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Discourse and Identity in Guatemala: Imaginaries of Indigeneity and Luis de Lión's Decolonial Grito/Llanto

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by

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Dedication

For my father, Dale R. Olen, Ph.D.

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Discourse and Identity in Guatemala: Imaginaries of Indigeneity and Luis de Lión's Decolonial Grito/Llanto

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This dissertation examines Guatemalan discourses of identity and indigeneity from the colonial period to the mid-1980s. Through the theoretical lens of the coloniality of power and by means of a genealogical approach to discourse, I argue that Maya Guatemalan writer Luis de Lión's (1939-1984) literary project decolonizes Guatemalan discursivities regarding Mayas in the nation. His work does so by problematizing the violence of the social myths and discursive "truths" about indigeneity circulating in Guatemalan society and literature, such as the "glorious Indian of the past" and the "miserable Indian of the present" binary. Additionally, Luis de Lión's literary work articulates a discursive, emancipatory decolonial project for Mayas in the nation that moves beyond "clasista" and "culturalista" approaches to Guatemalan revolution during the armed conflict period by underlining both the coloniality of spirituality and gender racializing Indigenous subjectivities. I begin with an analysis of the political conceptualizations and policy debates regarding national identity and Mayas' place within it from Criollo, Ladino (mixed Spanish-Indigenous), and Maya perspectives to evidence the construction and contestation of the notion of Mayas in the nation as a "problem". Next, I trace how the social myths of indigeneity developed in the political sphere are articulated in literature from the colonial period to the mid-20th century in order to understand how literary

discourses normalize social myths into imaginaries asserting discursive "truths" about Mayas. Finally, I consider a sample of Luis de Lión's narrative production to argue that his work commences a veritable decolonial turn in Guatemalan discourses of Indigenous identity through the creation of a counter-discourse complicating the racial and gendered framing of Mayas in the nation, what I call his decolonial "grito/llanto". I further evidence the different, "other" versions of Maya identity de Lión offers in his "rewriting" of a Maya cosmovision and his intertextual plays with the *Popol Wuj*, the Maya classical book. For his contestation of "truths" of indigeneity, de Lión's work emerges as a complex, multifaceted, discursive emancipatory project for Mayas in Guatemalan textualities.

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Introduction

"One crystal clear morning…I decided to think…then I started dreaming, inventing this story I am telling you."

So explains the character "juan without history" in Luis de Lión's short story "The Inventor". Juan is a Maya man from a Guatemalan town who resists centuries-old racialized oppression and Indigenous epistemological erasure in Guatemala to craft a counter-discourse resisting Ladino imaginaries of national identity and indigeneity in Guatemala. This counter-discourse is rooted, however, in a Maya cosmovision. Thinking, dreaming, inventing, and telling according to an "other" knowledge, one problematizing Eurocentric, assimilative discourses – this is the theme of de Lión's short story. It is also the heart of de Lión's decolonial, emancipatory narrative project spanning two of the bloodiest and most complex decades in contemporary Guatemalan history: the 1960s - 1980s.

Luis de Lión was born José Luis de León Díaz in the town of San Juan del Obispo outside of the colonial capital of Antigua, in the department of Sacatepéquez, Guatemala on August 19, 1939. Born to a mestizo police officer who served during the Jorge Ubico dictatorship and a Maya-Kaqchikel mother, he has been called the first Indigenous writer in Guatemala. Although he grew up planting and harvesting corn on his family's small plot of land, given his father's profession, de Lión was able to attain an elementary and high school education, and eventually received a teaching certificate which permitted him to travel to different parts of the country and teach school children in both rural, Indigenous areas and urban settings. According to Francisco Morales Santos, de Lión moved from his town to an agrarian "parcelamiento" in the west of the country, to the

Port of San José in the South, to Escuintla and eventually to Sololá, Quetzaltenango and municipalities outside of Guatemala City to teach (30). De Lión's daughter Mayarí de León explains that her father's experiences teaching were central to his intellectual and social development, as they permitted him to see first-hand the economic and ethno-racial disparities among Maya and non-Maya students and communities. These experiences exposed him to the diversity of lives and situations in his country, and working with Indigenous populations undoubtedly resonated with him as a racialized subject who had experienced his own encounters with ethno-cultural and racial discrimination throughout his life, particularly in his migrations between the spaces of his small, Indigenous home town and Guatemala City.

It was in a town in the area of Sololá, near Lake Atitlán, where de Lión taught in a Kaqchikel community, instructing monolingual Maya - Kaqchikel children. Mayarí de León indicates that given this experience her father became increasingly interested in and concerned about ethno-cultural divisions in Guatemala, having seen up close and personal the gulf between rural Indigenous communities and Ladino centers of power primarily in Guatemala City and Antigua. During a conversation with Mayarí, she also revealed a fundamental misconception of Luis de Lión's work and linguistic identity: that he wrote in Spanish, although his native language was Kaqchikel. In fact, she notes, her father never learned Kaqchikel as a child, and only took a greater interest in learning it while he was teaching in the Sololá region. She clarifies that the first day he walked into the classroom and began speaking Castilian to the students, they did not understand. When they did respond, de Lión did not understand their Kaqchikel, and so he spent many hours trading languages with his students, helping them learn Castilian words while they simultaneously taught him words and concepts in Kaqchikel. Mayarí notes that

because of this, her father began connecting at a deeper level with his own Indigenous heritage, becoming increasingly interested in Maya history, languages and cosmovision.

As a result, according to Mario Roberto Morales, a fundamental identitarian conflict arose in Luis de Lión, in which he began to intellectually understand the effects of centuries of Criollo and later Ladino attempts at Indigenous assimilation and ethno-cultural erasure. In his literary work, according to Morales, de Lión reveals the identitarian conflict he came to understand as the "pain of ladinization" ("el dolor de la ladinización"), or in other words, the conflict of "ceasing to be Indian among Indians and not being able to cease being Indian among Ladinos [being in] a limbo, a no man's land […] a crisis of identity" ("un dejar de ser indio ante los indios y un no poder dejar de ser indio ante los ladinos […] un limbo, una tiera de nadie […] una crisis de identidad") (4). Francisco Morales Santos, however, sees his work less as a personal meditation on his own ladinization and more as a testimony, one that reflects his own reality coupled with the various realities of his country and those who lives in it, with a particular concern for the "world of the marginalized" ("el mundo de los marginados") – poor laborers; children facing racialized discrimination; Mayas targeted by the National Police, local Ladino officials, and Church representatives; Maya women facing racialized sexism from their own Maya husbands; the identitarian conflict of being and feeling Maya but living in a Ladino-controlled world, etc. (29).

It is also because of these experiences and intellectual realizations that when Luis de Lión finally settled permanently in Guatemala City to teach at the University of San Carlos, he became involved with Ladino writers such as Marco Antonio Flores, Mario Roberto Morales and José Mejía, while simultaneously meeting with Francisco Morales Santos, another writer of Maya origin with whom de Lión discussed Latin American literature, as well as their own pieces. During his time in Guatemala City, de Lión

became increasingly involved in political militancy work as a leader of the University's teachers union, as well as an advisor to leftist student movements on campus. He was a member of the PGT, the Guatemalan Workers Party, which went underground after the 1954 coup d'état initiating the Counterrevolutionary period lasting from 1954-1984, roughly. On May 15, 1984, at the height of Counterrevolutionary terror in the Guatemalan 36-year armed conflict, Luis de Lión was approached by several men who ushered him into an unmarked car. No word of his fate appeared until nearly 15 years later, in 1999, when a document known as the Diario Militar originating in the historical Archives of the National Police of Guatemala appeared listing the names of 183 disappeared people during the 1980s. In the Diario, the activities of death squads are detailed in codes and photos of the disappeared. Luis de Lión's photo appears alongside notes indicating that he had been tortured and assassinated three weeks after his disappearance by the National Police.

Despite his political militancy and connections to the Marxist left, and ultimately his death because of his political activity and writing, his daughter maintains that he did not subscribe to any particular dogma. While much of the criticism of his narrative, poetry and life tend to emphasize either his Maya heritage or his Marxist militancy, Mayarí de Leon and Francisco Santos Morales both insist that he simply didn't believe that the world could be viewed through one, and only one, lens. Given the complex time in which he was writing, with its many iterations of emancipatory possibilities, the pluridiscursive environment of the 1960s-1980s period shines through in his narrative work, as if reflecting light through a prism, casting different colors and shapes as possibilities for the marginalized's emancipation from multiple oppressions. The goal of the present study is to contextualize Luis de Lión's work according to the parallel, and

multiple, colors and shapes circulating in the time frame in which he produced his narrative and poetic work.

This work considers the diverse Guatemalan discourses of national identity and indigeneity from the colonial period to the mid-1980s in Ladino policy debates and literature in order to place Maya Guatemalan writer Luis de Lión's literary project as a political and epistemic decolonization of the social myths and discursive "truths" about indigeneity circulating in Guatemalan society and literature. My concern is with understanding Luis de Lión's literary work as it articulates a discursive, emancipatory decolonial project for Mayas in the nation that moves beyond approaches to Guatemalan revolution during the armed conflict period and rather signals a multifaceted revolutionary vision interlaced with a Maya cosmovision. I suggest that Luis de Lión's narrative reflects a counter-discourse that complicates the racial and gendered framing of Mayas in the nation, and I further evidence the different, "other" versions of Maya identity de Lión offers in his "rewriting" of a Maya cosmovision and his intertextual plays with the *Popol Wuj*, the Maya classical book containing the Maya genesis story.

Paramount to understanding the complexity of de Lión's decolonial narrative project is the context of the post-1954 Counterrevolutionary period in Guatemalan history. This is a period in which discourses of indigeneity and Guatemalan national identity that are rooted in the Invasion and the colonial period morph and change, taking new shapes throughout the second half of the 20th Century. For this reason, it becomes necessary to contextualize de Lión's narrative as decolonial in response to first, Criollo and later Ladino discourses forming what we will call social myths and discursive "truths" about Mayas, and second, in response to imaginaries of binaristic intersubjective cultural relationships that have emerged in different forms throughout Guatemalan history.

I organize this Introduction into three parts. The first section considers the context of Indigenous textualities in Guatemala and their relationship to the Contemporary Maya Movement. In this section, I discuss the emergence of both "New Maya Literature" and the trajectory of the Maya Movement toward the end of the Guatemalan armed conflict. I follow this discussion with a review of two critics' engagement of de Lión's narrative, and their assessment of the political and cultural work Luis de Lión's texts perform within the context of intersubjective, political and social relationships among different ethno-cultural groups in Guatemala, namely, Maya and Ladino in a broad sense. These two critics are Emilio del Valle Escalante and Arturo Arias, whose criticism I engage due to the theoretical framework through which they address his work -- the coloniality of power --, which is also the theoretical lens through which I consider de Lión's narrative. Following this discussion, I contextualize the present study in relation to Del Valle Escalante and Arias's work in order to show what I consider to be a gap in the scholarship, and to indicate how the present study addresses this lacuna.

In the second part of this Introduction, I address the key hypotheses and research questions guiding this project, and I simultaneously explain the research methods and theoretical framework through which I analyze both Criollo and Ladino political and literary discourses, as well as Luis de Lión's narrative work. It is important here to clarify my use of Western theories and methodologies in this decolonial reading of Guatemalan literature. On the one hand, it can be considered unconstructive to approach Indigenous textualities with Western concepts, given the potential for falling into the trap of recolonizing Native works through the conceptual lenses used to assess them. And while I believe this is true in many cases, I do not renounce using Western concepts and methods particularly when I find them capable of both deconstructing Western ontologies and articulating an ethical research agenda. Therefore, I believe that the theories and

methods of Western thinkers such as Michel Foucault and Cornelous Castoriadis, in this study, complement my theorization of the colonial matrix of power, the primary lens through which I approach discourses of Indigeneity and national identity in Guatemala. I think of these Western thinkers as "ex-centric" in the sense that they articulate European critical theory emerging out of poststructuralism, and reconsider Western ontological "truths" that contribute to the epistemological hierarchization of "Europe" and "Other" discursive spaces. In this regard, the sections describing my methodology and theoretical framework perform a conversation among European "ex-centric" theorists, Latin American decolonial thinkers, and Indigenous writers. That said, I articulate this part of the Introduction in order to define key questions and terms that I work with throughout the study. I also indicate the significance or value of the present reading, hinting at the new knowledge or perspective on Guatemalan discourses of indigeneity and national identity that will emerge with this study.

Finally, I include chapter summaries for the three chapters of this text, and follow up with a personal comment regarding my interest in the topics I address, as well as my personal approach to analyzing Indigenous and non-Indigenous discourses in Guatemala as a person who is not native to the country or to the identitarian groups at issue in this dissertation. I explain the problematic space of my own positionality while also indicating my desire to think, read and analyze from a stance of socio-political and ethno-cultural solidarity with the writers and thinkers promoting a decolonization of Guatemalan discourses.

Indigenous Movements, Indigenous Textualities

Thinking about Luis de Lión's narrative work also means thinking about the broader field of Indigenous textual production emerging in the second half of the 20th

Century in Latin America. During this period, in most Latin American countries with significant Indigenous populations, Indigenous textualities began to appear in conjunction with sociopolitical movements struggling for Native rights in various contexts. While the explanations behind the development of these narratives are varied, many Indigenous texts function as responses "from the margins" to state practices and policies of Indigenous epistemological erasure or national and international capitalist pressures on Indigenous lands and resources. During the second half of the 20th Century, for example, we witnessed the production of numerous testimonies and later novels and poetry that develop out of Indigenous political engagements and conflicts with the state. Domitilia Barrios de Chungara's 1977 testimony *Let me Speak*, for example, reveals the struggle of Aymara/Quechua miners and union members with the oppressive Bolivian state primarily in the 1960s-1970s. For her part, some five years later, Rigoberta Menchu's testimony *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia* (1983) centers an Indigenous voice from the margins recounting the brutality of the Ladino Guatemalan state vis-à-vis the local Maya populations, and subsequent Maya resistance to state violence.

In the 1990s and 2000s, we witnessed additional examples of public crises with indigeneity at the center: the emergence of the Zapatistas in Chiapas in 1994, and the ensuing reaction of the Mexican state to combat the insurgency with a wide array of developmentalist models and projects; the 2000 Cochabamba Water War drawing attention to capitalist neo-colonialism, and the complex conflicts among actors such as the state, foreign governments, international financial instructions, and local Indigenous populations. Cultural production as a means to speak from the margins of national and

international power builds out of, and / or accompanies, these kinds of political movements. As Marisol de la Cadena notes, we have seen in the past 30 years the development of Indigenous movements that are social, political, economic and cultural, and signal the emergence of Indigenous "cosmopolitics" (de la Cadena 2010) in Latin America (Abya Yala); that is, Native politics and cultural production rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing and being that counter the assimilative efforts of modern /colonial power. These cosmopolitical movements and the textualities accompanying them reflect decolonizing practices and processes in their reassertion of Indigenous rights to existence and self-expression.

As a result of the above, contemporary Indigenous literatures have been gaining traction as counter-discursive, and "from the margins" literary expressions, edging their way into the Western-dominated cultural "center". The relationship between Indigenous political movements and the emergence of Indigenous literature is inextricable, and it is in this context that we can understand the rise of New Maya Literature within the broader Maya Movement in Guatemala.

The Contemporary Maya Movement

The Contemporary Maya Movement has its antecedents in the 1970s when Mayas became increasingly active in the Guatemalan armed conflict in various ways. Such participation, which will be discussed further in Chapter One, led to a progressive articulation of the need to reaffirm and develop a Maya conceptualization of cultural identity and history, as well as a critique of the experiences of economic and ethnic

inequality facing Mayas in the nation. However, in the 1970s and 1980s, state violence increasingly targeted Mayas as "communists" and subversives, resulting in massacres of entire Indigenous villages, disappearances and the torture of anyone thought to be associated with the revolutionary left. In this period, the initial wellspring of Maya activism on cultural and economic rights from the 1970s was subdued in the first part of the 1980s. After 1985 and into the 1990s with the end of the armed conflict and the signing of the 1996 Peace Accords, what we can consider the contemporary Maya Movement emerged again and stronger than before (Calder 92).

Edward Fischer and R. McKenna Brown explain that scholars and activists alike tend to agree on the roots of Maya ethnic revival, which include historical, economic, social, political and cultural antecedents.[1] Conversely, the terminology used to describe the development in the mid-1980s-1990s of the Maya Movement range from this more common name, to "Maya Nationalism", "Pan-Mayanismo", "Maya Development", "Maya Resurgence" or the "Pan-Maya Movement", among others.[2] Naming issues aside, while there is some disagreement on the long and short term goals of the movement in general, and while this movement has also been considered "diffuse" by some scholars (Davis 344), Fischer and Brown argue in their review of essays by such thinkers of the movement as Demetrio Cojtí Cuxil, Sam Colop, and Irma Otzoy, that current Maya activism "seeks a culture-based solution" to Maya disenfranchisement in a two-pronged approach: "to work for the conservation and resurrection of elements of Maya culture while promoting governmental reform within the framework of the [1985] Guatemalan constitution and international law" (13). At the center of the Maya Movement is linguistic

rights, as Maya languages "represent a uniquely authentic cultural possession for their speakers", but a "peaceful solution to their problems" through the Guatemalan constitutional framework and international law are also fundamental to their demands (14). These "problems" and their solutions are different, however, for the diverse proponents of Maya cultural activism, and range from issues of state policies of Maya assimilation to Ladino "culture", Ladino political and economic control and tutelage, internal colonialism, land rights, human rights addressing dress and language education, economic development and opportunities, and even autonomy in the exercise of legislative powers in a context of decentralization and a pact between Ladino and Maya peoples (Cojtí Cuxil "Politics" 20-28).

For others, the Maya Movement responds to a colonial situation based in oppression, racism, exploitation and marginality, and finds that its "primary objective is, clearly, a change in the structures of the nation-state, proposing a new model implying an admission of Mayas as a differentiated political entity in relation to other cultural experiences" (del Valle Escalante *Nacionalismos* 29-30). Echoing this assertion, Demetrio Cojtí Cuxil, one of the best known members of the Maya Movement, has asserted that a primary demand for Mayas is to be recognized as their own nation (1997 45). Some scholars, nonetheless, claim that increased activism surrounding the recognition and protection of the identities and rights of Indigenous populations has caused fear within the dominant Ladino sector "that the Maya Movement would lead to a fragmented and nonunitary Guatemalan state" (Davis 344). These fears emerged in the non-Indigenous sector, despite "several leaders of the Maya Movement [having]

disclaimed that they wanted to separate themselves from the Guatemalan nation or create another form of 'exclusive nationalism'" (ibid). Despite some disunity within the movement, in the mid-1990s and through and after the the creation of the 1996 Peace Accords, Mayas were able to influence proposals for intercultural and bilingual education, education reform, the appointment of prominent Maya educators and scholars into cultural ministry positions, and to a limited degree, through the Indigenous Peoples Accord, the formulation of a national poverty reduction strategy (349-353). While the Maya Movement has made headway in these areas politically, another aspect of the increased activism surrounding Indigenous rights and protections comes through literary production, in what Arturo Arias has called "New Maya Literature".

Arias evidences that a "new geopolitics of knowledge" that blends grassroots knowledge with political activism emerged in the later years of the 20th century and continues to articulate itself in literary discursivities produced by Maya writers; these textualities are part of a literary corpus that he calls New Maya Literature ("Afterword" 96). In the relationship between Indigenous textualities and social movements, Indigenous writers produce knowledge that becomes "operative for contemporary social movements" because it "inverts knowledge/power relationships" which in turn shatter the assumption that knowledge is produced solely by "Westerncentric academics", and, here I would add, more generally, non-Indigenous writers and thinkers (ibid). In Guatemala, this is particularly significant given first Criollo and later Ladino monopolies on knowledge production within the Guatemalan Ladino literary canon, and further, within discursivities of identity and indigeneity articulated in and by the Guatemalan state.

In this sense, New Maya Literature engages in both political and cultural work, as it affects contemporary social movements by producing cultural artifacts asserting epistemological tenets aligning with the discourses of Indigenous rights and respect for Maya ways of knowing and being in the world. But further, in terms of the politics of the cultural work Maya writers engage in, textualities become vehicles for Indigenous self-actualization and for remembering and redressing what Arias calls "traumatic events" – such as colonialism, disenfranchisement, and epistemological erasure, to name a few – in "imaginary spaces", thus allowing for an Indigenous "reworking of historical trauma" (2007 78). Finally, New Maya Literature provides "a continuous understanding of an alternative code of ethics", one Arias sees as rooted in the Maya cosmovision written in the *Popol Wuj* (ibid).

Emancipatory Project or Maya Nationalism?

Given the emergence of New Maya Literature primarily with the second iteration of the Maya Movement in the 1990s, the issue of how to place Luis de Lión's work produced in the 1960s-1980s reveals the ways in which critics have imagined his narrative vis-à-vis New Maya Literature. Arias considers de Lión as a "pioneer" of New Maya Literature, given he was writing before the emergence of the 1990s contemporary Maya Movement, and considering that his narrative attends to many of the characteristics describing New Maya Literature listed above. Further, Arias asserts that the 1985 publication of de Lión's novel *Time Commences in Xibalbá* (written in 1972, but

published posthumously), "seemed to open the floodgates" for subsequent Maya literary production ("Afterword" 95). Arias explains:

> Soon after [the 1985 publication of *Time Commences in Xibalbá*], the poetry of K'iche' poet Humberto Ak'abal was circulating to great international acclaim, and Gaspar Pedro González published *La otra cara* (A Mayan Life, 1995), originally written in Q'anjob'al, in 1992, the quincentennial year of the Spanish arrival to the Americas. Meanwhile, Victor Montejo, still residing in the United States where he fled after his near-assassination in 1982, began publishing novellas, testimonials, poetry, and then novels in Jakalteko (Popti'), translated into both English and Spanish. By the early 1990s, critics were already problematizing emerging Maya works. By the time the first Maya conference took place in 1996, the same year the peace treaty was signed, contemporary Maya literature was firmly established (Arias "Afterword" 95).

If then, as Arias suggests, de Lión's novel is the "pioneering novel" of contemporary Maya literature, it is worthwhile to spend a moment thinking about how it has been critiqued as an example of the "new geopolitics of knowledge" Maya writers reveal in their writing.

For Emilio del Valle Escalante, the purpose of de Lión's work is to "demystify and disarticulate traditional and stereotypical constructions of the Indigenous world in indigenista discourse" ("desmitificar y desarticular construcciones tradicionales y estereotipadas del mundo indígena en el discurso indigenista") ("Discursos" 547). In this

sense, de Lión's novel deconstructs the articulations of indigeneity of previous representations of Mayas in indigenista writing in Guatemala. Further, Del Valle Escalante indicates that his work presents an "ideology that combines literature's rhetorical language with a political militancy that serves to counteract the coloniality of power and organizes an antiracist and anticolonial movement" ("ideologia que combine el lenguaje retórico de la literature, con una militancia política que sirva para contrarestar la colonialidad del poder y organizer un movimiento antirracista y anticolonial") (*Nacionalismos* 64). As such, his writing presents a different version of Mayanity in textualities that counters indigenista imaginaries of Mayas by asserting a Maya-specific worldview in the context of a political movement that is decolonial in nature. Arias's reading is similar, however he first specifies de Lión's presentation of Mayas as a response to Ladino assertions of Indigenous people as "nonsubjects excluded from conventional discourse" in both the Ladino canon and more generally articulated by the Guatemalan state ("Afterword" 111). Arias then explains that with de Lión's novel, "we begin to witness the rebirth of a process that testifies to the knowledge, skill, value, experience, and authority of Maya subjects employing fascinating rhetorical devices to engage coloniality and rearticulate their subjectivities within a decolonial framework" (ibid). Therefore, Arias's view of his work also specifies resistive discourses that are political because they articulate a Maya epistemology and vision of Mayas as agents in their own lives. Along these lines, Arias further explains that *Time Commences in Xibalbá* as the "pioneer novel" of a New Maya Literature, "elaborates the epistemology of a decolonizing project that signals the end of Ladinization as an alternative for Maya

agency" (70). Both Arias and Del Valle Escalante situate de Lión's novel squarely within the framework of a decolonial project, a trait associated with New Maya Literature.

The difference between these two critics lies in the characterization of de Lión's literature as asserting a Maya nationalism. Del Valle Escalante argues that by challenging hegemonic constructions, "de Lión sets out to articulate a Maya nationalism as a political alternative for an anticolonial and antirracist struggle for Guatemala" ("de Lión propone articular un nacionalismo maya como alternativa política para una lucha anticolonial y antirracista para Guatemala") ("Discursos" 547). Arias, on the other hand, tends to disagree with the assertion of a Maya nationalism in de Lión's work, stating that he does not "see his literature as inscribed within the parameters of political mobilization per se", although he notes "I do see his own militancy in the PGT working in that direction" (Arias *Footsteps* forthcoming). Rather, Arias visualizes his work "more as de-centered experimentations whose plurality of voices, rhythms, and other innovative textual strategies that correspond to alternative forms of knowledge inscribed more within affect (and literary knowledge) than in ideology" (ibid). At the same time, Arias does acknowledge that the novel denotes "absolute violence" in Fanonian terms, which corresponds to "both to Javier Sanjinés's concept of 'viscerality,' and to Nelson Maldonado-Torres's depiction of the logical consequences of what he labels the ego conquiro", as components of coloniality, which "more often than not places subjects of color under a murderous gaze that inevitably extracts an equally forceful reaction" (ibid). And here Arias concedes that "it is in this sense that Emilio del Valle Escalante could ultimately be right":

> De Lión's fiction does not stage a process leading in the direction of an emancipatory revolution. But it certainly represents the chaos and violence encompassing colonialized beings, and there is evidence that it would appear nearly impossible to eliminate these constraints other than through violence of one form or another (Arias *Footsteps* forthcoming).

In this regard, Arias sees as "nearly impossible" the decolonization of colonized beings and the barriers to full Indigenous agency without some form of violence as suggested in Luis de Lión's work. While both authors view a resistance to the coloniality of power, or decoloniality, as central to understanding the epistemic and political implications of de Lión's work, the two critics differ in their assessments because Del Valle Escalante sees an assertion of a Maya Nationalism as a political alternative to racism and coloniality, and Arias sees to some extent a suggested violent resistance, but more, a response to the chaos of colonized, racialized beings. This difference, I believe, can be attributed to a gap in the criticism of his work.

First, we have to think about what Maya nationalism indicates. I would argue that contemporary Maya nationalism imagines Maya peoples as 1) unified, and 2) autonomous. For the former, Brown and Fischer argue that the contemporary Maya Movement:

> Promotes association [of Mayas] based on linguistic groups and then, building on that base, hopes to foster a pan-Maya, even pan-Native American, identity. By doing so, it hopes to *peacefully* unite Guatemalan Indians into a power base that can exert a proportional influence on

> Guatemalan politics and so claim social and economic justice for all Maya people (Brown and Fischer 15) (my emphasis).

For the latter component of Maya nationalism, following Cojtí Cuxil, we are left with a struggle enabling Mayas to exercise their political and cultural rights in an autonomous, decentralized fashion based in a relationship of equality with the Ladino state – a demand and a vision that is fundamentally resistive, yet peaceful ("Politics" 27-28). Yet, both Arias and del Valle Escalante acknowledge the latent violence in de Lión's work, as we will see again in Chapter Three. Given this contradiction between the contemporary Maya Movement as peaceful and the suggested violence in de Lión's work, I would argue that Maya nationalism as a term for thinking through de Lión's narrative is problematic. This is because it imagines his work within a post-war context of the Contemporary Maya movement, and thus is anachronistic. I do not see the violence in de Lión's work as promoting a Maya nationalism as a political alternative. Further, while I do see de Lión as a "pioneering" writer of New Maya Literature, I do not believe that he is also a "pioneer" because he intuits notions of Maya nationalism that emerge in the late 1980s-1990s contemporary Maya Movement.

The gap in the criticism of his work lies in the lack of a critical examination of the context in which de Lión was writing and the multiple revolutionary discourses circulating during that time period in Guatemala. Given he was writing some nearly 10-20 years before the emergence of contemporary ideas of Maya nationalism and the Contemporary Maya Movement itself, this study positions his narrative in the context of the time in which he was writing and instead considers his work in relation to the various

discourses of indigeneity, national identity, class-based and culture-based revolution within the Counterrevolutionary period of 1960s-1980s Guatemala.

Additionally, like the above-mentioned critics, I believe we can consider de Lión's work as articulating a "demystification and disarticulation of traditional and stereotypical constructions" of Mayas in indigenista discourse, as Del Valle Escalante argues, and these, thinking through Arias, do indeed result in a "counter-discourse to racialized subalterity" in Guatemalan textualities. However, the present study adds to these assertions a detailed analysis of de Lión's "disarticulation" beyond indigenista discourse by investigating political, academic and narrative discourses regarding indigeneity and national identity from the colonial period forward. With this analysis, we can trace in a broader genealogy the "traditional and stereotypical" discourses imagining Mayas in the broad sweep of Guatemalan politics and textualies.

Finally, following both Arias and Del Valle Escalante, I do consider de Lión's work within the context of the coloniality of power and decoloniality, however I also consider particular manifestations of coloniality which have gone unaddressed in previous considerations of de Lións work, such as the ego conquiro subjectivity, the coloniality of spirituality, the coloniality of gender, and the decolonial "grito/llanto". Through these additional lenses of coloniality/decoloniality, the ways in which de Lión's narrative project asserts a pluri-voiced, multifaceted political and epistemic emancipatory gesture for Mayas becomes evident. This analysis, thus, sees de Lión as undeniably a "pioneer" of New Maya Literature, but resituates his decolonial narrative within the

context of the Counterrevolutionary period, instead of within the context of the Contemporary Maya Movement.

Genealogy

In order to place de Lión's narrative in the context of the time in which he was writing, and in relation to the various discourses of indigeneity and national identity circulating in Guatemala, my first hypothesis is that discourses of indigeneity and national identity appear in political and social debates and literature throughout time, producing stereotypes and images of both non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples that morph and change according to the historical context in which they emerge. In order to track these changes in the first two chapters of this study, I take a genealogical approach to discourse analysis.

I follow Foucault's notion of genealogy as a form of history "which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects etc." (Foucault "Truth and Power" 117). In analyzing a genealogy of knowledges and discourses, we can see how over time and throughout history, knowledge is constructed as if to signal the primacy of a unified truth. And here I indicate "as if" because genealogical studies in fact demonstrate the inconsistencies and divots in the terrain of history making that problematize the very existence and possibility of unified truths. Thus, Foucauldian genealogy aims rather at deconstructing that which has been assumed to be unified and continuous within a chronological, linear "history" rooted in a determined point of departure in which the original "truth" is supposedly located (Foucault "Order of

Discourse" 69). In effect, through genealogy we can trace "the constitution of the subject across history which has led us up to the modern concept of the self", instead of understanding truths, selves, or subjects as if they were timeless and given (Foucault "About the Beginning" 202). Thus, we can identify discourses as mutable phenomena that transform and bend according to the moment in which they emerge, conditioned by their locality and specificity, and producing an understanding of the present: of present knowledge, of the present subject, of the present self. Further, with genealogy as a method we can clarify exactly what has been "given to us as universal, necessary, obligatory", and find in its deconstruction the ways in which knowledge serves as fabricated constraints on what we can believe; into limitations as to what we can know ("Enlightenment" 45). In this context, I argue in this study that tracing discourses of indigeneity and national identity in Guatemalan social and political debates, and in literary discourses as well, reveals contradictory stereotypes and assumptions about identitarian groups in Guatemala that become naturalized in the social imaginary as universal, obligatory and necessary knowledge or truths. Chapters One and Two of this dissertation unveil in a methodical way, and for the first time, social myths and discursive "truths" surrounding national identity and Guatemala's so called "Indian problem".

Social Myths and Discursive Truths in the Service of Power

Out of this last assertion, another hypothesis emerges: that through genealogy we can identify certain discourses producing knowledge that operate in the service of power, and specifically in the case of Guatemala, in the function of Criollo and later Ladino

power over Indigenous subjects and communities. This "knowledge" becomes naturalized into what I call "social myths" and "discursive truths". In what follows, I clarify how I place these terms theoretically and work with them in the context of the above-stated hypothesis.

In the political and social discourses addressed in these chapters, I examine the emergence and expression of "social myths", or socially constructed imagined characteristics of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples that shape and/or justify social and political power relations in Guatemala. Following Cornelius Castoriadis, we can relate "social myths" to "imagined social significations" (73). The invented symbolic order of a society, the illusions it creates and maintains, are often (though not always) crafted by means of discursive practices; that is, by "significations emerging from the creative potential of human collectivities" in "language, customs, norms, and techniques [that] cannot 'be explained' by factors external to human collectivities" (72). Human collectivities through their creative potential create significations that "refer neither to reality nor to logic", which is why this theorist calls them imagined social significations (74). They are products of imagination, they are dreamed up. He further clarifies that when we speak of the State in particular, "we're talking about an institution animated by imaginary significations" and once created, both social imaginary significations and institutions "crystalize or solidify" into what Castoriadis calls the instituted social imagery (73). This in turn "assures a society's continuity" and the "repetition of forms", which "thencefore rule men's lives" until a slow historical change or radical new creation modifies it (ibid). Be means of the instituted social imaginary, "social myths" become

constructed as imagined characteristics of Mayas, but also of non-Indigenous Guatemalan subjectivities through discourses emerging out of political and academic debates, and policy discussions.[3]

In Chapter One, I consider that the social myths elaborated in political debates and policy discourses imagine Guatemalan national identity as a binaristic conflict between Criollos and later Ladinos, on one end of the spectrum, and Mayas on the other. This discussion will then evidence my hypothesis that a binaristic understanding of social relations is employed as a means of maintaining non-Indigenous hegemony in the nation through a process of discursive othering. This othering, in turn, depends on the construction of a socio-political and economic imaginary of Mayas according to stereotypes and unproven or fictional traits. These include discourses of Mayas as either "glorious Indians of the past" or "miserable Indians of the present"; an obstacle to national development due to their "backwardness" and "incivility"; or, more basically, as a "problem" threatening the progress of the modern Guatemalan nation. [4] Two issues emerge here when I treat these "social myths".

The first issue is that the cornerstone of these social myths is the racialization of Mayas by Criollos and Ladinos as the latter's strategy to fashion and maintain political and economic hegemony in Guatemalan social relations. We can understand racialization as the adscription of racial identities and stereotypes to one racial group (Mayas) from another (Criollos, and later Ladinos) that form a relationship of dominance and marginalization.[5] Racialization works to maintain the dominant group in power by imagining the non-dominant group according to these racial identities, identities that the

non-dominant group does not use to define themselves. In this study, I consider racialization a central force in the production of social myths of Indigenous peoples in Guatemala, and I identify racialization as a component of the colonial matrix of power, which I will discuss later on in this Introduction.

Second, the social myths constructing Mayas, and particularly the image of Mayas as either "glorious Indians of the past" or "miserable Indians of the present" is especially problematic, I assert, because it is employed within the Eurocentric drive toward "nation" and operates according to a Eurocentric vision of linear time. To address this issue in both Chapters One and Two, I refer to an argument C. Javier Sanjinés puts forth in his study *Embers of the Past* (Duke UP, 2013). Sanjinés asserts that the "progressive course of modernity" based in Western historicism seeks to undertake the task of nation-building in part by advancing a "totalizing view of reality" rooted in rationalism, and linear and progressive history; such a view imagines time as moving from the past to the present in its progression toward the future identitarian goal of a homogenous, national 'we' (19, 98). As this dissertation will show, for Criollo and Ladino policy makers and political thinkers throughout Guatemalan history, national identity is constructed through an identitarian progression from a binaristic Maya-Ladino state of interethnic relations/conflict to an ethno-culturally homogenous national "we". In this progression, the ethno-cultural differences of distinct communities are absorbed into a single, national ethno-cultural identity. An outcome of this "progressional" thinking, rooted in Eurocentric notions of linear time, is a discourse imagining Mayas along a linear trajectory as "past" and "present" Mayas. The past Maya is positive yet strange, a

‘glorious’ Indian with a noble past. The image of the present-day Maya stands in absolute contrast, as present day Mayas are for the most part considered despicable, lazy shells of their once-great ancestors. The linear progression here moves us from one iteration of Guatemalan indigeneity to another. Since this evolution signals a progressive emptying of Mayaness out of Maya subjects (from great Mayas to declined Mayas), we can wonder about the implications for the future Maya if the Maya of the present are but a shell of their historical past subjectivities. Specifically, if the future identitarian goal of the nation is rooted in the bourgeois desire to create a homogenous, national “we”, then the progressional thinking naming Maya subjectivities on a linear progression of time assumes that future Mayas in the imminent national “we” will not be Mayas at all, but rather will have been totally erased of Mayanity and assimilated to Ladino identitarian ways of knowing and being in the world. Imagining Mayas in terms of a progressive decline suggests that through discourse and ethno-cultural policy, Mayas will assimilate, integrate or “Ladinize” so as to conform to the Eurocentric model of nationalism and belonging within the Guatemalan state. While we see these discourses emerge in policy debates as “social myths”, I will dissect in further detail the issue of Eurocentrism, linear time and the dichotomy of the “past and present Indian” as these concepts become encoded in literature in Chapter Two.

