Genocide in Guatemala: Geopolitical Systems of Death and Power

Dissertation

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Abstract

My dissertation examines the Guatemalan Maya genocide of the 1980s in light of four central geopolitical systems of death and power that I proclaim are causative to it. These are: 1) coloniality of power, 2) the invisibility of coloniality of power, 3) necropolitics, and 4) biopolitics. First, I contend that these four facets all fall within European modernity. Next, I maintain that the legacy of coloniality of power created the formation of the Guatemalan genocide-producing habitat starting most clearly in the 1950s with the U.S. led coup d'état of President Árbenz as well as its lead in fighting the dissemination of communism within Latin America and the Caribbean. Thereafter, I illustrate my contention that in the case of the Maya genocide, the operating system of coloniality of power is often invisible. I do so by highlighting how *Granito: A Story in Three Parts* relegate the U.S.' role in the formation of the habitat of the Maya genocide to silence. After this, I uphold that the militarization of life primarily by Guatemala's elite forces, the Kaibiles, but also by Guatemalan Guerrillas led to the material destruction of indigenous Guatemalans, the composition of which is necropolitics. And finally, I look at the administration of sovereign power at the expense of Maya lives (biopolitics) via two specific mechanisms, regulation and deduction. This falls specifically under the regime of General Efraín Ríos Montt, 1982 -1983. My thesis is that the concurrence of these four facets undoubtedly produced the Maya carnage, and I posit this concurrency as a framework with which we can comprehensively understand the

phenomenon of this cruel act against humanity.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents

Clive and Ivy Redwood

who taught me life's intangible values.

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General Introduction

> The 'subaltern' more than being an oppressed physical body delineates that agency that interrupts knowledge from within knowledge itself (Rodríguez "Debates" 43).

In an effort to denounce and bring to the fore the geopolitical systems (some may prefer to say strategies) of death and power causative of the Mayan slaughter of the early 1980s of Guatemala, renowned Indian literary theorist's, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, catchphrase incessantly plays across my mind – "can the subaltern speak?" – as a foray of questions along the following lines seek to deter this effort – "do you believe that the Guatemalan people will side with these assertions?" And what are those contentions? The most problematic one is that the Guatemalan Mayan genocide primarily resulted from the United States' drive to amass global economic power, and that, paralleling Darius M. Rejali's claim relating to torture (1994), this bloodshed was a requisite to the (transnational and national) growth of modernity, which is intrinsically European in nature. My overarching claim, however, is that four geopolitical systems of death and power clearly and in conjunction produced the mass extermination of Guatemala's Mayans in the early 1980s. With respect to the obstacle of whether or not the subaltern can speak, which is integral to this current research because the locus of enunciation of this research emerges from within the subaltern sphere, the above epigraph that cites

Ileana Rodriguez's observation on the critical role of the subaltern reassures us that there is room for this research, which commences as follows.

During its 36 years (1960-1996) of violent civil unrests, the Guatemalan state frequently targeted its own civilians. Patrick Ball et al underscore this in their study – "Institutionalized Violence in Guatemala, 1960-1996: A Quantitative Reflection". Within this study, which consists of more than five thousand testimonies amongst other sources, they point out that the Guatemalan state assassinated hundreds of thousands of citizens and displaced another million (6,17). According to them, the state terrorized its citizen as a deterrent to joining arms with the local insurgencies (18). Given that the Guatemalan state targeted its civilians, who because of their civil statuses posed no imminent threat to the state, the state unscrupulously decided who lived and who died.

Based on this, and focusing on the bloodiest timeframe of these unrests, 1975-1985, my research establishes the Guatemalan state as an employee of an operating system that conformed to geopolitical systems of death and power. These systems can be described as 1) coloniality of power, 2) biopolitics, and 3) necropolitics. Adding to them, I propose a new component: the invisibility of the operating system of coloniality of power. I suggest that this new component completes the operating system that the Guatemalan state conformed to, especially during this ten year time period. Furthermore, this new component enables the continuation of the three anteceding components of death and power. And as a result, I contend that the invisibility of the operating system of coloniality of power fosters continuations of human rights violations in Guatemala.

Finally, but of utmost importance, I charge that these geopolitical systems of death and power are intrinsically part and parcel of European modernity, the global political and economic system of today.

As a caveat, I admit that while my work does not set out to highlight decoloniality as such, it is decolonial in the sense that it unveils the manner in which the impact of coloniality of power and its legacy produced unquestionably the Mayan genocide of the early 1980s.[1] Likewise, it takes literature primarily from the subaltern to forge the path of unveiling genocide as a vice to coloniality of power and its legacy. My work also delves into necropolitics and biopolitics, which as I pointed out earlier I posit as systems closely tied to coloniality of power and its legacy. Likewise, and again, what is unique to my argument is that I put forth the invisibility of coloniality of power as a strategy that veils the vice, genocide of the Mayans, of the impact of coloniality of power and its legacy in the Guatemalan internal armed conflict. I also maintain that it veils the comprehensive whole of the operating system of coloniality of power and its legacy, which frequently prevents us from observing at once the operation of the entire system in which coloniality of power and its legacy dwell. This is crucial as it lends itself to the understanding that we are at times trapped within rigidly localized analyses that I argue may be too limiting in their comprehension.

In achieving my goal, my research uses works of literature to extract the general trend of thought or feeling characteristic of events surrounding the 1960-1996 Guatemalan genocide, while always returning to my focal point of 1975 to 1985. One of

the most salient thoughts that is of interest to me is the idea that the suffering faced by indigenous Guatemalans within the genocide has commonly been referred back to something that started with the Spanish colonization of Guatemala. As a consequence, we often hear the claim that the struggle of Guatemalan indigenous people has been a struggle of five hundred years. We may discern references to this in the testimonial narrative of Rigoberta Menchú as for instance. This reference is of importance because it is comingled, by people like Menchú, in the discussion of the genocidal struggle that the Guatemalan indigenous people faced within the thirty-six years of internal armed conflict. This contemplation is central to the direction that my research aims to go in. This is due to the fact that I purpose to use this general trend of thought characteristic of events surrounding and within the 1960-1996 Guatemalan civil war, or the zeitgeist of the Guatemalan civil war, to discuss the consequences of the above-mentioned four geo-political systems of death and power.

My objective is to carve out an operating system that engendered the Guatemalan Genocide, and that, with slight modifications of variables, may engender genocides in general within our society today. In other words, my goal is to concretize the relationship between European modernity and genocide by using Guatemala to exemplify my argument. Having a concrete understanding of the place of genocide within the modern era can contribute in important ways to concepts of and related to modernization. Thereafter, we may be better served with the right analytical tools to examine massacres and acts of genocide within literary texts, especially within testimonial narratives.

In chapter 1, “Coloniality of Power in Guatemala, 1950s: The Operating System Behind the Mayan Genocide in the 1980s”, I employ Aníbal Quijano’s coloniality of power and Walter Mignolo’s expanded matrix-version to claim that coloniality of power is a pertinent contributing factor to the nucleus of the cause of the Mayan carnages. Coloniality of power describes perfectly the nature and function of the current global political economy. The global economic and political system is a [European] modern system that necessitates genocides. Consequently, during the process of modernization or during the life span of a modern state, genocide is birth to full execution. What we have witnessed so far is mostly the birth of genocide within the process of modernization. Regardless, in this respect, genocide, contrary to historian Mark Levene’s claim, is not simply a dysfunction of the modern global and political economy. Rather, it is a necessary factor within it. On the other hand, I agree with Levene’s assertion that “in the increasing inequality of world society at the beginning of the twenty-first century lies genocide’s greatest future potential”, and I would add, if not throughout the lifespan of [European] modernity/modern era (71).

On these premises, my analysis scrutinizes the connection among control of economy and authority by the American United Fruit Company and by extension the U.S., the subsequent 1950s United States’ intervention in Guatemala, and the Guatemalan bloodshed of the 1980s. Similar to Mark Levene’s assertion (2002), my main postulate is that this Maya genocide of the modern era resulted from the drives of a more advanced nation – the United States – to accrue worldwide power via the manipulation of the

modernization processes of Guatemala. I limit my investigation to the overthrow of Árbenz and Arévalo, the 1950s and onwards.

Resultantly, this chapter locates the Guatemalan state within the process of modernization and within the realms of the geopolitics of coloniality of power. It emphasizes the forging of Guatemala's modern state under the control of U.S.' intervention since the 1950s to the early 1980s. It further brings to light the culminating results of the U.S' forced controlled of Guatemala's authority and economy, the annihilation of indigenous Guatemalans.

In chapter 2, "The invisibility of the Operating System of Coloniality of Power through the Lens of *Granito: A Story in Three Parts*", I follow the lead of *Never to Forget* and Mario Payera to formulate my preoccupation with the silencing of the roles of some major players who most clearly contributed to the birth of a genocide producing machine in Guatemala. In particular, I seek to make salient the role of the United States in the causation of the Mayan bloodbath.

Regarding the lead of the website *Never to Forget*, a pertinent message we encounter on it is that the survivors of the Guatemalan violence "hardly ever talk about their personal experience with anyone" ("Intro"). Wrestling with the question "why?" I encounter Rachel Hatcher who suggests an answer in her article "Truth and Forgetting in Guatemala". She says,

> Reports [by *Never to Forget*] which rehabilitate the memory of the thousands of Guatemalans who had to suffer in silence, can be seen as

> what Foucault termed a counter-memory, an insurrection of knowledge long repressed by the dominant group [and so]…. by making people remember differently the Reports facilitate forgetting (134).

Subsequently, the corollary of her argument is that dominant groups work to make the memories of these survivors invisible [forgotten or remembered differently]. Furthermore, we may agree that a primary objective of any dominant group is to safeguard the system that privileges it. My contention is that this system is coloniality of power including its legacy. Therefore, when dominant groups facilitate forgetting especially by making us remember differently, I charge that they redirect us from the operating system of coloniality of power. And their actions make this operating system invisible. This is perhaps the reason behind Mario Payera's claim concerning memory and forgetting. While reiterating the importance of remembering [human rights violations], a common focal point in this field, he points out keenly that, "Time moves on and memory seems to be made for forgetting" (qtd. in Zimmerman 25).

As a consequence, this chapter assesses how the operating system of coloniality of power becomes invisible within the context of the Mayan genocide. I do so by arguing that Pamela Yates' film, *Granito: A Story In Three Parts* (2001), discontinues the genealogy of its headline story in its antecedent documentary, *When The Mountains Tremble* (1982). This is exceedingly relevant because the antecedent headline story changes from "Stop the U.S.' intervention and aid in and to Guatemala because these actions by the U.S. are undoubtedly contributing directly to the Maya bloodshed" to

"how to indict Guatemala's ex-President General Efraín Ríos Montt for his intellectual authorship of the Maya genocide". I uphold that silencing the United States' actions in *Granito* serves to make invisible the operating system of coloniality of power.

In Chapter 3, "Guatemala 1980s: The Instrumentalization of Human Existence And the Material Destruction of Human Bodies and Populations", we encounter Achille Mbembe's necropower and conception of sovereignty in the exploration of how life is defined as the deployment and manifestation of power by the insurgents and by the Kaibiles, Guatemala's elite counterinsurgent forces. This is put into dialogue with three main texts: *This American Life*'s podcast: "What Happened at Dos Erres" (May 2012), Ortega Gaytán's novel (2003) – *The Kaibiles*, and Mario Roberto Morales' folletimonio (1998) – *Those Who Went Off On Their Own*. The employment of these three main texts affords us to see the developmental procedures involved from both the perspective of a Kaibil as well as from a guerrilla in the mechanization of the human existence. It also reveals to us the consequence of the end goals of the militarization of life, absolute demise of human populations. Subsequently, we glean that the latent necropower of the guerrillas threatened the permanence of Guatemala's governing authorities. This led to many preemptive strikes by protectors of these authorities, namely the Kaibiles. This act brings to light the use of violence to deter violence, an incongruity of modern reason. In the end, this chapter invokes the Commission for Historical Clarification's claims that the Kaibiles are killing machines and perpetrators of the 1982 massacre to sustain that the

necropolitics of the Kaibiles in particular was a pertinent contributor to the Mayan bloodshed.

Chapter 4, "Guatemala 1980s: Administering Sovereign Power at the Level of Life: Regulation & Deduction, Spaces of Exception – Biopolitics", brings us to the exploration of the manifestations of the deployment of military power at the expense of Mayan lives. Primarily, we do so through three perspectives of biopolitics: Michel Foucault (1976), Giorgio Agamben (1998), and Eugene Thacker (2009). However, we keep in mind various Guatemalan scholars' approach to this manifestation of power, namely Marta Casaús (2008) and Sociologist Juan Carlos Mazariegos (2009). Casaús delves into structural racism of Guatemala, and Mazariegos brings to the fore the finquero social order system of Guatemala. Establishing foundational commonalities between the three perspectives of biopolitics and Casaús and Mazariegos' studies, I subsequently put into dialogue these approximations of the manifestations of the deployment of military power at the expense of Mayan lives with the following texts: Horacio Castellanos Moya's 2008 novel *Senselessness*, Mario Roberto Morales' 1999 novel *Face of the Earth, Hearth of the Sky*, Commission of Historical Clarification (CEH) (1994), and *Guatemala: Never Again! – The Official report of the Human Rights Office, Archdiocese of Guatemala* (REMHI). The epicenter, however, dialogues predominantly with Mario Roberto Morales' *Face of the Earth, Hearth of the Sky* and two administrative forms of military power, regulation and deduction. In my conclusion, we find that Mario Roberto Morales' novel reveals Mayan systems of knowledge as for

instance references to Xibalbá, which indigenous Guatemalans employed to withstand the extreme cruelties that the deployment of military power inflicted upon them. In this same light, we come to understand the presence of indigenous Indians within the Guatemalan army. That is, light is shed upon the complex existence of indigenous military perpetrators of cruelties. This existence is a part of a Ladinization process, but most importantly it represents a state of being a living dead, to borrow from Agamben. And finally, borrowing from Thacker, we comprehend the simple fact that the Mayan multitude became a complex sort of epidemic threat to the survival of sovereign power in the sense that the sovereign had to eliminate them as the base of communism while simultaneously Ladinize as many as possible for its own survival.

My overarching conclusion is that the Mayan genocide was not simply due to global differences but rather to a conglomeration of systems simultaneously in play. Those are: 1) coloniality of power, 2) the invisibility of the operating system of coloniality of power, 3) the governance of power at the expense of human lives (biopolitics), and 4) the militarization of the human existence that results in the mass extermination of the human corpus (necropolitics). Most importantly, I posit that the invisibility of the operating system of coloniality of power serves to obscure an immediate and complete recognition of the synchronized functioning of these four systems, which together powers European modernity/hegemonic world power.

Chapter 1: Coloniality of power in Guatemala, 1950s:

The Operating System behind the Mayan Genocide in the Early 1980s

Chapter Introduction

In this chapter, I establish coloniality of power as an integral factor to the political structure that begot the 1980s onslaught against Mayans in Guatemala. Coloniality of power has within it four constitutive parts: control of economy, control of authority, control of gender and sexuality, and control of knowledge and subjectivity. These four elements form what Walter Mignolo coins as the coloniality of power matrix ("Preamble" 15). This matrix is, in effect, an extrapolated version of the concept of coloniality of power brought into being by Aníbal Quijano in his article "Coloniality of Power and Social Classification" (2000). In accordance to Quijano, this concept describes in short the socio-economic stratification of people based upon phenotypic make-ups during the era of European colonization and slavery of the new worlds. As can be imagined, within that period, the phenotypes of slaves occupied the lowest stratum, whereas the phenotypes of Europeans occupied the highest. What is powerfully interesting and simultaneously disturbing about this concept is that it is also deemed, by authors such as Mignolo, to be at the heart of today's society.[2] This, in part, substantiates my charge that

coloniality of power comprises part of the nucleus of what makes carnages occur today. That is, it is a cog of the operating system of genocide in the post-European colonization/post-overt slavery era.[3]

With the constraint of time in mind, I engage only two rudiments of the matrix. These are control of economy and control of authority. However, it is imperative to note that all four components are complexly linked to each other. Aníbal Quijano's original version of the concept establishes this, and Walter Mignolo' expanded version also corroborates this.[4] Hence, at the foundation of this chapter lies the understanding that these four constituents are so intricately meshed together that one necessarily impacts the other(s) and vice-versa. This, subsequently, explains why coloniality of power is presented as a single entity essential to the operating system of the Mayan massacre, and not simply the two elements that I will expound upon here. However, control of economy and control of authority are very salient contributing factors within the geo-political ambience of the Mayan violence. And above all, they are the most relevant ones to the direction of my analysis. Within my analysis, I aspire to follow the direction of Mark Levene's assertion regarding genocide and a drive to power. I posit that genocides of the post-European slavery/colonization era result from more advanced/modern nation-states' drives to amass global economic and political power via the manipulation of the modernization processes of less advanced/less modern nation-states.[5] I view the control of economy and control of authority as two central forms of drive to power carried out by United States' companies in Guatemala and by Guatemalan elites.[6]

Within my discussion, I chiefly examine the authorities that defended the interests of the United States' companies operating in Guatemala before and during the period of violence. I do, however, underscore the role of one specific American company – the United Fruit Company (UFCO). I uphold UFCO as the principal one responsible for the sudden avalanche of interest by the CIA and the Eisenhower administration in the affairs of Guatemala in the 1950s. Subsequently, I scrutinize the manners in which control of power and of economy are manifestations of a drive to power by the U.S. My scrutiny will bring to light Guatemalan oligarchy as a beneficiary and ultimately backers of this U.S.' action. It will also illustrate the Guatemalan military as indoctrinated defenders of the U.S. and the Guatemalan elites' prerogatives. My discourse employs various conceptual terminologies that require clarifications. These terminologies include the concept of genocide, the modern era in question, the idea of sovereignty, and the geopolitical zeitgeist that preceded and encircled the Maya killing.

The [European] Modern Era of Today

Contextualizing the modern era will lead us to grasp the specificities of the modernization process. Given that the period in question pertains to the post-European slavery/post-colonization age, I am in fact referring to the present-day time frame. This stage began with the discovery of the New World by Europeans. Hence, it is not solely restricted to the post-European slavery/post-colonization epoch, but rather it encompasses this discovery point as well. Walter Mignolo and Madina V. Tlostanova's conception of

it serves to edify us.[7] According to them, in the their article "Theorizing from the Borders: Shifting to Geo- and Body–Politics of Knowledge", the present day modern age is one founded upon a European, territorial, and imperial foundation of knowledge. They state further that the zero point of the world map that Gerardus Mercator and Johannes Ortelius drew validates this claim, and that this zero point serves as the starting point of modern time. Mignolo and Tlostanova further characterize this time frame, the Renaissance to the present, as one rooted in the logic of coloniality. For them, the logic of coloniality embodies two epistemic differences: colonial and imperial. The examples they give of imperial differences are the differences amongst the Ottoman, the Chinese, and the Russian empires. Whereas colonial differences, they note, can be seen amongst Indians and blacks in America. They further assert that these two epistemic differences "were based on racial classification of the planet, a classificatory order in which those who made the classification put themselves at the top of Humanity." A crucial observation here is that 'those' refers to Europeans since the epoch in question is that of the European modern period. To further clarify, 'those' refers directly to the Renaissance idea of Man "which was conceptualized based on the paradigmatic examples of Western Christianity, Europe, and white and male subjectivity" (Mignolo and Tlostanova 206).

It follows, then, that the framework relevant to this chapter is the European modern era that gave birth to the concepts of imperial and colonial differences. Given that the notion of colonial differences denotes the hierarchical structuring of people on a racial stratum of an absolute superior to an absolute inferior phenotypic value, it is not

surprising that Aníbal Quijano, founder of the term coloniality of power, situates colonial differences within his perception of coloniality of power as previously footnoted.[8] Nor should we be surprised that for Walter Mignolo coloniality of power is indispensible to modernity [the present time]. However, Mignolo maintains that coloniality of power has organized and continues to organize colonial differences ("Preamble"). In particular, for Mignolo, colonial differences include the "other" that the Europeans encountered during their colonization years. That "other", for Quijano, would be those that embody an absolute inferior value, those who were phenotypically non-European in the New World. My point here, in sum, is that all references to modern pertain directly to the European modern period, which necessarily must constitute coloniality of power.

Exploring the Significations of Genocide

Genocide is an essential cornerstone of the argument of Joan Ramón Resina's article "Negationism and Freedom of Speech" (2009). In this article, Resina expounds upon the manner in which an individual's freedom infringes upon a group's freedom and what that process means within the realms of human rights, democracy, and sovereignty. In particular, he scrutinizes (an individual's) freedom of speech in the act of negating occurrences of human rights violations against groups of peoples. The precise context of his discourse lies within the 2007 Spanish Constitutional Court ruling on the right of negationism within the sphere of genocide.[9] This ruling affirms, "To penalize negationist behavior 'is an attack against the right of freedom of expression' " (qtd. in Resina 82). Resina takes issue with this, and goes about espousing the inevitable questions that arises

from this stance taken by Spanish law. These questions pertain to "the nature and scope of human rights, national sovereignty, and the limits to the autonomy of states" (Resina 87). He focuses on the holocaust as a hallmark of genocide, shrewdly connecting it to the Jewish minority living in Spain. Because of this, one may infer that, for Resina, genocide pertains forthrightly to the holocaust. There is no clear evidence of this in his article. However, given that Raphael Lemkin, a Polish-Jewish legal scholar, coined the term, one could understand this equivocation in association.[10] Nevertheless, this is not the case.

According to Howard Ball, in the year that Lemkin invented the term genocide, 1944, the word had no political force, and it was not until 1948 that it acquired a "force of law" (10). On the 9th of December of this year (1948) the U.N. "approved the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide [, and] established genocide as an international crime" (Ball 11). And since then, many varying definitions of genocide have sprouted. For instance, Eric Markusen in his article "Mechanism of Genocide" defines genocide as "the intentional destruction of a human group, in whole or in significant part." Moreover, he attests, "It is a complex phenomenon and process that requires contributions from a range of individuals, institutions, and organizations" (83). Ervin Staub approximates this definition of Markusen when he invokes Chalk and Jonassohn to declare that, "Genocide is a form of a one-sided mass-killing in which the state or other authority intends to destroy the group, as the group and membership are defined by the perpetrators." In addition, Staub notes that this definition "includes political groups which, for political reasons – nations did not want interference in how

they treat political opposition – the United Nations Genocide Convention does not" (103). Staub's definition brings us to the matter of what the United Nations conceives of as genocide. On this matter, Ben Kieran informs us that,

> The 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the crime of Genocide defines victims of this crime as members of a targeted 'national, ethnical, racial, or religious group, as such' [in which the crime is a perpetrator's intent to destroy one or more of these human groups]. To the extent that it is most difficult, if not impossible, for a member of a racial [or any other] group to 'escape' that racial [or ethnical, religious, etc.] identity and assume another, it is an absolute injustice, indeed the most criminal of acts, to exterminate people on the basis of their membership of a race [a ethnic or religious group etc.] ("Studying the Roots" 141).

So far, these definitions have largely focused on the targeting of a particular human group with the intent of exterminating it. Yet, none of them has offered us any possible reason behind that intent. Fortunately, further investigations into the matter reveal a possible intent, one that is useful to the work at hand. Mark Levene supplies us with this definition, claiming, "Genocide is a by-product of very general drives toward what is referred to in German as a *Wille zu Macht*, a drive to power" (65). Genocide as a drive to power lends to my case a very rudimentary element of the operating system that

necessitates genocides. Consequently, I engage and employ Levene's conception of genocide within this chapter.

In questioning what makes genocide, Levene invokes Raphael Lemkin and summarizes his work as follows, "Raphael Lemkin considered it a form of state organized warfare, one directed exclusively at a communal group or groups, rather than at other states. The intention of this warfare, he thought, is to annihilate the group(s) partially or totally. Accordingly, Lemkin stressed actions aimed at the biological structure or group." Levene further points out that, "[Lemkin] thought of genocide as a phenomenon that did not discriminate on the basis of gender or age. Perpetrators sought to destroy all members of the group, whether they were young virile, their aged grandparents, pregnant women, or babies " (Levene 66). Lemkin's notion of a communal group perplexes Levene as he ponders the identification of such a group. This notion is equally as important to my argument because most definitions of the victims of genocides pertain to the identification of particular human groups as expressed by the United Nations. But, how is a communal group identified? Levene believes that such a group "may identify itself in ethnic, religious, or social terms, but for the purpose of genocide, it is wholly identified, or perhaps more to the point, *misidentified* by the perpetrators" (66).

Overall, Levene makes a number of important proclamations, several of which I list below. According to him, one of the steps states have taken in accumulating political power worldwide is to seek to control the process of modernization of states undergoing this process. Hence, he inadvertently establishes here the unequal development of states

in the process of modernization since there are states that are already modern that seek to control states that are undergoing the process to become modern. He limits this assertion to the realm of contemporary history, but points out that this step taken by more advance states is the only effective measure in amassing political power globally. He urges us to recall that a global interconnected community has only existed within the last century. And he points out that within this international interconnected community, [modern] states who arrived first within modernizing countries faired better in their endeavors to acquire political power worldwide (Levene 65). Examples of these modern states include the powers of Revolutionary France in the Vendée and early nineteenth century, Britain in the Americas and Antipodes, and the United States in its drive to trans-continental hegemony. These modern states lay down many of the prototypic ground-rules for genocides because they tolerated no obstacles in their determinations to accrue global political power. Thus, declares Levene, states undergoing the modernization process after those that are or were already modern emulate the previous methods used (67).

Unsurprisingly then, genocides of the modern era – the last century – have many characteristics in common which enables us to discern a pattern amongst them. The ability to unearth this pattern is crucial, admonishes Levene, "not least because there have been approximately fifty genocides since 1954" (65-6). Elaborating more on this, Levene enunciates that they result from difficult transitions of "desperate regimes" en route to establishing modern states. Likewise, he mentions that, characteristically, genocide occurs within conditions of war. He explains that this is because those targeted for

genocide are categorized as “an extension of the enemy [from?] without”, and this makes it easier for the perpetrators of genocide to carryout “a mass exterminatory program” (Levene 70). Above all, he asserts that, “What we have been trying to achieve as a species, particularly in the accelerated process of development of the last two hundred years, does contain within it the potential for genocide.” He adds that it is within the accelerated process of development of the last two hundred years that one may come to understand “why genocide is so particularly modern.” Returning to the difficulty of transition of non-modern states to the realm of modernity, he underscores that genocide is inherently a part of social engineering projects headed by states to transform traditional societies into modern societies too quickly too soon (Levene 66). As a result, many of those social engineering projects stall on or even end with the genocide of a particular group of people seen as an obstruction to the process. In the end, Levene maintains that by its very nature genocide forms part of the global community as well as the political community that accompanies it. He emphasizes that this “global political economy” is one that the liberal west have forged and dominated.

The Geopolitical Context of the Mayan Bloodbath

In examining the Mayan carnage, I find that it did not result from an isolated and instantaneous combustion of violent tensions or the likes. Rather, it resulted from multiple factors, and most of these factors seem to be engraved in the twenty-or-more years of civil unrest within the country, dubbed the internal armed conflict. Thus, the

question becomes: what were the triggers to this conflict and what triggers continued to fuel it? In order to answer these questions, I look deeper into what came before the civil war. Therefore, I start in the decade preceding the 60s, the 1950s. During the 1950s, the Cold War precipitated the geopolitical environment not only of Guatemala, but also of the world.[11] This geopolitical facet continued throughout the 60s in Guatemala and its hemispheric region and fueled the unrest within the nation. Vital to this particular element were the conflicting ideas on how to control the economy and ultimately the authority, amongst other ideas/ways of dominating. Similarly, the role of the United States in the geo-hemispheric region and its stance within the Cold War were significant contributing factors. These two factors are interwoven; but, however, we could say that: 1) the geo-hemispheric role of the United States' is/and was hegemon, and 2) the United States was a stronghold of capitalism within the Cold War. Hegemon is understood to be the most powerful economic and political player of a geo-political international region. That international region can vary from a small specific area to a large all-encompassing area, such as the world. Clearly, the borders of this hemispheric region at hand pertain to countries within North, South, and Central America, including the Caribbean. The importance of the hegemon is its ability to exercise its clout over neighboring countries in order to satisfy its agenda. During this time, one significant agenda for the U.S. was to win the Cold War by defeating and eliminating communism. Hence, its role as hegemon and its agenda worked hand-in-hand. In addition to this, there were three important items on the U.S.' agenda since the days of Jefferson. These items according to Piero Gleijeses

were: “the search for economic gain, the search for security, and imperial hubris” (361). Put together, these three directives can be grouped under the idea of hegemon. This means that since Jefferson’s rule the U.S. has continuously worked to become hegemon without ever letting up. And this was at play before, during, and after Guatemala’s internal armed conflict.[12]

With respect to the U.S.’ three directives since the presidency of Jefferson, it is essential to emphasize the start of his presidency, the year 1801. This is because these three directives were, according to Gleijeses, the policy the U.S. took towards the Caribbean and Latin America since that year with only one exception. Highlighting the period of the 1800s also allows us to point out another significant political element that triggered Guatemala’s civil war – the legacy of colonial power. Torres Rivas, in his book *Revoluciones sin cambios revolucionarios* (2011), understands the oligarchic power and the liberal state combined to be an expression of [the legacy of] colonial power in Guatemala (14). While it is not immediate whether or not Torres-Rivas sees that combination as strictly colonial power or its legacy, we would prefer the term legacy. We prefer legacy because it points to the structural effects left behind by colonial power and also respects the historic periodization of the term colonialism. One specific structural effect is that power and wealth remains in the hands of whites while poverty and oppression remained with the Indians in the specific context of Guatemala.[13] Interestingly enough, these whites were not always creoles [whites born within the New World], but were frequently foreigners who found it easy to become rich effortlessly and quickly

within the New World, specifically within Guatemala.[14] There is an additional significance to this legacy of colonial power in Guatemala; according to Torres-Rivas, in Central America a germane character of the [wealthy whites] oligarchy is its dependence on foreign capital (48). This implies the oligarchy's intentions to have a lucrative relationship with the owners of foreign capital. And in the case of Guatemala and much of Central America, North America [the United States] embodied foreign capital. Consequently, the geopolitics leading up to the Mayan killing constitutes the following players: the United States' policies towards Latin America and the Caribbean, the Cold War, and the effects of the legacy of colonial power.

Seeds of the Genocide: 1950's: U.S' Intervention in Guatemala: Overthrow of Árbenz and Arévalo

The United States sought to control the modernization processes of Guatemala as a vital tactic en route to achieving global economic power. It did so by supporting the monopolization of Guatemala's economy by U.S. companies as well as by enabling the Guatemalan military to seize power from its government. The latter action resulted in a militarization of the Guatemalan state. The act of controlling the process of modernization of a state, Mark Levene argues, is an essential step that mature states have taken [or take] in amassing global [economic] power within contemporary history (65). As such, I posit that the U.S. made one such crucial move within the borders of Guatemala most noticeably starting in the 1950s. This step stands as a very fundamental

root to Guatemala's thirty-six years of armed internal conflict, which has at its climax the Mayan genocide. Coloniality of power, seen as a system of power, enabled the U.S. to try to control the modernization process of Guatemala.

Particularly, from coloniality of power the U.S. enacted in Guatemala, most clearly and forcefully, control of economy and control of authority. It did so through its National Security Doctrine/the Monroe Doctrine and the premise of defending the interests of one particular American company. This company is the United Fruit Company, which was operating in Guatemala before the 1950s. The United Fruit Company (UFCO), dissatisfied with the agrarian reforms made in 1950 by Guatemala's president Jacobo Árbenz, appealed to the U.S. for help. Its pleas reached the ears of important White House government officials, especially those of the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA). These officials then used the National Security Doctrine alongside the fear of communism to defend the desires of UFCO, or so it seemed. They did so without openly declaring a war on Guatemala. This act of clandestineness was one of the main advantages of the National Security Doctrine.

Jorge A. Tapia Valdés, in chapter eight of his book *State Terrorism: The National Security Doctrine in the Southern Cone*, explains this and more.[15] According to Tapia Valdés, the advent of this creed meant first and foremost the indoctrination of armies in Latin America by the United States. The most critical fact of this indoctrination was the schooling of Latin American armies to always intervene in the governing of their nation-states if they perceived threats of communism or socialism within the bodies of their

governments, or if said threats were professed by the United States. The second most significant attribute of the National Security Doctrine was the elimination of direct wars between the United States and Latin America or any foreign nation-states. Here, the term "direct wars" lends itself to the understanding that the United States would not openly announce war on a foreign nation. Instead, it would partake in surreptitious wars. Furthermore, the elimination of direct wars offers us the notion that covert wars on behalf of the U.S. would have as their corollary an intervening act. This elimination would also furnish the benefit of lower costs of wars than those costs associated with openly declared wars.

The third most essential point of the National Security Doctrine is that it also served the capitalistic economic needs of the United States in an exceptionally hogged manner. That is, the capitalistic economic needs of the United States gained from being given, quite forcefully, utmost priority in every monetary sense of the word within Latin American and other foreign countries. With respect to Latin America, this was done at the expense of not only native companies of the region, but also at the expense of the national budgets of the region's nation-states. Jorge A. Tapia Valdés uses the southern cone, with emphasis on Brazil, to explain all of these points (and more) that I have deemed crucial to the functional meaning and benefits of the National Security Doctrine.[16] This doctrine bolstered the U.S.' ability to control the economy and the authority in Guatemala, most noticeably starting in the mid-1950s.

Another scholar on this topic, Gonzalo Arroyo, provides a similar perspective of the National Security Doctrine and its effects in Latin America. In his article, "Massacre against the people and the experience of the church", Arroyo Gonzalo delineates the manner in which the manifestation of the Monroe Doctrine along with transnational capitalism resulted in the violent oppression of the church and of the poor. He notes that this decree was practiced quite openly in Brazil in 1964, and thereafter in Latin America. Gonzalo focuses more on the effects of the National Security Doctrine on the church. Hence, he maintains and highlights that the violent encounters that the church experienced at the hands of Latin American armies have more to do with a conflict of ideologies than with any economic aspect or issue. He identifies the two main political ideologies in conflict as communism and capitalism. The conflict between these two ideologies spills over to negatively impact the church because of its Christian values. Yet, a conflict between communism and capitalism may very well be described as ideological, as Gonzalo stresses, but because of the meanings of these ideologies this type of conflict is very much monetary in nature as well. In deed, Gonzalo implicitly supports my argument when he asserts that the Christian values of the church were profoundly in contradiction with capitalism as well as with the Monroe Doctrine. From this, he makes his core case that the church did not have the option of neutrality in the all-engulfing tension between the two opposing political ideologies. This resulted in it being violently repressed. In line with his main argument is his assertion that the armies of Latin America defended the Monroe Doctrine. This consequently led to the oppression against the

church as well as against the poor (Arroyo 11-12). What Gonzalo offers to my analysis is the corroboration of a war of ideologies that resulted in violent repressions of the church and most importantly of the poor in Latin America. His take on the situation as pertaining to a war of ideologies is just because of the presence of the on-going Cold War. He also corroborates the negative impact of transnational capitalism in Latin America, the consequences of which resulted in violent repressions of the poor and of the church.

All these affirmations, supported and substantiated by Gonzalo Arroyo, Jorge A. Tapia Valdés, and many other experts, lead to the study of how the National Security Doctrine affected Guatemala in particular. More significantly, they justify why the 1950s is an appropriate starting point for my investigation. As a result, I am apt to discern the consequences of the United States' intervention in Guatemala as part of its effort to achieve capitalistic hegemonic power/global economic power via Guatemala. While examining the U.S.' role, other active players will come to light such as Guatemala's military. However, I proclaim this military to be an extension of the U.S. It is an extension in the sense that, its indoctrination by the U.S. prevented it from acting as an independent player with its own compelling ideologies. Hence, it defended the causes of U.S.' prerogatives against communism. Subsequently, a connection between this 1950s epoch and the 1980s can be exacted in terms of a cause and effect relationship. The cause may be considered as the U.S.' National Security Doctrine, and the outcome perceived as the thirty-six years of civil battle within Guatemala. The most resounding and sorrowful

consequence of this battle was the slaughtering of Guatemalan Highlanders between 1980 and 1982.

With regards to this cause and effect relationship between the 1950s and the 1980s, two analysts, Susanne Jonas and Christopher Chase-Dunn, tacitly ascertain the cause to be the CIA's 1954 overthrow of the Guatemalan President – Jacobo Árbenz. They determine the culminating effect as the genocidal state-sponsored violence against the Mayans ("Guatemalan Development and Democratization" 3).[17] The CIA's coup d'état of President Árbenz in 1954 stemmed from the United Fruit Company anxieties about the spread of communism in Guatemala. Given that the Cold War was still in play during the 1950s, fears of the spread of communism posed a palpable threat to American interests, especially economic ones. The UFCO's worries surfaced as early as the late 1940s during the presidency of Juan José Arévalo (1945-1951) in Guatemala. However, they became most perceptible during the presidency of Jacobo Árbenz (1951-1954).[18] Yet, interestingly enough, scholar Jorge Rovira Mas describes the resulting decade of the two terms of both presidents as characteristic of progress. Central to this progress is an acceleration of economic modernization and the creation of important social institutions. He explicates that this economic modernization entailed a desire to promote industrialization as well as a comprehensive agrarian reform in 1952 in Guatemala (11). The context, then, of the 1950s in Guatemala pertains to the modernization process of Guatemala within the modern era of the world.

