. The inquiry work with teachers centered storytelling and teacher-driven engagements with the past as a starting point for inquiry into (hi)stories of the Armed Conflict and how teachers might curate them for their students.

The extended interviews with each of the focal teachers, conducted at the beginning and then again towards the end of our work together, were generally held at their schools, a local cafe, or the restaurant of my hotel. During the second interview, I shared annotated transcripts of prior interviews with teachers, where I asked them follow-up questions and we reflected on our previous conversations. In addition to the one-on-one interviews, teacher participants interviewed each other, disrupting my protagonism in the research process and building spaces of dialogic learning with one another that invited contextually grounded ways of investigating, learning, and communicating.

My German colleague and I also organized a trip for teachers to visit the Rio Negro massacre site at the end of the *diplomado* process. The new settlement of Rio Negro was created by the handful of massacre survivors on the hills overlooking the river covering their homes

flooded by the construction the Chixoy dam. After the community refused to relocate in order for the dam to be constructed, on March 13, 1982, 12 members of the army and 15 patrollers from the nearby town of Xococ who had massacred most the men from the village the month before, marched 177 people, 70 women and 107 children three miles up the mountain to a mass grave where they were massacred (CEH, 1999). With funds from GIZ, the community constructed a guest house for visitors, who are invited to walk the path taken by those 117 women and children, with stops to tell the story of their journey by one of the few survivors, Sebastian, a child at the time, who managed to roll down the hill and escape.

The inquiry process with teachers involved finding multiple sources to help answer a research question they had chosen, which resulted in the co-creation of curriculum that each teacher implemented with their students. In the end, most groups chose topics and questions from a list of possible topics provided by workshop facilitators, though they had the option to come up with their own. In all the inquiry groups, the question of how we evaluate conflicting sources and decide what information we trust was a dominant theme in our work together. Moreover, interrogating the role of testimony and the validity of the accounts that come from family was particularly challenging for the groups examining topics related to the Armed Conflict, given the contradictions between the reports from truth commissions and what teachers had heard from their families and communities.

The inquiry groups and co-creation of curriculum with teachers represent part of my attempts to counter the damaging effects of the *extranjeras* (foreigners) who come and "study us," and center their own academic needs and epistemological processes (Batz, 2019). The collaborative inquiry and curricular work aimed to meander, stagger, and traverse our way into decolonial practices that work to improve the materials conditions of educators (Tuck & Yang,

2012) and support processes of social transformation (Sundberg, 2014) forged by the teachers and facilitators of this project.

The dissertation focused on the processes of *teacher learning*, investigation, and encounter with the history of the Internal Armed Conflict, which two of the five inquiry groups with whom I worked decided to take up. Overall, I accompanied the inquiry groups of the 11 teachers from Cunén (five secondary and six primary teachers) and three secondary teachers from Santa Cruz de Quiché, while the rest were supported by the other three facilitators. The two primary school groups examined the use of child labor in the community and gender equality in the home, school, and community, respectively, and developed curriculum using techniques from Theater of the Oppressed. A group of secondary teachers from Cunén investigated the history / myth of fallen Mayan hero Tecún Umán at the hands of Pedro Alvarado, and developed a curriculum to analyze the colonial purposes of glorifying Tecún Umán as one of the patriotic symbols of Guatemala. However, the five secondary teachers whose voices are quilted into Chapters 7 to 9 include: 1) three *básico* teachers (Nelly, Juan Pablo and Rodrigo) from Santa Cruz de Quiché who investigated the history of the Civil Defense Patrols (PAC) and examined to what extent the PAC were victims or perpetrators, and 2) two *diversificado* teachers who worked together in Cunén (Valeria and Ignacio) who explored to what extent the Peace Accords signed from 1994-1996 were successful, investigating both the goals of the various agreements and whether they succeeded in ushering in widespread social change. Valeria and Nelly both identified as Ladina, Juan Pablo identified as Mestizo, and Rodrigo and Ignacio identified as K'iche' Maya.

All these teachers work at public schools with students who are primarily Indigenous, with the girls wearing primarily *traje* to school each day. Their schools and the students who

attend are in rural areas; the two schools where the teachers from the Santa Cruz de Quiché group work actually sit outside the city center, in *aldeas* that are a 15 minute bus or pick-up truck ride away from the central plaza. The Cunén teachers work at the municipality's only secondary school which houses both the *básico* and *diversificado* students, nestled on the edge of the city center. Thrown together in groups mostly by the proximity of their teaching sites, these focal teachers were all challenged to confront their pre-existing ideas about the Armed Conflict and interrogate family histories, despite the differences in their age, gender, economic resources or ethnic identity.

While Chapters 7 - 9 exclusively focus on the work with the two groups examining the history of the Armed Conflict, Chapter 6 includes voices from a variety of teachers in the *diplomado*, but primarily those from Cunén with whom I worked more closely. Though their research endeavors did not take up stories of the Armed Conflict, these topics did come up as we chatted over lunch, reflected on the last workshop during a bus ride, or even when accompanying at teacher to a medical appointment (he knew he would be in the waiting room for hours, so figured this would be a good way to use the time). Indeed, it was within these more unscripted and unmediated moments that the presences of multiple worlds often made themselves felt.

Unraveling Method: Narrative Quilting as Decolonial Feminist Practice

Among memory workers (Dryden-Peterson & Siebörger, 2006; Jelin, 2003) in Guatemala, the discourse of *hilando el pasado*, or weaving together the past, in the wake of the Internal Armed Conflict which ripped apart *el tejido social*, the social fabric of Guatemala, serves as a common conceptual framing for engagements with the country's violent past. Indeed, one of the facilitators of the workshops, Imelda, a Kaqchikel Indigenous woman, compared the

process of inquiry into violent histories to weaving, as an iterative process of pulling at multiple threads from the past and weaving them together:

> La idea es que todos tenemos historias que nos cuentan acerca del conflicto armado, nuestros abuelos o familiares nos contaron ciertas historias, vamos a la escuela y también nos cuentan ciertas historias la maestra o profesor y trabajamos y vemos qué más hacemos y tenemos más información, pero la idea no es quedarnos solo con la información de mi familia, sino que también nos creemos más expectativas de qué pasa con la historia ¿sí?, porque puede ser que mi papá me dé una historia de una versión, pero tal vez, leyendo puedo ir descubriendo más realmente qué fue lo que pasa en el contexto y creo que es como vamos hilando la información. La historia que cuentan todos, pero que al final, todas las historias, creo que son válidas, desde el punto de vista que lo veamos, pero creo que el asunto es no quedarnos sólo con la información que me contó mi papá, sino que nos invita a explorar más fuentes, porque estamos en la metodología de indagar históricamente, entonces, qué más posibilidades tengo para analizar un tema, una situación, entonces creo que no sé si por esa línea vamos y no quedarnos sólo con una idea ¿sí?… es la invitación es no quedarnos sólo con una fuente, sino que seguir buscando, **hilando**, porque al mismo tiempo es como un compromiso con los estudiantes también. Si queremos abordar un tema, no les voy a dar sólo el testimonio de mi papá, no, sino qué dicen otras fuentes, qué dice esto y lo otro acerca de equis tema. Eso es un poco lo que vamos a hacer después, a lo mejor buscar, .., bueno, eso sucedió en el conflicto armado, pero en el presente también hay el mismo discurso, sólo que con otros

> actores, entonces es cómo analizamos eso y cómo conecto con el presente, creo que por ahí podríamos ir.[42]

Hilando el pasado, spinning new threads from the past and weaving them together into the ever evolving construction of history, resonates within the Guatemalan context, given the centrality of weaving within Mayan cosmologies, identities, linguistics, and ways of thinking and being. Decolonial scholar and tseltal Mayan philosopher Juan López Intzín (2015) links weaving with discursive and spatial processes of becoming and knowing:

> Compararemos el campo con el telar y viceversa, la comunidad, el pueblo y la sociedad donde se entretejen las relaciones socioculturales, políticas, económicas, ideológicas, religiosas y saberes, y en donde muchas veces nos entretejen con la fuerza de poder, desde la asimetría, la hegemonía del ser-actuarsaber-decir-tener del dominador mediante la construcción artificial de ciudadanos, anulando las individualidades. El campo, como el telar, es un lugar donde se hilvanan la memoria y la historia con los conocimientos ancestrales y actuales, con otros saberes y conocimientos muy otros, algunos vigentes, aunque trastocados, y otros olvidados. (p. 186).[43]

[42] The idea is that we all have stories that are told to us about the Armed Conflict, our grandparents or relatives told us certain stories, we go to school and the teacher also tells us certain stories and we work and see what else we can do and we have more information, but the idea is not to stay only with the information from my family, but also to have more expectations of what happens with history, right? Because my dad may give me one version of history, but perhaps, by reading I can discover more about what really happens in the context and I think that is how we weave the information together. The story that everyone tells, but in the end, all stories, I think they are valid, from the point of view that we see it, but I think that the point is not to stay only with the information that my father told me, but we are invited to explore more sources, because we are in the methodology of historical inquiry, so, what other possibilities do I have to analyze a topic, a situation, so I think that I don't know if we are going along that line and not stay only with one idea, yes? ... the invitation is not to stay only with one source, but to continue searching, spinning, because at the same time it is like a commitment to the students as well. If we want to address a topic, I am not going to give you only my father's testimony, no, but what other sources say, what this and that say about x topic. That is a bit what we are going to do next, maybe look for... well, that happened in the Armed Conflict, but in the present there is also the same discourse, only with other actors, so it is how we analyze that and how I connect it with the present, I think that is where we could go.

[43] We will compare the field with the loom and vice versa; the community, the people and the society where sociocultural, political, economic, ideological, religious and knowledge relations are interwoven, and where we are often interwoven with the forces of power, from asymmetr[ical relations], the hegemony of being-acting knowing-

In the same way that my positionality as a white woman from the United States does not permit me to write and analyze from within Indigenous Mayan cosmologies, the practice of material and analytical weaving that Intzín describes and enacts sits at the edges of my comprehensibility. While I am not a weaver, I am a quilter, stitching together constellations of stories from scrapes of fabric. The conceptualization of quilting as a feminist, decolonial practice of epistemological *encuentro* (encounter) that walks alongside (Sundberg, 2013) Indigenous practices draws inspiration from artist-researchers who fold their material creative practices into the production of research texts, using art as inquiry as a "rigorous process through which sense (rather than meaning) is tentatively fabricated" (Holbrook & Pourchier, 2014, p. 754). While the feminized labor of sewing scraps of fabric for protection from the elements had practical and utilitarian ends, as the textile industry grew in Europe and the United States in the 1800s, quilting transformed into a feminist practice, as a collective means of expression when other spaces were foreclosed (Southgate, 2024). They increasingly served subversive and activist purposes, such as the AIDS quilt that spanned the length of the Mall in Washington, D.C. in 1995. I have found the metaphor and practice of quilting to be quite analytically generative in that it sits in the margins of disciplinary constructs of art and knowledge, devalued as women's craftwork, which thus liberates the quilter (researcher) and allows them to play with the infinite possible constellations (analyses) formed from the scrapes of fabric ("data") at their disposal in a particular time and space.

The quilts I have created are community quilts, which stitch together squares sent from a quilt recipient's family and friends, sewing together fragments of meaning that may seem at first

saying-having of the dominator through the artificial construction of citizens, annulling individualities. The field, like the loom, is a place where memory and history are woven with ancestral and current knowledges, with other wisdoms and very different knowledges, some of which are current, although altered, and others forgotten.

brush to be disconnected and fragmented. Each square is a world of its own, bestowed with secrets and meaning tethering the giver and recipient. As a quilter, I play with the squares, moving them around on the floor into different configurations as the pieces start to speak to one another, creating something else once in proximity to one another, once stitched together by the interlocking threads of my sewing machine.

Quilting Becoming-Claims

Similar to my quilting practice with pieces of fabric, the swatches of data and analysis presented in the following chapters have been moved around, reordered, cast aside, only to be added back in later. The pieces have remained in constant movement across the document, mirroring the ever moving piles of articles before me, as I identify resonances and tensions in the scraps of text before me. I have put multiple epistemologies related to feeling, affect, and learning in conversation with moments from the research that defied (colonial) epistemological frameworks (Chapter 6), carried an affective weight that resonated far beyond the confines of the research moment (Chapter 7), or that held the intensities of *sentipensante* engagements with conflicting stories and memories of violence (Chapters 8 and 9). My approach to analysis has paid attention to the pluriversal exchanges and collisions of realities and epistemologies unfolding within the spaces of teacher learning and inquiry, while also recognizing that I remain epistemologically blind to plenty of its manifestations. But the moments of tension, confusion, intensity, refusal, awkwardness, and disconnection have provided gentle somatic nudges to return to these moments in the data, unlearn my assumptions, and find alternate frequencies in order to better hear the wisdoms bestowed by the teachers and my co-facilitators.

The sections of my dissertation mirror the process of quilting and my approach to analysis of the research data. Chapters 6 through 9 of the dissertation enact the mechanism of

action of a sewing machine[44] by analytically sewing together the scrapes of data, enacting an ecology of knowledges by bringing them into conversation with different epistemological threads. Pulling from the bobbin below and from the spool above, decolonial and affective theoretical threads are put into relation with the diverse textures, densities, and origins of the scrapes circulating within the research space. Some of the swatches that I have pulled into conversation have haunted me for years, remaining at the forefront of my re-membering of moments of tension and intensity in the inquiry groups. Other pieces have been unearthed by epistemological reorientations that pushed me to return to conversations and exchanges with teachers that did not resonate in the moment. They are pieces that have put something into motion for me and/or the educators with whom I worked, through the resonance and/or dissonance they have provoked. Indeed, as I have quilted them, some pieces bound together while others resisted entanglements, breaking the needle and foreclosing colonial efforts of sense-making across incommensurable ways of being and knowing.

I draw on Tuck and Yang's (2014) call to employ refusal as an analytical practice, in "resistance to making someone or something the subject of research; it is a form of objectless analysis, and analytic practice with nothing and no one to code" (p. 812). Grounding my analysis in the refusal served to realign how I have read and listened to encounters with teachers, and focused my attention on the power dynamics at work in the relationships between people, systems, communities and institutions. Refusal as a lens forces an unsettling confrontation with the deafening silences of "failed interviews" (Mazzai, 2007, p. 99) or other moments when teachers stopped responding to me or otherwise refused to conform to conscious or unconscious

[44] A sewing machine works by pulling from a thread from a spool sitting atop the machine and a thread from the bobbin hidden below the presser foot, which are then entangled by the needle as it moves in and out of the fabric being stitched together.

misalignments and/or challenges to their ways of knowing and being. I highlight their refusals in my writing, exploring the affective stickiness of those moments.

In acknowledging the contingency of this written product, I submit that I have elaborated “becoming-claims,” a term borrowed from Tuck and Yang (2014). “Becoming-claims” undermine the notion of objective, empirical claims on the lives and voices of others and embraces the contingencies and shifting fault lines of my unlearning of imperialism (Zembylas, 2024; Azoulay, 2019), while appreciating the possibilities and openings the work could generate. Becoming claims are the constellation of contingent assertions tethering my theoretical musings to *sentipensado* practices of teacher learning. They are contingent claims of possibility for alternate practices of teacher learning about the past, and they move the work from the theoretical back to the work with educators. I use them in the dissertation to ground the reflections, analysis, and musings articulated in each chapter in what I am carrying with me as a teacher educator, and what might catalyze generative conversations and alternate practices with educators. Yet they sit in the contingency of the moment of their articulation, and how when taken up in practice they may not last the wear and tear of use in learning spaces.

Chapter 6 presents swatches of analysis of the looming presence/absence of the relational ontologies that haunted both the spaces of learning and inquiry with educators and also my return(s) to the research archives after a temporal lacuna. The scrapes I gathered, patterned into sections, and stitched together pull together encounters with the pluriverse, as a means of activating decolonial approaches to sense-making that expose the limitations of disciplinary, scientific approaches to “truth-telling” in the wake of horror.

Chapter 7 addresses the complexities of learning and teaching difficult histories within the context of generations of necropedagogies of fear that have warped social relations and

whittled the pillars of trust and confidence into emaciated stick figures. The chapter also tracks specters of fear and follows the ghosts in the research - those moments, spaces, and objects that haunt me, the participants, and/or our work together - tracing the fantastical and pluriversal figures that "draw us affectively sometimes against our will and always a bit magically, into a structure of feeling of a reality we come to experience, not as cold knowledge, but as a transformative recognition" (Gordon, 2008, p. 8).

Chapters 8 and 9 focus on the collaborative inquiry process with two groups of teachers that chose to investigate topics related to the Internal Armed Conflict. They explore the pluriversal, situated, and contingent worlds that the educators and I brought to the inquiry project, and our efforts to put partial and incomplete knowledges into conversation and cross epistemological borders. **Chapter 8** examines the affective contours of discursive spiraling during the inquiry process, analyzing the "stickiness" of particular frames, worlds, realities and memories of the Internal Armed Conflict (Berlant, 2011; Ahmed, 2015) and considering the relational designs and implications (Escobar, 2018a) of how educators return and spiral back to that which unsettles them. **Chapter 9** narrates the affectively-charged encounters from the PAC inquiry group with conflicting accounts of the past between family histories and the findings of the truth commission reports. Tracing the tensions, discomforts, and intensities of these exchange, I posits the pedagogical possibilities of *sentipensante* (felt-thinking) approaches (Espinosa & Guerrero, 2021; Intzín, 2021a) to historical inquiry and the cultivation of affective proximity to difficult histories (Lederach, 2005) as pedagogical tools to activate (re)interrogations of past and present violence in Guatemala.

Chapter 10 aligns with the stage of quilting where what are called quilting stitches are applied to hold the layers of the quilt - the top, batting and bottom - together. This section brings

the analysis and musing back to the educators with whom I worked, considering the possible implications for the practice of teaching and learning about the Internal Armed Conflict in Guatemala. It maps some possibilities for how the research musings might be applied to work with teachers, and the articulation of alternate visions of the purpose and objectives of pedagogical engagements with violent histories beyond those of paradigmatic transitional justice endeavors.

Correcting Alterity in the Transcriptions

I had all the recordings of the workshops, interviews, inquiry group meetings, and other spontaneous moments transcribed by someone who had been recommended to me by another doctoral student. My general approach to analysis has been to (re)listen to the recordings as I (re)read and (re)annotate the transcriptions. However, I have found that the transcriber did not transcribe everything, and changed some of the language to make it more "readable" or grammatically "correct," resulting in a transcription that edited out many of the particularities of Guatemalan Spanish, including the influence of Mayan languages (Yanes, 2014). Despite the frustration of finding gaps in transcriptions that held gems, the process of rectifying the transcriptions has been useful in that it has forced me to perform an exceptionally close listen to the recording and reading of the text to pay attention to the pronouns, the verb tenses and and other "irregularities" or "grammatical mistakes" that the transcriber decided to clean up or gloss over. By highlighting missing pieces and errors in transcription in another color, I have ended up been able to better see the particularities of the ways that teachers chose to re-tell, narrate, and express themselves in ways that at times transgressed the rules of language and grammar that as someone who speaks Spanish as a second language, I might not have noticed. For example, the "corrections" helped me become acutely aware of participants' movement between the past and

present tense and between first and third person when participants were telling stories about the Internal Armed Conflict, both that they lived - to use their phrasing *"yo lo viví*" - or were told by someone else, details which the transcriber "corrected." I additionally had to pull in assistance from folks in Guatemala to decode and better understand the connotations of some of the words or phrases that I did not recognize, which are not just particular to Guatemala, but are generationally and/or regionally situated. Nonetheless, the (albeit frustrating) exercise proved extremely generative in exposing the colonial taming of language and narrative. It exposed damaging effects of assuming that difference, alterity, or the unknown is an error that can/should be corrected and made more legible and comprehensible within dominant normative and linguistic logics. Many of these so-called "errors" became the scrapes that I quilted together in the chapters that follow.

Chapter 6: Recognizing the Pluriverse in Spaces of Inquiry and Learning

I was raised around ghosts, not in the sense that I saw ghosts, or the dead spoke to me, but they did to the people around me. Summer vacations spent at Lilydale, a prominent Spiritualist community in upstate New York normalized seances and readings by mediums, who spoke to me of my ancestors, transmitting messages that were occasionally sweepingly profound but mostly strangely mundane. Twice daily during the summer, mediums hold services at Inspiration Stump, a small, raised cement podium surrounded by wooden benches and lush walls of pine trees and sylvan greenery, humming with energy of the forest. I tried to be open to the spectral, listening for the rappings - tapping sounds that the dead supposedly used to communicate with the living - a “spiritual telegraph” (Donovan & Ratner, 2017) of how the unseen made their presence recognizable. The term became the title of one of the first Spiritualist newsletters in the 1850s, with the tagline “The Agitation of Thoughts is the Beginning of Wisdom” (Partridge, 1855). As social figures with agency, those who haunted asked something of the living, demanding to be listened to, and recognized. In the case of Spiritualists, they found a home particularly among women, who as the voice for the dead, spoke out against slavery and the death penalty and demanded women’s right to suffrage. Their otherworldly communications meant their calls for justice represented a cacophony of voices, whose silent entreaties demanded not just an audience, but justice.

I have come back to these early encounters with spectrality and their lingering reverberations as I re-center the pluriverse in my research analysis, and examine the agitating wisdoms of the fantastical, spectral, and otherworldly in the spaces of learning, dialogue, and

inquiry with teachers. The absent presence of the ghostly vestiges of horror and death that continued to startle and scare resonated for me in how they were woven throughout the inquiry process of “what happened,” transgressing evidentiary approaches to truth-telling and sense-making. Tracing the agitations of the otherworldly / pluriversal within the research / learning space has allowed me to explore other possible interpretations for why the (hi)stories of Armed Conflict, massacre, and authoritarian violence remain ensconced in silence and misinformation and shrouded in fear and mistrust. The otherworldly opens up engagement with the pluriverse and relational ontologies and epistemologies that defy the logics of historiography and political science and unveil alternate ways of knowing and learning about violence circulating in the worlds in which the teachers live. With a decolonial intention to engage with multiple ways of knowing and telling the past and to recognize the epistemological pluriverse (Escobar, 2018b), the analysis explores multiple permutations of the otherworldly and what they allowed the teachers to know, feel, and express about power, trauma, fear, and mistrust.

The following sections present swatches of analysis of the looming presence/absence of past violence that haunted both the spaces of learning and inquiry with educators and also my return(s) to the research archives after a temporal lacuna. The scrapes I have gathered, patterned into sections, and stitched together pull together encounters with the otherworldly, with those moments, spaces, and objects that haunt me, the participants, and/or our work together, tracing the spectral figures that “draw us affectively sometimes against our will and always a bit magically, into a structure of feeling of a reality we come to experience, not as cold knowledge, but as a transformative recognition” (Gordon, 1997/2008, p. 8). Elevating the touch of what Western ontologies label as fantastical in our encounters and collisions with Guatemala’s violent past exposes the markers of Indigenous cosmologies in Guatemalan Spanish by Indigenous and

Mestizo/Ladino teachers alike (Henne, 2012). This chapter traces examples of the presence of the pluriverse in teacher learning, quilting the appearance of beings labeled as myths and legends, the places with the ability to tell stories, and the body and heart as holders of memory, knowledge, and wisdom.

The Otherworldly as an Irruption of the Pluriverse

Retrospectively I can feel when the cognitive parameters of historical thinking began to crack, as alternate ways of knowing and being in the world disrupted disciplined and disciplinary habits of reading the world(s). As I relistened to audio recordings of conversations with teachers, animating the transtemporal affective reach of the transcriptions on my screen and the testimonies they contain (Macón, 2023), I could hear my words quicken and stumble with both curiosity and incredulity at the sight/site of ghosts and other fantastical beings as historical sources. Nonetheless, I have found it generative to feel into moments with noise and friction as the frames I clung to scratched (Dernikos, Lesko, McCall & Niccolini, 2020) against their misalignment with the layered narratives of the past steeped in alternate realities and relational ontologies that teachers brought into spaces of inquiry (Escobar, 2018a). Despite the persistence of colonial structures embedded in the grammar of schooling (Tyack & Cuban, 1995) orienting pedagogical practice and content, the educators found ways to transgress Western ontologies and assert the presence of otherworldly beings lingering in the wake of state terror, violence, and Armed Conflict. Their stories meddled into an interstice between heavily mediated histories of "what happened" and state-sponsored oblivion, leading me to follow Rivera Cuscanqui's (2020) analytical attention to ambiguity and uncertainty and explore the "spaces with sliding boundaries and flickering edges, spaces where things exist and then cease to be, where they mutate, invest, or are contaminated by new relationships, uses and meanings" (Gago, 2020, p. xxii).

Many of the swatches of dialogue presented below are pulled from a conversation over lunch during the in-person workshop which directly took up the history of the Armed Conflict in Guatemala. The morning's activities had invited participants to position themselves in proximity to a paper in the middle of the room that said *Conflicto Armado Interno*, or Internal Armed Conflict, based on the extent to which the conflict had impacted their lives and/or the lives of their families. While many participants had the opportunity to explain and narrate why they situated themselves where they did, not everyone had the time or space to do so. The affective weight of stories of fear, disappearances, and (forced) participation / complicity in violence lingered after the close of the activity as teachers sat down for lunch. Another teacher and I had just sat down to join a group of teachers for lunch when Olivia launched into a story of a gunfight she witnessed as a child. I quickly grabbed my recorder.

Nahual Swatch …

> Olivia: Los guerrilleros también identificaban personas, líderes para eliminar, porque eran los que estaban a favor del ejército, para eliminarnos a ellos. Entonces en Cunén se armaba una balacera, pero solo para echarlos, que no bajaran al pueblo, que hubiera enfrentamientos ahí en el área urbana y entonces los ahuyentaban así. En una comunidad donde creció mi mamá, mi familia materna, mis tíos - uno era comisionado y el otro comandante - cuando se armaba la revuelca, bajaban los guerrilleros a la comunidad, para pasar al pueblo, se agarraba bien fuerte la balacera, la balacera era muy fuerte. Incluso, los guerrilleros tenían eso, yo no sé específicamente cómo llamarle a eso, que se convertían en animales para rastrear en dónde estaba la patrulla, a veces era un perro, a veces un gato, un toro, una vaca y ellos no entendían por qué siempre los encontraban, pero eran los animales. Hasta que se dieron cuenta y agarraron un perro, le dieron unos

cuantos balazos y le echaron gasolina, el perro decía "patrulleros huecos, patrulleros huecos'' y una vaca también, la hirieron y cuando los iba siguiendo la vaca, delante de ellos, la vaca dio vueltas hacia delante y hacia atrás y cuando vieron de nuevo, eran cuatro guerrilleros corriendo.

Charlotte: ¿Quién te contó esas historias?

Olivia: Esas yo las vi. Mis tíos nos contaron lo que pasó en esa noche de la vaca y los perros, ellos nos contaron, porque yo estaba en la casa de mis abuelos cuando fue esa balacera, entonces ellos fueron afuera, y regresaron a contarnos lo que estaba pasando. Y yo estaba con la abuela, y mi abuela me dijo no tengas miedo y me abrazó duro, no vayas a llorar, porque la casa estaba rodeada de guerrilleros, adelante estaban los guerrilleros y atrás estaban los patrulleros.[45]

Yosotros as Witness

Olivia begins the story speaking in third person, but when I asked who told her the story of the figures of dogs, cows, and other creatures that upon being discovered or wounded morphed into guerrillas, she exclaimed, "I saw it, my uncles told us what happened." Her story

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[45] The guerrillas also identified people, leaders to eliminate, because they were the ones who were in favor of the army. So in Cunén a shootout [armed response] was organized, but only to get rid of them, so that they wouldn't go down to the town, so there would be confrontations there in the urban area and then they would scar them away like that. In the community where my mother, my maternal family, and my uncles grew up - one was a commissioned military officer and the other a commander - and when the heavy fighting broke out, the guerrillas would come down to the community to enter the town, intense shooting would start, the shooting it was very strong. The guerrillas even had this… I don't know specifically what to call it. They turned into animals to track where the [civil] patrollers were. Sometimes it was a dog, sometimes a cat, a bull, a cow and they [the patrollers] didn't understand why they always found them, but it was the animals. Until they [the patrollers] realized [what was happening] and grabbed a dog, shot it a few times and poured gasoline on it, the dog said "faggot patrollers, faggot patrollers" and [there was] a cow too. They wounded it and as they ran after it, in front of them, the cow spun forwards and backwards and when they looked again, it was four guerrillas running.
CH: Who told you those stories?
Those I saw. My uncles told us what happened that night with the cow and the dogs, they told us, because I was at my grandparents' house when the shooting took place, so they went outside and came back to tell us what was happening. And I was with my grandmother, and my grandmother told me don't be afraid and hugged me hard, don't go crying, because the house was surrounded by guerrillas, in front were the guerrillas and behind were the patrolmen.

bears witness to a shared memory of how her grandmother sheltered her in her arms, comforting her from the cacophony of gunshots and armed men surrounding the house. Her telling breaks the rules of Western ontology, as she orates her memory from the *yosotros*, a way of being, knowing, and remembering "originated from Mayan worldview and language… [that combines] Yo (I) with Nosotros (us) to form yosotros (yo+nosotros)" (Albarrán González, 2022, p. 35; Intzín, 2015, Chilisa, 2012). Her retelling smudges divisions between the I and the We as she articulates her family's encounter with shapeshifting guerrillas, melding together what was seen, felt, heard and told into a scene from the past that both belongs to her and her family. Though she does not self-identify as Indigenous, her rendition is spun with other tales of the past that escape the Western delineation between what happens to me versus you or us, and the resulting implications for evaluations of the veracity or legitimacy of an account.