In Chapter Two, I turn to literary discourses of indigeneity in Guatemala to understand how the social myths discussed in Chapter One configure social imaginaries that through discursive practices become encrypted into and naturalized in narrative. First, though, we must acknowledge that discursive “truths” are the result of human

creation, akin to Castoriadis's "imaginary significations". We can trace this assertion through Nietzsche and Foucault.

For Nietzsche, "truth" is a product of discursive enhancement and embellishment; "truths" are the metaphors that become, over time, knowledge. Nietzsche presents the following key question, along with a response:

> What then is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms -- in short, a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people: truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that is what they are; metaphors which are worn out and without sensuous power; coins which have lost their pictures and now matter only as metal, no longer as coins (46-47).

Thus Nietzsche sees in discursivities a reflection of human relationships creatively translated into text as "truth", albeit they are, in reality, simply illusions. I would add, however, that although these truths may well be "worn out" or emptied of an "original" signification based in a specific moment and locality, as "truths" accepted by populations over time, they maintain their potential for shaping power relations. In the Guatemalan case, the "truths" about indigeneity and national identity studied in Chapter Two fall back on the Criollo and later Ladino drive to maintain cultural and economic hegemony, or more simply, power.

Here we can return to Foucault, who imagines the link between power and discourses of truth. He asserts:

> Basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterize and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association ("Two Lectures" 93).

This exercise of power, as linked to what Foucault calls the "will to truth", is the need to have, know and disseminate a singular, uncontested certainty at the expense of discursive diversity, or at the expense of "subjugated knowledges" ("Two Lectures" 81). The will to truth is the "prodigious machinery designed to exclude", or the institutionally supported and reinforced "pressure exerted as a power of constraint […] on other discourses" ("Order of Discourse" 55; 56). For Foucault, the link between power and the production of discursive "truths" can be understood as power producing knowledge. He clarifies, "that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations", and therefore power/knowledge function together and are ultimately inextricable ("Discipline and Punish" 550).

Because discursive "truths" (knowledge) ultimately link to the desire for power, when not power itself, Foucault warns that when analyzing discourse, the critic must

conceive of it as "a violence" done unto things, or, at least, as "a practice" imposed on them ("Order of Discourse" 52; 67). In Guatemalan discourse, identifying the social myths, social imaginaries and discursive "truths" in the Criollo and Ladino genealogy of texts elucidates how changing desires, the will to power, and power/knowledge impact discursive formulations of indigeneity and national identity over time and according to specific socio-political and historical circumstances. The "violences" done upon the "subjugated knowledges" of Mayas and upon Maya subjectivities through power/knowledge, however, must be further contextualized in the local, that is, in the context of a peripheral society that experienced colonization. For this reason, to approach Guatemalan discursivities, I analyze power/knowledge through the colonial matrix of power, or the coloniality of power.

Coloniality / Decoloniality

Another central issue addressed in this study considers the ways in which social myths and discursive "truths" reflect the colonial matrix of power in Guatemala. Particularly in Chapter Two, I consider key concepts from the coloniality/decolonial working group to analyze the production of power/knowledge by Ladino authors, and the ways in which power/knowledge frames Maya and Criollo/Ladino subjectivities over time. In Chapter Three, I hypothesize that de Lión's work articulates a decolonial narrative project which seeks to draw attention to the coloniality of power, and that, at the same time, decolonizes Guatemalan narrative through a multifaceted counter-discourse based in a Maya cosmovision. In what follows, I will briefly discuss the colonial matrix

of power (coloniality of power) in Guatemala, and then I will turn to specific terms that I employ in the present study, such as the coloniality of being, knowledge, gender and spirituality; the "ego conquiro" subjectivity; and the decolonial "grito/llanto".

The construction of social imaginaries through discursive practices links back to the will to power of the hegemonic sector of society, exercising power in a manner analogous to what Quijano denominated the "coloniality of power," that is, the existence and continual production of identities based on the notion of race; the hierarchized relation of inequality between "European" and "non-European" identities, and the domination of the former over the latter; and the construction of mechanisms of social domination designed to preserve this historical foundation of social classification.[6] Coloniality as such refers to the vestiges of Spanish colonialism's racial classification and labor exploitation of non-Euro descended populations in an effort to maintain binaristic, hierarchical intersubjective relationships between, in Guatemala, Criollos and Ladinos on one hand, and Mayas on the other. Coloniality emerges in the period following formal colonialism and remains alive in contemporary Latin American societies in a plurality of ways. In what follows, I explore those ways that are most pertinent to the current study.

Following Quijano, C. Javier Sanjinés explains that the colonial matrix of power can be understood as an "enterprise" working on five levels of human experience:

> (1) the economic, particularly the expropriation of land, the exploitation of work, and the control of finances; (2) the political, primarily the control of authority; (3) the civic, especially the control of gender and sexuality; (4)

> the epistemic, that is, the origins and subsequent control of knowledge; and (5) the subjective/ personal, that is, the control of subjectivity.[7]

In this definition, coloniality impacts, in our case, Mayas at all levels of being, from external controls on land and politics to control of the interior – epistemology and subjectivity, and even to the internalization of coloniality (an understanding of self as inferior) through the control of subjectivity. Coloniality as a regulatory "violence" is all-encompassing for the racialized subject, affecting key parts of his or her life.

I argue in this dissertation that we can think about the operation of coloniality in discourses of national identity and indigeneity as manifesting in several of the above-mentioned fashions: it works through the interrelated colonialit(ies), in broad terms, of being (*colonialidad del ser* – the subjective/personal) and of knowledge (*colonialidad del saber* – the epistemic), which reflect a racialization of both Maya subjectivity and epistemology at their core and in their interrelation.

Nelson Maldonado-Torres describes that the coloniality of being relates to the lived experience of colonization and its impact in language; and the coloniality of knowledge relates to the roles of epistemology and knowledge creation in the reproduction of colonial regimes of power ("Colonialidad del ser" 130). He sees these forms of coloniality as interrelated and as surviving formal colonialism because they live on in "culture, common sense and in the self-image of peoples, in subjects' aspirations" ("Colonialidad del ser" 131). Thus coloniality of being and knowledge control the knowledge and being of racialized subjects and becomes inscribed in Maya ways of

being and knowing in the world. All three of the chapters of this study address how these colonialities become articulated in Guatemalan discourse and policy.

Quijano understands the coloniality of knowledge as contributing to the coloniality of being, and sees it as a result of the hierarchical imposition of Western knowledge on "other" epistemologies in the modern/colonial system (537). Quijano argues that with the Invasion of the New World, "a historically new region was constituted as a new geocultural *id*-entity: Europe—more specifically, Western Europe" (ibid). Western Europe's monopoly on power within the modern/colonial system, through the spread of global capitalism, and the racialization of non-Western subjectivities resulted in a Eurocentric imaginary of global relations as the "truth", or in other words, as the natural fact of European superiority. This in turn saw "the success of Western Europe in becoming the center of the modern world-system" and along with it, the development "within Europeans [of] a trait common to all colonial dominators and imperialists, ethnocentrism" (541). Ethnocentrism, thus, as the critique of "other" ethno-cultural communities based solely on Western European values and standards, informed the exertion of exclusionary power/knowledge on subjugated knowledges worldwide. Eurocentric ethnocentrism thus continues to enact an epistemological erasure of non-European knowledges as inherently inferior, imagining intercommunity and intersubjective relations according to a superior-inferior binary. This, as we will see, is characteristic of Guatemala discourses of identity that imagine Criollos and Ladinos as existing in a superior subject position vis-à-vis inferior Mayas.

But further, the inferiorization of the racialized being and knowledge cedes to discursive "truths" of Mayas as, following Agamben, depoliticized, "bare-life subjectivities", and in some cases, following Abdul JanMohammed, as "death-bound subjects" –manifestations of racialized subjectivities that I argue emerge in Criollo and Ladino policy debates and literature to justify the hierarchical identitarian binary. I evidence, however, that de Lión's work grapples with these subjective manifestations in his own literature as a meditation on the coloniality of being and knowledge (epistemic erasure) from the space of an "other" knowledge.

The next major incarnation of coloniality we find in the genealogical work in this project hones in on spirituality, another form of coloniality of knowledge given that spiritualty too is epistemological understanding – however, in a Maya case, it could also be an aspect of the coloniality of being given the relationship between beings, intersubjective equilibrium and complementarity among humans and other natural elements within a Maya cosmovision. In this study, therefore, I suggest that the vestiges of discriminatory colonial power relationships based on spiritual beliefs and practices, or in other words, the reverberations of the spiritual conquest of Indigenous populations through Catholicism, can be called spiritual coloniality, as its own manifestation of coloniality that is both of knowledge and of being. With spiritual coloniality, Catholicism functions as a conqueror in and of itself, since Catholicism and agents of it attempted, and succeeded in many (but certainly not all) cases, to overcome Maya spiritual beliefs with Catholic tenets, such that Mayas were forced to abandon their belief systems and accept Catholicism as the "true" religion. The last chapter of this study in particular will

offer new insights as to Luis de Lión's narrative meditation on spiritual coloniality, and in particular, on Catholicism's attempted colonization of Indigenous belief systems.

Finally, in Chapter Three, I discuss the coloniality of gender appearing in Luis de Lión's work. This enterprise of coloniality, as mentioned above, is seen as a "civic" coloniality according to Sanjinés and Quijano. They thus appear to relate the coloniality of gender to the perceived activities of individuals in relation to the space in which they live. While I agree with this assessment, and tend to relate their assertion to biopolitics, which I discuss below, I also believe that the coloniality of gender is also an enterprise that works as part of the coloniality of being, since I see sexuality and personal gender identification as relating to the interior spaces of subjectivity.

For her part, María Lugones imagines gender coloniality as the double subjectification of women of color based on Eurocentric racism and sexism, however she also notes the potential for men of color's complicity with the Eurocentric patriarchy to suppress racialized women (8, 13). This incarnation of coloniality is particularly useful for understanding the internalization of gender coloniality by Maya men, as well as the racialized sexism facing Maya women by Indigenous and non-Indigenous men alike in Luis de Lión's work. This discussion, found in Chapter Three, marks the first time de Lión's work has been considered in terms of gender coloniality.

The coloniality of being, knowledge, spirituality and gender all rotate on the axis of Eurocentric epistemic foundations supporting the hegemony of European power/knowledge. As power/knowledge is crafted through discourse, and discourse creatively invents imagined social significations constituting the instituted social

imaginary, at the heart of these forms of coloniality is the colonization of a Maya imaginary by a Eurocentric colonizer imaginary. Santiago Castro-Gómez most succinctly and clearly defines coloniality according to this basic logic. For this critic, "coloniality consists of a colonization of the imaginary of dominated peoples" and the imposition of "a mystified image of [European] models of production and meaning" (281). In the context of this way of knowing coloniality, I propose that the violence of the social myths and discursive "truths" of indigeneity and national identity circulating within the colonial matrix of power in Guatemala connotes a continuous re-conquest and re-colonization of Maya epistemology by Criollos and later Ladinos. While the re-conquest and re-colonization of Maya epistemology in State policy and social debates articulates itself through biological, anthropological, indigenista and revolutionary frameworks, in the Criollo and Ladino literature we study in Chapter Two, the primary trope of coloniality as re-conquest takes depends upon the ego conquiro subjectivity.

In the study of narrative discourses in Chapter Two, I recur to the figure of the Criollo/Ladino ego conquiro subjectivity as it is conceived of by Argentine-Mexican writer and philosopher Enrique Dussel, and Puerto Rican critic Nelson Maldonado-Torres. Dussel in his 2008 essay "Meditaciones anti-cartesianas: sobre el origen del anti-discurso filosófico de la modernidad," theorizes the initial relationship between the Spanish conquistador and the Indigenous "Other" as based in a hierarchical binary of the civilized and the savage. He describes the ego conquiro subjectivity as imagined to be the quintessential representative of Eurocentric "civilization", and traces its emergence to the 1550-1551 Valladolid Debates between Ginés de Sepúlveda and Bartolomé de las Casas.

As we recall in these debates, Sepúlveda argued that the Spanish conquest of the American Indigenous was justified because the Indigenous were lacking the capability to accept Christianity and Spanish rule. In other words, they were mentally akin to animals, because, according to Patricia Seed "Christianity had established possession of 'reason' as a defining characteristic of humanity"; and thus reason defined as human, and lacking reason defined as animal, "became a way of establishing an absolute difference between men and animals" (636). Sepúlveda did not see Indigenous people as possessing the reason, and thus the capability of understanding and accepting Christianity as the one true religion. He assumed that "anyone who was 'rational' [with reason] would find their religion 'obvious', and so convert" (637). Because Indigenous people did not convert so easily, they were likened to animals by means of this argumentation. Based on this assertion, Sepúlveda argued in favor of the forced conversion and subjugation of Indigenous peoples by military means. Those who were to carry out this subjugation were the bands of conquerors and their brethren that identified as men of conquest. These men, for their qualities as conquerors, were justified in waging war.

Dussel cites Sepúlveda's argument along these lines in the following citation: "it is just, convenient, and in conformity with natural law that those honorable, intelligent, virtuous, and human men dominate all those who lack these qualities" (qtd in Dussel 166). Given this characterization, a few important images emerge in the discourse of the ego conquiro subjectivity: first, that it is an honorable subjectivity, one that is both intelligent and virtuous, as well as "human" and "man". The reference to "natural law", law that is determined by nature and thus universal, normalizes human man's domination

of the "other" – "those who lack these qualities". Thus emerges a discursive normalization of the "honorable, intelligent, virtuous" human man (European) to dominate "nature", which includes the animalized, Indigenous other.

Dussel continues that in the civilization/barbarism binary the ego conquiro is an "expanding, self-centered subjectivity", one that is based in the logic of a civilized "I" that is justified in conquering an "inferior barbarian" (166). But not only does the ego conquiro subjectivity have the natural right to conquer, he also has the obligation to "reconstruct the world under his control, at his service, for his exploitations" (Dussel 166; 187). In this imaginary, the ego conquiro subjectivity becomes the king of a domain, yet this domain has no visible boundaries, as it extends to the whole world and everything in it. Given this description, Dussel sees Hernán Cortés as the primary manifestation of the ego conquiro subjectivity; an ideal modern subjectivity, preceding the Cartesian formulation of the *ego cogito* (133).

Nelson Maldonado-Torres expands on Dussel's theorization of the ego conquiro subjectivity, suggesting its relationship vis-à-vis the Cartesian *ego cogito*:

> The meaning of the Cartesian cogito for the modern European identity had to be understood in relation to an unquestioned ideal of subjectivity expressed in the notion of the ego conquiro. The certainty of the subject in his work as conquistador preceded Descartes's certainty of the "I" as a thinking substance (res cogitans), and provided a form for interpreting it. What I suggest here is that the practical conquistador subject and the thinking substance had similar levels of certainty for the European subject.

> Additionally, the ego conquiro provided the practical foundation for the articulation of the ego cogito (“Colonialidad del ser” 133)
>
> (Esto sugiere que el significado del cogito cartesiano, para la identidad moderna europea, tiene que entenderse en relación un ideal no cuestionado de subjetividad, expresado en la noción del ego conquiro. La certidumbre del sujeto en su tarea de conquistador precedió la certidumbre de Descartes sobre el ‘yo’ como sustancia pensante (res cogitans), y proveyó una forma de interpretarlo. Lo que sugiero aquí es que el sujeto práctico conquistador y la sustancia pensante tenían grados de certidumbre parecidos para el sujeto europeo. Además, el ego conquiro proveyó el fundamento practico para la articulación del ego cogito) (“Colonialidad del ser” 133).

Maldonado-Torres thus explains in this assumption of certainty in the ego conquiro subjectivity that the necessary “other” in contrast was the unreasonable subject, the barbarian. He continues that in the context of the modern/colonial world system, the barbarian had acquired racialized connotations, such that “now the barbarian was a racialized subject” (“el bárbaro era ahora un sujeto racializado”) (“Colonialidad del ser” 134). Characterizing that racialization was a “radical questioning or a permanent suspicion” in regard to the humanity of the other in question (ibid). In this context, the ego conquiro, as the thinking (with reason/human) subject, continuously sheds doubt on the humanity of the racialized other. The “hyperbolic doubt” of the other by the “certain”

ego conquiro is what sustains the ego conquiro subjectivity in his imperial attitude; and this imperial attitude is a racist/imperial Manichaeism, since it is based in binaristic understandings of the ego conquiro / "other" dichotomy ("Colonilidad del ser" 134). This cedes to my next hypothesis in this project. As we explore the discourses of indigeneity and national identity in Guatemala, we can clearly identify the translation of the ego conquiro / "other" binary into the Ladino-Indigenous binary, in which the assumptions of reason and logic, intelligence and virtue, and most basically, humanity, continue to be concentrated, over the centuries, in the heirs of the original ego conquiro, conquistador subjectivities in Guatemala; that is, first in Criollos and later in Ladinos imagining Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships.

Nelson Maldonado-Torres ties the ego conquiro / "other" relationship to the coloniality of being because he sees a "diversity of forms of dehumanization based on the idea of race, and the creative circulation of racial concepts among distinct populations" ("diversidad de formas de deshumanización basadas en la idea de raza, y a la circulación creativa de conceptos raciales entre miembros de distintas poblaciones") as characterizing this binaristic relationship ("Colonialidad del ser" 133). These dehumanizing forms are linked to the "imperial attitude" ("actitud imperial") that defines racialized populations as "perpetual servants or slaves" ("perpetuos sirvientes o esclavos"), because given the ever-present doubt of their humanity, their bodies become part of nature which is, in the logic of the ego conquiro, a thing to be dominated and used in their service ("Colonialidad del ser" 139). The bodies of the racialized other further "come to form part of an economy of sexual abuse, exploitation and control" ("vienen a formar parte de una economía de abuso

sexual, explotación y control”), according to Maldonado-Torres, thus linking the ego conquiro subjectivity to the drive to control bodies (“Colonialidad del ser” 139). Following this asseveration, I believe Foucault’s reflections are useful for considering how this racializing gaze toward Indigenous people becomes translated into norms that regulate the body.

In his essay “Right of Death and Power over Life”, Foucault signals the modern development of biopolitics, a term reflecting the multiple mechanisms that exercise control over the bodies and lives of subjects. Foucault describes biopolitics in part as the techniques of supervision and discipline of bodies imagined as machines that can be optimized in their utility and docility, and additionally, in the control of biological processes (“Right of Death” 139). The ways in which bodies are subjugated become norms or “laws” disciplining modern bodies either explicitly or implicitly. In regards to the “violence” of discursive “truths”, these norms or laws as violence articulated in the ego conquiro / “other” binary through modern racism and “by extension coloniality” becomes a “radicalization and naturalization” of an unethical war (la no-ética de la guerra) or a war rooted in a lack of ethics, against the “other” (“Colonialidad del ser” 138). I imagine the “no-ética de la guerra” in this study as the imaginary of re-conquest or re-invasion of Indigenous America in Guatemala throughout history as a continuation of the unethical war of conquest/Invasion. In this sense, the norms racializing and subjugating Maya bodies in coloniality appears as a vestige of the spirit of the initial, and unethical, wars of conquest.

Given the above, if we think about norms as mechanisms dictating the control of bodies, we can imagine a biopolitics of coloniality, or a biopolitics of the ego conquiro / "other" binary, which would be the totality of controlling norms maintaining Indigenous bodies in an inferior position vis-a-vis the dominant ego conquiro. This kind of biopolitics of coloniality is precisely what the imaginaries of indigeneity and national identity in Guatemalan political, social and textual discourses reflect in the genealogies we study in Chapters One and Two. The dichotomy of the civilized versus the uncivilized, the "lacking" Maya versus the Euro-descended ego conquiro, becomes discursively codified and naturalized in language throughout colonial and post-colonial Guatemalan history.

However, Maldonado-Torres finds within the framework the ego conquiro / "other" relationship the possibility for subjugated populations to resist, contest and shift the disciplining discourses of racialization. Resistive discourse, counter-discourse, for Maldonado-Torres, resides in what he calls the "grito/llanto decolonial", or the decolonial shout/cry. Working from Frantz Fanon's articulation of the cry of the slave before the master in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Maldonado-Torres thinks of the cry as:

> A sound uttered as a call for attention, as a demand for immediate action or remedy, or as an expression of pain that points to an injustice committed or to something that is lacking. The cry is the revelation of someone who has been forgotten or wronged. Before the word reaches the horizons of meaning, where the world is unveiled and the meaning of reality becomes clear, the cry becomes a call for the recognition of the

> singularity of the subject as such. The cry indicates the 'return of a living subject' who impertinently announces his presence and who by doing so unsettles the established formation of meaning and challenges dominant ideological expressions (*Against War* 133).

In effect, the cry (llanto) is a call to the humanity of the oppressed, it is a call to the humanity of the "other" that has been dehumanized within the ego conquiro – "other" binary, where human and animal are distinguished by the racializing gaze of the conqueror. The cry speaks to the injustices stemming from this binaristic vision of intersubjective racialized relationships, and breaks into the dominant social imaginary with discourses that enunciate an/other knowledge.

The cry is also linked with shouting and weeping, and all express the "grief, sorrow and anger on the one hand, [and] joy, happiness, and love on the other" (*Against War* 133-134). Expressing affect through crying, shouting, weeping calls attention to one's own existence as a human in a dehumanizing power dynamic ("Colonialidad del ser" 150). For the multiple forms of these vocalizations of humanity, Maldonado-Torres moves the Fanonian "cry" to the context of coloniality as the decolonial "grito/llanto". It "points to the existential condition" ("apunta a la condición existencial") of the marginalized and draws attention to the subaltern's "negation" ("negación") within the order of coloniality (ibid). In effect, the grito/llanto is a decolonial gesture, one that contends the ego conquiro's assumption of power by resisting it and thus naming it, in an effort to resignify the subaltern experience and subjectivity. We can understand, I propose in this study, Luis de Lión's narrative in this context; that is, as a multifaceted

decolonial "grito/llanto" or as multiple decolonial "gritos/llantos" naming the power/knowledge normalized in the social imaginary and rooted in the ego conquiro's many forms and manifestations. Further, his literary project functions as both a political and epistemic decolonizing venture because his "grito/llanto" shifts the power/knowledge paradigm of Eurocentered conventions in Guatemala by discursively disconnecting Mayas from the social myths and discursive "truths" confining them to racist, discriminatory imaginaries, and state policies of erasure. For Walter Mignolo, this maneuver can be considered a political and epistemic "de-colonial de-linking" (2). According to Mignolo, de-colonial de-linking translates into the racialized subject engaging "in knowledge-making to de-colonize the knowledge that was responsible for the coloniality of his being" (17). As such, de Lión's grito/llanto emerges from the space of a subjugated knowledge that, in articulating an "other" knowledge, creates a counter-discursive telling that is critical of and disidentifies with the mechanisms of coloniality. Therefore, an "other" knowledge and a Maya episteme, particularly as they interpolate the *Popol Wuj*, find their liberation in his narrative. Through thinking, dreaming, inventing, and telling from the positionality of Mayaness, Luis de Lión emancipates Maya subjugated knowledge in the space of his texts.

Chapter One: Imaginaries of Nation and Identity

In order to fully situate de Lión's work as a decolonial project in the context in which he wrote, I argue that we must first understand Guatemala's socio-political and economic complexity, the contending imaginaries of the nation, and the events leading up

to and occurring during Guatemala's 36-year civil war. Therefore, in Chapter One, I argue that we can delineate the development of certain social myths surrounding Indigenous and non-Indigenous identities in Guatemala that emerge out of historical intersubjective relations between Mayas, Ladinos and the state; in policy discussions; social debates; and political activism. As such, I trace the discourses of national identity and indigeneity through the post-Independence Liberal era, the 1944-1954 October Revolutionary Period (the 10 Years of Spring), and the Counterrevolutionary Period (1954-1984) to elucidate that ethnic and economic policy went hand in hand in order to attempt to assimilate Mayas into a national capitalist imaginary, and resulted in the continued concentration of power benefitting an elite few. Through this discussion, we find the development of social myths of Indigenous and non-Indigneous identity that become normalized within the instituted social imaginary.

I also argue that we can describe the emergence of counter-discourses to the dominant social imaginary in the resistance movements to the dictatorial state during the Counterrevolutionary period. I identify two primary models for emancipatory projects in the nation, what we refer to as the "clasista" and "culturalista" views of the "problem" of Guatemalan society. Respectively, these are based in a class-based, Marxist analysis, and an ethno-cultural / racial analysis of socio-political inequality and oppression. To explain the emergence and evolution of both camps, I discuss the immediate post-Counterrevolution, Marxist resistance groups challenging state oppression and terror; a key academic debate developing in 1970 in the University of San Carlos between Severo Martínez Peláez, and Carlos Guzmán Böckler and Jean Loup-Herbert; the development

of Indigenous activism and the writings of Indigenous intellectuals; and the guerrilla insurgency organizations that reemerged in the 1970s, after having failed in their Marxist revolutionary project in the 1960s.

In this chapter, I elucidate that one of the major tensions in Guatemalan society in the 1944-1984 period is the repressive domination of a Ladino minority aligned with foreign economic interests, which provoked diverse forms of resistance and which spun into a 36-year civil war. The other major historical tension was rooted in the so-called "Indian Problem" thought to challenge the progress of the modern nation. In mapping the discourses of nation, indigeneity and revolution, we find a complex story revealing multiple struggles to determine and/or resist the economic and ethno-racial identity of Guatemala as a modern nation in the second part of the twentieth century.

Chapter Two: Imagining Identities in Guatemalan Literature

In Chapter Two, I argue that the discourses of indigeneity and identity circulating politically and discussed in Chapter One, become reflected, reified and fictionalized in Guatemalan textualities. In this way, Guatemalan literature symbolically codifies the social myths regarding identity and indigeneity into discursive "truths" of the nation. To this end, I construct a genealogy of discursive "truths" prior to the emergence of Luis de Lión's literary project, from the colonial period to the mid-1950s. Such a genealogy reveals the ways in which national identitarian imaginaries are constructed in text, how they change, morph and modernize over time, and the links between literary discourses and those found in the broader sociological, political and economic realms within

Guatemalan society. The texts I discuss are Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán's *Recordación florida* (1690); José Milla y Vidaurre's *La hija del adelantado* (1866); Flavio Herrera's *La tempestad* (1935), Miguel Ángel Asturias's *Hombres de maíz* (1949), and Mario Monteforte Toledo's *Donde acaban los caminos* (1952).

On the heels of this analysis, I investigate the emergence of contradictory social discourses about the "past and present" Indigenous, and codifications of the ego conquiro Criollo subjectivity. I further analyze the discourse of Indigenous subjectivities as demonic, malleable, or dangerous to the stability of the colonial order. In the 20th Century literature discussed, I consider the ways in which the foundational imaginaries of indigeneity morph over time, thereby altering colonial and 19th century discourses in an effort to discursively accommodate the socio-political and economic objectives of the 20th century land-owning elite. By way of these shifts, I explain the changes to what I call the discursive "truth" of the "bifurcated Maya" and a Ladino iteration of the ego conquiro subjectivity according to early 20th century, national economic and identitarian objectives. I accompany this discussion with an analysis of the transformation of the social myth of the "Indian problem" into a textual discursive "truth" of the Maya as backwards, malevolent and thieving. In the last sections, I discuss the emergence of national identitarian discourse in the context of indigenista literature, which simultaneously challenges certain discursive "truths" of indigeneity and national identity found in the previously studied texts, while reifying others. In this section of the chapter, I follow the transformation of the coffee elite ego conquiro subjectivity into the authorial and the revolutionary ego conquiro.

Through the theoretical lenses of coloniality, racialization and Western notions of linear time and progress, I identify the morphing and changing "truths" that emerge in literature. In this genealogy, I argue that the discursive "truths" about indigeneity and identity in Guatemala enact violences through a continual semantic imaginary of conquest/invasion of Mayas in Guatemala through their erasure. These are the founding discourses that Luis de Lión seeks to problematize in his narrative, which I turn to in Chapter Three.

Chapter Three: Luis de Lión's Narrative as Decolonial "Grito/llanto"

Next, I assert that de Lión's narrative functions as a decolonial "grito/llanto" by problematizing Criollo / Ladino power/knowledge regarding the Guatemalan nation and by complicating discursivities that place Mayas in an inferiorized object position vis-à-vis the ego conquiro, Ladino subject position. I initially consider three of de Lión's short stories: "The Inventor", "Children of the Father" and "The Ape" in the first half of the chapter to demonstrate de Lión's interweaving of emancipatory discourses circulating during the time in which he wrote, and his upending of various social myths and discursive "truths" of indigeneity penned in Ladino policy and literature. The second half of the chapter provides a deeper analysis of de Lión's 1972 novel *Time Commences in Xibalbá*, to analyze how his decolonial "grito/llanto" enunciates not only a condemnation of imperialistic biopolitics and coloniality, but also, a multifaceted emancipatory project that draws from, and complicates, imaginaries of revolution and identity within the context of the Guatemalan armed conflict.

I frame de Lión's work through the concepts of coloniality, biopolitics, and the decolonial "grito/llanto", as discussed in this Introduction and revisited in Chapter Three. In this Introduction, I discuss these concepts in theoretical terms, while in Chapter Three I build on this discussion with an analysis of the manifestation of these concepts in Luis de Lión's narrative. I then turn to the above-mentioned narrative work to analyze the ways in which de Lión articulates a decolonizing critique that draw on clasista and culturalista approachs to revolution. However, de Lión's vision of a revolutionary, emancipatory project goes beyond clasista and culturalista discourse by incorporating critiques of spiritual and gender coloniality. I also demonstrate how de Lión's narrative is both a political and epistemic decolonial project. Through this analysis, we find that Luis de Lión thus destabilizes the essentializing foundation on which a binaristic ethno-cultural imaginary of Guatemalan identity is built.

Considering Personal Interest

I close this Introduction with a note regarding my personal interest in Luis de Lión's narrative. The first time I read one of his stories, without knowing anything about the author except that he was Guatemalan, the language of his Maya protagonists struck me as the most realistic, accurate representation of what I have come to think of as a Maya influenced Castilian – a variety that although may vary throughout Guatemala, contains certain elements reflecting Maya linguistic features. The story I read was "The Ape" (El simio), which I analyze in Chapter Three, and while reading it initially in 2007,

I felt like I was listening to friends and acquaintances from Chisec, Alta Verapaz, the town I lived in for a little more than two years in the early 2000s.

Not only did the language of these protagonists feel familiar to me, but the humor of the characters was spot on. Luis de Lión, I thought and still think, captures the at times biting irony, the subtle sarcasm and the clever quips I hear uttered when I reconnect with Kekchi friends from Chisec. These two features of de Lión's work drew me in, especially because they contrast so greatly with the Ladino literature I had read representing Mayas as per stereotypes which are outlandish to me having worked and lived in a Maya community. The contrast, then, between Ladinos writing Indigenous characters and Mayas writing Indigenous characters is what piqued my interest and called me deeper into his work.

At the same time, I have come to believe that this dissertation has been a way for me to process what I witnessed living in Chisec, and more generally in Guatemala; that is, the deep racism affecting Mayas – the vestiges of colonialism and coloniality – that is at times blatant and at other times tempered and phantasmagorical in many aspects of Mayas' lives coexisting with Ladinos.

As a result of living in, working in and continuously returning to Guatemala, my own epistemological difference as a white woman educated in North America in contrast to, in particular, the Maya people I know best reinforces my own belief that I am removed from a Maya reality in multiple ways. I am not Maya. I am not Guatemalan. I am not a native speaker of Spanish or Mayan languages. I have only lived for a significant period of time in a Kekchi town, and have only spent shorter periods of time

in other Indigenous areas in Guatemala. I see the world through a lens that is fundamentally Eurocentric due to my socialization in the United States, but one that I challenge when I can identify it, and that has been challenged many times during the course of this project. All of that has appeared problematic to me at different moments while working on this thesis. With these distances in mind, I still approach this project because I believe in decoloniality as a political and epistemic undertaking that can be articulated in solidarity with, as well as by, those racialized in the modern/colonial world. My decolonial reading of Guatemalan discourses perhaps affects me the most in terms of my own decolonization of the mind. I am also fully aware that this study may accompany Indigenous scholars and writers as they embark on their own decolonial projects, but it will never replace them. I therefore produce it in solidarity and as an interpreter informed by thinkers and writers from diverse epistemic localities, and also by my own subjective understanding.

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[1] See Fischer and Brown *Maya Cultural Activism in Guatemala*, U of Texas P, 1996.

[2] Again, see Fischer and Brown (1996). The chapters of their study include essays by different actors in the development of the Contemporary Maya Movement, all of which tend to use different names for this movement surrounding Maya activism in the mid-1980s-1990s period.

[3] In US scholarship in recent years, Charles Taylor's theorizations of modern social imaginaries have become increasingly referenced instead of those of Castoriadis, however I refer in this project to Castoriadis's theorization of the instituted social imaginary because of this theorist's focus on the role of significations, as opposed to "imaginings", which Taylor emphasizes. Taylor explains, for example, that the social imaginary is the "ensemble of imaginings that enable our social acts and practices by making sense of them" (Taylor, 2004, 165). While "significations" and "imaginings" may ultimately describe the same thing – society's use of symbols, stories and images to imagine daily existence – I tend in this essay to work with Castoriadis's "significations" because this study deals primarily with written discourse, and "signification" ties to writing through the word and its significance. I find "singification" as signifying through signs the most appropriate for this primarily literary study.

[4] Generally throughout this work, the use of the term "Indian", as opposed to "Indigenous", speaks to Ladino discursive practices for defining social actors within the nation. "Indio" in Castilian, translated to "Indian" in English, is used by some non-Indigenous people as a discriminatory term with classist and racist connotations to characterize Mayas as less than in the national context.

[5] Racialization can also be thought of as the "racist distribution of new social identities" based on skin color from the conquerer to the conquered initiated with the Spanish Invasion (Quijano, "Coloniality of Power" 537).
[6] See Anibal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Latin America" in *Nepantla: Views from the South* 1(3), 2000: 533-580.
[7] See Sanjinés, *Embers of the Past. Essays in Times of Decolonization* (2013): Note 1 on page 183.

Chapter One: Imaginaries of Nation and Identity

The 1944-1984 period in Guatemalan political and social history is deeply complex. Multiple narratives interweave to produce an impressive story of popular revolutionary idealism and resistance to an equally ideological, yet violent and oppressive State. At the heart of this story are the contested visions of the modern Guatemalan nation in its multiple economic, socio-political, ethnic and racial manifestations. The actors in this story – politicians, intellectuals, workers, activists, campesinos, generals –struggle to determine the identity of Guatemala as a nation within the context of Revolutionary change and Counterrevolutionary terror. Therefore, this story is about power: the power to decide who belongs to the nation and who does not; the power to determine who controls economic resources and the means of production; and the power to obfuscate or elucidate the plurality of the nation's diverse ethnic populations.

As I stated in the Introduction to this study, since Luis de Lión's work offers a response to and critique of official policies and attitudes toward Mayas, this first chapter contextualizes the historical, anthropological and sociological discourses prevalent in 20th century Guatemalan society which de Lión reimagines or reinvents in his work. Therefore, in this chapter I will illuminate the prominent imaginaries of the Guatemalan nation according to official state discourses, and the multiple revolutionary movements emerging primarily in the 1944-1984 period to show how they countered state policies first through a democratic and capitalist project, and later through a progressively

intertwined Marxist, and ethno-racial emancipatory project. It becomes clear through our discussion that the state consistently relied on violence in its response to resistance. To see how this model of state violence to social dissent develops, I first trace official economic and ethnic policy to understand how prior to and after the 1944-1954 period, State discourses upheld exclusionary models of the nation in terms of the economic and ethnic identity it promoted. As a result, official national identity conformed to models of the nation that denied both cultural rights and economic justice to the majority of the population, Indigenous Mayas, while simultaneously concentrating wealth into the hands of a small, powerful elite. To fully understand this process, I focus on State discourses of "ethnic policy", which requires a brief review of colonial policy toward Indigenous peoples, and the dynamics of inter-ethnic and economic relations through Independence.