Could it be that this economic progress and modernization which started in the late 1940s by Arévalo and was brought to fruition in the 1950s by Árbenz, particularly with reference to the agrarian reform, was the real source of worry for the UFCO and not communism? Because unbeknown to the prioritized interests of the Soviet Union during the 1950s of the Cold War epoch, stood the sovereign nation of Guatemala.[19,20] As a sovereign nation, during this very time frame, the country's president Jacobo Árbenz sought to equilaterally develop the wealth of Guatemalans by transforming Guatemala from a "dependent nation with a semi-colonial economy to an economically independent country" (qtd. in Koeppel 125). Yet, Jacobo Árbenz was rather naïve to the fact that his just and noble goals as president would culminate in his own downfall. Nor did he know that, his overthrow would be catalysis to a subsequent stagnation of economic progress and of modernization in the years to come in Guatemala. William Blum and John Quigley are but a few of the authors who have delved into the reason for the coup of President Jacobo Árbenz. Both authors present a case in which Árbenz's fall from office was borne from a grand orchestrated charade led by the CIA and supported by members of Washington including President Eisenhower.[21] As John Quigley summarizes,

> Guatemala's president in 1954, Jacobo Árbenz, had come to office in 1950 by a free election and was peacefully in control of the country. With thousands of peasants unable to make a living, Árbenz nationalized uncultivated fields belonging to U.S.–owned United Fruit Company, a major landowner and banana producer in Guatemala. Although the

> nationalization did not affect United Fruit's current operations, it did take two-thirds of the land it owned in Guatemala. Árbenz offered compensation at the value United Fruit had declared its land worth for tax purposes, but the Eisenhower administration, which quickly rose to take up United Fruit's cause, demanded twenty-five times that amount (71).

From this abridged summary of the motives behind the overthrow of President Árbenz, one gathers that the root of it all lies within the economic profitability of an American owned company, the UFCO. Moreover, the capitalistic goals (economic profitability) of the UFCO stood in dissonance with the nationalization and nation building aims of President Árbenz. As explained by Quigley, Blum, and many others, Árbenz's nationalization of the land meant that the American giant would loose 66.7 percent of the Guatemalan land it owned to Guatemala's numerous landless peasants. This did not sit well with the company, and being the well-connected company it was, it was able to win support not merely from the CIA, but also from President Eisenhower. The support it won favored its capitalistic moneymaking goal, revenue. The land it owned could not or should not be taken freely away from it. This was in spite of the fact that doing so meant benefitting the countless landless peasants of Guatemala. This mindset of UFCO did not consider the meager price it might have bought the land for in the first place. Yet, regardless, the UFCO had no grounds to worry because President Árbenz never intended to confiscate its land without offering any monetary compensation. Moreover, harming the UFCO's profitability is at high odds with the

capitalistic nesting ground from which the company emerged, the United States of America. To do so would be to clearly offend not just the UFCO, but also the U.S. So, instead, President Árbenz sought to deal fairly by offering the United Fruit Company the monetary value of the 66.7 percent of uncultivated land it owned. He did his calculations based upon the company's tax report it had furnished to the Guatemalan State. But his calculations were off.

President Árbenz's calculations were off because, according to Dan Koeppel, the United Fruit Company had falsified its tax report to cheat the Guatemalan nation out of the fair share of taxes it owed it (128).[22] This came to light not during an audit of the company but during what would appear to be another glutinous escapade by the company. That is, highly unsatisfied with President Árbenz's monetary compensation offer, the company revalued the land it owned and demanded six times more than what it apparently had written on its tax reports to the Guatemalan government. And herein laid the real problem – struggle for profit – because since then the company ceaselessly put forth every effort to ensure that it did not loose any percentage of its maximum potential turnover during the 1950s. At least, it would appear that this was the case.

Piero Gleijeses elucidates us on this in his book *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944 – 1954*. According to Gleijeses, one chief offense Guatemala committed against the United States of America was the economic 'persecution' of American companies. The other, he proclaims, was a laxness in their fear of communism.[23] These two infractions seemingly go hand-in-hand during the 1950s

because of the zeitgeist of the period, the Cold War. To threaten the economic profitability of American companies is to inadvertently implicate President Árbenz as a supporter of communism, even if the allegation were false. It would appear that this is the logic the UFCO employed in its attempt to accrue the maximum economic power it could in Guatemala. Engaging this logic enabled the UFCO to garner support in classifying the presidency of Jacobo Árbenz as communist in nature. This, in turn, facilitated and guaranteed support from the CIA and President Eisenhower because of their duty to fight communism as well as to uphold the policies within the Doctrine of National Security. Consequently, it is understood that the CIA, as representative of the U.S., sought to control the economic policies of Guatemala. Thus, inevitably the CIA and President Eisenhower in effect endeavored to control the presidential authority of Jacobo Árbenz.

Two fundamental aspects we are dealing with thus far are the control of economy and the control of authority. The first references the particularities of the American company, UFCO. The second relates directly to the sovereign nation of Guatemala. I emphasize Guatemala as a sovereign nation because one would believe that as such a nation Guatemala's Presidents should have complete control of what goes on in Guatemala.[24] This was not the case during the 1950s. As for instance, President Árbenz had to ask the United Fruit, an alien company to Guatemala, to obey the Guatemalan constitution in October of 1951. This act should not have been necessary in the first place. In deed, analyst Dan Koeppel describes it sarcastically as audacious. Koeppel uses this adjective in his description of President Árbenz's first difficult negotiation with the

United Fruit; he states, "The Guatemalan asked for payment of export duties; he asked that the company offer fair prices for land it acquired; and, most audaciously, he asked that the United Fruit obey the Guatemalan constitution" (126). Audacious – why would the president of a sovereign nation be audacious by simply asking a foreign company to obey its rules and regulations? Perhaps this is because a higher and more forceful power existed (and still does) to control the economy of sovereign nations such as Guatemala. I attest that this was in fact the situation. In this situation, this higher power is manifested not only through American companies, but also through the United States of America itself as the bastion of American companies. Hence, Dan Koeppel emphasizes that: "Guatemala wasn't just fighting a fruit company. It was fighting America" (128).

Of utmost relevance to note is the fact that the U.S.' interest in controlling the economy of Guatemala did not directly involve the interests of Guatemala. Rather, it primarily and principally served the interests of U.S.' companies. The interests of U.S.' companies in Guatemala were magnanimous. For example, Piero Gleijeses points out that in 1944 U.S.' companies invested an astounding figure of nearly 93 million dollars in Guatemala.[25] Today, 93 million would amount to 1.2 billion dollars – a sizeable investment. With this kind of investment from contributing companies such as the UFCO, it is easy to understand why the U.S.' government would be interested in protecting them from economic impairment, reasonably or not. In Guatemala's case, it appears that this protection was unreasonable from the perspective of Guatemala as a sovereign nation. It was unreasonable because President Árbenz merely sought to protect the citizens of

Guatemala from dire exploitation, and not to cause the United Fruit Company to get negative returns in its profits. As was the case already, the United Fruit Company was not simply breaking evenly in profits but was, as we would say colloquially, "making a killing." The unfortunate aspect of this all is that it did so by way of dishonesty. Two clear examples of the United Fruit unbelievable high net returns include cheating the Guatemalan State on land taxes and export taxes. As mentioned above, United Fruit cheated the Guatemalan State in taxes by undervaluing the land it owned. Likewise, as previously pointed out, this act of deception came to light only when President Árbenz attempted to pay the company the monetary value for 66.7 percent of the land it owned based upon the value the company itself declared in its tax reports to the Guatemalan State. Below Piero Gleijeses proclaims this act of cheating via land taxes as commonplace, and he also explains the elaborate manner in which United Fruit cheated on export taxes. He states,

> UFCO (United Fruit Company) – like all large landowners in Guatemala – regularly undervalued its land in its tax declarations. Going beyond such elementary cheating, it also used methods that local landowners could not imitate. When UFCO shipped bananas to subsidiaries in North America and Europe, it recorded the sales at below market prices. The fraud was exposed by the Canadian Trade Commissioner in a 1949 article… Had UFCO declared the true value of the bananas, stated in a 1950 CIA report, 'bananas will be seen to contribute at least 39 percent of the total exports

(by value) and coffee 47 percent or less,' rather than the official averages of 20 percent and 60 percent respectively (91).

If these two fiscal deceptions are not sufficiently surprising to the reader, then perhaps knowing that United Fruit Company had no fiscal legitimate reason to seek to cheat on land taxes may be balking enough. This is because of contracts that existed between the company and the Guatemalan State that allowed the company the luxury of paying half the taxes it ought to have paid. Gleijeses explains that these contracts were based upon United Fruit developing regions in dire need of development in Guatemala in return for the tax break – 50% less in taxes.[26] Yet, this did not stop the capitalistic drive of United Fruit, and what seemed to have been of maximum importance was maximum profit, a desire for a 100% return. In order to comply with this desire, it was necessary to control the rules and regulation of Guatemala's economy with respect to the United Fruit's operations. To do so meant to override President Árbenz's rules that challenged the United Fruit's efforts at gaining maximum returns on its goods. President Árbenz, however, did not cower in the face of his aggressors. He was spurned on by fact that 70% of Guatemala's arable land, owned by United Fruit, remained unused.[27] As such he implemented Decree 900 in 1952, a law that mandated the redistribution of land to Guatemala's landless peasants (Koeppel 127). It is this decree that would in turn put into motion the mechanisms of overriding the sovereign economic laws of Guatemala and in overriding the presidency of Jacobo Árbenz. All this ultimately led to a control of economy by the United States of America, represented by the CIA.

With the implementation of Decree 900, the United Fruit and its advocates strategized the best way to obtain their economic capitalistic goals. Advocates for the company consisted of members of Washington, the CIA, and President Eisenhower himself. Thus, Koeppel states that, "In mid-1953, President Eisenhower authorized the CIA to oust Árbenz" (128). The most important strategy the United Fruit and its advocates employed was to label the presidency of Árbenz as communist in nature. Accordingly, Blum highlights that the pretext used by the CIA, which gained publicity through Washington, is the categorization of Guatemala as a communist state during Árbenz first year of presidency, 1953 to 1954. From there it was easy to declare war on Guatemala because of the Cold War occurring at the time. The ousting of President Árbenz was no easy feat, but it finally concluded in 1954. And since then on the U.S. remained active in Guatemala.

We now return to the question – how does the U.S.' overthrow of President Árbenz in 1954 relate to the genocide of the 1980s in Guatemala? We attempt to delineate an answer. By so doing, we return to Mark Levene who asserts that one of the steps states have taken in amassing political and economic power globally is to seek to control the process of modernization of states undergoing this process (65). Recalling Jorge Rovira Mas' previous description of the terms of Presidents Arévalo and Árbenz as terms marked by progress, we understand that a primary goal of President Árbenz was the implementation of an accelerated economic modernization via a desire to promote industrialization and a comprehensive agrarian reform ("perspectiva centroamericana"

11). Likewise, from what we have seen so far, we understand that the CIA's intervention was carried out in order to protect the economic interests of the United Fruit Company at the expense of the rights of the sovereign nation of Guatemala. This ruthlessness by the CIA, Levene would say, is typical of the drive to hegemonic global economic and political power of states operating within the framework of European modernity (67). Here, the CIA with the support of President Eisenhower and alongside the United Fruit Company is representative of the United States of America; a state that undoubtedly operates within the framework of European modernity and at an advanced stage. While Guatemala also operates within this same framework, it operates at a nascent stage. As a result, and in agreement with Levene, the situation at hand deals with one state, which is at an advanced stage of European modernization, seeking to control the economic modernization process of another state at a nascent stage of European modernization. The United State does this in its drive to accumulate global economic power, but more importantly it does this in a very forceful yet clandestine manner. The question now becomes: what is the relationship between this covert intervention of the U.S. by the CIA in Guatemala specifically starting with the coup of President Árbenz and the Mayan genocide? This is examined below.

U.S.' Role in Guatemala after Overthrowing Árbenz and the Events of 1960s and beyond

Although the U.S' coup d'état of President Árbenz was successful, the peasants and citizen in general of Guatemala still longed for land reform, social equality, and a

growing want to demonstrate national pride in the face of the interventionist state, the United States of America. As such, in the 1960s the guerrilla movement began to slowly but steadfastly grow and it became more visible through various skirmishes against the Guatemalan military as well as through organizing support groups amongst the peasants. Led by ex-military men, described as nationalists whose attempts to slight changes were firmly ousted by the CIA in a prior uprising, the guerrillas committed themselves to enacting the changes needed to achieve the land reform that Árbenz had failed to achieve.[28,29]

Indeed, the dissatisfaction amongst Guatemalan peasants, workers, students and others of the social inequality prevalent in Guatemala reached a tipping point in March 1962 when students led a demonstration filled with thousands of protestors in the streets of Guatemala. Not only were they protesting against social inequality but also against the deep-seated sphere of corruption that plagued President Miguel Ydígoras Fuentes' government as well as all representative bodies of his government. Due to the protest, one representative body, the Guatemalan military, that was inconspicuously supported and influenced by the U.S., began to receive training by a U.S. military base, now permanently a part of the nation, on counterinsurgency. This means that the U.S. military base viewed the student-led demonstration as insurgent in nature and not as a freedom of speech or as a civil right to protest against social inequality and government corruption. William Blum explains the reason for this as a resultant of the fear of communism; more specifically he says that for the U.S. military the demonstration denoted most saliently an

omnipresent threat of communism.[30] It is the U.S. military's training on counterinsurgency as well as its indoctrination of the Guatemalan military to always eliminate communism in any way necessary that would come into play during the thirty-six years of internal conflict. And it is at the height of this conflict that the Mayan genocide would occur in the early 1980s. This, thus, is the exacted relationship between the CIA's overthrow of President Árbenz and the Mayan genocide. Below we examine the extent to which the U.S indoctrinated the Guatemalan army. That is, we show how Guatemala's army did not wholly comprehend the true reasons to overthrow one of its presidents. This reason is simply the U.S.' drive to global economic power via controlling economy and authority in Guatemala, and not just the pretext of communism.

U.S.' involvement in the selection of presidents in Guatemala continued, and the next coup d'état victim was General Ydígoras in March 1963.[31] Julio Cesar Mendez, who was fully supported by U.S, succeeded Ydígoras in presidency. But, in a turn of events, the U.S. had to intervene twice to protect him from two coup d'états that were plotted against him by the Guatemalan army. In this rare case, according to William Blum, it is the Guatemalan military, and not the U.S., that suspects this president as communist in nature.[32] This U.S. unsupported and un-instigated effort of a coup d'état indicates the flowering of the U.S. training within the body of Guatemala's army. That is, this independent move by the army of Guatemala simulates the move of a pupil who makes his or her first decision without assistance from a master. And because the U.S. actually stepped in to prevent Mendez's overthrow, it is clear that the pupil – Guatemala's

military – albeit learning and mastering the motor skills along with some of the reasons of the job, did not understand fully the reasons why the job was carried out. And here, job refers to overthrowing a president of Guatemala. The reason the Guatemalan army wanted to overthrow Mendez was because of its suspicion that Mendez was a communist. This reason is the pretext the United States has used from the very beginning to overthrow its first Guatemalan president. Therefore, the Guatemalan military had learned, from the teachings and training they received from U.S., that the threat of being a communist is a very solid reason to exercise a coup against a president of Guatemala. Thus, it attempted to overthrow Mendez. Yet, as hinted at in the pupil-master metaphor, the intervention of the U.S. to stop this intention strongly suggests the lack of true understanding behind most of the U.S.-led coup d'états by the pupil, the Guatemalan military. Lacking this understanding, the Guatemalan military is in effect acting blindly or at least acting under false knowledge. By so doing, there is no doubt that the U.S. had managed to confuse, through indoctrination, and therefore manipulate the Guatemalan army to its own ends. The ends of which have been countlessly established so far as an effort to control the economy and authority of the Guatemalan State. This effort, it has been argued, is an indispensable step in its drive to amass global political economic power via, in our case, Guatemala. With this, we turn to the Mayan genocide.

Genocide as the Climax of the Internal Armed Conflict in Guatemala, 1960 to 1996

Guatemala suffered a violent period of war roughly from 1960 to 1996 in which approximately 200, 000 persons were killed or made to disappear.[33] Two years before the end of this period of bloodshed, the Government of the Republic of Guatemala and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unit signed the Accord of Oslo on June 23, 1994.[34] Their signature would bring into being Guatemala's Commission for Historical Clarification (the CEH) as well as the end of the war.[35] The goal of CEH is to clarify objectively the human rights violations and acts of violence of this war. CEH's final conclusion, like those of the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, highlights that an overwhelming majority of the victims belong to one ethnic group, the Mayans. According to the CEH, eighty-three percent of a total number of 42, 275 registered victims were Mayans.[36] Because of this, the violence perpetrated against the Mayans can be referred to as genocide. According to CEH's final report, the most violent period of the armed conflict in which the genocide took place is 1978 to 1985. This is because in this time frame the number of Mayans killed far exceeds that of any other time period of the armed conflict.[37] The Mayans who were killed during this genocide are largely not members of Guatemalan elites, but are rather poor peasants who were generally noncombatant civilians without state power.[38] Here, it should be noted that there might have been Mayans with state power acting on behalf of the State. If there were, they would be acting as representatives of the Guatemalan elites. Overall, representatives acting on behalf of the Guatemalan elites had state power and were military men. And

CEH finds these military men to be ninety-three percent culpable for the deaths of all victims.[39]

CEH also finds that the Guatemalan elites viewed the Mayans as the enemy within. In fact, since the country's independence in 1821, an authoritarian State emerged which excluded a large majority of its population in favor of protecting the economic interest of the privileged minority, Guatemala's elites or oligarchy.[40] Additionally, since the overthrow of the government of Colonel Jacobo Árbenz, the state distrusted and categorized this majority as malevolent.[41] As a consequence, the representatives of the Guatemalan elites, the Guatemalan army, carried out a dogmatic and systematic repression of any possible political expression that might emerge from the members of its non-oligarchic group. And in time, this repression alongside the categorization of distrust and malevolence of Guatemala's non-oligarchic members culminated in a "violence [that] was fundamentally directed by the [Guatemalan] State, against the excluded, the poor and above all, the Mayan people" ("Historical Roots of the Armed Confrontation"). This violence is the one within the internal armed conflict. The malevolence and distrust of Guatemala's peasant, the majority being Mayans, matured during the internal armed conflict to the harrowing point at which the Guatemalan army perceived this group of poor peasants/Mayans as the nation's internal enemy. CEH corroborates this by pointing out that

> During the armed confrontation, the State's idea of the "internal enemy", intrinsic to the National Security Doctrine, became increasingly inclusive.

> At the same time, this doctrine became the raison d'être of Army and State policies for several decades. Through its investigation, the CEH discovered one of the most devastating effects of this policy: […] [which is that] the vast majority [of the victims] were Mayans ("The Internal Enemy").

Consequently, as representatives of Guatemala's oligarchy, the Guatemalan state forces and paramilitary groups had a mandate to eliminate this enemy within specifically during the time frame of 1978 to 1985.[42] This mandate arises from the fact that of the eighty-three percent of Mayan victims killed during the entire conflict, a concentrated number was killed in this specific time period. This is because the Guatemalan army categorized the Mayans as the internal enemy during the conflict, in accordance with CEH's report.[43] It follows that, on one hand, the elites' policies, having fundamental roots in the country's independence as well as in the aftermath of the overthrow of the government of Colonel Jacobo Árbenz, have sought to repress the freedom of political expression by its large group of poor peasants, the majority being Mayans. It buttressed its repression of the Mayans with the National Security Doctrine since this doctrine lent itself to the classification of the Mayans as an internal enemy to the State. On the other hand, Guatemala's internal enemies have sought to disband their oppression and make audible and visible not only their political expression but also their economic and cultural demands. CEH substantiates this when it highlights that, "From 1978 to 1982 citizens from broad sectors of society participated in growing social mobilization and political

opposition to the continuity of the country's established order" ("A disproportionately repressive response"). Subsequently, because these non-elite members opposed the authority of the oligarchy on the basis of demands that may be seen as constitutional [since these demands dealt with politics, culture, and the economy] they were labeled as the internal enemy to and by the Guatemalan State, the head representative of the oligarchy. From this, it becomes obvious that the conflict between these two groups is not merely cultural in nature, but is rather one that deals with the economic and political demands of Guatemala's poor on one hand, and on the other, a stringent repression of freedom of political expression by representatives of the Guatemalan oligarchy. Moreover, the original reason of the division of Guatemalan's inhabitants into two groups centers on the protection of the financial interests of Guatemala's elites. In order to protect this fiscal interest, the state stringently tried to restrict its non-oligarchic members from protesting. CEH underscores this as follows,

> Faced with widespread political, socio-economic and cultural opposition, the state resorted to military operations directed towards the physical annihilation or absolute intimidation of this opposition, through a plan of repression carried out mainly by the Army and national security forces ("A Disproportionately Repressive Response").

From this, it is clear that the state pursued an ideology of dominance over the poor through any means possible. In this case, that means was through a very near annihilation

of the Mayans. This would imply, in someway, that the state was committed to its own idea of nationalism.

Chapter Conclusion

In Guatemala, a geopolitical region of past European colonization, the remnant structures and consequences of the colonial epoch are visible today. These two resultant factors ensure that power and wealth remain in the hands of whites, and poverty and oppression stay among the Guatemalan Indians. This argument correlates directly to those that Quijano and Mignolo have put forth with coloniality of power and coloniality of power matrix respectively. With respect to our present argument, the U.S., as a predominantly white nation, also manifested and continues to evince the legacy of coloniality of power. Today, the U.S. holds on to its world hegemony. During the 1950s, the U.S.' mission was to establish and concretize its hegemony. It did so in many ways, one of which included its stance and goal in the Cold War to ensure that its neighboring countries were not allies of communism. If they were, the U.S. assumed the right to forcibly change their ideological belief. As such, the U.S. embarked upon a process of accumulating political power during this era. In addition to this power, the U.S. also sought to amass fiscal clout. In fact, it is difficult to separate fiscal from political clout. Notwithstanding this, the U.S.' endeavor to accumulate economic power is very visible in its intervention in Guatemala. This is because the American company, the United Fruit

Company, practically summoned the U.S. via the CIA to defend its tyrannical fiscal goals in Guatemala. The UFCO did so in utter defiance of Guatemala's laws of land reform.

Responding to the summons, the U.S. set out to forcibly control the authority and economy of Guatemala. It had to do so in order to maintain the status quo of the United Fruit Company and its elite beneficiaries, most of who had close ties to the CIA and to the Eisenhower administration. This, in turn, maintained the status quo of the United States, particularly in the sphere of economic-political power. In the midst of this process, the [white] Guatemalan oligarchy also benefitted fiscally and politically as well.

When the U.S. implemented Decree 600 and the National Security Doctrine it disregarded the notion of sovereignty with respect to Guatemala. This term, sovereignty, has been used here to speak to the right of a nation's head to have the highest form of power with which to lead and protect its denizens. When the U.S. seized control over Guatemala's authority by overthrowing Árbenz and Arévalo, it took away the idea that Guatemala could be a sovereign nation. The U.S. was successful because of its military might, the violent havoc it wreaked in the process, and its control of knowledge. It acquired control of knowledge through its indoctrination, deception, and monetary corruption of the Guatemala's elites and army. As a consequence, the U.S. wielded the narrative of the threat of communism in Guatemala. This was the pretext it successfully employed to clandestinely wage war against the democratic progressive actions of Guatemala under the presidency of Árbenz and Arévalo in particular. Therefore, for the

sake of its own prerogatives, the U.S. had to turn a blind eye to the democratic changes in Guatemala.

Blinded by indoctrination and satiated by ceaseless power, the Guatemalan elite and military, for their part, seized the opportunity to accrue even more power and wealth. Land was the vehicle through which they did so. The land that they chose often belonged to the Mayans, who became obstacles to the Guatemalan elite and army. The ruse used to despoil them of it was to label them as communist and insurgents. It was a perfect plan because those labels straightforwardly corresponded to the U.S.' ploy of intervening in Guatemala, mentioned above. Both the U.S. and the conglomeration of Guatemalan elites and military stood to gain monetarily. The Mayans paid the price of the heist. And as a result, the basic drive for economic wealth, which has inherent within it the control of the modernization process, resulted in the slaughter of the Mayan Highlanders.

Chapter 2: The Invisibility of the Operating System of Coloniality of Power Through the Lens of *Granito: A Story In Three Parts*

> Where there's injustice, I always believed in fighting.
>
> The question is, do you fight to change things or to punish?
>
> –Mahatma Gandhi

Chapter Introduction

In writing this chapter, I wrestle with the ideas of silence as "a tool of power" and "the invisibility of coloniality of power." In the end, it could be that they are two sides of the same coin. This could explain the difficulty I have maneuvering these two concepts. For the sake of time, I find it easier to posit the idea of "the invisibility of coloniality of power". I also find that what I set out to unravel may, at first glance, appear needlessly controversial, but that is not my aim. Instead, my reasoning follows a similar one as Gonzalo Arroyo's in his 1979 article, "Repression of the Church and the Advance of Neo-fascism."[44] Arroyo claims, "It is not sufficient to point out the immediate reasons behind this heightened repression of the Church; it is necessary to situate this repression in a much broader context, continental and even worldwide, of an economic, social, and political regression" (Arroyo, "Repression" 11). My thesis is that it is inadequate and partially unjust to limit the allocation of blame for the late 1980s violence in Guatemala only to the local government of the time. This is because the circumstances surrounding

and producing this violence go beyond the boundaries of Guatemala. Moreover, and more importantly, the act of this limitation serves to mask the operating system of coloniality of power by not identifying the principal culprit.

Therefore, my goal is to bring to light the manner in which coloniality of power operates invisibly, and even at times unbeknown to the agent(s) through which it manifests itself. It does so because the habitat in which it lives allows it to do so. I maintain that its environs can collectively be referred to as European modernity. My claim is that it is necessary to recognize the invisibleness of the operating system of coloniality of power in order to thoroughly comprehend our roles as agents or non-agents of it. It is even more necessary to do so within the context of human rights violations, especially those that result in genocides.

In this chapter, I employ the 2001 documentary *Granito: A Story in Three Parts* to carryout my goal. Using *Granito* and its immediate socio-political context, I contend that this documentary has a double role, each of which contradicts the other. In the first instance, *Granito's* content favors anti-impunity and justice with specific reference to Guatemala's past general and president, Efraín Ríos Montt, and victims of Guatemala's internal armed conflict [1960-1996]. In the second instance, it mitigates and ignores the depth of responsibility the United States has with respect to the gross human casualties that occurred within Guatemala's aforementioned warfare. This is done principally through the reliance upon expert advice from U.S.' forensic specialist Kate Doyle. The statements she provides to us directly serve to remove the U.S. from the list of suspects

perceived as the intellectual author of the violence. This film, therefore, enables the United States' exemption from punishment for its accountability. This second instance commands my attention and urges me to bring it to the forefront of the minds of critics, spectators, and viewers of *Granito*. I have the urge to do so because I uphold that the invisibleness of the operating system of coloniality of power is enacted through the scant regard of the United States' role with respect to the human casualties of the Guatemalan conflict. I also claim that the first instance of *Granito's* double role, as previously mentioned, facilitates the invisibility of this operating system to unsuspecting critics, spectators, and viewers. It does this by simply being the headline story of the documentary. Part of the headline story is dubbed "how to nail a dictator", and at times forms part of the documentary's title. The other part that we glean from watching the documentary is the name of the dictator – Efraín Ríos Montt. Put together, the headline story is how to nail Efraín Ríos Montt, a dictator [where the proper noun and the common noun are interchangeable]. As a result, great effort is made to orient viewers of this documentary to this headline story. Consequently, the story revolving the U.S.' involvement remains undeveloped and seems inconsequential based on the expert claims of Kate Doyle given within *Granito*.

Accordingly, I examine and contrast the double role that this documentary plays: 1) to reveal evidence proving the accountability of Efraín Ríos Montt's actions and the process to indict him, and 2) to cast aside and ignore the depth of responsibility of the United States. Together, within the context of *Granito*, this double role masks the

operating system of coloniality of power and prevents its discovery as a fundamental cause of impunity and injustice. As a result of this obscurity, coloniality of power is manifested through agents who may be unconscious of their roles as carriers. Through the scrutiny of this manifestation we comprehend the stealthy manner in which coloniality of power becomes invisible. More pressingly though, a critical reasoning leads us to the realization that within the case of *Granito* a major benefactor of coloniality of power, the United States, may be much more responsible for the brutality that befell Guatemala's Mayan Highlanders than Efraín Ríos Montt. We may also concede that, in this case, coloniality of power seems to sacrifice a minor benefactor, General Efraín Ríos Montt, to indictment in order to protect the United States, a major benefactor. What is key here, to my understanding, is that in protecting a major benefactor such as the United States, the operating system of coloniality of power protects itself. I am, therefore, claiming that coloniality of power as a system ensures its own self-preservation independent of the agents through which it manifests itself. This means that at times, such as is the case in *Granito*, what may seem like a victory for justice against impunity may actually be a bigger victory for coloniality of power in its act of self-preservation. This is my main argument, which I believe is important to consider in the struggle against impunity and injustice. If we fail to recognize the invisible manner in which coloniality of power operates, then victory may just be an illusion; a temporary opium for the afflicted. Hence, we may forever be problematizing injustice, a recurrent theme within the field of literary, theoretical, and cultural studies.

It is important to understand that the invisibleness of the operating system of coloniality of power differs from the visibility of the functioning of its components. By this I mean that the four constitutive components put forth by Walter Mignolo of coloniality of power may be perceptible, at times, to the naked eyes.[45] However, I contend that, its entire operating system is not always at once visible, and is often masked, silenced, or made invisible. *Granito: a story in three parts* provides us with an insightful example of how this is done. How is the operating system of coloniality of power silenced, masked, or made invisible in this documentary? What is this documentary about? In answering these questions, I also draw upon similar works that I believe relate to my postulations on the invisibility of coloniality of power, or silence as a mechanism of power. These are Paulo Freire's works: 1) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968) and 2) *Cultural Action For Freedom* (1972), and Aníbal Quijano's 2000 article: "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Latin America." From Freire's work, I employ his idea of the culture of silence to buttress my reasoning, and I do the same with Quijano's notion of the term naturalization as it pertains to the power structure of the world. In the end, I submit that *Granito* ignores its genealogy with respect to the previous film, *When The Mountains Tremble*. That film details the world geopolitical and capitalistic ideologies and actions enveloping Central America and Guatemala in particular, and it firmly projects them as the creative forces engendering the brutal conflicts within the region. *Granito* projects Ríos Montt as the intellectual mastermind of those conflicts within Guatemala, and racism as the fundamental cause of the resulting

genocide. These two actions, I maintain, do the following: 1) they situate global differences, in this case racism, as the sole rationale for genocides, and 2) they engage in the partial fulfillment of the culture of silence regarding the root of the violence, and subsequently 3) they naturalize the power structure(s) responsible for the violence.

Synopsis of the Documentary, *Granito: A Story in Three Parts* about?

The documentary, *Granito: A Story in Three parts* depicts the manner in which one builds a case by collecting concrete evidence in order to prosecute a dictator.[46] Specifically, it centers upon the procedural stages of proving that Guatemala's ex-President, General Efraín Ríos Montt, was responsible for commanding his military to annihilate Mayan highlanders. And due to this, he deserves condemnation for his actions. In achieving this goal, the director, Pamela Yates, elucidates us on the gruesome mass murders that took place in the section of the Guatemalan warfare that coincides with the government of Ríos Montt. He held the presidency in Guatemala from March 23, 1982 through August 8, 1983. The most severe offensive against Guatemala's Mayans occurred in 1982. Two decades later, at the request of Rigoberta Menchú, Spanish international prosecutor Almudena Bernabeu sought to get a case hearing in order to arraign Ríos Montt as the one who is ultimately liable for the butchery. Almudena Bernabeu also sought to incriminate six other military officials, one of whom had also been a Guatemalan president – General Lucas García. In her efforts to achieve her goals, Bernabeu solicited the help of Pamela Yates. In particular, Bernabeu contacted Yates to

ask for permission to use a previous documentary of hers as evidence. Yates gladly agreed to this, and resulting from further contact between the two is the film *Granito* (sec. 1, *Granito*).

The previous documentary from which Bernabeu would find important evidence is titled *When The Mountains Tremble*. The content of this documentary is important because the structure of *Granito* consists of a continuous timeline of events interspersed with flashbacks from it. Consequently, I will provide more information on this documentary at the end of this synopsis. *Granito's* principal narrator is also its director, Pamela Yates. Through her perspective we come to know the story of the Mayan slaughter, pieced together in a cohesive whole. The film is partitioned into three main sections; the first is titled "a Chronicle Foretold"; the second, "Genocide on Trial"; and the third, "Grains of Sand."

Examining *When The Mountains Tremble* in Depth

This film displays various footages of how the Guatemalan state became militarized and the subsequent negative consequences of this militarization. Its timeframe goes from 1954 to 1982. Despite this, however, the film does not progress sequentially, but rather jumps to relevant dates, giving the most attention to the 1980s. It is the first documentary from director Pamela Yates, and was produced in 1982. Yates informs us that she was inspired to go to Guatemala in 1982 because of her anger towards the U.S. "for being on the wrong side of so many conflicts." Her goal was to reveal to the world

the consequences of the U.S.' policy in Central America through the example of the events that were occurring in Guatemala at the time. Part of the U.S.' policy, she believes, is the "propping up" of military governments in Guatemala since 1954, which led to dictatorships. She claims that these dictatorships became powerful and ruthless, and soon were challenged by revolutions. She makes the point that it was not just in Guatemala that dictatorships were being propped up, but rather throughout all of Central America. And, again, all these dictatorships were soon contested by a wave of revolution that swept across the hemisphere during the 1980s. At the time, she believed that if she could show to the world footages of the consequences of the U.S.' actions, she could make a difference (*Granito*, sec. 1).

In *When The Mountains Tremble*, Yates employs Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Rigoberta Menchú to narrate the story. Menchú starts the film with an introduction of herself and what she does. She explains that her struggle was to help stop the military violence against the Mayans, and that her story is representative of the victims of this violence. This introduction reminds us of the one she gives of herself in her story found in the Venezuelan Anthropologist Elisabeth Burgos-Debray's book, *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala* (1983). Due to her tireless efforts Menchú won the Nobel Peace Prize. However, she reminds us that the struggle continues. At that time in *When The Mountains Tremble* it was 1992, which is ten years after Menchú started her journey for peace and equality for Guatemala's Mayans. From there, the film goes back and forth between Menchú's narrative voice, interviews with important Guatemalan

government members, interviews with foreign clergymen serving in Guatemala, interviews with U.S. officials, news sound and video-clips from the U.S., and supporting onsite visuals of the militarized state of Guatemala. Evidence supporting Yates' denunciation of the United States' policies towards Guatemala in particular comes to light in this film directly after Menchú's introductory message. This evidence manifests itself in a scene portraying a dinner conversation amongst Guatemalan President Árbenz, the then U.S. ambassador, and their wives. In this scene, Árbenz explains to the U.S. ambassador that his goal is to convert Guatemala from a semi-dependent colonial country into a free and independent country. This includes the creation of a modern and economical viable society. He states to the U.S. ambassador, "We can't continue to simply give away every resources that we have." In response the ambassador replies, "Alarm is growing in Washington about what is going on down here." To erase the need for alarm Árbenz and his wife try to clarify the nature of the situation and the root of the problem. The conversation goes as follows:

> Árbenz: Mr. Ambassador, allow me to speak freely. The problem between the two nations is the United Fruit.
>
> Árbenz's wife: Imagine if in your country there was a foreign corporation that owned all the finest land. Then imagine that the means of getting your products to market, the ships, the ports, the railroads were all owned by

the same company. Not only do they own your entire infrastructure, but in 50 years they have paid virtually no taxes.

U.S. ambassador: Look, the government of the U.S. is not going to permit a Red Soviet Republic between Texas and the Panama Canal.

Árbenz: Ahh, Mr. Ambassador, I am certain when you have been here longer and have had an opportunity to know our country you will feel differently about this.

U.S. ambassador: No matter how long I'm here nothing is going to make me a communists. You clean those Reds out of your government. When United Fruit gets what is properly theirs, maybe then we can talk about bettering relations. I'm afraid that time is getting very short.

What we glean from the above conversation is that instead of responding to Árbenz's concern for Guatemala's then current economic status that is being unlawfully compromised and monopolized by an American company, the United States ambassador suspects Árbenz of communism. The two accounts may seem unrelated, but the immediate juxtaposition of them as well as their conversational relevance and intentions indicate that what Árbenz considers efforts towards establishing a modern and fully un-colonized and independent Guatemalan nation is understood by the U.S. ambassador as

efforts daubed in communism. Therefore, the nature of the U.S. government's interest within Guatemala at the time is the fear of communism. Yet, the scene right before this one informs us that Árbenz was the first democratically elected president in Guatemala, 1954. This information coupled with Árbenz and his wife's statements within the aforementioned conversation firmly put into doubt the U.S. ambassador's claim of the presence of communism in Guatemala. Unfortunately, this reasonable doubt is inconsequential as the film goes on to illustrate the U.S. CIA's development of a "movement of national liberation", the resultant coup d'état of Árbenz – dubbed the Red President of Guatemala, and the hail of glory of the defeat of communism in Guatemala by the U.S.' media. The U.S.' media also announces victory for the United Fruit, "Thousands of communists are in make-shift prisons. For the United Fruit, it's business as usual as all company land seized by the communist is returned" (*When The Mountains Tremble*).