Within the framework of transitional justice, truth-telling measures that bolster legal cases against perpetrators and/or endeavor to shift the public consciousness of past violence play a critical role in confronting whitewashed official histories spun by the government and the military leaders to deny or justify their actions (Kaye, 1997; Popkin & Roht-Arriaza, 1997; Llewellyn & Howse, 1999; Hayner, 2001). The incorporation of historical inquiry pedagogies in the *diplomado* echoed these goals, with the aim of addressing the discomforts of conflicting accounts and building practices of civil dissensus (Rancière & Corcoran, 2010; Osiel, 1999; Mouffe, 2013). This intention drove my question about the source of this story, with the implication that knowing the source can help evaluate its validity. Yet, Olivia's story serves a different epistemological purpose. She upsets the individualized, liberal notion of the power of the witness, challenging the model of *testimonio* as a critical truth-telling genre and tool by marginalized, subaltern populations to speak truth to power in the face of oppression, exclusion,

and even extermination (Beverly, 2004). Instead, she garners the discursive and cultural force of the *yosotros*, presenting a collective narrative that invites us to find meaning and learn from stories that might not meet the criteria of positivist or legal requirements for bearing witness. Speaking in the yosotros serves as a marker for relational subjectivities, where beings remain in constant, iterative construction in relation to other beings, both human and non-human, and the I cannot be separated from the We. The primacy of individual identity and one's own perception of reality, a logic steeped in capitalist trappings of possession and ownership, is seeded to relational epistemologies where knowledge is produced through relationships with others, living and nonliving, human and non-human (Chilisa, 2012).

The concept of *ch'ixi* or motley as proposed by Rivera Cusicanqui (2020) provides another lens for analyzing the subjectivities at work in Olivia's discourse pairing of "I saw it, my uncles told me." Rivera Cusicanqui differentiates the notion of motley from that of hybridity articulated by Nestor Garcia Canclini (1995), which "assumes the possibility that from a mixture of two different beings a third completely new one can emerge (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2020, p. 66). Hybridity as a metaphor drawn from biology remains problematic in that the hybrid is infertile; it cannot germinate new ways of being. Instead *ch'ixi*, the motley "expresses the parallel coexistence of multiple cultural differences that do not extinguish but instead antagonize and complement each other. Each one reproduces itself from the depths of the past and relations to others in a contentious way" (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2020, p. 66). The I/We does not represent a fusion, but a dialogic form of knowledge production where the antagonisms and contradictions of co-presences can open alternate ways of bearing witness and speaking to histories of violence. Within Western ontologies and epistemologies (and admittedly how I first understood this account), her telling could be interpreted as an appropriation of her uncle's story as her own or a

confused machination of a child experiencing violence and trauma. However, within relational ontologies, she articulates both an individual and shared memory, giving voice to a relational way of sharing and re-membering knowledge.

Recognizing the Poetics of Mayan Resistance

When I first began to think and write about this conversation, I paid more attention to the narrative layers and collage-work of teachers collectively piecing together "what happened" during the Armed Conflict in Cunén. I was more attuned to who and what the teachers valued and trusted as sources of historical knowledge, and the gaps and silences around what they could not make sense of or explain. In my early memoing, I wrote that the guerrillas were "dressed as animals," which is different from what Olivia actually said: "se convertían en animales" [they turned into animals]. I could not hear her, though I was listening with rapt attention. The roar of Western ontological frameworks that strictly delineate between humans and animals warped how I internally visualized what she described into a scene of guerillas running away into the darkness, yelling obscenities, as they pulled animal costumes over their heads and discarded them. It was only when, due to problems with the transcriptions, I was forced to review the text of the audio recordings word by word that I realized that I had molded her story into something palatable and comprehensible within my internalized Western logics. She was speaking on a different ontological plane about the guerrillas' shapeshifting abilities, or *nahualismo* (Rivera, 2021) as this ontological duality between humans and their tonal animal counterparts is called in much of Mesoamerica.

With shifting meanings and manifestation over time and space, *nahualismo* defies Western delineations between human and non-human, centering the interconnection of beings. Within contemporary mainstream media in Guatemala, the figure of the nahual is primarily

associated with the Mayan calendar as the benevolent animal or natural force who, based on the date of your birth, accompanies and guides you throughout your life (Ochoa, 2024). Yet, the older, more sinister figure of the shapeshifter who has detached from their human side in order to access the powers of their nahual does continue to circulate, as I found when listening to podcasts about histories, myths and legends of Guatemala. They live in whispers, relegated to the realm of myths, and rendered unrecognizable as beings.

No one named the power that the guerrillas had leveraged to outsmart and evade the patrollers as *nahualismo* in the moment; Olivia herself couched what she described by saying "yo no sé específicamente cómo llamarle a eso." [I don't know specifically what to call this.] Despite not identifying as Indigenous, nor having the language to name it, Olivia described a transformative power that has existed in Mayan cosmologies since at least the post-Classical period (900-1521 AD), with some of earliest documented conceptualizations appearing in the *Popul Vuh*. Linares (2019) describes the relationship to *nahuales* as a mechanism for exercising power, one that is derived from the ability to communicate across cosmic planes:

> El nahualismo es una práctica de mediación y comunicación entre planos cósmicos que se puede utilizar para diferentes fines en diferentes sociedades. … Detrás de estas modificaciones se puede encontrar en las sociedades mesoamericanas una concepción del poder como intermediario entre los planos del cosmos, entre hombres y animales, entre sociedad y naturaleza, entre tierra, cielo e inframundo, entre antepasados y contemporáneos, entre presente, pasado y futuro. Y el nahualismo en sus diferentes manifestaciones es una técnica privilegiada para lograr esa comunicación.[46] (p. 176-177)

[46] Translation: Nahualism is a practice of mediation and communication between cosmic planes that can be used for different purposes in different societies. ... Behind these modifications one can find in Mesoamerican societies a conception of power as an intermediary between the planes of the cosmos, between men and animals, between society and nature, between earth, sky and underworld, between ancestors and contemporaries, between present, past

The spectral figure of the guerrilla as a supernatural malevolent force heightens the already well-worn conception of the guerrillas as "the bad guys" who posed a threat to the communities for whom they supposedly were trying to fight. Olivia's distrust and fear of them echoes many of her peers' sentiments, while elevating their actions to something even more powerful. As *nahuales*, they confound and imperil the patrollers, deceiving and misleading them in their animal form, leveraging an otherworldliness to attack their enemies. Their presence in her memories suggests alternative conceptions and mechanisms of power and influence that are incommensurable within Western ontologies, and cannot be perceived without recognition of the pluriversal nature of how Olivia and her colleagues were engaging with the past.

The appearance of *nahuales* in stories of the Armed Conflict speaks to the artifacts of Mayan cosmologies woven into the fabric of Guatemalan society that have stubbornly refused elimination and extermination. As K'iche' poet Humberto Ak'abal defiantly declared in his poem *Robo*:

> Nos han robado
> tierras, árboles, agua…
> De lo que no han podido
> adueñarse es del Nawal.
>
> Ni podrán.[47]

Literary and linguistic scholarship of Guatemalan Spanish and Mayan literary production provides the most helpful insights into reading the presences and absences of Mayan cosmologies within teachers' stories of the Armed Conflict (Henne, 2012; Keme, 2021; Navarette Quan, 2019; Yanes, 2014). Even recognizing them and naming them as products of

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and future. And nahualism in its different manifestations is a privileged technique to achieve this communication. (p. 176-177).

[47] Translation: They have stolen from us / land, trees, water… / What they have not been able / to take over is the Nawal. / Nor will they be able to.

Mayan cosmologies can activate the rejections and negations of internal colonization, which has only heightened in recent years with the growing strength and size of *evangélicos*, as they are referred to in Guatemala, or neo-Pentecostal Christian churches (Lewis O'Neill, 2009). The syncretic elements of Catholic religious and cultural rituals, such as processions, dances, the dressing of saints, have been recast as sinful and/or *brujería*, witchcraft. Despite the strength of Christian-driven internal colonization, Indigenous cosmologies have nonetheless resisted extermination, appearing in the linguistic grammar and poetics of Guatemalan Spanish (Henne, 2012; Keme, 2021; Yanes, 2014). In his analysis of the use of Guatemalan Spanish by Mayan literary authors, Yanes (2014) argued that:

> Guatemalan Spanish is a heavily Maya-inflected interlanguage or *koiné* shared by *all* Guatemalans. Mayan writers chose purposefully to counter imminent ladino ethnocentrism of the time, including its ideologies of racial and linguistic "purity." This would, then, force all Guatemalans to confront the fact that not only ladino culture has infiltrated Maya society, but that since the conquest, all Guatemalans have been culturally and linguistically mayanized. This is in spite of the racial caste system that stealthily thrives to this day, as is manifested within the entire spectrum of variation of Guatemalan Spanish. (p. 3, author's italics)

The pluriversality of Guatemala memory and history irrupts into view with the unfolding of collective memories, though at times unbeknownst to the holder of the memory. Recognizing the heterogeneous Indigenous relational ontologies at work in the poetics of the teachers' storytelling and memory work opens space to alternatively inquire and make sense of the past. It also opens the possibility to draw on the poetics of Indigenous resistance as a decolonizing thread to be tugged at as educators envision alternate futures beyond the confines of liberal notions of peace.

Protecting Cunén Swatches …

Official or formal historical narratives of the way the Armed Conflict played out in Cunén are relatively limited. Particularly during the height of the state-sponsored violence and genocide in the early 1980s, the experience for inhabitants of Cunén sits in stark juxtaposition to the impacts of the Scorched Earth / *Tierra Arrasada* policy of the government of General Efrain Rios Montt that decimated rural Indigenous communities just on the other side of the mountain around what the military called the Ixil Triangle - Santa Maria Nebaj, San Gaspar Chajul, and San Juan Cotzal. By 1986, a third of the rural Ixil population in this area had been wiped out by what the military called Operation Plan Sofía (CEH, 1999). During the workshops, participants analyzed excerpts from military documents on Operation Plan Sofía that had been anonymously sent to Kate Doyle from the National Security Archives in the United States in 2009. They engaged with collectively unresolved arguments about whether genocide was committed in Guatemala by examining the evidence about of the repression, violence, and extermination of their Ixil neighbors who lived on the other side of mountain, just 15 miles away.

Yet, searching for formal narratives of what transpired during the Armed Conflict in Cunén does not produce many results. The Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (REHMI, 1998) report sponsored by the Catholic Church reported that the army, commissioned military officers, and the civil patrol units committed at least four massacres in Cunén in 1981 and 1982. The *Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico* (CEH, 1999) documents instances of sabotage of infrastructure, robbery and extrajudicial assassinations by the *Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres* (EGP), the guerrilla group that operated in the Quiché department and was one of the four that negotiated the peace accords with the government between 1994 and 1996. One of the acts of sabotage committed by the EGP was the burning of the municipal offices and post office

in Cunén on December 21, 1981, an event referenced by Olivia during our lunch conversation, which resulted in the destruction of municipal documents. Both the official truth-telling reports and the Operation Plan Sofía documents mention the involvement of soldiers from the outpost in Cunén in military operations against the civilian population during the height of the violence in the 1980s. The lack of published or official materials about the Armed Conflict drove our conversation as Olivia and the other teachers endeavored to patchwork a historical memory of the Armed Conflict in Cunén.

Invoking another manifestation of nahualism that appeared in the Popul Vuh, where clouds and rain gathered as protection (Linares, 2000), Olivia related what she had heard about why the military did not attack Cunén as much as they did other communities: "el comandante de guerrillas había dicho que, 'yo había escuchado que cada vez que querían bombardear no podían, porque se ponía una nube muy espesa y no los dejaba ver. Ahí ellos entendieron que había algo que protegía y no querían atentar con eso.'"[48]

Jacobo then chimed in to share what he called a "myth" about how the city's patron saint protected the city:

> J: Según decían, hay un mito, que como la patrona de Cunén, la virgen de Candelaria, dicen que venían los guerrilleros a bombardear Cunén, pero ella aparece y les dice que no, que se vayan por otro lado y cuando se dan cuenta, estaban en otro municipio, al igual los soldados, planificaban de ir a bombardear, pero aparecía la virgen y les decía que no y así fue como no afectó tanto la violencia o el conflicto armado a Cunén. Se murieron, no

[48] Translation: the guerrilla commander had said that, 'I had heard that every time they wanted to bomb they couldn't, because there was a very thick cloud and they couldn't see it. That's when they understood that there was something that was protecting them and they didn't want to attack it.

recuerdo si son 21 o 22, que los exhumaron por el arenal, pero son los soldados ahí en la entrada de Cunén, había una fosa ahí donde enterraron a civiles…

CH: ¿Pero a quienes mataron?

J: Civiles.

J: Son los soldados que registraban a todos los buses que pasaban y encontraban a alguien que no tenía documentos, entonces lo bajaban y lo metían ahí en un salón y a media noche obligaban a los patrulleros a que los llevaran a cavar la fosa y después los regresaban y días después los llevaron, los torturaron y los tiraron ahí.[49]

Syncretism and the Pluriverse

Though I had asked the group how they might investigate what happened in Cunén during the Armed Conflict, nudging them towards empirical, positivist forms of inquiry, the pluriversal elements couldn't be contained. The otherworldly, in this case, the protective clouds and the Virgin of Candelaria and her ability to relocate belligerent forces, irrupted into the conversation. They provide "notic[e] that what's been suppressed or concealed is very much alive and present, messing and interfering precisely with always incomplete forms of containment and repression" (Gordon, 2011, p.2). When weaving the fantastical into the mnemonic patchwork, they meddle into the "interstice between the visible and the invisible" (p.

[49] According to what they would say, there is a myth, that like the patron saint of Cunén, the Virgin of Candelaria, they say that the guerrillas came to bomb Cunén, but she appears and tells them no, to go the other way and when they realize, they were In another municipality, like the soldiers, they planned to go bomb, but the Virgin appeared and told them no and that was how the violence or the Armed Conflict did not affect Cunén as much. They died, I don't remember if there are 21 or 22, they were exhumed by the sandy area, but they are the soldiers there at the entrance to Cunén, there was a grave there where they buried civilians…
But who did they kill?
Civilians.
They are the soldiers who searched all the buses that passed and found someone who did not have documents, so they would take him down and put him there in a room and at midnight they would force the patrolmen to take them to dig the grave and then they would take them back and days later they took them, tortured them and threw them there.

24) forces at work from the past, and broaden the range of forces and beings with agency to protect and/or harm.

The stories of the past collide, as with the seamless transition from the miraculous abilities of the Virgin of Candelaría to the number of people that died and were exhumed from a mass grave situated next to the entrance to Cunén. I remember feeling the disjuncture between what I was imagining as a floating savior shift abruptly to the image of decaying bodies lumped on top of each other beneath the ground next to the gas station. I thought about how many times I had passed that site, unmarked and unremarkable. The affective pivots that Jacobo curates release the narrative from linear constraints, pinning additional stories onto the historical quilt-in-the-making of Cunén's past. The telling invites us as listener-witnesses to "re-think [our] expectations, demanding [we] complicate [our] desire for relatively straightforward and conclusive ways of telling a story" (Simon, 2011, p. 194).

The patron saints were assigned to each town by leaders in the Catholic Church at the end of the 16th century, ostensibly placing a town under the protection of its saint (García, 2017; Castro 2021). The yearly religious celebrations, characterized by processions, the burning of *pom* and *copal* as offering, and the *danzas autóctonas*, autochthonous dances, are steeped in syncretic tension as a performance of Indigenous resistance to the cultural genocide of the Spanish conquistadors and the missionaries they bought in tow. The *Virgin de la Candelaria* and the celebrations in her honor across the Americas / Abya Yala enact embodied and linguistic performances of resistance and survival by Indigenous communities (Merediz, 2001). As Guatemalan historian Aníbal Chajón explained (Castro, 2021):

> En los mayas ya existía la necesidad de manifestar adoración a un ser supremo. Los rituales, los rezos, uso de candelas, quema de pom y las procesiones son aportes

> prehispánicos a las fiestas patronales, mientras el aporte hispano consiste en las fechas y momentos en que se celebran siguiendo el santoral católico," explica Aníbal Chajón, historiador y sociólogo. "Antiguas fórmulas y deidades fueron sustituidas por un Dios cristiano y oraciones como el Padre Nuestro y el Ave María", añade. Los frailes se preocuparon porque la festividades no estuvieran "contaminadas" de religiosidad prehispánica, pero no lo lograron. Se adoptó la adoración cristiana, porque nadie habla del Dios del maíz, pero el terreno era fértil para dar fruto a la devoción católica.[50]

The invocation of the Virgin of Candelaria, generally depicted with a child in one hand and green candle in the other, and her protective powers interfaces[51] the historical patchwork with centuries of Indigenous struggle and resistance. The affective and symbolic weight of the patron saints and the yearly celebrations in their honor have long transcended Catholic doctrine, functioning as iterative, shifting productions of identity and community, though the "appropriat[ion] of the icon to demarcate local and alternative cultural and religious identity" (Merediz, 2001, p. 127). The generational ebbs and flows of ancestral knowledge, fragmented by episodic socio-political violence and oppression, nonetheless survived as symbolic anchors that framed how the educators and those in their communities explained the inexplicable nature of state-sponsored violence.

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[50] The Mayans already had the need to show adoration to a supreme being. The rituals, the prayers, the use of candles, the burning of pom and the processions are pre-Hispanic contributions to the patron saint festivals, while the Hispanic contribution consists of the dates and times in which they are celebrated following the Catholic calendar of saints," explains Aníbal Chajón, historian and sociologist. "Ancient formulas and deities were replaced by a Christian God and prayers such as the Our Father and the Hail Mary," he adds. The friars were concerned that the festivities were not "contaminated" by pre-Hispanic religiosity, but they did not succeed. Christian worship was adopted, because no one speaks of the God of corn, but the ground was fertile for giving fruit to Catholic devotion.

[51] Interfacing in sewing or quilting involves sewing or fusing with heat a layer of material to make a fabric more stable.

Los Encantos: The Presence of Absence

Reflecting on a weeklong walk through the Sahara, Badkhen (2022) contemplates, "What is a place? A memory of our presence, a memory of our absence. A separation sets the two apart. Sometimes the severing takes the shape of a mountain of sand that swallows a village" (p. 12). I borrow her framing and syntax to consider the hills outside of Nebaj. Something the severing takes the shape of a plateau of overgrown vegetation etched into the mountain slope that conceals and exposes the remnants of a house razed to the ground. This section explores the appearance of places that move, haunt, and speak within the teachers' stories of their engagements with difficult histories.

The firm Forensic Architecture (2014) conducted a geographic study of the region termed by the Guatemalan Army as the Ixil Triangle to document the environmental evidence of the genocide of the Ixil people between 1981 and 1983 (Grandin, 2003). Using a combined methodology of remote sensing, pattern analysis, geolocation, and fieldwork, the firm collaborated with several preeminent Guatemalan human rights organizations involved in the prosecution of human rights violations during the Armed Conflict to document and visualize the environmental footprint of massacres, the destruction of property, livestock and agriculture, and forced displacement as part of a campaign of extermination of the Ixil Mayan communities (Forensic Architecture, 2014). The documentary of the investigatory process traces how local survivors trekked through the cloud forest with researchers to identify the overrun indentations into Guatemala's mountainous topography where homes once stood. A disruption, or severing, of an otherwise steep landscape was a clue that the land had once been leveled to construct a home, its stone foundation buried under the weight of overgrowth, silently looming as a signpost of both presence and absence. Avocado and peach trees that survived the razing of villages,

communities, and bodies that inhabited them served as other markers, bearing witness to that which once was.

Only those who survived or knew how to read the forest and recognize the disruptions and successions in the vegetative assemblages could uncover these vestiges of human life and communal living destroyed by the military. Those who lived with the mountains could hear the stories of violence they had endured and see its scars on the earth. The survivors served as interpreters for the land, translating variations in vegetative growth into an evidentiary modality of the spatial dimensions of genocide that made sense to the courts. The fieldwork mapping of the sites of massacres, executions, and the destruction of villages helped communicate the tales of the forest. By comparing satellite images from before and after the violence inflicted upon the Ixil community, the research team could quantify the growth and destruction of vegetation over time, highlighting in green how the destruction of communities led unattended agriculture fields to flourish and become overgrown, and in red, the impacts of either the military's scorched earth campaign and forced displacement of survivors into centralized, easily surveillable and easily controllable so-called "model communities" (CEH, 1999).

The land has stories to tell, and those who live in relation, who remain in proximal relations to movements and messages of the mountains, trees, and rivers can serve as interlocutors for the non-human witnesses. The work of Forensic Architecture found a way to translate what survivors could perceive from the forests and jungles into legal prose, articulating scientifically and graphically the howls and marks of human and non-human destruction. The scars and messages from the land also moved and agitated the spaces of learning and inquiry, with the teachers acting as translators and liaisons for the spaces and places marked by massacre and genocide. The walls of the community center in Villa Hortensia, an Ixil community (*aldea*)

outside of Cotzal that found itself in the crosshairs of elimination by the military, still vibrate from the aftershocks of aerial bombings, unsettling and haunting Jacobo's sleep. The ghosts of massacre victims in the school haunt and scare Nelly's father, agitating his nerves to the point that the entire family had to join him at night as he "guarded" the school.

I intentionally write this section with the non-human - the land, human remains, the forests, the otherworldly - as the agents propelling movement, agitating thought, affect, and emotion, and with the educators as interlocutors of their touch. I could write about the stories that teachers tell about these places, but by invoking relational ontologies, I instead have paid attention to what the non-human moves and agitates, exploring how the teachers discursively translate and construct in the present the rappings in the walls, messages in the vegetation, and other spectral telegraphs from the past.

Villa Hortensio Swatch…

Some of the sites of massacre and atrocity hide themselves beneath the earth even still, the bodies interred beneath the weight of impunity and forced oblivion. Other sites scream in silence, as the memories of the horrors that unfolded in public spaces continue to haunt the present. The small Ixil *aldea*, or small community, of Villa Hortensio II is nested into rich overgrown vegetation at the end of windy roads from Cotzal, or a two-and-a-half-hour trek from Cunén, one which Jacobo took many times over the year he worked in the community to build a new school structure in the early 2000s. In order to not make the hike every day, he would often sleep in the local hall, despite the admonishments from those in the community that the space was haunted. Jacobo shared his story of sleeping among the ghosts of massacre victims from the community of Villa Hortensio II, whom his prayers protected him from hearing, but whose present absence remained tethered to the site of violence:

Escuché testimonios de varias personas de ahí y me contaban de varias personas de allí, y me contaba cómo quedaba, que aquí quedaban uno aquí, otro allá [los cuerpos] y un día que fuimos a buscar agua a la montaña, me dijeron, aquí hay un gran hoyo y aquí hay agua y bajamos a ver, pero cómo la vamos a sacar, si está muy profundo y ahí hay ropas, rebozos, jarras, candiles, son evidencias que estuvieron refugiados algunas personas ahí, vivieron cierto tiempo, en fin de que a veces, decían, como yo me quedaba durmiendo en un saloncito y me decían, ¡no le da miedo de dormir aquí?, no, porque aquí espantan, como ahí mataron a mucha gente. Se escuchaban gritos, se escuchaba que pasaba gente por las noches, pero yo no escuché nada durante ese año que trabajé ahí, no vi nada y antes de dormir oraba, pero si no me gustó trabajar en ese lugar.[52]

Spectrality of Genocide

The community was slated for elimination under the brutal dictator General Efraín Ríos Montt, whose brutal scorched earth campaign against "insurgents" from 1980 to 1982 resulted in over 200,000 deaths (CEH, 1999). Though the General was found guilty by Guatemalan courts of committing "acts of genocide" against the Ixil Indigenous community on May 13, 2013, making Guatemala the first country to find its own leader guilty of genocide, the ruling was overturned on a technicality ten days later (Watts, 2013). One survivor from Villa Hortensio II provided testimony at the genocide trial, Don Nicolas Toma Matóm, who spoke through a translator in Ixil of how the army murdered his parents, siblings, and children, burned down the

[52] Translation: I heard testimonies from several people from there and they told me about several people from there, and they told me how it was, that here there was one here, another one there [the bodies] and one day when we went to look for water in the mountain, they told me, here is a big hole and here is water and we went down to see, But how are we going to get it out, if it's very deep and there are clothes, shawls, jars, lamps, evidence that some people were refugees there, they lived there for a certain period of time, and sometimes, like me, they would say, I would sleep in a little room and they would say to me, aren't you afraid to sleep here? , No, because they scare people here, like they killed a lot of people there. You could hear screams, you could hear people passing by at night, but I didn't hear anything during the year I worked there, I didn't see anything and before I went to sleep I prayed, but I didn't like working in that place.

community, including the agricultural fields leaving them without any means of sustenance, and then fled to the mountains with a handful of other survivors (Organismo Judicial de Guatemala, C.A., 2013, p. 203). The hall where Jacobo slept, the land upon which he built the schools, and the hole where he went looking for water, but found artifacts of survival, all hold the memories of presence and absence. Encounters with the space provoke a retelling, a recognition of who and what is now absent, and lingering ghostly presence of what horror leaves behind. Even without any official marking or memorial that a massacre took place, the spaces hold on to and then find ways of provoking the "seething presence" (Gordon, 2008, p. 8) of those whose absence has barely escaped oblivion.

Thread: Resuscitating Ancestral Histories and Knowledges of the Heart

This section tugs on and examines a thread that Nelly, a secondary social sciences teacher, wove into our work together. She centered the heart in the inquiry process, her encounters with historical memories, and her work with students, dodging moves towards cognitive, analytical engagements with the past to envision paths of pedagogical *corazonando,* roughly translated as heartening, when learning difficult histories. In order to explore a becoming-claim about the pedagogical possibilities of drawing on the heart as a starting place to *sembrear* (plant the seeds) alternate pedagogical relationships (Espinoza Gómez y Guerrero Arias, 2022) based on trust and openness, I analyze how Nelly explained and enacted *corazonando*, which I put into conversation with Indigenous and decolonial conversations about heartening and feel-thinking / think-feeling memories and histories of violence and oppression.

Nelly's repetition of the phrase *abrir su corazón* (open your/their heart) throughout the process did not get taken up and examined by the other member of her inquiry group, but rather during one of our last one-on-one conversations. We explored the pedagogical dimensions of

inviting students to open their hearts to and with their teachers as they not only learn about the past, but "*revivir en nuestro corazón todo lo que pasaron nuestros familiares,*" relive/revive in our heart everything that happened to our families. Activating the heart as a site and process of learning difficult histories, the action of *corazonar* / heartening aligns with 1) Mayan Indigenous cosmologies (Intzín 2015; Intzín, 2021b; Hernández-Castillo, 2022), where "*los cuerpos tienen su propia voz, palabra y lugares de conocimiento*"[53] (Sánchez y Percia, 2023, p. 49), 2) decolonial endeavors to "warm up reason" (Santos, 2018; Cariño & Montelongo, 2022), and 3) pedagogical endeavors in Abya Yala to *corazonar* and *sentipensar* spaces of learning (Rendón, 2009; Espinoza, 2020; Espinoza Gómez y Guerrero Arias, 2022).

The history of the Armed Conflict still remains a lived history in that some of the protagonists are still alive, with some still contending with albeit hampered judicial efforts to hold them accountable (Burt, 2022; Caxaj Álvarez et al., 2017; González Riera, 2024) for mass murder and rape as a weapon of war. But as the years pass, the weight now rests on the 1.5 generation (Suleiman, 2002) (those with childhood memories of the conflict) and the post-memory generations (Hirsch, 2012), the children and grandchildren who have inherited, or using Nelly's conception, carry within their hearts, a living connection to the Armed Conflict.

The teachers in the research study fall into one of these two generational categories. Teachers like Valeria or Olivia carry visceral childhood memories of fear of the guerrillas and running to safety as bullets whizzed overheard, but their stories are woven from scraps and fragments of personal and collective memories, and often speak to the textures of a climate of fear and distrust that marked their childhood during the conflict. Others, like Ignacio, Juan Pablo, Nelly and Rodrigo sit in postmemory, which Hirsch (2012) describes as "the relationship that the

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[53] Translation: Bodies have their own voice, words and places of knowledge.