I then turn to a concise review of the post-Independence Liberal era and the official imaginaries of the nation circulating until 1944. Liberalism again takes root in State discourses in the post-1954 "neo-liberal" era, which found its ideological meaning in the policies of prior Liberal governments. In this discussion, we find that ethnic and economic policy went hand in hand in order to attempt to assimilate Mayas into a national capitalist imaginary, and resulted in the continued concentration of power benefitting an elite few. We then highlight how groups opposed to elite imaginaries of the nation critiqued and resisted State discourses, first, by promoting a democratic capitalist state in 1944-1954 primarily through the politics of *indigenismo* and economic modernization; second, by asserting a Marxist model of class-based revolution after

1960; and third, by progressively turning to an ethno-racial critique of, and armed resistance to, State ideologies rooted in both economic and ethno-racial discrimination.

The resistance groups challenging the State's policies, however, had divergent demands that appeared to be incompatible, as evidenced in the intellectual and social debates of the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s. Debates particularly in the 1970s signaled that ethno-racial demands and economic demands appeared to be mutually exclusive. Therefore, we will dissect the debates and their ideological differences to understand how "clasista" and "culturalista" emancipatory projects emerged in this period. We follow these debates through intellectual circles in Guatemala City, through Indigenous activism and the writings of Indigenous intellectuals, and through the guerrilla insurgency organizations that reemerged in the 1970s, after having failed in their Marxist revolutionary project in the 1960s.

In our analysis, it becomes clear that one of the major tensions in Guatemalan society in the 1944-1984 period is rooted in the repressive domination of a Ladino minority aligned with foreign economic interests.[1] This reality provoked diverse forms of resistance against the economic elite based in critiques of class segregation, and spun into a 36-year civil war. The other major historical tension was rooted in the so-called "Indian Problem" challenging the construction of the modern nation, thought of later as the "Ladino-Indigenous bipolarity", and even later as the "ethnic-national contradiction" segregating Guatemalan society into two antagonistic social groups, Mayas and Ladinos. This tension explains the emergence of an emancipatory project rooted in ethno-racial resistance. It turns out, however, that with the ever-increasing repression of the "neo-

liberal" state against ethno-racial and class-based movements, the two resistive camps eventually found some common ground in fighting an oppressive enemy. In tracing the discourses of nation and revolution in their own terms, we find a complex story revealing multiple struggles to determine and/or resist the economic and ethno-racial identity of Guatemala as a modern nation in the second part of the twentieth century. I will consider these discourses by analyzing them primarily through the critics of the period, supplemented with more recent historical and sociological studies.

Colonial Period to Independence: Policies for Guatemala's Comparative Advantage

In the colonial period, official treatment of Mayas was a two-fold proposition and consisted of exploiting Indigenous labor for hacienda-style agricultural production; and evangelization, run by Catholic missionaries, to convert Mayas into Christians. As time went on and the colonial State fought for power with Criollos (Guatemalan-born children of Spanish conquistadors and colonialists), those Indigenous groups that survived the conquest were manipulated by a trinity of political and economic power-holders (the Spanish functionaries, the Catholic Church, and Criollo land-owners) as a source of labor for production in the colonial hacienda system (Booth and Walker 18-19). The hacienda system concentrated fertile lands into vast agricultural centers under the control of elite landowners, and depended on slave-like Indigenous labor. Being one of Guatemala's "comparative advantages", to exploit this resource, hacienda owners along with colonial authorities devised diverse forms of forced labor and debt peonage through legal means, resorted to coercive tactics, and concentrated Mayas into small communities called

pueblos de indios (Jonas 15; Robinson 105).[2] In response, Indigenous resistance to power ranged from continuing religious practices underground to militant organizing, revolts and rebellions.[3] Regardless, a "basic pattern of underdevelopment in Guatemala" which had emerged by the time of Independence entailed a "polarized class structure" with the concentration of wealth in the hands of the economic elite and extreme poverty for the majority Maya population, despite some Indigenous communities having access to *ejidos*, or small plots of land for subsistence farming. This structure was upheld through the Criollo ideologies of racial and cultural superiority, and through the systematic and violent oppression of the Indigenous population (Jonas 16, Smith 15). The colonial order, rooted in ethno-racial and class segregation, and upheld through violence and antagonism, laid the foundation for the emergence of the modern Guatemalan state.

Independence, Forced Labor and Indigenismo

After Independence from Spain in 1821, liberal and conservative camps vied for political power over the next 120 years. Although little changed for the majority of Guatemalans in this "neocolonial" post-Independence era, gradual shifts in the world capitalist economy led to further foreign investment and control of raw materials in Guatemala. In economic terms, agricultural cultivation and exportation of cochineal dominated the first 20 some years after Independence, but tended not to alter land tenure relations greatly, given the "handicraft nature" of production which favored small scale as opposed to large scale farming (McCreery 114). Both Indigenous and Ladino small scale farmers produced much of the crop by growing it along with subsistence goods;

further, it was not a crop that involved large tracts of land because "market demand for the dye, competition, and a scarcity of capital kept production to a limited scale" (122). As such, unlike what occurred during the coffee revolution after 1871, the development of medium scale cochineal farms affected only a small number of Guatemala's Indigenous population, and namely that around the central Antigua region (125). Relative autonomy for rural Indigenous farmers on small plots of land would change dramatically in the late 19th and early 20th Century as Guatemalan coffee production exploded, resulting in the usurpation of land from small Indigenous and Ladino holders, and its concentration in the hands of the local coffee elite and/or growers backed by foreign investors.[4] The coffee industry in particular benefited from Liberal era reforms, including land reform programs that favored Ladino coffee growers by permitting them to encroach on Indigenous communal and municipal lands (McCreery 167; Williams 57-61). Simultaneously, during the administration of Liberal President Justo Rufino Barrios, an increase in military spending sought to crush campesino uprisings in Indigenous areas protesting land reforms (McCreery 179-181; Williams 64). Barrios's land reform program, executed through state violence, was complimented by laws coercing Indigenous peoples and poor Ladino workers to support the agro-export economy through their labor (McCreery 187-191). Additionally, with the rise of banana cultivation, US economic imperialism rooted itself in Guatemala through the United Fruit Company's (UFCO) control of banana production and utilities monopolies, which affected Mayas primarily because some of those displaced from their lands migrated to the banana enclave to work, and became trapped there (Booth and Walker 41-42). Liberal

governments until 1944 favored labor policies that institutionalized discrimination of Indigenous people and some poor Ladinos through vagrancy laws and "national work" programs (Taracena 25).[5] As late as 1934, vagrancy laws required landless campesinos to work a minimum of 150 unsalaried days for private growers or in state programs or public works projects (Jonas 18).

"Ethnic policy" of the Liberal period (1870s forward) was rooted in broadly accepted anthropological theories of cultural evolution, in which societies were categorized as "superior" or "inferior" according to their degree of material and social "progress". In nations with large Indigenous populations, Héctor Díaz-Polanco signals that states adopted policies of "evolutionary extraction" which intended to assimilate Indigenous groups into the "national society"; assimilation in turn required the "the abandonment on the part of the natives of all their cultural features, which were visualized negatively as responsible for the 'backward' degree of development" in which these cultures existed (Díaz-Polanco 46). In this context, "ethnic policy" of the Liberal period in Guatemala consisted of programs that attempted to erase contemporary indigeneity from the national imaginary. When complete erasure was impossible (and the "whitening" of the Indigenous population was hindered due to a lack of European immigration and biological mixing), Liberal policy represented Mayas as an inferior, backward, and hopelesslessly barbarian race. Furthermore, it can be argued that complete erasure of Mayas was not necessarily ideal because their presence was believed to be necessary for coffee harvesting, for example, or as an economic resource. Regardless, the Indigenous presence was still framed as abject. A general concensus of Liberal views of

the "backward Indian" can be summed up in the observations of one Liberal commentator at the turn of the 20th century, who indicated:

> the Indian is a pariah, stretched out in his hammock and drunk on chica […] his house is a pig sty: a ragged wife and six or more naked children live beneath a ceiling grimy [with smoke soot]; some images of saints with the faces of demons, four chickens and a rooster and two or three skinny dogs (qtd. in McCreery 175).

Apart from the abjectification of Mayas, Liberal ideology was rooted in tenants of Eurocentric individualism, and thus strove to eliminate social organization rooted in community ties, collective property, Indigenous languages and customs (Galvez Borrell 26). Through liberal education policies such as "castellanización" (teaching Indigenous people Castilian), the Guatemalan national identity as promoted by the State became increasingly hostile to Mayas, considering Mayas negatively as a "barrier to progress" in the modern, liberal nation (155). In the construction of the nationality, as Galvez Borrell notes, "Indigenous culture would occupy a place sufficiently far back in an imagined past, so as not to generate problems in the present" (ibid). While the nation could celebrate the architecture of the "Indian of the past", the backward "Indian of the present" would have to conform to Ladino national culture, all the while working for nothing to generate wealth for the land-owning and coffee elite (ibid).[6] Thus Liberal-era economic and ethnic policies were rooted in the construction of mechanisms of social domination designed to preserve the hierarchized relation of inequality between Indigenous (non-Western) and non-Indigenous (Western) identities – in other words, they were rooted in

what Quijano describes as the coloniality of power.[7]

In the 1920s throughout Latin America, imaginaries regarding race and the nation begin to change as Liberal ideologies of the Indigenous were questioned. Positivist evolutionary theories of Indigenous communities were challenged by a desire to create national imaginaries that attempted to define a national identity that respected the cultural traits of each Latin American country, and of "lo hispano" as a "common referent for the whole continent" (Casaús Arzú "Incógnita" 376). After a period protagonised by 1920s-1930s "unionism", which paralleled and at times merged with "spiritualist" and "vitalist" ideologies of the nation, many Ladino or mestizo scholars and intellectuals sought to "valorize" Indigenous culture and its past through the ideology of *indigenismo*.[8] Inspired in part by Mexican indigenismo after the consolidation of the 1910-1920 Revolution, a generalized Latin American indigenismo came to relate to an ideological component of nationalism and a set of policies by which the State proposes the "noncolonial integration of the Indian into the national society"; not through simple assimilation, but rather through "integration" of Indigenous people while at the same time "respecting Indigenous cultural values" (Díaz-Polanco 46). In the integration model, certain cultural and linguistic differences were highlighted and celebrated as part of the Latin American national heritage; although simultaneously, it was thought that Indigenous people, in time, would abandon those traits seen as barriers to progress. Thus a contradictory discourse emerges in the early 20th century that valorizes certain aspects of Indigenous heritage while also expressing a desire for the disappearance of contemporary manifestations of indigeneity.

In Guatemala, an initial effort to incorporate indigenista ideology into the Liberal regimes came through the creation of The Geography and History Society of Guatemala.[9] The Society was founded in 1923 as a State institution seeking to promote the understanding of pre-Columbian Maya culture for the purpose of both fomenting Guatemalan nationalism and foreign tourism. The activities of this institution were nonetheless truncated in the 1930s with dictator Jorge Ubico's rise to power. [10] When Guatemala was urged to participate in the newly formed Inter-American Indigenista Institute, Ubico refused, claiming that Guatemala simply did not have an Indigenous population (Jonas 18). Given Ubico's inability to acknowledge ethnic tensions in Guatemala, the national debate on the so-called "Indian Problem" – a central piece of indigenista discourse – would have to wait until after Ubico was forced from office in the 1940s (18–19).

The October Revolutionaries and the Ten Years of Spring

In October 1944, dissident military officers of the Ubico regime and an urban-bourgeoisie coalition calling for democracy over tyranny, forced the Ubico dictatorship to step down and demanded democratically elected officials and economic reform (Smith 263). The bulk of this nationalist "October Revolutionary" movement could be found in the educated urban petty bourgeoisie which, despite educational advances gained during the Ubico dictatorship, lacked the political liberties and economic opportunities they desired. This "new rich" banded with students, public employees, intellectuals, and to a limited degree, politicized peasants and rural and urban low-wage workers (Jonas 22-23).

A year after the October Revolutionaries forced Ubico to step down, elections in 1945 identified Juan José Arévalo as the new president, who came to power with 85% of the vote (23). The 10 years of the October Revolution (also known as the "Ten Years of Spring") would see two presidents (Arévalo from 1945-1951, and Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán from 1951-1954).

The goals of the October Revolution were to establish Guatemala as a democratic, modern capitalist nation – one that respected equal rights for all citizens, fought poverty and encouraged industrial and diversified economic growth (Casey 3-6). Central to the Arévalo and Arbenz Guzmán administrations were the UN Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC) theories of capitalist economic development based in agricultural modernization, crop diversification and import substitution industrialization (Fischer 53). Modernizing the Guatemalan economy meant increasing industrial production, but it also meant facing the deeply unequal relationship between agricultural laborers and Guatemalan land-owners. Therefore, the October Revolution quickly articulated new laws counteracting decades of labor abuses benefitting a minority land-owning elite.[11]

Addressing the agricultural question and creating a national capitalist culture, however, meant that the new government had to address the so-called "Indian problem", seen as hindering national development through the violent "colonial caste relationships" among Ladinos and Indigenous people (Casey 241; Diaz-Polanco 46).[12] For the revolutionary governments, the "Indian problem" was grounded in what was perceived as Guatemala's "Ladino-Indigenous bipolarity", a vestige of colonial and liberal regime

segregation that had persisted since the conquest and divided the nation into these two antagonistic social groups. In this context, questions regarding race, ethnicity and national identity were widely debated among intellectuals and governmental representatives during the first years of the Revolution, with indigenismo undoubtedly influencing these debates.

The intellectual and political debate that emerged in the construction of the 1945 Constitution first addressed the "Indian problem" by debating whether Indigenous people fit into the nation; in other words, they asked, were Indigenous people Guatemalans? As the deputies concluded that half or more of the population of the republic could not be considered part of the "universal definition of Guatemalanness", they began to consider the necessity of creating a special legal statute for Indigenous populations rooted in State tutelage.[13] Although no such statute materialized, the power for determining which values Indigenous people would contribute to the national identity rested in the hands of the President. In the final language of the new government's 1945 Constitution, the President was responsible for protecting these "positive values" and creating institutions that would focus on integrating Indigenous people into the State's version of the national identity (Taracena 30, 41, 88).

For the new revolutionary government, indigenista policy was institutionalized with the creation of the National Indigenista Institute (IIN) in 1945. The IIN's objectives were to better understand the "Indian problem" by studying Indigenous populations, and encouraging Indigenous peoples to "raise their cultural, social and economic situations" so as to better incorporate into the modern, capitalist Guatemalan nation (Taracena 42,

88). Antonio Goubard Carrera became the first director of the IIN, and explained that the main goal of the institution was to create a "homogenous nationality" (Aura Mariana Arriola 118). In the IIN's October-December 1945 Boletin, Goubard Carrera lamented that Indigenous people had not sufficiently adopted "those general aspects of occidental civilization as effectively as they should"; thus he identified "civilized" culture as Occidental, which in Guatemala corresponds to an imaginary of Ladino culture (Taracena 43). The equation of the true Guatemalan identity with Occidental civilization fit into the Revolution's goal of creating a modern, capitalist State based on the values of equality, fraternity and liberty rooted in the French Revolution, a values system steeped in coloniality and Eurocentrism, as Goubard Carrera's statement indicates.

Later in 1947, the IIN explained that its studies sought information on ecology, housing, dress, agriculture, religious practices and structures, health and reproduction. The goals of these studies were multifold, as some questions were geared toward fact finding, while others delved into Indigenous habits and worldviews, and the extent to which they would pose barriers to integrating Indigenous people into the Guatemalan national identity (Konefal 21). Although some elements of Indigenous culture and identity were questionable to the new regime, the IIN was interested in Indigenous customs of perceived value. Indigenous weaving, for example, was identified as an important part of the national culture and in need of state protection (22). From the start, the post-1944 governments would reveal contradictory positions toward Indigenous identity, favoring only those aspects they felt contributed to Guatemalaness, like weaving.

In 1946, the Revolutionary government further institutionalized its efforts to tackle the “Indian Problem” in the country with the inauguration of the Guatemalan Institute of Anthropology and History (IDAEH). Like the IIN, the IDAEH was tasked with studying Indigenous culture, and it focused its efforts on preserving the “Indigenous cultural patrimony" of Guatemala namely through anthropological, linguistic and literary studies of Indigenous cultural phenomenon – including studies on the *Popol Wuj* and other Indigenous texts (Taracena 46). There are several important issues that emerge out of the Revolutionary government’s focus on an anthropological and linguistic approach to solving the “Indian Problem”. First, with the creation of the IIN and IDAEH, we begin to see the dependency of Guatemalan authorities on US trained anthropologists to identify and make recommendations for solving the “Indian Problem”, which becomes more relevant in post-1954 Counterrevolutionary period. Second, with these institutions’ focus on highlighting an Indigenous patrimony rooted in the pre-conquest past through history and archeology, the Revolutionary governments, like the Liberal regimes before, celebrated the so-called “glorious Indigenous past”, at the risk of invisibilizing contemporary Indigenous ethno-cultural manifestations, apart from outwardly aesthetic practices such as weaving. And finally, we see a shift in position from the pre-1944 period in the Revolutionary government with a move toward promoting the study of Indigenous languages for the purposes of promoting literacy among Indigenous populations.

Casey argues that the revolutionary junta expressed a “genuine concern for the traditionally disenfranchised Indians” by considering illiteracy to be a basic contributing

factor in the tyranny of repressive dictators and the segregation of Indigenous people from the Guatemalan national imaginary (235). As such, the government called for the creation of a National Committee on Literacy tasked with teaching Indigenous peoples to read and write, because “only a literate Indian sector could be completely and effectively incorporated” into the nation (235-236). Betsy Konefal also notes that President Arévalo “made rural bilingual education a priority” after learning that some 80 percent of school-age rural Guatemalans had no access to formal education (20). It was argued, she continues, that literacy would “make effective citizenship available to Mayas for the first time, and in so doing would create the nation" (ibid). While promoting bilingual education can be seen as not only acknowledging Guatemala’s plurilingual reality but also vindicating the value of Maya languages through studies and education, it can also be argued that the end goal of bilingual education was summarily integrationist. Effectively, bilingual education may not have been an altruistic effort to safeguard Indigenous languages as such, but rather a tool to first teach Maya speakers to read and write in Mayan languages, in order to later teach and encourage them to use Spanish, and thus more readily integrate into the Ladino (Occidental) nation.

After several years of implementing tutelary-indigenista policies geared toward integration, President Jacobo Arbenz, inaugurated in 1951, published in his third year in office a report affirming that the cultural inventory of Guatemala consisted of Indigenous groups, rural and urban Ladinos, and was bolstered by much ethnic diversity. In this way, Arbenz became the first president to acknowledge that Indigenous people, too, were Guatemalans. Nonetheless, he maintained an integrationist discourse by asserting that it

was necessary for all Guatemalans to be part of one State, “grouped under the sole flag of the Revolution” (Arbenz in Taracena 48). Although the revolutionary leaders came to be the biggest critics of the former governments’ implementation of a "bipolar Ladino-Indian ideology”, they also revealed the ethno-cultural limits to their own understanding of Indigenous people, since Indigenous people were viewed primarily as victims of economic inequality, instead of as actors in their own history (Galvez Borrell 26). Therefore, the debates and policies of the period continued defending a policy of tutelage and protectionism, which prohibited any debate of a national paradigm based on multiculturality (ibid). Díaz-Polanco argues that ultimately, “indigenismo comes out to be a more elaborate version of the old and traditional assimilationist policy that the capitalist system has implemented” and that the “postulate of integration with due respect for Indigenous ‘singularities’ reduces itself to its true terms: dissolution, simply, of the Indigenous groups” (Diaz-Polanco 49).

While the Ten Years of Spring had implemented some measures directed toward integrating the Indigenous population into a cultural “national identity”, we cannot forget that the impetus of the Revolution was to transform the national economy from “dependent capitalism” (or what Jonas names feudalism) to “national and independent capitalism” (Jonas 26). Despite their progress in abolishing forced labor for Indigenous people, the October Revolutionaries were faced with the major problem of land distribution adversely affecting the majority Indigenous population.[14] Thus, if a goal of the Revolution was to increase the national consumer base and incorporate Indigenous people into the nation, the economic well-being of the majority of the population had to

be addressed through agricultural reform (Casey 236). Serious efforts at land reform came with the Arbenz administration.

While the traditional land-owning oligarchy was an obstacle to such reforms, even more formidable hindrances were foreign monopolies, such as the United Fruit Company (UFCO). Despite the UFCO and (its main ally) Washington's repeated attempts to discredit Arbenz as a communist, Arbenz passed the controversial Agrarian Reform Law in 1952.[15] During its two years in existence, this legislation licensed the redistribution of 603,704 hectares of land to an estimated 100,000 Guatemalan families (Trefzger n.pag.). To administer expropriations, the government set up several national agencies and promoted the establishment of Local Agrarian Committees (CALS) in rural areas to petition the government for expropriated lands, many of which were made up of Indigenous peasants. As Konefal and others argue, CALS served to initiate organized Maya activism in rural areas through the legally sanctioned political-administrative process of soliciting expropriations (30). Yet, the reforms did not unravel smoothly; causing clashes between outraged finca owners and mobilized peasants, and polarizing the country's population into supporters and opponents of the Revolution in general (Jonas 27). More specifically for the future of the Revolution, expropriations of nearly 400,000 acres of UFCO land, compensated by the government at UFCO's declared valuation for tax purposes of $525,000, would result in CIA-sponsored political ruin for the Revolution (Jonas 27; Blum 75). Rhetoric of communist infiltration in Guatemala both internally and externally inspired plans for overthrowing Arbenz by a CIA-backed, right-wing movement born in the Guatemalan exile community in Honduras and

Nicaragua, and led by Col. Carlos Castillo Armas.[16]

A major critique of the 10 Years of Spring governments' failure to maintain power was that it did too little to incorporate Indigenous populations into its revolutionary project.[17] While the Agrarian Reform Law may have permitted the first opportunities for Indigenous people to organize and participate politically, the limits of the Law, coupled with indigenista policies, left social relations in the countryside intact, and ultimately did not create a strong popular base among Indigenous people: the Revolution did not sufficiently appeal to Indigenous interests as Indigenous people rather than as campesinos (Jonas 37; Smith 264). In the years following the overthrow of Arbenz, the integrative ideology of indigenismo would progressively morph into a policy of terror that would leave thousands of Indigenous people dead or "disappeared".

Counterrevolution and the 1960s Insurgency Movement

On July 8th 1954, the Counterrevolution's Castillo Armas was named President of Guatemala, and his first task was to dismantle nearly everything the Ten Years of Spring had initiated. The regime implemented a restrictive "democracy" that sidelined parties and organizations associated with unions and workers' rights (Galvez Borrell 30). As leftist parties were deemed illegal and the official communist party, the PGT (Guatemalan Workers Party) went underground, the labor movement was reduced from 100,000 to 27,000, and in the most conservative estimates some 9,000 people were imprisoned during the Armas presidency (Jonas 41-42, Galvez Borrell 43). Some 70,000 people sought refuge in foreign embassies, thousands were jailed and murdered, and over

10,000 fled to neighboring countries or abroad: in sum, Guatemala experienced the total fragmentation of the democratic nationalist movement of the 1944-1954 period (Galvez Borrell 43).

Castillo Armas was assassinated in 1957, causing chasms between his supporters on the right, and a new "neo-liberal" faction that found in General Miguel Ydígoras Fuentes a direct political and ideological heir of the Ubico regime (Guzmán Böckler 223). Ydígoras Fuentes (president from 1958-1963) would see the emergence of a new revolutionary front energized by the reformist spirit of the Ten Years of Spring and the Marxist ideals of the Cuban Revolution after 1959 (Cal Montoya 6; Jonas 37-38). In this environment, radicalized military officers rose up against the Ydígoras regime on November 13th, 1960. Once subdued, key members of this group eventually founded the MR-13 insurgent guerrilla after leaving the military (Galvez Borrell 59). In rural areas in the eastern and southern parts of the country, MR-13 inspired campesinos to fight the administration by taking up arms. Additionally, some members of the underground PGT openly sympathized with the guerrilla leaders, publically agreeing in 1960 to support the fight against the regime. From these groups emerged the insurgency known as the Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes (FAR), which was operative in its initial phase from 1962-1970.[18] Additionally, support for Revolutionary change came from urban sectors, as one scholar notes that leftist resistance of the 1960s was "as much an urban movement and a youth movement as it was a rural guerrilla insurgency" (Way 117). The FAR therefore gained momentum with two demonstrations in April and May 1962 in Guatemala City, led mainly by students and workers protesting Counterrevolution economic policy,

fraudulent legislative elections, and ultimately, the stifling of the October Revolutionary movement.[19]

The 1960s insurgency movement was based primarily in the eastern and southern parts of the country, where ethno-cultural diversity is much less palpable than in the Guatemalan highlands region. On the one hand, the revolutionaries saw the eastern campesinos as an example of mestizo national identity; they evidenced that mestizaje was possible, and that mestizos would be the protagonist "masses" in creating a prosperous Guatemalan nation (Taracena 36; 39). As a result, the Indigenous role in the revolution was obfuscated in the guerilla revolutionary project. An early PGT statement on the issue is revealing:

> Indian peasants in some areas of Guatemala [...] have the worst standard of living in the country; but their cultural backwardness, the downtrodden state in which they have been living since the times of Spanish colonial rule, their relative isolation from the economic and political life of the country [means that] these people are, by and large, politically inactive (qtd. in Smith 264).

Again, with few exceptions, stigmas of 'backwardness' and political 'inactivity' would trump Indigenous incorporation into the insurgent movements of the 1960s, as the founders of said movement would fail to identify Guatemala's major problem as one with both ethno-racial and class dimensions. Their Marxist focus on class and on spatial concerns (whether the revolution would be led by the city or the countryside), ultimately led to their failure in garnering massive popular, and Indigenous, support for their emancipatory project.[20] Finally, we cannot forget that the guerrilla insurgency operated

primarily between 1962 and 1970, spanning the Ydígoras Fuentes (1959-1963), Peralta Azurdia (1963-1966), and Méndez Montenegro (1966-1970) administrations. These oppressive military regimes were tasked with implementing an "anticommunist democracy" that would attract and maintain investment opportunities for foreign companies through industrial development and integrationist economic policies in Central America as a regional block (Galvez Borrell 57–58). They would only be able to do so, however, by systematically oppressing dissenting voices and movements throughout the 60s, 70s and early 80s through increasingly violent State-sponsored terrorism.[21]

Counterrevolutionary Policies Addressing the "Indian Problem"

In the decades following the 1954 coup, the State project of creating an anticommunist, capitalist democracy included debates on the so-called "Indian Problem". Two strategies for attacking the problem emerged. Whereas Counterrevolutionary governments throughout the 1950s and 1960s implemented "ethnic policies" rooted in integrationist indigenismo, toward the end of the 1960s and into the 1970s, they would increasingly turn to economic policy as a means of obfuscating ethno-cultural and racial difference in the nation, and focus on economic development (desarrollismo). In terms of their outwardly "ethnic policy", the first actions taken by the Counterrevolutionary government were to cut and restructure IIN programming, and create the SISG (Guatemalan Seminar on Social Integration). This institution incorporated key indigenista intellectuals from Guatemala and the US. North American anthropologist Richard N.

Adams, who had been working with the IIN since 1950, would play a significant role in the period's integration discourse (Taracena 57).[22]

Adams proposed the theory of "ladinization" as the mainstay of integration. He understood it as the process by which the customs of Indigenous ethnic groups change and become increasingly like those of Ladinos. "Ladinization" implied that in time Indigenous people would lose Indigenous cultural traits and adopt those of Ladinos in the long term. In this process, three basic Indigenous identities could be observed: first, Indigenous people in their "authentic" form were understood as "traditional Indians" retaining "unadulterated" cultural practices; the next "level" of Indigenous identity could be found in the "the modified Indian", who demonstrated some cultural traits of both Ladino and Maya culture; and finally, the last "level" was the "ladinized Indian", who conformed to the cultural customs of Ladinos and failed to demonstrate Indigenous cultural practices (Arriola 130). The outcome of this process was the complete acculturation of Indigenous peoples into a homogenous (Ladino) national culture (130).

Considering Adams's take on "ladinization" (referred to by some scholars as "adamcismo"), both Betsy Konefal and Marta Elena Casaús Arzú note that racial and genetic processes are conveniently left untreated in "adamcismo". Konefal argues that "ladinization" in Guatemala suggested an unspoken genetic element of Indigenous people becoming Ladino based on the racial/biological assumption that "Ladino blood 'dominates' or overpowers Maya blood" (15). Ladinization, then, suggested an erasure of biological indigeneity, albeit couched in "cultural" discourses – a kind of harkening back to the discourse of biological positivism. Casaús Arzú explains this by noting that the

racial element is denied by proponents of “ladinization” due to the influence of North American anthropologists in Guatemala in the 1950s. She asserts that the Chicago School's development of concepts of race and culture in Guatemala led to confusion as to how to define and employ race in theoretical terms (“Reconceptualizacicón” 2).[23] In this period, she asserts, the argument that race did not exist as such incited intellectuals and policy makers alike to substitute the term “race” with “culture”, and view society according to a series of binaries: folk/modern, Indigenous/Ladino, rural/urban, and to think about integration as a progression from one end of the binaristic spectrum to the other (ibid). Binaristic thinking about “culture”, not only obscured racial discrimination as a component of the “Indian Problem”, but it also denied the existence of identities that fell between these rigid extremes. Moreover, displacing race as a model for understanding human interaction meant that these thinkers would not consider racism as a strategy of social domination (“Reconceptualización” 37).

Despite the failure to identify racial discrimination’s power, toward the end of the 1950s, “ladinization” would become increasing criticized by both Guatemalan and North American anthropologists, some of whom would drastically change their positions. In 1960 at the 4th Inter-American Indigenista Congress held in Guatemala, participants (including Adams) began to develop notions of integration in which “states no longer demanded that all of its citizen were culturally the same” (Athias 73). Some important contributions included a call to study not only Indigenous culture, but also Ladino culture as it was thought that Ladinos would have to be socialized to accept Indigenous peoples into the Guatemalan national identity (Taracena 60). Anthropologist Carlos Mejía

Pivaral, for his part, believed that three fields of integration needed to be addressed: cultural, economic and "humanistic", with this last field charged with combatting Ladinos' tendency to view Indigenous communities as "part of the landscape" and as "lesser beings" (ibid). In other words, viewing Indigenous people differently might cede to valuing them as humans and equal partners in the nation. For Joaquin Noval, state policies should distance themselves from notions that Indigenous peoples must "liquidate" their culture, given that history has shown Indigenous culture to survive and adapt to cultural changes over time (ibid). In these critiques of "ladinization", we find theoretical notions about Guatemalan ethno-cultural relations that would further develop in the intellectual discourses of the 1970s and 1980s.

Despite these debates and new ideas, traditional indigenista tutelary and paternalistic policies continued to plague the IIN and SISG from the 1950s well into the 1970s. The preservation of Maya "folklore" became a cornerstone of State ethnic policy in this regard. In 1955 the Museum of the Guatemalan Indian opened and displayed Indigenous ceramics and textiles, "aiming to attract national and international tourism" (Konefal 23). In 1958, the Ydígoras Fuentes government deemed April 19th as the official "Day of the Indian" which would enable Indigenous peoples to "focus the spirit of their race and awaken their patriotic sentiment" as the "original architect of the purest Guatemalan nationality", however, this policy was never fully implemented (Konefal 23; Taracena 62). In 1959, several congressional deputies formed the "Pro-Exaltation of the Hero Tecún Umán" committee in order to consecrate this figure as the Indigenous national hero, presumably to complement Umán's Spanish rival of the Invasion, Pedro de

Alvarado, by whom he was ultimately defeated (Paz Cárcamo 13-15). Developing in the late 1960s, the National Folklore Festival in Cobán, Alta Verapaz, which was to celebrate Maya heritage, "fit perfectly into the government's symbolic efforts to forge a nation of the fragments within Guatemala's borders" (Konefal 97). However, the Festival and Museum did more to affirm a Maya aesthetic than to affirm Mayas as integral participants in constructing a national identity that reflected Guatemala's reality. These kinds of policies continued to be indigenista and marked continuity with previous governments' desire to focus on the "Indian of the past", at the expense of recognizing the subjectivity and agency of the "Indigenous of the present".

Moving into the 1970s, the Counterrevolution's "developmentalist" economic policies aimed at both expanding capitalist growth and fomenting a sense of capitalist nationalism among Guatemalans.[24] In turn, the "Indian Problem" and "ethno-cultural" discourses were phased out and replaced by a discourse of capitalist nationalism. As part of the developmentalist strategy, the term "Indigenous" was replaced by "rural", and "rural culture" replaced "Indigenous culture" as that which was underdeveloped, "primitive", or "backward" according to the State (Taracena 76). Consequently, the "Indigenous-Ladino divide" ceased being the fundamental socio-economic problem in Guatemala as per the State, and was replaced with the "urban-rural divide". This change in discourse presents two key issues. First, it breaks with the indigenista policies of prior periods and their preoccupation with cultural integration as a strategy for national integration (77-78). As such, the Counterrevolutionary governments moving into the 1970s revert to pre-1944 discourses that obscure ethno-racial difference within the nation.

Second, by subsuming Indigenous people into a de-ethnicized "rural imaginary", they reduced Guatemala's complex socio-economic problems to simple economic issues that could be solved only through economic policy. Integration now meant mitigating the economic development differential between urban and rural areas.

Residual policies treating "folklore", then, fell perfectly into the progression from ethno-cultural policies to economic policies of integration. For example, developing the Maya textile industry and Folklore Festival rhetorically integrated Maya culture into national culture; however, "mayanity" in these forms were also exploited in an effort to attract tourism and the dollars that came with it. On this point, Mexican ethnologist Guillermo Bonfil Batalla noted in 1980 that the "integrative" aspect of indigenista policies, like "developmentalism", primarily respond to the "capitalist necessity to consolidate and expand the internal market" (13). He adds, however, that integration goes beyond this goal and aims to reconstruct the nation based on the social, political, economic, cultural and ideological frameworks of the post-Independence liberal governments that imposed capitalism on Indigenous populations marginalized from the national project (13-14). "The Indian", he notes, "does not fit into this enterprise" (ibid). Thus, Counterrevolutionary policies can aptly be termed "neo-liberal", in that, ideologically, they dialogue more with post-Independence liberal-era regimes' desires for capitalist economic expansion than they do with the indigenismo proper of the late 1930s and 1940s.

Academic Debates of the 1970s

As evidenced above, State indigenista and "neo-liberal" discourses on culture, race and the nation fail in addressing Guatemala's ethno-racial reality and tended to center on ideologies of capitalist nationalism and development. But, in other social circles –those resisting the Counterrevolutionary State – debates on these same issues challenged national imaginaries founded in capitalism, indigenismo and a singular Ladino identity. In what follows, I trace these debates in three major sections. First, I consider the intellectual debate in the first half of the 1970s among urban, Ladino intellectuals – namely Severo Martínez Peláez, and Jean Loup-Herbert and Carlos Guzmán Böckler. Then I discuss how Indigenous communities, organizations, writers and leaders articulate the nature of social revolution in racialized and Indigenous terms. And finally, I explore how the defeated FAR insurgents regroup in the 1970s, and incorporate the aforementioned debates into their revolutionary projects.

Severo Martínez Peláez and *La patria del criollo*

Guatemalan scholar Severo Martínez Peláez made waves in academic circles with his 1970 publication *La patria del criollo*. An essay markedly influenced by orthodox Marxism, he attempts to understand Guatemalan history and society as entrenched in colonial Criollos' conceptualization of the "homeland" or *patria*.[25] Influenced by PGT ideology, Martínez Peláez doggedly promoted a Marxist structural revolution to transform the nation into an inclusive socialist democratic state (Cal Montoya 5-6). However, through his take on "Indian Culture", we can observe the limits of his inclusive *patria* as imagined through a Marxist lens.

This intellectual's thesis states that contemporary Guatemalan society is still a colonial society due to the legacy of class stratification initiated in the colonial period. He develops his argument through a historical materialist analysis of Criollo chronicler Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán's *Recordación florida* (1690), and other colonial documents. In these texts, he argues, we can perceive an ideology of the Criollo "homeland" through which Criollos, due to their dominant class position over the mestizo "middle strata" and the rural "proletariat", justify their power over Guatemalan resources: land and labor, including the "masses of Indian serfs" (Martínez Peláez 3). In this sense, the Indian, as he calls Indigenous people, "is an element in the 'patria del criollo'" and "land and Indians […] constitute the two greatest assets of that heritage" (25). Since control over land and "Indians" defines the Criollo *patria*, Martínez Peláez presents a detailed analysis of colonial agrarian policy to demonstrate how inequity in contemporary land distribution is based on colonial economic organization and land policy (83).