These scenes lay the groundwork of Yates' goal in this documentary, which is to show to the world the manner in which the U.S. propped up presidents it wanted in Guatemala and the resulting consequences of the U.S.' actions. After these scenes, especially after the one depicting the "thousands of communists in prisons", the documentary illustrates the new Guatemalan government's style of conduct. Specifically, it highlights the particular style of conduct of mass policing and repression of indigenous Guatemalans, who the documentary points out are all categorized as communists. According to the then new military government of Guatemala, President Carlos Castillo

Armas, the heavy presence of police and military men throughout the streets of Guatemala kept the people inline. *When The Mountains Tremble* takes us from this initiation of a Guatemalan military state to demonstrate a prolonged state of militarization in Guatemala and an increasing repression of the people, who now are most visually represented as Highland Indians and destitute Ladinos. It also shows the U.S.' continued support for every subsequent dictatorship after President Castillo Armas leading to the administration of President Ríos Montt. This support includes the U.S.' military training of Guatemala's soldiers, and U.S. President Reagan's zeal to supply the necessary military equipment to Guatemala's government to wipe out communism. Likewise, *When The Mountains Tremble* goes on to depict the role of the Church in Guatemala as it pertains to the military repression. In this depiction, one finds a division in which opulent clergymen, such as Archbishop Casariego, sided with the despotic government, and those of the school of Liberation Theology, such as Father Celso, supported the oppressed in their struggle. Key to note here is that these clergymen are foreigners to Guatemala (*When The Mountains Tremble*).

Due to the support of Father Celso and other clergymen of the same theology, indigenous villagers began to employ the teachings of the Bible as supportive evidence for their right to fight for equality. Juxtapositions of the reasons supporting the villagers' struggle and for those supporting the U.S.-backed Guatemalan governments' repressions continue throughout the documentary. Despite these juxtapositions, *When The Mountains Tremble* unquestionably portrays the struggle of the Mayans as a just struggle and the

repression by the U.S.-backed Guatemalan tyrants, especially that of President Ríos Montt, as inhumane. Other pertinent scenes in this documentary include: 1) the well-known 1980 burning of the Spanish Embassy in Guatemala city by Guatemala's U.S.-backed government in which Rigoberta Menchú's father, Vicente Menchú, burned to his death along with thirty-nine other protestors, 2) Yates' interview with a Guatemalan soldier who reveals that he does not know the reasons for which he fights, 3) Yates' interviews with the categorized subversives, the Mayan Highlanders, who are acutely cognizant of why they fight, 4) Ríos Montt's national broadcast ridiculing the struggle for equality, and 5) the U.S.' news media report in which U.S.' president, Reagan, declares his nation's national security to be at risk in Central America. The film ends with a metaphorical recap of the history of oppression in Guatemala by an unnamed male villager, and a poem read by Rigoberta Menchú. In this recapitulation, the Mayan man says,

> The road that led to this war is over 400 years old. It lead us into the mountains when the Spanish came and tried to wipe out our Indian culture. But our ancestors preserved our customs. We grew corn and our numbers increased. We say that every road has a coming and a going, a leaving and a returning. Now we are coming down out of the mountains. We are going back to the towns and the cities. We are reclaiming our rights. But we don't travel this road alone. There can be no returning unless everyone, Indians and non-Indians go together. All of us together

> will make a new Guatemala. All of us together will reclaim our rights. The road is returning. Together we will win.

His message echoes Yates' goal, a call to the world to put an end to this violence. Menchú's poem solidifies the need for justice as she repeatedly says within the poem "cross the frontier of love!" (*When The Mountains Tremble*).

Examining *Granito* in Depth

In the first section of this film, Yates informs us in more ways than one that *Granito* continues the goals she had for her first film. One of those goals she discloses was "to expose the brutality of the Guatemalan armies' operations in the highlands." She explains that in *When the Mountains Tremble* she unfortunately did not achieve her main goal, which she notes in the following:

> The triumph we felt at the end of making *When the Mountains Tremble* would become a poignant reminder of our defeat. The film became part of a national campaign to stop U.S.' military intervention in Central America, but despite our protest, the U.S. continued to support the military regime in Guatemala, and the slaughter continued.

Yates' sense of defeat happens in spite of the fact that this first film of hers received widespread publicity. It was played at the first Sundance Film Festival and was shown all over the world (*Granito* sec.1). The production of *Granito*, Yates' second film, offers Yates the opportunity to redeem herself from the loss she experienced in her first film,

When The Mountains Tremble, even though the two films have different goals. A central difference is that *When The Mountains Tremble* emphasizes the consequences of the geopolitical meddling of United States in Guatemala. These consequences are the creation of authoritarian rule and ghastly human atrocities in Guatemala. As a result, Yates advocates for the requisite urgency to end U.S.' involvement in Guatemala and all of Central America. This point of focus acutely diverges from *Granito*'s accentuated argument. This argument centers on bringing to the fore the stockpiling of evidence being gathered from various fields of expertise that should resolutely incriminate Guatemala's ex-President Ríos Montt as the mastermind responsible for the Mayan carnage. My concern in this chapter lies with this divergence between the two films, which I will return to within my analysis.

From further explorations of the process of stockpiling evidence in *Granito*, we learn that the group of specialists being brought together by Spanish international prosecutor Almudena Bernabeu include the following experts: Fredy Peccerelli – a forensic anthropologist born in Guatemala but now residing in the U.S., Kate Doyle – a U.S. forensic archivist, and Guatemalan witnesses of the massacres – escapees as well as survivors. Through the work of these professionals, each one contributing from their own field of expertise, we come to understand, with precision, the significance of Guatemala's ex-President Ríos Montt's deadly politics. Of subsequent relevance is the reason for which Spanish persecutor Bernabeu took this case. Bernabeu did so for two reasons. The first is that Rigoberta Menchú, whose father had been burnt alive in the Spanish Embassy

in Guatemala, sought her help. And the second is because the Spanish National Court claims universal jurisdiction. According to Pamela Yates, this claim means that the Spanish National Court has "the right to prosecute the worst crimes even if they take place in another country" (*Granito*, second section). *Granito* ends by showing ample testaments of the atrocities committed under the presidency of Ríos Montt, which are similar to the gruesome death of Vicente Menchú as previously described.

Notwithstanding the manner in which it ends, the visual and oral messages of *Granito* are stupendous in their ability to reinforce and drive home the film's argument. For instance, visually, in section one of this documentary – "a Chronicle Foretold" –, the camera zooms in on the mass burial site at La Verbena Cemetery in Guatemala. This is believed to be the burial grounds of most of the disappeared. Present at the site is Guatemalan born forensic anthropologist Fredy Peccerelli, who establishes that the deceased were slain. The camera shows a massively deep and expansive grave with Fredy sitting on its rim and explaining to us exactly how the deceased were slain. He states that the victims fell face-forward into the hole by a blow from behind the head – a technique used by Nazis in the extermination of Jews. He also underscores the fact that twenty-five percent of the skeletal remains are those belonging to children and not adults (*Granito*, second section). Thereafter, the camera shows, in a separate scene, surviving mourners throwing white calla flowers into the mass grave. Their physical appearances convince us of the exceptionally skewed unidirectional violence against a particular group of Guatemalans, the Mayans. These two scenes are juxtaposed and their immediacy compels

viewers to believe the accentuated argument of the film. In the same light, Peccerelli's explanation of how the disappeared were slain is equally cogent.

In another apposition of two scenes, the camera continues to imprint upon us the severity of the crimes. These two scenes are flashbacks of the past, and are of Yates' earlier documentary – *When the Mountains Tremble*. In the first of these two scenes, the camera closes in on a line of bodies, freshly decimated. This scene is grisly in its effect because of the smears of blood splotched across the bodies and the buzz of flies encircling the corpses. Simultaneously and quite masterfully, this scene entreats us to identify with the agony of the wailing survivors onsite. In the second scene, the camera presents us with an insight to an operation of ex-President General Ríos Montt and his men. In this operation, Pamela Yates, having gained the trust of the general, accompanies him to the Highlands. There, a combat ensues between a handful of hidden guerrillas and the general's team. On the ground, the guerrillas return fire upon the helicopter in which are the general, his team, and Pamela Yates. No fatalities occur on either side, but the guerrillas succeed to hit the helicopter, which then spiral downwards. This forces the pilot to make an emergency landing. What this scene brings to the fore is the inequality between the advanced military technology of the army and the inferior artilleries of the militants. The back-to-back display of these two scenes brings to the forefront of our minds a clear concept of who the victims are as well as the perpetrators. The first scene doubtlessly portrays the Mayan Highlanders as the victims; while, the second scene

depicts ex-President General Ríos Montt and his men as the perpetrators since they went in search of combat with the Mayan Highlanders, dubbed as militants.

One particular pair of oral messages is salient because it unquestionably attests to the blameworthiness of Ríos Montt's actions. The first of the pair comes to light through an interview between Yates and Ríos Montt. This interview is embodied in a flashback scene taken from her first documentary, *When the Mountains Tremble*. And, more specifically, it is in the second section of *Granito*, "Genocide on Trial." In this scene, Ríos Montt asserts his strong control of the army, establishing that it does not act without his directives. Responding to a question from Yates, he says, "There is no repression by the army. Our strength is our ability to make command decisions. That's the most important thing…because if I can't control the army, then what am I doing here?" This confirmation of control is important, but also insufficient. What is of utmost relevance, Yates explains, is information that General Ríos Montt was not ignorant of his men's actions, especially with respect to slaughters. Proof of this materializes itself in the second message of the pair, which is also located in the second section of *Granito*. In this message, U.S. forensic archivist Kate Doyle tells us how Plan Sofia corroborates the general's knowledge of his men fulfilling his orders to obliterate all villagers in the Ixil region. Reading an excerpt from the plan, she elucidates us on how the villagers became insurgents in the eyes of Ríos Montt; she says, "Over the past ten years subversive groups in the Ixil region have managed to completely indoctrinate all the villagers, resulting in a hundred percent support from the population." Doyle rightly interprets this to mean that,

“Everyone in this village is a guerrilla.” Plan Sofia’s mission is the annihilation of subversive elements in Ixil, which means the obliteration of the villagers. Most importantly, notes Kate Doyle, is that, “This patrol report [Plan Sofia] is created in order to show the commander that they [his men] did what they were told.” Therefore, it is a verification of a cognizance of collaborative communication between ex-President General Ríos Montt and his men regarding a project of eradicating an entire village.

In the course of the aforementioned interview between Pamela Yates and the general, the general flabbergasts us with his question to Pamela Yates, “Which truth do you want?” along with his derisive retort, “I would say I believe in freedom of thought.” These declarations come as a response to Yates’ question, “What would you say to charges that the army is massacring people?” His remarks stand out in our minds because they question and simultaneously disregard the notion of a single verifiable truth, a highly theorized notion. This notion is highly theorized upon by many scholars, something we will not delve into here. What is terrifying, though, is that it sets into motion the game of “my word against theirs.” At the same time, his quipped derision shows his awareness of the untenable rules of this game. And as such, he, the general Ríos Montt, comes off as indomitable. His words put into question most forcibly our persuasion that he may be indicted. And we are left feeling disheartened but hopeful. We feel despair because of his asserted indomitableness. We feel optimistic that in spite of that, there is a greater good.

Investigating the Invisibility of the Operating System of Coloniality of Power in *Granito*

How is coloniality of power, understood as a Eurocentric system of power and the cornerstone of the modern world, made invisible in *Granito*? First, we recall that this documentary depicts the history behind the 1980s Mayan blood spill, bringing into focus the culprit(s) responsible for it. The primary offender, it maintains and emphasizes, is Guatemala's ex-President General Ríos Montt. This is its headline story, which I discussed earlier. This documentary stringently orients its viewers to this headline story. However, present within *Granito* is another narrative that blames the big landowners and the United States as even more blameworthy for the violence. This other narrative hardly receives the attention it deserves, and seems even to be dismissed. I submit that this other narrative is most forthrightly dismissed by a voice of authority – Kate Doyle, but even more so by the direction that *Granito* takes in developing its headline story. Concrete quotes from Kate Doyle are furnished below to support my stance. My argument throughout this chapter is that it is through the scant regard and near dismissal of this other narrative that the operating system of coloniality of power is made invisible in this documentary.

This other and dismissed narrative that holds the U.S. and the big land owners responsible manifests itself in twofold in *Granito*: 1) the acknowledgement that the United States engineered the necessary mechanism to produce the violence inflicted upon indigenous populations in Guatemala, and 2) the assertion that the big landowners commanded Guatemala's government to forcibly rid the people of their land, which led to

episodes of extermination. *Granito's* director, Pamela Yates, leads the evolution of the first part of this other narrative. She does this at the very beginning of *Granito*. In that section, Yates straightforwardly states that she first visited Guatemala in 1982 because she was angry with the U.S. "for being on the wrong sides of so many conflicts" (*Granito*, section 1). This "wrong side" speaks to the United States' support and heavy-handed involvement in the creation of numerous military dictatorship governments in Central America. In the specific case of Guatemala, Yates substantiates this fact when she points out that, "Since 1954 the U.S. had propped up military governments in Guatemala. These dictatorship became powerful and ruthless" (*Granito*, sec. 1). Her assertion is further bolstered with the testimonies from Rigoberta Menchú and U.S.' ex-President Nixon. First, Nixon, with much gusto, confirms the U.S.' support in the entire region when he expresses that, "All our neighbors ask of us is assistance in training and arms to protect themselves while they build a better life" (*Granito*, sec. 1). But, Yates did not recognize a better life amongst Guatemalans during her first visit in 1982 to the country. In fact, she ended up producing her first documentary, *When the Mountains Tremble*, because of the fact that what was occurring in Guatemala and what she witnessed firsthand was a most vicious form of butchery of the Mayan people. Convinced, as she stated earlier, that the United States' intervention was for the worse, she declares that her first documentary "became part of a national campaign to stop the U.S.' military intervention in Central America."

Unfortunately, her film failed to meet this goal, and Yates announces that, "The U.S. continued to support the military regime in Guatemala, and the slaughter continued" (*Granito*, section 1). Next, in a flashback in *Granito*, Rigoberta Menchú explains the consequences of the U.S.' support within Guatemala. According to Menchú, "When the U.S.' government sends aid to Guatemala, whether it is military aid, advisors or economic aid, they must understand that they are contributing directly to a worsening bloodbath" (*Granito*, section 1). Put together, Yates, U.S.' ex-President Nixon, and Menchú's statements present us with incriminating allegations directly against the United States for its support of the violence in Guatemala in particular. Yates' assertion, however, goes beyond U.S.' ex-President Nixon and Menchú's own to declare that the U.S. directly propped up the military governments in Central America. If Yates' claim can be evidenced, it would then be imperative to understand the clout of the U.S.' actions particularly in Guatemala. The question becomes: did the U.S. gain power over these military governments because of its role in propping them up? *Granito* does not pursue this line of questioning in detail. What it does do, however, is to bolster our interest in it with the following claim,

> The U.S. was present at the creation of what became a uniquely savage counterinsurgency. In that sense, the United States helped build and then institutionalized both (sic) the doctrine, the mindset, and then the apparatus - the technological capabilities. The United States helped create

> the machine to go on to commit the massacre. And that's the responsibility that we bear (*Granito*, section 1).

This statement comes from U.S. forensic archivist, Kate Doyle, and it is important for several reasons. These reasons are: 1) it places the United States at the creation of the violence, 2) it recognizes the U.S.' responsibility in the creation of a "machine that would go on to commit the massacre", and above all 3) it acknowledges the United States as the intellectual author of indigenous genocide. It achieves the latter reason through the words "institutionalized both (sic) the doctrine, the mindset, and then the apparatus; the technological capabilities."

The second part of this other narrative, which we recall as the assertion that the big landowners commanded Guatemala's government to forcibly rid the people of their land leading to instances of annihilation, comes to light through the testimony of Antonio. Antonio is survivor and a direct witness of the cruelty of military violence in his village, Ilom. The violence in Ilom resulted in bloodshed. Antonio names the group of people he believes to be the true offenders of this bloodshed. He does this while recounting the events that occurred in Ilom. He explains that,

> Long before the war, the land belonged to our people. The big landowners stole our land. They figured that we would rise up one day and fight for our land. So, they asked the government to massacre us, to stop us from ever raising the land issue again. It was 1982, when the army arrived at 5 in the morning and started to massacre us, one by one. That day they killed

> 95 people. I was 11 years old when the massacre happened. Ríos Montt was the government, and without his authorization, the killing here wouldn't have happened. That's why the soldiers always say 'we're just following orders'. And who gave the orders? The government. So he committed the crime. He headed the government. In 2000, we testified at the Justice Department (*Granito*, section 2).

Here, Antonio speaks on behalf of his community, and, as a result, his claims represent a body of victims – a collective voice.[47] Through his testimony, it is clear that primacy of the responsibility of the violence is assigned to the "big landowners" for their theft of the people's land. Equally, it is obvious that the government, that is Ríos Montt, is merely fulfilling the beckons of these big landowners. This situates the government as second in line for the responsibility of the atrocities. Unfortunately, *Granito* does not shine a light in the direction of the big landowners nor does it question their clout as a vital contributing power to the violence. Instead, it redirects us to the person that gave commands on behalf of these big landowners, according to Antonio. It focuses on Ríos Montt. Accordingly, it hides these big landowners and quiets in the same instance the primary claim made by Antonio and the village he represents.

This other and dismissed narrative, which inculpates the United States and big landowners, warrants our concern. We should be concerned because concrete evidence exists that supports it and upholds it as the most direct explanation of the Guatemalan violence. Authors such as Gonzalo Arroyo, Ileana Rodríguez, Edelberto Torres-Rivas,

Lesley Gill, and Peter H. Smith have similar arguments that emphasize the geopolitical influences upon Central America in general and the widespread violence as a subsequent outcome. These scholars are well versed in studies relating to Guatemala and/or Central America. For instance, Edelberto Torres-Rivas is a Guatemalan sociologist who is known for his studies in the field of political sociology as it pertains to the social structure, social changes, nation building, and the democratic process in Guatemala. Nicaraguan scholar Ileana Rodríguez is well known for her specialization in Latin American Literature and Culture with emphasis on Central American and Caribbean Literatures amongst other areas of specializations. Gonzalo Arroyo (1926-2012) was a Chilean Jesuit priest who was an expert on agricultural economics, a founder of Christians for Socialism, and an adherent to Liberation Theology. He has written extensively on the Chilean state of emergency during the presidency of Allende, on the theme of the Church and state in Latin America, and on the agricultural economics and technology in Latin America. He was also a technical advisor for problems relating to agricultural reform from around 1963 to 1973 in Chile (Arroyo, "Christians" 488). Lesley Gill and Peter H. Smith are North American scholars, anthropologist and professor of comparative politics respectively. Their works pertain to the violence within the region. For example, some of Gill's research deals with political violence, human rights, and military training in Latin America, while Smith has investigated the political relationship between the United States and the region. Therefore, the clout of their arguments should not be ignored with respect to the geopolitical causes of the Guatemalan violence. In my understanding of

their work, they all seem to identify the United States as the locus from which these geopolitical causes originated. A claim that evidences my belief can be found in Gill's 2004 book, *The School of the Americas: Military Training and Political Violence in the Americas*. In this book, she firmly points out that,

> From Chile to East Timor, Congo, Guatemala, El Salvador, Colombia, and many other cold war battlegrounds, ordinary people who desired land reform, better wages, improved health care, education, and the basic rights of self-determination were labeled communists by U.S.-backed regimes and murdered, tortured, and disappeared by shadowy paramilitary death squads and state security forces trained by the United States (2).

This statement identifies communism as the cause for the atrocities carried out by U.S.-backed regimes. It also attests to the fact that the regimes and security forces were reliant upon and supported fully in return by the U.S. in the fulfillment of their ghastly crimes. Another author, Gonzalo Arroyo argues that in the specific occasion of repression of the Church and the poor in Guatemala during the country's most recent thirty-six years of warfare, the violence against the Church and the poor cannot be explained away by its immediate environments. Instead, he posits that the reasons for that specific instance of violence pertains more to changes in the world economy and major world ideologies during the epoch. Examples of these changes include communism, liberalism, and capitalism. Therefore, he cites that it is necessary to understand this specific incident within a worldwide socio-economic political system.[48]

I find that if Arroyo can argue that one incident of repression should be analysed within the worldwide socio-economic system, it is quite feasible for me to argue that a conglomeration of incidences, including the one that Arroyo mentioned, which led to carnage should be viewed within said system. This means for me that, using some of Arroyo's words, it is "not sufficient to point to the immediate reasons" and thereby the immediate perpetrators of the bloodshed in Guatemala. I claim that *Granito* does this; it points to the immediate reason and to an immediate perpetrator of the violence. Hence, its headline story is how to nail a dictator, Ríos Montt. This is my point of contention. I am in disagreement here because an investigation into the contributing factors of the violence points to the involvement of major player(s) of the world's socio-economic system in the affairs of Guatemala during the time period. Similar to Lesley Gill's book, Edelberto Torres-Rivas 2011 book, *Revolutions Without Revolutionary Changes*, highlights and details these instances of geopolitical and geostrategic contributing factors. According to him, for example, "A substantial change in the region happened shortly after the presence of communism threatened the national security of North America" ("Revolutions" 235). That substantial change was due to the increase in the presence of communism within this region, Central America and the Caribbean. As a result, the changes came through the 1940s U.S.' development of new political rules with which to treat this region, in particular, with the goal of retarding the advances of communism.[49] Throughout the years to come, the United States continued its effort of deterring communism through programs such as aiding in the modernization of the region's armies and military artilleries. Torres-

Rivas maintains that the result of this particular aid was an augmentation in the "deadly efficiency" of both the militaries and the artilleries. In the case of Guatemala, he points out that between 1971 and 1991 the Guatemalan armed forces of 14 thousand increased by approximately 329%. In addition to this, he notes that the United States' aid to Guatemala also resulted in a 73% and 143% increase in military vehicles and planes respectively,

> The collection of arms of war enriched in its lethal efficiency…In Guatemala, the troops increased from 14 thousands to 60 thousands, vehicles increased from 41 to 71, and planes increased from 35 to 85… The disproportion had immediate pernicious effects on elevating the capacity for violence, on elevating the diabolically scandalous capacity for killing: the militaries gained political authority among the civilian elites and acquired a relative autonomy as a specialized body within the state; a modernized professional bureaucracy with the will to power meant major installments of authoritarianism (Torres-Rivas "Revolutions" 239).

These increases are astounding, and I take the opportunity to recall to our memory that the deadliest part of the Guatemalan killings occurred in the early 1980s of Guatemala. My point here is the coincidence between the alarming increase in Guatemala's military forces and equipment and the equally alarming increase in the number of deaths during the country's warfare.

In a separate article, Edelberto Torres-Rivas continues to point to the United States as a powerful and decisive economic influencer in Guatemala's society. He places this influence above Guatemala's elites, who he says are complicit with North American capitalistic goals. Above all, what is noteworthy is that this alliance created pseudo-capitalism in Guatemala during the era, which in turn led to a violent repression of the mass. Torres-Rivas declares Guatemala's military to be the enforcer of the goals of the alliance between the country's elites and the capital interests from the United States. Together, the three groups created what he describes to be a domineering death pact that governed through its power to kill. Subsequently, he finds these three groups of people responsible for the climate of terror in Guatemala during the era in question ("vida y muerte" 573).

For its part, *Granito* recognizes the destructive impact of the United States upon Guatemala. However, unlike Gonzalo Arroyo's claim in his article – "Repression Against the Church and Neo-Fascism Advances", *Granito* does not deem "the restructuring of the economic system by transnational capitalism" as a direct and essential factor that resulted in gross human atrocities of the epoch in question.[50] What it emphasizes is the authoritarian rule of Guatemala's ex-President General Efraín Ríos Montt without seeming to realize that his authority was reinforced by the aforementioned action of transnational capitalism. Fleshed out, this means within our context: 1) that foreign investors who took an interest in Guatemala were able to negotiate the cooperation of Guatemalan elites to their end, and 2) said investors were also able to inveigle

Guatemalan government's support to their end.[51] These two actions resulted in an exponential growth in the subjugation of oppositional voices, such as the church.[52] That growth led to the massacre and disappearance of more than 200,000 Mayan Highlanders (CEH, "conclusions").

Going back to *Granito*'s recognition of the U.S.' role in the Guatemalan armed conflict, I reiterate the inadequate manner in which it is done. That is, asides from a few sweeping claims, in *Granito* details are lacking pertaining to the precise manner in which the U.S. came to be involved with Guatemala, pertaining to whether or not the involvement was founded upon mutual grounds and thus mutually desired, and pertaining to how long the involvement lasted. All this and more can be found in Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer 2005 book, for instance. Their book is titled *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*. A key piece of evidence from this book is the reproach of the U.S.' first involvement in Guatemala as it relates directly to Guatemala's thirty-six years of civil war and latter Mayan genocide. This occasion took the form of a CIA coup led by Col. Albert Haney. However, the then chief of the CIA for the Western division, J.C. King, admonished the plot to carryout the coup. He said to Haney, "What Teddy Roosevelt did in Panama will pale in comparison to what you are planning to do in Guatemala. You'll start a civil war and have the blood of thousands on your hands" (Schlesinger and Kinzer 117). Given this crucial insight, it is hard to accept the portrayal of Guatemala's ex-President General Ríos Montt as the intellectual author of the massacre, as advocated by *Granito*. Above all, though, the failure to relate the

contextual circumstance of the U.S' role in this conflict stands in stark disbelief with the knowledge that a U.S. past president found the matter of his country's role in the Guatemalan armed conflict so important and wrong that he publicly apologized for it. This is according to Peter H. Smith, who informs us of this in the following excerpt,

> In avid pursuit of its anticommunist goals (plus retroactive justification for its campaign against Árbenz), the United States threw its wholehearted support behind the right-wing authoritarians. The degree of this collaboration would become apparent only in 1990s… During a state visit in March 1999 President Bill Clinton went so far as to offer a public apology: 'For the United States,' the president said, 'it is important that I state clearly that support for military forces and intelligence units which engaged in violence and widespread repression was wrong, and the United States must not repeat that mistake' (Smith 183).

President Clinton's argument adds to what I have been referring to as the other dismissed narrative present within *Granito*. Moreover, his argument underscores the heights of importance of the U.S.' role relevant to the mass extermination of Guatemalan Mayans. Again, I submit that *Granito* does not exhaust this line of argument, but rather dismisses it. As a consequence, viewers of *Granito* are left with the conviction that Guatemala's ex-President General Ríos Montt as commander in chief and as the giver of the orders, as disclosed by plan Sofia, is the locus from which originated and manifested the human atrocities against Guatemala's indigenous populace.

The dismissal process of the Other Narrative– The Story of the U.S. and the Big Landowners– and Its Connection to the Invisibility of Coloniality of Power

This other narrative which highlights the weight of the responsibility of the U.S. and the big landowners is dismissed in *Granito* by U.S.' forensic specialist Kate Doyle's forthright statement that, "We cannot assign the genocide in and of itself to the United States" because it was "fundamentally a Guatemalan project" (*Granito*). Within the film, this announcement by Doyle renders irrelevant the film's director and Menchú's claims and situates them within the realms of immateriality. Doyle's affirmation also makes invisible the testimony of a direct witness of the cruelty of military actions by a surviving victim, Antonio. The corollary is that the film succeeds in making one specific narrative – how to indict a dictator, Ríos Montt – more impacting, more heard, and hence more visible than its undercurrent discourse – the other narrative. This undercurrent discourse represents a suppressed narrative that emanates from the victims of the Guatemalan violence, the oppressed. The headline and success story of the film is the certain indictment of Ríos Montt. The allegations against the United States and the big landowners, such as the United Fruit Company, fall from the limelight and into the shadows.

As a consequence, *Granito* does not offer us the core causes of the violence. Without knowing these causes we cannot truly identify perpetrators of the violence. Likewise, without this knowledge, the film and most clearly Kate Doyle become

complicit with the goals of coloniality of power. As I have made clear before, coloniality of power's fundamental goal is the racial socio-economic structuring of the world. An investigation into the root causes of the violence permits us to comprehend that the United States' actions served to create and exacerbate the violence more than the actions of Guatemala's ex-President General Ríos Montt and his administration. We also comprehend that the United States is one of the heirs of coloniality of power, and therefore a major agent. This understanding comes from knowing the manner in which this system of power originated as well as how it operates today. Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano explains this:

> 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 ("Coloniality" 533).

Accordingly, this makes Guatemala, in contrast to the United States, a minor agent of coloniality of power. This means that Guatemala has less of a control of economy, less of a control of knowledge, and so forth as compared with the U.S. In fact, the United States' clout in the four categories of Walter Mignolo's coloniality of power matrix is so immense that authors such as Lesley Gill analyze the U.S.' effect as imperial.[53] Without

investigating the geopolitical factors behind the Mayan massacre, as the documentary fails to do, we are unable to see how the operating system of coloniality of power works through the interplay of these two nations. We are also unable to see that without the actions of the U.S.' the sequence of events leading up to the violence would not have occurred as it did. This means that the violence might not have happened, or might have happened differently.

Drawing again upon Lesley Gill, a United States author and anthropologist, further credence is given to my line of argument when she highlights that, "Forgetting the proxy wars and covert operations carried out by the United States and the Third World security forces that do its bidding obscures the extent to which modern America emerged as the result of an imperial project that brutalized and oppressed peoples around the world" (Gill 3). Similar to Gill, I maintain that in *Granito* the emphasis placed upon Ríos Montt as the intellectual author of the genocide obscures the true intellectual author, the United States. Due to said emphasis, I submit that we tend to fail to be cognizant of the manner in which the United States' actions towards Guatemala fit within the Eurocentric system of power – coloniality of power. Our oversight of this renders the operating system of coloniality of power invisible. This is because the weight placed on the actions of Ríos Montt is extremely limited in its scope of analysis. Whereas pointing out the significance of the role of the United States as the creator of the Guatemalan violence ties in the geopolitics and geo-strategies of not just the U.S. itself but also of the Eurocentric system of power. This is a view that distances itself from the immediacies of the problem

in order to see the consequential impact and totality of the interactions amongst the wider geopolitical contributing factors to this violence.

To further elucidate my point, I turn to Nicaraguan born and presently United States' Latin American cultural theorist, professor, and author Ileana Rodríguez. In her 2009 book, *Liberalism at its Limits*, Ileana Rodríguez titles her first chapter "Cultures, Nations, Differences: The paradoxical Fantasies of Liberalism as Democracy." She states that her goal is to attempt "to come to terms with the contradictions of liberalism." In achieving her goal Rodríguez delineates that she will "explore the possibilities of bringing the incongruous fantasies of liberalism to bear in the organization of the neoliberal, democratic, postmodern, and now global state" (Rodríguez 6-7). Rodríguez lists these incongruous fantasies as the following: democracy, justice, and the common good. Her claim of their incongruity is of interest to me as it applies to the direction of my reasoning in this chapter. The premise of my argument is that within modernity the Eurocentric system of power, coloniality of power, protects itself with the incongruity of elements such as those Rodríguez mentioned. This is why Doyle, in *Granito*, attributes the problem of the Mayan mass extermination to authoritarianism and racism and not to capitalism, for instance. In the context of *Granito*, this means that justice is not fully achieved with any plausible indictment of Ríos Montt.

Rodríguez goes on to point out the risk of her goal, which she states is the restoration of "radical possibilities of liberalism, before global differences come to be the only explanation of criminality, terror, and terrorism" (7). The latter part of her statement

entails a forewarning which I find quite productive to my reasoning. Have global differences come to be the only explanation of criminality, terror, and terrorism? Certainly not, but as can be seen in the Rwandan, the East Timorese, and the Guatemalan genocides global differences appear as a common way of rationalizing these carnages. Two such differences frequently cited in the above cases are racial and ethnic. In *Granito*, U.S. forensic archivist Kate Doyle evidences the use of racial difference as a rationale for Guatemala's killings. Doyle cites that, "The origins of the Guatemalan genocide like any other in the world were racism and fear" (*Granito* section 1). Doyle's statement bolsters *Granito*'s headline story of how to nail a dictator, which subsequently is heavily suggested as one of the film's main arguments. I submit that while racial differences may necessarily be a part of the reasons for these atrocities, they are not the centers of the problem.

In the cases of the Rwandan and East Timorese mass exterminations, the colonial organization of the people into ethnical groups coupled with the deliberate privileging of one group over the other by colonizers has been shown to be the root causes of the violence.[54] While in the case of Guatemala, the source of the problem has been traced back to the United States' actions within and towards the nation of Guatemala by authors such as Edelberto Torres-Rivas as I have argued earlier. It therefore follows that global differences are insufficient to explain the origin of these massacres against the indigenous Guatemalan populace. The persistent use of them, though, appears to have the effect of deterring us from arriving at the source of these exterminations. The source, I insist, is the

operating system of coloniality of power. I also maintain that scholars who persist in using global differences as the only rationale for genocide are un/consciously acting as agents of coloniality of power. This is why I find Rodríguez's forewarning to us regarding the possibility of "global differences becoming the only explanations of criminality, terror, and terrorism" so pertinent to my argument. Have they become so already? Or are they in the process of becoming so? While this is not the focus of my chapter, I do believe that critical skepticism needs to be applied to studies that find global differences as the underlying cause of criminality, terror, and terrorism. I maintain that these studies are superficial in their investigative reach, and have the consequence of "leaving hidden" the core cause of these problems, the operating system of coloniality of power.

Concluding Arguments: The Invisibility of Coloniality of Power Shrouded in A Culture of Silence and A Naturalization Mechanism

My argument surrounding the notion of the invisibility of the operating system of coloniality of power or of "silence as a mechanism of power" is not quite rare. Paulo Freire and Aníbal Quijano have made similar cases before. Paulo Freire (1921-1997) was a Brazilian educator who today is still well known for his critical theory of pedagogy, which pertains to the liberation of the oppressed through education. Despite the fact that the context of his work is pedagogy, I find some of his concepts and understanding quite

relevant to my argument within this chapter. In particular, I am interested in his notion of a culture of silence.

In describing the dialectic relationship between the dominator and the dominated within dichotomous societies of in/dependent, Paulo Freire points to their colonial roots to explain "the culture of silence" he sees as constitutive of this relationship. He says, "In either case there is a fundamental dimension to these societies resulting from their colonial phase: their culture was established and maintained as a 'culture of silence'" ("Intro" 2). According to him, this means in the first instance that in the eyes of the dominator society, the dominated society is voiceless and thus cannot be heard by them, on the one hand. On the other hand, the dominator society "prescribes its words" to the dominated society, and this act effectively silences that society. The second instance of the meaning of his statement is that, the masses in the dominated societies "are subjected to the same kind of silence by the power elites [within said society]" (Freire "Intro" 2). This brings us to his exact explanation of what occurs in the culture of silence. According to him,

> In the culture of silence the masses are "mute," that is, they are prohibited from creatively taking part in the transformations of their society and therefore prohibited from being. Even if they can occasionally read and write because they were "taught" in humanitarian-but not humanist-literacy campaigns, they are nevertheless alienated from the power responsible for their silence" ("Cultural" 7).

Read within the context of the Guatemalan massacre coupled with its depiction in G*ranito*, what I find from looking at the geopolitical factors enveloping this massacre are the following: 1) the United States is the dominator/director society, 2) Guatemala is the dominated society, 3) Guatemalan army and elites dominate indigenous Guatemalans, and 4) Spain's International Court as portrayed in *Granito* is also a dominator/director society. As such, I contend that this is the rationale that makes it possible for U.S.' forensic archivist Kate Doyle to make the claims that she has made with respect to Ríos Montt being the intellectual author and the U.S. not deserving the brunt of the responsibility, as I have pointed out before. It is also the reason behind Spain's international prosecutor Almudena Bernabeu's astonishment at the fact that the Guatemalan Court "disobeyed" the order of Spain's International Court, which claims international jurisdiction. According to her, "What surprised me is how far the Constitutional Court [in Guatemala] is willing to go, rejecting the jurisdiction of another country, questioning the legitimacy of a foreign judge." This is in response to the Guatemalan Constitutional Court's rejection for the extradition of Ríos Montt (*Granito* section 2). We could also consider the right that Spain has in claiming international jurisdiction as an instance of Spain being a dominator/director society, but that is for another paper. Returning to Freire, what *Granito* does show is that the Guatemalan elites were inept to deal with the "rebellious masses" that sought to change the structure of the power relations. Their search invoked the entire power system of coloniality of power

and not simply the Guatemalan elites, and this meant that the director society or major agent of coloniality of power had to step in. Freire explains this as follows,

> When the popular masses get beyond the stage of fascination with their own emergence, and from demand to demand announce by their action that they are nearing a stage of sufficient organization to be able to break their submissive silence, the power elites violently attempt to arrest the process. And if the elites lack the power to return the masses to their original silence, the director society, "invited" or not, takes it upon itself to do so ("Intro" 2).

During the period of violence, the United States' role was that of being the director society. Presently, during its aftermath, Spain is taking the lead role as the director society to indict not the United States, but rather an inferior ranked agent within the system of coloniality of power, Guatemalan ex-President General Ríos Montt. I remind you that Ríos Montt's indictment is the headline story of *Granito.* This ensures that the story that is being told by witnesses such as Antonio and Menchú of the U.S.' and the big landowners' responsibility within this conflict is in effect silenced in *Granito*. And the expected result of the entire process is that the masses are put back in place and the operating system of coloniality of power continues to function smoothly. This is my argument relating how the operating system of coloniality of power is made invisible.

Freire's argument concerning a culture of silence birthed within colonization is not far off from fellow humanist thinker, the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano. As I

have assumed you, my reader, to know or at least to glean from my citations, Quijano coined the term coloniality of power. And it is the operating system of this term that I am arguing is invisible. To further strengthen my claim, I will now use another postulation from Quijano regarding this power structure. That postulation, I believe is in alignment with Freire's conception of a culture of silence. And it deals directly with the manner in which the power relation within coloniality of power is naturalized by race. Therefore, we can call this idea the naturalization of the operating system of coloniality of power. Quijano explains,

> After the colonization of America and the expansion of European colonialism to the rest of the world, the subsequent constitution of Europe as a new *id*-entity needed the elaboration of a Eurocentric perspective of knowledge, a theoretical perspective on the idea of race as a naturalization of colonial relations between Europeans and non-Europeans. Historically, this meant a new way of legitimizing the already old ideas and practices of relations of superiority/inferiority between dominant and dominated (Quijano "Coloniality" 534-535).