‘generation after’ bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before — to experiences they ‘remember’ only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up” (p. 5). As Ignacio explained prior to sharing an encounter his father had with the *guerilla* on the way to collect firewood, “*Esto ya no lo vivimos nosotros, pero son como que historias vividas.”*[54]

While Hirsch builds the language and conceptualization of post-memory from her experience of recalling stories of the war from her parents that “were more vibrant and more vivid in my memories than moments I recalled from my own childhood” (Hirsch, n.d.), the relationships to the familial and community memories of the Armed Conflict in Guatemala is steeped in silence, fear, and fragmentation. The affective reverberations of the past resound, but the transmission of stories remains contained by the complexities of responsibility/complicity and social disarticulation, hobbled by distrust and fear. Yet, postmemory, as Hirsch (2012) conceptualizes it, does not strictly delineate a temporal or spatial distance or delay; it “reflects an uneasy oscillation between continuity and rupture,” and functions “as a structure of inter- and transgenerational return of traumatic knowledge and embodied experience” (p. 5-6). The notion of return links nicely with how Nelly reconceptualized inquiry into the past as an experience of reliving and/or reviving, where the movements and agitations of *corazonando* that she and other authors describe complements the idea of postmemory as an intergenerational traumatic transfer. Nelly suggests a ragged, disjointed process of inheritance, with embodied contours that are not just felt and lived in the body, but that the body itself holds and/or opens access to ancestral, collective knowledges.

[54] Translation” We did not live through this, but they are like lived histories/stories.

Nelly linked learning what happened in history with an embodied engagement with the experiences, both past and present, of family members and ancestors. She was drawn to teaching by the emotional connections and relationships that are built with students: “la docencia es muy importante para el ser humano, donde uno encuentra sentimientos, amor y donde uno puede recibir más que todo, amor de los demás, porque cuando uno está en un aula, los estudiantes vienen a ser como hijos de uno.”[55] When asked why she decided to focus on the social sciences, she interfaced learning about social problems with what happens in the heart:

> La situación está en que uno no conoce todos los problemas de la sociedad, todo lo que ha acontecido en la historia, año por año y es importante conocer las raíces del pasado, no sólo conocer el presente, sino hacer **revivir en nuestro corazón** todo lo que pasaron nuestros familiares, cómo lucharon y algunos están vivos, pero otros fallecieron con la frente en alto en la guerra, pero los que tuvieron la oportunidad siguen viviendo y contando la historia de lo que aconteció.[56]

The phrase “*hacer revivir en nuestro corazón todo lo que pasaron a nuestros familias*” I initially heard / translated as **relive** in our heart everything that happened to our families, which is how the word is generally used in Guatemala, but *revivir* has another denotation (found in the dictionary[57]): to **revive** or even **resuscitate**. Using the first definition, knowing and learning the roots of the past provokes a reliving of a collective experience, with the “re-” impling that ancestral knowledge was already present in the body. Re-living something implies it has already

[55] Translation: Teaching is very important for human beings, where one finds feelings, love and where one can receive, above all, love from others, because when one is in a classroom, the students become like one's children.

[56] Translation: The situation is that one does not know all the problems of society, everything that has happened in history, year by year, and it is important to know the roots of the past, not only to know the present, but to revive in our hearts everything that our relatives went through, how they fought and some are alive, but others died with their heads held high in the war, but those who had the opportunity continue to live and tell the story of what happened.

[57] As per the Real Academia Española: https://dle.rae.es/revivir

been lived in the past, so if learning the roots of history incites in a repetition, the relational slippage between the I and the We become apparent. In learning about the past, the "I" activates something that is pre-existing in the body, specifically in the heart: a knowledge from ancestors, embodied collective wisdom, that is activated, resuscitated, revived through the process of learning.

When the heart opens, or decides to open, the stores of what Arboleda (2002) calls "intimate sufficiencies" are made available, which he describes as "a set of internal supplies to be found in collective memory, a stock of meanings to be resorted to at critical moments from the construction of life strategies" (p. 417; cited in Santos, 2018, p. 102). A somatic return to the past serves a different function than that posited by trauma theory, which frames the experience as an individual or collective psychoanalytical process of "working through" difficult knowledge (Pitt & Britzman, 2003). Instead, "it is rather a way of releasing the power of our ways of thinking, doing, and naming with a view to carving, plowing, and finally clearing alternative paths vis-a-vis the official institutions, which is a valid way to rethink how to relaunch the social movement" (Arboleda, 2002, p. 417; cited in Santos, 2018, p. 102). For Santos (2018), tapping into the wisdom, collective memories, and affective resources of resistance and resilience of Arboleda's "intimate sufficiencies" mobilizes a *corazonada* re-existence that bolsters internal resources and resolve to relive the past in the present (p. 101-102). As Nelly articulates, *corazonar* unearths threads between ancestors who struggled and fought in the past, some of whom are still living, and others who have passed, but nonetheless left roots of the past ("*raíces del pasado*") for the next generations to discover, bring back to life and harness in present and future struggles.

Hearting into re-existence ancestral knowledge signifies a struggle to revive relational ontologies and epistemologies (Blaser 2013; de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018; Escobar 2018) that have been buried beneath the hierarchies, categories, and separations of Cartesian principles, and restore worlds where all beings "have agency and will of its own. And although hierarchies exist, they do not necessarily follow the human (culture) / nonhuman (nature) division" (Blaser & de la Cadena, 2009, p. 7 as cited in Cariño & Montelongo González, 2022, p. 552, their translation). Resuscitating knowledges and ways of being buried and hidden away in the heart entails stimulating the reconnection of the body, mind, and spirit, restoring plasticity and multiplicity to reading and being in the world. Intzín (2021b, The In-surgence of Sp'ijilal O'tan section) conceptualizes the epistemologies of the heart, or *Sp'ijilal O'tan* in Tseltal Mayan language, as an action-reflection of a forgotten cosmos, where "we must immerse ourselves in our history, understanding our origins as Maya people," including "the *Popol Vuh* [as] a foundational text of our thought as Maya civilization." A text borne in resistance to the rapidly evolving erasure of Indigenous populations, the Popol Vuh used the weapons of the colonizers, the written word, to ensure that which had been passed down orally would not become lost under the weight of epistemic genocide. The heart as noun, verb, being, creator, and subject sits at the center of the creation of the Mayan cosmos:

> Thus were established the four corners, the four sides, as it is said, by the Framer and the Shaper, the Mother and the Father of life and all creation, the giver of breath and the **giver of heart***, they who give birth and **give heart to the light everlasting**, the child of light born of woman and the son of light born of man, they who are compassionate and wise in all things—all that exists in the sky and on the earth, in the lakes and in the sea. (*Popol Vuh*, 2007, p. 53-54)

The translator of this version of the *Popol Vuh* (2007), Allen J. Christenson, extensively annotates his translation in an attempt to interpret across incommensurable worlds, often to the point that the annotations of a single line of text fill entire pages. He adds a footnote (* in the text above) to explain his translation of giver of heart:

> K'uxlanel (literally "heartener"). The heart is the central defining essence of a person, or what might be referred to as the soul. Thus the creators are those who ensoul living things. In addition, the Quichés use "hearten" to refer to someone who provides for, looks after, tends to, or counsels someone. The verbal form of this word also has the sense of "to remember." In English this would be "bear in mind," but for the Quichés this would be conceived as "bear in heart." (*Popol Vuh*, 2007, p. 55)

While I recognize the multiplicities of interpretation and difference across the 32 Mayan languages (and the innumerous dialects of each) and the resulting movements in meaning and use across time and space, I do find it relevant to defer to Intzín (2021b, Definitions of Chu'lel section) who differentiates *O'tan* (heart) and *ch'ulel* as "the primary essence of existence." Nonetheless, Christenson's (2007) description of hearten reinforces the assertion that the heart within K'iche' language and Mayan cosmologies transcends its physiological or metaphorical denotations within Western ontologies and epistemologies. The use of heartening to describe a caretaker or counsel resonates with how Nelly's conceptualizes her work as an educator, particularly as the young people she is looking after and tending to navigate the affective labyrinths of the past, (re)membering the wisdom and histories of a "forgotten cosmos" (Intzín, 2021b, The In-surgence of Sp'ijilal O'tan section), as they bear in heart the weight of what has been silenced, lost, and/or contaminated.

With the Popol Vuh as a sacred signpost for Mayan ontologies and epistemologies, the heart continues to anchor ways of thinking and interacting in Mayan languages in ways that are incommensurable in English or Spanish. The *O'tan*, heart - understood not as an organ but "a metaphor, an image or space, a being or entity that feels and thinks" (Intzín, 2021b, Sp'ijilal O'tan: Knowledges or Epistemologies of the Heart section), which is visualized in how the word *O'tan* is colloquially used by Tseltal communities:

> *Bixi awo'tan* (What does your heart say?), *Lekbal ay awo'tan* (Is your heart well?), *Mame xa mel awo'tan* (May your heart not be sad), *Ma xch'ayat ta ko'tan* (I do not lose you in my heart or I do not forget you), *Kuxix ko'tan* (My heart rested or resuscitated), *Tse'el ko'tan yu'un ya kilbet asit* (My heart laughs because I see your eyes), *K'uxat ta ko'tan* (You hurt in my heart or I love you), *Yutsil ko'tantik* (The kindness of our heart), *Ya jnop ta ko'tantik* (We think or meditate with and in our heart), *A'yantaya ta awo'tan* (Discuss it in your heart), *Nopa sok ajaol awo'tan* (Think with your mind and heart) (Intzín, 2015 as cited in Intzín, 2021b, Sp'ijilal O'tan: Knowledges or Epistemologies of the Heart section).

The heart speaks, feels, remembers, grows tired or animated, thinks and speaks; the heart remains present in all actions and thoughts. The idiomatic evidences ways of coming to know and be in the world, where the heart and mind do not sit in binary opposition; rather the heart threads through the mind, and thinking back-stitches through feeling. Feeling and thinking do not function in binary opposition or separation. All thinking and knowing is enheartened: "We feel in order to think and we think in order to feel, so that any creative act passes through reason, and any rationality travels through our heart and feelings" (Inztín, 2021b, Sp'ijilal O'tan: Knowledges or Epistemologies of the Heart section).

While the portmanteau *sentipensante* helps communicate the inseparability of the heart and mind, the linguistic tether to Spanish obscures its conceptual incommensurability, and risks its conflations with Western frameworks. However, though I do not speak Tseltal Maya, nor have retained much proficiency in K'iche' from my intensive course in 2017, my albeit rudimentary understanding of its linguistic structure, which I recognize in the multiple daily uses of *O'tan* provided by Intzín (included above), have allowed me a limited glimpse into an incommensurability that resides outside of Western logics and translation into Romance languages. With full recognition that I remain an outsider / newcomer to *sentipensante* / *coranzar* practices, centering these ways of thinking and spending time with those writing and practicing otherwise moves the work of reckoning with the past from the word to the body as a site of felt learning.

Becoming-Claims: Stitching a Pluriversal Patchwork of the Past

The pluriverse presents itself in spaces of teacher learning, opening up alternate readings of the past, present, and future that resonate with the multiplicities of ways of knowing and being circulating in spaces of teacher learning.

State-sponsored social disarticulation, driven by propaganda, fear, poverty, and genocide have cultivated a fragmented collective memory. During workshop activities, the teacher participants tended to tell stories of what they saw, heard, and/or were told by their families or neighbors that sat within the realm of what could be explained by logic and reason, by the ways of knowing valued by positivist sciences. The retelling of the sounds of gunfights in the cemetery as the "men in green" descended from the mountain, of the fear triggered by the looming violence that nightly power outages might portend, or waking up to find the adobe wall of your house pockmarked by bullets all sat within the realm of the horrifying real. Yet, outside of the

structured / scheduled group activities, as teachers chatted after finishing lunch or over an order of shared French fries with their inquiry groups, the boundaries of historical evidence began to fade as the fantastical irrupted into our discussions, conjuring "that which appears to be not there… [but has] a seething presence, acting on and often meddling with taken-for-granted realities" (Gordon, 2008, p. 8).

The use of the word *irruption* over *eruption* is intentional, and references Alexander Wilde's (1999) article about the "irruption of memory" in Chile after the arrest and detention of the former dictator Augusto Pinochet in London. Wilde (1999) used the term to examine "public events that break in upon Chile's national consciousness, unbidden and often suddenly, to evoke associations with symbols, figures, causes, ways of life which to an unusual degree are associated with a political past that still present in the lived experience of a major part of the population" (p. 475). Though rarely used in English, the word irruption speaks to the reverberations of the unexpected and, at times, uninvited arrival of haunted/ing scrapes from the past living in another reality that intrude and insert themselves into the field of relations with affective force. Those figures which defy the boundaries of Western scientific knowledge, when given the space to emerge, invite inquiry through the pluriverse by unsettling singular understandings of reality.

During the unstructured conversation over lunch, animated by an exercise that approximated proximity to the Armed Conflict, teachers pieced together swatches of memories and stories, creating a pluriversal patchwork that explored multi-dimensional dynamics of power and struggle. The narratives that the teachers constructed traversed epistemological and cosmological worlds, conjoining third-hand stories of political negotiations between warring parties with the force of guerrillas who activated the power of their *nahuales* to fight against the

civil patrollers. The edges of the narrative fragments were uneven and unraveling, and composed of ways of knowing that stitch together about as easily as chiffon and leather. The stories deny linearity, with time and space shifting quickly, as participants recount stories, both as individuals and collectives. The noise and friction when they spoke on top of each other, moved quickly from one speaker to the next, finishing each other thoughts, clarifying or adding on to the story of another, layering another reading on the past, created a mnemonic patchwork where the layers didn't need to have empirical coherence or validity to nestle together and take shape. Their eschewal of "coherent," stable representations of the past that "make sense" within Western positivist guidelines for telling the past speaks to the urgency of "ontological translation" as a pedagogical practice that explores and "emphasizes equivocations that stem from our multiple realities" (Costa, 2020, p. 175).

Though Indigenous communities throughout the region are the ones to explicitly articulate relational ontologies and epistemologies that recognize worlds that remain incommensurable with a Western universe, their presence reverberated throughout the inquiry work with teachers, whether they identify as Indigenous, Ladino/a or Mestizo/a. Nelly's articulation of pedagogical *corazonando* resonates with Olivia's witnessing of nahuales and Jacobo's syncretic explanation of how the patron saint of Cunén, la Virgen de la Candelaria, protected its inhabitants from the worst of the violence. Despite the pressures of internal colonization to repress and deny the wisdoms or even influence of Indigenous ways of thinking and speaking in Guatemalan culture and Spanish, teachers consistently wove syncretic

inflections of Indigenous survival and resistance into their ways of speaking and learning, no matter how they self-identified in the *pueblo*[58] column of the attendance lists.

Recognizing the pluriverse and paying attention to the multiplicity of epistemological planes in circulation within learning spaces opens alternate modes of collective inquiry and knowledge production. As much as the colonial grammar of schooling might foreclose spaces for relational ontologies, the poetics of Mayan cosmologies found their way into the learning space, though in most cases I could not hear them at the moment. I acknowledge the depths of my epistemological blindness that encumber(ed) my ability to read and perceive the heterogeneity of Mayan cosmologies and ways of knowing. Nonetheless, the teachers with whom I worked have challenged me and convinced me of the urgency of the decolonial work of recognizing the pluriverse and creating space for it by cultivating an ecology of knowledges within spaces of inquiry and learning.

[58] In an effort to formalize recognition of Indigenous identities and peoples, the Peace Accords established that Guatemala is made up of four pueblos (people): Mayans, Xinca, Garífuna, and Ladinos, though in more recent years some have changed Ladino to Mestizo, but it remains contested.

Chapter 7: Navigating Palimpsestic Necropedagogies of Fear

The affective multiplicities of fear and mistrust reverberated throughout the inquiry process, threading across time and space the impacts of colonial manipulation, military campaigns of disinformation, state-sponsored social disarticulation and destruction, and political corruption. Memories and post-memories painted in fear haunted the *diplomado* process and shaped how we engaged with one another, how teachers evaluated and analyzed conflicting accounts of the Armed Conflict, and how they envisioned learning sequences for their students. This chapter explores the contours of fear and distrust that teachers carried into and reproduced during the process of historical inquiry. I borrow from Gómez (2020) who characterizes the use of fear by colonial, authoritarian, and liberal governments in Guatemala as a *necropedagogy*: "la muerte como acontecimiento en continua muestra pública, difusión y socialización que produce su consumo como normalización"[59] (p. 64). I trace the temporal-spatial contours of fear as a necropedagogy in the stories and memories of the Armed Conflict shared by teachers, particularly in its spectral form, examining the presence of ghosts and their pedagogical affects and effects for teacher learning.

Tripping on the Culture of Fear

Writing about fear in Guatemala and finding academic sources to "back up" this pervasive lingering unsettled-ness that I walk with everyday living in Guatemala is a complicated endeavor. Fear and mistrust are infused into any social relations, which continues to cause frustrations with my friends because I have yet to learn, as Nelly's mother advised her, "Walk with wisdom, don't trust anyone." They shake their heads when I talk to my neighbors

[59] Translation: death as an occurrence in continuous public display, diffusion and socialization that produces its consumption as a normalization.

and share personal information about myself. At first, I chalked this tension up to cultural differences, knowing full well the legacies of the Armed Conflict and how it severed social relations. Yet, a shadow of mistrust continues to hang over the country, and in the decade that I have lived here, I have come to know its sinister weight that tinges every interaction until it becomes imperceptible. I realize how habituated I have become to fear and a heightened sense of insecurity when I feel such lightness and relief walking alone at night when I return home to the States.

Green (1994) similarly discussed the problematic nature of writing about fear in Guatemala, both hers and for the women with whom she worked in the late 1980s - early 1990s, given the "difficulty of fixing fear and terror into words" (p. 230). Though she did not set out to study fear, she realized - as I did - exploring the contours of fear and its effects on the lives of the women was critical for understanding the normalized abnormality of the context in which they lived. Citing both her own experiences living in the community of Xe'caj and the experiences of women around her, she described the insidious habituation to fear:

> Subjectively, the mundane experience of chronic fear wears down one's sensibility to it. … The routinization of terror is what fuels its power. Such routinization allows people to live in a chronic state of fear with a facade of normalcy, while the terror, at the same time, permeates and shreds the social fabric. … Self-censorship becomes second-nature - Bentham's panopticon internalized. (p. 230-231)

These conditions generate a complex, at times contradictory constellation of survival mechanisms that shape patterns of speech, movements, and social organization. Fear both scattered and constrained bodies during the conflict, compelling many to flee and seek safety

elsewhere on a temporary or permanent basis and others to hunker down inside with hushed voices and shut off the lights.

People ask if I feel safe living in Guatemala, which I do, but I live differently here, more so as time goes by. I am internalizing the lessons of fear, curtailing my social circle, choosing my words more deliberately, and shifting my criteria for what and who can be trusted. The neighbor who launders money through his hotel and was murdered a few weeks ago; the friendly co-worker who makes up and spreads malicious rumors; the friend who is an attorney for corrupt politicians. Each has honed my focus on the repetitive staccato of fear and mistrust seeped into each conversation and interaction with the teachers, which I had begun to hear in 2018, but can feel with a different urgency in 2025. Yet, I recognize that I walk through the research and Guatemala with privilege afforded by my passport, nationality, and race that, as Juárez (2023) similarly acknowledge, allows us to "'transitar por encima' de estas violencias, cuestión central que limita y sesga sus análisis" (p. 389). While making Guatemala my home has imparted a felt understanding of the pernicious economies of fear and the threats that sustain them, I still remain insulated, and recognize the limitations that places on my ability to perceive precarity both in the research and daily life.

Fear as a Strategy of Colonialism, War, and Social Control

The colonial "regime of terror" (Martínez Peláez, 1998/2021, p. 427) structured and regimented the bodies, communities, economies, and spatial formations of Indigenous populations and mandated their participation in colonial economic exploitation. Foreshadowing the activation of civilian populations to patrol and control their neighbors during the Armed Conflict, the absence of large colonial armies in Central America resulted in the formation of

local militias composed of *criollos*[60], creoles, which referred to those of European-descent born in the colonies, to "practicar una cultura política de terror y recurrir al miedo como estrategia política… orientad[a] a no permitir que la población [Indígena] no contara con la posibilidad de tener una vida más allá de la supervivencia, por un lado, y por otros a servirse económicamente de la población"[61] (Gómez, 2020, p. 47). The necropedagogy of fear worked on the body, social relations, and political formations of Indigenous populations, weaving its insidious, serpentine poison throughout all elements of society. Its underlying purpose remained distinctly economic, with death and the elimination of bodies in resistance as the consequence of interfering with the colonial economic project. Yet I could replace "colonial economic project," with the economic endeavors of Guatemalan elites since the colony up to the present, evidenced, for example, by the massacre in 1982 the entire community of Rio Negro, men, women and children, who refused to relocate to make way for the Chixoy dam in Alta Verapez[62] (Einbinder, 2017; Johnson, 2011) and by the present-day murders, imprisonment, forced displacement, and persecution of land rights defenders trying to fend off the appropriation of ancestral lands by large corporations for mining, the construction of hydro dams, logging, and huge palm oil and sugar cane plantations (Abbott, 2020; Mingorría, 2018; Kuepper, Drost & Piotrowski, 2021).

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[60] Francisco Antonio Fuentes y Guzmán was born in Guatemala from Spanish parents, and is remembered as "the first creole." The publication of *Recordación Florida* (1690) provides a vision of the colony and its opportunities for economic wealth once the wars of conquest had faded into memory. He presented an "idyllic and chauvinistic" outlook on the economic possibilities in Guatemala, while noting the obstacles presented by the "unproductive" Indigenous populations (Fuentes y Guzman & Oglesby, 1690/2011, p. 82)).

[61] Translation: practicing a political culture of terror and resorting to fear as a political strategy … The aim was, on the one hand, to prevent the [Indigenous] population from having the possibility of having a life beyond survival, and on the other hand, to economically exploit the population.

[62] During the *diplomado* workshops, we developed lessons to facilitate an encounter with the historical memories of the case of the massacres of Rio Negro and examine the the palimpsests of violence in Barillas, Huehuetenango during the Armed Conflict and in the present day related to land conflicts. In addition, a colleague and I sought additional funding to take a group of interested teachers to visit the massacre site of Rio Negro (the original town itself submerged underneath water), which, with funds from GIZ, can accommodate visitors who are led by one of the handful of survivors (themselves children at the time) on a memory-trek up the mountain, following the path taken under duress by the women and children to the site of their murder.

The REMHI report (ODHAG, 1998) of atrocities committed during the Armed Conflict published by the Catholic Church under the title *Guatemala Nunca Más* (Guatemala Never Again) opens its first volume with an extensive discussion of the use of fear and terror as mechanisms of social control and counterinsurgency:

> El terror ha constituido no sólo una consecuencia del enfrentamiento armado (el miedo es el efecto más frecuentemente descrito en los testimonios), sino también un objetivo de la política contrainsurgente que utilizó distintos medios en los diferentes momentos del conflicto armado. … El miedo más frecuente, y que ha funcionado como una amenaza permanente, ha sido el miedo a los señalamientos, dado que las acusaciones de ser parte de la guerrilla sirvieron para criminalizar cualquier intento de oposición y para justificar la represión.[63] (ODHAG, 1998, p. 5-6)

The strategic dispersion of terror took different forms over the course of the Armed Conflict, with differential racialized applications according to who was defined as the internal enemy in the counterinsurgency efforts. Fear became an "arbiter of power" (Green, 1994, p. 184) through myriad mechanisms including the use of indiscriminate violence against community leaders and civilians deemed to be allies of or sympathetic to the guerrillas, a combination of public displays of force and atrocity (public torture, displays of mutilated bodies), the use of disappearances to perpetuate fear of the unknown, and threats of violence against one's family if they refused to collaborate with the military (ODHAG, 1998, p. 5-11). Yet, a culture of fear infiltrated all sectors of society, albeit with divergent objects of fear (the military, guerrillas, the civil patrollers, etc.)

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[63] Translation: Terror has been not only a consequence of Armed Conflict (fear is the effect most frequently described in testimonies), but also an objective of the counterinsurgency policy that used different means at different times during the Armed Conflict. … The most frequent fear, and one that has functioned as a permanent threat, has been the fear of being accused, since accusations of being part of the guerrilla served to criminalize any attempt at opposition and to justify repression.

with aftershocks that continue into the present, constantly morphing to respond to new threats with survival strategies that have been honed over generations.

The use of fear for political manipulation and social control has registered fear as a chronic social condition, whose invisible omnipresence has profound reverberations in social relations both past and present (Green, 1994; Ystanes, 2016; Juaréz 2023). Fear exerted significant power over interpersonal communication, in that it fomented mistrust among neighbors, and even family members, because one could never be too sure who might be listening and acting as an *oreja* or informant for the military. The scope of people and information that could be trusted shrunk, as rumors, gossip, and half-truths created an environment of ambiguity and uncertainty where nothing and no one could be fully trusted. Fear became a powerful mechanism of exerting power over how people moved in space, how they communicated with one another and made sense of what was happening in their community and society, and how they endured despite state-sponsored campaigns of destruction against any forms of social organization or safety net (Gómez, 2020; Green, 1994; Juárez, 2023; Ystanes, 2016).

The politics of fear within the counterinsurgency campaigns in Guatemala, and throughout Latin America for that matter, echo Ahmed's (2015) analysis of how affective economies of fear function to ensure the "conservation of power" through "restrictions of bodily mobility in social space" and the mobilization in the present of fears of pain or loss of life in the future (p. 64-65). Fear becomes sticky, not just at the individual level, but in a relational, somatic sense (Ahmed, 2015, p. 46) that is *sentipensado/a/e*, felt-thought in the body and the word, and inherited through familial and community ways of being (or not being) with others. The fearful patterns of political regulation form palimpsestic (Huyssen, 2003) topographies of terror

(Goméz, 2020) and (re)produce difference using modern/colonial tools of control. Its mutation over space and time produce the effect of its permanence and constancy. In a moment during one of the inquiry group sessions when we were debating whether the REHMI report was a trustworthy source, the doubts poured out of Juan Pablo, a social studies teacher whose father is K'iche Mayan and mother is not (he did not specify exactly how she self-identifies):

> Ese miedo viene desde siempre. Yo digo que desde ahí empieza esa cierta desconfianza, porque algo que venga del gobierno nunca genera confianza. Siempre está ese grado que quizás hay propósitos ocultos. Yo creo que de esa desconfianza es que también nace la EGP [Ejército Guerrillero del Pueblo], porque la desconfianza siempre ha existido y sigue existiendo.[64]

Fear threads through the historical memories, fomenting layers of mistrust that permeate all levels of society, and how the teachers took up the inquiry process. Yet, while the teachers and scholars lament the social disarticulation that results from mistrust, silences, and secrets, these very reactions to fear have enabled survival in the face of extermination campaigns, guarded cosmologies and wisdoms from the threat of oblivion, and shielded loved ones from the heartache of pain and violence. While I share the teacher's desire to break down the fear and mistrust in their classrooms, I assert that the mistrust deserves a "depathologizing" reframing that is "concerned with understanding complexity, contradiction, and the self-determination of lived lives" (Tuck, 2009, p. 416). The affective and embodied networks and practices of (mis)trust resist and redirect the necropedagogies of fear, articulating paths of living despite its looming presence.

[64] Translation: That fear has always been there. I say that is where distrust begins, because something that comes from the government never generates trust. There is always that degree that perhaps there are hidden purposes. I believe that it is from that distrust that the EGP [People's Guerrilla Army] was also born, because distrust has always existed and continues to exist.

Sashings[65] of Uncertainty and Fear

The pervasive presence of fear and mistrust in the stories that teachers shared of the Armed Conflict echo the findings of the REHMI report (ODHAG, 1998) and literature written about the myriad ways that fear has become woven into the country's collective memory and fragmented its social fabric (Gómez, 2020; Green, 1994; Juárez, 2023; Ystanes, 2016). During the first meeting with the inquiry groups before they began the inquiry process, I invited teachers to share stories they had heard or been told about the Armed Conflict by their families or communities. Fear and mistrust blanketed their recounting on multiple levels, weaving a picture of community disassembly, social distrust, and inhibited silence. More than specific events or narratives, when asked what they had learned from home about the Armed Conflict, teachers often first described the feeling of fear and uncertainty.

Inheriting Fearful Affects

Rodrigo from the PAC inquiry group provided the following narrative of what he had learned from his mother and uncles about the Armed Conflict:

> Bueno, lo que ellos decían era que no había tanta comunicación, por el temor verdad, porque tal vez uno puede, ellos tenían temor por ejemplo decir algo y tal vez esta persona pues no sabemos, ahí si que sus intenciones verdad, porque como decía, no había tanta confianza, por lo mismo, porque muchas personas estaban del lado de los guerrilleros o del ejército, uno no sabía, entonces decían que era mejor quedarse callados y no soltar información verdad, pero a veces había comunicación, pero entre por decirle vecinos ya más confiables verdad, por ejemplo ya más conocidos de que se conocen de tantos y

[65] "Sashing is strips of fabric between blocks, generally in the rows and columns of a quilt. Sashing can visually tie all of the quilt blocks together and can be a strong element depending on the complexity of the blocks" (ARJJ Corporation, 2021). An example can be found at the following link: What is Sashing?

tantos años como que había un poquito de más comunicación y así fue como se fue pasando la información por rumores eran. Sólo contaban de que tal y tal persona, fíjate que, le pasó esto, pero la certeza no existía, pero sí comunicación había, poca pero entre personas mas confiables.[66]

He emphasized the uncertainty of social relationships where community alliances became stretched to the point of breakage under the polarizing pressures to meet the increasing demands by the military to root out the communist threat and surveil the behaviors and words of their neighbors. Trusting the wrong person, not knowing where their true allegiances might lie and whether they might inform (or be forced to inform) on others, could have fatal consequences. Only those closest to you could be trusted, but on the fundamental level, "certainty did not exist."