Given Martínez Peláez's analytical agenda, he focuses on Criollo control of the means of production and productive resources. In this framework, the opposition to Criollo power is rooted in a resistive, resource-poor proletariat. He explains the emergence of not only an Indian proletariat, but also a Ladino proletariat which shared a similar class as Indians. The basic structure of access to and ownership of land resulted in both Indians and poor mestizos becoming a massive labor force for plantations and haciendas. This, he argues, is the historical root of contemporary economic inequality in 1960s-1970s Guatemala, and thus he justifies a class-based revolutionary project that obscures ethno-racial resonances by considering the Ladino and Indian proletariat as part

of the same social group.

Race, Culture and the "Indian Problem"

While Martínez Peláez does not completely ignore racism and the ideology of Criollo biological superiority as a factor in the oppression of Indians, he includes these issues only to indicate that "the myth of Hispanic superiority" – fundamental to Criollo governing ideology – was secondary in explaining their control of the national imaginary (18). He states: "the factor that determined their effective supremacy over the Indians was not Spanish ascendancy because of unbroken bloodlines […] but simply the legacy of wealth and power derived from the Conquest" (18). He obscures ethno-racial discrimination by pointing out class stratification as characteristic of all ethnic groups during the colonial period. Particularly, he notes that a handful of "powerful Indians who frequently exploited and swindled their more vulnerable brethren" were charged by local governments to administer lands in the *pueblos de indios* (98). He also accounts for Criollos, Ladinos or mestizos of a variety of economic classes, and economically advantaged Indigenous people who composed a diverse "middle strata" of society – this was distinct, however, from the lowest economic class, which consisted of Indian serfs, but also of very poor Ladinos (197).

If for Martínez Peláez the crux of the nation's problem is based in a Criollo class identity which oppresses other factions of society, how does he deal with Guatemala's pluriethnic reality? What does Severo Martínez make, exactly, of "Indian Culture"? First of all, he claims repeatedly that the "physical and intellectual development of the Indian

has been impeded" throughout history, and signals that any sign of Indian cultural identity is simply a reaction to colonial economic relations, and thus is not "authentic" (272). In fact, there is no contemporary "authentic" Indian culture (285). "Indian culture" is simply the sum of attributes selected by the demands of the colonial reality, which in turn constitutes a "culture of colonial servitude" (285). He contrasts his vision with those "anthropological monographs" that "fetishize" Indian culture in a kind of reverse racism. For example, his understanding of Indians:

> Sees backwardness and archaism where others see antiquity and authenticity, childishness and lack of resources where others see simplicity. It sees superstition and obsession with magic, rooted in ignorance, where others see esoteric expression and false spirituality (287).

His series of binary oppositions highlights his own Eurocentric view of knowledge, spirituality and progress, ultimately revealing both his inability to conceive of a pluriethnic Guatemalan nation and his rootedness in a stubborn, Eurocentric Marxist view of national identity.

Due to this vision of national identity, Martínez Peláez's demand for national reform also couches a desire for the "transformation" of Indians. Instead of "integrating" Indians into a capitalist nationalism, he imagines they must "transform" through proletarianization to fit into the revolutionary socialist nation. While he does not believe in "ladinization" because he denies the existence of the "Indigenous-Ladino bipolarity", he does promote "de-indianization" as a means to "abandoning a serf-like mentality in

which fear plays an important role, breaking the cruel cycle that keeps Indians trapped defensively inside the prison of the colonial being" (272; 289). In order for Indians to stop being Indians (i.e., to reject their "culture of colonial servitude"), they transform via proletarianization. In this framework, the Indian "culture of servitude" falls away, and Guatemalan social revolution destroys colonial forms of capitalism and neo-colonial capitalism through the confrontation of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie (280).

His interpretation, therefore, falls into the trap of denying both race and culture as forms of domination in Guatemalan history, because a Marxist understanding of proletarianization as a social process also fails to address both race and culture. When he explains that the "serf-like mentality" or "culture of servitude" will fall away with proletarianization, he is alluding to what Marx considered to be the final stage of proletarianization: the development of a proletarian class consciousness. Through class consciousness the proletariat identifies its historical evolution within the capitalist system as workers in relation to bourgeoisie owners; they politicize as workers and challenge the bourgeoisie. This process rests on the assumption then that culture ("the colonial culture of servitude") is a product of class relations. If culture is created by class relations, ethno-cultural discrimination as a form of domination is a moot point in his interpretation. Thus, the main binary in his analysis is the proletariat-bourgeoisie, and not the "Indian-Ladino binary". This represents a major difference between his ideological stance and that of Carlos Guzmán Böckler and Jean-Loup Herbert.[26]

Jean Loup-Herbert and Carlos Guzmán Böckler's Interpretation

In 1970 – the same year that *La patria del criollo* was published – Carlos Guzmán Böckler and Jean-Loup Herbert published a book of essays globally titled *Guatemala: una interpretacion historico-social*. In describing the ideological influences of these authors, Marta Elena Casaús Arzú points to neomarxism, dependency theory and decolonization anthropology's contribution to new ways of thinking about ethnicity, race and racism in social analysis (22).[27] The influences of Albert Memmi and Frantz Fanon in particular are clear throughout the text, and mark a theoretical break with Martínez Peláez's framework rooted in the orthodox Marxism of the 1960s. The basis of J.L-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler's study revolves around a critique of 1960s Marxist intellectual thought and PGT ideology in comprehending the Guatemalan reality. J.L-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler's essay offered an alternative analysis by considering race relations as fundamental to understanding Guatemalan social relations.

These authors put forth an interpretation of Guatemalan history that accepts a class analysis, but centers on the racialized polarization of the Ladino and "Indio" as the main contradiction within the nation. While Severo Martínez takes pains to signal class stratification as the main contradiction in Guatemalan society, Guzmán Böckler and J.L-Herbert identify the class contradiction as based in the Ladino-Indigenous contradiction, such that "the Ladino-Indigenous relationship constitutes a class relationship" (J.L.-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler 47). In this sense, their analysis proved more nuanced and specific to Guatemalan reality, as it incorporated both the class and ethno-racial dimensions of oppression as a product of colonial and post-colonial relationships. In

reviewing their collaborative work from 1970 with Guzmán Böckler's 1975 *Colonialism y revolución*, several notable contributions emerge.

Race and Class in the Nation

First, in an effort to resemantize the colonial period such that a mere class-based analysis could be found insufficient, J.L.-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler drew attention to the effects that the reconquest of Spain produced in the racial-ethnic-religious ideology of the conquerors and colonizers. Spanish religious fanaticism and ideologies of purity of blood contextualized in the long campaign of the Reconquista, Herbert and Guzmán Böckler argue, set the stage for the colonial government's attempt to destroy Maya religions, and for racism to emerge as a cornerstone of colonial oppression (46). Along with religious persecution, skin color would be the main factor polarizing Guatemalan society from colonial times forward (48). While racial superiority marked the first and major polarization of colonial society into the Ladino – Indigenous contradiction, the colonial economic system would exacerbate it.

The colonial economic infrastructure described by J.L-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler does not differ greatly from Martínez Peláez's interpretation in one major aspect – the domination of Indigenous labor and the concentration of land into the latifundio-minifundio system resulted in the exploitation of Indigenous communities as mere economic resources at the disposal of the dominant group (64). Political structures worked in tandem with land tenure inequality to uphold the unequal distribution of natural resources throughout Guatemalan history, thereby preventing the development of

a base of medium-holding agriculturalists and a rural petit bourgeoisie capable of promoting upward mobility in rural areas (56). Furthermore, for the minority benefiting from the latifundio system, their goal was to protect their class position and control of resources from the colonial period to contemporary times through terror and violence against mainly unarmed Indigenous workers (83).

While paying special attention to the development of the city as the space of Ladino power, and the countryside as the space of Indigenous resistance, they constructed an interpretation of Guatemalan territory along the lines of the metropolis (city) – periphery (countryside) divide (64-65). This territorial division, along with racialized class stratification, created what these authors called "internal antagonisms" between Ladinos and Mayas. These various antagonisms between ethno-cultural groups bolstered what they called "internal colonization"; that is, an economic system which usurps the resources of the Indigenous majority and funnels them into the control of the Ladino minority. However, while Martínez Peláez would in part agree with a certain "internal colonization", these authors go beyond Martínez Peláez to identify Guatemala as a "bicolonial" nation, plagued by both internal and external colonization.

With external colonization, they asserted that Guatemala as a nation is colonized through its relationship with wealthy foreign nations. Following the then popular tenets of dependency theory, external colonialism meant Guatemala's "unequal integration into the capitalist marketplace" on a global level, which reinforced the dominance of external metropolises and the impoverishment of the colonized society (54). External colonialism, characterized by the movement of resources from Guatemala to the external metropolis,

resulted in the lack of wealth accumulation internally, thereby limiting industrial development, and preventing the emergence of a local, nationalist bourgeoisie and a true proletariat (54-55; 97). Within this system, the intermediary between the international metropolis and the labor producing crops for exportation is the urban Ladino. Guzmán Böckler argues in 1975 that international "cooperation" between a pseudo national bourgeoisie (the intermediary) and foreign investors maintained the economic system inside the nation, while racism at the national level is the ideology that justified its existence internally ("Colonialismo" 27-28).

Indigenous and Ladino Identity

Another major contribution in J.L.-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler's work is their acknowledgement of constant Indigenous resistance to internal colonization, a posture differing drastically from Martínez Peláez's. They argued against the long held assertion that Spanish conquerors found the Indigenous population in a state of "decline". By focusing on a variety of pre-Columbian features of Maya populations, they argued instead that at the time of the conquest, Maya populations were transitioning from their political, economic and social orientation toward a "superior unity" of social formation – "the State" (J.L-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler 29).

Further, Indigenous resistance for J.L-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler is traced through the many rebellions throughout the colonial and post-Independence period. The authors note that the Indigenous population in the past and present in fact has "resisted destruction, defended its threatened identity, affirms its solidarity, [and] rebels against the

trauma of colonization" (56). The Ladino, on the other hand, "denies and discriminates against the majority"; these in essence are the social roles of Ladinos and Mayas according to their analysis (56). Thus the "violent antagonism" that the "Guatemalan nationality" has faced over time and was facing undoubtedly in the 1970s, is attributed to Indigenous resistance to violent assimilative forces (ibid). Not unlike Cornejo Polar's theory of conflictive heterogeneity, these theorists asserted that Guatemalan national identity is found in this antagonism of social groups; it consists of ruptures and ambiguities and is essentially a dialectical phenomenon ultimately encapsulating the Guatemalan nationality as such (ibid).

Turning to official historical discourses, the authors argued that the conqueror justified his domination in the "descriptive, superficial and values-based *historia patria*": an "official history" that focused on the "primary protagonist", known first as the "peninsular", then the "Criollo, mestizo and, currently, the Ladino" (34). Official history for these authors is a false characterization of history; it is an "alienated history", one in which the collective memory of the governing group was used as an instrument of domination, but was fractured due to the contradictions it produced and upheld (34). Thus, due to a fractured, false history, the Ladino is confronted with his own unstable and false identity.[28] Building on this assertion, the authors criticized State policies for dealing with the so-called "Indian Problem" we have seen thus far: acculturation, assimilation, mestizaje and ladinization. For J.L.-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler, these policies for constructing a "national identity" are wrong, given the "fallacy" of Ladino cultural identity and history, and the myth of the Ladino nation.[29]

Reframing the "Indian Problem" and Solving the "Indigenous-Ladino Contradiction"

While Martínez Peláez criticized "adamcismo" as fragmenting proletariat unity by identifying cultural differences between groups, J.L-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler criticized such policies as divisive because they were racist. "Indigenista policies" were all rooted in a racist ideology that since conquest divided Ladinos and Indigenous people into ideological binaries: primitive-superior, barbarian-civilized, prelogical-logical, and magical-rational (129; 139; 146). For these authors, State policies from the colony through the Counterrevolution urged the progressive 'de-indigenization' of Guatemala due to the racial intolerance of Ladinos toward Indigenous people (153). For them, the real problem in Guatemala is not the "Indian Problem", i.e., how to force Indigenous people into the Ladino national imaginary, but rather the "Ladino-Indigenous contradiction", understood as the constant, contradictory antagonism between Ladinos, on the one hand, and Indigenous people, on the other hand. In displacing the "Indian Problem", the Eurocentric ideology of the Ladino "nation" is also destabilized. In replacing the "Indian Problem" with the "Ladino-Indigenous contradiction", these authors begin to intuit a new kind of nation constructed by both Ladinos and Indigenous people. This new nation, they suggested, would be formed through a dialectical interaction between Ladinos and Mayas (161). And in turn, this dialectic would provide spaces for "reconquests" or recuperations of Indigenous people as historical beings, and of Indigenous economic power. Such "recuperations" would occur through the coming to consciousness of Indigenous people of their ethno-racial and class discrimination, and/or

the development of a true Indigenous bourgeoisie (161).

On this last point, they argue that an opening up to professions and increased economic growth among an Indigenous bourgeoisie would cede to an effort to enact a "cultural recuperation" by promoting language use, affecting policy, developing political parties, and promoting economic development among Indigenous groups, which would counter policies of ladinization (Böckler and Herbert 161-162). Further, they argued that if colonial and neo-colonial domination were destroyed, Ladinos would shed their alienated identity as Ladinos, and stop acting as such, wherein Indigenous people could be freed of subjugation as "Indians".[30] Finally, they noted that when "Indians" shed this colonial identitarian construction and "recover their identity" as Indigenous people, they would "wake up" (se despierte), become actors in their own history, and "resume the thread of time in the moment in which it was cut" (31). In these ways, the authors envisioned Indigenous agency in the process of uncovering Guatemalan history in its totality, and therefore, in the process of "national liberation" (31).

Because "national liberation" suggested a new nation not rooted in a Western, "homogenous" identity, JL-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler critiqued prior Revolutionary movements in Guatemala as counterproductively importing foreign models for revolutionary change. The authors signaled the failures of both the Ten Years of Spring governments as well as the 1960s guerrilla movement for having adopted foreign models of socio-political and economic reform, which failed to address the "Indigenous-Ladino contradiction" sufficiently. In particular, J.L.-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler were quite critical of orthodox Marxism's role in the revolutionary project, and critiqued the Ladino

left as colonized through a process of "intellectual vassalage" (187). Instead, Indigenous participation in their own revolutionary project, in dialogue with Ladinos, for these authors, would resolve the problem of a singular Guatemalan national identity.

Critiques and Analysis of the 1970s Debates

Criticism on the academic debate was in part based on the opinion that Martínez Peláez's Marxist position was too rigid and failed to identify the ethno-racial reality of Guatemala. Additionally, it was argued that this academic "underestimated the Indian masses' political capacity and fell into a form of revolutionary paternalism: 'to create the Revolution in order to save the Indian'" (Cahmix qtd. in Arias "Changing Indian Identity" 237).[31] As for J.L-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler's work, in 1974 a lively debate on racism in Guatemala emerged in the pages of the political journal *Alero*. In this context, Mario Solórzano Foppa's article, *El nacionalismo indígena: una ideologia burguesa* (1974) articulated the main critiques of the work.

Solórzano Foppa criticized the concept of a rigid Ladino-Indigenous binary in Guatemala, noting that the "affirmation that society is divided into two opposing groups" was simply "false" (45). Because he claimed there is no hard research on the existence of such, belief in this binary was in fact an ideology that only served to fragment a class-based leftist movement. In a sense, Solórzano Foppa here criticizes J.L-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler notion of the "Ladino-Indigenous contradiction" – a figure defining the constant antagonism beween these two groups, a kind of Cornejo Polar style cultural heterogeneity – as essentially asserting the same kind of binarist vision of cultural

relations as the “Indian-Ladino” binary.

Solórzano Foppa also asserted that J.L-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler’s interpretation “idealized everything Indian to alarming levels”, and risked substituting one form of exploitation with another by imagining an “Indigenous bourgeoisie” as the main protagonist of an Indigenous emancipatory project (Solórzano Foppa 45-46). His hesitation to “exalt” an Indigenous bourgeoisie lies in his view that Guatemalan social scientists were failing to ask fundamental questions regarding such a social group, such as, how did they accumulate their wealth and who did they exploit in order to do so? (46). He was particularly doubtful that the Indigenous bourgeoisie would necessarily enter into contradiction with the Ladino bourgeoisie and become protagonists of a national dialectic on behalf of Indigenous people. He noted that the only strategic importance in the formation of an Indigenous bourgeoisie in the fight for national liberation was that it would “contribute to the general process of proletarization” in the country and would break down the “ideology that identifies the Indigenous as ‘exploited’, and the Ladino as ‘exploiter’” (46).

Looking at Indigenous movements throughout Latin America, Bonfil Batalla would argue on this point in the early 1980s that while some Indigenous leaders might in fact be better off than others economically, exposed to more education, and/or no longer directly working the land, it was a “simplistic vision of what is occurring” to call these people an Indigenous bourgeoisie (50). Instead he noted that if Indigenous “empresarios” were in fact maintaining and using their identity to displace Ladino competitors, and to consolidate their regional position, this was a “restricted phenomenon, with uncertain

prospects in the medium term", and cannot be conflated with the Indigenous movement in general (50-51). He added that "Indigenous peoples, by colonial definition, do not have access to the bourgeoisie" (51). Further he noted that throughout Latin America, those Indigenous peoples who were working on constructing an "Indigenous ideology" were involved in all kinds of forms in their respective class structures, from campesinos to professionals. Indigenous campesinos, professionals who had migrated and returned and even non-Indigenous people who had "recuperated their historical indian self" were together constructing an Indigenous ideology and political platform (53). As such, the Indigenous movement cannot be reduced to an Indigenous bourgeoisie.

Overall, thinkers of the 1970s made key contributions to the long-standing debates regarding indigeneity and the nation: mainly, they gave visibility to racism and racialized colonial relationships as a means to understanding Guatemala's "bipolarity" (Casaús Arzú 3). Another achievement is that their debates led to the acknowledgement of Indigenous cosmogony as a contemporary phenomenon, as opposed to the commonly held belief that Indigenous cosmogony belonged to Indigenous groups of an ancient past (3). Their debates also mark a major shift in thinking about "the Indian Problem" from earlier decades in that they acknowledge the polemical nature of ladinization and integration of Indigenous peoples into a homogenous national identity. I would argue that while JL-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler do problematize the Western ideology of the "Ladino nation" by questioning the "Indian Problem" discourse, they nonetheless fall into the trap of reasserting a rigid understanding of polarized Ladino and Indigenous identities. By focusing on a dialectic between these two antagonistic groups as forming

the new "nation", they fail to imagine a national project that considers the multiple identities not only within but also in-between the broad identitarian categories of Ladino and Maya. And finally, as Casaús Arzú signals, Indigenous intellectuals only marginally contributed to this academic debate. She maintains that there was a "certain ventriloquism" in the academic left in which Ladino scholars spoke for Mayas (3). However, as we will see in the next section, Indigenous intellectuals and activists contributed to broader debates in writing and in their activism.

Indigenous Intellectuals, Organizing and Activism: 1960-1980

In the 1960s and 1970s, developmentalist policies and economic growth had the effect of creating a wealthier and better educated group of Mayas who not only completed their secondary education, but continued studying in the country's larger cities where they were exposed to the ideas in the intellectual debates described above (Smith 265; Arias "Changing", 235; Konefal 56). Additionally, developmentalist policies led to changes in the organization of Indigenous communities, ceded spaces for cooperatives to emerge, enabled an "Indigenous bourgeoisie" to gain footing, and led to the radicalization of campesinos affected by continued economic hardship (Arias "Changing" 249-251). [32] In the beginning of the 1970s, however, cooperatives and community organizations became increasingly seen as "destabilizing elements" both politically and economically by the State, which maintained a strong anti-communist stance against them and considered them an economic threat to the capitalist agricultural system (Taracena 290). Additionally, after 1973, the region experienced a monetary crisis and increasing

inflation, leading to further confrontations between Indigenous farmers and landowners, the breakdown of cooperatives, and social and political polarization within Indigenous communities (ibid).

In this context, two major tendencies emerged in Indigenous organizing, and they fall along similar lines as the Martínez Peláez, Loup-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler debates occurring in academic circles in the University of San Carlos (USAC). Faced with parties and movements that act and speak for Mayas, Indigenous groups began organizing themselves, on the one hand, around the articulation of a struggle centered specifically in Indigenous identity, and on the other hand, around the articulation of a class struggle (Konefal 55; Bonfil Batalla 45-46). For the first group, alliances with popular organizations seemed uncertain, since banding with the Ladino left risked the submission of Indigenous mobilization to outside leadership (Bonfil Batalla 45). For the second group, the identification of a common enemy for poor Ladinos and Mayas alike – the state and the Ladino bourgeoisie – signaled greater chances for socio-political and economic change through alliances. These could ultimately yield spaces for Indigenous communities and rights to be respected, and for Indigenous people to partner with Ladinos in the construction of a new revolutionary state (46).

Activists stressing "Mayaness" would be known as “culturalistas”, while Mayas who promoted a broad, class-based emancipatory project in alliance with Ladinos were known as “clasistas”. However, Betsy Konefal notes that such distinctions are misleading, as these categories do not “give a clear view of the fluidity of 1970s organizing or the interchanges taking place among activists” as calls for change emerged

(8). Clasista and culturalista activists interacted, worked together and formed alliances, despite disagreements about strategies and priorities (8-9). Given the overlapping ideas and actions by clasista and culturalista Maya thinkers and activists, in what follows, I will signal some of the major Maya groups and individuals participating in the broader social debate on national change. We can first point to a series of meetings developed in the early 1970s by Maya university students from the Association of Indigenous University Students called "Seminarios Indígenas", in which participants discussed solutions to national problems (Konefal 65; Fischer 59).[33]

Seminarios Indígenas

The Seminarios Indígenas brought together Indigenous students from different linguistic groups and a diverse group of culturalista and clasista Maya activists (Konefal 66). The seminars focused on a gamut of topics, including Maya identity, culture and history, economic exploitation, poverty, class struggle and state violence. These seminars enabled a varied group of people concerned with Indigenous rights to meet one another, network and share opinions and experiences in a national setting (Fischer 59). They took place, however, amid tension between culturalista and clasista camps, along departmental lines, and particularly as some culturalistas began to demand autonomous Indigenous nations as a solution to the Guatemalan national problem (Konefal 73). The Seminarios Indígenas continued through the 1970s into the early 1980s, but became impossible to continue given state-sponsored terror, which targeted this and other Maya manifestations of political and intellectual activism (Tovar 43).

Mayas in National Politics

In 1974, Patinamit, an organization born out of the Seminarios Indígenas, was founded by Kaqchikel Professor Fernando Tezahuic Tohón of Tecpán. Patinamit served at first as a kind of unofficial Indigenous political party supporting Tezahuic's race for a seat in Congress (Fischer 60). Tezahuic won the 1974 election, legally inscribed in the Partido Revolucionario (PR). That same year another Kaqchikel leader, Pedro Verona Cumez from Comalapa, won a congressional seat with the Christian Democrat Party. These elections were significant because, as Ricardo Falla notes, although they were not the first Indigenous individuals to be elected to congress, they "would continue identifying themselves as Indigenous people at this level of power, [representing] in some way an Indigenous voice, and would draw their support […] from an Indigenous base" (Falla 440). These two deputies used their positions within the national government to denounce abuses against Indigenous communities, such as the plundering of Indigenous land by Ladino landowners and forestry laws that encroached on Indigenous communities' use of lumber, often bringing Indigenous community members to congress when these denunciations took place (441). However, the Indigenous representatives' desire to maintain power once involved in national party politics, differences between Cumez and Tezahuic's Indigenous "authenticity", and the power differential between Indigenous and Ladino voices in national party politics ultimately limited the possibilities for Indigenous representatives to use the national platform to advance a political Maya movement (Falla 442-444; 447; Fischer and Brown 61). While Mayas in official politics at local levels of government did in fact have the effect of strengthening ethnic

representivity in the Guatemalan political system, the situation at the national level was quite different.[34]

Antonio Pop Caal's Reply to "Ladinization"

Q'eqchi' activist Antonio Pop Caal from Cobán, Alta Verapaz, participant in the Seminarios Indígenas, emerged as a Maya leader whose position was strongly rooted in the ethno-racial analysis of Guatemalan history. Having studied in a Catholic seminary in Xelajú, theology and philosophy in Spain, and eventually rejecting the Church and returning to pursue law school in Guatemala City, Pop Caal formed a group of activist Mayas called Cabracán, which other activists perceived as "radical" (Konefal 60-61). Pop Caal contributed to the debates of the decade with the publication in *La semana* in 1972 of an article entitled "The Indian's Reply to a Ladino Thesis" ("Replica del indio a una disertación ladina"), which marked the insertion of an Indigenous perspective into debates on State ethnic policies. In the article, Pop Caal pointed to key issues that continued to be an important part of pan-Maya politics well into the future.

In the article, he signaled Maya language as the means to understanding the idiosyncrasies of Indigenous communities; he argued that Indigenous populations have incorporated only those Christian principles that "interest us" and "adapt to our manner of thinking and being"; and he criticized the formation of *pueblos de indios* as having concentrated Indigenous people as slave labor for Ladino interests (Pop Caal 145-148). Further, Pop Caal critiqued national education for its erasure of Indigenous identity through "castellanización", and he consequently demanded the right for Indigenous

peoples to use their languages in schools, churches, and courts within those departments where Mayas were the majority (150). Interestingly he also critiqued the Guatemalan literary cannon as serving to "justify racial discrimination", particularly through Ladino writers' use of the term "indito", "which connotes a great deal of racism" (ibid).

Pop Caal also specifically addressed state and intellectual discourses of "ladinization". On this point he explained:

> If one analyzed, with sincerity and scientific exactitude, the Ladino entity; his birth, a product of the conquistador and the colonizer's rape of Indian women; his political organization at the service of foreign metropolises; his intermediary economy; his foreign legislation, a faithful copy of foreign regulations; his imported system of education, etc., one would understand […] that the ideal they present us with offers nothing to the Indian. We have never dreamed of being Ladinos, and not only because we understand their mediocrity, but above all because we are convinced of our value and future. It's true that many of us are disguised as Ladinos, but we have done so against our will. Had we not accepted this disguise, we never would have had access to educational centers, to jobs, to public services (152).

While at once parallel to J.L-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler's thesis that Ladino identity is a fallacy or fiction, Pop Caal critiqued for the first time official policies of ladinization speaking as a Maya. In his critique, he suggested that Mayas have adapted to colonization in various ways without risking a profound understanding of self as Maya. By asserting

that Ladino cultural identity "has nothing to offer the Indio", Pop Caal rejected and refused the indigenismo within State ideologies of national cultural identity.

Ixim: Notas indígenas

Quetzaltenango (Xelajú) was one of the larger urban areas in Guatemala that experienced the growth of a Maya middle class and became a "center of emerging ideas about identity" mainly in secondary schools and in the regional branch of USAC (Konefal 58). In the Xelajú university setting, Maya students participating in the Seminarios Indígenas eventually began circulating a literary journal titled *Ixim: Notas indígenas* (58–59). *Ixim* became a voice of the culturalista contribution to the debates of the time, aimed to be an alternative to Ladino media outlets and intended to "raise the collective consciousness of the Maya people" on multiple issues affecting them (Fischer 61). In the late 1970s, *Ixim* became increasingly critical of State-sponsored violence and indigenista policies, and of the Marxist left's position, even terming the Marxist influence as a kind of "culturicidio" destroying Indigenous ethnic identity (79). Thus, the magazine resonated with critiques of indigenismo and Marxism, while simultaneously attacking the notion of a singular Guatemalan nation identity.

Specifically, in *Ixim's* 1978 article "Requiem por los homenajes", the unnamed authors waged a scathing critique of State indigenista policies "celebrating" Indigenous people, signaling that they served to consolidate and confirm Ladino ethnic superiority, and mitigate Ladino guilt for oppressing Mayas (*Ixim* 153-154). At the same time, the *Ixim* authors highlighted the economic purpose of "celebrating the indian"; that is, as part

and parcel of developmentalist policies to attract tourism. They noted that the end goal of celebrating Maya "folklore" is "pure 'show-business': the art of the glorious Maya race sells well" (158-159). As a "paternalistic institution", folklore festivals resulted in Ladino degradation of "Indigenous art to prostitute to tourists"; as such, it was a mechanism of both economic and ethnic control (159-160).

Also in 1978, *Ixim* published "Algo sobre *Ixim*" by Pedro Coj Ajbalam to highlight the journal's purpose of resisting Ladino media productions of "official" cultural discourses (Coj Ajbalam 366). As an Indigenous media outlet, *Ixim* served to reflect the "collective property" of the Indigenous population, and manifest the plurality of Indigenous communities: Indigenous "plurality in political ideology, religion and trends of Indigenous thought" as well as linguistic plurality (367). This is the first Maya publication to highlight the plurality of Indigenous identities and to resist indigenista discourses that essentialize and homogenize Indigenous subjectivities into a singular Maya identity. They resisted the homogeneity implicit in the imaginary of Mayas in the "Indigenous-Ladino" binary, and explained that diverse Indigenous communities must "decide for themselves" what the future of the nation(s) should be (368). One way the authors imagined resistance to indigenismo's essentializing discourses was through the promotion of "an Indigenous literature that expresses the spirit and sensibility of the Maya race" (369). Maya literature, then, could counter mass media outlets imposing "ideological and cultural colonialism" and facilitate Indigenous literary creativity through Maya "channels of communication" (370). Thus *Ixim* was not only a political and cultural journal that challenged racist media discourses of Indigenous people, but it also provided

a space for Indigenous literary expression and creativity.

1976 Earthquake, CUC and Ixtahuacán

Although the above noted Indigenous activism was based primarily in culturalista activism, Indigenous communities and activists would also become increasingly radicalized in the clasista group. We can point to several key moments in the 1970s that led to increasing Maya participation in the class-based struggle. Manuela Ocampo de la Paz explains that after the massive 1976 earthquake, changes in the national economy and the "crisis" of the Central American Common Market hit both small rural farmers and the already deficient Guatemalan industrial sector hard, increasing poverty in both rural and urban areas (113).[35] She points to these economic factors as having a role in the "coming to consciousness" of clasista Indigenous people in terms of their economic exploitation and the barriers to Indigenous representation on the national political scene (113). Additionally, Arias notes that after the 1976 earthquake, in the context of relief efforts, rural Indigenous communities and Ladino campesinos began collaborating, and forged alliances with urban Mayas, University students and Ladino activists (Arias "Changing", 248). These relationships, according to Arias, "proceeded with difficulty because of the racism that even poor Ladinos displayed toward Indians, and the Indians' mistrust of Ladinos of whatever class" (ibid). Nonetheless, Indigenous students and activists travelled to other regions to help in disaster relief efforts, fostering in turn connections and communication among Mayas and Ladino leftists throughout the country. These connections, along with campesinos' experience organizing in cooperatives and with

Acción Católica, would spark the political will to form the Committee for Peasant Unity (CUC), a popular movement seeking economic justice and influenced by the liberation theology teachings of the 60s and 70s (Konefal 69).[36]

Early in its life as an organization, CUC organizers supported striking Mam miners who in 1977 marched 250 miles from Ixtahuacán, Huehuetenango to the Capitol in an effort to gain better wages and working conditions. Protesters arrived in the capital in November 1977 with thousands of supporters (Konefal 69). Five months after the Ixtahuacán miners' strike, CUC was officially founded in April 1978, promoting its image of an organization of Mayas and poor Ladinos seeking to change the capitalist system oppressing all poor Guatemalan workers (Konefal 70; Yagenova 2010, 73). Over the next few years, CUC members would initiate strikes and protests throughout the country on behalf of workers; they demanded fair salaries, better working conditions, just distribution of arable land, and they increasingly protested human rights abuses by the State (Yagenova 73-75). Although CUC demonstrations marked a major turning point in the broader leftist movement through its incorporation of large numbers of Mayas and Ladinos, Ocampo de la Paz asserts that the government responded in kind with massacres in Panzós, Chajul, Uspantán, Cunén, and finally, with the Spanish Embassy fire on January 31st, 1980 (113).

Panzós and the Spanish Embassy

On May 29th 1978 soldiers opened fire on a group of Q'eqchi' campesinos in Panzós, Alta Verapaz that had come to request government assistance in settling a land

dispute. In this massacre, some 35 men, women and children were murdered. While *Ixim* condemned the massacre as "ethnocide", CUC publically denounced it at a massive Labor Day demonstration in Guatemala City (Konefal 112-113). Following the Panzós massacre, Indigenous activists from CUC met with others associated with *Ixim* and the culturalista camp to discuss the ways in which Mayas could further incorporate into the popular insurgency that had reemerged in the 1970s. This is because, after Panzós, CUC members began to increasingly consider State violence as primarily directed toward Mayas (ibid).

Amid increasing terror and State violence, in late December 1979, CUC members and students from USAC organized an action to occupy the Spanish Embassy as a symbolic measure for drawing attention to issues of land rights and the worsening human rights situation in the countryside (Garrard-Burnett 47). Despite a call from Spain's president to Guatemalan President Lucas García requesting that the Guatemalan military leave the Spanish embassy and the protestors alone, Lucas García ordered embassy doors locked and proceeded to bomb the building, killing almost all of those inside, including Spanish diplomats, staff, the Guatemalan foreign minister, CUC members and USAC students (Garrard-Burnett 47).[37] Additionally, the event prompted CUC, the Guerrilla Army of the Poor, and *Ixim* members to draft a document titled the "Declaration of Iximché". This document stressed the need for multiple activist organizations to unite in support of a broad-based, socio-political revolution. The document was made public on February 14th 1980, and called for the "union and solidarity between Mayas and poor Ladinos, as the solidarity of the popular movement with the Indigenous struggle has been

sealed with lives in the Spanish Embassy" (qtd. in Ocampo de la Paz 112). While the document called for solidarity among Mayas and Ladinos, Indigenous rights were at the heart of its discourse. It asserted:

> We fight for our Indigenous community, so it can develop its culture broken by criminal invaders […], for a community without discrimination, [so that] repression, torture, assassination and massacres cease […], so that all have the same labor rights, so that we stop being used as objects for tourism (ibid).

The Declaration of Iximché appeared to be the integration of clasista and culturalista activism in that it was a call for solidarity among Ladino and Indigenous organizations that incorporated both clasista and culturalista demands.

This moment in time marked the massive mobilization of Indigenous campesinos to join guerrilla insurgencies operating in the country (Arias 254). While the majority of CUC members and members of Acción Católica groups joined the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP), a smaller number of Mayas primarily from the Xelajú area joined ORPA (Revolutionary Organization of People in Arms), and even fewer numbers united with the FAR (Rebel Armed Forces) and the PGT (ibid).[38] Mayas became involved in combat units, ascended to some positions of leadership at the local, regional and national level, and/or provided clandestine aid to guerrilla fighters (Ocampo de la Paz 114-117). In this context, we turn next to the armed guerrilla organizations of the 1970s.

Armed Guerrilla Insurgencies

A major critique of the 1960s armed insurgency was that it failed to view the revolutionary capacity of rural Mayas and lacked real contact with them given that its leadership consisted primarily of urban leftists espousing traditional Marxist principles (Bonfil Batalla 16-17). Following their defeat, members of the FAR went into a period of reflection and re-programming of their revolutionary project until the early 1970s. Out of the rubble of the FAR's defeat, two new organizations emerged: the EGP, which crossed the Mexican border into the Ixcán region of the El Quiché department in 1972, and ORPA, immersed in the San Marcos, Quetzaltenango, and Atitlán regions starting in 1971 (Payeras 15-16; Galvez Borrell 63).

Initially, these groups focused on educating campesinos in literacy programs and in Marxist political theory, and sought to create revolutionary traction through "concientización" in rural areas.[39] As the 1970s progressed, the Arana Osorio administration (1970-1974) and the Laugerud García administration (1974-1976) increasingly used violence against any "suspected insurgents", which led to both organizations' further attempt to conflate Marxist ideologies with the Guatemalan cultural reality in order to increase their base support. They increasingly attempted to redefine the "Indian Problem" by changing its traditional emphasis on material conditions of oppression to an emphasis on either cultural and/or racial oppression (Galvez Borrell 64; Smith 267).