My understanding of Quijano here is that race was the element used to naturalize or to make natural the colonial relationship between the dominator/dominant and the dominated. Deductively, then, race made this power system natural. What does natural means here? For me, it means that there is no need to question this power system; there is no need to deconstruct its existence because it is not an aberrant of nature. It is a part of

nature; it's natural. It comes without questions – one does not question that which is not aberrant does s/he? If we agree here, and accept Quijano's claim that the colonial power system is natural, then we may agree that it does not immediately stand out to us as we go about our everyday life. This is my point; the operating system of coloniality of power is invisible. And moreover, before we can even get to it, we usually get to what hides it – racism for example. My claim here is the tools that hide this operating system also serve to reroute us away from it. Moreover, we tend to elaborate upon these tools – racism or a culture of silence – and situate them as the origin of violence, terrorism, and terror. When we do this, we stop short of the operating system; that is, we fail to unearth it as the problem. This makes the system invisible.

In conclusion, I have argued that the manner in which the entire system of coloniality of power functions as a whole is often invisible. This means that we seldom grasp the one picture that captures the interrelated performance of each of its four components, and as a consequence we seldom grasp the system itself. Hence, in the case of *Granito* justice seems to be won, but is only partially won. What this means is that within the operating system of coloniality of power we are able to do the following: 1) we are able to see the elements and identify them into broad categories, 2) we are able to understand that these categories are interrelated, and 3) we are able to see the functioning of these elements. What we seldom realize that we do not see *at once* is the entire functioning of its operating system. This means that we are often focused on the elements and the consequences of their interactions with each other. In other words, our focus

tends to be localized, as is the case in *Granito*. And subsequent explanations for negative consequences also tend to be confined to the immediate locality. *Granito* also evidences this. Accordingly, my argument has been that it is insufficient to point to Ríos Montt as the locus or even the intellectual author of the Mayan massacre that occurred during his presidency. This is because there exists this system – coloniality of power – that is still in process, and that encompass not just the local but also the global. What is more is that geopolitical and geostrategic factors enveloped the Mayan mass extermination. Director Pamela Yates was very cognizant of these factors when she made her first documentary, *When the Mountains Tremble*. She details them there, but her second documentary breaks that genealogy of those geopolitical and geostrategic factors. This is because the headline story of *Granito* does not pertain in the least to those geopolitical and geostrategic factors. To reiterate, those factors are embodied in two main bodies, the United States and big [foreign] landowners. What I have tried to unearth, is the manner in which the headline story of *Granito* – how to nail a dictator (Ríos Montt) – serves to illustrate to us the manner in which the operating system of coloniality of power punishes this power elite of Guatemala for his failure to control the rebellion of the mass, which led to the involvement of the director society, the United States. Additionally, I sought to point out as well that now another director society, Spain, is ensuring that things are put back into place through its involvement in the trial, as Freire's culture of silence substantiates. Simultaneously, and quite importantly, I have pointed out that global differences further obscure or naturalize [as Quijano would say] the operating system of coloniality of power

within this specific instance of the Mayan mass extermination. However, and unfortunately, global differences and localized explanations or solutions do not stop the operation of this system. Therefore, the system continues to operate and to produce similar consequences, and localized explanations and solutions continue to be manifested, and global differences continue to rationalize violence, terror, and terrorism. The relevance of my argument is that our focus on the local or on global differences detracts us from being conscientious of the functioning of the system in its entirety. This results in the system being ignored and consequently made invisible. This is what I mean by the invisibility of coloniality of power.

Chapter 3:

Guatemala 1980s: The Instrumentalization of Human Existence And the Material Destruction of Human Bodies and Populations[55]

Chapter Introduction

In this chapter, I examine two processes in the context of the Guatemalan internal armed conflict, which lasted from 1960 to 1996. These two processes are: 1) the mode in which human existence becomes instrumentalized and 2) the material destruction of human bodies and populations. Joined together, Achille Mbembe views these two processes as constitutive of necropolitics. As such, I am analyzing necropolitics within the context of the aforementioned civil war. There are three primary texts within my corpus: 1) Jorge Antonio Ortega Gaytán's 2003 literary narrative – *The Kaibiles*, 2) Mario Roberto Morales' 1998 literary piece *Those Who Went Off On Their Own* and, 3) *This American Life*'s 2012 podcast – "What Happened At Dos Erres."[56] The first two of these works serve to reflect two distinct means in which people's life can itself become transformed into an apparatus of war. The reflection of this process comes to light through the retelling of the past personal experiences of each author as 1) a guerrilla in *Those Who Went Off On Their Own*, and 2) as a Kaibil (a member soldier of Guatemala's

Elite Special Forces) in *The Kaibiles*. The third work, "What Happened At Dos Erres", evidences the corporeal obliteration of people by Guatemala's Elite Special Forces, the Kaibiles. Put together, these three works generate a picture of the mechanical process of the mass killing of Guatemala's indigenous citizens (the Mayans) by the Kaibiles.

The purpose of my analysis is to situate necropolitics as a necessary cog in the system that produces mass human rights violations such as can be seen within Guatemala's 36 years of civil war. I find that necropolitics is forthrightly relevant to understanding: 1) the consubstantiality of violence within European/today's modernity, and 2) the procedure behind these gruesome acts of violence that are often simulated within narratives, films, and podcasts.[57] Above all, through an analytical perspective founded in necropolitics, I submit that the cruelties accentuate a detrimental outcome of today's modernity.[58] This injurious outcome is the cruelties themselves, violence, terror, and terrorism. Phrased differently, this outcome could be called the physical demolition of populaces and of people's bodies. I assert that understanding how necropolitics functioned within Guatemala's social sphere during the country's civil war is extremely beneficial in deterring this deadly outcome, especially in hindsight of the butchery of the Mayans. Achieving such an understanding reveals the mode in which the ever-hovering latent power present within the process of marshaling the human existence to serve war is much like Walter Benjamin's understanding of a latent power of violence.[59] And it follows that, once enacted; the power that arises from martial developments necessarily results in the obliteration of peoples and populations. Interests in deterring this ultimate

negative yield of militarization is evidenced by the boom of writings specific to the sphere of Latin American literature that speaks pointedly to various instances of this issue.

As for instance, one very salient example of these writings is the work of the Guatemalan born sociologist Egla Martínez–Salazar, *Global Coloniality of Power in Guatemala* (2012). Martínez–Salazar, now currently a professor in Canada, has personally been impacted by the Mayan genocide. She lost her father, her brother, and her sister to the violence that led up to Mayan carnage. As a consequence, she dedicates this book to them as well as to all those who were killed and disappeared because of their effort to achieve a just world (Martínez Salazar v). Her book delves into the root and manifestation of coloniality of power and its related constituents such as racism. In it, Martínez–Salazar argues in detail on how coloniality of power and coloniality of power matrix are responsible for the structural changes that occurred since the days of Spanish settlement through to the present era in Guatemala. She put forth that these paradigmatic changes enabled the demarcations of indigenous Guatemalans as undesired people, which led to their subsequent exclusion from citizenship, and, inevitably, led to their elimination from the physical sphere of human reality within Guatemala. Martínez Salazar, however, employs different terminologies from, for instance, the aggregate term of coloniality of power matrix (Walter Mignolo). Some of her terms include: 1) structural racism, 2) racialized and politicized undesirables, 3) bureaucracy of death, 4) vilified memories, and 5) inclusion–exclusion of citizenship. Her work, *Global Coloniality of Power in*

Guatemala (2012), is pertinent to my present argument in so far as it instantiates the use of necropolitics within the Mayan slaughter. It does so in chapter five, "The Bureaucracy of Death and Vilified Memories" (Martínez Salazar 101-142). In this chapter, Martínez Salazar uses the death squad dossier to highlight the presence and operation of necropower. This is because she believes that this dossier is possibly the best piece of text to evidence necropolitics and necropower within the massacres of indigenous Guatemalans because of the visuals and testimonies it has within it. According to her, the death squad dossier is,

> [A] fifty-four-page log from a section of Guatemalan police and military intelligence, a log that contains information on 183 women and men who were kidnapped, assassinated, and/or disappeared by agents of the state during the government of Óscar Mejía Victores, from 1983 to 1985 (Fundación Myrna Mack n.d. qtd in Martínez Salazar 154).

Martínez Salazar also suggests that the dossier could properly be named "the dossier recording the calculated murder and torture" of Indigenous Guatemalans during this country's thirty-six years of internal combat. Still, she acknowledges that the death squad dossier "is only a tiny portion of the process of recording violent death in files" (154). Based on this acknowledgement, and using different materials than Martínez Salazar, I embark upon my analysis of necropower and necropolitics as a requisite cog to the system that produced the Mayan butchery within Guatemala's civil war of the mid to late twentieth century.

Two other pertinent examples of literary pieces on the violence that took place within Guatemala's civil war come from two equally important authors as Martínez–Salazar, and they are Guatemalan born author and critic Arturo Arias and Chilean Jesuit Priest Gonzalo Arroyo. In Arias' article, "Rigoberta Menchú's History within the Guatemalan Context", Arias sheds light on this Guatemalan human rights tragedy. For example, he brings to the fore the acknowledgement by the Guatemalan army and various human rights organizations of the decimation of close to five hundred communities of human bodies within Guatemala's civil war. Arias further establishes that these communities belong to the Mayan ethnic group of people within Guatemala. He also emphasizes that the count of these deceased human bodies exceeded a hundred thousand (Arias "Menchú's History" 4-5). Similar to Arias, Gonzalo Arroyo speaks to the growing presence of martialism within Guatemala's society during the late to mid twentieth century. Arroyo does this in his article, "Massacre of the People and the Church's Experience." In fact, two sections of his work relate directly to the instrumentalization and militarization of Guatemala. These are: 1) the current situation in Latin America and 2) the military ideology.

Given the works of these authors, I uphold that I have a sound footing with which to launch my investigation in which I illustrate a contrast between the procedure of militarizing human life as carried out separately by Kaibiles and guerrillas during Guatemala's civil unrest. I achieve this by examining the perspectives present in the documentary–like narrative of a past Kaibil and in the testimonial–like narrative of a past

guerrilla. Thereafter, in my analysis, I bring to the fore the material destruction of human lives by the Kaibiles. This is due to the premise that Guatemala's soldiers and Special Elite Forces (the Kaibiles) are predominantly responsible for the hands–on decimation of the country's indigenous members. "Hands-on" is quite crucial to my proposition because I sustain that while these military forces might have manually carried out the killings, they do so in the same light that a gun would do once its trigger is pulled. As a result, I do not view them or their commanders, even the highest commander, as the ones who pulled the trigger. To bolster my argument, I submit that Guatemalan born sociologist Egla Martínez–Salazar has a similar perspective as I do since her 2012 work, previously cited, traces the violence in Guatemala to its epistemic structural origin of global coloniality of power. Nevertheless, there are many who, like Victoria Sanford in her 2004 book – *Violence and Genocide in Guatemala*, seemingly limit the violence to those persons who manually perpetrated and commanded it. My stance on this perspective is that those who do limit the violence to its immediate locality seem heedless to the deadly reach and consequences of global coloniality of power. However, this is not the topic of discussion here as I have already discussed it in chapter two, but I nonetheless find it relevant to highlight.[60] Returning to my current topic of situating necropolitics as a requisite cog to the system that produced the massacres of indigenous Guatemalans, I point out that corroboration of my assumption that Guatemala's soldiers and Special Elite Forces (the Kaibiles) are largely accountable for the hands–on decimation of Guatemala's Mayas can be found in the conclusions of Guatemala's Commission of Historical Clarification

(CEH) report. According to CEH, "state forces and related paramilitary groups were responsible for 93% of the violations documented by CEH, including 92% of the arbitrary executions and 91% of forced disappearances" ("The internal enemy").[61] Accordingly, I emphasize that the Kaibiles' exterminatory martial impact upon Guatemala's indigenous denizens is more critical to my study than that of the guerrillas. Ultimately and as a manner of reiteration, I posit that the Kaibiles' latent necropower resulted in far more damage than that of the guerrillas when enacted, which the findings of CEH substantiate.

Militarization, Necropolitics, and Violence

Looking into the militarization of the nation of Guatemala I return to Martínez–Salazar's book, *Global Coloniality of Power in Guatemala* (2012). In chapter two, Martínez–Salazar delineates the root of global colonial power within Guatemala in order to unearth its resultant epistemic and socioeconomic violence. One of her key claims in this chapter is that the 1871 liberal reforms in Guatemala "consolidated the dependency of the Criollo and Ladino bourgeoisie on the power of the modern/coloniality of world systems, and also planted the seeds for the militarization of the state, which was to be fully implemented in 1954" (Martínez–Salazar 49). Of interest here is that Martínez–Salazar situates the origin of militarization in the Guatemalan state to the year 1871, and she also declares its full implementation to be in the year 1954. In a previous work of mine I have also cited the year 1954 as one that clearly illustrates a drastic change within

Guatemala towards becoming militarized, as well citing it as the year that openly depicts the geopolitical origins of the seeds of the Mayan carnage.[62] In this light, using Martínez–Salazar, I put forth that the military marshaling of the state of Guatemala goes as far back as 1871, but for the sake of this current chapter I am bounded by the years of the works of my corpus. This is due to the fact that I am using the perspectives available within the literary works of my corpus to envisage the deployment of necropolitics and necropower in the social environment of Guatemala during the 1960s through to the early 1980s.

As I established in this chapter's introduction, the theoretical footing of my investigation is necropolitics, coined by Achille Mbembe to signify the material destruction of human bodies and populations. Also present within Mbembe's delineations of necropolitics is his conception of Michel Foucault's biopower, which he succinctly states as that which designate an area of life that is under the control and influence of power (Mbembe 152). Based on this, my investigation necessarily assumes the presence of biopower within the sphere of the internal armed conflict of Guatemala, 1960 through to 1996. I also assert this to be correct since war by definition necessarily constitutes a period in which life is subjected to power, the power of warfare. And again, given that warfare is the context of my investigation, I find it pertinent to examine some of whom I consider to be the main players of the internal conflict, namely the Kaibiles who are dubbed as having the strength of two tigers.

Like Mbembe, I also place at the foundation of this chapter the idea that "modernity was at the origin of multiple concepts of sovereignty – and therefore of the

biopolitical" (Mbembe 153). My understanding of this is that modernity and the biopolitical go hand in hand, and subsequently the birth of modernity implicates the birth of the biopolitical and vice versa. Here, I comprehend biopolitical as the adjectival descriptor of the noun biopower, which is defined above. Also within my understanding is that sovereignty is bounded up with the concept of modernity and the biopolitical. Consequently, as Mbembe explains, sovereignty designates the state in which life becomes the deployment and manifestation of power as well as the state in which mortality is controlled (Mbembe 152).

Now, when we speak of the idea of a material destruction of human bodies and populations we are no doubt speaking of violence. But, what is violence? It is a term that is commonly "understood as an unjust or unwarranted exertion of force or power, as against rights or laws" ("violence"). However, within the 2009 special volume of work of the *Canadian Journal of Hispanic Studies* (*Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*), volume 34 no. 1, a group of specialists contextualizes and analyzes this term in an effort to offer an understanding of it from different schools of studies. I find this body of discourse to have within it a still very recent state of the question of violence, especially with reference to the material destruction of human bodies and populations. The title of this special volume of work is *Imaginaries of violence* (*Imaginarios de la Violencia*). José Antonio Giménez Micó and Ulises Juan Zevallos–Aguilar provide us with an introduction to the volume and the goal of the collaboration. In their introduction, one of the first claims they make is,

> Only from the analysis of the ensemble of imaginaries of violence (in the classic sense that Cornelius Castoriadis gave to the noun "imaginaries") will we be able, to not understand, but rather to continue to conceive of violence. […] To make reference to the imaginaries, in our case the imaginaries of violence, is to speak of something completely real: is to speak of a necessary condition in order for something to simply be conceived as real (Giménez and Zevallos 3).

Hence, accordingly, the works within this volume conceive of violence "in its most basic dimension, deprived from any moral, ethic or juridical transcendence that allows its legitimization." And as such, Giménez and Zevallos state that each contributing author of this collaboration set out to address "the conflicting and potentially infinite plurality of imaginaries of violence in the Hispanic world" as far as the limits of their potential would allow them. Due to the diversity of their field of expertise, thoughts, methodologies, and theoretical approaches, the resulting corpus is heterogeneous. In addition to this, Giménez and Zevallos both insist and highlight that none of the authors of this volume, including themselves, has sought to make claim to knowing the justifications of violence, intentionally or unintentionally. Rather, they say that the hope of each one of them is to understand violence by penetrating its core consciousness and unconsciousness. And their goal for writing to us readers is so that we may also be able to comprehend violence as they do, and thus possibly a little better than we did before reading their discourses (Giménez and Zevallos 2-7).

Elaborating further upon the position from which all the scholars of this ensemble of work contemplate the idea of the term violence, Giménez and Zevallos postulate that within the present day modernity, which is European in nature, violence and reason are inseparable insofar as each one lacks true meaning when apart. Moreover, since the start of this epoch, the two have often been contrasted together in what they refer to as "[a] crucial Unamunian distinction between "vanquishing" and "persuading" [which] consist in a particularly well achieved event from this binary discourse." Harshly criticizing this type of modernity as oxymoronic in its constituents, Giménez and Zevallos underscore how this modernity pretends to achieve human emancipation via violence, while simultaneously seeking to eliminate violence. In their own words they say,

> Interestingly, the history of this same [European] modernity seems to tenaciously deny itself the understanding of reason: the least it can say of itself is that the metanarrative of European modernity, which promised the gradual disappearance of violence along with the emancipation of humanity to the extent that reason was being universalized, has never been achieved; instead the "civilized" nations have appropriated the monopoly of reason to legitimize their dominion over the "barbarians" through, why not, violence (2).

Adding to this is the buildup that has taken place throughout the years in which this oxymoronic complicit characteristic of European modernity has been compounded by power. This, they point out, can be seen in the work of Antonio Gómez L-Quiñones,

"The Ironic Turn of Violence: The Post-Utopic Spanish Civil War in 'the blind sunflowers and capital of glory'" ("El giro irónico de la violencia: la posutopía de la Guerra Civil española en 'Los girasoles ciegos y Capital de la gloria'"). Within this work, L-Quiñones, employing the Frankfurt School's conceptualization of violence, brings to our attention the "consubstantiality of violence with modern reason." Broken down, this consubstantiality of violence with modern reason means that violence rationalizes reason and vice-versa so as to "achieve a most efficient ("rational") exploitation of all that exist, including people…" (Giménez and Zevallos 2).

Giménez and Zevallos invoke Walter Benjamin's notion of a "latent presence of violence" to assert that this notion is the constitutive representative element of the political scene within European modernity. To explain this concept – latent presence of violence – they make reference to Andrés Rábago's (nicknamed El Roto) cartoon in which a male is seen standing, holding, and pointing a gun at another upright male who is unarmed. The unarmed man enquires to the armed man why he is permitted to have a gun while he himself does not have one, and the armed man respond by simply saying that it is merely an issue of him possessing one and the unarmed man not possessing one. The explanation derived from this cartoon of the latent presence of violence is that the armed man, positioned to shoot with his finger on the trigger, represents the un-enacted potential of the mortal firing ability of the gun. This un-enacted but life-threatening firing ability is analogous to what is meant by latent presence of violence according to Giménez and Zevallos. In addition and as a result, they point out and affirm that the latent presence of

violence constantly structures and restructures the political scene within which the human existence is regulated within any society with existing conflicts (Giménez and Zevallos 2-3).

While in this volume of work the goal of all contributing authors is the desire to understand violence by means of penetrating its core consciousness and unconsciousness, the goal of my present work is to illustrate how violence is employed to subjugate people. The result of which, I sustain, are gross human rights violations such as genocide in my present case study. My goal is also to postulate that this type of employment of violence is an inherent aspect to the society in which we live today. More definitively, it is inherent to modern reason. This is also the claim of Giménez and Zevallos, when they point to a consubstantiality of violence with modern reason in the work of Antonio Gómez L-Quiñones. The consubstantiality of violence with modern reason refers most simply to the use of violence to rationalize reason and its inverse, the use of reason to rationalize violence. Consubstantiality, a term of Christian theology, means to regard as identical in substance or essence though different in aspect ("Consubstantiality," def.). Hence, within European modernity violence is reason. While I do not set out to prove how this is true, I do set out to show how the employment of reason/violence created the Mayan mass extermination in Guatemala during the early 1980s, and as such I turn to the literary works of my corpus.

Overview of *The Kaibiles*

The Kaibiles (2003) is an investigative narrative that probes the multiple layers of signification behind the name Kaibil. What makes this literary piece noteworthy is that Jorge Antonio Ortega Gaytán, its author, is a past Kaibil member. This means that although this book is fashioned from research, Ortega Gaytán's firsthand experience as a Kaibil orients the book in a more intimate direction than would have occurred had he not been a past Kaibil member. In this light, the book is not purely research, but rather it intertwines his story telling with historical information (Estrada Velásquez 12-13). Now with regard to the significations of the term Kaibil, we glean that from the twentieth century to the present a Kaibil member refers to an elite soldier of the Guatemalan Army Special Forces. Within this same context, to be a Kaibil is to be "a soldier who has the force and guile of two tigers" (Ortega Gaytán 18). The core of this novel revolves around the practices and challenges that a civilian must undertake in order to become a present–day Kaibil. In emphasizing those prerequisites, Ortega Gaytán buttresses this core by going to the origin of the name Kaibil. Accordingly, he looks at the historical and mythical references of this name. As a consequence, his book provides a wholesome view of what it means to be a Kaibil today as part of the Guatemalan Army Special Forces, and of what it meant to be a Kaibil of yesteryear. The two perspectives are quite similar to each other, but I believe that there is a fundamental difference between them. And at the same time, I believe that this difference may be problematic because it is very subtle in the sense that the distinction could become blurry. That is, the distinction I

perceive between a Kaibil of yesteryear versus a Kaibil of today resides in the purpose of their existence, which is to defend the in–group to which s/he belongs from an attacking out–group. Herein lies the problem. On one hand, Kaibiles of yesteryear had the goal of protecting the inhabitants of the Mam Kingdom, the in–group. The Mam Kingdom was one among many that inhabited the geographic location of what is now known as Guatemala. Therefore, past Kaibiles had the sworn duty to protect themselves from out–groups that necessarily did not belong to the Mam Kingdom, but were frequently inhabitants of the same geographical terrain. Kaibiles of the past, however, are lauded mostly because of their valiant fight against Spaniards, an out–group carrying the distinction of pertaining to a very separate geographical terrain. On the other hand, before and since the establishment of today's Kaibiles, the geographical terrain of Guatemala is considered a united entity, one nation ("one kingdom"). But today, Kaibiles' duty is to defend this single entity or nation not only from out–group members but also from in–group members. This is not explained as part of the primary duty of Kaibiles of yesteryear, according to Ortega Gaytán.[63] Additionally, the subtlety of this difference may manifest itself in the style in which one wishes to define in–group versus out–group. That is, enemies versus allies, where enemies can also be internal and not solely external. Yet, while I recognize this trajectory of reasoning, my trajectory lies within the acceptance that the in–groups are members of the same geographical and ideologically conceived entity, nation/kingdom. And that the members of this in–group are defended from attacking out–groups and not themselves attacked by Kaibiles of yesterday, as they

are by Kaibiles of today. *This American* podcast's "Dos Erres", which forms part of the corpus of this chapter, provides an instance of one of these attacks on Guatemala's indigenous population (members of the in–group) by today's Kaibiles. Finally, and asides from this key point in differences I have perceived, Ortega Gaytán suggests in this literary piece that Kaibiles of today is a sum product of three ingredients: 1) the present day appropriated use of the term, 2) the mythical reference of Kaibil, and 3) the historical denotation of Kaibil.

The History and Myth of Kaibil Balam

The name Kaibil is based upon the historic figure of the warrior prince, Kaibil Balam. Ortega Gaytán offers us a critical analysis of the character of this warrior prince in an effort to provide us with a meaning behind his name and his mythical image. Prince Kaibil Balam belonged to the Mam Kingdom, which is recognized as the biggest and most organized kingdom of the Mayan world (Ortega Gaytán 152). Today, the geographic region of this kingdom is largely found in Huehuetenango, which has thirty-three municipals all within Guatemala. However, Ortega Gaytán makes a note to point out that in the past the territorial spread of this kingdom extended to parts of what is today present-day Mexico. Prince Kaibil Balam's duty was to protect the Mam Kingdom. By examining the geographic layout of the Mam Kingdom we can, in part, understand the fighting tactics that Prince Kaibil Balam employed (Ortega Gaytán 129). This is due to the fact that the topographical layout of the kingdom was vital to his combat technique.

For instance, Ortega Gaytán uses the archaeologically preserved village Gema to illustrate this point. The construction layout of Gema is oriented from west to east. This orientation allows for the maximum use of sunlight to the advantage of the defenders of this village while simultaneously disadvantaging offensive combatants because of the position of the sunlight. That is, the attacking combatants' path would be dark or darker than the path of the defenders of the village. This is due to the fact that the attacking combatants' backs would be turned to the sun as they advanced, while the opposite would be true for the sentinels of this village. Over all, the construction layout was done in such a fashion as to retard the advancement of enemy intruders, to disorganize them, to deceive them of the true geographical size of the area, and to serve to inform the village sentries in a timely manner of the presence and advancement of their enemies (Ortega Gaytán 133).

Prince Kaibil Balam is an historic leader who was the first-born of King Acab of the Mayan Mam Kingdom. He was born approximately on April 27, 1492. Within the Mam's tradition, the year 1492 marks the birth of a new nahual. In fact, Mam's spiritual leaders considered the very day on which he was born as the exact day of birth of the new nahual. The new nahual was a tiger, denoted balam in the Mam's language. The spiritual leaders also connected the tiger to the moon within astrological readings. Due to the coincidence of the date of births between the two, Prince Kaibil was assigned the tiger, balam, as his nahual. In addition to the coincidence of date of births was an eclipse, which occurred on the same day as Prince Kaibil's birth. An eclipse within the Mam's

tradition is a great sign from above, signifying "the tiger consumes the sun again" (Ortega Gaytán 151-152). However, despite the fact that his nahual was a balam, Prince Kaibil was not known as Kaibil Balam until he completed a test.

Before the birth of Prince Kaibil's great-grandfather, the Mam kingdom had been under the rule of the Quichés. His great-grandfather ended this subjugation and freed the Mam Kingdom. Then his father, King Acab, guided it to become the biggest and grandest of its time. By developing a military-style defense system, King Acab also sought to ensure that his kingdom would be able to continue its independence from the Quichés (Ortega Gaytán 152). This defense system included the military readiness of Mams. It also explains the archaeological design of the village's center, Zaculeu. Zaculeu is a ceremonial and political center, and its design facilitates the optimization of the Mams' defense capabilities, using the same tactical outline as the Gema village previously described above. Currently, the ruins of Zaculeu can be found in the northern part of the valley of Huehuetenango.

In addition to the tactical defensive design of Zaculeu, King Acab desired his first born to prove himself capable of defending the kingdom when it was his time to rule. This would ensure a continuation of the independence of the Mam Kingdom. Due to this, Prince Kaibil had to take the ancient test given to aspiring warriors. This test was conducted outside the kingdom's fort and lasted for 29 days. Its goal is to assess the ability of aspiring warriors to survive in the wild without pre-made food and without major tools. Added pressure was placed upon the aspiring warriors through the Royal

Guards of Mam, known as the Quachic unit. This unit consisted of the strongest and most adroit warriors. These warriors stealthily pursued those undergoing the test in the wild in order to capture them by any means. The capture of an aspirant signaled his failure to become a warrior. The failed aspirant would be returned to the kingdom where he was expelled from the competition and publicly humiliated. As a result, for Prince Kaibil it was imperative not to fail in order to avoid dishonoring his stature and his father, the king (Ortega Gaytán 153).

To pass this test, Prince Kaibil had to learn the following: 1) how to move without leaving a trail, 2) how to guide himself by the stars at night, 3) how to guide himself in the mountains during the day by marks on the trees and by the trees' shades, 4) how to make his own xoyacal so that he could build a fire to keep himself warm and to cook his meals without being seen, and 5) how to use fire as a tactical tool to make sieges, to complete obstacles, or to make his enemies flee (Ortega Gaytán 153-154).

Tradition mandates that the test begin on a new moon. On that day, the priests held a ceremony in which they asked the gods to allow Prince Kaibil to be successful. They also reminded him that in carrying out this test he was unable to use his royal privileges and would be treated as any other aspiring warrior. When Prince Kaibil started his test, he strategically ran towards the east where in which lays the sierra. This strategy allowed him to flee the plains, which were not to his advantage because of him being in plain sight. The mountainous terrain along with the thickets of the sierra proved difficult to maneuver and that difficulty helped to keep him from plain sight. During the course of

this test, he always felt as if his nahual, the tiger (balam), accompanied him. After thirty days of mental and physical quagmire, the prince successfully completed his mission and returned running head-on to Zaculeu. There, he was greeted with joy and jubilation and became known as Kaibil Balam. Since then, balam, the tiger was the symbol of the warriors of Mam. Ortega Gaytán notes this to be in the mythical sense. The use of the tiger as a symbol for Mam's warriors led to the mythical connotations of today's Kaibiles, "a soldier who has the force and guile of two tigers" (Ortega Gaytán 18). During the epoch of the Mam Kingdom, the appropriation of the mythical signification of balam also led to the creation of a vicious group of warriors, who dressed in tiger skins and wore facial tiger masks. They were known as Caballeros del Tigre (Ortega Gaytán 155).

Prince Kaibil Balam became king of the Mam's kingdom in 1523 at the age of thirty-one (Ortega Gaytán 160). He governed the Mam Kingdom until the Spaniards conquered it in the XVI century. This was not because his military defense deteriorated, but rather because the secrets of his defense including the layout of Zaculeu were given to the Spaniards. This took the form of treason, and Tepepul II was the one who did it. Tepepul II was el Señor [Lord] of the Quiché and had leadership over them. He received both this title and position from the Spaniards, specifically from Captain General Pedro de Alvarado. Through his treason, the Spaniards were able to anticipate some of the military moves of the Kaibil Balam's leadership. This allowed the Spaniards an advantage in the battle. In spite of this, the battle was hard-fought as the military

techniques and skills of the sentinels of the Mam Kingdom proved to be quite challenging. The battle started out with the defeat of the city Pueblo Viejo Malacatán, located outside of Zaculeu. The Spaniards encountered Pueblo Viejo Malacatán en route to Zaculeu. Upon getting to the military fort of Zaculeu, the battle became one of sieges, with which the Spaniards were quite familiar. So familiar were the Spaniards with sieges that they are dubbed the masters of sieges (Ortega Gaytán 171). Key to their success is the following three techniques, which they used to defeat the heavily secured fort of Zaculeu: 1) to cordon off the fort, 2) to break down the walls or the trenches of the fort, and 3) to usurp the defense. Yet, even with their expertise, the siege was not easily won, and there were long moments of inactivity that brought doubt to the Spaniards' minds regarding their victory. The siege lasted four months and it is the longest siege in the history of the New World (Ortega Gaytán 176).

Due to its lengthiness, the Spaniards' captain, Captain General Gonzalo de Alvarado, returned to the new capital of Guatemala, Santiago de Goathemala (sic). There he announced victory over King Kaibil Balam even though that was not yet the case. King Kaibil Balam took advantage of his absence to go to the highest part of the mountains with a small group of brave warriors, carrying with them their family members and what little arms they had left. From there, he would continue to defend his kingdom through unpredicted sporadic uprisings. In this way – with him in the sierra, the siege came to an end. But word of King Kaibil Balam's rebellion spread to other villages and created a renewed surge in uprisings. In the end, King Kaibil Balam found his home amid

the mountain peaks and never returned to Zaculeu. Both history and myth has it that "his spirit was never conquered or defeated, and that he continued living amid the highest peaks, serving as an example in the struggle for freedom." There is no record of his death (Ortega Gaytán 178).

The Origin of the Current Use and Appropriation of the name Kaibil

In 1974 Guatemalan Major General Pablo Nuila Hub proposed the development of an institution that would prepare soldiers to successfully execute missions within small units. He called this institution Curso de Comandos/Escuela de Comandos, Commando School. The purpose of a school like this, he explained, would allow soldiers to learn the skills needed in military detachments, areas of operations or of commands, and within patrols. Equally, they would learn effective methods of developing special operations and unfamiliar warfare [sic: "guerra irregular"]. Ortega Gaytán provide us with more details of this proposal,

> [General Nuila] proposed a course in which military officials would be able to put into play their mental and physical aptitudes, would be able to increase comradeship and the esprit de corps, and would be able to be conscious from the start that in combat pain serves to unite while in training that union is achieved by means of sweating. The existence of older captains and higher-ranked officials with combat experience complemented [the proposal of] this type of training. This is because of

> the fact that they received training in foreign schools in areas of counterinsurgency, ranger classes, and lancer courses. However, they were unable to take advantage of their training before, and the creation of this institution would benefit greatly from their skills and in turn afford them the use of their training. In spite of all that, however, one risked discovering that their vitality and impetus might have been deteriorated over the years (Ortega Gaytán 80).

Within the early stages of the development of this institution, Major General Nuila Hub gained support from the following military instructors: 1) Captain Juan Manuel Peláez Castañeda, 2) Lieutenant Francisco Marín Golib, 3) Lieutenant Roberto Eduardo Letona Hora, and 4) Lieutenant Ismael Segura Abularach. A year later, on March 4th of 1975, Lieutenant Coronel Rodolfo Lobos Zamora informed these founding members that they should furnish a name for it that did not include commandos. After brainstorming possible names such as Jaguars, Remincheros, and Nacón, Major General Nuila Hub's wife brought to his attention an article on the warrior prince, Kaibil Balam, suggesting his name to him. He, in turn, suggested it to the group, which enthusiastically and collectively accepted it because of the origins and characteristics of the name as well as of the warrior prince to whom it belonged. Specifically, Ortega Gaytán explains some of the concrete reasons to be: "1) the fact that the name was Guatemalan in origin, 2) the fact that it represented the country's nationality [its historic significance], 3) the fact that it also represented the mythical characteristics of Prince Kaibil Balam, and 4) the fact that

it perfectly embodied, symbolically, the type of combatant the institution sought to produce." The result was naming the Commando School its new name, The Kaibil Special Operations Training Center (Ortega Gaytán 85-89).

Ortega Gaytán emphasizes that The Kaibil Special Operations Training Center was, at its conception, entirely the property of Guatemala's military, "It is important to note that The Kaibil Special Operations Training Center, from its opening was born as the property of the entire army" (91). And it was founded in the northern part of Huehuetenango. The curriculum of this military institution consists of five comprehensive subject areas: 1) physical, 2) special, 3) technical, 4) tactical, and 5) psychological. Some highlights from each of these sections as put forth by Ortega Gaytán follows. In physical training, despite the fact that all the exercises are painfully exhausting, a Kaibil must learn to obey without hesitation his/her instructors. In special training it is emphasized that a Kaibil must never underestimate his/her enemy combatant, and so s/he must make the effort to always know, inside and out, the strategies of the adversary. In technical training a Kaibil must learn to value his/her ammunitions more than food and must always be more serene than the strongest of men. In tactical training a Kaibil must at all times safeguard his/her artillery even if this means compromising his/her own comfort. Lastly, the psychological training of a Kaibil is the most difficult to explain and to impart. The most worrying part of it is to train aspiring Kaibiles to be conscientious of why they fight; a Kaibil should not be flabbergasted when responding to the question "why do you fight?" The sole relevant reason each Kaibil

should be able to furnish without hesitation as an answer is, "to preserve the peace in Guatemala" (Ortega Gaytán 91-97). The expected result of all this training is today,

> A Kaibil [who] is a compendium of the Guatemalan soldier, who is capable of surviving and fighting anywhere regardless if s/he is accompanied or not. His or her physical conditioning and training demands a wide variety of aptitudes and techniques. S/he learns to fight with his/her hands as well as to use his/her hands with the dexterity of a surgeon. S/he learns to live off the land and to use the land for his/her plans. S/he is, in one word, a superior soldier, with the best ability of surviving on the battlefield (Ortega Gaytán 99).

The Instrumentalization of Human Existence from the perspective of a past Guatemalan Kaibil, Ortega Gaytán

The novel, *The Kaibiles*, evidences the process of the acquisition of meanings in the name Kaibil. A Kaibil today is an adroit soldier whose dexterities rest upon the imaginaries of the mythical and historical significations of the term itself. As outlined above, these dexterities mirror the stealth and strength of two tigers that go about unconquerable in the harshest of terrains such as the Sierras of Guatemala. Hence, the lemma of the Guatemala's special forces is, "If I advance, follow me! If I stop, hurry me along! If I retreat, kill me! Kaibil!" (Ortega Gaytán 190). The training of Kaibiles of today and yesterday clearly demarcates a preparation for victory within states of

exception such as sieges. The extensive preparation of Kaibiles reveals the degree to which the participation of the entire society is requisite. Ortega Gaytán elucidates this in his explanation of the historic acquisition and simultaneous denotation of the name Kaibil to and by Prince Kaibil Balam. He also brings to light the present-day norm in which training of future Kaibiles is supported wholeheartedly by the Guatemalan military (Ortega Gaytán 91). The military preparation of Kaibiles is a form of instrumentalizing human existence insofar as human beings are trained to use their bodies and their surroundings as tools, and in our case as tools of war. The end goal of this preparation, which is to secure victory by means of battle against an enemy, undoubtedly necessitates the material destruction of human bodies. Therefore, the existence of Kaibiles and any military organization denotes convolutedly the existence of necropolitics. Necropolitics, as explained by its founder Achille Mbembe, is the subjugation of life to the power of death (Mbembe 39). As such, the transformation of human groups into military entities that serve to conquer and subdue by physical might, the most extreme of which results in death, is an instance of necropolitics. The necropolitical potential of the Kaibiles therefore lies within the historical, mythical, and present-day appropriated imaginaries of the name. That is, Princes Kaibil Balam's vigor against Spanish colonization, his exceptional ability to outwit the siege they waged against him and his men, and his unconfirmed death capture the ever-present latent potential of the necropolitical ability of a Kaibil from a historic perspective. The signified being of the Quechua name Kaibil, a tiger, intertwined with the mythical connotations of said term also clearly embody the

necropolitical ability of today's Kaibiles combatants. The present-day appropriation of Kaibil should therefore be terrifying to us due to the hermeneutic significations of the heights of its lethal potential to subjugate life to its power to enact with ease death. In this sense, a Kaibil (combatant) is "an instrument" whose latent potential is necropower. To think of a Kaibil as "an instrument" is to accept the rationale that Kaibiles exist solely to execute their power to subjugate life to death under the instructions of a master/director. Put simply, I am saying that a Kaibil does not act without orders, and only when orders are given does a Kaibil becomes activated to subdue others by using necropower. This will come to light in my analysis of "Dos Erres."