His story speaks to the necropedagogy of fear reproduced at home and in communities, where learning about the past imparts lessons in how to mitigate exposure to potential harm and protect oneself from those who might betray us. Death and violence, though not named, sit barely beneath the surface of fear-laden social relations where shifting power alliances might contaminate and corrupt even those closest to us. The uncertainty of who can be trusted, and the resulting limits on interpersonal communication insulated the experiences and memories of family members. Few of the teachers had spoken about these topics outside of their family before their participation in the *diplomado*. They had learned that in order to stave off death or harm

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[66] Translation: Well, what they said was that there wasn't much communication, out of fear, right? Because maybe one could, they were afraid, for example, to say something and maybe this person, well, we don't know, that's where their intentions lie, right? Because as I said, there wasn't much trust, for that very reason, because many people were on the side of the guerrillas or the army, one didn't know, so they said it was better to stay quiet and not give out information, right? But sometimes there was communication, but among, say, more trustworthy neighbors, right? For example, people who had known each other for many years, it seemed like there was a little more communication [with well-known people] and that's how the information was passed on, through rumors. They only said that such and such a person, you know, this happened to him, but there was no certainty, but there was communication, a little, but between more trustworthy people.

that they needed to keep quiet, keep to themselves, and not give anyone any reason to think that might be involved in something, "*que están metido en algo*," a common refrain in Guatemala used to make sense of and/or justify the violence that has befallen someone (ex. Juárez, 2023, p. 384; Ystanes, 2016, p. 230). In the absence of salient official narratives, definitive judicial sentences, and pervasive public pedagogy, the post-memories carried by teachers into the inquiry spaces often imparted the felt experiences they had gleaned from the bits and fragments shared by their family members, more than robust stories of incidents or events. Though these stories came later for many participants once they returned to their parents or family members to interview them (though not for all, as some still refused to even broach the topic), what they brought first were the felt negotiations of fear and mistrust in the midst of uncertainty and precarity.

Silence as Protection

Though Nelly did not manage to convince her father to speak to her about his experiences during the Armed Conflict, the layers of his fear and its myriad manifestations remained a throughline to our inquiry work together. In the following swatch, she describes the the hushed whispers and mandated silences in her home, speaks of her confusion and lack of understanding about the causes of the conflict, and begins to allude to the haunting impacts of the conflict on her childhood:

> Bueno, yo lo que pude notar en mi papá, le tenía miedo a ambos grupos. No entendía el contexto, porque cuando nosotros veníamos de Guatemala, todavía había militares que bajaban de las montañas. Los veíamos pasar y la gente se atemorizaba. No se supo por qué pasó el conflicto. Esa historia aún está guardada en cofre. No supieron por qué tantos muertos, por qué tanto dolor, por qué tuvieron que dejar todo lo que habían hecho en

> cuestiones materiales y empezar en otra ciudad de cero. Mi papá me cuenta que tenía que pagar arriendo allá, cuando acá tenía terreno, tenía casa, tenía cosas, entonces ellos no lo comprenden, lo que sí, yo veo en ellos mucho miedo, quedó mucho miedo en ellos.[67]

> La situación fue que a nosotros, no mucho lo manifestaron, porque casi no hablaban de eso delante de nosotros, porque los niños todo lo dicen y tenían miedo que quizás si nos contaban una historia nosotros íbamos a hablarlo, entonces ellos eran muy ocultos para hablar de esas historias. Lo que yo recuerdo que cuando ellos platicaban nos sacaban, los grandes aquí, nos alejaban un poco de la historia. En mi caso, hasta ahora que estoy en este curso, me estoy dando cuenta de lo que pasó, pero ellos me lo ocultaron, yo no supe mucho de la historia, como que fue un secreto para la familia. Fuera de, he escuchado, pero dentro de casa mi papá no toca ese tema.[68]

While the teachers and facilitators talked about the importance of breaking the silence about the past and confronting the legacies of violence, I want to acknowledge that at least part of its purpose in many cases was to protect their families from harm. Saying the wrong thing to the wrong person, asking too many question carried/s real risk, so people "cerraba la boca donde iban porque sentían que habían oídos para escuchar y que a través de esos oídos podían ellos ya

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[67] Translation: Well, what I could see in my dad, he was afraid of both groups. He didn't understand the context, because when we came (back) from Guatemala (City), there were still soldiers coming down from the mountains. We saw them passing by and the people were scared. It was not known why the conflict happened. That history is still kept in a box. They did not know why so many people died, why so much pain, why they had to leave everything they had built in material possessions and start in another city from scratch. My father tells me that he had to pay rent there (in Guatemala City), when here (in Quiché) he had land, he had a house, he had things, so they do not understand it. What I do see in them is a lot of fear, there is a lot of fear left in them.

[68] Translation: The situation was that they did not say much to us, because they almost did not talk about it in front of us, because children say everything and they were afraid that maybe if they told us a story we were going to talk about it, so they were very secretive when talking about those stories. What I remember is that when they talked [about the conflict] they sent us out, just grown-ups here. They distanced us from what was happening a little bit. In my case, now that I am in this course, I am realizing what happened, but they hid it from me. I didn't know much about the history, it was a secret in the family. Outside of the house, I had heard things, but at home my dad does not touch that subject.

no existir."[69] Ears, or *orejas* in Spanish which has the double meaning of ears and informants, wield a sinister power, and can distort or exploit information in order to enact harm or control on the bodies of others. Ears cannot be trusted, particularly those on the street, who are strange(rs) and outside of the realm of the familiar:

> This public domain of outsiders and strangers is considered the location of mistrust, confrontation, conflict and moral risk. In contrast, family and kin are considered a realm of trust, respectability and intimacy. This conceptual boundary is often referred to as a distinction between *calle* (street) and *casa* (house), and it rests upon the assumption that close, mutually supportive relationships are more easily developed among kin. Conversely, it is considered that close relationships cultivated in the public domain may turn out to be deceptive. (Ystanes, 2016, p. 231).

Nelly's parents made clear to her the consequences of making the mistake of letting something slip *en la calle* / on the street, both in terms of what the ears might do, but how they would react: "No se podía hablar cosas que no se debía, porque si no, les quitaba el pescuezo. Ese tema no es tuyo porque por hablar eso en la calle, todos vamos a pagar."[70] Silence shields and protects, both from looming external threats, but repercussions within the home. Her father's silences and parents' careful efforts to exclude her from serious conversations helped mitigate her exposure to violence. She did not have to bear the weight of guarding secrets and keeping silent, since they kept the details of the darkness away from her. While she felt and perceived the sashing of fear framing how her parents moved through the world, the stories/swatches they contained remained blurry and undefined, insulating her from full terror.

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[69] Translation: shut their mouths wherever they went because they felt that there were ears to listen and that through those ears they could no longer exist.

[70] Translation: You were not allowed to talk about things you shouldn't, because if you did, I will ripe your throat out. That topic is not yours, because for talking about it in the street, we will all pay.

Patchwork of the Conflict's Elusive Origins

For many teachers and their families, the causes and reasons for the violence remained elusive, compounding the sensation of ambiguity and uncertainty that cloaks this period. After speaking with his mother about her memories and experiences of the war, Rodrigo brought this question to the group, observing the suffering that she recounted seemed senseless and disconnected without understanding the origins of the conflict:

> Por lo que me pude dar cuenta según las historias que contaron todos de que nadie tenía una perspectiva o una visión clara del por qué se inició el conflicto, nadie daba por qué, no estaba claro va, eso es lo que se pudo dar cuenta, uno de los aprendizajes que ni la gente indígena, ni la gente de la etnia ladina sabe del porqué se inició el conflicto.[71]

Similarly, Nelly shared the lack of understanding in her household of why the violence and conflict happened:

> No se sabían quiénes eran los buenos y los malos, a ambas personas les tenían temor, desconfianza, entonces lo que hacía la gente era callar, … Entonces me imagino que la situación no se supo quien en si quien inició. La situación no se sabe como inicio y que grupo inició. Más que todo están en la ignorancia porque no se ha descubierto el porqué pasó todo. Lo que sí está claro es el dolor que ellos vivieron, las tristezas que quedó y, las huellas y los impactos, que algunos están con temor que cuando cierran los ojos ellos quizás vuelven a vivir lo pasado todavía está la secuela secuela ahí el dolor y fue muy fuerte lo que pasaron.[72]

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[71] Translation: From what I could tell from the stories that everyone told, no one had a clear perspective or vision of why the conflict started, no one explained why, it was not clear, that is what could be seen, one of the lessons that neither the Indigenous people nor the people of the Ladino ethnic group know about why the conflict started.

[72] Translation: They did not know who were the good guys and the bad guys, they were afraid and distrustful of both sides, so what people did was to keep quiet, shut their mouths wherever they went because they felt that there were ears listening and that through those ears they could no longer exist. So I imagine that it was not known who

This questioning about the causes of the Armed Conflict from teachers surfaced in several of the inquiry groups with other facilitators, to the extent that we shifted our workshop plan to examine with teachers the multiple external and internal factors that turned a failed coup attempt by left-wing military officers in 1960 into a 36-year Armed Conflict.

Much of the public attention to the Armed Conflict centers in the 1970s and 1980s, given the spike of violence during that period, the improved technology to document what was happening, and the temporal proximity of survivors who are still alive to speak out. However, the origins, causes, and reasons for Armed Conflict have gotten lost in the public discourse. Though partially attributed to the manipulation of information by the army, Juan Pablo argued that the lack of access to public information left many in the dark: "Decía usted (Charlotte), ¿quién manejaba los medios? Pero a veces, nuestro país, en ese entonces, ¿quiénes tenían acceso a un radio? Eran muy pocos, casi nadie. ¿Cuál era la mayor fuente de comunicación? Rumores, telegrama, la comunicación verbal siempre."[73] I had been asking about propaganda from the government and how that might have shaped perceptions of who was responsible for the massacres. Yet, he reminded me of the material conditions that isolated communities and separated macro-level national or international machinations from their ramifications on communities with minimal access to information that might help make sense of the violence.

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initiated the situation. It is not known how the situation started and which group started it. Most of all they are in ignorance because it has not been discovered why it all happened. What is clear is the pain that they lived through, the sadness that remained and the traces and impacts, that some are so afraid that when they close their eyes they may relive the past, there is still the aftermath of the pain and it was very strong what they went through.

[73] Translation: You (Charlotte) were saying, who managed the media? But sometimes, our country, at that time, who had access to a radio? There were very few, almost nobody. What was the major source of communication? Rumors, telegrams, verbal communication always.

Fragmented Memories

The stories that teachers shared in the workshops and in the inquiry groups centered around individual or familiar stories where they or their loved ones found themselves in close proximity with violence or the threat thereof: "relatos fragmentarios" (Garcés y Leiva, 2005, p. 23) or fragmentary stories where individual stories have not been put into conversation or circulation socially. Writing about the fragmentation of memories in Chile during the dictatorship, which I would assert has some generative parallels with the disarticulated and disputed terrain of memory conflicts in Guatemala, Garcés and Leiva (2005) examined the privatized experience of memory under authoritarianism, contained by fear, shame, and/or the closure of public spaces and social organizations:

> Lo que vieron, literalmente hablando, era lo que podía observar a través de las ventanas de sus casas (sobre todo, cuando ya temprano se estableció el "toque de queda"). Entonces vieron fragmentos - un joven que corría, una patrullera o una tanqueta que cruzaba su pasaje - y lo que no vieron, lo oían: disparos que interrumpían el silencio de la noche, helicópteros que se desplazaban por los cielos de su barrio. Y lo que no vieron, ni oyeron, lo supieron por el relato de sus vecinos … Es decir, la propia experiencia vivida … está signada por la parcialidad, por la percepción fragmentaria[74] (p. 24-25).

The partiality and fragmentation of memory proliferated in Quiché and many regions as a result of the forced closure of social spaces which state-supported propaganda then filled. Furthermore, the isolation of poverty and racialized marginalization made access to radio,

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[74] Translation: What they saw, literally speaking, was what they could observe through the windows of their houses (especially when the "curfew" was established early in the morning). Then they saw fragments - a young man running, a police car or a tank crossing their passage - and what they did not see, they heard: gunshots interrupting the silence of the night, helicopters flying through the skies of their neighborhood. And what they did not see, or hear, they learned from the stories of their neighbors… That is to say, their own lived experience… is marked by partiality, by fragmentary perception.

television, and/or travel a rarity during much of the conflict. The violences seen and felt at the community level remained disconnected from national and international discourses, political maneuvers, and pressures. The social movements and efforts at land reform that set off the intervention of the United States in 1954, which resulted in the overthrow of the democratically elected President Jacobo Arbenz, became consumed within the binary politics of the Cold War. Yet, the complexities of these external political machinations did not translate into a coherent and socialized narrative that could put what happened on a local level within a broader national or international context. As such, often the violence and abuses of power were interpreted as the result of and justification for enacting retribution for local rivalries and feuds. While local conflicts did play a role in how local civil patrollers took up their role to surveil and control the community, the teachers' explanations at the outset of the inquiry and learning process tended to defer to local sources of conflict, without reference to macro-level conditions.

As Juan Pablo reiterated multiple times, rumors, gossip and informal forms of communication served as the primary mechanism of information exchange in the absence of mass media and reliable sources of news:

> Otras de las cosas, que el compañero recalcó, que era importante y se dio mucho, eso de los rumores, podríamos marcarlo como envidia entre personas, porque supongamos, yo veo que una persona me cae mal por tal y tal motivo, yo vengo y lo acuso, él es de la guerrilla con tal de perjudicarlo y al momento de mencionarlo a las patrullas, ellos tenían que pasar la información, entonces cuando ya cuando venía el ejército no preguntaban nada y se llevaban a la persona y pues ya para qué terminamos la historia.[75]

[75] Translation: Another thing, that my colleague emphasized, that was important and that there was a lot of is the issue of rumors, we could mark it as envy between people, because let's suppose, I see that I don't like a person for such and that reason, I come and accuse him, he is from the guerrilla as long as he harms him and at the time of

The explanation of violence as a result of local animosities and rivalries reflects the fragmentation of memory; the story develops from what is seen from one's window, is corroborated from rumors from trusted neighbors, and reflects knowledge of local social structures. However, both Green (1994) and Paul & Demarest (1998) warn against reducing an uptick in violence to local factionalism:

> It may be tempting to blame the outbreak of violence in San Pedro on social divisiveness and settling old scores, but the temptation should be resisted. Religious competition and vigorous political infighting were features of San Pedro life for decades before 1980 without producing violence. … What disrupted the peace in San Pedro was not the presence of differences and divisions but the army's recruitment of agents and spies that had the effect of exploiting these cleavages (Paul & Demarest, 1988, p. 153-154)

In the absence of global narratives, the local mechanisms of conflict resolution fill in the causal gaps, giving some meaning or explanation to horrors that sit at the edges of comprehensibility. Therefore, learning about the causes of the conflict had a profound impact on many of the teachers; both during my final interviews and in their comments on the final survey that all participants filled out for the donor, they mentioned how learning about the macro-level causes provided them with critical context for beginning to approximate the justifications of the different actors for engaging in Armed Conflict and make sense of the stories of fear they learned from home.

Here I find a split between the needs of educators and the needs of survivors in considering transitional justice projects. In her research with Mayan Q'eqchi' communities on the micro-level perceptions of justice and reconciliation in the wake of the Armed Conflict,

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mentioning him to the patrols, they had to pass the information, then when the army came they didn't ask anything and they took the person and well, why did we end the story.

Viaene (2010) noted that part of the reason that survivors did not demand justice was because they "still do now know the reasons for this conflict, or even who was in power at the time" (p. 296), though primarily they believed the logics and forces of *q'oqonk* and that those responsible "are paying for their faults in this life" (p. 297). As survivors, they expressed the desire for material and cosmological reparations, more than justice; a macro-level historical narrative from a truth-telling endeavor does not meet their localized spiritual, material or communal needs. However, epistemological dialogues between local and national memories, histories, and ways of knowing can help better prepare educators to mediate the difficulties of teaching about the Armed Conflict. Despite the controversies and negation of the results of truth-telling reports, which I will discuss in more detail in the following chapter along with how the teachers grappled with these reports, these documents serve as a critical resource for educators to complement the local with a more global framing of the conflict.

Swatches of Hauntings and Susto (Fright)…

The residues of trauma and violence marked Nelly's childhood; even as a child she acted as a protector from the ghosts that haunted and empoisoned her father's body and mind. In the following excerpt, she narrates the lingering damage, fear, and panic that fantastically followed him. The details of what he witnessed, suffered or even participated in remained firmly sealed off and locked away in his heart; what we know is that he served as a civil patroller and chose to flee the violence in Quiché and relocate to Guatemala City with his family for a period of time. I do not pretend to understand and intend to make assumptions about what drove his *susto*, "a malady, common throughout Mesoamerica, with undifferentiated symptomatology and which appears to have pre-Colombian antecedents. Susto is understood by its victims to be the loss of essential life force due to fright" (Green, 1994, p. 248). As such, the sections following the

swatch ecologically consider post-memories of hauntings, as entities “working on the living, [to] open up reparative and political possibilities” (Kent, 2024, p. 501), enacting visceral reverberations on the body (Khanna, 2020), muddling Western ontological lines between real and imaginary, and taking up the role of history teachers, memory workers (Kent, 2024), prosecutors of spectral justice (Ramos Alquezar, 2021) in the face of impunity, silence, and social disarticulation.

Nelly shared the following mnemonic story with me during a one-on-one conversation towards the beginning of our work together, seated on the second floor in a restaurant / pastry shop, overlooking the main square of Santa Cruz de Quiché and overlooked by the statue of Tecún Umán, the fallen K’iche leader struck down in *nahual* form by Pedro Alvarado, glorified for his defiant defeat.

> N: En el caso de nosotros crecimos con muchos cuidados, en el sentido que él llegando las 5 o 6, ya no quisiera que saliéramos. Tenía miedo de la oscuridad, cerraba las puertas. Los ruidos, [y] más que todo, la oscuridad le provoca pánico y ese pánico a la larga traía secuelas, porque imaginaba cosas que no habían a su alrededor y de alguna u otra manera, a nosotros como hijos nos afectaba. Incluso, nosotros, él trabajando como un guardián de escuela, ese lugar donde él trabajaba cuidando, nos llevaba a toda la familia de noche y ... volvió a recaer la historia en él, quisieron ingresarse al establecimiento donde él cuidaba. Nosotros durmiendo en ese cuartito donde empezó él a oír pasos, bulla, muchos hombres que querían robar inmobiliario de la escuela y el pánico fue tan terrible que se enfermó y él ya no quería regresar ahí. Entonces lo que él hizo fue lograr jubilarse, pero cuando él trabajaba tenía secuelas de la guerra, porque había muchos ruidos fuertes,

donde entrando la oscuridad él podría escuchar pasos, podía escuchar chiflidos, podía escuchar como que gente caminaba, entonces…

CH: ¿Pero gente real o imaginaria?[76]

N: Eran como espíritus de gente que había fallecido y estaba allí enterrada … en la escuela, entonces lo que decían que posiblemente ahí habían fosas de gente que habían matado, cuerpos allí y habían hecho fosas allí por eso se escuchaban ruidos sobrenaturales se puede decir y a él le daba mucho miedo. Entonces lo que él hacía era llevar a toda la familia para que lo acompañáramos para que su miedo no fuera tanto, entonces nosotros donde él iba, íbamos nosotros como hijos. En mi caso, yo soy la hija más pequeña, andaba mucho con él, yo me quedaba con él en la mañana apoyándolo, en la tarde, pero él jamás pretendía quedarse solo, por el mismo miedo. Así es.

CH: Dijo que él se enfermó, ¿físicamente o mentalmente?[77]

N: Fue todo, físicamente, su cuerpo, los nervios, mentalmente tenía miedo a los ruidos, miraba me imagino que sombras. No sé qué tiempos vivió él, por lo mismo que se fueron

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[76] Translation: N: In our case, we grew up being very careful, in the sense that when it got to be 5 or 6 o'clock, he did not want us to go out. He was afraid of the dark, he would close the doors. The noises, [and] more than anything, the darkness caused him panic and that panic eventually had consequences, because he imagined things that were not around him and in some way or another, it affected us as children. Even, we, him working as a school guardian, that place where he worked taking care of, he would take the whole family at night and ... The history came down on him again, they wanted to enter the establishment where he was taking care of. We were sleeping in that little room where he began to hear footsteps, noise, many men who wanted to steal real estate from the school and his panic was so terrible that he got sick and he did not want to go back there. So what he did was retire, but when he worked he had after-effects of the war, because there were many loud noises, when entering the darkness he could hear footsteps, he could hear whistles, he could hear people walking, so...
CH: But real or imaginary people?

[77] Translation: N: They were like spirits of people who had died and were buried there ... in the school, so they said that possibly there were graves of people who had been killed, bodies there and they had made graves there, that's why you could hear supernatural noises and he was very afraid of them. So what he did was to take the whole family to accompany him so that his fear would not be so great, so where he would go, we would go as his children. In my case, I am the youngest daughter, I was with him a lot, I stayed with him in the morning supporting him, in the afternoon, but he never wanted to be alone, because of the same fear. That's right.

CH: You said he got sick. Physically or mentally?

huyendo. Imagino que vieron cosas duras en el pasado que por motivos de no querer transmitirnos no nos contaron. Quizás vieron algunas masacres y eso se lo guardaron para no ponernos a nosotros en ese miedo que ellos tienen, para que nosotros fuéramos más valientes que ellos, pero sí, secuelas en su mente, el miedo, el nerviosismo, quizás sombras que no existen, pero sí el miedo quedó en su vida.[78]

Ghosts as Memory Workers

Nelly did not hear the fearsome hauntings herself, and yet she and her family vicariously had to contend with their absent presence when they slept on the floor of the school, or she tagged along with her father to keep his terror at bay. They unsettled both her father and her childhood, influencing the affective relational dynamics and geographic movements of her family. They demanded recognition and attention, imparting:

> a message … that the gap between the personal and social, public and private, objective and subjective is misleading in the first place. That is to say, [the haunting] is leading you elsewhere, it is making you see things you did not see before, it is making an impact on you; your relation to things that seemed separate or invisible is changing. (Gordon, 1997/2008, p. 98)

These haunting had deeply personal, private ramifications for Nelly, but upon their introduction into the inquiry space (she also shared a version of this story with her colleagues) they took on a politically charged, pedagogical tone situated within the context of inquiry. Their invocation and

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[78] Translation: N: It was everything, physically, his body, his nerves, mentally he was afraid of noises, I imagine he was looking at shadows. I don't know what times he lived through, [but] for the same reason they ran away [to Guatemala City]. I imagine that they saw hard things in the past that, and because they did not wanting to pass it on to us, they did not tell us [about it]. Maybe they saw some massacres and they kept that to themselves to not impose in us that fear that they have, so that we would be braver than them. But yes, [they had] after effects in their mind, the fear, the nervousness, maybe shadows that do not exist, but the fear remained in their lives.

invitation into spaces of learning and inquiry facilitated spectral agency, which Kent (2024) suggests allows the dead to become memory workers. She "suggest[s] that the dead have both an 'affective presence' as spirit agents who make demands on the living and an 'emotive materiality' as substances that were once human beings and seem to demand care and attention" (Kent, 2024, p. 501). The presumed presence of bodies and bones interred in a mass grave around the school anchored the haunting to a place and to the materiality of remains. The noises, shadows, and *espantos* (scares) conjure what the military discarded, that is, the skeletal remnants of lives, which nonetheless manage to unsettle the living and haunt their imaginaries, even hidden beneath the earth.

The dead and their persistent haunting of her father influenced Nelly's childhood. However, she began to better understand the ways in which they, and the experiences and memories they carry, wrought such fear and terror when she put her memories of haunting and fear in conversation with other sources, i.e. the testimonies, case studies, and other primary documents gathered as part of the history inquiry process. The inquiry process enabled a reckoning with how her father remained marked by what happened when he left at night to patrol, as it was explained to Nelly, "guarda(r) la integridad de la familia y la comunidad" (to protect the integrity of the family and the community). She began to grapple with the shadows and bitterness that was left in his heart.

Marks on the Hearts

Though she had hoped to interview her dad about his experiences during the Armed Conflict as a civil patroller, that he would "open his heart" and speak with her, he firmly rejected any attempts to broach the subject, reiterating that these topics should not be spoken about. His foreclosure of speaking about the conflict maintained a lifetime of silence about wounds and

traumas that expressed themselves in other forms, with screams in the middle of the night, physical and mental illnesses that left him bedridden, and a cold detachment punctuated by anger that set the tone for her upbringing. The violence, whether observed, inflicted upon others, or exerted on him, left a mark on his heart.

Yet at the outset of the inquiry process, she did not perceive the scale and depth of these scars; at first, when she compared the accounts of violence from the *diplomado* and her childhood memories of fear and insecurity with the present, she expressed gratitude that people could occupy public spaces after dark and that she and her children did not live under the threat of violence like the generations before. However, during our final interview, she changed course and spoke of how the inquiry process about the civil patrollers, and the Armed Conflict in general, had helped her reflect and understand her father's disposition and behavior:

> N: Yo veía al inicio, cuando usted me hablaba sobre la historia, yo puedo ver más que todo, que dejó huellas positivas, pero de mi punto de vista, que no sabía nada, puedo ver que en el pasado, dejaron muchas secuelas, no fueron huellas positivas, porque no fue algo bueno, **quedó lo malo en el corazón de las personas**. Entonces, aquí me retracto, porque dije que había huellas positivas, pero no es así, con lecturas, con fuentes, ya vi las cosas de otro punto de vista, porque en mi misma casa puedo ver a mi padre con huellas negativas, pero nunca lo pude de ver de esa manera, pero ahora sí comprendo que la historia no dejó nada bueno.
>
> CH: Cuéntame de eso, ¿cómo se entiende ahora de otra manera?
>
> N: Lo que yo puedo visualizar, es que la gente que vivió el conflicto armado interno se quedó con un carácter muy fuerte, muy duros, puro ejército, porque yo le comentaba, ya en los 80 y viendo su carácter y comparando el carácter de mi esposo, que él es menor

que mi padre, la generación, su carácter es más tranquilo, en cambio, la generación que yo puede conocer en mi aldea, gente muy enojada, mala, sin sentimientos y fue por lo mismo que pasó en el conflicto armado interno, quedaron con muchas secuelas y con un corazón no dulce, agridulce o amargo, donde se puede notar todo lo que ellos vivieron. Ahora lo comprendo, su carácter, su forma de actuar, a veces quizás muy rudo, sin sentimientos, pero qué vamos a hacer, si eso sucedió en el tiempo de ellos, nosotros solo estamos leyendo lo que pasó, no lo vivimos en carne propia y yo lo que podía ver, …entonces, por eso mi padre es muy cerrado al momento de hablar, porque algo pasó muy fuerte, que tuvieron que huir, emigrar y vivieron y vieron cosas muy duras.[79]

While all the focal teachers, and many others in the *diplomado*, shared how the learning and inquiry process after the Armed Conflict had reverberated through their families and communities, the two female focal teachers, Nelly in the PAC group and Valeria in the Peace Accords group, expressed how it changed how they understood and approached their relationships with the men in their families: Nelly with her father, and Valeria with her husband

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[79] Translation: I thought in the beginning, when you were talking to me about history, I saw more than anything, that [the Armed Conflict] left positive traces, but from my point of view, that I didn't know anything [then], I can see that in the past, it left many negative effects, they were not positive traces, because it was not a good thing, something bad remained in people's hearts. So, here I retract [what I said], because I said that there were positive traces, but it is not like that. With the readings, with the sources, I then saw things from another point of view, because in my own house I can see my father with negative traces, but I could never see him that way, but now I do understand that history did not leave anything good.

CH: Tell me about that, how is it understood now in another way?

What I can visualize is that the people who lived the Internal Armed Conflict were left with a very strong character, very hard, pure army, because I told him, already in the 80s and seeing his character and comparing the character of my husband, who he is younger than my father, the generation, his character is calmer, on the other hand, the generation that I can meet in my village, very angry people, bad, without feelings and it was for the same reason of the Internal Armed Conflict, they were left with many impacts and with a heart that is not not sweet, bittersweet or bitter, where you can notice everything they lived. Now I understand [my father], his character, his way of acting, sometimes maybe very rude, without feelings, but what are we going to do, if that happened in their time, we are only reading what happened, we did not live it in our own flesh and what I could see, ... then, that's why my father is very closed when talking, because something happened that was very difficult, that they had to flee, emigrate and lived and saw very hard things.

and brothers, who I will discuss in the following chapter. Both used the phrase "*carácter fuerte*," which connotes a harsh, controlling or intense disposition or personality, one that rubs up against a more amenable way of interacting that diffuses or prevents conflict.