The major documents indicating EGP and ORPA's positions on the ethno-racial question were penned by Ladino commanders of both groups: EGP leader Mario Payeras

wrote "The Ethnic-National Question" and "Indian Peoples and the Guatemalan Revolution", written from a more traditionally Marxist perspective; and ORPA's Rodrigo Asturias (son of novelist Miguel Ángel Asturias, using the nom-de-guerre Gaspar Ilóm, a name taken from one of the main characters of his father's 1949 novel *Men of Maize*) wrote "The True Magnitude of Racism", "Racism I" and "Racism II", which, according to Casaús Arzú, had "strong Böcklerian influences" (Casúas Arzú "Reconctualización" 7).

The Guerilla Army of the Poor (EGP)

When addressing the so-called "Indian Problem", the EGP signaled that Guatemalan social contradictions lie in a "clasista contradiction" and an "ethno-national contradiction", both of which were fundamental to revolutionary change (EGP 1982, 11). The clasista contradiction consisted of the unequal differentiation of classes in society according to their relationship with the means of production, which is a traditional understanding of class conflict between the proletariat or semi-proletariat and the national bourgeoisie. However, the ethnic-national contradiction for the EGP was framed by the fact that "more than half of the Guatemalan population is Indigenous and the majority of that population is composed of salaried or semi-salaried producers" (ibid). Thus, "Indigenous peoples and their ethno-cultural identity are tied to the capitalist, dependent agro-export system of domination which has historically created exploited classes in our country" (ibid). EGP finds that the class contradiction and the ethno-national contradiction work hand in hand to exploit and oppress the Indigenous majority.

The only way they saw this multiform domination changing was through a two-phase revolution. The first phase consisted of altering 'the existent relations of production" and overthrowing "the land-owning/pro-imperialist bourgeoisie" which would bring about "an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist agrarian revolution" (ibid). After this class-based revolution, the next step would happen naturally: to "liquidate relations of ethno-national domination and eliminate the oppression and discrimination Indigenous peoples face due to the system of class exploitation" (11). In this sense, the EGP believed that the ethno-national contradiction could not be resolved without first solving the class contradiction (12).

In the EGP's "Indian Peoples and the Guatemalan Revolution", Payeras explained the guerrillas' task with Indigenous populations was to "invigorate the ethnic-national consciousness, recognizing their specificity, and their intrinsic revolutionary value, while at the same time reinforcing and complementing this consciousness with revolutionary class content" (EGP 1982, 12). They did warn however that "the primary danger" of considering cultural revolution above the class contradiction is that it would take over and obfuscate class factors in the revolutionary project (12). Therefore, the EGP leadership took it upon itself to identify those cultural practices, traits and characteristics which would be a good fit for the "new multinational *patria*", which included Indigenous people's demonstration of fraternity, bravery, collectivity, their "sencillez" (simplicity, plainness), and "llaneza" (simplicity, straightforwardness, clarity) (13). While these qualities were important for the new multicultural *patria*, other "negative elements" could come into contradiction with the new society. As such, it was "the obligation of the

Directive Body of the Revolutionary Movement to investigate […] each aspect, so that the necessary differences between positive and negative elements are established, taking advantage of the former and eliminating the latter" (13). Suffice it to say, the task of identifying positive and negative elements of Indigenous culture, and determining which are appropriate for the nation, recalls the paternalistic indigenista discourse of prior governments which located the figure of the President as the ultimate authority in sanctioning national cultural traits. In the EGP's version of the story, the "Directive Body" of the Revolution assumed the role that the President played prior. In this way, EGP discourse again fell into the trap of precluding Indigenous autonomy and self-determination.

Perhaps this discourse was rooted in EGP Commander-in-Chief Rolando Morán's (nom-de-guerre Ricardo Ramírez) potential fear of the so-called nationalist (culturalista) "Indigenous bourgeoisie" in the new revolutionary nation, as expressed most forcefully in Solórzano Foppa's critique discussed above. It also evidenced Morán's nostalgia for the 1944-54 "order of things" and his subliminal sense that the revoltion would restore such an order; he himself had been a major student leader during the Ten Years of Spring period, going into exile in 1954 with the fall of Arbenz.[40] Nonetheless, regarding the "Indigenous bourgeosisie", the EGP noted that the "sectors of Indigenous classes that are not exploited -- the urban and rural middle class and the groups of the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie" -- had an important role to play in the revolutionary project with both Ladinos and Mayas because "despite their class condition, they do not escape the effects of ethno-cultural oppression and discrimination that the system generates" (12).

Although they counter Solórzano Foppa's critique of the "Indigenous bourgeoisie" by indicating that it has an important role to play, it is unclear what that role is. Unlike Herbert and Guzmán Böckler who argued that a nationalist "Indigenous bourgeoisie" would foment the cultural aspect of revolutionary change, the EGP warned against this social group's potential for taking over the revolutionary struggle. Smith notes the EGP's warning: "in the absence of revolutionary theory," Indigenous nationalists were liable to take their "more refined sense of ethnic identity" in the direction of "racist and indigenista ideas" (qtd. in Smith 269). Thus, the EGP's position on the "Indigenous bourgeoisie" ultimately expressed fears akin to those voiced by Solórzano Foppa.

Nonetheless, given the rapid flow of events in the late 1970s, both CUC and remnants of other Catholic Action organizations whose membership consisted primarily of Mayas ended up in the EGP's fold as a result of the Army's military actions in Quiché. At least rhetorically, the EGP was forced to insist on the revolution's need to "energetically and decidedly support the legitimate rights of ethno-national groups" (EGP 12). This required Indigenous "participation and the exercise of power locally and in the directive bodies in all guerrilla fronts, as well as Indigenous participation in [bodies of] political power at the national level" after revolutionary triumph (ibid). In some ways similar to Guzmán Böckler and J.L-Herbert's vision of a dialectic between Ladinos and Mayas as conforming national political culture, the EGP insisted that the Revolutionary National Directing Body would incorporate Indigenous and Ladino perspectives in the configuration of the new multicultural nation (13).

The EGP's main contributions, therefore, were the theorization of the ethno-

national contradiction as one of the cornerstones of Guatemala's "Indian problem", and the need to "liquidate" ethnic discrimination, which for them, ultimately upheld pro-imperial capitalist relations in the nation. However, given their focus on "ethnic" (cultural) oppression, they gave little lip service to racism as a means of understanding disenfranchisement in the country, and they fell back on certain indigenista discourses. ORPA, on the other hand, would focus less on "ethnic oppression" and explicitly name racism as the key to understanding oppression of Indigenous populations (Martínez Salazar 89).

Revolutionary Organization of People in Arms (ORPA)

ORPA emphasized racism as the key component in binaristic intercultural relations in Guatemala. Thus, unlike other insurgent organizations, combatting racism was fundamental to ORPA's revolutionary project. ORPA explained that racism, obscured in Marxist theory, "initiated due to the need to exploit the economic base" and thus became an "ideological pretext" justifying exploitation ("Magnitud" 3-4). Because racism was tied to exploitative economic relations, it also bolstered class segmentation between racial groups within the country. A major contribution of their theorization on racism was that they tied racist ideology with everyday practices shaping social relations: racist ideology "is not an abstract category, but rather, has concrete effects", influencing media outlets, technological development, land tenure, labor relations, the education system, health services and military service ("Magnitud" 4-5, 74). Another major ORPA contribution was their identification of racism as "social aggression", which devalued

Maya language use, humiliated Mayas, pit social groups against one another – both Ladinos versus Mayas, and within Indigenous communities – and acted as "venom and an element of corrosion within the social consciousness" ("Magnitud" 56, 89; 1982, 1). Further, racist social aggression had diminished the Indigenous "spirit" to the extent that Mayas often internalized racist attitudes toward themselves and other Indigenous peoples ("Magnitud" 56).[41]

Like J.L.-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler, ORPA discussed Ladino "false consciousness", indicating that it resulted from the Ladino's failure to admit his racist projection on society and history ("Magnitud" 14). ORPA claimed that Ladino identity itself was "false" because the Ladino based his identity on what he was not, as opposed to what he was. Ilóm (Rodrigo Asturias) noted, however, that "being different never indicates an identity or a way of being" ("Magnitud" 33). Because Ladinos did not have culture in a positive sense, but only by denying their own indigeneity, Ilóm asserted that Guatemala had not been able to create a true "national culture" based on Ladino cultural identity. ORPA found that the "culture of the natural communities" (Indigenous people) represented the only real Guatemalan culture because it had roots and traditions, and had resisted oppression in order to continue practicing cultural ways of life ("Magnitud" 34). If Ladinos could see their own history and themselves as part of a national culture with Indigenous roots, they could become part of a non-racist nation and rid themselves of their false consciousness. The objective of guerrilla warfare, then, was to diminish the "alienation" of the Ladino and the oppression of the Maya, and unite them within a non-racist nation ("Magnitud" 107).

However, in both “Racism I” and “Racism II”, as well as in “The True Magnitude of Racism” there is a notable lack of specific ways in which this union will happen. ORPA simply emphasized that the revolutionary process must attack racism so that Indigenous communities could participate in it, “feel that it is their own”, and understand the revolutionary process as an experience that was “absolutely different than the experiences of marginalization and racist practices that they have encountered throughout the centuries” (“Magnitud” 107). In this sense, ORPA’s major intellectual contribution was their focus on racism as an ideological, economic and social practice fragmenting the nation, coupled with combatting unequal economic conditions in the nation, although their strategy for doing so was limited.

Finally, how ORPA treated the so-called “Indigenous bourgeoisie”, debated throughout the 1970s, is worthy of consideration. ORPA’s take on the Indigenous bourgeoisie was couched within its discussion of Indigenous participation in Ladino party politics, particularly in Quetzaltenango. While they noted that Mayas gained seats in some municipal governing bodies, and even gained two seats in Congress in the early 1970s, they emphasized the general exclusion of Indigenous participation in the official political system (“Magnitud” 95). As such, ORPA discredited Indigenous bourgeoisie political leaders as incapable of gaining traction in official party politics, and so, ORPA did not see them as forceful leaders in the process of social change. Their critique of the Indigenous bourgeoisie was limited by their understanding of it as solely conforming Indigenous politicians, and thus they seemed to miss the greater debate about the Indigenous bourgeoisie’s role in the revolutionary process. Ironically, most of their

Indigenous militants were the sons and daughters of Quetzaltenango's Indigenous bourgeoisie.[42]

The PGT on the Indigenous Question

Two other organizations that continued participating in the broader insurgency movement were the FAR and the PGT. Both, however, retained class-based ideologies of armed revolution and lacked a substantive position on ethno-racial contradictions in the nation. The PGT in 1982 eventually recognized certain aspects of "the Indigenous question" as being important to mention in their publications, but they did so, like Martínez Peláez, himself a member of the PGT, in order to reassert their justifications for class-based revolution. Disunity among Indigenous people was one of their major arguments for maintaining a class-based analysis: Indigenous "unity", they asserted, "did not exist [in the past] despite [Mayas] having a common ancestry before the conquest, and much less after they were violently subjugated and separated" (PGT 14). In a parternalistic twist, the PGT signaled, "only the revolution can effectively integrate them, developing their creative faculties as an essential part of the Guatemalan society" (ibid).

Additionally, the PGT was reticent to attribute the "distinct elements of the diverse Indigenous groups (language differences, for example)" to personal and communal politics of resistance; instead, these differences "have been maintained by the dominant classes to segment them even more" (14). However, while the PGT acknowledged that discrimination of Mayas by Ladinos was a reality, they still maintained that "the full incorporation of Indigenous communities into the revolutionary

process through their class situation", and the "concientización" of Indigenous people as to their class position were the paths to revolutionary change (15). As such, the PGT focused on urban and rural literacy programs, agricultural programs, and providing credit and support to communities throughout the 1970s and 1980s (PGT 16; Galvez Borrell 92). EGP, ORPA, FAR and PGT documents notwithstanding, the actual revolutionary practice was infinitely more anarchic in its day-to-day operations. According to Arias, only cadres knew of these documents and even understood them. And there was never a moment when their actual application could be tested, given the nature of the Army's counter-insurgency tactics.[43]

URNG and the Disintegration of the Popular War

With the EGP in the Ixil area, southern Quiché, Chimaltenango, Huehuetenango and the western Verapaces, and ORPA in the Quetzaltenango region, and with supporters in nearly all departments and in the capitol, the guerrilla insurgency was close to succeeding in their revolutionary goals in the early 1980s. In 1982, both guerrilla columns and their directives, along with what was left of the FAR and part of the PGT, combined forces to become a veritable political alternative to the military government under the auspices of the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG). The URNG affirmed their attention to both sets of concerns (race and class) in a policy statement published in January 1982, which indicated their "goal to end cultural oppression and discrimination and to guarantee equality among Ladinos and Mayas" (URNG qtd. in Smith 268).[44] However, as increased organizing and mobilization took

place throughout the country, the State would match it with ever increasing terror and violence, in particular after the March 23, 1982 military coup that overthrew General Lucas García and brought General Ríos Montt to power. In this period, counterinsurgency tactics equating “Maya” and “subversive” would reach a level of destruction that the UN Truth Commission determined to be genocide (Konefal 84–85).

Against the forces of the URNG, Aura Marina Arriola describes the genocide as manifesting itself through a scorched earth policy and assassinations of entire communities, in an effort to terrorize the population at large and destroy the bases of the popular army (21). With the “self-election” of General Efrain Rios Montt as President, the number of massacres of Maya villages increased with the “institutionalized terrorist repression” by the military (21–23). During his term, Rios Montt enacted his National Plan for Security and Development, which focused on political, economic, social and military stability. This plan developed a system of civil self-defense patrols in rural areas, and consolidated villagers displaced by the violence into “model villages”, in an effort to both “eliminate a base of support for Communist groups and lay the foundation for economic development" (Fischer 54-55). After Rios Montt's reign was ended by a coup in August 1983, General Oscar Mejía Victores came to power and presided over the election of a constituent assembly in 1984, and the writing of a new constitution in 1985. Mejía Victores, in 1986, finally handed power over to democratically elected President Marco Vinicio Cerezo of the Christian Democratic Party. His election signaled some hope that the first democratically elected president in years would begin negotiations with the URNG and bring an end to the repression in the countryside (Fischer 62-63).

The Emergence of the Contemporary Maya Movement

As activist Mayas and members of the Ladino left were decimated during the early 1980s, the emergence of a "pan-Maya movement" would publically appear after the 2nd National Linguistics Congress in 1984; in it, participants called for "an institution to preside over the creation of a unified alphabet for writing Mayan languages" (Fischer 63). This resulted in a meeting of all the groups working on Maya linguistics in the country and in the formation of the Guatemalan Academy of Maya Languages (ALMG). This became the leading group in what was seen as a Maya "revitalization movement", which while initially focused on linguistic matters, would turn to other issues such as Maya history, economic development, religion, and political autonomy (Fischer 64; Cojtí Cuxil "Configuración" 11). Given the history of violence that cultural resistance was met with in the 1970s and early 1980s, it is important to note that the Maya Movement after 1984 tended to focus on linguistics, and thus escapted repression due to their "moderate message" and their "use of savvy diplomacy when presenting" their demands (Fischer 69). Because Maya leaders stressed that they were working to preserve language and culture, Fischer notes, "their demands fall outside the historical political confrontations between the Guatemalan left and right, and they are not inherently antagonistic to either side" (69). Further, Fischer indicates that Maya activists after 1984 maintained separation from groups with Marxist philosophies (67).

However, the Maya Movement throughout the second half of the 1980s increasingly incorporated many of the critiques of the State's indigenista policies that emerged in the 1970s and early 1980s. While Maya leaders continued to emphasize

racism as the motive for continued indigenista practices, they would also critique state tendencies to define Maya identity in essentialist terms, noting instead the multiple manifestation of Mayaness through adaptations and changes emerging out of necessity for self-preservation within the hostile state (Cojtí Cuxil "Configuración" 11-12). In this context, they progressively employed the language of international treaties on human rights to demand Maya rights to political, linguistic and cultural self-determination within the state structure (Cojtí Cuxil "Politics" 19; 21; 25-26). Thus, after the Violence of the late 1970s and early 1980s, we can perceive the emergence of the modern Maya Movement as focused on specific aspects of indigeneity, such as language, but also as building on and going beyond culturalista discourses initially presented in the intellectual and social debates of the 1970s. As Emilio del Valle Escalante notes since the consolidation of the Maya Movement in the 1990s, two tendencies among its ranks mark "complementary and at times contradictory paths": articulating these two tendencies are "maya culturales" and "mayas populares" (*Nacionalismos* 30). The former, as per del Valle Escalante, is composed of a group of intellectuals, professionals and Indigenous organizations that "prioritize a revitalization of a Maya identity […], Maya languages, dress, religion, etc.", while the latter understands "the Guatemalan society in terms of class and consider their condition as Indigenous peoples as secondary" (30). Interestingly, as the Maya Movement of the late 1980s and 1990s emerged, the same tensions between culturalista and clasista camps present in the 1970s and early 1980s reappeared. While both camps may coexist albeit with tension at times, we could argue that their coexistence within the broader Maya Movement is traced back to the late 1970s

and early 1980s when both clasista and culturalista Mayas, and revolutionary non-Mayas, forged alliances in resistance to the brutal state violence.

Conclusions

When reviewing the broad sweep of Guatemalan history, tensions over the imaginaries of national identity, both economic and ethnic, at all points in history caused deep conflicts among different social groups, and culminated in a genocidal civil war. The end result makes it clear that ideologies of the modern Guatemalan nation rooted in a singular, Western national identity at no point sufficiently address the complexity of Guatemala's economic and ethnic reality and the multiple demands of national actors. This is because ethno-racial identity and economic identity in and of themselves are complicated by divergent interpretations of the nation which were often seen as mutually exclusive.

If we take official economic and ethnic discourses from the colonial period through the 1980s, we find that consistently, capitalist economic ideologies employ ethnic policies insofar as they bolster liberal and neo-liberal economic ideology or mitigate prior capitalist economic policies. Before the 1944 October Revolution, ethnic policy blatantly served economic ideology, as vagrancy laws and forced labor statutes disproportionately affected Mayas, thus maintaining them as laborers within the inequitable national economy. These kinds of laws, nonetheless, resulted in what Ladino policy makers perceived as the "Indian Problem" – the perception that Indigenous people were economically, culturally and even territorially segregated from the rest of Ladino

society. This segregation, which some 300 years of forced labor practices produced, and the accompanied Indigenous resistance to exploitation, led to official perceptions that Indigenous people were an obstacle to national development due to their "backwardness" and "incivility". Therefore, ethnic policies emerged which attempted to assuage Indigenous "backwardness"; but these were either economic in nature (agricultural tecnification for small farmers) or were policies of ethnic erasure (castellanización or rural education).

Ethnic policy, then, evolved as a kind of damage control strategy for liberal regimes. Since the majority of Mayas had a specific economic role to play in the national economy, yet playing this role oppressed them and led to ethnic conflicts, the state implemented ethnic policies that attempted to either raise Mayas' economic situations just enough to subdue them, or to erase indigeneity altogether. Erasing indigeneity meant that Indigenous people would cease envisioning themselves as ethnically and epistemologically different, and therefore would pledge allegiance to a homogenous, capitalist national identity and accept the economic roles that came along with it.

The Counterrevolutionary governments enacted similar ethnic management policies as the liberal regimes before them; ones that denied Indigenous cultural demands and attempted to homogenize Indigenous people into an anti-communist, capitalist vision of the Guatemalan nation. Initially, they recognized an "Indian Problem" in the nation, but understood it as an Indigenous cultural obstacle to fomenting their brand of nationalism. Thus, through indigenista policies aimed at "ladinization", they again institutionalized ethnic policies of "culturcidio", or ethnic erasure. As ladinization

became increasingly criticized and fearing Maya insurgent mobilization with the emergence of new guerrilla insurgencies in the 1970s, neo-liberal governments shifted their strategies of ethnic management to policies that were primarily economic, or outwardly violent. Developmentalist policies discursively erased indigeneity all together by replacing the language of cultural difference (Ladino-Indigenous) with that of territorial difference (urban-rural). Residual indigenista policies form the 1960s that focused on celebrating the Maya as a relic of the past became progressively geared toward fomenting national development through tourism, as discussed above. However, while liberal and neo-liberal regimes attempted to erase Indigenous people from the national context, the problem of economic inequality between a Ladino minority aligned with foreign economic interests would also cause major tensions in the nation. As such, conflicts erupted between political and economic power holders, and Ladino social sectors demanding, at first, democratic and economic reforms, and later, the transformation of the national economy through Marxist revolution.

The first major challenge to unbalanced liberal economic policies came with the 1944-1954 October Revolutionary governments, which sought to transform the nation through the creation of a culturally homogenous and economically just society based in a democratic capitalist State. Nonetheless, the revolutionary governments also had to deal with the so-called "Indian problem" which they now imagined based in the "Ladino-Indigenous bipolarity", a vestige of colonial and liberal regime segregation that had persisted since the conquest and divided the nation into these two antagonistic social groups. In this sense, the Revolutionary government, at least rhetorically, moved away

from liberal regimes' identification of the Indian as *the* problem, and identified segregation between Ladinos and Mayas as the major obstacle to a stable national identity. But, because their ideology of the nation was still fixed in capitalism, even their ethnic policies tended to favor economic integration and progress over ethno-racial matters.

In this context, Agrarian Reform was the major policy initiative that sought to diminish economic national disintegration. It follows that the Ten Years of Spring governments believed that with land reform, poor Indigenous people and Ladinos alike would be able to augment their productive capacity, which in turn would encourage their participation in the new democratic state and diminish the traditional elites' monopoly on political and economic power. However, perhaps to mitigate ethnic conflicts within the new state, the Arévalo and Arbenz administrations were inclined to favor ethnic policies that focused on integrating Mayas into a national identitarian imaginary that viewed all citizens as equal and as enjoying the same rights. The problem with this ideology is that not all social groups conceived of rights in the same way. Since Mayas were excluded from the process of forming laws governing rights and equality, Revolutionary functionaries perceived for them not only the kinds of rights they were to receive, but which of their "cultural values" were appropriate for the new democratic capitalist state. Therefore, in all of the official discourses from the colonial period forward, State ethnic and economic policies sought to assimilate or integrate Mayas into a Western model of the nation that denied them the right to self-determination. Had Mayas had the opportunity to assert their demands within the State system, the very economic ideology

of capitalism may well have been challenged, and the very notion of a homogenous nation may well have been checked.

Further, with the emergence of a Marxist inspired emancipatory project in the 1960s and 1970s, Mayas were still imagined out of the Western vision of an ethnically homogenous socialist nation. Their identitarian difference as Mayas was denied due to the Marxist desire for the proletarianization of all campesinos and workers. There is an important parallel here between Marxist revolutionary ideology and the "adamcismo" approach to the "Indian Problem". As we saw above, the structural-functional approach in anthropology downplayed the role of race and emphasized culture and ethnicity. Yet, as Casaús Arzú argues, displacing race obscured the understanding of racism as a strategy of domination in Guatemalan social relations. Therefore, little was done in State social and economic policies to attack racial discrimination as a potential solution to Guatemala's "Indian Problem". It is notable that Marxism functions parallel to structural-functional approaches in anthropology in that it too fails to perceive race as a category of social analysis, and racism as a means of domination and oppression. While the structural-functional approach to anthropology considers culture and ethnicity as prisms though which to understand society, Marxism sees class relations as the primary paradigm for understanding social relations. A consequence of obscuring race in both discourses is that their protagonists came to believe that for Indigenous peoples to "to integrate into the nation" or be "historical subjects of the revolution", they would have to either pass through processes of "ladinization" or "proletarianization", respectively. In both strategies of power and resistance (state versus insurgency), imaginaries of Mayas

were folded into ideologies that failed to acknowledge racial domination and its complication for both ethno-racial and class-based analyses of Guatemalan social, political and economic problems. And these too failed to cede spaces for Indigenous participation, autonomy and self-determination.

It was not until Indigenous people began organizing on a national scale that they themselves articulated revolutionary projects that challenged state and Marxist ideologies (both Eurocentric in nature). However, even within Maya groups, political demands were diverse and tended to be different for those Mayas who had been exposed to urban educational and professional opportunities, and for rural campesinos. Ultimately, the fact that Mayas espoused multiple visions of national emancipatory projects is an important refutation of the State's repeated conceptualization of Indigenous people as a knowable, solvable "problem", or as existing at one end of the "Ladino-Indigenous polarity". Mayas reasserted through their activism and organization that they were not simply tied to the land or of the past, nor were they a homogenous group to be "managed" through State tutelary policies. Thus Maya activism in its multiple forms is in itself a major complication of official and even Marxist essentialist imaginaries of Maya subjectivities and the identity of the nation.

Diversity among Mayas in how they envision emancipatory projects also led to serious critiques of the nation-state as understood in its Western, totalizing form. While the nation as a structure for governance of national citizens resonated for some Mayas who felt they were citizens of the nation, for others the very concept of a singular nation was a farce. Therefore, with Maya resistance to national projects that oppressed and / or

erased them from the national imaginary, we find a major movement in Guatemalan history from ideologies centered in the Western, capitalist nation, to an emergent form of post-nationalism in which the rights of individuals and communities as global citizens are prioritized over rights as citizens of a particular nation. This emergence is even more notable given that it occurred amid the backdrop of a long tradition of State repression of Indigenous socio-political and ethnic manifestations.

That said, we cannot forget that Mayas and Ladinos in the late 1970s and early 1980s progressively united their diverse platforms in response to State violence, revealing how extreme, genocidal violence against the majority ushered in a phase of cooperation in the left. However, in these later years, when both class-based and culture-based resistance movements merged in the context of armed insurgency, the State's response once again relied on the ideological premises guiding prior periods' economic and ethnic policy: the erasure of dissenting political voices, and primarily, the erasure of Indigenous people.

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[1] Ladino here refers to people of a mixed race background with a Eurocentric worldview; in Guatemala this pertains to the offspring of Indigenous and European peoples. However, in Guatemala, perhaps to a lesser degree than in the rest of Central American, African slaves and mulatto (African-European mixed raced offspring) would be considered part of the "nonwhite majority" pertaining to the poor, landless masses (Booth and Walker 20).

[2] The hacienda system evolved into what would be known as the latifundia-minifundia system of land tenure, in which fewer large farms were owned by the minority economic elite, and subsistence-oriented small farms were allotted to Indigenous populations in the *pueblos de indios*.

[3] See Severo Martínez Peláez's *Motines de indios* (1985) for an analysis of Indigenous rebellions and resistance.

[4] See David McCreery's chapter "The Coffee Revolution" in *Rural Guatemala 1760-1940*, in particular pages 181-186 for a discussion of the Liberal nationalization of land held by Catholic orders, state baldíos, and the usurpation of Indigenous *ejidos*.

[5] It should be noted that Vagrancy Laws during the Barrios period differed from those of the Ubico period (1931 until 1944) in that upholding and expanding such laws during the Ubico period was this government's response to the Great Depression.

[6] See also Ileana Rodriguez's *Transatlantic Topographies* for her discussion of the "old, dead 'Indian'" as an "investment of knowledge" that was "civilized too, because he is manageable", whereas the "savage is the live 'Indian'" (142-143).
[7] See the Introduction to this project for a discussion of the coloniality of power.
[8] See Marta Casaús Arzú's 2005 article in *Revista de Indias* (Vol LXV, No 234, pgs 375-404) for a detailed analysis of the "espirtualista" and "vitalista" debates on national identity, inspired primarily in the writings of Salvadoran author Alberto Masferrer.
[9] See Chapter Two of this study for a discussion of late Liberal-era abolition of debt peonage during the regime of Jorge Ubico.
[10] See Jonas (1991) for details on US involvement in Ubico's rise to power.
[11] Early on, the Arévalo administration enforced the regulation of labor contracts in an effort to control indebtedness and normalize labor relations between owners and poor Ladino and Indigenous labor forces (Casey 229–230). The newly adopted 1945 Constitution abolished vagrancy laws and forced labor, followed by the 1947 Labor Code which established minimum wages, equal pay for equal work, improved working conditions, social security measures and the right to strike and organize unions. While urban, banana and railroad workers gained rights and better working conditions, wages for rural agricultural workers rose little or not at all (Jonas 24).
[12] Additionally, in 1944, ethnic tensions were particularly palpable due to interethnic bloodshed in Patzicía, San Andres Iztapa and Patzún, which left several Ladinos and Mayas dead, and resulted in the death sentence for eleven Mayas.
[13] The discussions surrounding the "Indigenous Statute" signal two ideological extremes circulating among politicians and intellectuals of the time: the abolition of state protectionism toward Indigenous populations, on the one hand, and the development of indigenista protectionism on the other hand. See Taracena (2004) for specific details on this debate during the 1945 constitutional discussions.
[14] By the time the October revolutionaries came to power, 2.2 percent of landowners owned 70 percent of arable land, and in a country that is primarily rural, agricultural workers' per capita income was a mere $87 per year (Blum 74). Further, 88 percent of the population held only 14 percent of the land, and of the total privately held land, less than 12 percent was under cultivation (Trezfger n.pag.).
[15] See Blum (1995) for details on UFCO's ties to US State Department officials.
[16] See Blum (1995) for a detailed discussion of communism's influence, or lack thereof, in the Arbenz administration.
[17] See Jonas (1991) for an additional critique of the petty bourgeoisie's role in the failure of the revolution; also, it had been argued that women were not sufficiently folded into the Revolutionary project.
[18] See Galvez Borrell (2008) for details on the development of the unified FAR front. Also, we can consider the FAR as functioning in two distinct periods. After this first period of guerrilla activity (until 1970) the FAR would reemerge later in the 1970s and continue operating through the end of the armed conflict (see the below section on guerrilla organizations in the late 1970s).
[19] Students at the university level participated through the University Students' Association, and even at the secondary level through a group calling themselves The United Front of Organized Guatemalan Students (FUEGO); while other urban young people got involved in the PGT's wing for the youth, Patriotic Worker Youth (Way 116-117).
[20] The FAR as the insurgent coalition, would be plagued by ideological divisions within its ranks. For example, Turcios Lima noted, in an "Open Letter" dated March 6th, 1965, that the emergence of a Trotskyist faction advocating the seizure of power via urban insurrection was out of the ideological fundamentals of the insurgency. For him, the revolution was a Maoist-influenced prolonged war, in which, working from the countryside to the city, "campesinos [would] be the decisive […] factor in taking over power" (4). He criticized the Trotskyist faction for disrupting FAR unity, claiming that would consolidate their power through "urban vanguard leadership" should the revolution succeed (5-7).
[21] The Ydigoras Fuentes administration ramped up terror tactics directed at dissident leaders and activists, and strengthened the military; Peralta Azurdia intensified oppression against dissenting voices, and deepened political and economic relations with the US (Arriola 225). Next came President Julio César

Méndez Montenegro (1966-1970), the only civilian President between 1954 and 1986, and then Carlos Manuel Arana Osorio, a Coronel in Méndez Montenegro's army known as the "Butcherer of Zacapa" for his murder of peasants during the late 1960s.

[22] Adams would remain to work as an ethnologist on "integration" theories and policies after the revolution until he returned to the US in 1956 due to his discomfort with growing violence in the nation (Darnell and Gleach 243).

[23] Marisol de la Cadena also notes the confusion surrounding the terms and meanings of race and culture filtering into Peru during the early 20th century, which she notes was directly related to North American academics. Citing Stocking she explains that for American academics there was no clear line between "cultural and physical elements or between social and biological heredity". But rather, that the term race was used as a "catchall that might be applied to various human groups whose sensible similatirites of appearance of manner and of speech persisted over time, and therefore were to them, evidently hereditary" (de la Cadena 18; Stocking 1994, 6-7). In the end, "race could be biology but it could also be the soul of the people; it was also their culture, their spirit, their language" (19).

[24] From 1971-1975, Arana Osorio implemented his Economic Development Plan to attract foreign and national investment and improve its image, as the Guatemalan state was increasingly criticized for using violence to repress political dissent (Galvez Borrell 83). This resulted in major increases in agricultural investment through credits and technical trainings, along with other measures. In this sense, the administration promoted a state development policy while simultaneously repressing workers, students and political organizations (84).

[25] An active participant in student organizations in the Arbenz period and after the 1954 coup, Martínez Peláez was a member of the radicalized generation of intellectuals impassioned by leftist mobilizations marking the period in Latin America (Cal Montoya 6). Due to his involvement in the leftist movement as an activist, Severo Martínez Peláez went into exile in Mexico only months after Arbenz was removed from office. In this period, he began researching and writing *La patria del Criollo*. After returning to Guatemala, and leaving again for Spain, he again returned to Guatemala in 1969. Shortly after his arrival, his manuscript, nearly a decade and a half in the making, was released by USAC presses on September 30th, 1970 (Lovell and Lutz xxii).

[26] Smith notes the complication of analyzing Indigenous people and Ladinos in terms of a broad-based proletariat, given that "class, ethnic, community and state relations in Guatemala have always and everywhere vastly complicated each other so that no general or singular analysis will do" (25). She is critical of theories of proletarianization of Indigenous people because she states that "a major element in the maintenance of Indian cultural identity has been Indian resistance to full proletariazation and to capitalist relations of production with the community", which is a point J.L-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler make in their work (24).

[27] She finds these authors' influence in post-colonial theorists such as Fanon, Memmi, and Jean-Paul Sartre; with additional influences being anthropologists Barre, Balandier, Levi-Strauss and Frederik Barch, Aguirre Beltran, Bonfil Batalla, Díaz Polanco and Stavenhagen, as they influenced a shift in the anthropological and theoretical treatment of ethnicity and racism (22-24).

[28] This dialogues with the Marxist definition of "false consciousness" as the failure of the proletariat to realize their class position vis-à-vis the bourgeoisie, and accept the legitimacy of the power oppressing them. In these authors, "false consciousness" is modified and applied to the Ladino imaginary of their power over Mayas.

[29] In 1975, Guzmán Böckler would extend his analysis of the "alienation of the Ladino" to dialogue with Octavio Paz's notion of the "soledad" of the national Mexican subject. (See *Colonialismo y revolución*, 1975, 228-229, and Octavio Paz's *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, 1950.)

[30] On this point – the colonial construct of false identitarian categories such as "Ladino" and "Indio" – both Martínez Peláez and J.L-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler present arguments lacking clarity. In investigating this issue, Bonfil Batalla in 1981 would expand upon their understandings of "Ladino" and "Indio" as constructs by explaining the following: "La categoría de indio designa al sector colonizado y hace referencia necesaria a la relación colonial. El indio surge con el establecimiento del orden colonial europeo

en América; antes no hay indios, sino pueblos diversos con sus identidades propias. Al indio lo crea el europeo, porque toda situación colonial exige la definición global del colonizado como diferente e inferior [...] en base a esa categorización de indio, el colonizador racionalize y justifica la dominación y su posicion de privilegio" (Bonfil Batalla 1981, 19).

[31] As for Martínez Peláez's descriptions of Indian subjugation, he generally describes Mayas in terms stripping them of resistive agency. For example, noting that while Indians received small portions of land to farm, they "were there to be exploited, and exploited they were, subject to oppression and the threat of violence, which was used to snuff out any hint of rebellion" (99). For this passive characterization of Indians, he was heavily criticized and later would study Indigenous resistance and rebellion, publishing his research in *Motines de indios. La violencia colonial en Centroamérica y Chiapas* (1985).

[32] The Catholic Church, through Acción Católica, Jesuit priests and the Maryknolls, would play an important role in accompanying both rural organizations and professionalized Indigenous activists and students as they became increasingly politicized into the 1970s.

[33] Fischer and Brown (1996) and Arias (1985, 1990) both note that in the early 1970s, groups in the K'iche' region would form culturalista organizations dedicated to Indigenous cultural and linguistic activism. These include the Asociacion Indígena Pro Cultura Maya-Quiche, the Asociacion de Forjadores de Ideales Quichelenses, and the Asociacion de Escritores Mayances de Guatemala (AEMG) were all established in Quetzaltenango to promote Maya culture (Arias 1990 in Fischer and Brown 59).

[34] See Falla "El movimiento indígena" 1978 for a detailed account of Tezahuic's fall from grace from the Indigenous 'base' represented by Patinamit. Writing in 1996, Demetrio Cojtí Cuxil notes that Indian mayors in hamlets and villages have "always been" quite common, and even throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, Maya mayors have increased in the highlands region (Cojtí Cuxil, "Politics of Maya Revindication" 32). However, the higher levels of government, such as the departmental, regional and national levels, "remain totally in the hands of Ladinos, who generally promulgate and apply colonialist laws" (32). He notes that despite the fact that Mayas have participated in Ladino party politics, "their participation has always been marginal, accidental, and hardly representative" (33). In the 1970s, Patinamit eventually formed the short-lived FIN party, which while initially dedicated to Indigenous issues, eventually ceded to Ladino claims of reverse racism, and adopted the line of "national unity" (Fischer 62, Falla 447; Konefal 80-82). Eventually, for the party's survival, they would not only have to adopt a moderate political platform, but they would be courted by other parties for their endorsement. Ironically, given their initial party line, but not ironically given the corrupt political environment and their disenchantment with the Christian Democrats, FIN would eventually throw its support to the right-wing candidacy of General Romeo Lucas García (Fischer 62). Internal conflicts and external resistance eventually disbanded FIN.