The Instrumentalization of Human Existence by Guerrillas differently from Kaibiles in Mario Roberto Morales's Folletimonio, *Those Who Went Off On Their Own*

Past Guatemalan guerrilla, Mario Roberto Morales, is the author of *Those Who Went Off On Their Own* [*Los que se fueron por la libre*] (1998). Today, he is a columnist, writer, and academic. In this literary exposé, *Those Who Went Off On Their Own*, he writes from the perspective of his experience as an insurgent Guatemalan member during the late 1960s to 1992. Close to half of the content of this book first appeared in *Siglo Veintiuno* newspaper in Guatemala between 1996 and 1997. In fact, this work comes to fruition because of *Siglo Veintiuno*. He informs us that he "had decided to write for pleasure…and because of that [he] accepted the task of writing *Those Who Went Off On*

Their Own when *Siglo Veintiuno* asked [him]." Towards the end of this book, Morales stresses the literary genre of which he considers his literary exposé to be a member; he claims that, "[…] it is a mixture of a romance novel and a testimony – a folletimonio" (123). In his very last chapter, he repudiates any pretension of objectivity within this folletimonio, emphasizing that this work is his own personal history. In addition to this, he makes it clear that much has been left out of this recount of his personal history as a guerrilla within the armed struggle. He describes this as the following, "What I could not tell is a lot more that what is written… This is a personal history of the armed struggle and the popular war, and not an 'objective' history of the revolution. […] This is also the history of the ones who went off on their own" (Morales 126).

Through his narration of how he became a militant we are able to see another type of instrumentalization of human existence. Put differently, we are able to see another procedure of maneuvering human existence to the service of war. Furthermore, we are able to become mindful of the differences between the strategizing of individual's life by the Guatemala's elite forces – the Kaibiles as opposed to Guatemala's mutineers during the country's thirty-six years of civil war. For instance, similar to military institutions that entail the strategic exercise of human existence, insurgent organizations also require some type of imbuement of militarism within human existence. Morales' narrative allows us to see a glimpse of the type of militarism that existed amongst past rebel forces of Guatemala, especially from his standpoint of becoming a member of the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR). Morales' development and participation as a militant spans twenty-five

years of the time period of the Guatemalan internal armed conflict, which is roughly the end of 1966 to 1992. This makes his experience quite meaningful to my discourse as I juxtapose Guatemala's military deployment of necropower to the Guatemalan rebels' use of it. Additionally, Morales' direct involvement in the insurgent movement of his time period enables us to see how Walter Benjamin's notion of a latent presence of violence manifests itself in the lives of Guatemalans, but from the rebels' perspectives. This subsequently affords us insight to the process of change from a latent to an active presence of violence during Guatemala's armed internal civil war. The end result of which is the material destruction of human lives furnished from the vantage point of Guatemalan insurgents of the era. The question is: in the case of Guatemala, is there a difference [and a significance to that difference] of how the Guatemalan army strategized life to serve the purpose of war, and thus destroyed sections of the Guatemalan human population in comparison to the insurgents' methods during the thirty-six years of warfare, particularly with respect to the early 1980s?

First, before getting to that question, another or more need to be answered: from Morales perspective, is there a militarization of human existence in becoming a rebel? And if so, how is that marshaling process established? To become a rebel, it is necessary to undergo a certain type of training. Morales gives us insight to the particulars of his training. The first thing we notice at the very start of this novel is the form in which Morales depicts himself and his family as members of the Guatemalan upper middle class, if not the elites. He specifically employs the term petite bourgeoisie to label his

social class. However, it must be said that his description of his social standing and access to wealth is in disparity with the English definition of the term petite bourgeoisie ("petite bourgeoisie," def.). In his description, he situates himself as an older adolescent who usually spends his summer vacations in the United States of America, and who is privy to access tertiary education at the only private Guatemalan university during his days, Rafael Landívar University. He says, "I came from the English American School, of rock 'n roll, of trips each year to Miami, New Orleans, New York, and Mexico, and I was eighteen years old. From secondary school, I passed effortlessly on first admission decision into university without any humiliating events" (Morales 8). He then informs us of how he became interested in becoming a militant. Unashamedly, he makes it known to us that his desire to become a rebel was very much inline with and due to what/who was fashionable at the time coupled with his own fetishism of that fad. Turcios Lima was the idol of the era of his young adulthood, 1966.[64] He explains this to us in the following way, "It was going on 1966, and Turcios Lima still lived, the legendary commando of the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR) whom the youth of those days admired for his temerity" (Morales 8). The idolization of Turcios Lima by the youth and specifically by Morales fueled Morales himself to actively try to imitate this idol.

Consequently, Morales' desire to be a militant rests solely upon imitating Turcios Lima. This means that Morales expressly wanted to be a member of the FAR: "what I wanted to be was a guerrilla, and guerrilla of the FAR because my model was Turcios Lima and I wanted to be a little like him" (Morales 9). The concrete beginning of his

involvement starts out with two left-winged militants who had infiltrated Rafael Landívar University, again the only private Guatemalan tertiary institution at the time, with the goal of creating a unit within it. According to Morales, these two members unfailingly contested the Jesuits professors with opposing arguments and perspectives. They also sought to change Morales' way of thinking as well as to attract him to become a member of their unit. Morales explains this as follows,

> […] I became conscious that their interventions in the philosophy class would always contradict the priests and would always introduce a different manner of thinking that included the people [proletariat] in the discussions. […] One of them taught a friend of mine and myself how to dismantle a 45 magnum … and the other was dedicated to speak to me about the injustice in which the Guatemalan people live and the incongruity of studying in a private university (the only one in Guatemala at the time) … (Morales 7-8).

The above depiction of the actions of the two left-winged militants stands as the foothold of Morales' initial exposure to the operation of the insurgents. In addition, it foreshadows the style in which Morales' training as an insurgent would begin. That is, as a militant-in-training, Morales' first duty was to educate himself about the reasons for the existence of the insurgency. The two rebels who infiltrated Rafael Landívar, as noted above, did not impart upon him this duty. Rather, Morales received his first duty from René (pseudonym), someone who we may think of as his "training officer" (Morales 12-13).

However, throughout this folletimonio, Morales uses an abbreviation of the corresponding Spanish word to the English word comrade, "compa", to refer to all members of the insurgents regardless of rank. In fact, he makes the effort to explain that the formality of names and ranks was not a custom of the insurgency movement. This was because a conscientious effort was being made to avoid the "commanditis" that resulted from the grandeur of the myth engulfing previous commanders such as Fidel Castro and Ché Guevara. Morales also points out that this practice was also done because of the desire to avoid the [negative] implications of such authoritative behavior within the revolutionary movement (Morales 52). With respect to his first duty to educate himself as rebel-in-training, Morales indicates how René incessantly informed him that,

> […] a revolutionary must begin by studying, by knowing the revolutionary theory; that combat was a matter of minutes and the most important thing was to organize the village [people] for the struggle; that I had to read a lot of books; but that in light of the fact that I pertained to the well-to-do petite bourgeoisie he [René] was going to give me basic military instructions to fulfill some missions that would allow me to develop into an urban [city] militant (12).

Thus, differently from the extenuating emphasis placed upon the physical capability of a Kaibil-in-training during his/her first stage of instruction, emphasis is placed upon the mental capability of becoming cognizant of social tensions within the first stage of instruction of a future rebel (Ortega Gaytán 19, 91-97). In addition to the first oral lesson

that Morales received from René, he also received a document to read, and he acquired a pseudonym for himself. As previously explained, René is also a pseudonym for his "training officer", and the alias Morales administered to himself is John Paul (Juan Pablo in Spanish). This is the name that Morales employed throughout his militia lifestyle. However, the more trusted one became and involved in the militia, true identities got exchanged, but the use of codenames continued as an official custom of comportment.[65] In fact, even as Morales narrates his experience he straightforwardly notes that he had to maintain a certain degree of secrecy that pertains not specifically to names but to the past correspondences among members of the insurgency. He fails to fully explain his reasoning, leaving us only with the scant explanation that his secrecy is due to the fact that some of the rebels from the movement of the era are still alive. He explains, "Given that some of these comrades still walk about there [in Guatemala] […] I cannot go into details about our correspondences" (Morales 9). Several possibilities may suffice to explain this, but two concrete rationales are: 1) the fear of reprisal/punishment from the ruling government since the insurgents lost the battle, and 2) fear of reprisal from other militia members. The first reason should be readily understood within the context that the militants sought to usurp the then president of Guatemala and his government but failed in their task, and said president and government continued to rule up to the time in which Morales wrote and finished his book. The second reason comes into play because of Morales' own exposure to internal conflict within the wider revolutionary movement. In any event, covert identities strongly appear to be a part of the first step of preparation of

the human existence to the service of the insurgency. The occurrence of Morales' name change took place at the end of his meeting with René right before they parted ways: "[a]lready close to the restaurant door, [René] added, ah, for these things I am called René, and you? And given that I was reading Jean Paul Sartre's *The Wall* at the time, I told him, 'I am John Paul'" (Morales 13).

The employment of aliases from the start of Morales' training is similar to the employment of code names by the Kaibiles. The difference is that Kaibiles' code names are alphanumerically derived. An example of this is Ortega Gaytán's direct reference to Kaibil 015 in his third chapter titled "Kaibil Balam." In this reference, Ortega Gaytán expresses his gratitude to Kaibil 015 for allowing him to use an essay that s/he (Kaibil 015) wrote pertaining to the historic events relevant to Prince Kaibil Balam and the Spanish conquest (Ortega Gaytán 127). The real name of Kaibil 015 is not revealed, but we can infer that at the time when Ortega Gaytán was writing this book, Kaibil 015 was alive. The use of alphanumerical names by Kaibiles surpasses the use of aliases by the guerrillas in the instrumentalization of the human corpus. It does this by objectifying the Kaibiles through the use of names not commonly thought of as referring to people. In fact, these alphanumerical names are better conceived as alphanumerical labels. I use labels in the sense that Kaibil 015 immediately demarcates a particular category and classification of belonging, but not an obvious living entity much less a human one ("label," def.). This may not be convincing since the word Kaibil signifies an elite soldier of Guatemala, which in turn signifies a human entity. But my point lies in the addendum

of numbers; for instance, what would Kaibil 22 really refer to? Regardless, what I aim to emphasize here is the procedure in which the central project of the then Guatemalan figures of sovereignty was to fully instrumentalize the human existence via the Kaibiles to the point of using alphanumerical labels to refer to members of this elite branch of soldiers. By emphasizing this, I also bring to light part of Achille Mbembe's concern in his essay on necropolitics. This section of his concern deals with "those figures of sovereignty whose central project is not the struggle for autonomy but the generalized instrumentalization of human existence…" (Mbembe 154). The use of alphanumerical labels amongst Kaibiles completes the process of the mechanization of the human existence to the service of war on behalf of past (and/or present) Guatemalan figures of sovereignty. This is given the fact that it certainly achieves a type of human-alienation in the metamorphic process of becoming an instrument of war, a Kaibil – a human automaton.

Returning to the militia stages of mechanizing human existence, I extend upon a section of the first stage in this course of instrumentalization. This part deals with Morales' duty to read the document he received from René. This document explains in detail the social disparity rampant within the Guatemalan society at the time, the consequent need for the insurgency, the Cuban revolution, and white imperialism (Morales 13). Accordingly, this step in the martial mechanization of a guerrilla-in-training caters to the preparation of his mind to understand the need for physical violence. Moreover, from what René stresses to Morales, as previously noted, this mental

cognizance of social disparities comes across as the foundation of what makes a guerrilla as well as the powerhouse from which a guerrilla musters the will to engage in an armed struggle. So, in essence, educating an aspiring rebel about social issues appears to be a very key stage from the start and throughout in the training of rebel aspirants and also in the continued training of seasoned rebels. This is not the case with the Kaibiles. Aspiring Guatemalan soldiers start training to become a Kaibil in the geographical location literally (and originally) named El Infierno (Hell). There, they must successfully endure eight weeks of intense physical training in which the weeding out of weaklings commence with the very first activity (Ortega Gaytán 217). For the Kaibiles, that very first activity consists of walking for twenty-two kilometers with a backpack filled to the brim and weighted down with stones. This walk has to be completed within half of a day. When the aspiring Kaibiles return, they undergo a small physical exam and those whose results indicate feebleness of heart are not commissioned to continue the program (Ortega Gaytán 218). This foreshadows the extent to which Kaibil officers focus on physical strength during training as opposed to how the militants focus on the understanding of Guatemala's social issues during training. Ortega Gaytán explains the Kaibiles' focus on physical strength, and he also includes their emphasis on mental strength in so far as mental strength pertains to the complexly related physical-psychological ability of the mind to endure extreme conditions such as sleep deprivation. He says, "within the eight weeks not even the smallest sign of weakness is tolerated. The training is divided in three phases, all of which are geared towards the mental and physical resistance of the future

Kaibil" (Ortega Gaytán 218). The extirpation of the physically and mentally decrepit continues forth to the third week, the black week. The third week is dubbed the black week because it is during this week that the heights of exhaustion give way to the fall and mental breakdown of those who had tried to hide their fragility. As a result, they abandoned their desires to become Kaibiles, and those who remain continue forward (Ortega Gaytán 219). Therefore, the training of the minds of Kaibiles pertains directly to their abilities to use their minds to exceed their bodily limitations, and this reverberates within their creed part of which goes as follows,

> I will endure in order to withstand sufferings, harsh treatment, pain, hunger, fatigue, weariness, thirst, heat, and cold. For I am a soldier superior to any other. I will perfect my combat skills, I will develop my initiative in order to obtain victory, making my homeland Guatemala feel proud of me and of the unit in which I belong (Ortega Gaytán 254).

The subsequent stages of militarization of the life of a guerrilla mirror the structure of some of the steps taken by a Kaibil, but with central differences. For instance, Morales' narrative highlights the fiscal scarcity the movement encounters when trying to acquire necessary items to enable its functioning. Examples of these include vehicles, allotted land, public spaces, and buildings, as well as basic sustenance for human health. Due to the financial difficulty, in order to acquire some of these items the guerrilla relied heavily upon the goodwill of friends and families as well as their own members. As a consequence, the instrumentalization of life via the process of becoming/being a militant

is much more enmeshed within the daily lives of ordinary civilians. The following are examples: 1) the use of Morales' car 2) the use of the house of Morales' parents, 3) the re-appropriation of everyday items, and 4) the covert re-appropriation of public spaces. In the first two instances we are able to observe how different elements of Morales' life gradually alter to accommodate the needs of his service as a guerrilla. With respect to the shortage in funding of the revolutionary movement to access vehicles, we come to understand that the solution carried out by the movement involves a combination of legal and illegally acquired automobiles. In his very first meeting with René, Morales informs us that as a part of his first order of tactile duty René tells him to take good care of his car because "'legal' cars were very useful to the organization and [his] was certainly going to be of much use" (Morales 13). In examining the usefulness of Morales' car, we come to understand that it was insufficient to simply have any automobile. Rather, it was highly preferable to have a certain look to an automobile. This look consists of having the characteristics of being unnoticeable. Morales' car was the opposite, "in those days [he] had a white Chevrolet Corvair Monza that was very flashy because its upholstery was red." Due to this, and in order to attain the desired look of inconspicuousness, he was advised to change his Corvair Monza to a less striking color such as grey or dark blue and even to a smaller car such as a Mini-cooper or an Alfa Romeo. Unfortunately, at that time, Morales was in between the phase of being an adolescent and a young adult, and so he was dependent upon the financial support of his parents. And he says they would never buy him a car like the ones suggested (Morales 15). I also take a moment here to

remind you, my reader, that at this moment his parents were unaware of his initiation and involvement in the revolutionary movement. This means that Morales would not have been able to explain to his parents why he would have liked to have instead a less fancy car, especially since he was a young adolescent. This automobile crisis clearly demonstrates the shortage of available resources held by the FAR. At the same time, we are able to observe an instance in which Morales' life becomes militarized.

Despite the unsuitability of his car, the revolutionaries still found themselves at the mercy of its availability for lack of other options; and in this light, Morales' first physical duty was the transportation of goods, people, and arms. While carrying out this duty, he was warned to act with stealth so as not to draw further attention to his already noticeable vehicle and, in turn, to him and his passengers. One such instance in which he was cautioned comes to light through David, his second "training officer" and contact in the militancy. On one of his mission of transportation, David says to Morales, "Slow down […] you should not attract the enemy's attention on purpose; I am armed and if they stop us you will have to show me how good of a driver you are" (Morales 16-17). What we observe here is how the guerrillas try to operate without being noticed amidst the hustle and bustle of civilian life. This is different from a soldier or a Kaibil because their attire, open display of being armed, and means of transportation immediately mark them. The difference further lies in the fact that as members of the Guatemalan military force they are not obliged to hide their identities. In fact, we could argue that they are

more likely to be required to openly identify themselves as sources of authority when necessary.

The use of the house of Morales' parents is notable because its employment to the service of the guerrilla had nothing to do with Morales himself. Instead, and very surprisingly, during his adulthood of being married with kids and then divorced, Morales returns home to find that his mother had volunteered her house and items within the house as provisions to militia members. He explains, "I left the house in which I lived with my wife and kids in September of 1980, and I returned to my family's house, which my mother had converted into a house for the militia members without my knowledge " (Morales 62). The action of his mother connotes the measure in which the civilian sphere of life also becomes impacted and changed by the guerrillas' own process of militarizing life. That is to say that this example illustrates a ripple effect of the martial (re)organization of life to the service of war.

With respect to the re-appropriation of everyday items to serve the purpose of a guerrilla, we see that a backpack is used to carry guns, grenades, and bombs. For example, through Morales, we understand that some of his fellow militia members carried bombs in their backpacks (Morales 21). Even Morales found himself, at times, in possession of a backpack full of grenades. He recounts one instance of this in the following quote, "[…] he gave me [Morales] a very heavy knapsack… it has fifteen grenades…I [Morales] took the knapsack and sighed" (Morales 46). The height to which the life of a guerrilla became curtailed to the service of the revolutionary movement, and

thus militarized, can be seen in what Morales refers to as one of the numerous suicidal anecdotes of the 60s. He relates this anecdote as follows; "many of the youth walked the city with guns in their waists […] thinking that the revolution would occur any day soon" (Morales 40). This anecdote also corroborates the ripple effect of the martial transformation of life via the guerrilla training upon Guatemala's civilian population. This ripple effect results from the rebels' primary focus on educating the people along with themselves on social injustice primarily within Guatemala, but also within the context of worldwide social injustice. Indeed, the dissemination of the comprehension of social justice amongst guerrillas and amongst ordinary citizens is the apogee of curtailment of a guerrilla's life to the services of the revolutionary movement. This claim finds strong backing in the enunciations of Efraín, the last fellow rebel to oversee the participation of Morales within the movement. Efraín, in particular, dedicated himself to the militarization of Morales. In one instance, Efraín expounds that, "now […] we have sown our roots in the town and we have to become the town, to make ourselves proletarians" (Morales 45). In another instance, he insisted that Morales deconstruct his locus of existence, which refers to his membership in the bourgeoisie class, and that he train himself to meet the physical, mental, and spiritual requisites of a rebel. Morales indicates this in the following, "He gave me a lot of tests to attune my character, and he dedicated himself – at times excessively – to 'ridding me' of 'my bourgeoisie shortcomings' " (47). One example of his shortcoming was his custom of having breakfast when signaled by his body as well as at a socially adapted time in the morning:

"I looked at the dawn in the distance, and I realized that I was hungry. 'Shall we stop at some canteen', I said to him [Efraín]. Efraín sighed. 'You have much work to do with respect to your bourgeoisie shortcomings'…and he slammed his foot down on the accelerator'" (Morales 54). Yet, it is during his tutelage with Efraín that Morales eventually came to see himself as a member of a subgroup within the FAR. He refers to this subgroup as those who went off on their own, the same name as the title of this folletimonio. He does this in spite of the fact that Efraín insisted that they were not members of this or any other subgroup. According to Morales, Efraín believes that they "were members of a Marxist-Leninist organization without any type of deviations, and that the ethnical peculiarities of Guatemala demanded a revolutionary theorization that could not be tied to orthodoxy" (Morales 53).

With respect to the insurgents' re-appropriation of everyday items, we find that Kaibiles also make use of everyday items such as a knapsack in their process of mechanizing life for war. The key difference in how both groups use knapsacks is that while the rebels use knapsacks to carry arms while on a mission or during transference of them from one place to another; the Kaibiles use them to carry stones during the test of their physical strength and endurance (Morales 219). Another similarity is that the Kaibiles' training involves self-control of hunger and appetite and this is comparable to what René tried to inflict upon Morales when he told him that he had to get rid of his bourgeoisie shortcomings as previously mentioned. Ortega Gaytán points out that during their first physical test, the march of twenty-two kilometers, Kaibiles survive on rice and

black beans, and that during the black week, the third week of training, Kaibiles survive off of foraging in the forest. The latter point he notes as follows,

> During the third week, named the black week […and] from there on out, and with few exceptions, [Kaibiles] must find their own meals. The forest is abundant in plants and animals. The instructor teaches them about the animals, and the different plants, the edible ones and the toxic ones. […] (Ortega Gaytán 219).

The extremity faced by aspiring Kaibiles through self-deprivation is much more accentuated than what we see from Morales' perspective of a militant-in-training. In one specific example during the training of Morales to develop self-control of his bourgeoisie shortcomings, Efraín only delays the time in which Morales and he would eat breakfast. Unlike the Kaibiles, though, Efraín and Morales never seem to be at the mercy of foraging in the forest for food. Instead, and at most, they rely upon villages at times for sustenance.

The covert re-appropriation of public spaces by the insurgents took many different shapes primarily because the guerrilla did not have funding to attain designated spaces in which they could carry out various aspects of their operations. This is different from the Guatemalan military and Special Forces who had designated private and public spaces with which to perform their operations. This is because both the Guatemalan military and Special Forces are extensions of the Guatemalan state, and thus they receive ample funding from governmental resources. The revolutionary movement, on the other

hand, by its covert nature could not function openly or publicly. Instead, they needed the supports of the people, and in order to get that support they needed a geo-physical sphere in which to convince them. Some of these geo-physical spheres took the form of community villages and public restaurants. When these spheres were in use by the guerrillas they obtained an air of secrecy given that the activities of the guerrillas were not legally sanctioned. Morales shed light on these activities and on the re-appropriation of the community spaces of villages when he narrates, referring to a particular village, that "family members from different villages and towns were informed that the village was organizing and everyone wanted to be a part of the struggle" (59). Specifically, Morales highlights some of the activities he and a fellow militia member performed within these village meetings. Those activities include the political and ideological education and conscientiousness of the villagers, for which Morales claims responsibility, and the military training of the villagers which he says was carried out by his fellow militia member (Morales 57). With respect to the illegality of this activity, we find that human posts were at times put in place to warn the gatherings about the presence of army members when spotted. The ones who carry out these duties are members from within the villages who are at times young children; "the children keep watch in the roads in order to protect me" (Morales 58). The illegality of these events is further evidenced by the fact that Morales always had prepared a pretext for his presence within the communities. He says, "[…] I confess, I was at risk…[but] prepared [to tell] the fib that I was carrying out university investigation if the authority caught me" (Morales 58).

The above four ways in which the militarization of the life of a guerrilla is enmeshed with the lives of civilians is different from the stark separation between civilians and future Kaibiles that occurs during Kaibiles' training. To recap, The Kaibil Special Operations Training Center is a government-funded institution. As a result, they do not face a dearth in finances, as do the rebels. Funding for the Kaibiles manifests itself most saliently in: 1) the physical geographical demarcation of territory for administrative and training purposes, 2) the accessibility to arms for use in training and in combat, 3) the designation of special attire – Kaibil uniforms, and 4) the availability of survival tools and equipment including food. Consequently, as future Kaibiles train and become more militarized, their activities do not mingle with those of the public. This is because they carry out their activities in the sectioned off geographic space called El Infierno, situated in the Poptún municipality in Petén (Ortega Gaytán 252). Due to the fact that El Infierno is a military compound, the public will not be found crisscrossing its grounds, and actually would need permission to access it. This is valid up to the time in which Ortega Gaytán visited this compound. From his visit to this center to gather information with which to write his book, we learn that he is the first journalist privileged enough, perhaps because of his past membership as a Kaibil, to access the compound. Speaking with Lieutenant Coronel Héctor Mario Barrios Celada, Ortega Gaytán is told by him that, "You are the first Guatemalan journalist invited to participate in some of the activities that our men carryout in order to become a Kaibil. The idea is that the people learn about what is done here in the Infierno…" (Ortega Gaytán 221).

Hence, the Kaibiles have no need to re-appropriate public spaces to facilitate their meetings and activities. This is different from the guerrillas as previously discussed. Nor do the Kaibiles find themselves at the mercy of private legal and "illegal" vehicles as the rebels did. And finally, with respect to the four steps in which the martial process of transformation of a rebel-to-be become enmeshed with the lives of civilians, Kaibiles-to-be do not need shelters in the home of civilians like we saw with the house of Morales' parents.

To conclude this section, and as a manner of emphasis despite risking repeating myself, what we come to understand is that Military members such as those of the Guatemalan Special Forces, the Kaibiles, are legally sanctioned and supported by the legislative system of Guatemala to protect said system. This allows them to openly and fearlessly demarcate geographic spaces, designate special attire that serve to identify them, openly present themselves as armed, and to evade worrying about funding for their training, missions, and livelihoods. This is evidently different from the experiences of revolutionary militants of the epoch who were not legally sanctioned nor supported by Guatemala's legislative system since they served to usurp this very system. And as a consequence, they experienced the exact opposite of the Guatemala's military members, especially the Kaibiles. Consequently, they were forced to operate covertly, they could not openly claim territory for their operations – administrative or tactical, their attire served to make them unidentifiable among civilians, and they could not openly present themselves as armed. Most critically though, is that they did not have any established

wealthy resources outside their own means with which to fund their training, missions, and livelihoods.

The significance in the difference between the protocols in which the Kaibiles undertook the military mechanization of life as opposed to the rebels comes to light in the consequences of the activated latent power of the militarized state of each group. In other words, the magnitude of material destruction attributed to each group speaks volumes about the effectiveness of the mechanization procedures of their lives. While Ortega Gaytán does not delve into the type or magnitude of the damage carried out by the Kaibiles, he does inform us of the negligible loss of life suffered by the Kaibiles within a decade. For Morales' part, he briefly but pointedly attributes the massacre of the indigenous Guatemalans to the army. However, instead of expounding upon this violence, Morales' narrative focuses upon his personal, physical, and mental sufferings, and he ends his narrative on that. This ending is different from *The Kaibiles* in which its salient point is its emphasis on the extraordinary physical and mental strength of a Kaibil. This contrast leads me to question Morales' claim regarding the gruesome slaughter of indigenous Guatemalans by Guatemala's army offensive. He explains this,

> "…The URGN had been formed when the army offensive had already been underway, in 1982; the command general had preserved its military structures, abandoning the indigenous base of support to its own luck, and as a result the massacre that the army perpetrated [against this base] had been possible, as was the case of the Guazapa [massacre], the war might

> have developed differently; in that way in Ixim we blame the URGN as well as the army for the massacre of some hundred thousand indigenous Guatemalans in the heights of 1983" (Morales 104).

Despite questioning the above claim by Morales that inculpates the rebels as responsible for the extermination of indigenous Guatemalans, I concur that his charge against Guatemala's army for the mass murder of indigenous Guatemalans resonates within the final report of the CEH. It also reverberates through the following account of the massacre of an indigenous Guatemalan village (Dos Erres) not just by the army body; but rather, by the most elite body of the army, the Kaibiles.

The Material Destruction of Human lives through *This American Life*'s podcast, "What Happened at Dos Erres"

The regulation of human life to the service of war inevitably leads to the material ruin of human beings. The Guatemalan warfare included two broad opposing categories: those who fought on behalf of the Guatemalan government and those who fought against it. Broadly speaking, these are the soldiers of the Guatemalan military forces and of the rebel forces respectively. These two human components underwent drastic physical and mental changes in order to serve as instruments of war. The predestined clash between the two resulted in the physical devastation of lives. While Ortega Gaytán's book does not provide much evidence of any measurable obliteration of peoples, Morales' folletimonio offers some insight to certain types of visible destruction of peoples. This

insight bifurcates to produce a claim with respect to the physical demise of indigenous Guatemalans by the Guatemalan military, and the physical and mental breakdown of Morales himself while he was a militant.

According to Morales, he suffered extreme physical and mental deterioration because of the torture he received at the hands of the Sandinistas of Nicaragua while living outside of Guatemala in the late 1980s. Morales' life also acquired the status of the living dead after becoming militarized as a militia member. This status manifested through death threats he received

From Morales' viewpoint, the insurgents did not at first include Indian members, and the battle also did not consist of Indian participation within it. According to Morales, it is general knowledge that the incorporation of the Indians within the warfare is owed to the influence of the Catholic Action organization upon them, "As one knows, the massive incorporation of indigenous Guatemalans in the civil war was not due because the Marxism-Leninism of the guerrillas convinced them, but rather because the Catholic Action that served to them on a plate the social foundation of the guerrilla organization" (Morales 65). Moreover, he asserts that the massive demise of these indigenous citizens was the result of a strategic tactic carried out by Guatemala's military as an offensive strike against the guerrillas. It is important to note here that Morales admit to the fact that he did not witness in person the massacre against these indigenous people because he was outside of the country during the heights of the violence. Instead, he left Guatemala

during the second quarter of the year 1982 in which the bloodshed occurred. He explains as follows,

> I left for Mexico on the twenty-second of April of 1982. I was able to live [to see] the start of Ríos Montt's mandate and the counterinsurgent plan in its most ambitious level, but I was far from imagining up to which point the Guatemalan army would attain in its genocidal politics towards the indigenous populations in an effort to rid the guerrillas of their social foundation (Morales 68).

Within the above-cited explanation, we note Morales' proposition in which he insinuates the military as responsible for the slaughter of Indigenous Guatemalans as a strategic move against the guerrillas. His claim is not unsounded because previously we understood that the indigenous population became the social base of the guerrilla by the deeds of the Catholic Action organization. Thus, it is fathomable that the army, in their attempt to defeat the insurgents, would preemptively try to destroy the insurgents' base. In *This American Life*'s podcast, "What happened at Dos Erres", we come across one such instance in which the elite special forces of the Guatemalan army, the Kaibiles, embarked on a tactical mission to obliterate a particular social base of the guerrilla, an indigenous village and its dwellers. The name of this village is Dos Erres.

Habiba Nosheen and Brian Reed produced this podcast with the help of Sebastian Rotella and Ana Arana. Habiba Nosheen is also the narrator. Dos Erres was a Guatemalan indigenous village which existence came to an end in the year 1982.

Nosheen explains this to us and cites simply that, “One day, the residents were there. The next day, they were nowhere to be found” (“Dos Erres”). This podcast is important because it reveals to us the method in which weapons are deployed to serve the interest of total annihilation of a body of people. Additionally, it demonstrates how the latent potential of violence characteristically constitutive of the militarization of life by the Kaibiles yields death-worlds and the conferral of the status of living dead upon this particular indigenous population (Mbembe 176).

The story of the disappearance of the village and all the inhabitants of Dos Erres begins with the discovery of bones and a water repository around the year of 1994. This discovery was later told to Aura Elena Farfan, and then to Habiba Nosheen. Aura Farfan is an elderly lady who lost a member of her family in 1984. No trace was left of that relative, and so Aura and her brother believed that their relative was disappeared by the military. As a result of this experience, she and her brother began to investigate the disappearance of their relative. Unfortunately, around 1986 Aura lost her brother to the same fate. Subsequently, Nosheen informs us that, “Aura started an organization to investigate and bring these kinds of cases to justice. And that's how she came across the massacre of Dos Erres” (“Dos Erres”).

Approximately around 1994, Aura received news that bones were located inside a well, and that the well was located within the thicket of the jungle and in an area that once was home to the village of Dos Erres. Aura set out with a team of forensic anthropologist to investigate the validity of the information. After locating the well, and

during the excavating of it, Aura and her team invited a local prosecutor to visit the site. Nosheen informs us, however, that this local prosecutor discouraged Aura and her team's investigative quest stating, "they wouldn't find anything there but dogs' bones." In spite of this, Aura and her team continued until they found, four meters buried, the bones of a young boy still wrapped in his clothing. This encouraged them to continue as Aura puts it, "We were able to see the shirt of a small boy, the bones inside. And that made us think that all the inhabitants of Dos Erres were there" ("Dos Erres"). And indeed, forty feet in, they extracted numerous skeletal remains still garbed in the domestic and bodily wares of their defunct owners. The well was clearly a mass burial site; 162 complete skeletal remains of bodies were found in addition to "lots of incomplete remains." Close to forty-two percent of the 162 complete skeletal remains pertained to children younger than twelve years of age. The next step of the investigation for Aura and her team was to ascertain the identities of the skeletal remains that were whole in their makeup. Nosheen narrates to us that Aura did so in the following manner, "They took the remains to the center of the nearest town. They put them together as best they could into skeletons and laid them out. Alongside, they placed the clothing they found in the well next to the body they thought each piece belonged to. Then, they put out an invitation for the community to come and look." ("Dos Erres"). The town's response was minimal, and so Aura and her team pursued the option of using the local media of Petén (the home of the Kaibiles) to disseminate their message. Their message was an urgent invitation to the public to come forth and identify the remains they had found, and to enlighten them, if they could,

of what had happened. In retrospect of her actions, Aura believes that she might have been too foolhardy, “Sometimes I think that I was too daring.” She makes this statement because she believes that, “The life of Guatemalans doesn't cost a thing. It's not worth a thing. And just anything could have happened to us” (“Dos Erres”). Fortunately for her and her team nothing happened to them during those days. Even more opportune was that her media announcements paid off in a spectacular form. An ex-soldier heard them and decided to go and relate to her and her team what he knew. This ex-soldier, Favio Pinzon Jerez, told his story to Aura. And Aura related it to Nosheen, who, I remind you, is the narrator in this radio podcast. In addition to Favio Pinzon Jerez, Nosheen also reports on another ex-soldier, Cesar Ibanez. This is how we are privileged today to learn about the tragedy that took place at Dos Erres (“Dos Erres”).

Favio Pinzon Jerez is an ex-sergeant of the Guatemalan Special Forces – the Kaibiles. When he heard Aura’s media call for help in unraveling the Dos Erres mystery, Favio decided to confess what he knew from his participation in the disappearance of Dos Erres as a means to safeguard the future survival of his children. He said, “I heard this [media announcement]. And I looked at my little children playing. And I decided I'd do this so the same thing would not happen to them, as happened to the children in the massacre at Dos Erres” (“Dos Erres”). His voluntary confession of his participation as an ex-Kaibil in a mass extermination is virtually unheard of in Guatemala. This is in accordance to Nosheen who explains Favio’s journey to confession,

> […] After hearing Aura on the radio, he got on a bus and took the 12-hour ride to Guatemala City. He walked into the UN office and told them he knew what had happened at Dos Erres because he had taken part in it. He did something no one soldier had ever done in Guatemala --- he confessed ("Dos Erres").

Favio enlisted in the Guatemalan military at the age of 18 and served as a cook. He was assigned to the Schools of the Kaibiles in 1979. Nosheen tells us that at the school Favio participated in a lesson on survival training in which he and others "ate raw snakes and dogs", and in which he witnessed people being tortured. In 1982, Favio accompanied a special unit of the Kaibiles to Dos Erres. His duty remained being the chef. The soldiers Favio accompanied were the Kaibiles' best. Their assignment "was to deploy on urgent missions all over the country. One of those [missions] was to Dos Erres." While Favio was the cook for this group of soldiers, the other ex-Kaibil on whom reports Nosheen– Cesar Ibanez– was one of the elite Kaibiles in this group. This group was created per the orders of Guatemala's President at the time – General Efraín Ríos Montt, and it was dubbed the special ops group. Its leader was Lieutenant Rivera ("Dos Erres").