The encounters with documents and other sources helped Nelly make sense of what she had experienced in her own home, and see her father's behavior and attitude through another lens. The imprint of military culture left their mark on the hearts of a generation of men, particularly those who chose, were forced, or felt they had no other option than to enlist in the military or join the civil patrollers. In this reflection, the heart unfolds as a site that can be damaged and forged closed by violence and trauma. While her father may not have opened his heart to feel-think/*sentipensar* the past with Nelly, with the inquiry group, she could grapple with the ghosts of her childhood and the inheritance of fear in her heart, *sentipensando* alternate interpretations and understandings of her father, and how he enacted a form of masculinity shaped by violent marks on the heart. The inquiry process, steeped in evidence of male-driven violence, opened a space of felt reflection about the gendered dynamics of power within their homes, providing Nelly and Valeria with resources to make sense of, empathize with, and respond to the "*carácter fuerte*" in their homes.

Following the Ghosts

Nelly's male colleagues did not interact much with the ghosts; during their group interviews, they focused more on unpacking the underlying causes of her father's fear and what motivated the family's move to Guatemala City and return to Quiché. However, with her students, where I observed her to be much more comfortable and confident than when she was in the workshops or with the inquiry group, she fostered an environment for conjuring the unsettling forces from the past looming over the present. Though she shared the resistance she

met from some students, who wouldn't "open the doors to their hearts," Nelly pedagogically invited in the possibility of following the ghosts in the classrooms, which Gordon (1997/2008) suggests "is about making contact that changes you and refashions the social relations in which you are located" (p. 22). In response to the unit on the Armed Conflict, one of Nelly's students embarked on her own "investigation" to learn about her family's past. The historical inquiry in the classroom - examinations of documents and photos, the sharing of family stories, and dialogic *sentipensante* realignments of student's relationship with the past - cascaded outside of the school walls. Her manner of inquiry took her to the site where her grandfather had been murdered, a place about which her father dared not speak, let alone visit. The place does not have an official memorial or documentation of the violence that transpired, but like many unmarked sites of mass graves or arbitrary executions, within the collective memory they linger, invisibly marked by the past. She continued exploring the past through a embodied interaction with place, enacting a somatic, felt mechanism of corroborating historical accounts:

> Una alumna quiso ir a ver sus raíces, quizás ella ya sabía, verdad, pero nunca había profundizado sus raíces. Ella me comentaba que un día hábil, que tuvieron unas vacaciones, y fue a buscar el lugar donde había muerto su abuelito. Era una hacienda muy grande, me decía ella, pero dice que para ella todo lo que veía era tenebroso y me comentaba que fue a investigar qué pasó con la muerte de su abuelito. Y me decía que fíjese que mi papá no quiere a los indígenas. Ella también es de traje típico. ¿Por qué? Le dije yo. Porque por malas interpretaciones, malo lenguazo[80] y falsos testimonios habían matado a su abuelo. Entonces ella fue a buscar el lugar y la casa estaba abandonada

[80] The word *lenguazo* is colloquially used in Guatemala to refer to the use of any language other than official Spanish, including Mayan, Xinca, Garifuna or sign language. This word is an example of something the transcriber missed, but I "discovered" upon close re-listening.

donde había muerto su abuelito y empezó a buscar a ver que había de su pasado y dice que la casa todavía estaba de pie, no se ha caído y que las puertas se movían. Pero ella sentía que alguien andaba detrás de ella, ella solita se fue a ingresar a la hacienda. Y dice que en eso daba un río, y dice qué había allí? Cuando ella sintió que la empujaron y empezó a rodar al río. Entonces me daba a entender que donde había pasado el conflicto armado interno, habían muchos espíritus volando, que habían muerto algunos injustamente y que esos malos espíritus ella los pudo sentir. Dijo, primera y última vez que visito mi raíz, porque fue en base a los temas que llevamos nosotros en el aula que ella se fue interesando en sus raíces pasadas, entonces imagino que este tema, a algunos alumnos, los motivó a querer conocer más de lo que vivieron en el pasado, estuvo importante.[81]

Nelly's re-telling of her students' investigation into her grandfather's death highlights the ways she and her students engaged in ways of learning that transgress accepted empirical modalities, and fall far outside of disciplinary skills of historical thinking. Of her own initiative, this student moved to extend her inquiry beyond the materials and discussions of the classroom and draw on suppressed "sensual and perceptual repertoires" made available to her through

[81] Translation: A student wanted to see her roots, maybe she knew [something about it], but she had never gone deeper. She said that one day, when they had a vacation, she went to look for the place where her grandfather had died. It was a very big hacienda, but for her everything she saw was dark, and she told me that she went to investigate what happened with her grandfather's death. And she told me that her father doesn't like Indigenous people. She also [uses typical Indigenous clothing]. Why? I told her. Because of bad interpretations, bad language (see previous note) and false testimonies, they had killed her grandfather. So she went to look for the place and the house was abandoned where he had died and she went in to look what might be there of her past and she said that the house was still standing, it had not fallen down and that the doors were moving. But she felt that someone was behind her, she had entered the hacienda alone. And she said the house was facing a river and she said what's over there? When she felt that she was pushed and started to roll into the river. Then I got the impression that where the Internal Armed Conflict had happened, there were many spirits flying, that some had died unjustly and that she could feel those bad spirits. She said, [this is the] first and last time she would visit my roots. It was based on the topics we saw in the classroom that she became interested in her roots from the past, so I imagine that this topic, to some students, motivated them to want to know more about what they lived in the past. It was important..

alternate worlds and cosmologies in order to experience hallucinatory ways of knowing and learning (DiPietro, 2020). Like DiPietro (2020), I use the word hallucinatory not to pathologize, but to describe the "*more-than-human* and *more-than-ordinary* consciousness" (p. 220) that Indigenous healers and spiritual leaders have fought to preserve despite the waves of the regulatory suppression of pluriversal perceptual fields. Nelly and her students broadened the sensorial and perceptual frame for historical inquiry, seeking out *more-than-human* sources of knowing, learning, and being to bring *sentipensante* complexity to disciplinary engagements with historical inquiry. The haunted, fantastical sources of knowledge interacted with the documentary touch of the curriculum materials. They expanded the perceptual field of what learning difficult histories might entail beyond the disciplinary confines of modernity/colonity, while cultivating a proximity to the past not quite achieved solely by material sources.

Becoming-Claims: Countering Necropedagogies of Fear

Necropedagogies of fear made purely disciplinary approaches to teacher learning untenable.

Though many of the teachers (and their students) did not initially have access to detailed narratives and histories about the Armed Conflict outside of the fragmented felt memories of fear they inherited from their families or witnessed as children, the on-going ambience of fear quickly activated a sensorial, affective, and cognitive proximity to the Armed Conflict upon encountering difficult histories within the academic space of the *diplomado*. Somatic fear cascaded from the home into spaces of learning, foreclosing the possibility of a purely disciplinary, analytical approach to learning Guatemala's difficult histories. Within the process of inquiry, which placed secondary accounts and written and video testimony in conversation with inherited felt knowledge and family stories, we found ourselves moving through moments of affective, emotional, and analytical intensities, that is, a *sentipensante* exploration where the sensations of

fear and mistrust were interfaced with enactments of historical thinking skills (Wineburg, 2001; Reisman, 2012). Fear and its necrotizing emotional and affective knots created snags in cognitive engagements with difficult histories, demanding a *sentipensante* inquiry that allows for the felt weft threads to weave their way through the thinking waft threads, or the other way around.[82]

Threading together Intzin's (2021b) writing on the forgotten *sp'ijilal O'tan*, or knowledges of the heart, and Nelly's centering of the heart as a place and force of felt-learning, I assert that quilting historical inquiry with pedagogical practices of *corazonando* or heartening involves recognizing and caring for the layers of fear and "*desconfianza … creciendo dentro del corazón de uno*," mistrust growing inside one's heart (Nelly), while also *sentipensando* alternative affective relationships with the past. In practice, teacher learning of difficult histories engaged with the felt memories and affective reverberations of *sentipensante* dissonances, particularly when the educators could guide the process of learning. They revived / resuscitated an affective / heartened proximity to the past by *sentipensando* the validity and reliability of sources of knowledge, comparing conflicting accounts, bearing witness to painful familial histories, and enacting historical empathy to consider the decisions made by people in the past. *Analyzing the entrenched dynamics of fear and mistrust reoriented teachers' vision and goals for teaching about the Armed Conflict.*

Fear oriented how the teachers framed the curriculum we developed as they tried to anticipate how students and their families might react when they took up the Armed Conflict in their classrooms. They worried about how parents might respond (and whether they might complain), whether students would resist or participate in the activities, and whether they would be prepared to address their students' questions and concerns. Juan Pablo remarked that

[82] Warp yards are static and vertical in a loom, while weft threads are woven horizontally back and forth through them.

addressing and allaying students' fears about studying this topic was the greatest challenge when implementing the curriculum:

> Uno de los retos es tratar de mostrarle a ellos que dejen el miedo a un lado, que pregunten, cuestionen un poquito, que traten de averiguar un poco de más información sobre el conflicto, cómo afectó a su familia, para que ellos conozcan también sobre el tema. Creo que uno de los retos, es quitarnos eso de que ese tema está prohibido hablar. Tenemos que enfrentarlo tarde o temprano, ya no dejarlo almacenado más.[83]

The affective latches barring the opening of discussion and debate of charged histories were well secured long before these teachers entered the classroom, as Nelly said, "por miedos que fueron sembrados."[84] Yet, both collectively and individually, the PAC inquiry group explicitly envisioned the curriculum we developed as a means of dislodging the hold of fear and distrust that remain rampant in society.

Contending with the culture of fear does not imply that the fears are not well-founded, both in terms of the baseline, normalized felt insecurities and precarities in the present and the potential activation of barely dormant parallel political forces that maintain the pact of silence enveloping histories of the Armed Conflict. The concerns by teachers, students, and their families are not without foundation that the conditions to grapple with the history of the Armed Conflict remain precarious until osteoporotic state institutions are strengthened and become capable of curbing narco-kleptocratic elements, high crime rates, and implementing basic services.

[83] Translation: One of the challenges is to try to show them to leave fear aside, to ask and question a little [more], to try to find out a little more information about the conflict, how it affected their family, so that they can also learn about the subject. I think that one of the challenges is to get rid of the idea that this subject is forbidden to talk about. We have to face it sooner or later, and not leave it in storage anymore.

[84] Translation: out of the fears that were sown

However, the teachers endeavored through their implementation of historical inquiry ensconced in *sentipensante,* heartened examinations of what and who can be trusted with their students to provide openings to create pockets of interconnection and *interaprendizaje* (inter-learning). Mirroring the process of confronting the layers of mnemonic mistrust they experienced in the *diplomado*, they hoped to forge trust within learning spaces, carefully negotiating the affective, cosmological, historical frames/structures and systems that make trusting information or people outside of the nucleus difficult, if not impossible.

To combat the layers of fear and distrust in their classroom, teachers should corazonar [hearten] their teaching of difficult histories.

When I asked Nelly what were the most important messages or ideas that she wanted to teach students about the Armed Conflict, she again invited me to shift my gaze away from objective-driven pedagogies and center affective practices of *corazonando* (heartening) where a student's understanding of the past implies opening up their heart in order to express themselves, "open their lips," and begin to talk about the past:

> N: Sería enseñarles la historia sobre cómo se dio el conflicto armado en Guatemala, uniendo con ellos ejemplos, que a veces los estudiantes lo que tienen, es que van **uniendo como rompecabezas**, al darles quizás **libertad**, **empiezan a abrir su corazón con el docente**, de decir seño, mi papá me contó tal historia y así otro estudiante lo mismo, **es como que darles la libertad que ellos en el aula abran su corazón,** qué es lo que han escuchado, qué es lo que han vivido**, …** la historia es demasiado grande, es gigante, pero yo imagino que dándole un poco de historia y algunos videos claves, ellos van a ir comprendiendo.
>
> CH: ¿Comprendiendo qué?

N: Cómo inició la historia y **darles libertad a que abran su corazón**, para que se expresen, qué es lo que saben en sí de la historia, qué les han contado, quizás les han prohibido que **abran sus labios**, como los viejitos de antes decían, que no se le podía contar la historia a cualquiera, era algo como un secreto… pero cuando empiezan a tener **confianza** los estudiantes, empiezan a abrir sus labios.[85]

Later I directly asked Nelly during a one-on-one interview to explain in more detail what she meant by her often repeated phrase "opening their hearts," which she scattered throughout her discussions during the inquiry groups, comments during workshops, and our first interview together. She reiterated that for her, opening up the heart was about building trust with students, and creating spaces for them to talk about their feelings and receive the help and support they needed.

Es como **dar confianza**, cuando una persona **tiene confianza habla de sus sentimientos**, es como **abrir una puerta**, que cuando **uno deja que alguien abra la puerta, puede entrar**, pero cuando una persona es muy cerrada, yo, como docente, en el camino, hemos visto muchos casos. En el caso de nosotros, tenemos que ser psicólogos, no solamente docentes, vemos el estado de ánimo de estudiantes que sí pueden platicar así con confianza, como cuando uno abre la puerta y dice pase adelante y empiezan a charlar,

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[85] Translation: It would be teaching them the history of how the Armed Conflict in Guatemala occurred, putting together examples with them, because sometimes students have to put things together like a puzzle, and by giving them freedom, they begin to open their hearts to the teacher, to say, teacher, my dad told me this story and so did another student, it is like giving them the freedom to open their hearts in the classroom, what have they heard, what have they experienced, … history is too big, it is gigantic, but I imagine that by giving them a little bit of history and some key videos, they will understand.

CH: Understand what?

How the story began and giving them the freedom to open their hearts, to express themselves, what they know about the story, what they have been told, perhaps they have been forbidden to open their lips, as the old people used to say, that you couldn't tell the story to just anyone, it was something like a secret... but when the students begin to have confidence, they begin to open their lips.

pero hay estudiantes que cierran la puerta y aunque uno insista en tocar, no dejan que uno les pregunte nada, entonces, cuando digo eso de **hablar del corazón, es la confianza que le pueden tener a uno**.[86]

Her work with young people involves attention to both their learning and also their emotional needs, in particular finding ways to build trust so that students can open themselves up to connect with and trust those around them, particularly adults who might be able to support them.

In order for students to feel that they might have the freedom to open their hearts and trust those around them in learning spaces, they put the stories from their families into conversation with one another, which she described as a jigsaw, though I might alternatively suggest a collage or patchwork as metaphor to capture the imperfections and contradictions of narrative misalignments. The act of bringing into the classroom what they have heard and (re)lived takes their family stories out of isolation and into community. What she as a teacher contributes in terms of facts, narratives, or videos serves the larger purpose of *corazonando la historia,* heartening history, where the coldness, isolation, distance, and mistrust that has taken root gets warmed up (Santos, 2018), their foundations disturbed, and the connectivity of emotion and feeling begins to crackle. The ability of the educator to create a safe environment where students feel free to explore their patchwork of stories serves to chip aways at mistrust and eases the fear of reprisals for "opening their lips." The strength of the interpersonal relationships combined with access to sources about the past opens a door for students to open their hearts, build relationships based on trust, and put into words what they had stored away in their hearts.

[86] Translation: It's like giving confidence, when a person has confidence they talk about their feelings, it's like opening a door, when you let someone open the door, they can enter, but when a person is very closed, I, as a teacher, along the way, have seen many cases. In our case, we have to be psychologists, not just teachers, we see the mood of students who can talk like that with confidence, like when you open the door and say come in and they start talking, but there are students who close the door and even if you insist on knocking, they don't let you ask them anything, so, when I s ay that about talking from the heart, it's the trust they can have in you.

Santos (2018) conceptualizes the process of *corazonando* as both a bridge and the river that runs beneath it, in that for him, warming up reason / heartening causes movement:

> Corazonar is the act of building bridges between emotions/affections, on the one hand, and knowledges/reasons, on the other. Such a bridge is like a third reality, that is to say, a reality of meaningful emotions/affections and emotional or affective ways of knowing. Actually, corazonar is both the bridge and the river it bridges, since the mix of emotions/knowledges keeps changing as corazonar evolves together with the struggle. As corazonar evolves, either warming up or cooling off may occur, but there is always change. Corazonar is always an exercise in self-learning, since changing one's understanding of the struggle goes hand in hand with changing one's self-understanding. Corazonar means to assume an enhanced personal responsibility for understanding and changing the world." (Santos, 2018, p. 102)

Conceptualizations of corazonar have surfaced in both decolonial and Indigenous literatures, and also been applied as a mechanism for speaking back to neoliberal pedagogical structures. Through referencing the centrality of the heart in Indigenous cosmologies, both Santos (2018) and Guerrero Arias (2010) focus on its decolonizing potential to situate ways of being and knowing outside of Cartesian frameworks, challenge colonial social and political systems and structures, and "reintegrar la dimensión de totalidad de la condición humana, pues nuestra humanidad descansa tanta en las dimensiones de afectividad, como de rázon"[87] (Guerrero Arias, 2010, p. 41). While Intzín (2021b) situates his discussion of *corazonar* in the body and its ability to hold and articulate knowledge, they center their challenge to Western epistemologies on the

[87] Translation: reintegrate the dimension of totality of the human condition, because our humanity rests as much on the dimensions of affectivity as on reason.

gendered colonial delineation between reason and emotion, seeking to “nourish intelligence with affect” as a form of “insurgent politics” (Guerrero Arias, 2012, p. 44, my translation).

Though Nelly does not situate her conceptualization of abriendo la corazon / opening the heart within a decolonial project, her articulation marks the heart as a hub for affective movements where learning implicates *el sentir-pensar* / feeling-thinking, understood not as a simple combination of the Cartesian binary, but an motley (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2020) way of being where the I and We are mutually implicated. The stickiness of *desconfianza* / mistrust functions at the level of *yosotros,* where individual *sentipensante* evaluations of safety and security can’t be divorced from communal conditions.

Chapter 8: Nonlinear *Sentipensante* Inquiry and the Stickiness of Implication

The research study took up some concerns outlined by Bellino (2011) about the complications of "displacing the violent past from the realm of formal history education to the role of the informal memory, where diverse memory communities diverge on the role of the past in the present" (p. 2). In her research, she observed an inclination towards remembrance approaches focused on preserving *la memoria histórica* or historical memory, a frequent lem of human rights movements that embraces the power of testimony and personal stories in truth-telling efforts. I had observed similar approaches during my pilot study and other engagements with teachers and students, where pedagogical strategies vacillated between an interactive presentation of key facts, opportunities for debate and discussion, and case studies or other means of sharing testimonies that humanized victims and survivors. Thus, I entered the research / *diplomado* wondering about what might happen if we folded historical thinking skills into a curriculum whose theory of change combined somatic, affective, and cognitive encounters with the past to build tolerance of difference and strengthen the ability to recognize and respect multiple perspectives.

Pulling together strategies from Boal (1992/2002) and theater of the oppressed, interactive techniques for reflection, discussion, and dialogue developed by IIARS, and activities adapted from the methodologies of the Stanford History Education (SHEG)[88], the *diplomado* program infused dialogic encounters of memories and post-memories of the Armed Conflict with structured historical inquiry that engaged teacher participants in what Ignacio called the

[88] These resources can now be found at the Digital Inquiry Group (DIG), https://inquirygroup.org/.

"cognitive conflicts" of evaluating conflicting accounts of the past to identify if the information had been manipulated, a recurring concern among participants:

> Para estar seguro, lo que hay que hacer, es tener muchas fuentes y ver si las diferentes fuentes coinciden entre ellos y como le digo, más verificar el tipo de fuente, si es verídico y con los testimonios que ayudan a fortalecer, ahí se crea la opinión de uno, más la veracidad, verificar un poco más de la persona que redacta dichos documentos, para tener validez del documento.[89]

Ignacio provided this explanation of the inquiry process during our final conversation in response to my question about how he decides what information to trust, when, as he had again reiterated, it could be manipulated. He succinctly describes the disciplinary processes of sourcing, contextualizing, and corroborating of historical thinking (Wineburg, 2001; Reisman, 2012) that teachers encountered in the workshops and that they took up collectively in the inquiry groups. Indeed, in the inquiry groups, we compared differing accounts, questioned their reliability, and debated what pieces and stories might have been left in the shadows. Yet, his depiction in this moment does not fully capture for me the affective and emotional texture of the encounters with the past that unraveled within the inquiry process.

Given that the focal teachers belonged to the 1.5 and postmemory generations (Suleiman, 2002; Hirsch, 2012), inquiry involved a confrontation with the implications and pain of their older or deceased family members. Historical inquiry entailed an interrogation of the continued reverberations of the fear of the guerrillas learned from their families, which sat in stark contrast

[89] Translation: As I say, to be sure, what you have to do, is to have many sources and see if the different sources coincide with each other and as I say, plus verify the type of source, if it is truthful and with the testimonies that help to strengthen, there you create one's opinion, plus the veracity, verify a little more of the person who writes those documents, to [make sure of the] validity of the document.

to the accounts of widespread and systemic violence against Indigenous communities by the army presented in the workshops and online materials. Our inquiry work together involved the elicitation of stories from their families, which they then put into conversation with other testimonies and documents, including the reports from the truth commissions. I argue that the teachers did much more than traverse the cognitive and affective realms of learning, but rather engaged in *sentipensante* inquiry, a felt-thinking of the past that wove together a multiplicity of knowledges of the past. The co-presences of multiple ways of knowing and being, both those stitched by the facilitator team and those sewn by the teachers, opened alternate paths for reckoning with present-past violence.

This chapter traces a non-linear, spiraling *sentipensante* process of inquiry by one of the teachers with her inquiry partner and I that involved reckoning both with her affective attachments to historical narratives that assigned responsibility for the violence to the guerrillas and also the difficult implications of alternate historical interpretations. By spiraling, I am not referring to the pedagogical strategy of spiraling back to previous content to reinforce skills or knowledge or address confusions. Instead, the *sentipensante* spiraling I describe below threaded through our conversations (and its silences) without a defined path or prescribed timeline. The uncertainty of when and how sticky attachments and affectively saturated doubts would irrupt into or shut down a conversation demanded the discarding of sequence and the cultivation of unpredictable spaces of simultaneous weaving and unraveling, binding and seam ripping.

The Stickiness of Responsibility

During the workshops and inquiry groups, the spaces for discussion and processes of historical inquiry invited participants to share stories and memories from the Armed Conflict as a mechanism for uncovering the multiplicities in how the teachers remembered, narrated, and

engaged with the country's violent past. One of the workshop activities invited teachers to physically situate themselves based on their perceived proximity to the Armed Conflict. Facilitators placed a piece of paper with the words *Conflicto armado interno* (Internal Armed Conflict) in the center of the room, and participants positioned themselves closer or farther from the paper based on the extent to which "Los hechos ocurridos en el CAI afectaron la vida de mi familia" [The events that occurred during the CAI affected the life of my family.]

I remember being surprised when Valeria moved herself right next to the paper on the floor, given her age and that she would have been quite young at the height of the conflict in the early 80s. Moreover, I had been so steeped in the discourses and frameworks of the human rights community who have worked tirelessly to expose and seek justice for state-sponsored genocide of Indigenous Mayan people that Valeria, who presents as a light-skinned Ladina, was not within the frame of who I expected to see as deeply impacted by the Armed Conflict. At this point, we had yet to begin our inquiry group work together, but shortly thereafter at the outset of our first meeting she made sure that Ignacio, her inquiry group partner, and I knew that she would speak about the conflict as a witness, as someone who lived through it: "Yo lo vivía, ya estaba en lo elevado la guerra en este entonces." [I lived it, the war was pretty elevated / heated at that time.]

Valeria was thirteen in 1996 when the Peace Accords were finalized, and she remembers seeing images on the television of the President signing the peace accords in the capitol and the symbolic act by the guerrillas of turning in their weapons. She and Ignacio had chosen to investigate and build curriculum around the question of to what extent the peace accords were successful. Though they had chosen to examine the promises and disappointments of the products and processes of conflict transformation in Guatemala, our conversations more often centered around what Valeria referred to as her doubts: her struggle to reconcile what she had

known as a child, that the soldiers were the heroes of the conflict, with what she had learned in the workshops, that the military were responsible for the vast majority of deaths and atrocities committed.

The following discussion pays attention to the moments of return to her doubts, and the movements and difference between their multiple reiterations over the course of our work together. The exploration of attachments to the “cruel optimism” (Berlant, 2011) of particular readings of the past opens a discussion of the enduring salience of some histories and the possibilities that emerge in the repetition and spiraling return to the past as part of the inquiry process.

Patchworking Spirals[90]: Los buenos y los malos

In the first minutes of our first inquiry group meeting, Valeria centers her doubts and embarks upon the first iteration of a spiraling conversation that took place over months. Seated in a side room of a restaurant on a weekend afternoon, cumbia music trilling on in the background, I opened the conversation with Valeria and Ignacio by very generally asking what they had learned so far from the course. Ignacio began by providing a short response of how he was much clearer on the causes of the conflict and the broader social and geopolitical conditions that precipitated and exacerbated it. Valeria then quickly chimed in with her doubts: what she lived, saw, and was told about who she could trust and who she should fear did not align with the texts and testimonies she encountered during the workshops, both in terms of the curricular materials presented by facilitators and the stories told by other participants. Though the curriculum of the course did not explicitly tread into a discussion of who bore moral responsibility, avoiding

[90] Some examples of spiraled patchwork quilt patterns: https://mysterybayquiltdesign.com/2014/10/11/expanding-scrappy-spiral-free-pattern/
https://spiromaniacs.wordpress.com/look-at-spiral-quilts/spiral-quilts-from-sasq/

overly pedantic instructions for what information should be trusted or seen as valid, the very introduction of alternative narratives, particularly in the form of video testimonies or testimonies shared by other teachers, created significant doubts for Valeria:

> En mi caso, como yo, parte de eso, lo viví. Yo tenía como malos solo a los guerrilleros, que les llamaban los de la FAR. Porque se supone que los soldados eran los que defendían al pueblo, así lo veía de esa manera cuando era pequeña, que los únicos que nos podían apoyar eran los soldados.
>
> Pero ya ahora que recibimos el diplomado y la clase que nos dieron, es otra historia y al final los malos también era los…
>
> No había confianza en nadie, porque también eran malos y a los guerrilleros, nuestros padres, nos ponían miedo sobre ellos pues, porque según ellos la guerrilla eran malos y la idea que yo tenía, hasta no sé mucho, era que la guerrilla siempre fue mala.
>
> Pero ya recibiendo todos los talleres, se me ha abierto la mente a decir, no era como yo pensaba. Tenía una idea equivocada a como era en realidad.[91]

As a child witness to the conflict, she shared how she grew up with a clear idea of who the enemy was (the guerrillas) and who she could trust to defend and take care of her (the soldiers). But the course had thrown into chaos her understanding of who could be trusted and who could claim moral authority in the wake of the violence. The discussion of her doubts about who were

[91] Translation: In my case, given that part of this I lived through, I thought only the guerrillas were bad, who were called the FAR. Because the soldiers were supposed to be the ones who defended the people, that's how I saw it when I was little, that the only ones who could help us were the soldiers.
But now that we received the course and the class they gave us, it is another story and in the end the bad guys were also the...
There was no trust in anyone, because they were also bad and the guerrillas, our parents, made us afraid of them, because according to them the guerrillas were bad and the idea that I had, though I don't know much, was that the guerrillas were always bad.
But having received all the workshops, my mind has been opened to [be able to] say, it was not how I thought. I had the wrong idea about what it was like in reality.

the good and bad guys during the conflict remained a theme that we returned to throughout our work together. I found that she often (re)presented her doubts using a particular discursive pattern, where she would 1) position herself as a witness, 2) explain how she saw and read the world as a child, and then 3) engage with how that "reality" has been upended.

In each of these discursive spirals about responsibility, Victoria consistently employs the language of *los buenos y los malos,* the good guys and the bad guys, to evaluate the complicity and guilt of the military and guerrillas. The translation of *los buenos* as "good guys" feels a bit awkward given the myriad connotations that phrase has in English. I find myself imagining a street fight in old Westerns or a mobster shootout with police when I think about the good guys versus the bad guys. But, unlike in Spanish, we need a noun in English. But I do think the translation works, because the use of guys as a male gendered term that gets used to describe a mixed gender group of people (Hey guys…) does serve a similar function the -os in buenos, which is the masculine form of the adjective good.

I am struck by the ellipsis at the end of the second paragraph in the excerpt above and the break in what she is willing or able to verbalize. She can acknowledge that there might be another story about what happened during the Armed Conflict, but she is not ready to name who the alternate "bad guys" might be. Instead, she loops back to the issue of widespread mistrust, and then chunkily reiterates that her parents had taught her that the guerrillas were always bad, but that her mind had been opened to other possibilities after the workshops. She ends this section with the word "reality," in that the information she learned in the workshops showed her a different historical reality. She continued to repeat this word *reality* three more times in this section, assigning a certain authority to the narratives and sources encountered in the workshops on a cognitive level, while maintaining an affective resistance to the implications of what the

veracity of alternative histories might mean for her relationship to the past and its weight in the present.