[35] According to a personal communication with Arturo Arias, Manuela Ocampo de la Paz is a pseudonym for Mercedes Olivera, who was one of "los siete magníficos," a group of Mexican anthropologists who broke with the Mexican State's official line of anthropology with the publication of *De eso que se llama antropología mexicana* (1970). The group also included Margarita Nolasco, Enrique Valencia, Guillermo Bonfil, Arturo Warman, Ángel Palerm, Juan José Rendón and Daniel Cazés. Arias notes that "yes, there were actually eight". Further, Arias indicates that Olivera wrote the article with the pseudonym of Manuela Ocampo de la Paz because she was a secret member of the EGP.

[36] Founders included Emerterio Toj, Domingo Hernandez Ixcoy, Pablo Ceto, among others from Chimaltenango, Rabinal, Baja Verapaz, etc.

[37] See also *Taking Their Word: Literature and the Signs of Central America* (2007), chapter 7 "The Burning of the Spanish Embassy: Máximo Cajal versus David Stoll" by Arturo Arias for an indepth discussion of the multiple versions of the Spanish Embassy fire story.

[38] Although many poor Mayas would participate in grass-roots social organizations, a section of the culturalista "Indigenous bourgeoisie" would resist armed resistance and make Maya nationalistic claims. One such group called themselves the Tojiles, who called for a separate Maya republic which would work in coordination with, but independently from a Ladino republic. See Konefal 146-150 for details.

[39] See Yolanda Colom, *Mujeres en la alborada*, 1993; Mario Payeras, *Los días de la selva*, 1981.

[40] Personal communication with Arturo Arias, May 2013.
[41] Suffice it to say, the links between ORPA's focus on racism as a violence done onto Indigenous populations and the terms of the coloniality of power discussed in the Introduction to this study, are strong, and thus, ORPA's discourse on racism and its effects appears to be an intellectual precursor to the development of coloniality as a lens through which to analyze hierarchical social relations in Guatemala.
[42] Personal communication with Arturo Arias, May 2013.
[43] Personal communication with Arturo Arias, May 2013.
[44] Smith notes that the URNG elaborated this position minimally, and did so to affirm that the cause of Indigenous oppression was rooted in Guatemala's class structure and to suggest that cultural oppression would be eradicated with the political participation of Mayas in the revolutionary struggle (268).

Chapter Two: Imagining Identities in Guatemalan Literature

As demonstrated in the last chapter, tensions between Ladinos and Mayas throughout Guatemalan history served as the basis for contradictory imaginaries of national identity, and resulted in the emergence of Criollo/Ladino national projects that oppressed or erased Mayas beginning in the colonial period through the first half of the 20th Century. Only in the 1944-1954 period did a desire to promote a mixed "national soul" or identity drawing from Maya and Ladino cultures, cosmovisions and ways of life emerge in political discourses. While discourses of indigeneity and identity circulated politically in the urban centers and among Criollo and later Ladino politicians and critics, Guatemalan textualities reflected, reified and fictionalized these political discourses. In this way, Guatemalan literature symbolically codified those debates regarding identity and indigeneity in the nation. In this chapter I want to first argue that initial iterations of the contradictory, Eurocentric vision of Guatemalan identity and indigeneity discussed in Chapter One can be located in colonial literary discourses of identity in the proto-nation.[1] These colonial Criollo discourses produce a series of imaginaries in literature about the nature of Mayas and Criollos that both reflect the politics of the day and textually enact the erasure of contemporary Maya subjecthood within the proto-nation. Further, said discourses of indigeneity and identity morph through the 19th Century with the birth of the independent Guatemalan nation state, and eventually bend to political trends for understanding the "Indian problem" in Guatemala, a turn most clearly demonstrated in key literary works from the first half of the 20th Century. Through a discussion of the

identitarian discourses found in literature, we can perceive a rigid Ladino-centric imaginary of national identity even in works once seen as revolutionary for their incorporation of textured Maya characters. To this end, I will construct a genealogy of the discourses of indigeneity and national identity in Guatemalan textualities prior to the emergence of Luis de Lión's literary project. Such a genealogy reveals the ways in which national identitarian imaginaries are constructed in text, how they change, morph and modernize over time, and the links between literary discourses and those found in the broader sociological, political and economic realms within Guatemalan society.

As anchors of these textual constructions, I first discuss a 17th Century text by Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán titled *Recordación florida* (1690), followed by an analysis of José Milla y Vidaurre's 19th Century text *La hija del adelantado* (1866). I then turn to three 20th century texts: Flavio Herrera's *La tempestad* (1935), Miguel Ángel Asturias's *Hombres de maíz* (1949), and Mario Monteforte Toledo's *Donde acaban los caminos* (1952). In this genealogy, I am omitting a text from the 18th Century due to a lack of literary production in Guatemala with content that addresses indigeneity and national identity. As a side note, perhaps Rafael Landívar's *Rusticatio Mexicana* – an epic renaissance poem written in Latin in 1781-1782 – could be considered in this genealogy, as it is the key text emerging in the 18th Century. However, this text neither acknowledges a Maya presence in the proto-nation, nor does it offer imaginaries of the national persona that include a treatment of indigeneity. For this reason, I have opted to omit it from this study.[2]

The first section of this chapter considers Fuentes y Guzmán's *Recordación florida* because in it we find an emergent "bipolar" vision of Guatemalan identity based on contradictory social discourses about the past and present Indigenous, and codifications of a dominant ego conquiro Criollo subjectivity. In Fuentes y Guzmán's text, a "bipolar" Criollo imaginary of Mayas in the Guatemalan proto-nation emerges in which Mayas of the past are constructed as glorious, magical adversaries, while contemporary Mayas are established as miserable, superstitious objects to be dominated by Criollos. Such a dichotomy serves to suggest a progressive decline of Mayas in the proto-national identity, such that the ideal, future Guatemalan 'we' does not include Mayas. Also of note in Fuentes y Guzmán's text is his iteration of discursive "truths" regarding the colonial Criollo (the ego conquiro subjectivity discussed below and in the Introduction) as the civilized conqueror placing the land and the "Other" under his control.

José Milla's 19th Century text is a work of historical fiction that recurs to the colonial past to imagine the 19th Century nation. While it is primarily marked by an absence of Mayas, when they do appear in the text, they are imagined as ornamental, demonic, malleable, or simply dangerous to the stability of the colonial order. In other images, they are constructed as slaves to Criollo power holders. Milla's historical novel therefore returns to the colonial past to reiterate the "proper" place for Mayas in the 19th Century nation, and so, we can consider it a kind of Guatemalan foundational fiction relegating Maya subjectivities to spaces outside of the desired social order, albeit still serving the powerful of the nation.

I next turn to Flavio Herrera's 1935 novel *La tempestad* to investigate how foundational imaginaries of indigeneity morph over time, thereby altering colonial and 19th Century discourses in an effort to discursively accommodate the socio-political and economic objectives of the 20th Century land-owning elite. In Herrera's representation, the "Maya of the past" versus "contemporary Maya" dichotomy is given a modern makeover which is then used to assert a new Ladino ego conquiro subjectivity. In Herrera's text, the ego conquiro figure ceases to be associated with the narrative authority of the colonial Criollo, as it is in Fuentes y Guzmán's text, and becomes the authoritative voice of the land-owning, Ladino elite. In analyzing this novel, we see, first, how discursive "truths" elaborated particularly in Fuentes y Guzmán's work become reified and reworked through images of Ladino economic domination and sexuality; second, the emergence of imaginaries about Maya women; and third, the Ladino elite's textual rebuttal to socio-political and economic policy debates of the decade on how to solve the so-called "Indian problem".

In the last two sections of this chapter, I consider two authors ideologically aligned with the integrative tenants of the 1944-1954 Ten Years of Spring governments. Both authors' works challenge certain discursive "truths" of indigeneity and national identity found in the previously studied texts. Miguel Ángel Asturias and his use of linguistic and rhetorical devices to signify a resistive Maya cosmovision in the novel *Hombres de maíz* (1949) breaks with prior imaginaries about Mayas as non-subjects in the nation. Reflecting the intellectual currents of his time, Asturias's indigenista discourse tends to parallel IDAEH's (The Institute of Anthropology and History) cultural

policy rhetoric. However, through an analysis of Asturias's portrayal of a prototypical Maya, we find how his work, despite its then-progressive nature, unwittingly recasts Mayas according to both the "Ladino - Indian" binary, and to the "Maya of the past" versus "Maya of the present" contradiction. In his work we discover a subtle reassertion of a Ladino ego conquiro subjectivity that emerges in the shape of the Ladino authorial voice.

Finally, I study Mario Monteforte Toledo's 1952 novel *Donde acaban los caminos* to understand how another indigenista writer signals discourses of national identity and indigeneity according to the social policies aimed at solving the "Indian problem" circulating during the October Revolutionary period, in particular those of the IIN (National Indigenista Institute). Monteforte Toledo's work is important as it also breaks with previous imaginaries of Mayas established in Fuentes y Guzmán, Milla and Herrera, particularly in regards to Mayas' "mythic" nature and aptitude to be educated. While Monteforte Toledo does not focus on a temporal binary regarding indigeneity, his work reifies discursive "truths" about Indigenous superstition and stubbornness, and the problems for Maya integration into the Ladino nation that such behaviors and beliefs present. In this discourse, Monteforte Toledo asserts a new kind of ego conquiro subjectivity: that of the Ladino Revolutionary.

For the analysis of the aforementioned texts, in this chapter I am aided by the work of three theorists: Michel Foucault, Javier Sanjinés and Enrique Dussel. As discussed in the Introduction to this project, Foucault's observations regarding discourse's classification, ordering and distribution, as well as its links to power and

knowledge are particularly useful. For Foucault in "The Order of Discourse", discursive ordering enables the crafting of a "truth", in the Nietzschean sense, that is distributed through communication and in the construction of social imaginaries. This "truth conceived as a richness […] a fecundity, a gentle and insidiously universal force" is fashioned through what Foucault calls the "will to truth" – the "prodigious machinery designed to exclude", or the institutionally supported and reinforced "pressure exerted as a power of constraint […] on other discourses" (55; 56). The will to truth orders discourse so that the "truth" is apparent and unquestionable. Said "truths" however, are ultimately linked back to the desire for power, when not power itself (52). In other words, the construction of social imaginaries through discursive practices links back to the will to power of the hegemonic sector of society, exercising power in a manner analogous to what Quijano denominated the "coloniality of power," that is, the existence and continual production of identities based on the notion of race; the hierarchized relation of inequality between "European" and "non-European" identities, and the domination of the former over the latter; and the construction of mechanisms of social domination designed to preserve this historical foundation of social classification.[3] In this sense, Foucault's warning that when analyzing discourse the critic must conceive of it as "a violence" done unto things is, in peripheral societies that experienced colonialism, a discursive violence rooted in the coloniality of power (67). In Guatemalan textualities, while we can identify the injurious continuities in Criollo/Ladino discourses of identity, when we take a closer look, we can also identify how the "truths" break down, leaving holes that reveal the power and desire encoded into discourse. The ambiguities, contradictions, and

discontinuities in Criollo and Ladino narratives on identity and indigeneity allow us to further critique the discursive truths of national identity.

Second, to understand our genealogy of texts and discursive "truths" in the context of Western progress, Javier Sanjinés 2013 study *Embers of the Past* proves particularly useful. Sanjinés argues that the "linear time that has been so essential for progress-based European nation building […] corresponds to the direction humanity must take in quest of its infinite perfectibility" (109). In other words, European-style nation building as it emerged in Guatemala and elsewhere has depended on a linear movement of time that progressively advances toward an ideal state. The notion of the perfect nation forced upon autochthonous populations through European invasion, and later, idealization by the local bourgeoisie, Sanjinés argues, inspired within Criollo/Ladino subjectivities "longed-for, still incomplete, projects of creating 'national cultures'" (109). The Western understanding of time as progress moving nations toward an identitarian ideal was not lost on the local Latin American bourgeoisie, and in fact became a goal for the fathers of the patria as they tried to imagine the national identity while simultaneously mitigating tensions among various ethno-cultural groups. Sanjinés also indicates that in areas with large Indigenous populations the imposition of a Hegelian conceptualization of time considered "history on the move toward a synthetic unity, toward a resurrection of lost wholeness" (18). The desire for a synthetic ideal, for unity, historically obfuscated conceptualizations of the national identity as pluriethnic and pluricultural, and rather tended to envision communities first in terms of binaries of the modern or archaic, as we saw in Chapter One with our study of indigenismo. The ideal was that the two would

eventually merge together to create a synthesis: a national cultural identity (19). As we will see in this chapter, the Hegelian view of time as progress permits the unfolding of a central discursive "truth" regarding Guatemalan indigeneity – that the Maya of the past were glorious, while the Maya of the present are miserable, such that the Maya of the (national) future will cease to exist. This temporal construction of Mayas lends to the discursive construction of present-day Mayas as non-contemporaneous shells of a former, "lost" subjectivity.

Thirdly, as discussed in the Introduction to this project, I recur to the figure of the Criollo/Ladino ego conquiro subjectivity as it is conceived of by Argentine-Mexican writer and philosopher Enrique Dussel.[4] For Dussel, the ego conquiro subjectivity is a symbolic codification of an originally Spanish, and later Criollo and Ladino, understanding of self as conqueror. The ego conquiro refers to an "expanding, self-centered subjectivity" based in the logic of a civilized "I" that is justified in conquering an "inferior barbarian" in order to "reconstruct the world under his control, at his service, for his exploitations" (Dussel 166; 187). In this definition, Dussel theorizes the initial relationship between the Spanish conquistador and the Indigenous "Other" as based in a hierarchical paradigm rooted in a binary of the civilized versus the savage. In his 2008 essay "Meditaciones anti-cartesianas: sobre el origen del anti-discurso filosófico de la modernidad," Dussel describes the ego conquiro subjectivity as it emerged theoretically out of the 1550-1551 Valladolid Debates between Ginés de Sepúlveda and Bartolomé de las Casas in which Ginés de Sepúlveda argued that the Spanish conquest of the American Indigenous was justified because the Indigenous were barbarians, and lacking civilization

according to the rules of Spanish reason. Sepúlveda argued: "it is just, convenient, and in conformity with natural law that those honorable, intelligent, virtuous, and human men dominate all those who lack these qualities" (Gines de Sepulveda qtd. in Dussel 166). This view provided justification for "dominating" Indigenous populations, while the reference to "natural law" suggested a reasoning founded in the racialized hierarchization of the so-called civilized and barbarian. The dichotomy of the civilized versus the uncivilized, the "lacking" Maya versus the Criollo ego conquiro inaugurated in the Valladolid debates becomes textually codified as social myths of indigeneity in Guatemalan textualities from the colonial period through the 20th century.

Working through these theoretical constructs, we discover in the following genealogy of Criollo/Ladino textualities how the social myths discussed in Chapter One are symbolically codified and expanded upon in narrative, and thus translated into social imaginaries through discursive practices, and become "naturalized" as discursive "truths". Of particular importance in the discursive organization of the nation and those who live in it is the constant reenactment of conquest, in which the primary subjects are, on one side, the Criollo/Ladino ego conquiro subjectivity, and on the other, a contradictory Maya subjectivity that is simultaneously glorious and past, and miserable and contemporary. Subsequently, it will become evident that the authorial gaze elaborating and arranging identitarian imaginaries in the texts studied in this chapter is consistently, and unapologetically, a Criollo or later Ladino gaze that seeks an erasure of contemporary indigeneity in the modern nation.

Inaugurating a Foundational Contradiction: Fuentes y Guzmán's *Recordación florida*

While many Latin American colonial texts contain foundational discourses for explaining national identity, when looking at Guatemalan textualities one can discern a foundational discourse steeped in contradictions. As we saw in Chapter One, said contradictions are the basis for understanding the imaginary of a "bipolar" identity throughout Guatemalan history. The first literary arrangement of the Guatemalan foundational contradiction can be read in Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán's *Recordación florida* (1690).

Recordación florida was written as a non-fiction, historical document treating the natural, material, military and political history of the Kingdom of Guatemala during and after the Invasion of the Americas by Spanish Conquistadors; this text focuses primarily on the Criollo fight to enjoy the same rights as "peninsulares" – in other words, it was written in the context of the growing conflict between Criollos (persons of Spanish heritage born in the Americas), and "peninsulares" (Spanish colonialists born in Spain but living in the colony) (Liano "Visión crítica" 47).[5] As we saw in Chapter One, Severo Martínez Peláez asserts that in *Recordación florida* we can perceive an ideology of the Criollo "homeland" through which Criollos justify their power over Guatemalan resources: land and labor, which includes the "masses of Indian serfs" (Martínez Peláez 3). The work as a whole, according to Martínez Peláez, is "charged with ideological significance" establishing the Criollo's privileged position in the proto-nation (78-79). Along these lines, Guillermo Paz Cárcamo notes that Fuentes y Guzmán's "history"

obscures the facts, mixing them with legends and fantasies, in order to create a particular "truth" of the foundation of the nation (45). For its significance as a colonial Criollo manifesto that interrupts discourses of Spanish hegemony in the colony, Fuentes y Guzmán's text stands as a foundational narrative intuiting the struggle for Guatemalan independence. However, Fuentes y Guzmán articulates this struggle in a highly contradictory, racially-charged manner. He uses discursivity and "letrado power" to create a hereditary link between the conquistadores and Criollos that serves to displace peninsulares' local political control, while simultaneously reifying the subordination and/or erasure of contemporary indigeneity in the proto-nation.[6] His argument depends on an imaginary of Mayas as bifurcated into two distinctive states of subjecthood –the "glorious Indian of the past" and the "miserable Indian of the present".

In order to meet his textual objectives of creating a political-documentary or history, Fuentes y Guzmán uses a tactic common to other colonial "historians". He first constructs the Indigenous inhabitants encountered at the time of the Invasion in a way that exalts the conquistadors' military prowess, while also justifying their brutality against their Indigenous rivals. He does this first by highlighting Maya strength, civilization and leadership. As in other colonial accounts of the Invasion, the heroic conqueror is faced with a formidable Indigenous foe that he vanquishes due to his nearly super-human strength and skill as a warrior. For example, Fuentes y Guzmán first notes the heroism of the conquistadors by describing their feats and the grandeur of their acts: he notes the "heroic zeal" surrounding the "conquest and consolidation of the lands" ("celo heróico de las conquistas y reducción de la tierra") (4). Further, when Fuentes y

Guzmán lists the names of the conquistadors, he explains that "these are the memorable names and heroic last names of those excellent and brave Spaniards who joined the conquest of this great Kingdom" ("estos son los memorables nombres y heroicos apellidos de aquellos excelentes y valerosos españoles que pasaron a las conquistas de este gran Reino") (67). From the beginning of the text, then, the conquistadors are imbued with a sense of heroism, and to heighten this aspect of conquistador subjectivity, Fuentes y Guzmán describes his enemy as equally robust, as well as intelligent. He notes the ancestors of the Maya as being the "Tultecas", who were "of sound intelligence" ("de buena inteligencia") and "very cultured in matters of policing" ("muy cultos en materias de policía") (11). He emphasizes the superiority of the "Tultecas" by contrasting them to the Mexica and marking a distance between the two Indigenous groups in order to suggest the superiority of the Spanish conquistadors invading Guatemala in comparison to those invading Mexico. Regarding Mayas, he notes that "although in some things they cooperated and agreed with the Mexicanos, they were set apart from them in more ways" ("aunque en algunas de ellas cooperaban y convenían con los Mexicanos, en las más distaban mucho") (12). A discursive strategy to heighten the image of strong Maya ancestors compared to the Mexica is to describe the strength and resilience of the "Indians of these lands" ("los indios de estas provincias") (11). For example, Fuentes y Guzmán takes care to dedicate a chapter of *Recordación florida* to his assertion that "this kingdom of Goathemala was never subject to the Mexican empire, and it was always a kingdom that was apart and separate from that of Mexico" ("este reino de Goathemala no estuvo jamás sujeto al imperio Mexicano, y que siempre fué reino aparte y separado del

de México") (42). He emphasizes the image of Mayas as more fiercely independent than the Mexica by insisting that the Mexica in fact "were so disgusting to the Indians of Guatemala" ("repugnaban tanto a los indios de Goathemala") because the Guatemalan Indigenous found them to be "treacherous and quick to speak" and even "feminine and delicate" ("aleves y de fácil palabra […] tendiéndolos por femininiles y delicados") (46). For this, the Guatemalan Indigenous "refused to give them [the Mexica] their daughters to marry" ("rehusaban darles sus hijas en casamiento") (46). The feminization of Mexica men only serves to heighten the vision of a masculine Maya; in this sense, they are worthy opponents for the conquistadors, and present an even greater challenge for the conquistadors of Guatemala than the Mexica presented Cortés and his men.

Fuentes y Guzmán goes on to note the Mayas' developed socio-political organization at the time the conquistadors encountered them. In particular, he focuses on Mayas' organized legal and social system of laws and regulations, noting how the ancestors of the Maya dealt with adultery, the process of marriage, and even the punishment of rape (*Recordación florida* 11-15). He therefore adds to the imaginary of a noble, civilized Maya by emphasizing their ethics and rationality. They appear in this initial instance in *Recordación florida* as an organized civilization, however, in this same section of the text, Fuentes y Guzmán notes the "cruelty and rigor" ("crueldad y rigor") of the pre-conquest Indigenous in terms of their punishments of criminals (14). These ambivalent positive and negative traits apply not only to the "Tulteca" pre-conquest Indigenous in the region of Guatemala, but also to "the three kingdoms of the Quichel, Chachiquel and Sotojil" ("los tres reinos del Quichel, Cachiquel y Sotojil"); while the

cruel punishments of the Guatemalan Indigenous developed "more rigorously and exactly in the Verapaces" ("más rigurosas y exactas en lo de la Verapaz") (14).

Despite these ambivalent characterizations, Fuentes y Guzmán goes even further to highlight the strength of the Maya encountered in the Invasion by employing the image of the K'iche' military leader, Tekum Uman, who is discursively constructed as having been defeated by conquistador Pedro de Alvarado in the fight for the region of Guatemala.[7] For Paz Cárcamo, the rendition of the battle between Tekum and Alvarado in *Recordación florida* is "a calque", or a near identical copy of Bernal Díaz's version of the "famous episode" of Hernán Cortés battling and defeating a great Aztec army in Otumba following the Noche Triste massacre in Tecnochititlán (79). The episode narrated by Bernal Díaz is finally "recreated by Fuentes y Guzmán in order to cover Pedro de Alvarado in an aura of bravery and military cleverness superior to that of Cortés" ("recreado por Fuentes y Guzmán para cubrir a Pedro de Alvarado con aureola de arrojo y perspicacia military superior a la de Cortés") (ibid). Fuentes y Guzmán, then, employs the figure of Tekum Uman seemingly hoping that if Guatemalan Criollos come from a more noble and heroic conquistador, they themselves within the Mesoamerican colonial environment could be construed as superior in terms of their valor.

All that aside, when we delve into Fuentes y Guzmán's account, what is particular about his vision of the Maya leader, as both Palacios and Paz Cárcamo note, is that he infuses this figure, and thus the Maya in general, with a sense of supernatural, mystical or even paranormal powers: in a word, with "witchcraft's diabolic magic" ("la mágia diabólica de la brujería") (Paz Cárcamo 80). Fuentes y Guzmán is intent on describing

the “spells and nawals” (“encantos y naguales”) that the K’iche’ used in their attempts to retaliate against the conquistadors (Palacios 33; Fuentes y Guzmán 29).[8] Neither the K’iche’s “encantos y naguales”, nor their “hechizos”, could defeat the conquistadors, as Fuentes y Guzmán notes (29):

> because all the Indians of that land, seeing the resolve, courage and uncompromising nature of our Spaniards, attempted to make use of […] the art of spells and Nawals: in this occasion, the devil, through the King of the Quiche, taking the form of an eagle, extremely large […] dressed in beautiful and long green feathers, flew with strange and unique ostentation over the army, but always directing all the tenacity of his rage against the heroic commander D. Pedro de Alvarado; but this illustrious leader, without losing his drive or ever stopping his march, taking a lance in his hand, without dismounting, wounded it (with his lance) so skillfully, that it died in the campaign […] in this occasion, they found King Tekum dead, by the same strike and wound of the lance that the bird received (29).[9]
>
> (porque viendo los indios de todo aquel país la constancia, valor y inflexibilidad de nuestros españoles, procuraron valerse [...] del arte de los encantos y Naguales; tomando en esta ocasión el demonio, por el rey del Quiche, la forma de águila, sumamente crecida [...] que se vestía de hermosas y dilatadas plumas verdes […] volaba con extraño

> y singular estruendo sobre el ejército, pero procurando siempre enderezar todo el empeño de su saña contra el heroico caudillo D. Pedro de Alvarado; mas este ilustre adalid, sin perderse de ánimo ni pausar jamás su marcha, tomando una lanza en la mano, sin desmontarse, la hirió con ella tan diestro, que vino muerta a la campana […] Hallaron en esta ocasión muerto al rey Tecúm, con el mismo golpe y herida de lanza que recibió el pájaro (29).

According to Palacios, Fuentes y Guzmán imagines Tekum Uman in this instance as a "mythic, magical presence, who is one with the lush Guatemalan landscape and its flora and fauna" (33-34). He further emphasizes this equation of the Indigenous with the flora and fauna through the parallel deaths of Tekum Uman and the Quetzal bird, which die at the same time, in the same sweep of Alvarado's sword. The textual equation of man and animal points to a discursive appropriation of the Mesoamerican belief in the nawal. Erik Espinoza Villatoro in his work *Rejqalem ri Wa'ix: Dimension Cero* (Cholsamaj, 1999) describes the nawal according to several different interpretations, one of which considers the nawal to be one's energy that can take a material form reflecting what is inside any being, and it is that which recovers and protects that being (76).[10] Others describe the Nawal as an animal spirit closely associated with a human that can act as the human's shadow spirit, double, or advisor depending on the cultural group defining it (González and Read 215-216). In the interpretation of the text studied above, both the Indigenous and nature, their spirits and energies are equally possessed by a demonic force that is ultimately defeated in a kind of battle of divine powers by the noble vassal of the Spanish

Catholic kings. This "demonic spirit" reflects a Eurocentric interpretation of the Nawal that forces it into a Catholic paradigm to reflect the figure of the devil.

The discursive "truths" the reader is left with, then, are those of the fierce Maya warrior, the civilized Maya social order, and the supernatural, mystical Maya figure who derives his essence from both nature and a demonic force.[11] All of these descriptions combine to construct the perfect rival – a noble, yet strange Other– that the conquistadors encountered and who ceased to exist after Pedro de Alvarado defeated Tekum Uman. The imaginary of these Mayas becomes the "truth" of the "glorious Indians of the past" in Fuentes y Guzmán's text.[12]

The flip side of this discourse since Fuentes y Guzmán's time, however, is that no matter how noble the "Indian of the past", the "Indian of the present" is miserable in any myriad of ways and is hence shunned from the construction of the proto-national, and later, the national imaginary. We see the roots of this discourse again in *Recordación florida,* as Fuentes y Guzmán's portrayal of the post-Invasion "miserable Indian of the present" involves countless adjectives describing these other, contemporary Mayas. The *Recordación florida's* descriptions of the then-contemporary Maya include such terms and labels as "miserable primitives", lazy, "barbarian", superstitious, and part of the landscape, or belonging to rural, natural spaces [i.e., "those miserable, blind and savagely hopeless, primitive Indians of this Kingdom of Goathemala" ("aquellos miserable, ciegos y bárbaramente torpes, primitivos indios de este Reino de goathemala")] (16). By arranging then-contemporary Mayas according to these negative adjectives, Fuentes y Guzmán clearly contrasts contemporary Mayas with the "glorious Maya of the past":

> When the Spaniards conquered these vast lands and kingdoms, the Indians in them were very warlike (aggressive), gifted with a great talent for governing, ingenious […] And now they are cowards, crude, artless and full of malice. [13]
>
> (cuando los españoles conquistaron estos países y reinos tan dilatados, eran los indios de ellos muy belicosos, dotados de gran don de gobierno, ingeniosos [...] Y ahora son cobardes, rústicos y sin talento, sin gobierno, desaliñados, sin arte y llenos de malicia.)

The contradiction of the bifurcated Maya is evident. While one was fierce and brave, the other was a coward. While one was civilized and ordered, the other was crude and artless, alluding to an unsophisticated naiveté. Yet they were also malicious, which suggests an intention to do evil. Beyond contradicting the "glorious Indian of the past", the very description of the "miserable Indian of the present" holds its own contradictions. For example, the post-Invasion Maya is simultaneously cowardly and naïve, and full of intent to do evil. These are contradictory attributes, as the first two describe one who is spineless and lacks experience and judgment, while the later implies planning, assessing situations, and manipulating them for one's own benefit. But further, and playing off of his previous description of the Indigenous as possessed by supernatural and demonic powers, Fuentes y Guzmán asserts that Mayas' worldview, the narratives they tell to explain events in time, is rooted in "superstitions and fantasies of impossible and diverse fables, which are both infinitely despicable and no less ridiculous" ("supersticiones y

fantasías de quiméricas y diversas fabulas, que son, como infinitas despreciables y no menos ridículas") (5). For Fuentes y Guzmán, while Tekum Uman had the spiritual and mystical power to transform himself into the great Quetzal only to be defeated by an even greater Pedro de Alvarado, contemporary Maya belief systems include ridiculous stories and fables rooted in irrational superstitions. With these negative descriptions, we have a foundational Criollo discourse that reduces Maya spiritual belief systems to superstitions tied to an irrational, mystical cosmovision.

Fuentes y Guzmán's contradictory versions of the "Indian of the past" and "Indian of the present" hold the key to understanding the foundational imaginary of Guatemalan identity and indigeneity. At the most basic level, it presents a series of stereotypes and contradictions surrounding indigeneity which persevere in Guatemalan textualities and politics well into the 20th century. It also inaugurates the textual demarcation of Mayas within the ideology of Western, linear time, in which Mayas of the past were glorious, but have declined into a degenerated state. This linear progression suggests that the future Maya will have suffered such degradation that they may not in fact continue to be a factor within the proto-national imaginary, as the next natural progression from a degraded state is, presumably, extinction. Finally, Fuentes y Guzmán's contradiction can also be read as a symbolic codification of an originally Spanish, and later Criollo and then Ladino, understanding of self as the ego conquiro subjectivity. As indicated above, the imagery of the ego conquiro subjectivity versus the barbarian emerges in the 1550-1551 Valladolid debates and was used politically at that time to justify military invasion. I suggest, consequently, that Fuentes y Guzmán recuperates the discourse of the ego conquiro

subjectivity and invents the "truths" of past and present Mayas in his work to perform a textual-sematic (re)invasion of the then-present day Indigenous in order to wrestle control of the proto-nation and its natural resources away from local "peninsulares". In a word, the ego conquiro – barbarian Indian contradiction is used to justify the author's reconstruction of the textual-semantic world under the colonial Criollo's control and for his exploits, thereby bolstering his assertion of Criollo authority in the proto-nation. Therefore, the foundational contradiction that Fuentes y Guzmán presents is twofold: that of the "glorious Indian of the past" and the "miserable Indian of the present", and that of the "Criollo ego conquiro" and the "barbarian Indian". As we will see in the next sections, versions of these contradictions hold as literary motifs well into the 20th Century.

José Milla and the "Colonial Indian" in the 19th Century

José Milla y Vidaurre publishes *La hija del adelantado* in 1866 under the pseudonym Salomé Jil. A commencement of modern narrative in Guatemala, *La hija del adelantado* is a historical novel dramatizing conquistador Pedro de Alvarado's return to Guatemala on royal orders to govern. Pedro de Alvarado, of course, participated in the conquests of Cuba and Mexico, and is known as the infamous conquistador that captured for Spain much of Central America. In the work, Alvarado returns with his second wife Beatriz de la Cueva and his mestiza daughter Leonor, daughter of Alvarado and the Tlaxcalteca princess, Luisa Xicotencatl. Despite its title, the novel focuses little on Leonor and even less on Pedro de Alvarado, at least not directly. Instead, the novel

dramatizes the struggle for power in colonial Guatemala between Alvarado and his rivals, who, with the help of an array of sneaky characters, organize to wrestle power away from the conquistador. Accompanying this political drama is a romantic intrigue involving Leonor's reciprocated but impossible love for Pedro de Portocarrero, fellow conquistador and ally of Alvarado. The novel concludes in an apocalyptic finale with the destruction of the colonial capital and residences of the story's main characters in a mudslide of volcanic ash, which occurred in real life on September 11th, 1541 and which Rafael Landívar details in poetry in his *Rusticatio Mexicana* (1781).

Milla's historical novel, written only a few years before the beginning of the liberal coffee revolution and the presidency of Rufino Barrios discussed in Chapter One, considers the colonial past to grapple with the mid-19th Century political reality. For our purposes, the central issue in analyzing this "national novel" is to understand how Guatemala's Indigenous population is discursively constructed. I call this a "national novel" thinking of Doris Sommer's *Foundational Fictions* (1984) in which she studies 19th century romances in Latin America and their relationship to history, politics, and the aesthetic framing of the nation – in a word, national consolidation. In this context, if Milla's novel looks back to the colonial period in order to make sense of or set an agenda for the 19th century present, the discourses of Mayas in the colonial drama also mark their place in the 19th Century nation.

The "Indiada" and "Natural Resources" in *La hija del adelantado*

In Milla's novel, Mayas are generally non-existent, as there is a notable absence of Mayas in the text in comparison to the protagonism of Criollo characters. As critic Francisco Albizúrez Palma argues, Milla "is benevolent with the conquistador, while at the same time he defends the Catholic religion and almost totally ignores the life, traditions and pain of the Indigenous" ("es benévolo con el conquistador, al tiempo que defiende la religión católica e ignora casi totalmente la vida, las costumbres y el dolor del indígena") (12). Milla avoids filling the pages of his work with explorations of Maya people or their participation in or against the consolidation of the proto-national identity. Despite this general trend toward absences, we can locate a handful of instances in which Mayas appear in the text and which give us a better sense as to the discursive "truths" Milla perpetuates regarding Mayas.

Indigenous people in the novel are first and foremost a natural, decorative part of important conquistadors' entourages. We come across several mentions of various processions followed by or including a "multitude of Indians" ("multitud de indios") (Milla 46). This mass of Indians acts as support troops or as decorative figures representing the customs of the region; they are "elegantly dressed, with drums, bugles, kettledrums, trumpets, marimbas and other instruments of the country" ("vestidos de gala, con cajas, clarines, atabales, trompetas, marimbas y otros instrumentos del país") (46). In the novel, Guatemalan indigeneity plays an ornamental, supporting role, at the service –aesthetic or political – of the Spanish colonial authorities.

When not part of a "multitude" or a mass, Indigenous characters are slaves and servants. Leonor herself has "six Indians that directly served [her], slaves despite the royal prohibitions" ("seis indias que servían inmediatamente a doña Leonor, esclavas a pesar de las prohibiciones reales") (70). This line is telling in that the narrator notes the royal order against enslaving Mayas, however the colonial authorities, including the mestiza heroine, are in clear violation of such laws. Maya bodies, then, occupy the space of servants for the disobedient Spaniards; despite the rule of law, they are a natural resource to exploit. We can perceive a certain arrogance in the Criollo characters, given that when it comes to regulations on slavery, they indeed act above the law. The mention of the legality of their actions subtly asserts them as possessing a different knowledge than the Spanish authorities as to the utility of Mayas in the colonial state. However, Indigenous bodies are just one of several natural resources imagined as the patrimony of the non-Indigenous characters. Early on in the novel, the narrator describes the wealth of the land in the eyes of the conquistadors:

> Plentiful were precious metals, precious stones, velvet, silk, fine cloths; and added to the naturally ostentatious character of the Spaniards was the situation of abundant riches in a country that were still not exhausted (45)
>
> (Abundaban los metales preciosos, las pedrerías, el terciopelo, la seda y los ricos paños; y al carácter naturalmente ostentoso de los españoles, agregábase la circunstancia de la profusión de las riquezas en un país que aún no estaba esquilmado) (45)

The vision of the land, and the products that Mayas have created with the land's provisions, are seen as material riches to be "exhausted". This is a quintessentially Western vision of land, as well as one typical of a 19th Century positivist imaginary prominent when Milla was writing. Certain features of the land, and the land itself, are considered simultaneously important because they are viewed materially, objectively, as a commodity to be used and discarded (Rodriguez, 137).[14] The mention of "exhausting" resources hints at a fundamental contradiction between this Western and 19th Century image of land use and that understood according to a Maya episteme. As per Espinoza Villatoro, in Maya philosophy the Earth is an extension and simultaneously a product of the "cielo" (sky/heavens) whose existence facilitates life: the land and the heavens together are a cosmic, unified energy providing for all life forms on land (29). In this way, the land is tended to rather than pilfered, because it is essential to the continuity of all life. In Milla's work of fiction, the Western vision of the patrimony of the conquistador as both land and labor is explicitly reiterated, signaling the primacy of a Western episteme within the national imaginary and obscuring "other" knowledges regarding land and labor.