With respect to the operation carried out at Dos Erres, Cesar tells us that he and the group believed that they would have come under fire from the inhabitants of Dos Erres upon approaching the community. This is because they "thought that the people in Dos Erres were all communists." However, he says, their expectation was not fulfilled because "nobody shot at [them]" ("Dos Erres"). Nosheen narrates to us that this special

ops group arrived at the community of Dos Erres at two in the morning while the villagers were all asleep. Despite this and despite not being shot at, the soldiers still carried out their mission to recover arms. The procedure of their assignment consisted of removing all the inhabitants from their homes, still at two in the morning, and segregating the women and children from the men. Segregating them was part of an interrogatory technique. This special ops group of Kaibiles placed the women and children within the village church and the men within the village school. However, what proceeded next were not only interrogations but also sexual violence against the females. According to Cesar, the soldiers showed no respect to any of the villagers, and soon after segregating the village members the Kaibiles began to sexually abuse the females. Nosheen notes that both Favio and Cesar confirm that during this moment of sexual abuse the mission of this special ops group of Kaibiles transformed from seizing weapons to evolve into the manifestation of groundless violence. According to Nosheen, “It started with a lieutenant who grabbed a girl and raped her in front of her family. And because he was one of the highest ranking officers, other soldiers started doing it too throughout the day.” Favio supplies us with more details about the age of this girl and the manner in which the rape began, “There was a girl about 12 years old. And a guy grabbed her by her hair and dragged her along. And there in the little field to the side, that's where he raped her.” Adding to this act of violence, Nosheen clarifies that from the outset of the Kaibiles’ occupation of Dos Erres, the village became a site of a “state of emergency”. And that

during the sexual violations, Kaibiles were stationed at the village's entrance to prevent people from leaving while nevertheless allowing people to enter ("Dos Erres").

While a twelve-year-old girl was the first to be molested sexually, a baby's life was the first to be viciously terminated. Favio explains this as follows: "the first massacre was of a baby. I heard crying. And I looked. And I saw Gilberto Jordan and Manuel Pop Sun carrying the baby. They threw the baby alive into the well. And that's the way the massacre began. The first were the children" ("Dos Erres"). Nosheen recounts to us that the rape and slaughter of the villagers took place concomitantly. Cesar and Favio admit to helping in the slaughter but not to partaking in the sexual violations. And Cesar notes that en route to the well, villagers were also interrogated, "as they were brought to the well, they were asked: "where are the rifles?" They said nothing about rifles. And they were hit on the back of the head with a sledgehammer and thrown in the well" ("Dos Erres"). Cesar also attests that the villagers were thrown into the well while still alive, and admits that he brought roughly fifteen people to the well. He was also ordered by Lieutenant Rivera to murder. Below is an excerpt from the interview detailing this,

> Habiba Nosheen: Were you ever asked to kill anyone?
>
> Cesar Ibanez [speaking Spanish] Translator: Yes, when I took the first person to the well, Lieutenant Rivera told me to throw the person in the well. He did it so that we'd all be implicated in what happened.
>
> Brian Reed [co-narrator/producer]: What would have happened if you said no?

> Cesar Ibanez [speaking Spanish] Translator**:** They would have killed us ("Dos Erres").

This is the manner in which the Dos Erres village was wiped off the face of the Guatemalan landscape. Auspiciously, however, there were three survivors; two of which were chosen to survive and one that was an escapee. They all were boys. The chosen two, according to Favio and Cesar, were "both young boys with light skin and green eyes," whose lives were simply spared ("Dos Erres"). The escapee is Salome Armando Hernandez. Salome was not a resident of Dos Erres, but rather a visitor. He was eleven years old at the time, and had gone there with his brother to visit a family member. He was part of the last group of women and children to be taken out of the church, and by then the well had filled up with bodies. So, the soldiers brought them to the forest ("Dos Erres"). Salome, who is 42 during this interview, explains what happened next and how he managed to escape. According to him,

> All the women were resisting. They didn't want to go. So the soldiers started pushing and beating them. I remember one of the women saying, "we're not dogs for you to kill us in the field. We know that you're going to kill us. Why don't you kill us right here?" That's when I decided to run ("Dos Erres").

Nosheen explains further that Salome waited until the soldiers' backs were turned to him, and then he fled into the forest's thicket, but when the soldiers became aware of his effort to escape he had to hide behind a tree while they fired shots at him. That is how he made

his escape. In the end, the special ops group, made up of the best of the Kaibiles, ended their mission in Dos Erres without ever finding the arms that they went in search of (Nosheen,"Dos Erres"). Three months after, Lieutenant Oscar Ramirez Ramos, the second in command of this special ops group, brought home one of the two light-skinned green eyes boys and presented him as his own. The rest of the podcast interviews these three survivors, other Kaibil members of this special ops group, and various specialists such as anthropologists and prosecutors investigating this massacre.

From the testaments given by Favio and Cesar, we comprehend the manner in which excruciating practices of marshaling life through the requisite training to become a Kaibil resulted in the successful surgical extermination by Kaibiles of the human population of Dos Erres, and subsequently of the village itself. When a civilian is transformed into a Kaibil we must comprehend that this Kaibil is in effect an instrument of war, an automaton. To become a Kaibil, a civilian undergoes a transformation in which s/he views life from the perspective of how each component of life may benefit combat strategies. As we have seen before, a future Kaibil must successfully hone the aptitude to react reflexively to orders without the least of hesitations. In this light, independent thinking is intolerable since it is this mode of thinking that brooks hesitancy. Without the privilege of independent thinking, Kaibiles carry out their orders in much the same way as automatons. Hence, my argument is that they are instruments of wars that await the ignition of a trigger button in order to operate. As instruments of war, Kaibiles can also be thought of as the best human-like automaton weapons. As such, the

deployment of them upon Dos Erres proved to serve the interest of the maximum destruction of the denizens of Dos Erres. In fact, their lemma makes every Kaibil member complicit in whatever mission is being undertaken as can be seen in this section of it, "If I advance, follow me! If I stop, hurry me along! If I retreat, kill me! Kaibil!" (Ortega Gaytán 190).

This inherent complicity is also seen when Cesar and Favio both admit that they were ordered to kill by their commanding officers. What is curious about this mission is that the Kaibiles went in search of weapons, but ended up effecting the physical demolition of the entire human population of Dos Erres. Could it be that this was because this indigenous population was already categorized as people with statuses of the living dead? That is, was this indigenous group already marked for death? And thus, was it the case that until they were brought to their death they occupied a dormant state of death, which makes them the living dead? Or could it be that this unarmed indigenous population remained a threat to the Kaibiles because of their latent presence of violence? Is this question different from the previous ones? I believe it is not. From the podcast we can now infer that yes; the inhabitants of Dos Erres were a peril to not just the best of the Kaibiles, but also to the then government of Guatemala. This corollary comes from the fact that a special opt group, the best of the Kaibiles, was deployed to the community in full combat gear and at the stealthiest hour of the day to tackle the impending threat of arms being held by members of the community. When found unarmed, the villagers still posed the threat of becoming armed, and thus they were viewed as having a latent

potential of violence. This potential, from the standpoint of the Kaibiles, conferred upon the citizens of Dos Erres the status of imminent threat if allowed to survive. For Kaibiles it is paramount to eliminate threats, especially looming ones. Consequently, perceived as an imminent threat, the villagers attained the status of the living dead.

From this analysis of the podcast "Dos Erres", what we find is that similar to Giménez and Zevallos' claim in their introduction, the imaginary of the violence of necropolitics and necropower deployed in Guatemala and manifested through the militarization of life by both government military forces and nongovernment military forces was completely real. In other words, the implementation of necropolitics was an absolutely necessary condition that gave rise to the very real slaughter of indigenous Mayans (Giménez and Zevallos 3). The deployment of necropolitics is evidenced here from the perception of the insurgents and of the Kaibiles. By delineating how life became mechanized under the command of each of these two groups, one finds that the Kaibiles' necropower was much greater than that of the militia's. Accordingly, what the "Dos Erres" podcast from *This American Life* illustrates is the manner in which the Kaibiles sought to eliminate the root of the guerrillas' uprising because they, as Kaibiles, acted to preserve the peace within Guatemala. Here then, the guerrillas' uprising is understood from the perspective of the Kaibiles as opposing the preservation of peace in Guatemala at the time. This corollary can be substantiated by the Kaibiles' lemma and by the order this special ops group of Kaibiles received. Furthermore, this inference lends itself to the rationale of not only the Kaibiles but also of Guatemala's government and supporting

international and national bodies at the time. In this manner, the Kaibiles, the Guatemalan government and its supporters reasoned to employ violence to eliminate violence in order to achieve peace, which was the rationale. This, according to Giménez and Zevallos, is the oxymoronic nature of today's (European) modernity (2). Within the present context, the oxymoronic nature of the Guatemalan civil war references the Kaibiles' attempt to eliminate the (potential) violence of the guerrillas by using violence.

Additionally, this "Dos Erres" podcast offers us an instance in which Guatemalan military and its supporting national and international bodies were in essence bureaucracies of death, as Egla Martínez Salazar would claim.[66] The development and wholehearted support for the School of the Kaibiles reflects the manner in which these bureaucracies of death opted to make terror their final and optimal element of governance as evidenced by the podcast "Dos Erres." In this podcast, we observe that the Kaibiles conceived of the indigenous villagers of Dos Erres as politically undesirable and indisputably expendable (Salazar Martínez 146). Moreover, in view of Martínez Salazar's work, specifically chapter five of her book – *Global Coloniality of Power in Guatemala*, we are liable to understand that the indigenous denizens of Dos Erres were reduced to simple objects. This is because of the type of sexual violence and the mode of killing, simply shoving live bodies into the well for example, which the Kaibiles committed. Martínez Salazar argues that this reduction of human beings to simple objects is a necessary prerequisite to discarding human lives; especially revolutionary human lives, and is constitutive of necropolitics.[67]

Chapter Conclusion: Kaibiles' Exercise of Necropower Outshines that of the Guerrillas, Resulting in the Annihilation of the Village of Dos Erres

In this chapter, I have examined two methods that lead to the conversion of human lives into instruments of war. These two processes are: the procedure involving becoming a member of the Guatemalan Elite Special Forces, the Kaibiles, and the practice involving becoming a guerrilla. I have also examined the material destruction of the human population of Dos Erres by the Kaibiles. My analysis illustrates a significant contrast between the process of militarizing the human life as carried out separately by Kaibiles and guerrillas during Guatemala's civil unrest. I have found that the instrumentalization of the human existence by the guerrillas was far more inferior as compared to that of the Kaibiles. This readily implies, then, that the latent necropower of the Kaibiles should result in far more damage than that of the guerrillas when enacted, and the findings from the investigation of CEH attests that this was in fact the case. According to CEH, "state forces and related paramilitary groups were responsible for 93% of the violations documented by CEH, including 92% of the arbitrary executions and 91% of forced disappearances" ("The internal enemy").[68] Due to this and despite the fact that the guerrillas' act of militarizing life subsequently led to some material destruction of human lives, in my analysis, I have only explored the material destruction of human lives by the Kaibiles. In this manner, I am claiming that this type of destruction by the Kaibiles is of utmost importance than that of the guerrillas in the mass elimination

of Mayan groups. In contrast to this, what I have found is that preparation to become a guerilla during this time epoch heavily leaned towards acquiring a conscientious educational awareness of social injustice within Guatemala as well as of the world power structure that fosters the continuation of social injustice in Guatemala. This is the stark difference between the militarization of life for a rebel as opposed to that of a Kaibil, where in which emphasis was placed upon the process of becoming a physical war machine.

Using "What Happened at Dos Erres" [abbreviated throughout as "Dos Erres"], *The Kaibiles*, and *Those Who Went Off On Their Own*, I have shown how the employment of reason/violence created the mass extermination of Guatemala's indigenous denizens during the early 1980s. In fact, "Dos Erres" significantly illustrates the manner in which the latent presence of violence existing within Guatemala during its internal armed conflict constantly structured and restructured the political scene within which the human existence was being regulated (Giménez and Zevallos 2-3). Put differently, we may say that, "In order to control, persecute, and kidnap those invented as enemies, [during this Guatemalan warfare] necropower not only follow[ed] transnational guidelines for how to kill and torture, but reinvent[ed] those guidelines with more precision, repressiveness, and deadliness" (Salazar Martínez 154). This leads to a consubstantiality of violence with modern reason, as Antonio Gómez L-Quiñones would describe it. That is to say, the slaughter of indigenous Guatemalan Mayans resulted from

a thought process in which reason was employed to rationalize violence and vice-versa (Giménez and Zevallos 2-3).

As a way of concluding and in agreement with Mbembe, I maintain that the establishment of the School of the Kaibiles serves as one salient example in which Guatemalan leaders and their foreign supporters exercised Guatemala's sovereignty by defining life as the deployment and manifestation of power.[69] As a consequence, this group of people exercised control over mortality (Mbembe 1-2). By contrast and due to the dearth in the martial transformation of the guerrillas' corpus as well as their focal point on educational conscientiousness, from Morales' account, the guerrillas did not exercise any significant control over mortality nor did they truly define life as the deployment and the manifestation of power.

Chapter 4: Guatemala 1980s: Administering Sovereign Power at the Level of Life: Regulation & Deduction, Spaces of Exception – Biopolitics

Chapter Introduction

My current research focuses on the administration of sovereign power at the expense of the lives of indigenous Guatemalans during the apex of the early 1980s bloodshed. Coupled with that, I also examine regulation and deduction as mechanisms of this administered power. The bloodshed of the early 1980s falls within a space of exception within Guatemala in which a state of emergency was declared. Specifically, it was declared towards the end of 1981 to the beginning of 1982.[70] This space of exception is equally important to the heart of my analysis. Through my subjectivity, the political space in which I am implicated, I interpret these three occurrences through the analytical tool of biopolitics.[71] I contend that biopolitics fully describe, from one angle, the stringent military supervision of the lives of Mayans immediately before the apex of the Mayan bloodshed. Equally, I maintain that the aforementioned style of governance exercised over Guatemalan Indigenous lives contributed to the subsequent cruelty that this population subset experienced. However, these occurrences could also be interpreted through the plantation order or the social order of the plantation-owner system described

by Guatemalan Sociologist Juan Carlos Mazariegos (2009) as well as through the contention that said occurrences resulted from the highest expression of Guatemala's racism towards its indigenous population according to Marta Casaús (2008). While I am in agreement with both of these scholars, I add that the application of sovereign power that led to the mass extermination of Mayans may also be scrutinized through three diverse approximations of biopolitics, with which Casaús and Mazariegos' arguments have commonalities. These include that of Michel Foucault (1976), Giorgio Agamben (1998), and Eugene Thacker (2009). For instance, we can see an example of a commonality in the premise of Casaús' argument that the Guatemalan genocide was the maximum expression of racism. She employs Foucault to emphasize that "at the base of the modern state, whether it be communist or social, lies a strong bio-racial component, which Foucault calls biopower" (Casaús 16). And with the deployment of this biopower, wars of the modern state revolve around the mobilization of entire populations to defend some notion of "life necessity" instead of defending the sovereign power as such. Thus, massacres are vital to the modern state (Foucault 137). Subsequently, Casaús goes on to assert that, "Genocides form part of the modern bureaucracies of culture and rationality. And in any given moment these bureaucracies can produce genocide" (12-13). In Mazariegos' argument, we encounter another instance of commonality via his main postulate. This comes to light when he openly admits that his reasoning follows that of Agamben's, and as such he maintains that, "The massacres in Guatemala were the expression of the crudest of sovereign power and of a plantation-owner social order"

(Mazariegos 13-14). A final example of a commonality can be found in Eugene Thacker's argument. This becomes evident through his delineation of biopolitics in which he bases it in the interrelations between circulation, flux, flow, and the administration of sovereign power. He believes that in biopolitics the "'problem of multiplicities' is that of managing the circulations that are deemed to be 'for the people' and 'against the people'. [And thus,] the real challenge of sovereignty is in the form it takes vis-à-vis the multiplicity that it identifies as the threat" (150). We believe that this is a relevant perspective that we can apply to Guatemala because, as for instance, Jesuit priest Gonzalo Arroyo locates the changes in the flux, flow, and circulation of transnational capitalism as causative of succeeding devastating changes in the national capitalism of developing nations including Guatemala during the 1960s to the early 1980s. Specifically, Gonzalo Arroyo describes those destructive changes as the bearer of an epoch of mass exploitation of "workers in the countries of the so-called Third World" (11). In Guatemala, this type of exploitation resulted in strikes in the southern coastal area in which, according to Mazariegos, "one fought against [the] social relationships of power" of the plantation-order power system. The outcome of this struggle is a momentary unraveling of the social-plantation order of power within Guatemala during the 1970s (Mazariegos 13). These affirmations and commonalities solidly support my aim of illustrating the manner in which the administration of sovereign power via the mechanisms of regulation and deduction within the state of emergency of Guatemala

during the late 1970s to early 1980s led to the assassination en masse of Guatemala's indigenous populace.

I acknowledge that my postulations are in no way definitive, but rather serve as a manner in which I attempt to estimate and posit an intelligible system in which we can comprehend the unnamable of the annihilation of this human population. To illustrate my contention, I employ Horacio Castellanos Moya's 2008 novel *Senselessness*, Mario Roberto Morales' 1999 novel *Face of the Earth, Hearth of the Sky*, the Commission of Historical Clarification (CEH) (1994), and *Guatemala: Never Again! – The Official report of the Human Rights Office, Archdiocese of Guatemala* (REMHI). Primarily though, we honor the narratives we encounter within Morales' novel because they afford us the ability to forthrightly illustrate the administration of military power at the expense of the lives of indigenous Guatemalans. Above all, these narratives provide us with a Mayan framework in which Mayans contextualize the violence in order to make sense of it. We employ the historical works of CEH and REMHI as anchors of the fictionalized testimonies of our study, and Moya's novel, *Senselessness*, we consider opportune to begin our study.

Senselessness relates the effects upon a hired editor, an unnamed Salvadorian protagonist, of 1,100 written testimonies given by indigenous Guatemalan victims during the aftermath of the 1980s' massacres. The goal of his editorial post is to be able to furnish a publishable compilation of the testimonies he edits. His contract is with the Guatemalan Catholic Church under the supervision of Bishop Juan Gerardi.[72] The central

message of *Senselessness* is the fact that even a far removed individual, such as the Salvadorian protagonist, will suffer psychological and emotional trauma due to the "concentrated capsules of pain" embedded in each testimony s/he reads (Moya 18, 135). As a result, *Senselessness* begins precisely with this message by employing a sonorous quote with which the Salvadorian narrator exposes the consequence of his exposure to the unnamable horror that Mayans victims underwent. This quote is "I AM NOT COMPLETE IN THE MIND" (emphasis in the original Moya 1). We believe that this phrase directly illustrates an awareness of his ruptured subjectivity, which leaves him incomplete in his mind at the moment in which he confronts the excess of the violence vicariously through the concentrated capsules of pain embedded within the testimonies. "I am not complete in the mind" comes specifically from the testimony of a Cakchiquel man who was unfortunate enough to have forever plastered to his memory the gruesome butchery of his family, not to mention the loss of his family. Guatemalan soldiers limbed and quartered his four children and his wife into chunks of meat, and reprimanded him to observe it all. The Salvadorian raconteur battles with this excess in violence and explains the emotional and mental rupture he experiences himself,

> I am not complete in my mind, I repeated to myself, stunned by the extent of mental perturbation experienced by this Cakchiquel man who had witnessed his family's murder, by the fact that this indigenous man was aware of the breakdown of his own psychic apparatus as a result of having watched, albeit wounded and powerless, as soldiers of his country's army

> scornfully and in cold blood chopped each of his four small children to pieces with machetes, then turned to his wife, the poor woman already in shock because she too had been forced to watch the soldiers turned her small children into palpitating pieces of human flesh (Moya 1).

This excess in horror visited upon the Cakchiquel Indian's kids and eventually his wife signals a passage in which they go from being human subjects to mere objects of military power, so callously disposed of. According to Mazariegos, this passage of change from human subjects to objects is in fact "the […] process in which power prepares us as subjects in order to convert us into objects: it objectifies us" (4). It is the manifestation of the administration of this [military] power that is the epicenter of this chapter. Continuing along the lines of Mazariegos' previous claim, we understand that because of this objectification functioning of power, "subjects can only become aware of themselves as fractured, ruptured, and contradictory subjects" (4). "I am not complete in the mind" perfectly demonstrates the fractured, ruptured, and contradictory subjects the Cakchiquel Indian and the Salvadorian protagonist found themselves to be through a process of self-awareness. Musing on this resounding statement, "I am not complete in the mind", the Salvadorian raconteur goes on to provide us with a frame through which we would like to structure our current investigation because it aptly summarizes our ultimate thoughts on the ineffable cruelty that engendered the slaughter of Guatemala's Mayans. Thus, we join with the nameless narrator of *Senselessness* to say,

> Nobody can be complete in his mind after having survived such an ordeal, … [as I try] to imagine what waking up must have been like for this indigenous man, whom they had left for dead among chunks of the flesh of his wife and children and who then, many years later, had the opportunity to give his testimony that began, in fact, with the sentence *I am not complete in the mind* that so moved me because it summed up in the most concise manner possible the mental state of tens of thousands of people who have suffered experiences similar to the ones recounted by this Cakchiquel man…, and also summed up the mental state of thousands of soldiers and paramilitary men who had with relish cut to pieces their so-called compatriots, though I must admit that it's not the same to be incomplete in the mind after watching your own children drawn and quartered as after drawing and quartering other people's children, I told myself before reaching the overwhelming conclusion that it was the entire population of this country that was not complete in the mind…(emphasis in the original Moya 1-2)

The sonorous catchphrase, *I am not complete in the mind*, emphatically rephrases our own perturbation of the violence, incessantly begging the question how and why such cruelties came to pass. Subsequently, the weight of our argument lies in the juxtaposition of fictionalized literary testimonies with factual documents. Because as demonstrated through the above Cakchiquel Indian, the testimonies, both novelized and non-

fictionalized, gag us with painful and exceedingly visual exposure to unimaginable but real somatic torment that the victims suffered. This, in turn, fuels us to read on, gathering evidences ourselves, and subsequently pledging to do our part to prevent the repetition of such cruelty. The consistency of the unreal corporeal violence, especially in the non-novelized texts, also impels us to question if there is at all any rationality behind the torment. Doing so jerks our judicious axis, almost unhinging it; why are we even entertaining an idea of rationalizing the violence. It is because no matter how much we read, our mental system proves unequipped with handling the raw cruelty behind the violence. Lacking the ability to make sense of it all, in the end we are left resolved to fight the battle of those who we read about.[73] The question becomes "how?" Most of us seem to write about it, to make documentary movies about it, to teach about it, or to become activists on the issue. A subsequent increase in the dissemination of these testimonies takes place; the wheels of their economic values spin productively and so do the wheels of their teaching value. They, the testimonies, become visible to unsuspecting students far removed from their imaginaries in distant places such as the United States and Spain. And I, as one of those students, seek within this chapter to situate the act of the mass annihilation of Mayans within an intelligible system, biopolitics. As a manner of emphasizing, for us, biopolitics include the administration of power at the level of life, the production of the living dead in spaces of exception, and the interrelations between circulation, flux, flow, and the administration of sovereign power. Our thesis follows that of Guatemalan Juan Carlos Mazariegos in his article "The War of Names" (2007). To

recall, he upholds that, "the massacres in Guatemala were the crudest expression of a sovereign power and of a social finquero order" (13). Finquero, farmer in Spanish, is related to the Spanish word finca, which refers to ranch, farm, plantation or estate.[74] As such, we consider Mazariegos' use of social finquero order to connote the social order of the plantation-owner, and finca order to connote plantation order. Here, we understand plantation in the context of the colonization epoch of the New World. We base our understanding in the context of the legacy of coloniality of power.

In our attempt to understand the social phenomenon of the slaughter of the Mayans by first grasping the phenomenon of mass exterminations of populations by sovereign powers, we come across leading British historian David Edgerton who informs us that these acts of cruelties are not in the least alien to modernity, to borrow Jean Franco's term.[75] In his book, *Shock Of The Old: Technology and Global History since 1900*, Edgerton makes the following statement, "At certain times, in certain places, governments have sought to eliminate particular populations, or simply kill large numbers of people. In doing so they were sometimes forced to think about methods of killing, and sometimes to innovate in killing techniques" (178). Although unsettling, Edgerton's claim should be no surprise to those of us who are studying the political culture in Guatemala or in any contextual setting of carnages. Edgerton's claim references cases in the somewhat distant past such as the 1941 to 1945 slaughter of millions of Eastern Europeans by Nazi-German forces, and the Great War between the Ottoman Empire and its own very sizeable Armenian Christian populace that saw the

mass extermination of roughly 1.5 million Armenian. Yet, it also resonates within our case of the Guatemalan Mayan massacres, as the Cakchiquel Indian above evidences, and as investigative bodies such as CEH and REMHI, as well as scholastic researchers such as Marta Casaús, Juan Carlos Mazariegos, and Victoria Stanford have supported and/or proven.[76] As far as an innovation of killing technique, Edgerton highlights that Nazi-Germans were visionary leaders in the production of this technology. This type of creation by them commenced with the employment of gas chambers, specifically the application of the carbon monoxide killing technique. Indeed, one of Nazi-Germans' major places of large-scale execution is the Auschwitz-Birkenau, where gas chambers, later filled with hydrogen cyanide, were the representative novelty in technologies of killing. Due to this, today Auschwitz embodies within itself a salient critique of modernity, as consistent with Edgerton. This is given the fact that its image signifies the maladies of modernity (Edgerton 179-181). Under the premise of the novelty of the Holocaust, Edgerton astutely states that, "Following the Holocaust genocides cannot be considered a throwback to earlier barbarity, however tempting that line of argument remains" and with that I concur. He cites the 1975-1979 and 1994 carnages in Cambodia and Rwanda respectively as examples in which modern technology cradled in "an already established pattern" proved fruitful in the exercise of human annihilation. In Cambodia's case, technologies of killing include the use of the following, "shooting, skulls bashed in with shovels, hoes and iron bars, and – an innovation – suffocation with a plastic bag." In Rwanda, one encounters a very new innovation, the use of machetes. Edgerton stresses

this new and unique characteristic of the Rwandan Tutsis' bloodshed, and points out that this was the first time in history that governments/[or anyone] utilized machetes as "a major killing machine" (Edgerton 182-183). This singularity of the machete as a major killing machine would cease to be so as its employment repeats within Guatemala's Mayan massacre. In this manner, our work manifests very close similarities with these two examples given that some of the mechanisms of killing in the massacre of Indigenous Guatemalans include the use of machetes, shootings, and skull bashes. Therefore, in agreement with Edgerton and as a manner of emphasis, we underscore again the early 1980s in Guatemala as a time and a place in which Guatemala's authorities sought to eliminate one particular but diversely composed group of people, the Indigenous Guatemalans of the Highlands. The outcome is habitually denoted the Mayan genocide, and the highly publicized perpetrator blamed for it is Guatemala's ex-President General Efraín Ríos Montt.

The Apex of the Mayan Slaughter – Ríos Montt's Presidency, And His 2013 Genocide Trial

Ex-president Ríos Montt held office in Guatemala for roughly 18 months, March 1982 to August 1983. Before his presidency, Ríos Montt was surprisingly a priest, evangelical in nature. His appointment as an evangelical minister came around 1977 at the heels of the end of his duties as a diplomat in Madrid, Spain. However, his quest for presidency began before he finally won his 18 months appointment mentioned above. He

had previously attempted to gain the position in 1974 after completing another embassy career, this time in Washington. He was unsuccessful due to fraudulent votes. This fluctuation between consular and political offices does not encompass the totality of Ríos Montt's career. The complete dynamics of his career comes to light once we add his earlier and first occupational positions in the military. Ríos Montt started his military vocation journey in 1946 at the age of 20 in the Guatemalan Army. By means of his military conscription, he received training in counterinsurgency, torture, and political sabotage techniques from the School of the Americas in 1951. This institution is U.S. manned and was located in Panama; it is now in the American state of Georgia under the name Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. At the age of 44 Ríos Montt got promoted as brigadier general, which reflects his ambition for rapid professional growth. And this ambition culminated with him being the president of Guatemala at the age of 56 for a relatively brief period in time. Sadly, however, the brevity of his term as president did not impede the murder of roughly 1,000 Guatemalan Mayans per month under his regime (Galván, 169-181).[77] As a consequence, the inaugurating year of Ríos Montt's presidency, 1982, marks the apex of the Mayan slaughter (CEH 84).

Crucial to his presidency, is the fact that he was not democratically elected. Instead, with the assistance of a military triumvirate with him as one of the members, a coup d'état resulted in the overthrow of the antecedent president, General Romeo Lucas Garcia, and gave birth to his subsequent role as president. Directly thereafter, Ríos Montt

accomplished the following drastic and devastating changes: the annulment of Guatemala's constitution, the militarization of public administration, the implementation of Plan Victory 82, and the preparation and implementation of the National Security and Development Plan (CEH 75). The latter feat occurred simultaneously with his declaration of complete advocacy against communism, and this in turn rewarded him with support from the United States' Reagan administration (Galván 171). These changes led inevitably to the most repressive and violent period of Guatemala's 36 years of internal conflict, which produced the massacres of Mayans. Due to this, Guatemalan Nobel Peace laureate and activist for indigenous rights Rigoberta Menchú, and her foundation, pursued legal recourses in 1999 to indict Ríos Montt for genocide, among other past presidents of Guatemala such as Romeo Lucas Garcia who passed away in May 2006 in Venezuela (*CJA*, Petrich). Rigoberta Menchú did this in conjunction with The Center for Justice and Accountability and Spain's Association for Human Rights. An investigative team resulted from Menchú's efforts. One of the investigators gathering evidence against Ríos Montt, U.S.' forensic scientist Kate Doyle, concluded that Ríos Montt is the intellectual author of the mass extermination of the Mayans (Yates, sec. 1). She did so despite the CEH's findings.[78] Nevertheless, Doyle's statement binds Ríos Montt to the slaughter of the Mayans. Subsequently, he was formally indicted for genocides and crimes against humanity on January 26th 2012. A year later, the trial against him began in Guatemala's highest court – the Constitutional Court (CC). Thus ensued, perhaps, the most difficult and high-risk juridical process in Guatemala in the fight against impunity.

Guatemalan Iris Jazmín Barrios presided as judge. She is quite familiar with overseeing high-risk cases such as this. In the past she presided as magistrate in the following popular and high-risk tribunals: Monsignor Juan Gerardi, Myrna Mack, Dos Erres, and narco trafficking by the Zetas from Zacapa in Guatemala (Petrich). In all four cases she ruled in favor of the victims and of justice for human rights. A relevant observation here is that of the four tribunals three are immediately recognizable as directly related to vicious crimes against human rights within the roughly three and half decades of internal warfare in Guatemala. These are: Monsignor Juan Gerardi, Myrna Mack, and Dos Erres. In the case of these tribunals as is the case in Ríos Montt's trial, Judge Barrios' sole preoccupation is decreeing justice regardless of how dangerous the circumstances of a trial may be.

On May 9th 2013 justice triumphed amidst and above the impunity riddled cultural politics of Guatemala. Magistrate Iris Jazmín Barrios announced that Ríos Montt was guilty of crimes of genocide against the following three Ixil communities: Santa María Nebaj, San Juan Cotzal, and San Gaspar Chajul. Ríos Montt received 80 years in prison. It was a momentous accomplishment for Indigenous Guatemalans and for human rights advocates across the globe, especially within Guatemala, the United States, and Spain. Devastatingly though, the victory was ephemeral. The fabric of the political impunity proved far more impermeable than a decade and a half of the villagers' perseverance in their quest of the law. An elapse of little over a week, ten days to be exact, succeeded the verdict before the CC annulled it. During those ten days the

Committee of Agriculture, Commercial, Industrial and Financial Association (CACIF) of Guatemala met frequently. And on May 20th, Ríos Montt was free of all charges. According to Barrios, CACIF holds the political and economic power in Guatemala, and she suspects the chronology of their meetings juxtaposed with the subsequent annulment of her verdict. Possibly experiencing some form of psychological dissonance due to the annulment but more because of threatening flak hurled from within the sphere of political impunity, Judge Barrios recoiled from society for a little over two months thereafter. In the end, Ríos Montt stood incredibly firm throughout his highly contested prosecution pronouncing his innocence and ultimately finding victory amidst mountains of incriminating evidence (Petrich).

This concise overview of Ríos Montt's trial supports the foundational premise of this chapter, which we recall succinctly as: in the early 1980s Guatemalan governments sought to annihilate large numbers of its Ixil populace. The trial firmly situates Ríos Montt as one of the Guatemalan presidents deemed culpable for the mass butchery of Mayan Highlanders, despite the annulment of the punishment. Consequently, our foundational premise coincides well within Edgerton's aforementioned claim, which we recollect as, "At certain times, in certain places, governments have sought to eliminate particular populations, or simply kill large numbers of people. In doing so they were sometimes forced to think about methods of killing, and sometimes to innovate in killing techniques" (178). Proceeding from this, our present concern is to evidence how processes of the administration of Guatemalan sovereign and military power (where the

former power embodies the latter) lead to the deaths of thousands of Mayans, and thus to genocide.

Connecting the Administration of Sovereign and Military Power to the Genocide – Reports from REMHI and CEH

In this section we will concisely establish the relevance of these two reports, REMHI and CEH, to the administration of sovereign and military power as causative of the slaughter of Mayas. Doing so strengthens and clarifies our proposal to anchor our literary analysis with affirmations from these reports. We begin with REMHI. REMHI is a report of a thorough fact-finding project which goal was to search for truth as it pertains to what occurred during the teamed government-military task of eliminating internal enemies, who now are largely considered as forming a significant percentage of indigenous Guatemalans. Specifically, REMHI stress its objective as an effort to "conserve the historical memory of political violence, of egregious human rights violations suffered by indigenous people and communities over the past thirty-six years of fratricidal struggle, which left incalculable social polarization" (xxvii). Its complete name is *Guatemala Never Again! /* REMHI*: Recovery of Historical Memory Project: The Official Report of the Human Rights Office, Archdiocese of Guatemala* (1999). As one may infer from its title, this report spurns from a Guatemalan religious organization, the Catholic Church in Guatemala. More specifically, it originated and came to completion in the branch office of the Archdiocesan Human Rights Office headed by Bishop Juan

Gerardi, who we came across briefly in our discussion of *Senselessness*. The completion of REMHI preceded the report from the Guatemalan Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH). CEH's objectives are very similar to those of REMHI. According to CEH, it "was established through the Accord of Oslo on 23 June 1994 in order to clarify with objectivity, equity and impartiality, the human rights violations and acts of violence connected with the armed confrontation that caused suffering among the Guatemalan people" (11). As a result, CEH and REMHI are similar in their search to fathom and then to elucidate the incidents, the political elements, the reasons, and the composition for the three and a half decades and more of homicidal strife in Guatemala.

Two fundamental differences between the two projects, however, are first that CEH is much more extensive in its accumulation of data than REMHI, and second that CEH came at the heels of the Peace Accords in Guatemala that brought an end to the homicidal strife in 1996.[79] REMHI commenced before the signing of Peace Accord, and this is a crucial point as it indicates a much more fatal climate in which to carryout its endeavor. In fact, two years after the presentation of this report, its lead project manager – Bishop Juan Gerardi was assassinated in 1998 (REMHI xvii).[80] At the same time, it must be stressed that the ambience of Guatemala was still very deadly after the Peace Accords were signed. Another vital fact worth pointing out is that REMHI considered its mission as one that would aid those of the commission. REMHI's investigative reach directly pertains to information gathering from rural communities, and this explains why its report is not as extensive as the commission's. Yet, this is on purpose and underscores

a unique means in which REMHI's investigation would serve to be useful to the commission. Archbishop Primate of Guatemala, Mons. Próspero Penados del Barrio, explains this by pointing out that their search "for information centered on rural communities whose physical inaccessibility and linguistic diversity would complicate the commission's task". The findings of REMHI were first presented in October 1994 in a Guatemalan Episcopal Conference ("intro" xxvii).

From analyzing the thousands of testimonies they acquired, REMHI and CEH present us with various strategies in which sovereign and military power was employed to systematize life. We maintain that this systematization of life is part and parcel of the different modes of manifestations of biopolitics. These include but are not limited to the following: 1) the use of fear as an internal mechanism of control, 2) the violation of human rights, 3) selective repression, 4) utilization of terror, 5) mutilation of corpses, 6), propaganda and psychological warfare, 7) the manipulation of Mayan cultural beliefs, 8) strategies of guilt, and 9) normalization of the violence via forced participation in it.

Modes of systematizing life within *Face of the Earth, Heart of the Sky*

Face of the Earth, Heart of the Sky is a testinovela, "an emerging literary form in which fiction is used by the novelist, [Mario Roberto Morales], in the service of testimonial truth" (qtd in "Translator's Note" X). In it we encounter unnerving anecdotes of the politically charged war of the Guatemalan thirty-six years of armed internal conflict (1960-1996). From them we receive the skeletal makeup of a rampage of insane

levels of cruelty enacted towards the Indian population in Guatemala. Second to that is another salient character of this novel, which is a seemingly lack of coherency. The titles of its partitions illustrate this lack of fluid transition through the common employment of the word fragments. The titles are: "I - First Fragments of the Explosion", "II – Other Fragments", and "III – And More Fragments." Indeed, bits and pieces assail us immediately as we read. It is only nearing the end of this literary piece that we realize how craftily and intricately sewn together every tale is with each other. Morales accomplishes this through geographical localities, characters, motifs, Mayan cultural practices, historical references, and the use of the names of political figures and parties tied to the combat in question. Examples of these include: the commonly cited Quiché and Rabinal localities, recurrent motifs such as *Xibalbá* and variations of the book's title – *Face of the Earth, Heart of the Sky*, historical references such as the Spanish conquest of Guatemala and Pedro de Alvarado, political associations such Catholic Action, Organization of the People in Arms (ORPA), and the Committee of Peasant Unity (the CUC), and political figures such as Generals Efraín Ríos Montt, Oscar Mejía Victores, and Romero Lucas García. These aspects are crucial in supporting our conjecture that biopolitics led to the death of innumerable Indians in Guatemala. For example, as espoused much earlier, culpability for these deaths falls upon Generals Ríos Montt and Lucas García. While Lucas García passed away in 2006, Ríos Montt recently faced trial for this allegation. Therefore, this testinovela truly demonstrates the manner in which the genre of testimonio serves as a social call for action, specifically for justice within our

case. Hence, as Kimberly Nance would say in her book *Can Literature Promote Justice?* (2006), the presence of these elements in *Face of the Earth, Heart of the Sky* marks "concrete, and undramatic (sic) actions of everyday life" that occurred during the massacres of the 1980s, in particular, in Guatemala (158). Furthermore, the political parties also signal the concreteness of the war because they give insight to some of the various indigenous parties involved in the struggle against Guatemala's sovereign representatives – Ríos Montt, Lucas García, and the Army. Similarly, the historical references within this testinovela, for example the Spanish conquest, are crucial in their purpose to our analysis because they support our angle of reasoning as it pertains to us being fixed and identified by a capitalist and modernist Euro-centered gaze of power. Put differently, the presentations of these historical references also make claim to manifestations of biopolitics within Guatemala since the Spanish conquest without necessarily employing the term biopolitics.