After this first exchange, I then asked Valeria how this made her feel, inviting a discussion of the emotional or affective elements at play as she encountered narratives that contradicted her experiences as a child witness and the socially bound understandings transmitted by her family and community. She framed the process of returning to her memories from childhood of the conflict with how the encounter with the darker layers of the past felt on her skin. Unlearning the landscape of safety and home, she described how her skin crawls at the thought that the field where she used to play as a child is also a mass grave site:

> Hasta se me erizó la piel de ver y decir yo, si cuando yo era pequeña yo creía que los soldados eran las personas que nos protegían y ya viendo la realidad, es otra, entonces ¿en qué mundo estábamos viviendo? … Porque ahí donde yo vivo, estaba el destacamento a la par y nosotros como niños, siempre bajábamos a jugar al campo y ahí tenían las fosas donde tiraban a los que mataban. Pero nuestros padres nos decían siempre que los soldados eran buenos, entonces nosotros crecimos con la idea que los soldados eran buenos y ahora me doy cuenta que es una realidad distinta a la que crecí.[92]

She weaves in the body as a site where disruption and change can be felt and observed as she returns to sites of childhood memories now differently imbued with the weight and intensity of a darker, more violent past. As Berlant (2011, p. 39) asserts, "Change is an impact lived in the body before anything is understood, and as such is simultaneously meaningful and ineloquent."

[92] Translation: It even makes my skin crawl from seeing or saying, if when I was little I believed that the soldiers were the people who protected us and now seeing the reality, it is another, then in what world were we living? … Because where I live, there was the [military] detachment next to us, and we as children, we always went down to play in the field and there they had the pits where they threw those who they killed. But our parents always told us that the soldiers were good, so we grew up with the idea that soldiers were good and now I realize that it's a different reality than what I grew up with.

The body becomes awash with discomforts, as the confrontation with historical dissonance reverberates through the mind and heart. By putting words to how the senses work on the body, she gives voice to the multiplicities of experiences at play in the encounter with alternative historical worlds. Later, during the same discussion with Ignacio, she again narrates the physical discomforts of remembering, stating: *Cuando lo recuerdo me da escalofríos, de veras. Yo cuando lo recuerdo eso, no quiero recordar porque me trae recuerdos y … es como que uno regresara el tiempo atrás y digo gracias a Dios mis hijos no vivieron eso, porque fue duro*.[93] In this excerpt, where she gets chills (*escalofriós*), she refers more generally to the discomforts of remembering, of allowing memories steeped in fear to take up space and become present.

I read a difference between the two moments where Valerie brings the sensations of the body into view. In the first excerpt, she narrates a cognitive and affective splintering or misalignment as her mnemonic concept of the world in which she lived as a child gets called into question when confronted with testimonies and historical narratives that name the military as responsible for the overwhelming majority of the human rights violations committed during the conflict. What was real, true, and familiar - the stories that made her fear and the constant lurking of violence comprehensible - then felt strange. A screen is removed, and a familiar landscape of play and friendship becomes contaminated when confronted with the ghosts of those haphazardly strewn and interred beneath. The skin crawls in proximity to suffering and death, but also at the reckoning with what she uncovers and allows to come into view. She does not say when she learned about the mass grave sites near her house, but it preceded her participation in the workshops and inquiry groups. Nonetheless, something in the process of inquiry and her

[93] Translation: When I remember it gives me chills, really. When I remember that, I don't want to remember because it brings back memories and it's like you go back in time and I say thank God my kids didn't live through that, because it was hard.

encounters with alternate histories of the conflict have unearthed and intensified the somatic response to the contamination of her childhood memory by interred violence.

In the second excerpt, where she gets chills, right before this moment, her colleague had finished telling the story of a violent encounter his father had with guerrillas when he was out looking for firewood. I asked Valeria if she had any follow-up questions for Ignacio, but she was still sitting in the muddiness and sticky discomforts of the temporal slippages of memory. Though she wavers and resists a return to the past, a spiraling back in time, the stories of horror that her mother told her continue to tumble out. She shares the case of a family from a neighboring community who were murdered by the guerrillas, hung up one by one with their throats split, "for no reason at all." The story focuses on the brutality and its perceived senselessness, and she does not know or understand why the guerrillas would have committed such atrocity "if they supposedly were fighting for the country." She then spirals back to the lack of trust during the conflict, and her doubts about who bore responsibility for the violence during this period:

> No había confianza en nadie. Sí, me cambió la mente total, porque yo tenía la mentalidad de que los soldados eran buenos, que nos apoyaban. Pero al mismo tiempo, yo me hacía la pregunta de ¿por qué?
>
> Porque ahí donde yo vivo, estaba el destacamento a la par y nosotros como niños, siempre bajábamos a jugar al campo y ahí tenían las fosas donde tiraban a los que mataban.
>
> Pero nuestros padres nos decían siempre que los soldados eran buenos, entonces nosotros crecimos con la idea que los soldados eran buenos y ahora me doy cuenta que es una

realidad distinta a la que crecí, creyendo que era eso, que no es esa la realidad. Es todo cambiado total.[94]

The bodily sensations frame the discursive reconstruction of the memory, marking the somatic reverberations of Valeria's attachment to the "cluster of promises" (Berlant, 2011, p. 23) embedded in her childhood understanding of who she could trust and who she should fear.

As she articulated her doubts and how she is processing a loss of certainty, I have remained attuned to the repetitions and subtle differences in each iteration. I find myself visualizing spiraling narrative loops that shift, move and adjust with each return to the past, each articulation of the doubts (Berlant, 2011). Valeria often verbalized that she was troubled and conflicted by the dissonance between the stories of the conflict from her childhood and several formative fearful experiences that established the guerrilla as *los malos*. However, both during the interviews and as I relistened, I noticed movements in the nature of stories from the past she chose to share that increasingly could have called her understanding of *los malos* into question. For example, she shared a story where the guerrillas arrived at her older sister's school, and her mother panicked and ran to save her daughter. But as raced to find her daughter, she found her walking home accompanied by a female *guerrilla* whom she had befriended. She states that her mother told her the guerrillas were not that bad because they did not hurt anyone that day. Valeria had stories and (post)memories at her disposal that she was able to draw upon as she spiraled through her inquiry into that past that provided her with alternate frames for her

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[94] Translation: There was no trust in anyone. Yes, it changed my mind completely, because I had the mentality that the soldiers were good, that they supported us. But at the same time, I asked myself the question why?
Because where I live, there was a military base next to us and we, as children, always went down to play in the fields, and there they had the pits where they threw those they killed.
But our parents always told us that soldiers were good, so we grew up with the idea that soldiers were good and now I realize that the reality is different than the one I grew up with, believing that it was [one thing], [but] that is not [what it was in] reality. It's all totally changed.

childhood memories, that helped her assimilate the discomforts of the "other history" she was learning.

Yet, I wonder to what extent the stickiness of her frames are gendered. When we spoke about *los buenos* and *los malos*, we implicitly were talking about groups of men inflicting violence on one another and on civilians. While women did join the ranks of the guerrilla, as Victoria attested to in the story of her precocious sister who befriended the female guerrilla, the protagonists of the conflict were generally men, some of whom joined the army or guerrillas by choice, while others were forcibly conscripted to the military or paramilitary civilian patrol units (PAC). As much as the spiraling conversation remains generalized, she later reveals what is underneath: we are talking about the men in her family, her brother, her husband, her brother-in-laws, all of whom bear the marks of the war in how they walk through the world and engage with their loved ones. This reckoning with their potential implication and/or complicity reverberates through her body, giving her chills and making her skin crawl.

Spiraled Encounters with Implication

Learning about the Armed Conflict and the scope of the human rights abuses committed by the military and civil patrollers provoked an emotionally charged reflection for Valeria on how the men in her family were marked by their time in the military during the conflict. She described how her older brothers were forced to join the military as adolescents and were taught how to *ser malos* / be bad. They have a lot of resentment towards others, and in particular to Indigenous people, and are very *machista* / sexist and chauvinist. In her family, she is surrounded by former soldiers; in addition to her brothers, her brother-in-law was also in the army, and her husband was not just a soldier, but part of an elite special operations unit called the *kaibiles* who

were implicated in countless human rights violations during the CAI.[95] They have what she calls a *carácter militar* / military personality, and in particular her brother-in-law who is controlling and abusive to his wife and children. She realized that the harsh conditions of military service and the brutal process of breaking in new recruits transformed them into *los malos*, the legacy of which she sees in the behavior of these men in her family and how they treat the people around them:

> Tengo la historia de mi esposo, él fue soldado, pero él no fue obligado, fue voluntariamente, y me doy cuenta, porque él tiene un carácter muy fuerte, el no anda con tanta cosa para decir las cosas y cuenta él, que cuando se iban a combatir a la montaña, no tenían qué comer y cuenta de una hierba de la montaña, le quitaban todo lo de arriba y chupaban eso, porque no tenían comida. Cuenta que los trataban muy mal, en el aspecto que si alguien era bueno, ahí tenía que convertirse en malo. La idea de los soldados, en ese entonces los jefes, que si alguien era bueno, se tenía que poner malo, porque era la única forma en que iban a tener el valor matar. Él cuenta que en muchas oportunidades estuvo a punto que lo matara la guerrilla, porque él sí combatió contra los guerrilleros, pero si me doy cuenta que sí le cambió el carácter, porque mis hermanos que no estuvieron ahí, pero sus hermanos todos fueron al ejército y yo veo el carácter militar de los que fueron y los que no, porque tengo un cuñado que también fue, pero a él como que se le quedó metido eso en la mente, porque tiene mucho resentimiento contra la gente

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[95] According to the *Conclusion and Recommendation* section of the CEH (1999), “The Army's special counterinsurgency force, known as Kaibiles, has attracted the CEH's attention, as the degrading content of its training process, which included killing animals and then eating them raw and drinking their blood as evidence of valor, has attracted the attention of the CEH. The extreme cruelty of these training methods, according to testimonies available to the CEH, were put into practice in various operations carried out by these troops, making true one of the points of the decalogue of its members: “The Kaibil is a killing machine” (p. 32, my translation)

indígena y a sus hijos los trata de una manera, “te quiero aquí, estás aquí y punto”. Es que ahí se reciben órdenes y hay un lema que ellos manejan, “el orden no se discute, se cumple’’. Es como que dicen algo y se debe hacer al pie de la letra. Mi cuñado es así con los hijos y los tiene todos humillados, no tienen ni voz ni voto. Gracias a dios en mi caso, con mis hijos no, porque yo ahí intervengo y le digo a mi marido que no se actúa de esa manera, pero mi cuñado si, la esposa no puede salir de la casa, los hijos no pueden salir a la calle y el único que manda es él y todo viene de la formación que le dieron ahí en el ejército.[96]

The depth of the lingering effects of military culture in her family speaks to the tension between the litany of “evidence” surrounding her that perhaps the military were not the saviors of Guatemala that she had understood them to be and the discomforts of even broaching their possible implication. Rothberg (2019) develops a theory of *implication* that aims to “conceptualize and confront both the legacies of violent histories and the sociopolitical dynamics that create suffering and inequality in the present” (p. 11). He treads into the “gray zone,” to use Primo Levi’s (1986/2017) term for the murky moral waters between victim and perpetrators,

[96] Translation: I have the story of my husband. He was a soldier, but he was not forced [to join], he went voluntarily, and I realize that, because he has a very strong character. He doesn't go around saying many things, and he says that when they went to fight in the mountains, they didn't have anything to eat and he says that they took everything off the top of a mountain herb and sucked it, because they didn't have food. He says that they were treated very badly, in the sense that if someone was good, he had to become bad. The idea of the soldiers, at that time the bosses, that if someone was good, he had to become bad, because that was the only way they were going to have the courage to kill. He says that on many occasions he was on the verge of being killed by the guerrillas, because he did fight against the guerrillas, but I realize that it did change his character, because my brothers [did not go to the military], but his brothers all went to the army and I see the military character of those who went and those who did not, because I have a brother-in-law who also went, but he kind of got that in his mind, because he has a lot of resentment against the Indigenous people and he treats his children in a way, “I want you here, you are here and that's it.” It’s that orders are received and there is a motto [the army has], ‘‘orders are not discussed, they are fulfilled/completed,” It is like they say something and it must be done to the letter. My brother-in-law is like that with the children and he has them all humiliated, they have no voice or vote. Thank God in my case, not with my children, because I intervene and tell my husband not to act that way, but my brother-in-law does, the wife cannot leave the house, the children cannot go out in the street and he is the only one in charge and everything comes from the training he received in the army.

where the extremity of violence, horror, and fear combined with the fight for survival blurs the lines between "moral and immoral, licit and illicit, right and wrong, and even between victim and perpetrator" (Adams, 2017, p. 47). For Rothberg (2019), implicated subjects "help produce or reproduce the positions of victims and perpetrators. [They] help propagate the legacies of historical violence and prop up the structures of inequality that mar the present" (p. 1). Within the Guatemalan context, both the concept of the gray zone, which Adams (2017) asserts is a characteristic of social relations weakened by chronic violence (p. 42-47), and Rothberg's umbrella concept of implication provide tools for *sentipensando* the relational contours of learning about historical violence.

The implicated figure that sits in the interstice between victims and perpetrators questions the existence of a pure passive bystander, recognizing that both action or inactions contribute to social injustices. These grey-zoned, implicated figures are rife in the narrative tomes of memories of the Armed Conflict. The focus of endeavors to seek legal justice in the post-Armed Conflict period has focused on those identified by truth commissions and the justice sector as perpetrators of war crimes, genocide or human rights violations, though sadly they have rarely been held to account. Those in the gray zone of complicated implication, who occupy multiple and shifting relationships to violence and injustice, have remained in the shadows. Conceptually they muddy the clarity of transitional justice legal frameworks, and socially they don't acknowledge their implication and maintain their obscurity out of fear of reprisals and prosecution. Yet, all of the participants encountered implicated figures in their homes, with one inquiry group explicitly addressing perhaps the most notable of those complexly implicated, the forced participation of hundreds of thousands of young men in the *patrullas de auto-defensa civil* [civil self-defense patrols] (PAC). Both politically and pedagogically, the country has not

reckoned with implicated bodies, the military rank-and-file, the ex-PAC and other gray-zoned figures (Petropoulos & Roth, 2005), whose hearts bear marks, whose lips remain paralyzed, and whose contentious presence rarely gets addressed in efforts to break past-present-future cycles of violence, corruption, and exploitation (Esparza, 2014).

Returning to Valeria and her husband and other male family members, I read her spiraling inquiry as iterative encounters with implication, with *sentipensado* (felt-thought) movements in each repetition: as "a spiral whose movement is a continuous feedback from the past to the future" (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2020, p. 48). The discomforts of tracing the tenuous boundaries of implication challenged the teachers and I to collectively spiral back to our assumptions, examine what they belied, and consider relational reconfigurations, both personally and pedagogically. For Valeria, the act of narrating the negative effects of her male family member's time in the military enabled a re-reading of the implicated past-present, while drawing on alternate narratives and new sources of historical learning. A spiraled re-telling and re-visiting of the past cultivated a *sentipensado* analysis of implication and of her husband's behavior towards her and her son.

My final conversation with her (under the formal auspices of the research) occurred several months after the *diplomado* had concluded. We again returned to her doubts, but she spoke in depth about her relationship with her husband, and how what she had *sentipensado* [felt-thought] and *sentiaprendido* [felt-learned] from the *diplomado* informed how she re-approached her relationship with her husband. The tone of how she talked during our last interview was more assured, more settled in that she had found a way to assimilate the stories from her family and her memories with the new learning from the *diplomado*. A key piece in that settling was having a conversation with her husband, something she expressed interest in doing

since our first conversations but he had resisted. However, she broached the conversation with him not just from a place of inquiring about what he had experienced and/or participated in, but also to corroborate her analysis of how violence and military service had marked the men in her life. She spoke to him from a place of empathy and understanding, while also holding up a mirror so that he could grapple of how the past haunted him and affected his relationship with his family:

CH: Entonces, ¿qué dudas querías sacar o resolver?

V: Que qué más hicieron en el tiempo que le tocó estar en la montaña, cómo fue su estadía y parte de eso era comprobar por qué son sus actitudes machistas a veces o de enojo, de cólera, se altera de cualquier cosa, como para poder estudiarlo y decir no, no es culpa de él, viene de atrás y para poder comprenderlo y apoyarlo de cualquier manera a salir de eso, porque gracias a Dios, después de escuchar todo eso, he tratado la manera de tratarlo y hablarle de otra forma, porque ya es otra persona a como era antes.[97]

CH: ¿Cómo así?

V: Que ya no es machista, se enojaba de cualquier cosa y ahora ya no, ya es totalmente diferente.

CH: ¿Después de la conversación?

V: Sí, yo platiqué con él y le dije que algo ahí no estaba bien, que tenía que dejar esas actitudes, que le traían recuerdos de su pasado y que al final venían a afectar a mis hijos y a mí, que nosotros no éramos culpables de lo que había vivido antes en su juventud y

[97] Translation: CH: So, what doubts did you want to resolve?
V: What else did they do during the time he was in the mountain, how was his stay, and part of that was to check why his attitudes are sometimes macho or angry, with rage, he gets upset about anything, [so I wanted] to be able to study him and say no, it is not his fault, it comes from his past and to understand him and support him in any way to get him out of that, because thank God, after hearing all that, I have tried to treat him and talk to him differently, because he is already a different person than he was before.

quizás lo hizo entrar en razón, porque él igual era alcohólico, pero hace tiempo ya lo dejó de ser, pero he llegado a la conclusión que viene a raíz de todo lo que vivió. Imagínese, me pongo a pensar yo, viendo que sus jefes o compañeros estén asesinando a una familia… cuesta imaginarlo, pero así como lo fui comprendiendo y viendo lo que quizás le había tocado la mente y hablándole cosas de Dios y gracias a eso, ya es otra persona diferente y por lo mismo no le gusta hablar de esos temas.[98]

My research questions focused on how home and community learning might make their way into learning spaces, and how they might interact with alternate and/or coinciding narratives presented by facilitators and other participants. But, admittedly, I did not expect the reverse, that is, how the *diplomado* might reverberate back into their relationships with partners, parents, children, neighbors, and family members. While inviting participants to interview someone in their life about their experiences or knowledge about the Armed Conflict was part of the plan for the inquiry process, all the focal teachers (and many others) spoke of how they shared what they learned with their children, corroborated what they were learning with those in their family, or debated at a family gathering why they all so resoundingly feared the guerrillas as *los malos*.

The dramatic change in her husband that Valeria narrates has implications for addressing gender-based violence (GBV) in the present. While government institutions and international organizations speak of addressing root causes of GBV, with workshops for men on so-called

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[98] Translation: CH: How so?
V: That he is no longer macho, he used to get angry about anything and now he is not, he is totally different.
CH: After the conversation?
V: Yes, I talked to him and told him that something was not right, that he had to leave those attitudes, that they brought back memories of his past and that in the end they came to affect my children and me, that we were not to blame for what he had lived before in his youth and maybe it made him come to his senses, because he was an alcoholic too, but he stopped being one some time ago, but I have come to the conclusion that it comes from everything he lived through. It is hard to imagine it, but as I began to understand him and see what perhaps had touched his mind and talked to him about God, and thanks to that, he is already a different person and for that reason he does not like to talk about those subjects.

"new masculinities" as the most recent development approach, few dare to explicitly link reckoning with the history of the Armed Conflict with violence prevention. Even with the success of the Sepur Zarco case, lodged by Achí women who were imprisoned and used as sex slaves in military barracks (Caxaj Álvarez et al., 2017), and the proliferation of documentation of rape as a weapon of war, the staggering rates of documented violence against women are more often discursively linked to a machista culture and traditional gender roles, than a legacy of the conflict. By no means am I implying that Valeria's husband was abusive. Rather I read broader implications and possibilities in the shift she described in his behavior. She describes changes both *en la casa y en la calle*, that is, towards his family and in how he enacts his masculinity at work and leads his colleagues. Her story of bravery in confronting her husband with kindness, empathy, and resolve, which is not without risks, has lingered with me, given how extraordinary her actions are within the context of my work in violence prevention outside of this dissertation.

One of the few organizations that I have found that pedagogically links the prevention of GBV and historical memory (again, a term used by the human rights movements and NGOs to connote preserving survivors testimonies and learning about past human rights abuses) is the *Colectivo Actoras de Cambio* [Actresses of Change Collective].[99] In their methodological guides developed for community leaders, students, teachers, and survivors of sexual violence, they intertwine Mayan cosmologies, learning histories of violence, and practices of healing:

> Conocer su historia, la historia de su país, representa para las/os estudiantes, la oportunidad de entender a su sociedad y, a la vez profundizar en el conocimiento de sí mismas/os, de sus comunidades y familias. Esto les facilitará aprender y re-significar su historia, y a través de ello, la construcción o recreación de alternativas que generan, de

[99] Website for Colectiva Actoras de cambio: https://www.actorasdecambio.org.gt/

nuevo, bienestar personal, colectivo, social y planetario.[100] (Colectiva actoras de cambio, 2012, p. 8)

I mention their work, of which I only recently became aware, as a civil society example of enacting prevention of violence in the present through inquiry into past violences through the lens of Indigenous relational ontologies and ways of healing. Though few institutions and organizations dare to link these elements due to fear, lack of resources, or internal colonization, I do not pretend to make a fully novel connection.

I also hear something else beyond learning *la memoria historica* in how Valeria broaches the conversation with her husband. She drew upon new knowledge about the violence and horrors of the Armed Conflict to re-signify history, but she wants to *corroborate* her suspicions about how his behavior might be the product of his "time in the mountain" as a *kaibil,* a key part of historical thinking. She brought a felt inquiry into her home, pulling what she learned about the Armed Conflict to empathize with and support her husband in changing his behavior, urge him to seek forgiveness from (the Catholic) God, and set a positive example for their children: "le dije que había que ir a la iglesia, hay que pedir perdón a Dios, no al mundo ni a nadie, a Dios. Quizás sí hizo algo malo, pida perdón, Dios perdona y se empieza de cero, olvide todos su pasado y empiece una nueva vida. … Dios puede cambiar corazones dañados."[101] The spiraling historical inquiry process, of reading and re-reading the past (not necessarily in a literary sense) provided her with a tool to realign gendered power relations in the present in her home. It gave

[100] Translation: Knowing their history, the history of their country, represents for the students the opportunity to understand their society and, at the same time, deepen their knowledge of themselves, their communities and families. This will enable them to learn and re-signify their history, and through it, the construction or recreation of alternatives that generate, once again, personal, collective, social and planetary wellbeing.

[101] Translation: I told him that he should go to church, ask God for forgiveness, not the world or anyone else, but God. Maybe he did do something wrong, [so] ask for forgiveness, God forgives and you start from scratch, forget all your past and start a new life… God can change damaged hearts.

her additional resources as she asserted and advocated for herself, in addition to drawing upon a key source of community support, connection, and social safety net in many communities: the church. She leveraged the political and social strengths of churches, which often fill the void left by frail government institutions, to connect with him and help him heal.

Becoming-claims: Spiraling Memory and History

Spiraling inquiry gives time and space to return differently to the past, troubling habits of curricular sequences.

While she remained affectively attached to a particular reading of the past with implications for her relationships in the present, with each felt return, she re-membered childhood memories. The *sentipensante* spiraling back to the dissonances opened cracks for the co-presences of multiple meanings, offering spaces for re-arranging the meaning, weight, and significance of memories. Though I participated in the spiraling, wandering paths of querying with the inquiry groups, the sensation of return did not get felt until I re-read the transcripts from our meetings and found myself getting lost in the data, confusing conversations from June with those from December. However, when I re-listened to recordings, I could hear the shifting terrain beneath the returns to doubts in the speed and pitch of their voices, which had quieted towards the end of our work together. We indeed created curricular sequences together, which they faithfully implemented and documented as part of their final project for the *diplomado*. But in retrospect, I wish that we had discussed how to curate the twists and turns of our felt inquiry together with their students. The teachers did fold the contents of their investigations into what they facilitated with students and encountered similar doubts, refusals, and tensions, which they addressed based on their own difficult encounters with the past. However, the rigidity of the sequence (set within the rigidity of school structures) foreclosed a more nonlinear approach that

might allow students to iteratively return to snags in a *sentipensante* inquiry process, enacting, to re-quote Rivera Cusicanqui (2020) "a spiral whose movement is a continuous feedback from the past to the future" (p. 48).

Sentipensante historical inquiry provides feminist resources for re-signifying and reworking gender dynamics steeped in violence.

As Valeria began to rearrange her mnemonic patchwork, she brought different swatches to the fore, binding them with alternate threads, while still holding on to the patches she had carried into the *diplomado* process. The stories of her machista family members who the military had "turned bad" began to take up more space in our work, as she confronted the strangeness of evidence of the military's crimes. The inquiry implicated her brothers and her husband, but also provided her with resources that she could call upon to both demand and also support him in confronting his ghosts. More than the content of narrative, testimonial or documentary resources, the space to iteratively (re)feel-think the dynamics of past implication (or even complicity or responsibility) and consider its emotional, psychological weight gave her access to tools to reconstruct her relational world.

Sentipensante historical inquiry opened space for educators to envision alternate narratives, explanations, and relationships within their families and communities.

The research presented in the dissertation has squarely focused on teacher learning, paying close attention to the pluriversal, multimodal dynamics of learning and inquiry of educators. Indeed, I refer to the participants in this text as teachers or educators, marking their role within the research by their work, defined by their engagements with students. Yet, our most affectively charged discussions of the past centered on the interactions with family members, and their memories and stories and/or silences and refusals to touch the past. Though I dedicate some

discussion to the implications of teacher learning on how they approached their work with students, I mostly intend to break from the pattern of reading teachers as conduits to young people and only forming goals for teacher learning that focus on their impact with students.

The reverberations of teacher learning vibrated through their families and communities, activating conversations about what they were learning and investigating with neighbors and family members, shifting perceptions of the actions and attitudes of their family members, and reorienting how they made sense of cultures of fear and mistrust. Ignacio shared what he had learned with his wife and her family, and discussed the widespread fear of the guerrillas at a family gathering a few towns away. Nelly reconfigured her understanding of her father's demeanor based on learning the myriad violences and traumas that could have informed his haunted fears. Juan Pablo took a macro level look at the legacies of past violences, reorienting his reading of fear and mistrust in society:

> Al igual como reflexionar también, porque a veces nuestra cultura es de desconfianza, de esto y lo otro, pero cuando veo todo eso, es un legado que quedó de ello, la desconfianza en todo. Como que cuando hay alguien que quiere apoyarnos, siempre queda eso de decir ¿Qué tal si hay algo atrás de ello? Porque a veces yo lo miraba a mal. Cuando se visitaban las comunidades y decían es que la gente no quiere, pero no sabía por qué. Pero es porque sienten todavía el miedo, de generación en generación se vino transmitiendo. Le digo, esto me sirvió también para conocer por qué es que nuestra sociedad se comporta así y sí, el odio y resentimiento que queda también.[102]

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[102] Translation: As I reflect, sometimes our culture is one of distrust, of this and that, but when I see all that, it is a legacy that remains, the distrust in everything. Like when there is someone who wants to help us, there is always the thought that, "What if there is something behind it? Because sometimes I looked at it badly. When we visited the communities and they said that people do not want [help], but I did not know why. But it is because they still feel the fear, from generation to generation it has been transmitted. I tell you, this also helped me to know why our society behaves this way and yes, the hatred and resentment that remains.

Designing and curating experiences and encounters of teacher learning should consider the possible implications beyond the classroom, and how exploration of the memories, post-memories, and histories of violence can activate discomforts, reconfigurations, reflections and other movements within familial and community constellations. The following chapter continues to explore the reverberations of *sentipensante* historical inquiry for teachers in opening spaces of encounter and dialogue within families and as a mechanism of critical collective reflection on the continuities of necropedagogies of fear.

Chapter 9: *Sentipensando* Historical Thinking Skills

This chapter explores the contours and texture of how teachers negotiated their mistrust with divergent accounts of the past, what their encounters with written documents sensorially and viscerally moved, and how the collision with difficult histories opened space to *sentipensar* memory and history. It pays the most explicit attention to how teachers implemented historical thinking skills, and the extent to which the ways they took up *sourcing* and *corroboration* both exceeded the epistemological boundaries of disciplinary inquiry and opened alternate generative avenues for re-reading, re-signifying, and re-worlding the past in relation to the present and future.