Reiterating Spiritual Savagery and Maya "Encantos"

Like in several of the texts considered in this genealogy, in *La hija del adelantado* Indigenous spirituality is lambasted in the name of defending Catholicism. However, in Milla's text, the narrator notes that Mayas are so beyond salvation, that "even the indians who have received the waters of the holy communion […] tend to maintain relations with

the malignant spirit" ("aun los indios que han recibido las aguas del santo bautismo […] suelen mantener relaciones con el espiritu malign") (32). Again, Mayas are associated with Christian demons or the devil. The narrator confirms this when he notes that, "some Spaniards, contaminated by their interactions with these bad Christians, make deals with the devil" ("algunos españoles, contaminados con el trato de estos malos cristianos, tienen comercio con el demonio"), the "bad Christians" being the baptized yet non-believing Mayas (32). Given this sense of "contamination", Maya spirituality is no longer simply ridiculous, as it is in Fuentes y Guzmán's text, rather it is constructed as something threatening and to be feared.

The juxtaposition between the powers of Catholicism and the force of the Maya devil is tightly woven into the textual thread detailing the novel's key villain. A kind of charlatan medicine man, Peraza is a scheming character who interferes in the romantic ties between several characters and who is involved with the crew of dissidents plotting to overthrow Alvarado. By sheer luck, the medicine man has some success curing patients and therefore becomes a famous healer in the colonial capital. When the novel's characters fall ill, Peraza is called to help, giving him access to important people and the ability to administer them potions that make them do what he wants. Interestingly, the narration details Peraza's education in medicine and potions as having direct ties to Maya shamans. The narrator informs us that Peraza:

> Travelled through the mountains, got to know the Indians and from them learned the different medicinal herbs that he applied with more or less success. Soon people began calling him the 'herbalist' in his ascent to

> fame; and curing a few and killing the rest, he made a big name for himself and became a man of influence in the city (107).
>
> (Recorrió las montañas, hizo conocimiento con los indios y de ellos aprendió el uso de diferentes yerbas medicinales, que aplicaba con más o menos éxito. Pronto voló el nombre del 'herbolario', como lo llamaban, en alas de la fama; y curando a unos pocos y matando a los más, llegó a hacerse de gran reputación y hombre de influencia en la ciudad) (107).

Of note in this quote is first the reference to the Mayas in the "mountains", making the countryside the logical place where Indigenous people are found, a trope which occurs again and again in Guatemalan textualities – that is, the reiteration that the habitat of Indigenous people is outside of the lettered city, in an untamed nature.

The second noteworthy aspect of this quote is that the narrator twice mentions the tenuous effectiveness of Maya forms of medicine: that Indigenous treatments work with "more or less success" and that Peraza cures few and kills the majority of his patients with Indigenous medicine is a slight not only to Peraza as a kind of colonial quack, but also to Indigenous medical practices and knowledge in general. Third, that the villain is associated with Mayas functions in the text as a strike against him. If Peraza is an enemy of the colonial order, his association with Mayas sheds a questionable light onto the Indigenous as de facto enemies of the state.

The diminishing of Maya epistemology in the above instance is undeniable, but it becomes more nuanced when Peraza gathers a love potion from an "old Indian from

Petapa" ("Indio anciano de Petapa"), Diego Tziquín, "who enjoyed the reputation of being a very famous witch doctor" ("que gozaba la reputacion de ser un famosísimo hechicero") (135-136). That he is considered a "witch doctor" or a kind of "sorcerer" holds a negative connotation and confers with the discursive "truth" of Mayas as given to "encantos" and demonic forces seen in Fuentes y Guzmán's text. The narrator also refers to Tziquin as a "liar" ("embustero"), implying that he is tricky and conniving, a "truth" that is reiterated later in this genealogy (137).

When Peraza returns to the colonial capital to administer Tziquin's love potion to Pedro de Portocarrero, he is dismayed to see that it does not take effect. Later Peraza visits Tziquin to explain what happened, and the narrator informs us that "the Indian thought for a moment; and suddenly, as if he had been unexpectedly inspired, he asked Peraza: -- you haven't seen by chance if the person you gave the potion to has a holy relic on his body?" ("el indio permaneció un rato pensativo; y de repente, como si hubiese tenido una súbita inspiración, preguntó a Peraza: -- ¿No has visto si por casualidad tiene la persona a quien se ha dado la bebida, alguna santa reliquia sobre su cuerpo?") (139). When Peraza responds affirmatively, Tziquin answers back that "it is necessary to take that relic off the person and give him the medicine again" ("es necesario quitar esa reliquia a la persona y luego volver a darle la medicina") (140). The message here is that the Catholic charm trumps Maya "witchcraft". While above we discovered that demonic Maya spirituality is actually something to be feared given its powers to contaminate Christian Spaniards, in this instance Catholicism proves more powerful than Maya "witchcraft", since the image of a saint can defend against the malignant force of Maya

magic. While Maya demonic spirituality is dangerous and can corrupt the unsuspecting, if one is well protected from evil with the relics of Catholicism, one can mitigate or even defend against said harm. This kind of good versus evil play harkens back to medieval European literary tropes in which amulets and potions abound, where heroes are protected by talismans from evil forces. Milla's text therefore imposes the tried and true literary tropes of Western Europe on his version of the colonial period, fitting Mayas into the role of the strange sorcerers and witches.

Mayas in the Colonial Power Play

The other image constructed of Mayas in the novel is revealed in the political machinations of Alvarado's opponents. Peraza, along with his co-conspirators desiring to seize control of the colony, decide to ally themselves with various Indigenous caciques, two of whom are imprisoned in the colonial capital, so that the caciques can rally their communities, and fight Alvarado's government alongside or perhaps for the local Spanish dissidents. This part of the narration specifically references two historical Maya figures, Sinacam and Sequechul, who were, according to the text, leaders in the Indigenous uprising of 1526.[15] The narrator reminds readers of the historical importance of the Indigenous fighters, noting that "a vigorous effort was needed to defeat the rebels, who fought in considerable numbers" ("fue necesario un vigoroso esfuerzo para reducer a los rebeldes, que peleaban en número considerable") (120). In order to downplay the challenge that Indigenous fighters presented the Spaniards, and risk a valiant image of them in the text, the narrator includes that regardless of their great numbers, the

Indigenous battled “without discipline or any knowledge whatsoever of the military arts” (“sin disciplina ni conocimiento alguno del arte military”) and “with the bravery of desperation” (“con el valor de la desesperación”) (120). This quote presents a version of the dual characterization of Mayas seen in other works studied in this chapter. On the one hand, the narrator is impressed by the sheer number of Indigenous that rebelled; however, he notes they are poor fighters. Then he lends the Mayas a back-handed compliment by indicating that they fight from a place of bravery which is inspired by their desperation. This characterization strays from the “glorious Indian of the past”/ “miserable Indian of the present” dichotomy found in other Guatemalan texts by creating ambivalence in the image of the coeval Maya fighter as simultaneously brave and weak, strong in spirit but ignorant in the “arts” of war. We can perceive an epistemological hierarchy emerging here based on the education of savvy of the civilized versus the ignorance of the barbaric. If the Indigenous are ignorant as to the art of war, we can assume the narrator is subtly contrasting an ignorant Indigenous war party with a refined, Western Criollo force. Also important in this characterization is Milla’s use of fiction to explain the historical record regarding the 1526 uprising. With little to no details in the narrative regarding the uprising, especially not from an Indigenous perspective, Milla makes sure to set the record straight that the Maya fighters were ignorant, undisciplined and desperate. This portrayal of Maya resistance strips it of its credibility since the Maya rebels are imagined as “unicivilized”.

When speaking with the Indigenous caciques, Peraza explains to Sinacam and Sequechul that he has visited their communities and those of sixteen other caciques and

has convinced them to partake in his plan of revolt (125-126). Although the caciques insist that they no longer have any "vassals" or "dominions" because the whites have taken them all, Peraza convinces them of his plan anyway (ibid).[16] A subtle assumption is made concerning this scenario in that Milla, without questioning the validity of such an assumption, portrays the white villain as able to convince the Indigenous to ally with his band of dissidents. This suggests that Mayas would willingly trust whites despite the fact that whites have taken everything away from them, thus painting a portrait of the Indigenous leaders as naïve and malleable.

When Sinacam and Sequechul are freed from prison through Peraza's assistance, they are captured once again, and are tortured so that they reveal the identities of Alvarado's enemies. As a result of the harebrained plan of those colonial Spaniards who rebel, Sinacam and Sequechul, along with the other sixteen caciques who supposedly were going to be involved in the revolt, were hanged. The fate of the caciques for aligning with dissidents is written in their deaths. Again, we have Milla portraying Mayas in association with those parties who threaten the central narratives of interest in the text: the love story of Leonor and de Portocarrero, and the stability of the colonial political order.

Milla's text elaborates several discourses of Maya indigeneity that serve to degrade the position of Mayas in both his work of historical fiction and in the 19th Century liberal imaginary. In addition to being viewed as part of a "multitude", we have a reiteration of Mayas as natural resources (laborers) that harkens back to a colonial vision of Indigenous bodies as the conquistadors' property. As we discussed in Chapter One,

through vagrancy laws and "mandamientos" Mayas were forced to provide uncompensated labor to the liberal state and were punished harshly if they did not. Milla's text goes back in time to show that Indigenous enslavement is natural in the colonial social order, which is then viewed in the 19th Century as a naturalized "truth" – something that has always been; a given. In this maneuver, Milla normalizes the forced labor of Mayas in the modern nation based on tradition. Another way to simultaneously normalize labor exploitation and exclusion from the nation state is to discredit Maya epistemology, which is achieved in the text through the demonization of Maya customs; spiritual and medical.

Another series of "truths" Milla asserts involves the conflation of Mayas and natural spaces. Not only does Milla fuze the "exploitable" nature of Mayas, the land and its natural resources, but he also relegates Mayas to the countryside, the "mountains" where Peraza finds the Mayas he needs to accomplish his goals. This geographical relegation of Mayas to the wild spaces of the "mountain" is a trope that will morph again in subsequent texts.

Finally, as Francisco Albizúrez Palma points out, "for Milla, the Spanish colonial system appears correct, susceptible, of course, to deviations and errors that the system itself can fix" ("para Milla, el sistema colonial español aparece correcto, susceptible, claro está, de desviaciones y errores que el sistema mismo podía corregir") (12). In this historical novel, which views said political system as "correct" and in which "Alvarado was a great man, despite his defects" ("Alvarado era un hombre grande, a pesar de sus defectos"), the colonial system and its ruling figure are ultimately portrayed in high

regard (Milla 247).[17] Milla's generally positive view of the colonial system, with its top down organization that excluded and exploited Mayas, provides a figurative model for the modern, liberal 19th Century Guatemalan nation: Mayas are primarily absent within the centralized state, but when they are not, they are either a threat, easily manipulated, and/or exist to serve those in power.

Flavio Herrera's Iterations of Identity and Indigeneity

Toward the end of the "Liberal Revolution" from 1871 until 1944, I argue in Chapter One, Liberal state policies reflected an increased focus on strengthening the Guatemalan economy so as to augment exportations favoring the coffee-producing elite. However, following the rise of indigenista discourses throughout Latin America, Guatemalan social critics initiated policy debates to address the so-called "Indian problem" beginning in the first half of the 20th Century. These discourses incorporated early indigenista tenets, albeit to the chagrin of the authoritarian dictatorships of both Estrada Cabrera and Ubico, whose primary focus was on maintaining the economic elite's power at the expense of Maya social and economic advancement. Consequently, stances on Guatemalan indigeneity in this period reflected a bifurcated, contradictory discourse depending on which sector of society it was coming from. As in colonial literature, breaks within the broader political and social regimes become symbolically codified through language in the popular texts of the day. In this section, we turn to influential writer Flavio Herrera (1895-1965) and his novel *La tempestad* (1935) to study how it reflects the major political and social discourses of the time impacting the

imaginary of Guatemalan identity. In this discussion, we will also see how Herrera's text expands on and creates new discursive "truths" surrounding Guatemalan identity and indigeneity.

The Ego conquiro as King-God

Flavio Herrera's 1935 novel, *La tempestad*, is conditioned by its "relatively homological relationship to Ubiquista ideology", or to the socio-economic policies and discourses of the Ubico dictatorship discussed in Chapter One (Arias *Identidad* 44).[18] The novel describes the adventures of its main protagonist César, a wealthy son of coffee finca owners from the city who has recently returned from Europe to oversee his family's farms.[19] While the major plotlines revolve around César's romantic relationships and his interactions with the coffee-growing Zavala family, my concern with the novel is the semantic codification of Guatemalan identity and society reflected in the conversations among the novel's coffee-elite characters. Due to the narrative voice and the voices of the elite characters, the most poignant textual effect in the novel is that it upholds and modernizes the foundational contradiction between the mythologized ego conquiro and the "miserable Indian of the present".

The first step in perceiving this aspect of Herrera's novel lies in his framing of the coffee finca owner in his text. As Arias notes, the novel idealizes and glorifies the finquero figure as a planter or grower, thus imagining him as a national hero (*Identidad* 65). While Arias argues that this idealization leads to the image of the finquero as promoting national growth and progress, I would add that the author goes further to

semantically equate the finca owner to a god or a king, as the narrator describes: "Those who have been blessed to create a finca, to establish a plantation, are the only ones who know this ineffable pleasure that is a privilege of gods and kings. Create, establish, plant, build" ("los que han tenido la gloria de crear una finca, de fundar una plantación, son los solo que saben de este gozo inefable que es un privilegio de dioses y reyes. Crear, fundar, sembrar, erigir") (Herrera 169). The finquero is imagined as a national hero in a liberal economic sense – one who literally plants the seeds of wealth, and creates a glorious empire. But he is also linked to a divine creator image; one who shares the privileges of gods and kings in planting, growing and creating. This God-King image echoes Fuentes y Guzmán's discourse of the conquistador Pedro de Alvarado in terms of his near divine qualities: Alvarado, in *Recordación florida*, is the quasi-celestial vassal of the Spanish monarch who, due to a kind of divine intervention, conquers the Mayas' strength as warriors and their demonic "encantos y naguales". For Herrera, the economic act of coffee producing is semantically linked to the militaristic act of conquering in Fuentes y Guzmán through imagery of the divine.

The equation of the coffee grower to God-King in Herrera's work reveals the economic and political discourses of the coffee-elite in 1930s Guatemala, particularly given the time period in which the novel was written. During the Great Depression era in Guatemala, governmental support of the coffee industry sought to bring about a rapid recovery from the "dramatic decline of coffee and banana prices during the late 1920s and early 1930s" (Gould 188-189). To achieve that goal, Ubiquista liberal policies favored economic development during the Depression era in lieu of or even at the

expense of the liberal social ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity. For example and as discussed in Chapter One, vagrancy laws forcing the landless and minifundistas to labor on plantations and on road crews is clearly in violation of the aforementioned liberal social ideals (188). For Dante Liano, Herrera's understanding of liberalism aligns with Ubiquista policies that defend private property, the free market, and the right to freely hire workers without constraints (Liano "Visión crítica" 111). However, Liano notes, as for human rights and individual liberties, Herrera thought them subordinate to economic rights and trivial when it came to applying them to all Guatemalans (ibid). Consequently, by equating the key figure of the economic engine of the nation (the coffee grower) to a divine ruler, we witness the emergence of a glorification of economic actors in Guatemalan society and the concentration of corresponding social liberties solely in these figures. The representative of Guatemalan national identity – economic and social – is the finquero, and thus we can observe the transference of the ego conquiro subjectivity from the colonial Criollo to the 20th century liberal finquero in Herrera's work. Because this modern ego conquiro is central to national progress and development, national policy favors this economic elite; as seen in Chapter One, this is an ideology and a politics that continues well into the developmentalist policies of the counter-revolutionary governments of the 60s-80s.[20]

Ego conquiro and his Sexuality

A new feature of Herrera's modernized ego conquiro subjectivity is directly related to the finquero's insatiable sexuality.[21] For his view on finquero sexuality,

Herrera's text is the first to turn a literary lens toward Indigenous women in Guatemala. In colonial constructions of indigeneity, Maya women are invisibilized in the imaginary of the "glorious Indian of the past", and are completely ignored as anything except part of a generalized mass of Indians in the present; they are simply another part of the "indiada". In *La tempestad*, nonetheless, we have the first representation of the utility of Indigenous women to the finquero hero, and the first mention of Indigenous sexuality. Parallel to this mention, Herrera, perhaps unwittingly, presents an ambiguous model of finquero masculinity, one in need of discursive justification given its socially transgressive nature.

In the novel, Leonarda Zavala, the wife of a prominent finca owner, knows that her husband has a history of infidelity with the Indigenous women on his finca – the wives of the Indigenous workers. Leonarda is not surprised that her husband sleeps with the "dirty indian women" ("indias sucias") on the ranch, those "whores of anonymous and slavish flesh" ("pingos de carne anónima y esclava") who she describes as living in a "sordid" ("sórdida") and "vile" ("vil") condition (Herrera 102). The figure of the Indigenous woman is at once sexualized and characterized as sordid, vile and dirty, yet imagined as nameless or anonymous, and therefore lacking individuated subjecthood. She is a natural slave for her abjectness. Thus, a discursive "truth" of Maya sexuality as vile and dirty emerges here for the first time, while the body of the Maya woman is imagined as an unindividuated servant. Here we have another iteration of the Maya as existing only as part of a mass, yet as part of a mass that belongs in servitude.

Leonarda also notes that her husband, due to his uncontrollable virility, "didn't stop to select, but rather threw himself on the first Indian hick he came across whenever a fit of lust ignited in him" ("no se detenía a seleccionar sino que se echaba sobre la primera india ranchera que estuviese al paso siempre que lo inflamaba un ramalazo de lujuria") (101). To imagine the finquero "throwing himself on" any Indian woman is to imagine him as a rapist, with no interrogation as to the dubiousness of his actions by the narrator or other characters. This silence of the narrator and other characters suggests a tacit approval of sexual violence toward Indigenous women. Further, Leonarda does not condemn her husband for his actions, but rather considers them as merely childish. She even feels better about his philandering with "Indian women" than she does with other women, because she views them as worthless whores, and therefore as less of a threat than others who could potentially replace her as matriarch of the family (ibid). Later, César, speaking with his girlfriend Palma, justifies finqueros' sexual relations with and rape of Indigenous women not as childish whims, but rather as both a physical and social necessity. In an equally disturbing and telling quote, César explains to her the complications for the finquero of his oversexed nature:

> 'How would you suggest that a single man resolves his sexual problems on a finca'[…] he has to satisfy his instinct with Indians, with his rancheras – the commoners – but this, for a delicate man is sordid; it puts his spiritual scruples at risk; it is sheer beastiality; this besides the issue of his possible descendants, this half sin in which even the illegitimate child – as they call it – has an inferior, even shameful, social condition. It is true

> that in villages and fincas you can find Ladina women, but these, due to the sordidness of their lives, for their ignorance and lack of manners, differ little from the Indians and the problem is the same' (219).
>
> ('Como quieres que un hombre soltero resuelva su problema sexual en una finca' […] 'tiene que desfogar el instinto con indias, con sus rancheras – lo corriente – pero esto, para un hombre delicado es sórdido; se le vulneran muchas delicadeces espirituales; es la bestialidad desnuda; aparte del problema de la descendencia posible, en este medio pacato en que aun el hijo ilegítimo – como se le llama – tiene una condición social inferior, hasta vergonzosa. Cierto que en pueblos y fincas hay mujeres Ladinas, pero éstas, por la sordidez de su vida, por su ignorancia y grosería, en poco difieren de las indias y el problema es idéntico') (219).

César reiterates the abjectness of Indigenous female sexuality and condones the rape of Indigenous women, while going further to create a hierarchy of women based on race and class. To group together Indigenous and poor Ladina women as "sordid", "ill-mannered" and "ignorant", is to suggest a hierarchy of women in which the Indigenous, for their skin color, are grouped in with poor Ladinas to compose a sordid underclass. Thus we can perceive a gendered conflation of race and class which in turn signifies the illicit within the social hierarchy. Skin color and class combine here to signal a sordid femininity in contrast to moneyed finquero masculinity.

But this problematic binary is not so cleanly delineated in the text due to the ambiguity of the finquero masculine model. On the one hand, the upper class, white finquero is imagined to be a "delicate man" with "spiritual scruples" which are jeopardized when he sleeps with poor Ladina and/or Indigenous women. César views the finquero's sexual escapades with poor Ladina and Indigenous women as "sordid", but necessary in order for the finquero to release his overwhelming sexual energy, described both as his "sexual problem" and his natural instinct. This model of masculinity implies that sex with women of a different class and race is socially prohibited for the finquero, as both César and Leonarda Zavala indicate. However, the finquero's desire and "instinct" to be with women of a different class and race trumps the established social rules, and he openly seeks sex with "Other" women. The suggestion is, then, that the finquero's biological urge overpowers the social rules established to discipline it, or that they rules do not apply to him. By defying this racialized and class-cognizant social-sexual control, the finquero masculine model slides unexpectedly toward queerness in Herrera's novel. Though, his actions also reaffirm his social power in the sense that the rules do not apply to him – he is able to do what he wants socially and sexually without reprimand, which reinforces the finquero's freedom and power in the social realm. He, like Milla's colonial characters, is above the law.

Nevertheless, the finquero's descendants – his "illegitimate" children –signal a disciplining of the finquero's sexual transgression. They are characterized in the novel, like the Indigenous in textual and broader social discourses, as problems. The result of a

social transgression, racialized illegitimate mestizo children share an illicit, socially transgressive quality with the Indigenous. Herrera rhetorically lumps together the Indians and the illegitimate mestizos by equated these two social groups based on race and class. Herrera's treatment of "illegitimate" mestizo children, however, is steeped in contradiction.

Later in the novel, a discourse of whitening is reiterated as a productive social policy for dealing with the Maya race. As one finquero notes to another, it is nearly impossible to encourage more European migration to Guatemala as a means of whitening the population, however, the rape of Indigenous women by white men as a whitening policy is not so subtly advocated with the praise of a German finca owner's rape of the Indigenous women on his finca: "It's the only good thing Herr Glura does […] In San Patrocinio, there are lots of little Indians with blond hair and light blue eyes" ("es lo único bueno que hace Herr Glura, […] En San Patrocinio hay muchos inditos de pelo canche y ojos zarcos") (235). In this sense, overcoming the abjection of sexual relations with Indigenous women by the oversexed finca owner is not only justified and necessary for national progress, but it is a heroic act in service of the nation. The kind of national progress to which the finquero contributes in this instance ceases to be economic in nature and the finca owner's transgression of upper class, white social-sexual mores is justified through the liberal discourse of progress. The idea of progress here harkens back to an early 19th Century extreme liberal discourse of social Darwinism: progress

translates into exterminating the Indigenous, and the development of a mestizo underclass is simply an outcome of such a policy.[22]

There is, finally, a liberal economic discourse that emerges in this discussion, one that reiterates the image of the finquero ego conquiro. The finquero, despite social rules, sleeps with Indigenous women given they are at his service and under his control. We recall that Leonarda Zavala indicates that her husband "jumps on the first Indian woman" he sees in order to satisfy his sexual desire. "Jumping on" an Indigenous body and using it for personal gain can be symbolically equated to a finquero usurping Indigenous land for his use. In both instances, we have an upper class, white male appropriating a physical resource – a body, land. The image of Indigenous bodies and land as the two major resources of Guatemala's comparative advantage shines through in Herrera's text and in his portrayal of the finquero ego conquiro. The finquero continues to "conquer" these "resources" for his own gain and as part of the national project.

The Exploited Finquero and the Thieving Indian

Interestingly, though, the finquero ego conquiro in *La tempestad*, despite his attributes as King-God, virile creator, and economic and social hero, is nonetheless discursively constructed as an exploited hero. This construction is tied to the labor relationships between finca owners and Indigenous workers. To construct this image, Herrera naturalizes an imaginary of Indigenous men as deceitful moochers in his text. Describing César's discussion with another finquero, the narrator notes the Indigenous finca workers who use any excuse to economically exploit the finca owner:

> A parade before the master – César – of sordid and mooching Indians. They all asked for something even if there was nothing to ask for; but asking, always asking because being a moocher – like being a thief – are attributes of the Indian […] those who didn't have anything to ask for invented something […] It was an imploring, insidious pilgrimage, annoying. The Indian exploits at the drop of a hat. The main festival in town or on the finca. Christmas, Holy Week, when the finca owner arrives […] the first downpour, an earthquake, any incident in order to ask for something from the finca (143-144).
>
> (Desfile ante el amo – César – de indios sórdidos y pedigüeños. Todos pedían algo aunque no tuvieran nada que pedir; pero pedir, pedir siempre porque ser pedigüeño – como ser ladrón – son atributos del indio […] Los que nada tenían que pedir, lo inventaban […] Era un romería implorante, insidiosa, fastidia. El indio explota al menor pretexto. La fiesta titular del pueblo o de la finca. Navidad, Semana Santa, la llegada del patrón […] el primer aguacero, un temblor de tierra, cualquier incidente para pedir a la finca alguna cosa) (143-144).

As Arias argues, the roles of the exploiter and exploited are inverted in order to create within the reader a sensation of emotional complicity with the finquero (*Identidad* 65). To encourage empathy for the finquero, a sense of antipathy is suggested toward the Indigenous characters, and is sanctioned by the various narrative voices that do not

question or contradict these contemptuous portrayals of indigeneity. Mayas are constructed again as an illicit subjectivity, an outcast for being "like a thief". This codification of Maya men as thieves assumes that the finquero ego conquiro subjectivity is entitled to certain goods or property that Mayas are appropriating. The entitlement that Fuentes y Guzmán calls the Criollo patrimony, and Severo Martínez Peláez calls the Criollo "homeland"/patria consisting of land and Indians in the colony, again discursively reemerges in this 20th Century narrative in a modernized fashion. The finquero takes the place of the colonial Criollo and his entitlement extends to the Indigenous and to property in general, not just specifically to land. By highlighting the Indigenous thieves who "steal" the finquero's goods or who no longer act as his passive property, the author imagines an infringement on the finquero's rights to property and labor. Any infringement on his rights or property is exploitative, and the exploiting Indian-thief transgresses the social rules concentrating the rights to land and Indians in the hands of the Ladino heirs of the Invasion. In this way, we have a resemantization of the "patrimony" of the Criollo, as well as a rearticulation of the notion of the evil "Indio lleno de malicia" – the spiteful subjectivity intent on usurping from the finquero his entitled patrimony.

Dichotomies of Language, Color and Reality

But Herrera's construction of discursive "truths" about Indigenous subjects does not stop there. In the text, he includes a hypothetical conversation between what appear to

be two Maya workers and a finca owner to further emphasize the thief/moocher image, through the voices of the Indigenous workers:

> --Boss, I has no clothes, gimme an advance…
>
> --Boss, I's wife be sick. Gimme sompin for cure…
>
> --And aren't there doctors here? Haven't they given you one?
>
> --Yeah but it no working, is not cures…
>
> --Boss, I's wants bigga house
>
> --And don't you fit in the one you have?
>
> --But corn ain't fits there.[23] (145).
>
> (--Patrón. No tenés ropo, damo un habilitación…
>
> --Patrón. Tenés empermo al mujer. Damo pa'l remedie…
>
> ---¿Y aquí no hay medicinas, no te dan?
>
> --Si pero no sibro, este no cura…
>
> ---Patrón no querés un ranch más grando…
>
> ---¿Y no cabés en el tuyo?
>
> ---Perlo la máis no cabo…) (145).

A particularly dangerous aspect of this codification of Indigenous voices is that it subsequently frames Mayas not only as "moochers", but as linguistic "Others" in the nation. This ideologically charged rendering of Indigenous Castilian codifies for the first time in Guatemalan textualities a social bipolarity based on language –a linguistic insider-outsider dichotomy – which becomes the cornerstone of social policies

surrounding *Castellanización*, or the teaching of Castilian to Mayas so that they abandon Mayan languages. This dichotomy becomes a key component in the contemporary Maya Movement's political project in the 1990s discussed in Chapter One of this work, as well: language rights.

It is noteworthy that the above conversation is the only time in Herrera's text that Indigenous subjects actually speak, but when they do, they do so using an ideologically crafted, ungrammatical Castilian. Grammatical errors, more so than content, strike the reader: "damo" instead of "dame", "sibro" instead of "sirve", "grando" for "grande". I would argue that this mocked speech is a tool used to symbolically codify an imaginary of the "miserable Indian of the present", as it does not reflect the linguistic production of Castilian second language speakers who are native speakers of Mayan languages.[24] If we consider the political work of the text as constructing the nation, the identitarian and ideological work of such a rendering of language in the text is that it frames the Indigenous subject as incapable of belonging to the nation. In other words, we can imagine the text as nation, and the language of the text becomes an inherent aspect of the national persona, or even, the national language. Since Indigenous subjects speak this language in a sub-par or "bastardized" fashion, they are linguistic others, failing to belong in the Castilian language nation/text; they are the illegitimate/illicit orphans of the nation based on their linguistic distance from the hegemonic (standard) Castilian variety. Further still, this conversation initiates yet another discursive "truth" regarding indigeneity which only a few Ladino and Indigenous authors in the second half of the 20th Century will question, but which nonetheless holds true to an imaginary of Indigenous

subjectivity that continues well into the 21st Century: the essentialization of Guatemalan Mayas as exclusively native Maya language speakers.

A further contradiction in Herrera's text is his denial of an economic hierarchy between Ladinos and Mayas which coexists with a racialized hierarchy among the two groups. First, even though Herrera imagines the Maya as moochers, he also asserts that the Indigenous are not at a socio-economic disadvantage vis-à-vis the finquero. A landowner in *La tempestad* notes that "the truth is that it has been some time since the Indian gained a privileged situation which he affirms daily" ("lo cierto es que hace tiempo que el indio logró una situación privilegiada que afirma cada día") (230), a statement that clearly disavows classism and an exclusionary economic system. However, the narrator in a contradictory fashion reinforces a racialized hierarchy that justifies the landowner's domination of the Indian laborer. He does so by noting the structuration of Guatemalan society based on skin color as an unquestionable truth. In a Semana Santa party, when the finqueros and laborers share in the festivities together, we can perceive a division between them that maintains a hierarchical social order:

> Etiquette is pushed aside and masters and workers franternize in naïve and cordial delight […] Only in skin color is the hierarchical distinction maintained. The masters are white or light brown. Some are white like raw milk – a Nordic reminiscence in the tropics. –Cinnamon colored skin of the Criollos. The Indians, cibaque color and with a greenish-purplish stigma on their lower backs (205-206).

> (La etiqueta se soslaya y amos y peones fraternizan en ingenuo y cordial regocijo […] Solo en el color de la pelleja se mantiene el distingo jerárquico. Los amos son blancos o morenos. Algunos de un blanco de leche cruda – reminiscencia nórdica en el trópico. – Piel de canela de los Criollos. Los indios, con la color de cibaque y un estigma verdimorado en la rabadilla) (205-206).[25]

Here "Criollo" is used not as in the colonial period, but rather to refer to lighter or darker-skinned mestizos; upper class Ladinos. Even though they "fraternize", the finqueros, for the color of their skin, remain at the top of the social hierarchy, above the rush fiber colored Indigenous with their greenish-purple Mongolian spots at the base of their backs. This, as Arias has argued, is also a racialized trait which lingers at the center of Ladino literariness as an epistemic metaphor of the trace of indigeneity in Mestizos, a visible sign of both Indians' and Mestizos' inferiority in relation to "whiteness".[26]

The designation of the Indigenous as per their "cibaque" color unfolds into another series of derogatory discursive "truths" of the Indigenous. First, cibaque as metonym for the Maya is reflective of more blatant characterizations of the Indian as "part of the landscape", or as picturesque, natural elements (Pailler 268). References to Mayas in this narrative as "part of the landscape" are subtly tied into larger descriptions of landscapes. For example, the narrator describes that: "the bank was flat with even sand. […] Down in the river, sinking his net in the water, a nude Indian removed stones. Suddenly a heron extended its neck giving the scene a romantic allusion" ("la riba era plana, de arena lisa. […] Rio abajo, un indio desnudo removía piedras hundiendo el

jalaballo. De pronto una garza alzó el cuello dando al cuadro una alusión romántica") (Herrera 136). The "Indio" here blends into the landscape, naked as if to signal a wild animal in its natural habitat; working with rocks in the river conjures the image of a primitive being. The heron overhead completes this "romantic" image of the wild before the finquero's gaze.

The image of the cibaque colored Indian goes even further than simply implying the Indian's place in nature. The Maya of the novel not only blend into the landscape, but eventually, they transcend humanity and nature itself. They become non-human. In describing an Indigenous man who is holding a homemade firework in his hands while he wades in a river, the explosive goes off and the narrator describes his body, "cibaque strip" ("tira de cibaque"), falling into the river "as a confused stain" ("en mancha confusa") (211). The Indigenous body reduced to cibaque and then to a "mancha", or a trace of a subjectivity, is followed into the river by twenty other unreal Indians:

> Twenty nude bodies in one singular impulse, twenty unanimous fevers, twenty hypnotized bronzes threw themselves into the water after the fallen one […] those twenty black stains were lost down river like one single impulse, a mythological impulse, blind and crazy to capture the dead body (211).
>
> (Veinte cuerpos desnudos en un solo impulso, veinte fiebres unánimes, veinte bronces como hipnotizados se lanzaron al agua tras el caído […]

> aquellas veinte manchas prietas se perdieron río abajo como una sola ansia, una ansia mitológica, ciega y loca por atrapar a la muerte) (211).

This citation points to the morphing and modernization of Fuentes y Guzmán's contradictory "glorious Indian of the past" – "miserable Indian of the present" dichotomy. While earlier in the novel, the narrative voice focuses on the miserable Indian of the present, in the citation above, we witness a move beyond the imaginary of the miserable contemporary Indian to the notion of the Indian, in general, as imagined; that is, the Indian is a fiction of itself, a non-real, non-present, non-individualized shell existing in a hypnotic, bare state.[27] This recalls Giorgio Agamben's theorization of a "bare life" subjectivity,—one reduced to a naked, depoliticized state without official status or rights – because for Herrera, in this and the aforementioned descriptions, the Indigenous do not exist in the same spiritual, political or even physical space as the non-Indigenous.[28] Herrera's image of the Maya as barelife subjectivity recalls Arias's observation that "indigenous subjects are still configured as "invisibilized" bodies coexisting and intermingling with modernity […] deliria of the secret threads of coloniality" relegated "to social forms of nonexistence" (Arias "Ghosts" 208). Furthermore, the superstitious Indian in Fuentes y Guzmán's rendering reemerges here in the collectivity of "stains" that, working on pure instinct, blindly (and crazily) seek out their dead brother. Metaphorically, the "stain" of the Maya of the present in Herrera's work longs for the lost subjectivity of the mythic Indian of the past, the dead brother that has disappeared down river. Intuiting Martínez Peláez's notion of the "Indio" as an

"unauthentic" entity in need of "de-indianization" appearing some 35 years later, Herrera's modernization of Fuentes y Guzmán's foundational contradiction is steeped in imagery of a mythical Maya that no longer exists in its prior glory, but that rather, in contemporaneity, exists simply as a bare-life subjectivity; a trace of a prior, mythical iteration of itself.[29] This conceptualization again fits into a Ladino desire rooted in the Western progression of linear time. As per this view, historical time has its way of moving toward the inevitable decline and disappearance of Mayanity within the national, homogenous 'we'. Herrera textually creates the discursive, linear movement from the "miserable Indian of the present" toward an extinct Maya imagined as simply a "stain", a trace.