With respect to narrative structure, what we encounter is that in *Face of the Earth, Heart of the Sky*, the active storytelling manifests itself primarily through unnamed protagonists and narrators, who saturate this testinovela. Each raconteur offers a new perspective to the slaughter of the Indians. The diversity in perspectives originates from the following characters among others: Guatemala's elite soldiers – the Kaibiles, and victims who are males, females, children, adults, and elders. The verisimilitude of this multiplicity in perspectives simulates unequivocally the reality of the conflict, which is disarray. Another outstanding aspect is that the narrations also embody different writing

techniques. One example that resonates with us is one in which the literary style took on a cinematographic quality. The characteristic of this anonymous account is (film) script-write in nature because its raconteur appears to be directing a film. It is a very idiosyncratic performance, and we consider its inclusion a critique of the violence of the Mayan massacre, as we will discuss.

Two named main characters are the Army and Toribio de León, but they do not narrate. Their presence stands out to us because of the emphasis on the interplay between the Mayan villagers and the Army. Through Toribio de Léon and the Army we come to understand how Indigenous Guatemalans' lives became cast into a space of exception in which defenders of Guatemala's sovereign executed power at the expense of those lives (the lives of Indigenous Guatemalans). As a result, this work represents Guatemala's leaders and martial forces as powers of hell (*Xibalbá*) bent on permanently transforming the Indians from their identities and traditions into something new. That something new is at times tagged as ladinized Indians and other times merely described and not labeled. This process of transformation along with its transformative power concerns us greatly as we seek to situate the two as characteristics of biopolitics. In fact, they are pivotal to our analysis since we examine them as a process that administers the lives of the Indians and as a controlling mechanism of those lives. In truth, by upholding these regulatory strategies as features of biopolitics, we are examining the role of biopolitics in the slaughtering of Guatemalan Indians during the early 1980s. We will use five of the stories that most command our attention due to their bold illustrations of the

implementation of elements of biopolitics. These five accounts are of: 1) Xibalbá, 2) the case of the land quota, 3) the case of the corporeal quota, 4) an anonymous film scriptwriter and the extraction of material wealth, and 5) Toribio de Leon – a Kaibil, Indian, and former fireworks maker.

Xibalbá, A Mayan Framework Contextualizing the Massacres[81]

> What is clear is that *Xibalbá* revealed its face to us. It revealed itself to us Quiché Indians when the repression came here, to this place called Quiché…(Morales 24)

In *Face of the Earth, Heart of the Sky* Xibalbá comes across as a framework emerging from within the Mayan community. Its purpose is to make sense of their plight. Its existence consists in an interweaving of the noumenal and the phenomenal. Here we use noumenal similar to ontic in order to ascribe that which is real (tangible) – a thing-in-itself. And we employ phenomenal to ascribe that which is perceptible by the senses (conceptual) and not necessarily a thing-in-itself.[82] Subsequently, in *Face of the Earth, Heart of the Sky* the phenomenal side of Xibalbá connotes a mythological parable involving gods, and the Mayan characters equate its noumenal side to the army as well as to describe their own physical dilemma. Even more is the fact that the noumenal and phenomenal sides are complexly interconnected. The Mayan characters of *Face of the Earth, Heart of the Sky* declare the equivalence between the army and Xibalbá as, "the army is omnipotent: it is Xibalbá. It is killing the Indians around here worse than the Spanish did five hundred years ago, much worse…" (Morales 31). And correlation

between the physical dilemma of these Mayan characters and Xibalbá comes to light through a Mayan cosmovision that constructs the mass extermination as a segment of a whole and not as some isolated and inexplicable occurrence. This Mayan cosmovision forms the juncture between the phenomenal and noumenal since it at once references a mythological parable involving gods, which serves to locate the occurrence of the plight of the Mayans in a bigger picture, and it simultaneously references the concrete experience of horror. This type of conceptualization of the violence by the Mayan characters of the testinovela *Face of the Earth, Heart of the Sky* mirrors real-life actions by Mayan villagers during the actual internal armed conflict. Indeed, REMHI encountered it within its studies of the actual carnage. According to REMHI, "the people call on some of their own cultural beliefs to interpret what happened and give meaning to their firsthand experience of the incidents" (72).

A closer look at Xibalbá as a mythological parable yields significations that revolves around concepts of good and bad, heaven and hell, dark and light, and other similar binaries. And yet another instance of overlap between the noumenal and phenomenal, we find that while signifying these binaries the indigenous characters of *Face of the Earth, Heart of the Sky* simultaneously attach the conceptual with the concrete, which in reverse is the army and its connotative power. This connotative power results in the horrific; the inhumane violence waged against the Mayans. For instance, they say, "The army is *Xibalbá*, it is not the Heart of the Sky, or perhaps it is the dark side of the Heart of the Sky, which is *Xibalbá*, according to the way I see things and what

the *brujos* say" (Morales 41). Hence, the army is concretely Xibalbá, and Xibalbá conceptually denotes the dark side of the Heart of the Sky. Deductively then, the army symbolizes the dark side of the Heart of the Sky; the army's power is dark. Also in the aforementioned quotation is reference to the relationship between brujos and their cosmovision of the army and Xibalbá. This reference leads to the deduction that the brujos are the gatekeepers of the knowledge of Xibalbá and of the army, and that they are the ones who disseminate this knowledge. An account by a brujo gives credence to this point,

> We brujos kept our practices secret, transmitting in secret the wisdom of immortality to a few to avoid the error of our ancestors, the brujos of antiquity, the ones who got lost on the paths of Xibalbá. That's why the people protect their brujos from the army, because the people knows that the army knows that the brujos have the knowledge of Kukulkán, and the army doesn't want this knowledge to exist any longer, and that's why they seek to kill our elders (Morales 115).

In the above citations we first learn that the army's power is dark. And we then learn of one of the strategies in which the army controlled the Indians, which is the elimination of indigenous knowledge via Mayan elders, the brujos. The knowledge of Kukulkán is of utmost importance to Mayans because Kukulkán is the Plumed Serpent, Quetzacaotl.[83] It is the highest Mayan god who is revered for balancing both good and evil. Due to this, within this testinovela an astute critique is made of the imposed religion that erases

consciousness of the ways of Kukulkán, Christianity. The indigenous people of this testinovela believe that Christianity fails to balance both good and evil, which leads to it being ineffective in helping them. They say,

> When the Christians came they wanted to impose only good, and it turned out that only evil was imposed. Good or Evil alone does not work. Each always brings about its opposite; that's why they have to go together. That's why San Simón and Maximón do good or evil, according to the circumstance. But that way got lost over time. Only the brujos can teach it to you. That's why the army kills the brujos, the shamans, the elders. So the secret of the lineages will be lost. And the army kills children also so that there will be no one to whom it can be revealed. And they recruit the young boys into military service to Ladinize them so they will stop being Indians…. (Morales 56).

By removing the indigenous gatekeepers of knowledge and young heirs of it, the army clears the path to inculcate the remaining population according to how it and its head, Guatemala's government, saw fit. Furthermore, this tactic works well to rid indigenous populations of their leaders, who indubitably will oppose the army's subjugation. Likewise, it severs the youth; both children and youngsters who have more physical might than their elders, and thereby it prevents them from opposing the army in battle. Without leaders, without knowledge, and without physical might the task of herding and molding the Indian population becomes more effortless. These are key aspects that

REMHI concluded. REMHI underscores that, “The imposition of armed force destroyed community systems of governance: traditional leaders and authorities were killed, basic social organization destroyed, and ethical and moral principles and convictions trampled upon. This confused the population” (42). Confusion necessarily leads to a more frictionless control of the Mayan populace, which is the military’s objective.

Two additional factors that are essential to scrutinize are: brujos who loose their way in Xibalbá and the recruitment of Mayan lads. We ascertain from the brujo quoted above the idea that even brujos, the keepers of indigenous knowledge, may also become misguided when inhabiting Xibalbá. Those brujos are of antiquity the quote dictates to us. This recognition is vital within our study and within analyses regarding the termination en masse of Indian Highlanders of Guatemala. This is because of the adverse retort that indigenous individuals also participated in the slaughter. Here, Mayans acknowledge this assertion and underline that on one hand martial involvement by in-group members occurs/occurred because of one being misguided. On the other hand, it is (or was) also due to compulsory recruitment of their youth within the army. They point out that the presence of Indian soldiers forms a part of the military's procedure of destroying the cultural cognizance of Indigenous Guatemalans. Hence, we realize that one of the purposes of mandatory conscription is to Ladinize young indigenous Guatemalans. These two factors combined together offers a very firm rejection of any attempt to undermine their victimization by means of this adversarial critique of the participation of Indian soldiers in the violence. However, a further complication to these

two reasons of how indigenous people lose their way in Xibalbá is the intentional decision to disguise oneself as Ladino. Explanation of the reason for Indians to disguise themselves manifests through a juxtaposition of the myth of Xibalbá and the spatial denotation of Xibalbá. In this apposition, an unidentified Indian community representative explains that,

> We are alone in Xibalbá and we have to have come up with some trick to get out of here, to deceive them, the soldiers… Perhaps that's the only way we can leave Xibalbá, with deceit, with tricks, by being clever like Hunahpú and Ixbalanqué when they were also in Xibalbá and played with the Lords of Darkness. That's what my Word says to the Face of the Sky, to the Face of the Earth. The morality of the Lords of Quiché and the Lord of Rabinal do not work with the Lords of Xibalbá; they only work among the wisest Indians, the brujos, but not with the Ladinos and even less with the army, with the soldiers. For that reason we should learn the ways of the Ladino as does our Lord Maximón, who disguises himself as Ladino and a soldier but remains an Indian. We must disguise our Word as Ladino word, our Thought as Ladino thought, our Deeds as Ladino deeds (Morales 31).

Subsequently, here we come across the presence of a third layer, a mask, of how Indians survive under the thumbs of the army, Xibalbá. This third reason confers to us another rationale of how some of them may have become involved in the army. By masquerading

as Ladinos, they exercise a last resort and intelligent move to persevere under their new and oppressive social conditions. In the above account, they directly reference their own cultural believes as a way of comprehending the new and imposed circumstance they find themselves living in. Also from the above citation, we are able to infer another signification of Xibalbá, and that is that it parallels the Christian concept of hell. In Xibalbá resides the Lords of Darkness. To overcome the reigns of these lords, as did Hunahpú and Ixbalanqué, it is necessary to engage them in their diverse ways of performance as well as to do so in accordance to their rules. Additionally, the Lords of Quiché, which appears as an aggregate to correspond to the Christian idea of God, assist those in opposition to the Lords of the Darkness. The army and its governing bodies are representative of the Lords of Darkness. By placing emphasis on the meaning of this myth in conjunction with the perpetuation of the lives of Mayan villagers under the duress of the army's oppression, we realize that one must not just carry out a process of Ladinization in order to survive, but must do so under false pretense. In other words, the villagers would only pretend to become Ladinized so that they can withstand the otherwise fatal deceit of the Ladinos. This method of existence reflects a reorganization of the lifestyle of the Indians. Despite the seemingly voluntary nature of this reformation, the fact that Mayans believe it necessary for their survival indicates a substrate of regulatory power on behalf of the military, and by extension ladinos.

Toribio de León: Corporal Extraction; Compulsory Conscription

> If one seeks darkness one finds Xibalbá in one's own heart, that's why the soldiers are Xibalbá, because they are trained to glorify darkness. The most painful thing is that they are Indians like us, and their darkness becomes blacker (Morales 42).

We come across Toribio de León in four different anecdotes. Combining them, we receive a brief genealogy of the major events that change his life and his outlook. Yet, he is never the storyteller of these events, and even more the storyteller goes unnamed. Therefore, by secondhand, we learn that he is an indigenous Guatemalan who was once a fireworks maker but was forced to become a Kaibil soldier. Our first encounter with him is in his hometown where he is in the midst of an attack and subtraction mission by the military, "'the army is coming! ...' A silenced descended, giving way to the noise of boots trampling underbrush and rifle bolts moving into firing position." Thus commence the start of one of the military's duty, which is to remove young males eighteen years and older from their communities in order to serve in the Guatemalan martial services, " 'We are here for our quota!' he shouted.' […] 'Those who are eighteen years or older step forward! The army and the fatherland need you!' " (Morales 4-5). Despite the fact that at this point the soldiers have encircled all the people in this town's plaza and have their guns pointing towards the circle's center, no one stepped forward. This illustrates resistance, however slight, to statutory enlistment. And in fact, an escalation in threat level is necessary to force the participation of the young lads. This manifests itself

through the use of the power of death over life. As a consequence, the young lads' lives entered into a space of being imminently and violently terminated, " 'the punishment for refusing to serve the fatherland is death. So, choose: either military service or the firing squad, right here and now!' […] 'Chose! Those who prefer military service, take one step forward; those who prefer the firing squad, stay where you are!' " (Morales 6). Now facing death, Toribio and other young males choose to live and consequently opt for the military. Satisfying their goal, the soldiers go on to execute another removal of the community's corpus; this time it manifests as instant death for the community's leaders. The idea is to weaken any remaining resolve the people might have to fight back,

> 'The fatherland charges these three characters with subversion. The priest is a collaborator with the guerrillas. The fireworks maker [not Toribio] organizes the cooperatives under orders from the priest according to instructions from the subversives, and the sacristan takes orders back and forth for the guerrillas and the priest. Those so-called cooperatives are only a front for drawing people into the subversion. These men have been condemned by the fatherland to die. Therefore, say goodbye to them and don't think of following their bad example, because you could end up the way they have! Sergeant, proceed!'…'The boys we are taking will return within two years! They're going to serve the fatherland, not betray it like these men!' and he pointed to the smoking corpses. 'When we return for

> our quota you had better cooperate with us! You can see what happens to those who help the subversives" (Morales 6-7)

These two types of subtraction activities by the soldiers are representative of biopolitics because they illustrate a hostile removal of young and old Mayan males from their hometown or from the world of the living. Moreover, in the first instance, the removal of living bodies for the purpose of war against the in-group members of those extracted directly evidences the manner in which an entire group of people is mobilized to effect genocide. Additionally and with respect to the second instance as well, REMHI notes both the execution of village leaders and obligatory recruitment of Mayan juveniles as one of the strategies of war the army employed in real life. It finds that, "People were pressured to join the civil patrols through intimidation, accusations, and death threats against entire families. Threats were the primary means of involving the men in the community and, through them, establishing control over the families" (REMHI 120). Through this instance in which power takes the form of extraction we maintain that this deductive power alters the lives of the corporeal bodies it removes and simultaneously alters the life of the entire community that this action of removal affects. Furthermore, this illustrates one form in which the military power assigned itself the task of controlling the lives of Mayans, which is a primary parameter of biopolitics (Foucault 139).

Our second encounter with Toribio is when he turns into a fully-fledged killing machine – a Kaibil soldier. This comes to us from one of the descriptions of him in which the narrator points out Toribio's reaction to decapitating a man – Juan, "Toribio de León,

kaibil, remained motionless for a moment looking at Juan's head on the ground" (Morales 43). The act of beheading immediately connotes the employment of the governability of brute force at the level of life. The exercise of the power of the sword, as a metaphor, also fittingly captures this kind of regulation. Likewise, present in this anecdote are images of uprooting lives and imageries of scorched-earth campaigns. Uprooting lives characterize the opening of wombs and subsequent destruction of developing fetuses. For instance, under the instruction of a superior officer, Toribio "grabbed one of the [pregnant] women by her hair and threw her to the ground. He placed his boot on her neck and sliced her stomach open…then he pulled the fetus out, he showed it to the woman…and then threw it far away" (Morales 44). In actuality, during the implementation of scorched-earth campaigns, REHMI explains that the Guatemalan military considered "the entire civilian population of many villages as members of guerrilla groups and physically eliminating them, including the children, was part of a carefully design strategy" (31). Subsequently, the prior examples of uprooting and the beheading of Juan fall under this scorched-earth campaign policy. A more vivid example that takes on a more literal understanding of "scorched" relates to the burning of the entire community as the directive of a Kaibil officer illustrates; "finish burning everything and kill everything that is alive!" and,

> When the whole village was in flames and the stench of burning flesh saturated the smoke-filled air, the *kaibiles* made the three men finish off several of their relatives who were strewn about the ground missing arms,

> legs, eyes, noses, lips. And then the officer said to them, 'This is what happens to those who help the subversives! Now go and tell everything to the people around here!' (Morales 44 -45).

Within this excerpt, depicting an example of scorched earth policy, we also find that the soldiers use this process of annihilation as a teaching moment in which they impart cruel "lessons" that warn against and serve to strongly deter the villagers from joining insurgent groups. This act of instruction weighs the option of choosing life or death, leaning more on the side of death to illustrate the gravity of the lesson. That is, the point these denizens must comprehend is that their lives enter into jeopardy if they consider joining the rebels. Moreover, from our excerpt above, the soldiers dispense this warning at the expense of the mortality of *all but three* of the inhabitants of this highland village. So, truthfully, what is salient here is the martial clout to severely and definitively destroy anything and anyone that oppose the military supervision. Ricardo Falla makes a similar claim with respect to the actual violence that took place in Guatemala; he says one objective of terror is "to inhibit all activity against the army" (184). His use of terror parallels our use of the idea of "instructing at the expense of the pupils' mortality" because immanent to the latter is a form of terrorization. Hence, in the quote above, the three spared victims experience terror by witnessing the crude butchery of their loved ones as well as their neighbors, but above all by being forced to finish the job of murdering their writhing chopped-up relatives.

Our third crossing with Toribio is at Rabinal, a military outpost. Rabinal, according to CEH, is also one of the geographical locations in which wholesale exterminations and razing of villages occurred – "whole villages were razed, properties were destroyed and the collectively worked fields and harvests were also burnt, leaving the communities without food" (40).[84] Here, Toribio's activities fall under the presidency of Ríos Montt (Morales 50-55). This third encounter provides us with an introspective Toribio. We see him contemplating the time he was seized and extracted from his village to the training he underwent to become a Kaibil to his present assassin activities in this office. He feels trapped because he is unable to help his fellow Indians and unable to desist his office as a Kaibil. If he does either, he knows he will face death as his punishment,

> Alone he can do nothing – he thinks – and so he decides to continue doing what he is ordered as long as his military service lasts. He wants to be aware of what is happening, that is certain. He must do evil although he does not want to, but if he knows that he cannot prevent it – he thinks – he remains in the ways of Kukulkán (Morales 57)

Once again, indigenous knowledge surges forth to provide a foundation with which to understand and cope with the repression. Particularly, Toribio uses it to cope with being forced to participate in the slaughter of his own people. He rationalizes his actions based on the understanding of Kukulkán, good and evil must be simultaneously present. More importantly though, is the extent to which the army controls his life. It simultaneously

empowers and disempowers him; a dexterous slaying machine against his fellow Indigenous denizens but a powerless individual in the face of the army, Xibalbá. But perhaps, empowerment is not the right word to describe his transformation into a destructive automaton by the army. The concept of living dead seems more apt as it connotes the notion of operating not based on one's own philosophy, a concept that coincides well with being a Kaibil because a Kaibil must not hesitate to follow orders. When Toribio does think, he finds himself ineffective to enact his opposition to the annihilative directives of the military. This sentiment of incapability is one that REHMI encounters in its study of the testimonies of surviving male victims, "Descriptions of effects associated with powerlessness and their social role as males tend to predominate in men's testimonies…" (3).

Our fourth and final encounter with Toribio before the testinovela ends reveals further introspection by him. He informs us of his coping mechanism in his trapped situation. He writes in a notebook his daily activities, which spans murdering to reading his instruction manuals (Morales 108-113). He impresses upon us his firm footing in indigenous beliefs, as it is the only way he withstands his journey in Xibalbá (his membership in the army). As a result, we know he has not lost his way in Xibalbá. Rather, he uses disguise to survive his service in the military. Due to his intact cognizance of his heritage, disguising himself as Ladino is a shrewd move that ensures the perseverance of his life and his Indian heritage. He explains,

> I will fill up this notebook today, hiding it from my comrades as I always do before I burn it. It's the fifth one. It makes no difference if my words go up in smoke. The weight of my thought, of my Word that I offer to the Heart of the Sky, goes to the wind. This is the only way I can bear all this until my military service is up (Morales 112).

Echoes of his psychological duress can be found within REHMI's report on surviving victims who participated in Guatemala's martial services during the internal conflict.[85] This makes it even more difficult for us readers to withstand the descriptions of his pain. The upside, however, is that in his distress Toribio was able to resist the objective of the Ladinization process of the army. This follows previous arguments that maintain the Ladinization of Indians soldiers as one of the intentions of statutory recruitment, which also echoes in REHMI's analysis. In the end, what is clear is that corporeal extraction and statutory recruitment of Mayan males are necessarily interrelated with the reorganization of their lives at every stratum. Thus, in respect to Guatemala's thirty-six years of internal strife, REMHI finds that "soldiers were trained in a system designed to suppress their identity and premised on absolute submission, isolation from familiar social surroundings, training in a system of values and customs that was completely devoid of any notion of human right or international humanitarian law" (REMHI 126).

Spaces of Exception, Land Larceny, and Restructuring of Indigenous Lifestyles

In the first circumstance delineating the exaction of territory, we meet an unknown Quiché individual who describes the manner in which the people in his/her township lost their land, and also alleges that the injustice meted out to Guatemalan Indians goes back to the era of colonization. This latter affirmation conjures the idea of a bond between the historical and the biological, which according to Foucault is a pertinent feature to the parameters of biopolitics.[86] Put differently, it relates and signals how "deployments of power are directly connected to the body" (Foucault 151). In the present case, this references how the use of force is imposed upon the indigenous corpus to extort them of their land. Moreover, it becomes apparent that the method involved is one of unlawful pilfering in the description of the process of losing ownership of their land. Furthermore, this larceny of terrain is linked to capitalism, as we shall see within excerpts from this anonymous Quiché's tale. Two relevant observations are that the appropriation of land was successful because the army led the process, and because the Indians lacked protection from the government. Saying the army was in charge of this subtractive form of power is implicitly acknowledging that indigenous peoples faced a fortified offensive ready to employ its artillery,

> I am also from this place called Quiché, […]. But, from the time I was very young, we have been running out of land. They say that the army's generals needed lands in order to create their Northern Transversal Strip

(FTN), as they called it. […] It was 1969; it had not even occurred to us to organize in order to fight for land (Morales 25).

Here, the issue of usurpation of terrain dates back to 1969, a little over a decade before the peak of the butchery against the indigenous denizens of Guatemala. Later on, and through the same account, change seems to come the way of the Indians as they receive agency through religious organizations. In addition, another modification comes in the way of the identification of the perpetrator of the appropriation of land, oil companies, "Through Father José we were able to get people to come teach us about our rights, because we knew that the oil companies were going around taking land away from people throughout the north of the country" (Morales 26). Subsequently, we become mindful of this contention that a relationship between unlawful land loss and capitalism exist. Even more noteworthy is that the big oil companies are non-Guatemalan corporations. The presence of international companies within Guatemala during the thirty-six years of internal strife has been noted as a contributory factor of the conflict. The importance of understanding the connection between foreign corporations operating in Guatemala during the epoch pertains to the expansion of capitalism. This is especially so when we recall Foucault's assertion that the growth of capitalism requires biopower. Reverberations of this fact find concrete ground within analyses of cause and effects of the internal armed struggle. With respect to the literary message, what we have at hand is a statement that the development of capitalism was indeed taking place, which complies with one requisite condition for the exercise of biopolitics.[87] One scholarly expert who

argues this to be the case in Guatemala is William I Robison. He does so in his 2001 article "Neoliberalism, the Global Elite, and the Guatemalan Transition."[88] A closer examination of this relation between the exaction of land and capitalism yields a key element. That element is the extent to which the causation of the violence was heavily hinged on the operational objectives of transnational companies and transnational power players within Guatemala at the time.[89] By transnational power players we mean to speak of any person who is able to wield power, to influence concretely, the affairs of national and international countries. For instance, below we learn that oil companies commissioned the army to carryout gruesome reprisals against the peasants if they, the peasants, refused to easily give up possession of their lands. In other words, the army's reasons for confiscating land may just be because of the political clout exercised over them by foreign corporations such as the named oil company below. The bold manner in which these oil companies committed thievery also becomes apparent within this testinovela. The specific company mentioned is Petromaya,

> In 1980s we had our first big setback. It so happened that Petromaya, a gringo oil company, carried out explorations in lands that belonged to our cooperatives, and they destroyed planted fields and ruined our harvests. When we peasants protested against these abuses, Petromaya threatened to call in the army. We were well organized, and we began to fight for our demands – the first struggle we engaged in. And it turned out that the lands we held showed up registered in the company's name. So we

> quickly filed suit against the company, and the courts made them pay five years of production for destroyed fields. That's when the threats began, the kidnappings at night, and the slayings along the roads… (Morales 27)

Within the next year, after losing the battle of keeping possession of their lands, the entire community relocated. Unfortunately, their new living space in the jungle lacked the suitable soil type to sustain their farming and herding existence. In particular, they moved to the region of Ixcán where they tried to rebuild their homes and livelihoods. This displacement, however, brought contact between them and members of the guerrillas. And the unidentified protagonist of this segment tells us that this interaction would then lead to an unfortunate misrepresentation of the community members as being guerrillas,

> By 1981, the guerrillas frequently occupied the villages of Ixcán. They would come and go, and the people gave them food and listened to their speeches, in which they spoke of the ideals of equality and freedom for all, claiming that the time had arrived for the Indians to free themselves. […] Unfortunately, some journalists from Mexico arrived in Ixcán and took some photos of Indian *compañeros* dressed in guerrilla uniforms, and they published a story saying that the guerrilla movement was made up of Indians. The magazine, called *¡Por esto!*, described how the EGP was operating in Ixcán. Then the army began to arrive in Ixcán, burning villages and massacring people (Morales 27-28).

As a consequence, further alteration of the lives of the inhabitants of this once removed population took place. This time, as can be seen above, power was deployed at the level of life given that the village as a community was destroyed. This vicious expression and implementation of power was exceptionally difficult for the people to handle and with reasons. Those reasons include the fact that the land at Ixcán was not as fertile as their previous land and this means it took them a while to figure out what would grow and what would not, and above all is that it took them eleven years to develop a decent settling with houses, crops, cattle, and trade. The case of housing is of special significance because the humid temperature of the Ixcán environs did not allow for the easy drying-out of the wood, which was a necessary stage in the construction of housing as well as in the provision of warmth via firewood. The annihilation of the community structures, of the livestock, and of the crops of this Ixcán village was the army's way of dissipating the social, economic, and existential fabric of the people. Its most devastating consequence serves to uproot and eliminate their foundation for living, almost to disallow life to the point of death. In order to survive this type of biopower, the people fled deeper into the thicket of the jungle. Yet, the military had not completely fulfilled their task of deploying power at the level of life itself. After the purging process, it then proceeded to regulate the lives of those who returned to this Ixcán communal base. Those who returned did so only after evaluating their chances of survival in the jungle's thicket versus survival amid the soldiers. Sadly, these returnees conceived of their chances as better amid the soldiers. The storyteller relates all this as follows,

> It took the people eleven years to build everything, but it took the army only three days to destroy it all. But, what could we do: there we were again and we had escaped death. Yes the village was destroyed; they had killed it completely. It was ashes, a black stain in the forest, charred wood with little drops of shiny water – that was all that remained. The first thing the army did was organize us in civil defense patrols. They divided us into groups and assigned days and hours for each group to patrol. We had one obligation: kill every guerrilla we ran into. Or the army would kill all of us. And many of us did not even know what a subversive was. All told, that's how we spent our time, patrolling and rebuilding the small houses. But the army wouldn't let us build the houses where they had been before, because they said if we did, the soldiers wouldn't be able to control who came and went, and once again we would begin to help the subversives. So they made us build shacks in the center of the village, the little houses one on top the other like wrinkles, and we ended up closer together (Morales 29-30).

The above citation references regulatory power on behalf of the military, which resonates within the actual reality of the events of the war. According to REMHI, one of the control policies the army exercised over the indigenous populace and their material possessions was the enactment of "projects to militarize rural communities based on an exorbitant level of social control that affected nearly half a million Mayans. These projects included

so-called strategic villages, model villages, and development poles" (REMHI 117). These types of living spaces are really what Giorgio Agamben would call camps or spaces of exception, which he sustains is immanent to modern biopolitics. In these spaces of exception indigenous Guatemalans lost their freedom as citizen to freely move about because the soldiers closely monitored all their movements as we note in the following, "That's why we no longer leave the village, and whoever needs to go somewhere ask for a safe conduct pass, which is what they call it… You also must present, upon returning, a paper from the patron of the finca where you went to work" (Morales 85-86). This type of restriction opposes the decreed declaration of rights of human beings. This evidences Agamben's claim that those declaration of rights are in disaccord with modern biopolitics because of the politicization of bare life. Hence he states, "In the system of the nation-state, the so-called sacred and inalienable rights of man show themselves to lack every protection and reality at the moment in which they can no longer take the form of rights belonging to citizens of the state (126). The CEH's findings support this stance as well when it points out that as part of the strategy to criminalize Mayan victims the state implemented the use of "fire and sword to teach them the lesson that the exercise of their rights as citizens could mean death" (27). Consequently, we contend here that Guatemalan Indians were no longer free and political citizens during the period of war and especially during the early 1980s.

Bribery, Slaughtering of Children, and A Metanarrative Critique through Cinematography

A perfect quote that not only explains the stylistic objective of this narrative selection, but also describes the writing style of this entire folletimonio is, “In short, you understand what I’m talking about. With silent fade-ins, we have to squeeze together this great quantity of information that otherwise might overwhelm the U.S. public” (Morales 72). Truthfully, it is difficult to not associate the message of this quote with a greater metanarrative significance that speaks to the fragmentary presentation of anecdotes within the entire testinovela itself. Notwithstanding this, however, one finds that this scriptwriter’s outlook begins immediately with deliberations and suggestions of how to start what seems to be a scene in a movie. No mention of the name of the movie is furnished. Ideas and thoughts are cordoned off with the use of slashes. At once, the deliberations seem centered on the presentation of the violence in its most becoming form, if that is something that is actually feasible. The screenwriter's aim is to attract the most audience possible on the international scene,

> I mean, showing tortured people, heads cut off with one blow, mutilated hands and feet, children with their stomachs cut open and mothers with their breasts cut off is what we tried to avoid when we chose this site and the particular violence that the gringo anthropologist documented here – a case of selective violence that lends itself very well to the elaboration of

> an interesting plot and an exotic and mysterious backdrop which can attract a wide international audience (Morales 67).

Capturing the most audience internationally means radically suppressing the degree of distress the violence produces, as also explained by the screenwriter above. Expounding further, the dramatist finds it necessary to think of providing "an exotic and mysterious backdrop" to the violence, and as such, to have this type of milieu the resonating point for the audience. S/he admits that achieving this is not as simply as it may appears, "I know it's a case of staged contrast and that when we wrote the preliminary film script we realized the all-too-obvious switching back and forth between the serene scenery and the tremendous violence would bore the audience" (Morales 67). Nonetheless, the very fact that this dramatist's account begins with, "Perhaps a night shot of Lake Atitlán to start off will allow us to produce in the spectator the sensation of quietude" underscores his/her attempt to create calm within an international audience rather than fear and immediate rejection of the film itself. The dramatist throughout his/her account frequently stresses this point. This leads us to question the inclusion of this cinematographic technique within this testinovela. Does it provide us with a critique of the violence itself? Would that critique allude to the extremity of the violence to the point in which this very real Guatemalan atrocity is too unimaginable for even the fictional imaginaries of film? We believe it does, and that the employment of a cinematographic technique to depict one perspective of the bloodbath waged against the Indians is an ingenious manner of critiquing the "irreality" and un-imaginary character of this bloodbath. In effect, the

cinematizing of the events accentuates the insanity of the violence.

Another observation from the previous excerpt, asides from the clear acts of assassination, is that the mutilation of the human corpus indicates the intent of disallowing life to the point of death. This type of intention is a manifestation of one of the deadly forces of biopolitics, says Foucault. Especially disturbing is the realization of the lack of limit of the furious application of power at the level of life. For us, the specific description of the mutilation of the female body and more so the annihilative attack on children substantiate our disquietude, and actually is also a germane issue within REMHI's report. REMHI reports that the slaughtering of children constituted fifty percent of all killing. This, it maintains, was a military strategy of war that made up a bigger policy. The report describes this as a meticulously planned scorched-earth policy.[90]

It follows then that this script evidences the implementation of military power to control the lives of indigenous Guatemalans. The policing of the lives of these Indians comes to light through a subtraction mechanism. In truth, supervisory and deductive power frequently goes hand in hand. With regards to the manifestation of regulatory power via an extractive devise, one finds that the army demands, by some form of force and/or terror, material wealth from this population in order that individuals and/or their family members' lives might be spared. The following excerpt illustrates one example of coercion by means of terror to receive money, in particular, from residents in living in an unknown urban area,

> Then we can go on to successive shots of the military commissioners talking with townspeople. They tell them yes, your son, daughter or mother is on the military detachment's blacklist for collaborating with the guerrillas, but if you give them some five or six hundred *quetzales* to bribe a few officials, they themselves will remove the names from the list. / Some refuse with indignation and disappear from the scene, / but a short while later they are knifed or machine-gunned down in mute (Morales 73).

And the ensuing citation illustrates the act of taking other material wealth such as livestock, electronics, and even the arguable immeasurable wealth of sexual intercourse. All these actions are carried out forcibly,

> /Continued fade-ins of the band arriving at houses where they take chickens, a goat, money, pigs, ducks, even a television set. / Twelve members of the gang now rape a woman on the shore of the lake: / her brilliant face, / her damp hair adheres to her forehead and cheeks, / the grass torn by her hand, broken breathing, the noises from the vegetation, moans (Morales 73).

These two excerpts portray what seems to be mere exploitation and abuse of the townspeople. Indeed, prior to both depictions, the dramatist describes how one Good Samaritan, a shopkeeper, forewarns a citizen of the army's intention to abduct him. As a consequence, the army executes him, the shopkeeper and the Good Samaritan. It is the moment after his execution that is of importance to what I would like to underscore in my

present line of argument. During that moment the soldiers are described as going through the motions of "pursuing a nonexistent guerrilla who has supposedly killed the shopkeeper" (Morales 72). This is significant because it showcases the style in which soldiers try to place blame on guerrillas for their own wrongdoings. Those wrongdoings would of course include the previously cited examples of looting, exploitation, and blackmail carried out by the military.

Concluding Arguments

> It is the army that rises above the hill, that rises from the plain. It comes climbing the ravine, fording the river, descending the mountainside, and it is coming to kill and rape and burn, and it appears in waves here in these lands of our ancestors that belong to us, and like our ancestors, we are still standing, always standing, whether in the mountains or in the jungles, standing beneath the trees (Morales 135).

The first aspect of our analysis pertained to Xibalbá, a mixture of the noumenal with the phenomena. Xibalbá simultaneously represents concepts of a hellish locality and dreadful rulers. It is tantamount to a space of exception for Mayan victims. This anomic domain can also be viewed at times as a concentration camp, depending on the circumstances. As a result, the literary representation of indigenous Guatemalans in *Face of the Earth, Hearth of the Sky* depicts a very tenuous categorization of them as citizens. So tenuous is this category that one could say that they were the "walking-dead"; their

lives were disallowed to the point of death. This fictional image is tantamount to the findings in the investigative reports of the actual violence in REMHI and CEH. What we also gathered are instances in which the text relay to us selective repressions and scorched earth offensives. According to Ricardo Falla, these are two types of victimization equivalent with events within the actual warfare (180). The remaining aspects of our study pertain to the exercise of martial clout at the expense of the lives of the Mayans in order to 1) acquire wealth – especially in the form of land, 2) to eradicate Mayan consciousness via the elimination of its gatekeepers and by the process of Ladinization, and 3) to straightforwardly reduce significantly the Mayan population for fear of it being a base for the guerrilla movement.[91] These objectives constitute the application of the sword to effect at a fundamental level a process of illegal confiscation/elimination.

Accordingly, we have seen that Mario Roberto Morales' folletimonio, *Face of the Earth, Heart of the Sky*, is tremendously instrumental in furnishing a diverse set of fragmentary narratives. Although they are fragmented, these brief anecdotes provide a definitive and wholesome message. And as we have pointed out in the introduction to his work, it is possible to perceive of a fluid picture of all the pieces joined together. This would be based upon an in depth knowledge of the Guatemalan internal dissention of the mid to late twentieth century. Once perceived, the conjecture of a complete picture will depict a very concise illustration of the indigenous populace's experience of cruelties as well as the military performance of those cruelties. Employing the brief testimonial and

fictionalized accounts of this testinovela allowed us to argue the presence of biopolitics within this work, and to argue as well that the literary presence of biopolitics is not restricted to the world of fictions. Instead, and in agreement with REMHI and CEH's reports, most cases of the literary representation of biopower through this work of fiction resonate almost exactly at times in the testimonies of actual survivors.