The first section analyzes enactments of *sourcing*, which invites learners to consider the author or creator of a source and the circumstances in which it was created in order to evaluate its reliability, credibility, and relevance.[103] I analyze the intensities of the multi-layered mistrust that irrupted when the teachers in the PAC inquiry group were confronted with the conclusions that the military was responsible for the vast majority of the human rights violations during the Armed Conflict, as asserted by both the United Nation's Historical Clarification Commission Report [*Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, CEH*] and Report of the Interdiocesan Project for the Recovery of Historical Memory, Guatemala [*Informe del Proyecto lnterdiocesano de Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica Guatemala: Nunca Más, REMHI]*. Tracing the *sentipensante* contours of their mistrust (with attention to my alternate reading of the

[103] Students/teachers are prompted to consider the following: Who made this? (or who wrote it?) When was this made? Who did the author/creators expect would see this? Why was it made? Is this source believable? (why or why not?) What might they have left out? How might their perspectives and biases affect the creation of the document or source?

documents), I consider the contextually contingent enactments of sourcing within a culture of fear and the possibilities of a heartened path to historical inquiry.

The second section focuses on how the PAC inquiry group navigated the complexities of familial implication, having borne witness to silences and painful stories of loss. They pursued a *sentipensante* approach to *corroboration* that quilted *lo emocionante* [the excitement] of uncovering new sources, *una sensación fea* [an ugly sensation] of encountering the horror, and *lo incómodo* [the discomfort] of hitting the edges of what families were willing to reveal. More than any of the other participants, Juan Pablo took up the search for different sources of information about the PAC and the Armed Conflict in general, listening to hours of testimony from the genocide trial of Rios Montt[104] and scouring documents from the truth reports to corroborate the stories his parents had shared. Analyzing the group's felt investigations, I explore the possibilities in teacher learning for approximating a proximity *sentipensada* to the past through historical inquiry that agitates alternate wisdoms.

Hiding the truth of the land swatch…

The following excerpt is from a novella by Mexican author Ermilo Abreu Gómez that presents a fictionalized account of the historical events of Jacinto Canek, an Indigenous leader who rebelled against the Spanish conquistadors in 1761. A colleague once gently recommended I read it to help me understand Guatemalan history:

> Canek dijo: —Hace años leí libros donde se contaba la historia de estas tierras. Los leí con placer y me entretuve en el conocimiento de los sucesos antiguos y en el razonar de las gentes que fueron. Una vez mi padrino me dijo: Los libros que lees fueron escritos por

[104] The audios were published on the online investigative news site Plaza Publica: https://www.plazapublica.com.gt/content/audio-de-testimonios-del-juicio-genocidio

los hombres que ganaron estos lugares. Mira con cuidado las razones puestas en sus páginas, porque si te entregas desprevenido, no entenderás la verdad de la tierra sino la verdad de los hombres. Léelos, sin embargo, para que aprendas a odiar la mentira que se dice dentro de los pensamientos de los filósofos y dentro de la oración de los devotos. — Y así aprendí —concluyó Canek— a leer, no la letra, sino el espíritu de la letra de todas esas historias.[105] (Abreu Gomez, 1983, p. 66)

Mistrusting Written Documents

One of the most contentious conversations within the PAC inquiry group related to the reliability and validity of the contents, interpretations, and conclusions of the two "truth reports" published on the violence committed during the Armed Conflict. Excerpts from both had been included in the online and workshops materials, and had been presented as credible representations of the nature, scale, and impacts of the commission of human rights violations by both state and non-state actors. Yet, when brought into the inquiry space, the teachers unleashed a flurry of concerns and questions, challenging their potential biases, silences, and the interests lurking behind their conclusions. Through their rigorous questioning, they exemplified the practices of sourcing a document, analyzing every possible crack to expose how the findings could differ so drastically from the truth they had been taught at home: that the guerrillas were to be feared, that they committed widespread atrocities, and bear significant responsibility for the war. I assert that their mistrust is intricately linked to the necropedagogies of fear, as a learned

[105] Translation: Canek said: "Years ago I read books where the history of these lands was told. I read them with pleasure and I entertained myself in the knowledge of the ancient events and in the reasoning of the people who were [there]. Once my godfather told me: The books you read were written by the men who won these places. Look carefully at the reasons put in their pages, because if you give in to it unsuspectingly, you will not understand the truth of the earth but the truth of men. Read them, however, so that you may learn to hate the lie that is spoken within the thoughts of philosophers and within the prayer of the devout. And so I learned," concluded Canek, "to read, not the words, but the spirit of the words of all those stories."

defense mechanism to limit the scope and range of trust as a form of protection and survival. They stood firm in arguing that books and publications, particularly from governmental sources, should not be trusted over the word of a witness or a trusted person from your immediate social circle. Rivera Cusicanqui (2020) argues that the mistrust of books derives from the colonial manipulation of the written word to occlude, misrepresent, and enact systems of racialized violence and epistemological erasure:

> Our society is characterized by elements of the cultural and civilizational confrontation begun in 1532. Words have a peculiar function in colonialism: they conceal rather than designate, a function made particularly evident in the republican phase, during which the state adopted egalitarian ideologies while at the same time erasing the citizenship rights of the majority of the population. In this way, words became a fictional record, plagued with euphemisms that veiled reality instead of revealing it. In this way, public discourse becomes a form of not saying. And these unsaid meanings and notions, these beliefs in racial hierarchy and in the inherent inequality of human beings, continue to incubate in our common sense, exploding once in a while in cathartic and irrational eruptions" (p. 12-13).

Echoing the excerpt from *Canek* that opened this chapter, the mistrust of texts, forged in colonial violence and manipulation, lingers, reinforced by palimpsestic iterations of distorted official histories and failed government promises. Moreover, the structural violence of illiteracy and hobbled media and publisher markets undermines the credibility of texts that are only available to some and by definition function as a tool of exclusion. The practices of mistrust are steeped in wisdom, resistance, and survival, and should not be discounted as just a legacy of the Armed Conflict.

The lack of resources of schools, particularly public schools in rural areas where this research was conducted, often means that classroom time is spent with the professor dictating word for word the contents of the singular textbook, which students then copy down into their notebooks. Rote memorization and the reproduction of facts still remains a dominant modality. Within that context, Rodrigo shared how in university he was taught to seek out more sources and be more investigative, which also meant learning to not blindly trust books:

> Más que todo, en la universidad nos han inculcado a que no creamos todo lo que dicen los libros. Hay que ser más investigativos, confiar más, se puede tomar como fuentes las historias de personas que lo vivieron. Entonces ahí uno dice, no hay que confiar tanto en los libros. Es parte de la mentalidad que se inculca en la universidad, porque incluso, antes nos decían que sólo repetimos lo que dicen los libros. Sí, esto pasó, pero sólo es una partecita, entonces sí, es parte de lo que nos han enseñado en la universidad, de buscar más fuentes, de ser más investigativos.[106]

Critical thinking involved breaking the dependence on the textbook, an inheritance of colonial patterns of schooling. Though given the debility of teacher education programs outside of the major universities, textbooks provide a critical lifeline for educators, particularly in regards to how to navigate contested and emotionally laden content. One of the main concerns about the implementation of the methodologies we developed with teachers during the *diplomado* was the viability of creating similar sequences in the future, given the time and access to online or textual resources required to gather, analyze, adapt, and curate student encounters with diverse sources

[106] Translation: More than anything, at university we have been taught not to believe everything that books say. You have to be more investigative, trust more, you can take as sources the stories of people who lived through it. So then one says that we should not trust books so much. It is part of the mentality that is instilled in the university, because even before they told us that, we only repeated what the books said. Yes, this happened, but it is only a small part, so yes, it is part of what we have been taught at the university, to look for more sources, to be more investigative.

of knowledge about the past. While the cohort of teachers presented what they have developed to each other with the hope that what they created would be taken up by other teachers and implemented in other contexts, that process also remains steeped in mistrust, given that each sequence took up a different controversial inquiry question.

Affective Provocations of Mistrust

Between the second and third inquiry group meeting, the teachers had each chosen one of the *casos ilustrativos*, illustrative case studies, from the CEH report, *Guatemala: Memoria de silencio*, that recounted atrocities committed by the PAC to read about and research, with the intention of sharing out what they learned during our next session together. In addition, they each wanted to interview someone in their family about their experiences during the Armed Conflict. Though they had shared family stories about the Armed Conflict in our first meeting together, they all had additional questions after reading the online materials and participating in the workshop sessions that specifically focused on the topic. Moreover, each had family members who had served as civil patrollers, though they were unsure if their family members would be willing to break their silence and speak openly with them, particularly Nelly's father. But they all hoped to find a time and space where they could broach this difficult topic with their families.

Therefore, during the third session, they began to perceive and confront the divergences in the more detailed stories they brought from home and what they had learned about the liminality of the *gray zone* experiences of many patrollers. When they began to put multiple accounts into conversation with one another, comparing what they read in the REMHI and CEH reports with what they learned through first-person accounts, they struggled with trusting that the reports were not biased or manipulated. In particular, they took issue with the finding from the CEH (1999) that the military was responsible for 93% of the human rights violations committed

during the war. As Juan Pablo exclaimed at a particularly tense moment in the conversation, “I feel like they crucified the military!”

While in my role as *acompanante*[107] to the inquiry process, I had invited teachers to examine similarities and differences between the accounts, the teachers had already begun to make these comparisons without prompting. The incongruencies between the felt (post-)memories of fear and violence and which actors bore responsibility for them triggered an affectively charged questioning of the reports. The collective process of comparing accounts brought waves of affective intensity, admittedly to some extent at my instigation. I challenged the teachers to both complicate their argument that the PAC should not be held responsible for their actions because they were forcibly recruited by the military and also examine why they struggled to trust the findings of both the CEH and REHMI reports about the responsibility of the military. The individual case studies, testimonies, and stories of atrocities in the reports provoked a mix of emotions, though they generally found them credible. What they questioned was whether all voices and perspectives were included, and if those responsible for the reports' compilation were biased or influenced by outside influences. The broader narrative that concluded that the military, at times with the active participation of members of the PAC, held primary responsibility for the violence and atrocities provoked a critical examination of the trustworthiness and reliability of the reports that exemplified the historical thinking skills outlined in the DIG resources.

[107] Each of the four facilitators of the *diplomado* engaged in *accompañamiento* of the process of inquiry with several groups of teachers. *Acompañar* in Spanish can be defined as “helping, through a process of consultation and negotiation based on an ethic of communication, so that a project can see the light of day or evolve, by providing tools and sharing know-how in order to empower the stakeholders involved. It is a position of facilitator, mediator, expert if necessary to methodologically help the implementation of a project by a collective in a systemic and open way in an approach of empowerment and emancipation of all the stakeholders of the project. It is about supporting co-decision, co-construction, by providing tools and methodologies of ‘reflecting, building and doing together’ based on an ethic of participatory democracy.” (Bischoff & Velazquez, n.d., Perceptions of the role of accompanist in the four partner countries Section)

Senti-Sourcing the Truth Reports

During the conversation, the teachers struggled to make sense of the damning statistics from the CEH about the responsibility of the military and PAC in the commission of human rights violations. The *Conclusions and Recommendations* section of the CEH report (1999) stated the following:

> Las violaciones de los derechos humanos y hechos de violencia atribuibles a actos del Estado alcanzan el 93% de los registrados por la CEH; dan cuenta de que las violaciones producidas por la represión estatal fueron reiteradas y que, aunque con diversas intensidades, se prolongaron en el tiempo de forma persistente, con especial gravedad del año 1978 al 1984, período en el cual se concentra el 91% de las violaciones conocidas por la CEH. Actuando solos o en combinación con otra fuerza, en un 85% de todas las violaciones de los derechos humanos y hechos de violencia registrados por la CEH, la violación es atribuida al Ejército y en un 18% a las Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil, organizadas por la misma institución armada.[108] (p. 42)

Of the 42,275 victims specifically identified by the CEH, 83% were Mayan and 17% were Ladino (CEH, Conclusion and Recommendations, 1999, p. 21); the report estimates a total of 200,000 people were killed, with 45,000 disappeared.

In response to these findings, the teachers presented a litany of scenarios and explanations that could explain how the CEH report could have come to such "skewed"

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[108] Translation: Human rights violations and acts of violence attributable to acts of the State account for 93% of those recorded by the CEH; they show that the violations produced by State repression were repeated and that, although with varying intensities, they were persistently prolonged over time, with particular severity from 1978 to 1984, a period in which 91% of the violations known to the CEH were concentrated. Acting alone or in combination with another force, in 85% of all human rights violations and acts of violence registered by the CEH, the violation is attributed to the Army and in 18% to the Civil Self-Defense Patrols, organized by the same armed institution.

conclusions. Juan Pablo wondered whether the commission had truly interviewed all the key actors, especially since so many people had fled into exile or into the mountains. Nelly questioned whether what they had presented was more of a hypothesis derived from second-hand information from relatives of the victims. In terms of the REHMI report, they questioned whether the results were biased based on the Catholic Church's political stance during the war, since they "provided refuge to the guerrillas." Perhaps they had simply not found the mass grave sites of the guerrillas yet, since so many have yet to be excavated. Fundamentally, they questioned what had been left out because of outside interests. Juan Pablo was adamant that, "hay información acá, pero siento que dejaron de lado mucha información más. Porque es la constante de no confiar en el gobierno." I reminded him that neither report had been created by the government, to which he responded, "Pero siento que es como que tiene injerencia en ello."[109]

The question of the anonymity of the sources, of the people who provided testimony, proved particularly contentious, though I pushed back and challenged them to consider the fear felt by survivors and the danger they could be in if named: "Se podrían haber aprovechado a las personas, como no se está revelando la identidad de nadie, vengo yo y busco a equis persona, lo hago pasar como una víctima y ya, tengo un testimonio más y puede que no haya sido de esa comunidad"[110] (Juan Pablo). I argued that perhaps they could trust anonymous sources more because the survivors might feel safer to tell the truth of what happened if they knew their names would not be published. Nelly wondered whether they could have been bribed, while Rolando

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[109] Translation: There is information here, but I feel they left out a lot of other information. Because it is the constant of not trusting the government….But I feel like it's like they have a hand in it.

[110] Translation: People could have been taken advantage of, since no one's identity is being revealed, I come and look for such and such a person, I pass him off as a victim and that's it, I have one more testimony and he may not have been from that community.

reiterated his desire to see more documentation of the process and who provided the information: “No veo fotos o videos de las personas entrevistando a las víctimas, fotos, videos, no sé, está publicado todo, pero en papel, no hay fotos.”[111] They also questioned who created the reports, which ideological bloc they belonged to, and how their interests might have informed the information they selected and how they compiled and presented the report.

While our discussion was not intended as an exercise in sourcing a document, their questions and challenges of its veracity and bias could have served as *cognitive modeling* for their students, an activity where teachers (or students) think aloud as they analyze a source to model historical thinking. They took up the sourcing questions listed in footnote 103, examining the perceptions and possible bias of the authors and the conditions under which the source was created. Yet sourcing does not account for the layers of mistrust and holding power of entrenched historical narratives that tint and skew how the teachers analyzed the texts. At one point I asked Juan Pablo what he would need to trust the documents, to which he responded that he would need to have been there to have witnessed it with his own eyes. On the one hand, such entrenched mistrust risks a nihilistic outlook when nothing and nobody can be trusted, upending the intention for inquiry to help learners become attuned to the multiplicities of factors that might shape a source’s relevance, reliability or credibility. Yet, among all the questions and doubts that I detailed above, the group managed to identify a critical flaw / silence in the truth report that has hobbled its general acceptance and left it open to criticism and questioning.

The group engaged in a sort of *senti-sourcing* that hindered their ability to trust the truth reports because the statistics and conclusions about who bore responsibility for the violence did

[111] Translation: I don't see photos or videos of people interviewing the victims, photos, videos. I don't know, everything is published, but on paper, there are no photos.

not represent the felt experience of much of the population. Juan Pablo summarized the affective disjunction felt by the group in the following excerpt:

> Que sí se le debería dar más responsabilidad a la guerrilla, porque por ejemplo, en algunos lugares, como que **se sentían** más seguros cuando había presencia militar, porque imagino que ya sabían que la guerrilla… o sea, porque las intenciones de ellos eran proteger a su propia gente, pero muchas veces no hicieron eso. Incluso, ellos mismos mataban a su propia gente, entonces a veces **se sentían** más seguros y confiaban más en el ejército en algunos lugares, pero aquí, en este informe, el [93%] de responsabilidad es del ejército y **yo siento** que está muy disparejo, porque la guerrilla en algunos lugares sí actuó bastante y cometieron varias masacres.[112]

I have bolded the use of the verb *sentir* [to feel] to accentuate the shift in language in how he explained the lingering sense that, as expansive and comprehensive as the report may have been, with thousands and thousands of interviews to back up their conclusions and recommendations, the affective gap between the text and their felt experience was a red flag. The statistics did not coincide with their post-memories of vulnerability and fear of the guerrillas. While I was interpreting their resistance as "sticky attachments" to the manipulations of government propaganda that had succeeded in denying the military's crimes and demonizing the guerrilla forces, their senti-sourcing grounded in the ancestral wisdoms of mistrust astutely identified omissions that some attribute to the report's beleaguered reception.

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[112] Translation: Yes, more responsibility should be given to the guerrillas, because for example, in some places, they felt safer when there was a military presence, because I imagine that they already knew that the guerrillas... that is, because their intentions were to protect their own people, but many times they did not do that. They even killed their own people, so sometimes they felt safer and trusted the army more in some places, but here, in this report, [93%] of the responsibility is of the army and I feel that it is very uneven, because the guerrilla in some places did act quite a lot and committed several massacres.

Writing with the perspective and authority of a researcher who gathered testimonies from survivors for the CEH reports, Esparza (2015) argues that the report did not manage to dispel many of the myths of the conflict, principally:

> the ways the army managed to build its mass-based support in the countryside prior to the genocide—which has historical continuity within the context of internal colonialism … I argue more specifically, that the lack of testimonies from pro-army groups collaborating with the army, such as members of the Civil Self-Defense Patrols (PAC in Spanish), resulted in silences over the army's efforts to convince Indigenous groups to collaborate with its genocidal policy.

She also traces the implementation of social services by the military to alleviate hunger and combat poverty in rural areas that played a role in successfully winning over rural populations and re-signifying the military as a protector in the hearts, minds, and (post)memories of many affected populations (Esparza, 2015, p. 75). Though the reports do discuss both of these issues, the limited amount of testimony from former civil patrollers and those who perpetrated human rights violations successfully centered the narrative on the experiences of victims and survivors, while failing to explain the actions of the State to co-opt local communities and ensure they would turn a blind eyes to their brutal tactics of elimination of the internal enemy.

The material, affective, and cosmological conditions of the inquiry process may have destabilized the pathways for trust, but they also predisposed the teachers to identify a critical (affective) gap in how the history of the Armed Conflict pedagogically and politically often gets reproduced. Talking about the role of the civil patrollers and rank-and-file military veterans in winning over many local populations remains contentious, given their continued political power

and on-going requests of payments for their services during the war.[113] Nonetheless, the inquiry topic chosen by the group represents a critical piece in addressing the lingering negation of genocide and role of the military in atrocity. The gap that Esparza articulated and the inquiry group identified through their senti-sourcing of the Truth Reports reinforces for me the possibilities of a *sentipensado* historical analysis, and alternate paths to reading the past in the present it might pave.

***Sentimientos Encontrados*: The Feeling of Historical Proximity**

In preparation for the third inquiry group meeting, Juan Pablo opted to analyze the Illustrative Case #107: The Massacre of the Acul Community (CEH, 1999, p. 115-122) because his mother and her family originated in Acul. At first, he found significant resonance between the Acul case study from the CEH report and the information shared by his mother, which he took pains not to influence with any new learning from the *diplomado*: "ella me decía que le platicara un poco sobre lo que leí y le decía que no, porque puede que interfiera con lo que usted sabe. Yo quiero conocer lo que usted tiene, y la verdad, fue muy parecido."[114] Yet the work of comparing his mother's accounts with the CEH case study had intense affective implications given,

> los **sentimientos encontrados** que tiene uno, la impotencia, el no creer que las personas tengan esa maldad en ellos verdad, también cómo hacerle para dormir cada noche, sabiendo las atrocidades que habían cometido. …Cómo fue que unos grupos no se

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[113] The ex-PAC received a significant pay-out in 2019, 23 years after their dissolution (Coronado, 2019). In July 2024, the Congress voted to authorize payments to military veterans for their service during the Armed Conflict (Espinoza, 2024).

[114] Translation: She was telling me to tell her a little bit about what I read and I said no, because it might interfere with what you know. I want to know what you have, and honestly, it was very similar.

tentaron el corazón y arrasaron con comunidades, no importando si a los que exterminaban eran niños, ancianos, la verdad que es un poco difícil"[115]

This response to my inquiry about what he had learned since our last meeting opened the conversation that day with Juan Pablo weaving the sadness and feelings of impotence at the loss of a family member (his mother's brother) with attempts to empathize with and make sense of how people could commit such atrocities and still sleep at night. His interview with his mother, which he dutifully recorded, and his search to corroborate her account with information found in the CEH report provoked a heartened learning. Discussions of the guerilla's strategy and the army's use of curfews to reinforce social control collided with:

> El sentimiento tan feo que le da a uno de leer todo ello, de escuchar… se me hace un nudo en la garganta y me da una rabia, de cómo pudiera haberlos ayudado. Obviamente ya no se puede, pero lo que había padecido toda la gente, me conmueve y leyendo también los artículos y más otras cosas, la verdad, no quisiera que nunca volviera a pasar. Como leí alguna vez y que también decía una señora, que todo esto que pasó antes, lo pudieran decir en las escuelas, hablarlo más, para que ya no vuelva a pasar, porque regresar atrás fue estar en el infierno y cree que con todo lo que han leído es con justa razón a lo que se refiere.[116]

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[115] Translation: the mixed feelings one has, the helplessness, not believing that people have such evil in them, and also how they could sleep at night, knowing the atrocities they have committed. How was it that some groups were not tempted by the heart and razed communities to the ground, no matter if those they exterminated were children or the elderly. The truth is that it is a little difficult.

[116] Translation: The ugly feeling it gives you to read and to listen to all this... it gives me a lump in my throat and makes me angry, how I could have helped them. Obviously it is no longer possible, but what all the people had suffered, touches me and also reading the articles and other things, the truth is that I would never want it to happen again. As I read once and as a lady also said, that all this that happened before, they could say it in the schools, talk about it more, so that it does not happen again, because going back was like being in hell and she believes that with all that you have read, it is with good reason what she is referring to.

At this point, he got choked up and could not go on speaking. He took some deep breaths - we all did - and drank some water. We sat together quietly in the courtyard of my hotel for a few minutes, as the knot in his throat and heart ensnared and entangled us all.

His investigation had led to *sentimientos encontrados*, literally found or encountered emotions, but the phrase refers to an inundation or assault of distinct and/or conflicting emotions (Hernández, 2021). It speaks to the affective complexity of finding impotence, rage, sadness, disgust, and sympathy, among other emotions and sensations in the words found on the page (or screen) and heard across the kitchen table. The emotional multiplicity included temporal elisions, where he feel-thinks the impotence, wondering and wishing he could have done something to save his uncle, though he was killed years before his was born. The inquiry process unearthed a proximity to loss and atrocity that had been hidden away beneath the fear and sadness. Though washed in empirical trappings of a search for truths and finds, the framework of historical thinking created space for a resuscitation of affective intensity where what was "found" was first and foremost a knotted web of mixed emotions.

Yet, he continued to return to his parents and ask them questions, mostly over the breakfast table, until the edges of what his father would reveal became visceral, and "mejor ya no seguir preguntando." Juan Pablo came to recognize and respect the silences surrounding his father's time as a patroller in Nebaj. The details of patrolling in one of the most violent regions at the height of the conflict remained guarded, eliciting pointed responses when Juan Pablo's curiosity exceeded the invisible boundaries of silence. "Es que me dijo, 'mira, yo siento que las personas que no lo vivieron, no tendrían derecho a estar hablando muchas cosas." Ya se puso cerrado ahí."[117] Yet, the foreclosures at home only served to motivate him to seek out

[117] Translation: He told me, 'Look, I feel that people who didn't live through it shouldn't have the right to be saying a lot of things." [The topic] was closed there.

information from other sources, delving deeply into the audios from the 2013 genocide trial of Rios Montt until the *sensaciones feas* (ugly feelings) of the incomprehensible violence of annihilation would overtake him:

> Yo cuando estaba buscando fuentes, dije tiene que haber algún testimonio de alguien que haya estado ahí, alguien que sea directo, que haya tenido que ver por eso e investigando e investigando encontré la página y empecé a escuchar, y tratar de regresar a ellos a ese entonces, es complicado, pero es interesante, difícil, ya es escuchar el audio directo de una persona que sobrevivió. Pero después de un rato ya no quería, porque uno se siente mal de sólo imaginar todo lo que pasa, es feo.[118]

I read in Juan Pablo's on-going search for more sources an impulse to put the known and unknown of his parents' and family's experiences and actions during the conflict in conversation with other voices. The earnestness and intensity of his inquiry stood out from his colleagues: "Mientras transcribía lo que él decía, trataba de imaginar lo que estaba pasando ahí y después hacía una comparación entre fuentes, entre el informe de la CEH y este y coincide mucho"[119] He is transcribing hours of testimony, while trying to imagine what it felt and looked like to be in that moment, while corroborating what he was hearing with the truth reports and other sources he had encountered throughout the *diplomado*. The salience of this moment for me comes from the ways he took up the methods of historical thinking we introduced into the *diplomado* and forged a deeply personal path of inquiry into the past. He lamented more than once that he could not go

[118] Translation: When I was looking for sources, I said there must be some testimony from someone who was there, someone who was there directly, who had to see it, and researching and researching I found the page and started to listen, and try to go back to that time, it is complicated, but it is interesting, difficult, it is already to listen to the direct audio of a person who survived. But after a while I didn't want to, because you feel bad just imagining everything that happened, it's ugly.

[119] Translation: As I transcribed what he was saying, I tried to imagine what was going on there and then made a comparison between sources, between the CH report and this one and it matches a lot."

back in time, either to intervene or just understand. Though he held up the first-person witness as the authority of truth, he carved a path to approximate as close a proximity to the past as he could. During one of our final meetings as an inquiry group, he reflected on the movements in his ways of approaching learning history:

> Creo que uno va creciendo con las historias y las va a investigar, las va creyendo. Cuando se empieza a leer, uno se da cuenta que hay partes que sí concuerdan, pero que hay otras que se van para diferentes partes, entonces ahí es donde lo que decía de analizar una fuente, la credibilidad de ella, porque si sólo nos enfocamos en una sola, no creo que obtengamos mucha información, nos vamos a quedar con un solo punto, pero hay bastante información. Cuando usted mencionaba esto, decía, quisiera saber qué dije en mayo {risas}, pero sí, porque es increíble cómo puede cambiar todo esto, cómo puede cambiar la idea que tiene uno, ir cambiando poco a poco, porque totalmente no cambió, pero sí, eso de seguir investigando, de buscar más información. … Al igual escuchar las historias es tan crudo, tan difícil asimilarlas o leerlas incluso, porque a veces uno se viene imaginando y estar en ese momento estuvo difícil.[120]

Juan Pablo by no means was the only teacher to seek out or even stumble upon a *sentipensada* proximity to the past that extended beyond the fragments of family memories and stories. However, the intensity with which he pursued, cultivated, and verbally articulated his search for proximity (my word) has provided me with curious fodder to consider the pedagogical

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[120] Translation: I think you grow with the stories and you start to investigate them, you start to believe them. When you start to read, you realize that there are parts that do match, but there are others that go in different directions, so that is where what I was saying about analyzing a source, the credibility of it, because if we only focus on one, I don't think we will get much information, we are going to be left with only one point, but there is enough information. When you mentioned this, you said, I would like to know what I said in May {laughs}, but yes, because it is incredible how all this can change, how it can change the idea that one has, change little by little, because it did not totally change, but yes, that of continuing to investigate, to look for more information. ... Listening to the stories is so raw, so difficult to assimilate them or even to read them, because sometimes one starts imagining and to be in that moment [must have been] difficult.

implications a *sentipensante* approach for closing the distance of the past and forging a proximity with "*sentimentos encontrados"* (Juan Pablo) and "cognitive dissonance" (Ignacio).

Lederach (2005) places the study of proxemics on conversation with the affective impacts of national-level peace processes, and the challenge of disseminating the touch and feel of change widely:

> Proxemics is the study of the actual physical space that people view as necessary to set between themselves and others in order to feel comfortable. Applied to our inquiry, one way to understand how change is viewed is to study the space that people feel is necessary to perceive and experience a change process as genuine. I find rather consistently that people judge change by what can be felt and touched and by what touches their lives. This of course poses a major challenge for national-level processes. When national leaders and campaigns are successful, it is because people feel touched and feel they can touch what is happening. From the view of proxemics, the distance between people and the processes of change has been reduced because they feel directly connected to it. When things happen, locally or nationally, and people do not have a sense of touch and feel, the distance expands and they feel removed and remote. Correspondingly, the processes are perceived as foreign and unconnected, creating a sense of imposition or, worse, apathy. In the vernacular: "Stuff happens to us. We are not shaping what happens." This is why a prevalent feeling about peace processes is that they are distant from us. They happen out there. (p. 56)

Instead, I apply proxemics to processes of teacher learning about difficult histories, though within the very contexts that Lederach describes where national agreements have struggled to feel and touch the daily lives of many Guatemalans. The mnemonic gaps between the superficial

histories of the Armed Conflict that often appear in schools (if they even are broached), the informal histories passed on by families or teachers, and the articulation of official histories with the publication of Truth Reports have created a crisis of proximity. Fear and mistrust indeed exacerbate to what extent teachers feel comfortable learning and teaching about the Armed Conflict, and the racialized injustices that pre-dated it. However, the feeling of distance from the past, particularly one shrouding in silences, fear and shame, presents an obstacle within spaces of teacher learning. Several of the teachers even admitted to me (once we had developed a level of rapport) that they had little interest in learning about the Armed Conflict, until they started to learn a bit more through the *diplomado* and got hooked on its complexities once they began to encounter stories, testimonies, military documents, music, and art that moved the history of the Armed Conflict outside of guarded sphere of the home.

Sentipensando **the Gray Zone**

Prime Levi's (1986/2017) writing on *gray zones*, of those spaces, people, and circumstances of moral and ethical complexity and ambiguity baked into the insidious Nazi strategy of forcing victims to particulate in the extermination of their brethren or face death themselves, provides a powerful foundation for examining the ethical, affective, and historiographical complexities of learning and teaching about the civil patrollers, and even the Armed Conflict in general. The dominant narrative of the Armed Conflict as a conflict between *las dos bandas*, two sides - a common refrain from teachers throughout the *diplomado* program - fails to capture the proliferation of ethical gray zones that proliferated under the pressures of persecution, authoritarianism, and social control. The focus on the use of the judicial system to lead the process of transitional justice and its need for clear determinations of guilt, and the corollary framing of much of the education of the Armed Conflict through the lens of human

rights, has excluded the moral ambiguities and compromise of the gray zones of the Armed Conflict. The massive mobilization of male civilians (PAC) and the brutal incentive system for *orejas* / spies created ethical dysfunctionality that defied clean delineation of right and wrong and degraded the foundations of ethics and morality (Roth, 2005, p. 374).

Moreover, in the gray zones, mistrust in others and in the moral structures that previously might have bound communities together begins to fester. As Levi (1986/2017) argued, "if the most basic ethical teachings lost their appeal in the gray zone, then that fact scarcely inspired confidence - then and now - that the world had a fundamental moral structure that could be trusted" (Roth, 2005, p. 374). Both focal inquiry groups experienced the discomforts of confronting alternative historical narratives that disrupted the affective and mnemonic stability of their post-memories while investigating the gray zones of the Armed Conflict. That these gray zones overlapped with questions of moral responsibility and the implication of family members only compounded the discomforts and tightened the knots of doubt and confusion.

Given the community's close proximity to where he lived, Rodrigo had chosen to examine Illustrative Case #43: The Patrollers of Cucabaj (CEH, Tomo VII, 1999, p. 131), which documented the forced participation of civil patrollers in the interrogation, torture, and arbitrary execution of their neighbors and colleagues as accused members of or collaborators with the guerrilla:

> "*Hay que sacar los que están podridos para que no se pudran los demás, si no, no van a tener paz en sus casas*", reprendió el oficial. A continuación, el oficial ordenó a los patrulleros que pasaran, uno por uno, y que cortaran el cuello de sus compañeros, hasta matarlos. Un testigo presencial afirma que debieron hacerlo, "*hasta quitarles la cabeza, también tuvimos que darles con piedras y palos*". De esta manera el Ejército obligó a los

hombres de Cucabaj a matar a sus vecinos Santos López López, Tomás Ventura González, Tomás López Tiño y Diego Ventura López.[121] (p. 134, italics in original)

The dehumanization of beings who are rotten and must be rooted out combined with the liminality of a scenario where one is forced to choose between enacting horrific violence upon your neighbors or becoming the victim of said atrocity captures the double bind of forced complicity. Collaborators must call out and expose others by name, and yet they are seen and treated as less than human, as a disease that must be eradicated for the peace of the nation. The patrollers of Cucabaj faced what Lawrence Langer (1982) called *choiceless choices*, a term used to describe the impossible dilemmas that Nazis and their collaborators concocted for their victims when they forced them to choose "among hideous options that could not even be described as involving so-called 'lesser of evils' (Petropoulos & Roth, 2005, p. xvii), but were "between one form of abnormal response and another, both imposed by a situation that was in no way of the victim's own choosing" (Langer, 1982, p. 72). Though they acknowledged that military obedience should not extend to the commission of human rights violations, the CEH members assigned full responsibility in this case to the army, given that the patrollers were placed "en una situación límite que anuló su capacidad para obedecer o desobedecer libremente las órdenes impartidas"[122] (CEH, 1999, p. 136).

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[121] Translation: "*You have to take out those who are rotten so that the others don't rot, otherwise you won't have peace in your homes*," the officer reprimanded. The officer then ordered the patrolmen to go down, one by one, and cut the throats of their companions, until they killed them. An eyewitness affirms that they had to do it, "*until they removed their heads, we also had to hit them with stones and sticks*." In this way the Army forced Cucabaj's men to kill their neighbors Santos López López, Tomás Ventura González, Tomás López Tiño and Diego Ventura López.

[122] Translation: in a liminal situation that nullified their ability to freely obey or disobey the orders issued

Rodrigo broached the subject of whether the civil patrollers were victims or perpetrators with his mother, who redirected him to speak to his uncle who was ex-PAC, but firmly declared that only the army and guerrilla has committed abuses:

> R: Pensaba hacerle la entrevista a mi mamá, pero ella no tiene mucha información de eso, incluso fue ella la que me dijo que entrevistara a mi tío. Lo que decía mi mamá, era que el ejército y los guerrilleros cometieron masacres, pero los patrulleros no…
>
> CH: ¿Ella decía que no?
>
> R: Sí, pero yo le decía que en los libros que he leído dice que sí, que cometieron masacres, qué raro pues me dice, en este sector no, aquí no pasó eso, pero yo le decía que en otros lugares sí. … Cuando le decía que los patrulleros también asesinaron personas, ella me decía que no, que nada que ver. … No creo que mi tío haya hecho eso y le contaba el caso de Cucabaj y no dijo nada, se quedó pensando y dijo, **qué tremendo**.[123]

Rodrigo's re-telling of the story for us and for his mother weaves together the pedagogical and the strange, moving between an intention to know, explore, and understand, and an affective collision with the unknowable and unspeakable. He tries to put himself in their shoes, projecting himself upon the past and imagining how he might have reacted in these moments of liminality. He pulls out from the narrative the pain of being forced to kill another to save yourself, and the defiance of the guerrillero who refuses to give up his comrades:

[123] Translation: R: I was thinking of doing the interview with my mother, but she doesn't have much information about it, she was the one who told me to interview my uncle. What my mom was saying was that the army and the guerrillas committed massacres, but the patrollers did not....
CH: She said no?
R: Yes, but I told her that in the books I have read it says that they did, that they committed massacres, how strange because she told me, not in this sector, that didn't happen here, but I told her that in other places they did. ... When I told her that the patrols also killed people, she told me no, that it had nothing to do with that. ... I don't think my uncle did that and I told her about the case of Cucabaj and she said nothing, she kept thinking and said, what a tremendous thing to say.

> El ejército no metió las manos, no fueron directamente a matar a las personas, sino que utilizaron a la gente. Eso me llamó la atención, porque es más doloroso. Me pongo en los zapatos de la gente, que tal vez se conocían durante años y que se tuvieran que matar y sí, lo hicieron. Uno de los relatos decía, yo soy guerrillero, pero no les voy a decir el nombre de nadie, si tengo que morir, mátenme porque no hablaré, no me torturen, mejor denme ya un disparo y ahí fue cuando el teniente del ejército le disparó.[124]

The case begins to touch the complexities of forced complicity that ensnared over a million men from the PAC's creation in 1981 under the regime of General Lucas García until its dissolution with the signing of the final Peace Accords in 1996. It exemplifies how their forced participation in surveillance and social control often under the threat of violence could escalate into complicity in the annihilatory machinations of counterinsurgency. However, other illustrative cases presented by the CEH clearly deemed both the military and civil patrollers responsible for massacres, arbitrary executions, torture, and other violations of human rights. The conclusion section at the end of each case presented a determination of responsibility and culpability for the atrocities committed, which proved a critical exercise for laying the foundation for future legal cases against said unnamed perpetrators. Yet these declarations elide the gray zoned circumstances in which the civil patrollers found themselves.

Nelly was the first in the group to begin to sew doubts in the group about the REHMI report among the group as she wondered how her family's narrative that the role of the PAC was to keep their families and the community diverged so significantly to what the reports presented:

[124] Translation: The army did not even raise a finger, they did not directly kill anyone, but they used other people to do so. That caught my attention, because it is more painful. I put myself in the shoes of those people, that maybe they had known each other for years and they had to kill each other and yes, they did. One of the stories said, "I am a guerrilla, but I am not going to tell you the name of anyone, if I have to die, kill me because I will not talk, do not torture me, you better shoot me," and that is when the army lieutenant shot him.

> En mi caso, leí el informe REHMI, lo que habían hecho los PAC y yo comparaba con lo que mi papá me decía y no era nada que ver con lo que él describía. Pero yo me pongo a pensar que tal vez era diferente en cada lugar la forma que trabajaban los ex PAC.[125]

Reered in guarded silences and trauma-driven anxieties, Nelly began to assimilate new information, while preserving the fragments she inherited from her family and from a broader social narrative that reinforced what she gleaned from her parents that the ex-PAC were protectors, and any misdeeds resulted from orders from above. Yet, the disparities she mentions opens the field of engagement with the affective attachments with the stories of the Armed Conflict that the teachers brought from home.

These stories carry "a cluster of promises" (Berlant, 2011, p. 23) about the past, about the nature of violence, and its proximity to their family members with optimistic assurances that, within the precarities of a culture of mistrust, the word of their family members and the world they created for me is true. The loss of the truth of their stories, and the possible corollary realization of possible familiar complicity in horror, presents a threat that might be too much to bear. The collision with alternate versions of the past creates a stress test of the attachments to affectively charged stories from the 1.5 and post-memory generations and how these narratives "provide something of the continuity of the subject's sense of what it means to keep on living on and look forward to being in the world" (Berlant, 2011, p. 24). The discomforts of challenges to teacher's affective attachments to certain pasts generates an additional layer of fear: "fear that the loss of the promising object/scene itself will defeat the capacity to have any hope about anything" (Berlant, 2011, p. 24). As we began to directly address the doubts that they had about

[125] Translation: In my case, I read the REHMI report, what the PACs had done, and I compared it with what my father told me and it was nothing like what he described. But I started to think that maybe the way the ex-PACs worked was different in each place.

incongruities between family stories and the report narratives, I began to hear a tightening of the affective attachments, as we delved into the possibility that the PAC might hold some responsibility for their actions, and some might have even chosen to join or organize themselves.

As the teachers started to compare and contrast the case studies they each studied and presented to each other, Juan Pablo declared: "Una semejanza, yo creo que es que las patrullas, en su mayoría, siempre fueron organizadas por el ejército y las personas que estaban dentro fueron forzadas a participar, el reclutamiento forzado de menores de edad, imagino que eso pasó, porque nadie quería participar de eso."[126] Two of the three cases chosen by the group, including the case study of Acúl which Juan Pablo reviewed, named members of the civil patrollers as those responsible for the human rights violations. At this point in the conversation, I directed the group's attention back to the documents, acknowledging that indeed, as was the case of Cucabaj, some PAC were forced to commit violence, others had options and chose to particulate in massacres of entire villages and communities, as was the case of Rio Negro, which we had studied in the most recent workshop. Yet, they remained firm in their assessment that ultimately the army should be held responsible for the atrocities, not the members of the PAC, despite the findings of the CEH report, which I had even read aloud. Juan Pablo rested his evaluation on what both his parents had told him, and on his incredulity that anyone would willingly participate in the murder or massacre of other:

> Lo que me decía [mi mamá], o los asesinaban a ellos o usted se va junto con los que están ahí, entonces también habría que ver esa situación, qué tan en su sano juicio podría estar la persona que fuera matar a otra persona, sólo por querer hacerlo. Lo que yo creo ahí, es

[126] Translation: One similarity, I think, is that the patrols, for the most part, they were always organized by the army and the people who were part of it were forced to participate, the forced recruitment of minors. I imagine that happened, because nobody wanted to participate in that.

que fueron forzados a hacerlo. … Yo lo veo desde ese punto, porque yo recuerdo, como lo decía mi papá, que era una vez que yo leía un libro y le comentaba, mira, es que no es lo mismo que estés leyendo que las personas hicieron esto o lo otro, pero haberlo vivido y que conozcas cómo pasó todo eso, es diferente, entonces yo creo que la perspectiva que yo les decía, que es más responsabilidad del Estado, porque son las mismas personas que estuvieron ahí, que eran las que contaban las historias y como era antes, que cualquiera le echaba la culpa a cualquiera o acusaban a cualquier persona para justiciarlo, no importaba si estaba en un grupo o no, entonces yo confiaría más en la fuente directa, en la persona que estuvo en el caso, que observó y estuvo en la comunidad durante los hechos.[127]

Despite living in a country with one of the highest per capita homicide rates in the world (Minian, Young, Pitti & Wackett, 2023), he maintains an optimistic hope that no one in their right mind would murder someone unless they were compelled to do so. More importantly, he values the word of those who lived through the past and were witnesses or participants to what happened more so than what could be found in a book. The witness and their first-person testimony take precedence over any secondary accounts, which he suggested were more easily subject to manipulation or bias.

The PAC remained operational until the end of the signing of the peace accords in 1996, though their name and activities changed after the intensity of the violence in the early 1980s subsided. An entire social movement of and for the former patrollers or ex-PAC developed in the

[127] Translation: What [my mother] told me, either they killed them or you leave together with those who are there, so we would also have to look at that situation, how sane a person could be to kill another person, just because they wanted to do it. What I believe there, is that they were forced to do it. ... I see it from that point of view, because I remember, as my father used to say, that it was once when I was reading a book and I told him, look, it is not the same if you are reading that people did this or that, but having lived it and knowing how it all happened, it is different, so I think that the perspective I was telling you, that it is more the responsibility of the State, because they are the same people who were there, who were the ones who told the stories and as it was before, that anyone could blame anyone or accuse anyone to justify him, no matter if he was in a group or not, so I would trust more in the direct source, in the person who was in the case, who observed and was in the community during the events.

later years and after their deactivation to legitimize their actions and garner recognition and remuneration for their contributions to re-establishing peace in Guatemala. The ex-PAC movement has proven particularly successful at whitewashing the gray zone of their very existence. The obligatory nature of their participation in nightly *rondas*, rounds, and other activities to monitor and control the civilian population that freed up soldiers to directly take on military operations against the guerrilla, leant some level of justification for their participation in human rights violations. Bolstered by the right-wing slant of most media sources and continued ability of military leadership to influence public discourse, the ex-PAC have exerted significant political power over how their story has been written even after their dissolution.

Becoming claims

Cultivating sentipensante paths for approximating proximity to the past in teacher learning enables a rebellious form of historical inquiry that opens space for imagining alternate worlds and futures.

The feeling of proximity to the past opens the possibility for shifts in felt-thinking of the past in terms of 1) valuing the actions and wisdoms of ancestors and how they have survived in the face of oppression, 2) honoring the lives of victims remembered and forgotten, 3) moving out of the urgencies of the present and its challenges to engage in spiraling, cross-temporal examinations, in order to 4) move from feelings of impotence, fear, and/or indifference to a motivated sense of *yosotros*-guided action. The feeling of proximity has a motivating force that can drive on-going inquiry:

> las emociones y afectos de quien se aproxima al pasado no son consideradas como un mero accesorio o epifenómeno de la investigación histórica. Más bien, son aquello que

motiva el estudio, que insulfa la escritura y que habilita la emergencia de nuevos interrogantes"[128] (Macón y Solana, 2015, p. 26).

I argue for a rebellious process of historical thinking, that questions sources (understood as *tz'iib*), contextualizes the worlds in which they were created or developed, and puts them in conversation with one another, while opening oneself to the felt reverberations of those actions (which were never limited to cognition to begin with) and their ability to approximate a proximity to the past. The goal of forming historical arguments backed by robust evidence does have a role in classrooms, in terms of preparing young people to code switch into forms of verbal and written articulation expected in formal places of work, government institutions, and schools (among other spaces). However, the purposes of cultivating proximity to the past as a teacher, for oneself and for the students, detours from the rhetoric of critical thinking or deliberative democracy and other terms that implicitly envision a Western-washed form of citizenship that often gets stuck at the level of rhetoric in Guatemala. The projects for transitional justice, which have morphed into international development projects (which I have worked in), have broadly failed to address structural violence nor reckon with the gray zones of implication and cultivate alternate paths for social healing beyond psychological treatments and a hobbled legal system. Instead, the past in Guatemala has been rendered irrelevant, distant, and unknowable due to convenience, negligence and/or arrogance. Alternatively, *sentipensado* approximations of the past allows for the co-presences of multiple narratives (particularly in situations of familial complicity and implication), diverse ontological figures (where the land can tell stories and

[128] Translation: "The emotions and affects of those who approximate the past are not considered as a mere accessory or epiphenomenon of historical research. Rather, they are what motivates the study, what infuses the writing [with ideas or feelings] and enables the emergence of new questions."

ghosts can make requests of the living), and authorship and subjectivities based on *yosotros* (an I/We).

A purely disciplinary, analytical approach to teaching and learning difficult histories falls short in addressing the affective complexities of the gray zone.

Though some high-level officials have been found guilty of human rights violations and are imprisoned, impunity still reigns for the vast majority of those responsible for the violence. But as troubling as the lack of justice for those who committed the most egregious crimes, my experiences with the teachers have shown me the complicated expanse of implication and complicity that transitional justice initiatives have failed to address. From the millions of patrollers who were obligated to participate in the control, monitoring, and regulation of their neighbors to soldiers who were forcibly recruited into the military, a majority of men of a certain age were obliged (with varying levels of willingness) to participate in violence, repression and social control. Some of these men are teachers, or they are the fathers, husbands, uncles of teachers. They shape the lacunae that surrounds certain topics in that the ways that they cope (or struggle) with what they lived and felt during the Armed Conflict haunts how they walk through the world and ripples into their relationships.

These workshops had an impact on how some teachers understood the actions of their family members. Our discussion of military service / PAC and machismo suggests the need for a more explicit articulation a feminist pedagogy of the Armed Conflict (though in Guatemala naming it as such would provoke resistance in certain sectors). The silence around those implicated in the gray zone necessitates a mode of engagement with teachers that invites reflection about how the widespread participation of men affected/affects gender relations, and how to address the presence of those implicated in violence in our families and communities.

These men will not be called to task, and there are not any local commissions like there were in Rwanda and South Africa to engage communities in conversations. As such, I assert that spaces of teacher learning need to better prepare educators to grapple with the complexities of implications in violence and injustice both historically and in the present beyond the punitive frames of transitional justice that reinforce local silences.

Chapter 10: Decolonial Approaches to Historical Inquiry of Difficult and Violent Histories

This dissertation represents the knot tied at the end of a messy tapestry of questions and wonderings that began to take shape in the offices of the *Agrupación de las familias de los detenidos desaparecidos* (Association of the Families of the Detained and Disappeared) in Chile in the fall of 1999. Little did I realize in the moment how sitting vigil through the night with the extraordinary women leaders of this organization and walking alongside them as they demanded General Augusto Pinochet be held accountable for the forced disappearances of their family member would haunt and guide, both consciously and unconsciously, the way I move through the world, the questions I have continued to ask and ask again, and what I have written in this dissertation.

While my ontological assumptions, ideological and epistemological influences, and pedagogical practices have shifted over the past 25 years, like Valeria, I have continued to spiral back to my doubts and the possibilities for learning and teaching violent histories to agitate wisdom, disrupt entrenched racialized, gendered structures, systems and dynamics of power, and open pluriversal pathways towards peaceful co-existence. Since my first visit to Guatemala in 2002 as an election observer when former dictator Rios Montt was running for president, I have been steeped in the work of international and Guatemalan human rights organizations, and the struggle for justice for the victims of massive, systematic violations of human rights, and acts of genocide by the military. On this trip, we stayed in a former safehouse for refugees which leftist religious organizations used to help those persecuted by the government escape into exile. I was given a copy of the report by the Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH) on the armed

conflict (which I recently unearthed), which I read at night in my twin bunk after a long day of visits to human rights organizations preparing for the impending electoral process. In 2005, I attended and bore witness to a *muestra de restos* and *inhumación*, where the remains and clothes of those exhumed from mass graves are displayed and families travel from distant communities in the hopes of being able to identify a disappeared family member. The clothes are laid out alongside the bones all over the courtyard and throughout the building. I am most haunted by the remains that were only accompanied by underware, the victims having been forced to undress before they were shot and shoved into an unmarked grave.

My ways of being an educator, researcher, *acompañante*, and colleague seeks to honor the memories of those whose remains still await identification or have yet to have been discovered, the struggle of survivors of violence to carve multiple ontological and epistemological paths for reckoning the continuities of colonialism and legacies of violence, and the educators who open their hearts, minds, and spirits to young people and teach these controversial histories from a place of decolonial love (Maluleka, 2023).

Throughout this dissertation I have endeavored to develop becoming-claims, situated in the contingencies of my *sentipensado* readings of the research process and literatures, that attend to the curiosities and longings of the research questions, which morphed and shifted in response to situating the dissertation in decolonial thinking and recognition of the pluriverse. Chapters 6 and 7 generally focused on the first research question and articulated the pluriversal frameworks, experiences, memories, discourses, affective economies, and multiplicities of worlds that teachers brought into spaces of learning and inquiry about difficult histories. Chapter 8 and 9 meandered and spiraled through the possibilities for the encounters and collisions with difficult

histories in spaces of teacher learning to disrupt pernicious readings, enactments, and manipulations of the past that perpetuate violence, discrimination and inequality in the present.

Threading together the becoming-claims articulated at the end of Chapters 6 through 9, this final chapter aims to bind them together in articulating considerations for practitioners and researchers of teacher learning in post-armed conflict contexts struggling with colonial continuities and chronic violence. While the possibilities of decolonial *sentipensante* approaches to historical inquiry might reverberate for educators working outside of the particularities of the Guatemalan context in which this research was situated, my reflections and contingent assertions were written with the folks with whom I have worked in Guatemala in mind, both the facilitators and teachers from the research project, and also those working in government, civil society, and international organizations whose work to combat violence in the present remains intricately connected with the past and the dominance of neoliberal visions of the future.

Enacting an Ecology of Knowledges in Spaces of Teacher Learning

Teachers carried, escorted, and/or snuck into the spaces of teacher learning a multiplicity of ways of knowing, being and learning, enacting performances of an ecology of knowledges, though they at times presented themselves more as epistemological tensions and pluriversal irruptions than the dialogic model that Santos (2009) suggests. I argue that dismissing or dissuading the appearance of otherworldly and alternative ontological figures merely reproduces social divisions and colonial thinking. It widens the gap between a neoliberal state tilting economically and culturally towards the United States and Europe and the diverse Indigenous and Mestiza communities whose lived experiences, fragmented memories of the past, and visions of the future seem worlds away from that projected by Guatemala's economic and political elite. These material, affective, and cosmological gaps only reinforce the entrenchment of fear and

mistrust locally and a sense of impotence and futility in the face of a precarious liberal state model.

Instead of reinforcing divisions between school and home, inviting in / paying attention to the irruption of the pluriverse creates the possibility of building trust in learning spaces and creating proximity between ways of knowing and reading the past that are incompatible with Western ways of constructing historical narratives and liberal goals for governance and justice. The careful cultivation of an ecology of knowledge that puts the practices of historical thinking in conversation with somatic and affective encounters with historical memory can agitate, unravel, and reveal fissures in the affective economies and material logics of violence and oppression.

Contemplating the Contours of Sentipensante Inquiry of Difficult Histories

When I asked the IIARS facilitators how they would describe the organization's pedagogical methodology, several of them laughed because one of the running internal discussions was "*que no tiene nombre la metodología que tenemos"* (Imelda), that there is not a name for the methodology we have. Indeed many in the organization admitted that they struggled to document and systematize what they had implemented with teachers and the constant movements, adaptations, evolutions, and returns in pedagogical practice, outside of the documentation required for donor organizations. However, in my returns to my research archives while endeavoring to read and think decolonially, I found a powerful resonance between the "unnamed" methodological workings of IIARS and *sentipensante* approaches to teaching, learning, and reckoning with violences and resilience in Guatemalan pasts, presents and futures. While the priorities, frameworks, and political interests of donor organizations shape how organizations reorient their work in order to receive funding, such as the framing of the

diplomado program under the citizenship formation umbrella, the organization managed to develop a powerful set of core principles and practices grounded in the multiplicities of Guatemala identities, discursive practices, mechanisms of knowledge creation, and cosmologies that could weather the shifting labels applied by external entities. Grounding teacher learning about difficult histories and controversial topics in somatic and affective practices in a *sentipensante* approach (a label that I am offering) embraces a multiplicity of entry points to the past that taken into account the ecology of ontological and epistemological assumptions that teachers carry with them into learning spaces.

More than the overwhelming weight of vivid inherited stories, the teachers from the 1.5 and postmemory generations in this research study came into the inquiry process grappling with the legacies of silence, fragmentation, and distrust, muddled in disarticulated emblematic individual and collective histories of violence, repression, control and fear. The inherited sashings of fear created mnemonic patterns of their own, giving form, order, and shape to the narratives that the teachers learned from their families and communities and carried with them into the inquiry group and *diplomado* workshops. The necropedagogies of fear pervaded both the content and dynamics of learning about Guatemala's histories and memories of violence, sewing mistrust and skepticism of accounts that diverged from what they had learned at home.

Broaching the complexity of the histories of the Armed Conflict with her colleagues involved what Nelly described as *un convivir*, which literally means to co-exist and live together, but she uses the word to describe her approach to working with the colleagues and me in the inquiry group, where she aimed to listen and "live with" the stories and ideas of her colleagues before she engaged and shared her own opinion. I see this approach of careful, measured listening in how she worked to fortify her trust in others (and herself) in her work to open the

hearts of students. I would argue that the creation of spaces to *convivir* the past emerged from the *sentipensante* approach to teacher learning infused into IIARS methodologies, implemented throughout the in-person workshops as we wove and quilted affective and cognitive historical analyses of sources and narratives, and then carried them into the group inquiry process.

Quilting historical thinking within an environment primed by the demechanization of the body and invitations to affectively engage and explore difficult pasts exposed the incommensurability of Western historiographic assumptions about what qualifies as evidence and sources of knowledge within spaces of learning. The affectively charged nature of the inquiry process with teachers challenged the viability of purely "rational" disciplinary approaches to teaching history in post-armed conflict contexts like Guatemala that remain plagued by chronic violence, fear and mistrust, and legal and moral gray zones (Adams, 2017, p. 47).

Confronting fear and mistrust in the wake of authoritarianism or human rights violations appears as a common objective of pedagogical projects, though the diverse approaches and their assumptions about the theory of change outlined in Chapter 2 vary significantly. I am proposing a particular arrangement of pedagogical strategies that raises some curious possibilities, while recognizing, as my co-facilitators reminded me, that our approach with teachers must remain flexible, contextually situated, and driven by the cultivation of trust and listening.

Historical thinking, in the form it was taken up and woven into the *diplomado* process, traversed between moments of approximating proximity to the past, moments of estrangement and disruption, and moments of incommensurability. We explored the tensions between the familiar and the strange as multidimensional paths to building connection and proximity to the past. Encounters with the strange, or in decolonial terms with the incommensurable, enabled

disruptions and discomforts that opened the possibilities of recognition of other worlds. Inviting an exchange between the familiar and the strange in decolonial terms endeavored to give space for an ecology of knowledges (Santos, 2009), where the collisions and interpolations of divergent epistemologies and ontologies could foster *sentipensante* encounters with difficult histories.

Reconfiguring the boundaries, "rules," and pathways of historical thinking practices as they moved in translation across worlds 1) allowed for myths, legends, and ghosts to make their absent presences heard, 2) recognized the *yosotros,* which threads individual and collective subjectivities and memories defying Western conceptions of both individual or collective memory, 3) attended to the powerful necropedagogies of fear that have built mistrust into a carefully carved armor against generations of manipulation, dehumanization, and violent exclusion, and 4) disrupted legal and modern rules of evidence and what constitutes a "text." These translations within what I have called processes of *sentipensante* historical inquiry entailed shifting visions of futurity and of worlds in transition, with corollary implications for the purposes, processes, objects and forms of knowledge productive in learning spaces. An ecological model of inquiry, that is, a felt-thinking of sourcing, corroboration, and other historical thinking skills, offered glimpses into how to *sembrar* [sow] *sentipensante* spaces of teacher learning (Espinosa y Guerrero, 2021) that moves beyond the invitation to share memories not just from multiple perspectives, but from multiple worlds.

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