The fact that Foucault's biopolitics deals directly with the application of power at the level of life (or at the expense of life) enabled us to comprehend why the army slaughtered Guatemalan Indians. The answer manifests as the assertion of governmental power in civil society during war, a very compact response. Nevertheless, it connotes aptly the forceful control of population under anomic conditions. For this reason, Agamben maintains that modern biopolitics must deal with the state of exception. Within the context of a state of exception, we find within our analysis that the Mayans who were forced to carry out orders from the army, be it through civil patrols or joining the Kaibiles, are a form of the living dead. This is due to the fact that within that anomic state they lost their rights to refuse the directives of the army and to continue on with their daily lives. This directly implicates that they had no control over their destinies. This in turn necessarily connotes the loss of their statuses as citizens, and subsequently the loss of their privileges to the declarations of rights.[92] Therefore, and in deed, one of the many faces the army (Xibalbá) has is that of a Guatemalan Mayan, who truly is no longer that, but rather is a living dead.

Additionally, Agamben's main postulate on biopolitics is that politicized bare/natural life is the heart and foundation of sovereign power, which means that the juridico-institutional and biopolitical models of power are inseparable (6). This has been evidenced within my analysis through the understanding that the clout of the soldiers denotes the Guatemalan government, and thus the employment of it/power at the level of life, biopolitics, severs the distinction between the juridico-institutional and biopolitical models of power. One concrete example we recall is of the confiscation of indigenous lands coupled with their realization of their legal nakedness within the juridical system. However, a third unique scholarly perspective on biopolitics considers that the problematic of modern biopolitics has nothing to do with this blending of the juridico-institutional and biopolitical models of power, but rather with the problem of multiplicities. Eugene Thacker espouses this claim in his 2009 article, "The Shadows of Atheology: Epidemics, Power and Life after Foucault". It concerns us because he maintains that in biopolitics the "'problem of multiplicities' is that of managing the circulations that are deemed to be 'for the people' and 'against the people'. The real challenge of sovereignty is in the form it takes vis-à-vis the multiplicity that it identifies as the threat" (150). While Thacker makes his assertions in relation to epidemics, we believe that it applies to our situation in the sense that the sovereign representatives (military and governmental) of Guatemala perceived as threat the multiplicity of the indigenous people. In fact, they viewed this population as a base of potential epidemic threat, a base to foster antigovernment philosophies by guerrillas. Hence, the martial

intervention and regulation of Indigenous civilians became the real problem due to the fact that this action was paradoxically waged against them in order to save them (the sovereign would contend). The idea of saving the Indians resides in the process of (forced) Ladinization. What is clear, though, is that from all these perspectives, biopolitics is/was one effective means of massacring the Mayans.

General Conclusions

In chapter 1, I followed Mark Levene's assertion regarding genocide and a drive to power and posited and illustrated that the extermination of Indigenous Guatemalans resulted from the more advanced/modern state of the U.S.' drive to aggregate fiscal and political power worldwide. To achieve this, I demonstrated how the U.S. manipulated the modernization processes of Guatemala by controlling the country's economy and authority. In particular, I examined the authorities that defended the interests of the United States' companies operating in Guatemala before and during the period of violence. In doing so, I emphasized the role of one specific American company – the United Fruit Company (UFCO). I sustained that the UFCO was the principal one responsible for the sudden avalanche of interest by the CIA and the Eisenhower administration in the affairs of Guatemala in the 1950s. My analysis also revealed the Guatemalan oligarchy as a beneficiary and ultimately a backer of this U.S.' action. It also demonstrated the manner in which Guatemala's military was indoctrinated by the U.S., and subsequently defended the U.S.' interests as well as those of Guatemala's ruling elite.

In chapter 2, I assessed and compared the double role that the documentary – *Granito: a Story in Three Parts* – plays. I sustained that this documentary reveals evidence proving the accountability of ex-Guatemalan President General Efraín Ríos

Montt's actions and the process to indict him, and that it concurrently ignores the depth of responsibility of the United States. I charged that these two functions disguise the operating system of coloniality of power and prevent its discovery as a fundamental cause of impunity and injustice. As a result of this obscurity, *Granito* fails to thoroughly drive home the details along with the extent to which the United States may be much more responsible than Efraín Ríos Montt for the brutality that befell Guatemala's Mayan Highlanders. Due to this, I suggested that the purpose of the invisibility of the operating system of coloniality of power is self-preservation. This means that this invisible attribute serves to redirect us at times in order to conceal its operations. Through *Granito: A Story in Three Parts*, it directs us to focus upon Ríos Montt and not the United States.

In chapter 3, employing three primary texts within my corpus, I reasoned that, above all, the militarization procedures to become Kaibiles along with the resulting latent necropower of fully-fledged Kaibiles impacted significantly in the physical demise of indigenous Guatemalans. The three primary texts are: Jorge Antonio Ortega Gaytán's 2003 literary narrative – *The Kaibiles*, Mario Roberto Morales' 1998 literary piece *Those Who Went Off On Their Own* and, *This American Life*'s 2012 podcast – "What Happened At Dos Erres". Combined, these three works generate a picture of the crude process of the massive demise of Guatemala's indigenous citizens (the Mayans) by the Kaibiles. In the end, I illustrated the necessity of necropolitics to aiding and abetting in the slaughter of Indigenous Guatemalans. In so doing, I brought to the fore the incongruity of modernity with respect to violence or the consubstantiality of violence with modernity

In Chapter 4, engaging Horacio Castellanos Moya's 2008 novel *Senselessness*, *Commission of Historical Clarification* (CEH) (1994), Mario Roberto Morales' 1999 novel *Face of the Earth, Hearth of the Sky*, and *Guatemala: Never Again! – The Official report of the Human Rights Office, Archdiocese of Guatemala* (REMHI), I argued three postulations. First, I contended that the Mayan bloodshed of the early 1980s lies within a space of exception, Xibalbá. Secondly, I sustained that during the apex of the early 1980s bloodshed representatives of Guatemala's sovereign power employed two mechanisms of power – regulation and deduction – at the expense of the lives of indigenous Guatemalans. And thirdly, I upheld that this type of governance (biopolitics) of Guatemalan Indigenous lives contributed to the subsequent cruelty the indigenous Guatemalans experienced.

In sum, I have illustrated the manner in which the four geopolitical systems of death and power have produced from each of their positions and as a sum the extermination en mass of indigenous Guatemalan highlanders in particular. The Guatemalan Mayan genocide, I have maintained, is chiefly the result of a drive to amass worldwide economic and political clout. This is due to the creators of the machine that produced this genocide, the United States. And we have since understood that the United States' involvement in the production of this machine resulted from it defending, on one hand, the United Fruit Company. Explicitly, the United States intervened within Guatemala specifically starting with the overthrows of Presidents Arévalo and Árbenz (1950s) in order to ensure that this U.S. business could do without complying with the

new regulatory changes of these regimens. Since then, the U.S. controlled Guatemala's authority through indoctrination, and it backed and helped instate the majority of Guatemala's subsequent presidents including General Efraín Ríos Montt. The following diagram allows us to grasp clearly the interplay between the U.S.' drive to hegemonic world power and the four geopolitical systems of death and power.

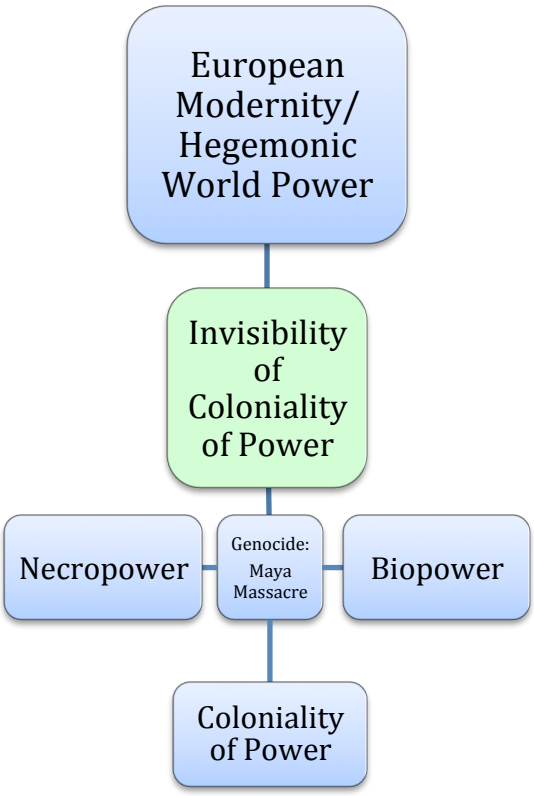

Figure 1. Interplay between the U.S.' drive to hegemonic world power and the four geopolitical systems of death and power.

In figure 1 above, I position the invisibility of coloniality of power directly beneath European modernity/hegemonic world power in an effort to illustrate its importance to the maintenance of the aforementioned world power. That is, and I have argued that, due to the operation of this specific element, one seldom grasps at once the interrelations between necropower, biopower, coloniality of power, European modernity, and genocides. We have seen that in the case of the Guatemalan Mayan carnage, it is pertinent to always consider this interconnectedness between these systems of death and power if we are to understand profoundly the habitat of the mass human rights violations against the Mayans. Because, similar to my argument in chapter 2, it is insufficient to do otherwise; that is, to focus on one, or some of these elements as causative of the indigenous Guatemalan genocide.

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Notes

Chapter 1: Coloniality of power in Guatemala, 1950s: The Operating System behind the Mayan Genocide in the Early 1980s.

[1] According to Madina V. Tlostanova and Walter D. Mignolo the core analytic concept of decolonial thinking is the colonial matrix of power. Furthermore, "Decolonial thinking and decolonial options are projects led and created by the people whom Frantz Fanon called 'les damnés de la terre' (1967): all those humiliated, devalued, disregarded, disavowed, and confronting the trauma of the 'colonial wound'" ("Learning to Unlearn"

[2] See Walter Mignolo's 2008 article "Preamble"

[3] Overt slavery, as a modifier, is used since it could be argued that European [including American in the sense of European phenotype] colonization is still underway today, and thus to differentiate between such an argument.

[4] See Quijano's articles "Coloniality and Modernity" p.171 and "The Control of Labor" p. 539.

[5] See Mark Levene, p. 65.

[6] See E. Torres-Rivas on the Guatemalan elites' drive to power in his book *Revoluciones sin cambios revolucionarios* (2011), and see Dan Koeppel on drive to power by U.S. companies in Guatemala in his book *Banana: the Fate of the Fruit that changed the World* (2008).

[7] They contend that, "The modern foundation of knowledge is territorial and imperial. By modern we mean the socio-historical organization and classification of the world founded on a macro-narrative and on a specific concept and principles of knowledge. The point of reference of modernity is the European Renaissance founded, as an idea and interpretation of the historical present, on two complementary moves: the colonization of time and the invention of the Middle Ages, and the colonization of space and the invention of America that became integrated into a Christian tripartite geo-political order. It was from and in Europe that the classification of the world emerged and not in and from Asia, Africa, or America – borders were created therein but of different kinds. The Middle Ages were integrated into the history of Europe, while the histories of Asia, Africa and America were denied as history. The world map drawn by Gerardus Mercator and Johannes Ortelius worked together with theology to create a zero point of observation and of knowledge: a perspective that denied all other perspectives" (qtd. in Castro-Gómez 2002, 205-206).

[8] See Quijano' article "Coloniality and Modernity" p. 171, or prior footnote explaining this.

[9] "Negationism is in and of itself an aggravation of the original crime. Negation of crimes and thus of the truth flourishes where perpetrators enjoy social esteem or at the very least rely on passive indifference, and where the political and juridical arrangement is pervaded by consciousness of the lingering effects of crimes that are negated. Negation,

in other words, does not occur in abstract academic space but in social terrain where leniency furnishes a protective umbrella for crimes that often remain unstated" (82-83).

[10] "Although mass murder of groups took place in world history, the word 'genocide' did not exist before 1944. It's creator, Raphael Lemkin… " (Ball 9). "In response to Winston Churchill's view that [what] was happening across Europe by the Nazi hordes 'was a crime without a name,' in his 1944 book, Lemkin provided these horrendous crimes alluded to by Churchill with a name: *genocide*. He formed the word by combining *geno-* from the Greek word for race or tribe, with *–cide*, the Latin word for murder. Lemkin wrote in the 1944 book that genocide '…is a conspiracy aimed at the total destruction of a group and thus requires a concerted plan of action. It is a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves.' However, although the word began to be used descriptively by the Allies, it had no force of law until 1948" (Ball 11).

[11] In simple terms, this was a war of ideologies between communism and capitalism.

[12] "Eisenhower's Guatemala policy was no aberration… It fit within a deeply held tradition, shared by Democrats and Republicans alike and centered on the intransigent assertion of U.S. hegemony over Central America and the Caribbean" (Gleijeses 366).

[13]"The Indian in the republican era continued to be the colonial laborer obliged now by new forms of [labor] division, becoming a peasant obliged to work for different means of extra-economic coercion, with a formal salary that subjects the Indian to ambiguous forms of servitude" (Torres-Rivas, "revoluciones" 44).

[14]"Those foreigners became rich as quickly as they became nationalized: they married Guatemalans, they stayed in the country, they acquired citizenship, they power policies and contributed unequally to the modernization of the country" (Torres-Rivas, "revoluciones" 43).

[15] All translations from this point on are mine.

[16] "The gradual democratization of the sociopolitical processes in Latin America along with the development of Focalism and other guerrilla tactics in development since the middle of the 1950s and related to the anti-subversive tactics within the global strategy of 'flexible responses' doubly fueled the accentuation of the antidemocratic characteristics of the North American military doctrine. The militarization of the foreign politics of North America meant the selection of tactics that mitigated border confrontations between great [national] powers, which diminished the need for direct interventions from the North American armed forces and which also diverted part of the cost involved in defending the 'free world' towards the budgets of the countries 'being helped'. These tactics privileged the notion of 'internal defense' and meant, therefore, the political indoctrination of Latin American armies in the values and demands of the foreign politics of North America … This 'training' produced tendencies that were then systematized in the form of a political doctrine geared to justifying the dominant and permanent intervention of armies in the governing of their states, with the goal of assuring the neutralization of any national form of threat from communism or socialism, and of achieving the consolidation of capitalistic economic models that were favorable to the

implementation of monopolized transnational capitalism. … The National Security Doctrine rationalized the liquidation of liberal notions of the State and the law and provided the implantation of a type of government that was extremely repressive which endeavored to create political unity through the forceful imposition of property taxes" (Tapia Valdés 250).

[17] In their own word they explain that: "The past half century –following the 1954 Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)-orchestrated overthrow of the ten-year national democratic Revolution of 1944 to 1954 –was characterized by levels of state repression and violence, ethnic and racial discrimination, and exclusionary politics virtually unparalleled in Latin America. During the early 1980s, state-sponsored violence against Mayan communities took on the characteristics of genocide" (Jonas and Chase-Dunn "Guatemalan Development and Democratization" 3).

[18] In one of his many claims, Piero Gleijeses corroborate the late 1940s as the starting point of the fear of the spread of communism in Guatemala as perceived by the United Fruit Company – he states that: "in the late 1940s, a new enemy threatened the banana republics: Soviet imperialism, as barbarous as German Nazism, but even more dangerous." Here he places Guatemala within the category of the banana republics, countries in which the United Fruit Company operated (84-84).

[19] On Sovereignty

Most apprentices of political science, including myself, understand that states are sovereign. That is, states have the exclusive right to exercise their power within their

nations without interference from any other nation(s). Thus, within the physical confines of nations, states hold the highest power there is to be held. Unfortunately, this novice understanding is not steadfast in its hold, and many critics question if states are truly sovereign. As for instance, Jacques Derrida underscores the ever-becoming-common fact that sovereignty is quite convoluted as a concept. He does this in his discourse titled "Psychoanalysis searches the states of its soul: the impossible beyond of a sovereign cruelty" (2002). Nevertheless, invoking Einstein's interpretation of the implication of international security, Jacques Derrida brings into focus a definition of sovereignty. According to Derrida, Einstein finds that the first implication of international security, the first axiom, is that for there to be international peace every nation must surrender its will to do as it pleases. This "will to do as it pleases", according to Derrida, is a state's liberty of action, which, in turn, is for Derrida a state's sovereignty. Here, I stress that prior to this, Derrida belabors the point that the word sovereignty is so baffling in its definition that it leaves a trail of vagueness in its wake. As such and on this premise, sovereignty is taken here to mean a nation's liberty to act (Derrida 251). Within that liberty to act are two essential powers that originate from biopolitics: the liberty to enable life and simultaneously enable death. These are the confines of the definition of sovereignty being used in this chapter.

[20] In contrast to U.S. claims of the Soviet Union's interest in Guatemala as an expansion of communism, Blum explains the stark bewilderment the Soviet Union actually faced regarding these claims: "The Soviet Union could be excused if it was somewhat

bewildered by all the rhetoric, for the Russians had scant interest in Guatemala, did not provide the country with any kind of military assistance, did not even maintain diplomatic relations with it, thus did not have the normally indispensable embassy from which to conduct such nefarious schemes" ("1953-1954" 73).

[21] See William Blum's article "Guatemala 1953-1954: while the world watch".

[22] In his book, *Banana: The Fate of the Fruit that changed the World*, Dan Koeppel speaks to this act of deception by the United Fruit Company when he mentions Árbenz Decree 900, issued in 1952. According to Koeppel, Decree 900 "mandated that the former landholders receive compensation based on the declared worth of the confiscated territory. According to the formula, United Fruit was to receive $600, 000. When the company protested that the sum was just a fraction of the true value of its holdings, which was true, Árbenz countered that the amount was based on tax returns submitted by the banana company itself" (128).

[23] "The Guatemalans' major sins were two: their 'persecution' of American companies and their irresponsible attitude toward communism" (85).

[24] See previous footnote explaining my use of sovereign.

[25] "Total U.S. investment in Guatemala in 1944 was about $93 million, concentrated in three companies: the Empresa Eléctrica de Guatemala, a subsidiary of Electric Bond and Share; the International Railways of Central America; and the United Fruit Company" (Gleijeses 86).

[26] "Although UFCO developed previously neglected regions, it did so in return for immense privileges… In a detailed 1950 study, three U.S. financial experts concluded, 'A careful estimate indicates that in all three cases the tax liability is in the neighborhood of one-half of what it would be in the absence of the contracts' (Gleijeses 88).

[27] "What bothered Árbenz most wasn't even that the banana companies owned so much land in the country –4 million acres, or 70 percent of the nation's arable land –but that they weren't using it" (Koeppel 125).

[28] "In 1960 nationalist elements of the Guatemalan military who were committed to slightly opening the door to change were summarily crushed by the CIA… In the early years of the 1960s, the guerilla movement, with several military officers of the abortive 1960 uprising prominent amongst the leadership, was slowly finding its way: organizing peasant support in the countryside, attacking an army outpost to gather arms, staging a kidnapping or bank robbery to raise money, trying to avoid direct armed clashes with the Guatemalan military" (Blum "1962 to 1980s" 229-230).

[29] "No ideology or sentiment dominated the movement more than a commitment to the desperately needed program of land reform aborted by the 1954 coup, a simple desire for a more equitable society, and a nationalist pride vis-à-vis the United States " (Blum "1962 to 1980s" 230).

[30] "In March 1962, thousands of demonstrators took to the streets in protest against the economic policies, the deep-rooted corruption, the electoral fraud of the government of General Miguel Ydígoras Fuentes. Initiated by students, the demonstrators soon picked

up support from worker and peasant groups… The American military mission in Guatemala, permanently stationed there, saw and heard in this, as in the burgeoning guerrilla movement, only the omnipresent 'communist threat'. As US military equipment flowed in, American advisers began to prod a less-alarmed and less-than-aggressive Guatemalan army to take appropriate measures. In May the United States established a base designed specifically for counter-insurgency training…Accordingly, while the Guatemalan military were being taught techniques of ambush, booby-traps, jungle survival and search-and-destroy warfare, and provided with aircraft and pilot training" (Blum "1962 to 1980s" 230 - 231).

[31] "In March 1963, General Ydígoras, who had been elected in 1958 for a six-year term, was overthrown in a coup by Col. Enrique Peralta. Veteran Latin American correspondent Georgie Anne Geyer later reported that 'Top sources within the Kennedy administration have revealed the U.S. instigated and supported the 1963 coup'" (Blum 231).

[32] "However, whatever social conscience Julio Cesar Mendez may have harbored deep within, he was largely a captive of the Guatemalan army, and his administration far exceeded Peralta's in its cruelty. Yet the army did not trust this former law school professor–in the rarefied atmosphere of Guatemala, some military men regarded him as a communist – and on at least two occasions, the United States had to intervene to stifle a coup against him" (Blum 231-232).

[33] The start date varies from what the CEH has – it has that it started in 1962 as can be seen in the following quote: "With the outbreak of the internal armed confrontation in 1962, Guatemala entered a tragic and devastating stage of its history, with enormous human, material and moral cost." (CEH).

[34] Dates vary for this. So the CEH has one date, while in the next footnote one may infer that the Accord of Oslo was signed in December 1996. CEH highlights that: "The CEH's Report has been structured in accordance with the objectives and terms of the mandate entrusted to it by the Parties to the Guatemalan peace process as expressed in the Accord of Oslo, signed in Norway, on 23 June 1994" (CEH).

[35] "The thirty-six year Guatemalan armed conflict ended on 31 December 1996 when the government signed a peace accord [Oslo] with the URGN insurgents." "Assistance to the Guatemalan Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH)."

[36] See "Human rights violations, acts of violence and assignment of responsibility." "Conclusions." (CEH).

[37] "During the most violent and bloody period of the entire armed confrontation, 1978-1985, military operations were concentrated in Quiche, Huehuetenango, Chimaltenango, Alta and Baja Verapaz, the south coast and the capital, the victims being principally Mayan and to a lesser extent Ladino." "Conclusions" (CEH).

[38] "31. In the years when the confrontation deepened (1978-1983), as the guerrilla support base and area of action expanded, Mayans as a group in several different parts of the country were identified by the Army as guerrilla allies. Occasionally this was the

result of the effective existence of support for the insurgent groups and of pre-insurrectional conditions in the country's interior. However, the *CEH* has ascertained that, in the majority of cases, the identification of Mayan communities with the insurgency was intentionally exaggerated by the State, which, based on traditional racist prejudices, used this identification to eliminate any present or future possibilities of the people providing help for, or joining, an insurgent project.

32. The consequence of this manipulation, extensively documented by the *CEH*, was massive and indiscriminate aggression directed against communities independent of their actual involvement in the guerrilla movement and with a clear indifference to their status as a non-combatant civilian population. The massacres, scorched earth operations, forced disappearances and executions of Mayan authorities, leaders and spiritual guides, were not only an attempt to destroy the social base of the guerrillas, but above all, to destroy the cultural values that ensured cohesion and collective action in Mayan communities" (CEH).

[39] "Acts of violence attributable to the guerrillas represent 3% of the violations registered by the CEH. This contrasts with 93% committed by agents of the State, especially the Army. This quantitative difference provides new evidence of the magnitude of the State's repressive response" (CEH, "Acts of Violence committed by Guerrillas")

[40] "The proclamation of independence in 1821, an event prompted by the country's elite, saw the creation of an authoritarian State which excluded the majority of the population, was racist in its precepts and practises, and served to protect the economic interests of the

privileged minority. The evidence for this, throughout Guatemala's history, but particularly so during the armed confrontation, lies in the fact that the violence was fundamentally directed by the State against the excluded, the poor and above all, the Mayan people, as well as against those who fought for justice and greater social equality" ("Historical Roots of The Armed Confrontation").

[41] "After the overthrow of the government of Colonel Jacobo Árbenz in 1954, there was a rapid reduction of the opportunity for political expression. Inspired by fundamentalist anti-communism, new legislation outlawed the extensive and diverse social movement and consolidated the restrictive and exclusionary nature of the political system. These restrictions on political participation were agreed to by the country's real powers and activated by the period's civil and political forces. In itself, this process constitutes one of the most overwhelming pieces of evidence for the close relationship between the military, the economic powers and the political parties that emerged in 1954. From 1963 onwards, in addition to the legal restrictions, growing state repression against its real or suspected opponents was another decisive factor in the closing of political options in Guatemala" (The Closing of Political Space).

[42] "The majority of human rights violations occurred with the knowledge or by order of the highest authorities of the State. Evidence from different sources (declarations made by previous members of the armed forces, documentation, declassified documents, data from various organisations, testimonies of well-known Guatemalans) all coincide with the fact that the intelligence services of the Army, especially the G-2 and the Presidential

General Staff (*Estado Mayor Presidencial*), obtained information about all kinds of individuals and civic organisations, evaluated their behaviour in their respective fields of activity, prepared lists of those actions that were to be repressed for their supposedly subversive character and proceeded accordingly to capture, interrogate, torture, forcibly disappear or execute these individuals." (CEH, "Institutional Responsibility").

[43] "The CEH is able to confirm that between 1981 and 1983 the Army identified groups of the Mayan population as the internal enemy, considering them to be an actual or potential support base for the guerrillas, with respect to material sustenance, a source of recruits and a place to hide their members. In this way, the Army, inspired by the National Security Doctrine, defined a concept of internal enemy that went beyond guerrilla sympathizers, combatants or militants to include civilians from specific ethnic groups." (CEH, "Acts of Genocides").

Chapter 2: The invisibility of the operating system of Coloniality of power through the lens of *Granito: A Story in Three Parts*

[44] All translations from here on out are mine

[45] According to Mignolo these four constitutive components are: control of economy, control of authority, control of gender and sexuality, and control of knowledge and subjectivity ("Preamble" 15).

[46] From this point on, *Granito: A Story in Three Parts* will be abbreviated to *Granito*.

[47] Antonio collaborates this in section 3 of the documentary when he points out that "I felt committed as a representative of my community. Although anyone from the community could give testimony not all have the courage to tell what happened here" (*Granito*).

[48] " It is not sufficient to point out the immediate reasons behind this heightened repression of the Church; it is necessary to situate this repression in a much broader context, continental and even worldwide, of an economic, social, and political regression" (Arroyo, "Repression" 11).

[49] "Centroamérica y el Caribe fueron el foco inicial del anunciado roll back de lo que el presidente y sus asesores veían como los graves avances comunistas. Por vez primera desde 1940, la administración norteamericana estableció una explícita distinción de políticas a aplicar en los pequeños países de Centroamérica y el Caribe y el resto de América Latina. " (Torres-Rivas "Revoluciones" 236).

[50] "As a consequence of the restructuring of the economic system by transnational capitalism, a period of major exploitation of the mass workers in the countries of the so-called Third World begins. This leads to the reinforcement of the authoritarian regimes, above all the militaries, in the Latin American continent, considered in fact, in agreement with the Monroe Doctrine, the back door of North American imperialism" (Arroyo, "Repression" 11).

[51] "This type of development leads to, on one hand, the concentration of investment in the hands of the local bourgeoisies who share the interests of the multinationals; on the other

hand, it leads to unemployment, reduction of real investments and even hunger for a growing number of workers and members of the middle classes" (Arroyo, "Repression" 11-12).

[52] "In order to avoid the loss of their political hegemony these classes must resort to the armed forces and to governments capable of exercising a political repression (judicial and police) against the opposition forces, amongst which one finds today the churches and the political currents that are identified with the liberal democratic traditions… This demonstration of economic, political, and institutional violence brings to light, however, another fact: the failure of capitalism in its new phase of internationalization, a failure of a political nature. (Arroyo, "Repression" 12).

[53] See her book *The School of the Americas: Military Training and Political Violence in the Americas*.

[54] See the movie *Hotel Rwanda*; See Matthew Jardine's 1999 book: *East Timor: Genocide in Paradise*, or David Wurfel's 2004 article: "Democracy, Nationalism, and Ethnic Identity: The Philippines and East Timor Compared".

Chapter 3: Guatemala 1980s: The Instrumentalization of Human Existence and the Material Destruction of Human Bodies and Populations

[55] See Mbembe (154)

[56] All translations from here on out are mine.

[57] See "The ironic turn of violence: the post-utopic Spanish Civil War in "the blind sunflowers and capital of glory " (Antonio Gómez L-Quiñones 2009)

[58] According to Martínez Salazar, the liberal reform of 1871 in Guatemala consolidated the reliance of the Criollo and Ladino bourgeoisie on the power of the modern-colonial world system. And at the same time, this 1871 liberal reform proved to be the most devastating administrative impact upon the lives of Indigenous Guatemalans since the beginning of colonial rule. This is because it resulted in the creation of Guatemala's national army and military academy both of which would later go on to conscript forcibly Indigenous Guatemalans, after having excluded them (Martínez Salazar 49).

[59] See Giménez and Zevallos (2-3).

[60] See "The invisibility of the operating system of Coloniality of power through the lens of *Granito: a story in three parts*" (Redwood 2013).

[61] See "Conclusions" (CEH) - http://shr.aaas.org/guatemala/ceh/report/english/conc2.html

[62] See "Coloniality of power in Guatemala, 1950s: the operating system behind the Mayan Genocide in the 1980s" (Redwood 2012).

[63] See Ortega Gaytán's 3rd chapter – "Kaibil Balam" (119-180).

[64] According to Morales in his 1994 book, *The Ideology and Poetry of the Armed Struggle*, Turcios Lima (or Luis Augusto Turcios Lima), Marco Antonio Yon Sosa, Alejandro de León, and Luis Esquivel are "only four of the well known young officials" that became the first rebel leaders who unleashed the armed struggle in 1962 against the

then oligarchic-military dictatorship of Guatemala. Two years before 1962, they unsuccessfully attempted coup d'état against president Ydígoras Fuentes (147).

[65] See Chapter 16 and 17 (Morales).

[66] "Bureaucracies of death are able to make terror their central element of governance because the planners and executioners of this terror act with total or near-total levels of impunity, either by bending the rule of law, or by creating other rules of law that abandon those who have been conceived as politically and racially undesirable, and as economically expendable" (Martínez Salazar 146).

[67] In chapter five, "The Bureaucracy of Death and Vilified Memories", Egla Martínez Salazar explains that, "the bureaucracy of death consists of a set of state and corporate apparatuses whose agents employ various violent methods for one primary purpose: the 'thingification' of those who organize and fight for revolutionary and progressive change. It is this reduction of organizers and fighters for sociopolitical changes – women, men, their families, and communities – to simple objects, which constitutes necropolitics and necropower (Mbembe 2003). Necropolitics and necropower have industrialized and mechanized death, enabling the operation of everyday coercion and repression in parallel with mass killing, all under global, imperial designs" (Martínez Salazar 143).

[68] See "Conclusions" (CEH) - http://shr.aaas.org/guatemala/ceh/report/english/conc2.html

[69] Another instance in which life in Guatemala was defined as the deployment and manifestation of power comes to light through the Kaibiles predecessors, the Scorpions.

This is because the Scorpions were the first to initiate the process of metamorphosis from a regular soldier to a special soldier (Ortega Gaytán 34-35).

Chapter 4: Guatemala 1980s: Administering Sovereign Power at the Level of Life: Regulation & Deduction, Spaces of Exception – Biopolitics

[70] According to Mazariegos, "Towards the end of 1981 and the beginnings of 1982, the Guatemalan Army had conceived and decreed a state of emergency (exception) inaugurated by Plan Victoria 82, which was first implemented in the Ixil zone and which gave birth to a brief period of bloody massacres in all the Western Highlands of Guatemala" (13). This state of emergency (exception) was thirty days long, but came at the price of being indefinitely prolonged (34).

[71] Here I employ Subjectivity in the same light as Guatemalan Sociologist Juan Carlos Mazariegos in his 2007 article, "The War of Names". This means that like Mazariegos, "I speak from *the political relationship*, from that space in which I am implicated and as such, expose my subjectivity: this essay is a reflexive exercise of writing, which utilizes my subjectivity as a vehicle to accentuate and dilate the intensity of the story of that political relationship, in which I was exposed and broken by the horror of the unnamed" (Mazariegos 12).

[72] Although presented within this fictional novel, Bishop Juan Gerardi is a historic figure within Guatemala. Through the Archdiocesan Human Rights Office, he led an

investigative project to document the testimonies of Mayan victims. The project report is called REMHI.

[73] According to Zimmerman, testimonio suggest solidarity and "[t]he complicity the form establishes with readers involves their identification with what they may well have seen as an alien or at least distant cause. By breaking down distance, testimonio has been important in maintaining and developing the practice of third world solidarity movements" (14-15)

[74] See wordreference.com

[75] In examining the devastating genocidal effects of modernity in Latin America, Jean Franco employs the term "alien to modernity" as the title of her second chapter in which she delves into an analysis of the unimaginable manifestations of cruelties of Guatemala and Peru's extermination process of their Indigenous populace.

[76] In her 2004 book, *Violencia y Genocidio en Guatemala*, Victoria Sandford delineates the manner in which the bloodshed in Guatemala falls under the category of genocide, illustrating simultaneously that the commander in chief was General Efraín Ríos Montt, to whom blame should be assigned for this vicious crime against humanity.

[77] According to Javier A. Galván, "Reports by human rights organizations have corroborated that at least 19,000 individuals were killed during the 18-month long Ríos Montt dictatorship (1982-1983). Those numbers average to at least 1,000 assassinations a month" (172).

[78] Its findings are as follows: "The CEH concludes that a full explanation of the Guatemalan confrontation cannot be reduced to the sole logic of two armed parties [which necessarily includes their leaders, Ríos Montt being one of them]. Such an interpretation fails to explain or establish the basis for the persistence and significance of the participation of the political parties and economic forces in the initiation, development and continuation of the violence; nor does it explain the repeated efforts at organization and the continuous mobilization of those sectors of the population struggling to achieve their economic, political and cultural demands" (21).

[79] According to Kay B. Warren, "On December 29, 1996, huge crowds gathered in Guatemala City's central square and cheered representatives of the government, military, and guerrillas as they signed the Accord for a Firm and Lasting Peace" ("Pan-Mayanism" 145).

[80] Here we recall that Moya's novel *Senselessness* touches on this aspect of the murder of Juan Gerardi. This inclusion of historical aspects within this novel speaks to the testimonial genre of this work. We point out here that all our fictionalized literature resides in the genre of testimonio which is important because as Ileana Rodriguez explains: "most concretely, testimonio has the capacity to underscore events or situations poorly or completely unknown, to provide direct access to forms of thought hitherto not known or understood (qtd in Zimmerman 11). The inclusion of the assassination of Bishop Juan Gerardi in *Senselessness* achieves the goal of disseminating this event still poorly known outside of the spheres of those concerned with the human rights violations

in Guatemala. Another testimonio-like and fictionalized literature, *The Art of the Political Murder* (2007) by Francisco Goldman, concerns itself solely with retelling the events leading up to the murder of Bishop Gerardi.

[81] From the Popol Vuh, we receive a historical understanding of Xibalbá, "The underworld, located below the face of the earth but at the same time conceptualized as being accessible by way of a road that descends cliffs and canyons, probably in the general direction of the lowlands that lie to the Atlantic side of the Guatemalan highlands. In Yucatec Maya, Xibalbá is one of the names of the lord of the lowest underworld." (Tedlock 369)

[82] See Dictionary.com for definitions.

[83] We learn that Kukulkán equates Quetzalcoalt from the following, "It was the way of Kukulkán, the Plumed Serpent. It was the way of good and evil together, equal; neither was stronger than the other. Both could be practiced as long as it was done in a conscious manner" (Morales 56).

[84] A historic understanding of Rabinal comes to us from the Popol Vuh, "The people known today as the Achí, whose principal town is Rabinal. Their language, Achí, may be considered either a dialect of Quiché or a separate language of the Quichean family; its speakers are located to the northeast of the speakers of Quiché proper. They belonged to a group of thirteen allied tribes the Quichés regarded as having come (like themselves) from the east." (Tedlock 357)

[85] According to REHMI, "Soldiers were kept under intense psychological pressure throughout their military training" (126).

[86] Foucault maintains that the focus of his discourse on biopolitics is to illustrate that "the biological and the historical…are bounded together in an increasingly complex fashion in accordance with the development of modern technologies of power that take life as their objective" ("Right" 152).

[87] Foucault informs us that "bio-power was without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism; the latter would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes" ("Right" 140-141)

[88] Speaking about Guatemala years of violence in the late twentieth century, Robinson declares, "With the introduction and expansion of new economic activities in the 1980s, including a powerful new financial sector tied to international banking, incipient export-oriented industry such as maquila textile production, nontraditional agricultural exports promoted by the IFIs, and new commercial groups, a transnationalized fraction of the elite assumed its own profile and clashed with the old state-protected oligarchy over fiscal, tax, liberalization, and related policies" (198).

[89]See "Coloniality of power in Guatemala, 1950s: the operating system behind the Mayan Genocide in the 1980s" (Redwood 2012)

[90] "Information on the deaths of children and survivors' accounts of atrocities also are consistent with testimonies about military training methods and the instruction that was

given at that time to soldiers in order to implement the scorched-earth policy. During those years (1980-1982), regarding the entire civilian population of many villages as members of guerrilla groups and physically eliminating them, including children, was part of a carefully designed strategy" (REMHI 30 -31).

[91] According to CEH, "The massacres, scorched earth operations, forced disappearances and executions of Mayan authorities, leaders and spiritual guides, were not only an attempt to destroy the social base of the guerrillas, but above all to destroy the cultural values that ensured cohesion and collective action in Mayan communities" (23).

[92] CEH highlights this as follows, "The State also tried to stigmatize and blame the victims and the country's social organizations, making them into criminals in the public eye and thus into "legitimate" targets for the repression. This was done by stripping them of their dignity as individuals, using fire and sword to teach the lesson that the exercise of their rights as citizens could mean death" (27).