Solving the Indian Problem: Contesting Emerging Social Policy Discourses

Arias reminds us in his book *La identidad de la palabra: narrativa guatemalteca a la luz del Siglo XX* (1998), that the finqueros in the *La tempestad* recognize the "Indian Problem" in Guatemala due to their experience with the Indigenous in the countryside, and they even propose solutions to said problem (*Identidad* 65). This aspect of the novel reflects the social discourses regarding the Indigenous that emerge in the 1920s and 1930s with indigenismo throughout Latin America, and in particular within Guatemalan political and intellectual circles in the form of a public debate that continues throughout the 20th Century.[30] Herrera's *La tempestad* becomes one of the first literary works to participate in these debates through fiction, but does so in a way that favors only the finqueros' versions of social policy.

In a meeting of several finqueros, Don Ramón tells the group that a recent article in a national newspaper criticizes finqueros as upholding master-slave like relations with Indigenous workers. Don Ramón sarcastically calls the piece a "a little sonnet about the long-suffering Indigenous class and emancipation of the Indian" ("sonecito de la sufrida clase indígena y la redención del Indio") – a criticism of early indigenista imaginaries of the Indigenous as long suffering, needing redemption or vindication (Herrera 230; Díaz-Polanco 46; Konefal 17-18). Don Ramón, speaking of what we can imagine is the socially liberal urban petty bourgeoisie, mocks the urban intellectual as uninformed regarding the reality of the finquero and the countryside: "if these people who write would come to the country to see the reality! For them, the Indian continues to be the colonial slave and the finca master, the *encomendero*" ("si esas gentes que escriben vinieran al campo a ver la realidad! Para ellos el indio sigue siendo el esclavo del coloniaje y el amo de finca, el encomendero") (230).[31] César agrees that "those who cry out for the emanicpation of Indians don't know them" ("los que claman por la rendición del indio no lo conocen") (232). Again, the construction of the finquero here as *the* figure that has a full grasp of Guatemala's social reality precisely because he "works with" Mayas is yet another facet of this modernized ego conquiro subjectivity. His relegation of the Indigenous to the countryside reinforces his superior knowledge of the Indigenous over that of the urban intellectual: if Mayas exist in the countryside, then those Ladinos who understand him in his natural environment are better placed to make a judgment on him than urban intellectuals who do not venture out into the geographical spaces of indigeneity.

For the finquero, one resolution to the problem of Indians in Guatemala is to eradicate them through a personal sexual policy of rape and whitening, as discussed above. In addition to this xenophobic "solution" is the obsessive focus on the discourse of dirtiness and disease among Mayas as a public health threat. Reminiscent of an ethnic cleansing discourse, one finca owner notes that the "lack of hygienic education" ("incultura higénica") of the Maya should be cured by state programs that scrub Indigenous peoples with "quinine, water and soap" ("quinina, agua y jabon"), or impose on Indigenous communities "the socializing intent of health" ("el proposito socializante de la salud") (232-233). The coffee elite's social policy, then, imagines a tutelary institution providing Indigenous people with an education on hygiene, as it was assumed that Indigenous populations were "morally and scientifically backward, and […] notions of sanitation, disease control and personal cleanliness, were alien to them" (Abel 22).[32]

Interestingly, we hear one finquero, Don Luis, state that this "lack of hygienic education" exists not only among the "indiada", but also among "the Ladinos in the villages" ("la gente Ladina en los poblados"), or rural, poor mestizo agricultural workers (Herrera 233). Once again, we have poor Ladinos placed alongside Mayas in the construction of a hierarchical social imaginary. This reference, when taken with the others discussed in this section, is indicative of the elite's insistence on the simultaneous existence of both a racial and class-based hierarchy in which poor Ladinos and Mayas are lumped together in opposition to the non-Indigenous, wealthy mestizo finqueros.

Other finca owners parrot some of the social policy initiatives which emerge in the years following the Ubico administration: compulsory public education in basics like

history and geography, along with a system to "latinize" ("latinizar") Mayas, meaning teaching them to read, write and speak Castilian (233). The discussion regarding such policies, nonetheless, is truncated by an overarching consensus that Mayas are, in fact, irredeemable. For the Maya's "rudimentary psyche" (psiquis rudimentaria) and "biological misery" (miseria biológica), César finds it unlikely that all the social programs imaginable would help the "race" (234). This fatalistic view of the Indigenous as impossible to socialize or "latinize" is a perfect scapegoat for Herrera's modernized ego conquiro. Indigenous fatalism enables the modern ego conquiro to continue justifying his use and abuse of Indigenous labor, as well as his usurpation of Indigenous land for the supposed good of the nation and for his own enrichment.

For these reasons, Herrera's *La tempestad* modernizes the ego conquiro subjectivity such that it reflects many of the dominant ideologies of the Ubico regime, and he even incites his coffee elite protagonists to respond to burgeoning indigenista social policy discourses in order to strip them of their credibility. Beyond *La tempestad's* reflection of prominent social and economic imaginaries of the nation, Herrera's novel is of note because it breathes new life into several imaginaries seen in Fuentes y Guzmán and Milla, and adds new discursive "truths" to the Guatemalan identitarian portfolio. Most importantly, his novel is discursively violent toward Indigenous populations in that it resemanticizes the destruction of the Invasion by textually codifying a version of the Maya as unreal in the present and dead in the past. The Indigenous thus are presented as "progressing" toward the state of extinction by becoming a fiction in the nation / text.

Shifting Discourses after 1944: Ambivalent Solutions to the "Indian Problem"

As discussed in Chapter One, in the 1940s pressures favoring a democratic transformation in Guatemala from popular sectors sought to transform the country into a modern, capitalist nation, which led to the 1944 October Revolution. The Revolution brought with it increased attention to the fracture between Guatemalan Ladinos and Mayas, and concerns for land tenure issues, and labor and human rights. However, some of the social policy rhetoric circulating in the 1920s and 1930s regarding C*astellanización*, Indigenous assimilation through education and health policies, etc., continued to be implemented and further developed after the 1944 Revolution (Galvez Borrell 155; Liano "Visión crítica" 143). The National Indigenista Institute (IIN), created in 1945, focused its efforts on Indigenous education so as to create a "homogenous nationality", a single ideal of Guatemalaness, which would appear with the assimilation of Indigenous populations to Ladino social and cultural norms (Taracena 43). In 1946, the Revolutionary government further institutionalized its efforts to tackle the "Indian Problem" with the inauguration of the Guatemalan Institute of Anthropology and History (IDAEH), an institution tasked with studying Indigenous culture, and "preserving the Indigenous cultural patrimony" namely through anthropological, linguistic and literary studies of Indigenous cultural phenomenon – including studies of the *Popol Wuj* and other Indigenous texts (46). In this environment, two indigenista writers emerge whose work echoes these policy strategies for dealing with identity and indigeneity. They are Miguel Ángel Asturias, whose classic novel *Hombres de maíz* (1949) aligns with the IDAEH's mission of valorizing the Maya cultural patrimony; and Mario Monteforte

Toledo, whose work reflects that of the IIN, charged with implementing social policy directed toward the assimilation of Indigenous populations into the "homogenous nationality". In this next section, we will first discuss Asturias's work, and then Monteforte Toledo's work, in relation to the imaginaries of indigeneity and national identity studied in this chapter thus far.

Miguel Ángel Asturias's National Soul

With the emergence of indigenismo, the artistic generations of the late 1930s-1950s imagined a brand of Latin American nationalism that fused mestizo and Indigenous content in art and literature as a marker of identity (Toledo 5). In this context, in Guatemalan literature, the work of Miguel Ángel Asturias stands as an example of an artist reimagining the Indigenous such that they are positioned as central contributors to the Guatemalan national identity. Asturias's thinking about Guatemalan identity moves beyond the desire for Maya integration into the nation through cultural erasure. He rather creates a vision of Guatemalaness he developed due to his studies in Paris on magic, alchemy and mythology, and in particular, his study of Maya sacred books, such as the *Popol Wuj* (Martin "Génesis" 488). Additionally, Asturias studied Guatemalan history, imperialism, and cultural and economic dependency on the United States, which led him to question Ladino bourgeois identity as a brand of dependent mimesis of European or North American culture that lacked originality (Martin "Génesis" 488-489). In this light, Asturias probably came to question Ladino identity as *the essence* of Guatemalaness, as Antonio Pop, the writers of *Ixim*, and Carlos Guzmán Böckler did in the 1970s when they

identified the "fallacy" of Ladino cultural identity vis-à-vis Maya identitarian authenticity, and therefore the Ladino identity's inability to be *the* identity central to Guatemalaness.

Arturo Arias, along these lines, argues that in Paris, Asturias "discovered" the Maya world and imagined it to be the very essence of the country's national identity ("Aspectos" 561). Arias explains that Asturias came to realize that he himself, along with all Guatemalan Ladinos, had Mayaness in him; Ladinos had Maya characteristics "in their physical traits, in their psychology, in their customs" (ibid). For this reason, "the 'national soul', in turn, had to be Indigenous and rooted in the Maya spirit" (ibid). Arias goes on to explain that Asturias's notion of the "national soul" was most likely rooted in his studies of Vasconcelos's theorization of the *raza cosmica* (ibid). While this mid 1920s concept served as a springboard for imagining Guatemalaness as a transcultured or hybridized identity, it also influenced the social policy of the 10 Years of Spring governments into the 1940s and 1950s, in that they promoted a national cultural identity through an indigenista "valorization" of Indigenous ethnic traits, ways of life and/or belief systems. As discussed in Chapter One, the so-called "national soul" or national identity was to emerge as the integration of the positive elements of Indigenous culture and Ladino culture. The "positive element" of Indigenous cultures as touted by the IDAEH revolved around ancient Maya civilization – ancient Maya architecture, glyphic histories, and Maya writings that had been transcribed by colonial scribes after the destruction of Maya texts during the Invasion.

One such writing which became increasingly popular as a sign of Guatemala's Maya identity in the 1940s was the *Popol Wuj*, a highly symbolic, circular narrative recounting, in part, the Maya creation myth or genesis story. For Asturias, both the desire to find the essence of Guatemalaness and the *Popol Wuj* as that which manifested Maya culture in Guatemala would become central to his literary work, particularly in *Hombres de maíz*. In this novel, he breaks with the genealogy of discourses on Maya indigeneity, as Liano notes, by "coming to an Indigenous vision of reality through the elaboration of the myth as the only possible literary strategy" for doing so ("Déspotas" 548). In this novel, we can see how Asturias uses Maya myth as a strategy to wrestle the essence of Guatemalaness away from an image of the Criollo or Ladino ego conquiro. Nonetheless, his work reifies binaristic discursive "truths" centered in the "mythic Indian of the past" and the non-existent contemporary Maya.

About *Hombres de maíz* and the *Popol Wuj*

Asturias's 1949 novel revolves around the fight between a traditional Indigenous community, its ties to the land, and Ladino invaders who are interested in usurping Indigenous land and cultivating maize as a commercial product. Growing corn for sale, instead of sustenance is an activity which transgresses the Maya notion of maize as the sacred, life-giving substance.[33] This conflict serves to juxtapose, throughout the novel, the values and epistemology of the Maya world, on the one hand, and the Western, Ladino world, on the other hand. The Ladino world in the novel is imagined according to the values of a capitalist ego conquiro, reflecting that subjectivity found in both Fuentes y

Guzmán and Herrera, since the Ladino in Asturias's novel believes himself to be entitled to his patrimony – in particular land – which he takes from the Indigenous subjects at his discretion. Liano notes that the "terrible Ladinos" portrayed in *Hombres de maíz* correspond to those small and medium sized agriculturalists who, during the rise of the liberal regimes after 1871, desired vast amounts of land, but knew that the large agriculturalists would not sell off their ample plots ("Déspotas" 545). These smaller growers then turned to the uncultivated and/or collectively farmed plots of Indigenous communities. As Martin Lienhard observes, if the novel were a realist narrative based on this conflict, Asturias's work would easily fit into the tradition of realist indigenismo, however, Asturias's "aesthetic-literary treatment" in the novel, including the novel's non-linear structure, allows him to protagonize Maya characters and exemplify a Maya episteme in contrast to a Ladino worldview (Lienhard 578).[34] To see how Asturias fashions his work in this way, let us briefly review the novel's plot and that of the *Popol Wuj*, which serves as an "original" text on which Asturias bases his work.

The novel is written in six parts, with the first titled "Gaspar Ilóm", the name of a Maya leader who fights the commercialization of corn due to his view of it as sacred. After a series of defeats, Ilóm's wife La Piojosa Grande leaves him and he is assassinated in a massacre in his Indigenous community (Asturias 20-23). However, Ilóm's fellow community members are certain that he has survived the attack by throwing himself into a river (24: 62). Seven years pass in the next parts – two through four – in which the surviving Mayas continue to defend themselves and their land against state-sponsored military forces. They are able to gain some victories and retain lands on which to

reestablish a communal culture centered in the cultivation of corn. This system is to juxtapose a Western, capitalist view of agriculture for profit.

Part five picks up the story of a blind Indigenous man named Goyo Yic. Like Gaspar Ilóm, Goyo Yic's wife also leaves him, although she, María Tecún, is pregnant (96-97). Overwhelmed by the desire to reunite with María, Goyo Yic has cataract surgery and recovers his vision, which enables him to undertake a search for his wife (103-110; 116). In the last part of the novel, we have the story of two men – Nicho Aquino, a postal worker who leaves the city for the countryside, and Hilario Sacayón, a mule driver. Nicho Aquino, like Gaspar Ilóm and Goyo Yic before him, also loses his wife, Isaura Terrón (144). Hilario decides to help Aquino find his wife, but on the journey, Aquino transforms into the nawal version of himself (Coyote) and enters the labyrinth of the infraworld accompanied by the Curandero-Venado de Siete-Rozas (256-258). When these two characters-turned-nawales enter the underworld, their voyage becomes a symbolic retelling of the Maya creation story located in the *Popol Wuj*.

Briefly, the *Popol Wuj* narrates that in the creation of humans, the gods fail in their attempts three times before creating the successful, and true, people of the earth – the Maya – made out of white and yellow corn.[35] The creation story's hero twins, Junajpú and Xbalanke, are forced to go to Xibalbá (the underworld) in order to defeat the "Señores de Xibalbá" or the lords of the underworld. Once they do so by passing a series of tests and tricking the Lords, Junajpú and Xbalanke transform into the sun and the moon, which represent fire and rain. Once these two elements combine in the heavens,

the cycle of day and night commences, and sun and rain combine to set the stage for the growth of corn, from which the first true Mayas are created.

In *Hombres de maíz*, a version of this story is related in that once Aquino and the Curandero delve into the underworld, they become a translated version of the hero twins. They confront a series of tests, like Junajpú and Xbalanke, to defeat the underworld lords (Asturias 1992; 255-262). Aquino and the Curandero (Coyote and Venado) pass the tests, which in turn symbolically parallels the battle between Ladino commercial corn growers and Mayas over land. When the heroes emerge victorious, the story locates them on the Caribbean coast where Goyo Yic and María Tecún appear (263-264; 275). Goyo Yic and María Tecún reunite and return to their town to cultivate corn (281). However, we find out that María Tecún is also La Piojosa Grande, but has now been renamed "María la Lluvia" (280). In this final moment, the reader discovers that all of the men in the story who lost their wives, and all of the wives that left them, are archetypes of the original Gaspar Ilóm and La Piojosa Grande, and therefore, archetypes of the original Junajpú and Xbalanke figures reflecting fire and water, sun and moon in the mythic creation story.[36]

The three times in the novel in which the men lose their wives correspond to lost possibilities of creation: upon losing their wives, the men cannot procreate, and so, they cannot populate the earth with their children – failures which correspond to the Creators' three failed attempts at crafting humans in the *Popol Wuj*. Asturias plays with the image of fire and water, sun and moon, (as in the renaming of María Tecún/La Piojosa Grande to María la Lluvia) to signal the intertextuality between his work and the *Popol Wuj's* creation myth, which also relies on elements of fire and water so that the true Maya made

of corn can emerge. Additionally, Asturias tells his story of the Indigenous creation myth in a non-linear manner, reflecting in turn the non-linear structure of the *Popol Wuj*. Thus, Asturias recurs to the narrative of the *Popol Wuj* in both content and form to articulate his version of the struggle between Mayas and Ladinos in the nation. In this process, he articulates a Maya perspective, from the vantage point of a Ladino, in regards to national identity.

***Hombres de maíz*: Rethinking Indigeneity and National Identity**

Given the genealogy of concepts discussed earlier, we can ask, in the big picture, how does Asturias's *Hombres de maíz* fit with the various discourses of identity and indigeneity seen thus far? Notably, Asturias's work breaks with those discourses of indigeneity and national identity seen in Fuentes y Guzmán, Milla and Herrera by decentering the authoritative gaze of the Criollo/Ladino ego conquiro articulated through these authors' characters, and instead imagines the Ladino as an exploiter of Indigenous land and labor. In the first few pages of the text, this exploitation is directly tied to Ladino commercial exploitation of corn, juxtaposed to Maya uses of corn: for Mayas, corn, "sown to be eaten it is the sacred sustenance of the men who were made of maize. Sown to make money it means famine for the men who were made of maize" (Asturias 1993; 11) ("sembrado para comer es sagrado sustento del hombre que fue hecho de maíz. Sembrado por negocio es hambre del hombre que fue hecho de maíz") (Asturias 9). Asturias thereafter protagonizes Indigenous characters as justifiably resistive to a history of racialized exploitation that has its roots in this capitalist desire; a violent resistance

textually inaugurated by Gaspar Ilóm in the first chapter of the novel. By protagonizing Mayas and painting Ladinos in a negative light, Asturias does the opposite of Herrera in *La tempestad*, who encourages reader empathy with the "exploited" Ladino coffee elite. Instead, Asturias implores the reader to empathize with the Maya. Arias explains this maneuver by noting that prior to the publication of *Hombres de maíz*, the "we or us" in Guatemalan literature always constituted the Ladino world, while the Indigenous 'others' were objectified in texts so that their oppression by Ladinos could be ideologically justified ("Aspectos" 566). For Arias, Asturias alters this relationship such that the "we" of the novel, "the Mayas, are the Guatemalans" ("Aspectos" 566-567). This serves as a symbolic reformulation of Guatemalan identity, as it shifts the meaning of national identity away from occidentalist ladinism and moves its essence toward an "other" (Maya) epistemology.

Specifically, Asturias shifts the "we" of Guatemalaness to Mayanness through his treatment of Guatemalan history and myth. Liano argues that the text can be read as a historical novel in which mestizos subjugate the Indigenous in the context of late 19th - early 20th century feudal liberalism (Liano "Déspotas" 547). In this sense, the fact that Asturias critiques the historical developments resulting in the continual oppression of the Indigenous through land and labor policy is significant and apropos of his time: publishing his novel after the first years of the October Revolution, his critique of unequal land tenure relationships intuits the land reform policy the Arbenz government would undertake in the 1950s to level the economic playing field between sustenance producers (Mayas and poor Ladinos) and large land owners (Ladino national and foreign

investors). For the purpose of changing the vision of Guatemalan identity not only ethnically but also economically, Asturias returns to the past to elucidate a primordial conflict of epistemologies between Ladinos and Mayas; that is, the contradiction between their value systems regarding land use. Martin argues that with the publication of *Hombres de maíz*, Asturias takes away the past from the colonialists and "giv[es] it to the Indigenous, returning the title of their territory to them" (530). In this move, Asturias loosens the Ladino ego conquiro's hold on land rights through a critique of land exploitation for profit. Through juxtaposition with Maya land use objectives, the coffee elite of Herrera and the Criollo heir of the Invasion in Fuentes y Guzmán are stripped of their patrimonial rights to the land.

Asturias's use of the creation story in the *Popol Wuj* is also indicative of a major break with previous narratives treating identity and indigeneity. First, by creating a kind of translation of the *Popol Wuj* in his novel, Asturias pays homage to a Maya textuality as an "original" text, breathing life into it in the present, or as Walter Benjamin describes this process, providing it an "afterlife" through its "translation".[37] Viewing similarly the novel as palimpsest, the *Popol Wuj* serves again as an "original" discourse; as the base of a contemporary text. If we think again of text as nation, the suggestion here is that the root of the nation –the foundational, national text – is the *Popol Wuj*, an implication that simultaneously displaces colonial documentation or histories (like that of Fuentes y Guzmán) or Ladino works (such as Milla's) as foundational narratives. Such a displacement of prior discourses centers instead a Maya text as the original truth of the modern nation. Asturias's use of the myth reflects Guillermo Bonfil Batalla's indication

in the 1980s that myth can serve as an emancipatory gesture for Indigenous peoples. "Myth", he explains,

> matters as much as documents, inference or oral tradition […] the value of works, at the end of the day, is measured first of all for that which they offer to the vindication of the Indigenous past and the denunciation of colonial oppression and lies (38).

Asturias's use of the *Popol Wuj* in terms of translation or palimpsest appears to attend to this concern; it is used as both a symbolic original input and as a mechanism for denouncing epistemological and economic oppression. It is introduced into the discursive realm in order to reorganize an understanding of Guatemalaness according to a Maya episteme.

Hombres de maíz: An Ambivalent Emancipation of the Textual Maya

Despite these ruptures with previous Guatemalan textualities, Asturias nonetheless upholds certain imaginaries of the Maya articulated in the previously studied authors. Asturias, plain and simple, is not able to get away from an imaginary of an unreal, non-contemporary Maya. His reliance on old discourses of the Maya as irreal and magical is apparent in the text, and in large part has to do with his literary style. Arias argues that Asturias attempted to write the Maya world through surrealist techniques and methods that would "create a kind of duality between dreams and reality", which is the kind of dual state Asturias believed texts such as the *Popol Wuj* communicated ("Aspectos" 568). In fact, Asturias claimed that his literary representations of Maya

Guatemalans were "a kind of dream, an unreality, which when written in full detail seems more real than reality itself" (Asturias qtd. in Arias "Aspectos" 568).[38] In attempting to write the national identity as grounded in Mayaness, Asturias signals Mayaness using a dream-like, unrealistic, or purely mythical aesthetic. He therefore symbolically situates the contribution of Maya culture to national identity in an intangible unreality. In effect, he resorts to indigenista political and intellectual discourses, such as those of the IDAEH, that locate the valorization of Maya indigeneity in the "glorious" or "mythic Indian of the past", omitting, in turn, the recognition of contemporary Maya subjectivities. He does this primarily through the use of the *Popol Wuj* myth, and through his linguistic representation of Mayas as of another space and time, in comparison to a realist, present Ladino. Finally, his recurrence to a magical aesthetic of "naguales y encantos" discussed earlier in this chapter is ambivalent, as its interpretation depends on the lens though which we view it, which I will discuss at the end of this section.

By using the *Popol Wuj* as an "original" or as the base of the palimpsest, we can argue the opposite position from that stated above by imagining Asturias as re-colonizing the *Popol Wuj* as a proto-text of the nation. López argues that Asturias "inscribes [the *Popol Wuj*] within a Eurocentric paradigm", a project he believes intends to the "leave [the *Popol Wuj*] in the margins of that which is remote" (50). While he doesn't expand on this point, López is likely hinting that Asturias imagines the *Popol Wuj* as 'of the past' and therefore existing as merely an identitarian or cultural trace in the contemporary Guatemalan imaginary. Or Asturias considers the *Popol Wuj* a valid yet antique source for a Eurocentric modern framework which borrows from it only symbolic elements. If

we reconsider the novel as palimpsest in another sense (a manuscript which can be erased in order to write another text over it) we can think of Asturias's *Hombres de maíz* not as giving the *Popol Wuj* an "afterlife" but rather as erasing the narration of the *Popol Wuj* in order to write another version, one filtered through a Eurocentric, Ladino lens: it is re-written as a national text, a text recounting the creation of a national soul, as opposed to a text tracing the mythical Maya genesis story.

While the use of the *Popol Wuj* myth may erase its difference by forcing it to tell the story of the birth of a nation, the use of myth is also problematic precisely because it denies Maya epistemological contemporaneity and reifies the "archaic"/Maya-"modern"/Ladino binary. As Emilio del Valle Escalante signals, for this dichotomy, Mayas in the novel, instead of being imagined as present subjects in modernity, come to represent a "paradigm of antiquity defined as a kind of past and traditional artefact".[39] In this sense, Asturias's desire to imagine the Guatemalan 'national soul' or 'national culture' depends on a return of the Mayas to the *Popol Wuj* narrative, a historical rewind, in terms of linear time. In this context, we can perceive how Asturias's narrative rests on an interpretation of Mayas according to a Western notion of linear time, that is, of Mayas of the "past" and Mayas of the "present" as being two separate entities. How does this work and what are the implications of such a maneuver? First, if we consider *Hombres de maíz* a translation of the *Popol Wuj*, Asturias's belief emerges that in order for Mayas to redeem their rightful place as part of the nation, a certain mythic dignity must be restored to them, given their oppression by Ladino power holders in the present. Luis Cardoza y Aragón argues, based on this interpretation, that the Indigenous in *Hombres de*

maíz signal a simple project of "restitution" (Cardoza y Aragón qtd. in Liano "Déspotas" 552). If restitution is the returning of something lost or stolen, the idea here is that either, or both, the dignity and ethno-cultural epistemology of Mayas (along with their land) was lost or stolen, and must be returned to them. This assumes first that contemporary Mayas are not dignified Mayas (read "real" Mayas) and that they lack a present ethno-cultural epistemology. By "restoring" Mayas a "lost" epistemology through imagining them via the narrative of the *Popol Wuj*, we can perceive Asturias's failure to acknowledge how Mayas incorporate an autochthonous worldview into their present-day lives and struggles that differs from both Western epistemology and the mythic *Popol Wuj* narrative. Second, the return to a "lost" past in Asturias assumes that the only "real" Maya is indeed an archetype of the Maya of the mythic past, an assumption that again denies the existence of present Mayas subjectivities that act and struggle within the framework of a contemporary, "other" epistemology.[40] Like with Fuentes y Guzmán, Milla and Herrera before him, Asturias assumes an absence in contemporary Indigenous subjectivities, which in turn makes it impossible to understand how contemporary Maya subjects articulate epistemologies in their hybridized, veiled or resistive forms.

This is a textual iteration of the IDAEH tenet that the way to elevate the dignity of contemporary, "lost" Mayas is to return to them the glory of their mythic past. This idea is problematic because it assumes that in order for contemporary Mayas to have the agency to resist Ladino oppression, they must, as Guzmán Böckler and J.L.-Herbert suggest in 1975, "resume the thread of time in the moment in which it was cut short" (Guzmán Böckler and J.L.-Herbert 31).[41] Ultimately, it is difficult to comprehend what

that historical moment is, exactly. If it refers to the immediate post-Invasion, it harbors the assumption that post-Invasion Mayas ceased being and living according to an "original" epistemology, and were therefore incapable of cultural adaptation and epistemological preservation after contact with Spaniards.[42] This supposition, found in Asturias, IDAEH policies, and Guzmán Böckler and J.L.-Herbert's assessment, erases Indigenous agency for cultural and epistemological survival from the Invasion to the present; it fails to address how Maya epistemology circulates through time by insisting on a historicist project that identifies a "past" Maya and a "present" Maya that are fundamentally differentiated. It also denies the history of Indigenous land use practices on colonial *ejidos* and in *pueblos de indios*, discussed in Chapter One. Finally, another problem emerges in that we can perceive an assumption that the authorial Ladino ego conquiro has a benevolent side which, in a patronizing move, restores this lost dignity to a contemporary Maya through a valorization of a mythical Maya aesthetic.[43] These assumptions reinforce the image of a tutelary Ladino subjectivity that is tasked with restoring Mayas, or perhaps more accurately, infusing in the notion of the national culture, a 'lost' (or ignored) Maya episteme.

Crafting the Mythic Maya: Dichotomies of the "Real" and the "Magical"

In the novel, when a resistive Maya subjectivity is acknowledged, it is portrayed according to Palacios as a "fully fledged mythic, almost shamanic" Maya subjectivity (59). Given this view, we can argue that by encasing the resistive Maya of the historical present in the novel as mythic and shamanic, Asturias recurs to Fuentes y Guzmán and

Milla's vision of the Maya as supernatural and nearly demonic. In this context, one issue to consider is Asturias's use of nawalism. This is a problematic issue, however, because the interpretation of nawalism's work in the text is ambivalent depending on the epistemic angle from which we approach it. In Asturias, Nicho and the Curandero transform into their nawales (Coyote and Venado de Siete-Rozas) in order to symbolically defeat the Ladino land owners (256-258).[44] This is a tricky aspect of the text because if one reads "animalization" in this instance without a deeper understanding of the epistemological work of nawalism, the transforming Maya characters could appear at best magical and at worst demonic. If, on the other hand, we consider the "animalization" of these characters in an "Other" sense – that of subjective equals – the recurrence to nawalism in Asturias would stand as an epistemological challenge to Western understanding of hierarchies among natural phenomena.[45] It is unclear how Asturias viewed nawalism and animalization, and even more uncertain how his audience interpreted this element in his text. But, I would simply note, we can point to the impossibility in the text of contemporary Mayas to resist politically in ways that do not highlight a nawalistic character of protest. I would suggest that this is problematic because we have a conflation of Maya political resistance and nawalism in the novel, a pairing that potentially limits both the myriad of ways Mayas resist and the multiple significations of nawalism in Maya culture. This conflation also harkens back to the myth of Tekum Uman as the Quetzal bird penned by Fuentes y Guzmán. Finally, I would add, the use of nawalism in Asturias tends to insist on a quite literal interpretation of Nawalism as humans transforming into animals, without a deeper textual incursion into

the reasons why certain characters transform into certain animals; in other words, Asturias doesn't note the significance of perceived animal qualities and traits and how they relate to the human characters with whom they are paired, nor does he signal the many other cultural aspects of Nawalism, such as its symbolic articulation of the Maya calendar, for example, among others.[46]

Given the ambivalence of Nawalism in the text, we can turn to a different way in which Asturias constructs the Indigenous as an "unreal" entity: through the manipulation of Indigenous voices in the language of the novel. Although Lienhard argues that characters identified as Indigenous are not always clearly distinguishable from Ladino-marked characters, in that they all use a "Guatemalan Spanish", he argues that in the "most Indigenous moments" in the text (the voice of the land at the beginning of the novel or the prophesy of the bat witches), "Asturias makes a 'distinct', stylized Indigenous voice emerge", one without "significant sociolectal traits" (1996, 581). In the absence of a tangible (and realistic) Indigenous sociolect, Asturias uses rhetorical devices to signal this stylized Indigenous voice, resulting in the creation of a Maya voice that is purely mythical.[47] Dante Liano observes that Asturias's language mimics the mythical language of the *Popol Wuj* through "lyrical narrations", "obsessive reiterations" and lengthy enumerations, "alliterations and phonic iterations that create an oneiric environment" (Liano *Palabra* 145-147). I would add, too, as indicated in the following citation, that Indigenous speech in the novel also includes illeism, which for some may connote anything from narcissism to a lack of confidence to mental illness, but which I would argue contributes to the kind of distancing between Maya subjectivities and reality

we have been discussing in this chapter thus far. For example, while talking to La Piojosa Grande, Gaspar Ilóm demonstrates the repetitive, oneiric speech environment Liano describes:

> Look, Piojosa, the ruckus'll be starting any day now. We've got to clear the land of Ilóm of the ones who knock the trees down with axes, who scorch the forest with their fires, who dam the waters of the river that sleeps as it flows and opens its eyes in the pools and rots for wanting to sleep…The maizegrowers, the ones who've done away with the shade, for either the earth that falls from the stars is gonna find some place to go on dreaming its dream in the soil of Ilóm, or they can put me off to sleep forever. Get some old rags together to tie up my things, and don't forget the cold tortillas, some salt beef, some chili, all a man needs to go to war (Asturias 1993, 11).[48]
>
> (Ve, Piojosa, diacún rato va a empezar la bulla. Hay que limpiar la tierra de Ilóm de los que botan los árboles con hacha, de los que chamuscan el monte con las quemas, de los que atajan el agua del río que corriendo duerme y en las pozas abre los ojos y se pugre de sueño…los maiceros…ésos que han acabado con la sombra, porque la tierra que cae de las estrellas incuentra onde seguir soñando su sueño en el suelo de Ilóm, o a mí me duermen para siempre. Arrejuntá unos trapos viejos pa

> amarrar a los trozados, que no falte totoposte, tasajo, sal, chile, lo que se lleva a la guerra) (Asturias 1992; 9).

This is just one of many instances in which Mayas in the novel speak in lists, in repetitions of entire clauses with minor changes, and with several references to sleep and dreaming, even in a discourse signaling an impending war. Further, the reference to the "tierra de Ilóm" and "suelo de Ilóm" serves as an additional distance between the protagonist and the material world through the use of the third person. In terms of the repetitions, Ricardo Estrada identifies this repetitive discourse as "ritmo trimembre" or in English, trimerous rhythm, explained as a repetition three times of the same thing using different imagery each time (14-15). Estrada notes that the use of the triads in *Hombres de maíz* infuses Maya speech with a magical element:

> In *Hombres de maíz* we find the air of the colloquial, with the emotional triads transcending to that which is magical […] Asturias maintains the austerity of the *Popol Vuh* […] the similes and metaphors, in order to demonstrate the magic of the image, appear at each step along the way. The trimerous rhythm is a constant in its aesthetic expression. The *Popol Vuh* is a magical-literary rite. *Hombres de maíz* is as well (14-15).
>
> (En *Hombres de maíz* encontramos el aire del coloquio, con las triadas emocionales trascendentes a lo mágico […] Asturias guarda la austeridad del *Popol Vuh* […] los símiles y las metáforas, en camino de realizar la magia de la imagen, surgen a cada paso. El ritmo trimembre es un toque

> constante en su expresión estética. El *Popol Vuh* es todo un rito mágico-literario. *Hombres de maíz* también lo es) (14-15).

In this way, Asturias invents a contemporary language for Mayas that is rooted in magic, and therefore, in mystery, otherness. Given Asturias was experimenting with surrealist stylistics and "lo fantástico", and even Jungian psychoanalysis, this mythic Maya speech may seem innocuous as it reflects a certain aesthetic at a given time (Martin 527). However, the mythical speech of the Mayas only serves to indicate their otherness through linguistic distancing if we consider how Ladino speech is constructed.

In contrast to that of the Mayas, the Ladino world is represented through a language which Liano identifies as "realist", based in descriptions, without temporal interruptions and without excessive use of literary rhetorical devices (Liano *Palabra* 145-147). This kind of discourse stands out in the section of the novel titled "Coronel Chalo Godoy" which relates the happenings of the Ladino war against the Mayas from the Ladino point of view.[49] In this section the Coronel's speech consists of short phrases and assessments of reality, well-worn if not somewhat banal figures of speech, and it is stripped of the baroque ornamentation seen in the speech of the Maya characters. Even the narrator in this "Ladino" section uses a minimalist speech. The narrator, for example, describes the Coronel's thought process regarding the massacre he carried out in Pisiquilito, the Indigenous town, in an unadorned speech:

> Easy to say there's no crying over spilt milk. But some of us have spilt too much to feel easy. When Chief Gaspar Ilóm had been poisoned the Indians had not defended themselves. The darkness of the night, the loss of their

> leader, the surprise attack and the drunkenness of the celebration had all favored his plans for not killing the Indians, for just frightening them. But the patrol fell upon them like hail on a dry maizefield. They left not a single one alive. No use crying over spilt milk. Though maybe it wasn't such a bad thing they'd killed them all, because the chief threw himself into the river to douse the fire in his intestines which was killing him, and washed away the poison (Asturias 1993, 77).
>
> (Bonito es el dicho de a lo hecho, pecho. Pero no hay pecho que alcance para tanta cosa como uno ha hecho. Envenenado el cacique Gaspar Ilóm, la indiada no se habría defendido: la oscuridad de la noche, la falta de jefe, el asalto por sorpresa y la borrachera de la fiesta favorecían sus planes de no matar a los indios, de asustarlos solamente. Pero la montada les cayó como granizo en milpa seca. Ni para remedio dejaron uno. A lo hecho, pecho. Aunque tal vez no estuvo malo que los matara a todos, porque el cacique se tiró al rio para apagarse el feugaron de las tripas que lo estaba matando y se contralavó el veneno) (Asturias 1992; 74)

A 'realist' narration, the Ladino speech itself is concise, with its shorter and at times even incomplete sentences that get right to the kernel of information to be communicated; the figures of speech are quotidian and easily understood. Asturias signals the difference between the Maya world and the Ladino world by placing Mayas in an oneiric textual space, one of the subconscious, of an intangible reality, whereas the Ladino world is

firmly rooted in "reality" and the diegetic present. Since Mayas are rhetorically constructed in the time of the mythic past through the novel's translation of and/or intertextuality with the *Popol Wuj*, and simultaneously couched in the linguistic space of an oneiric aesthetic, the space-time continuum connoting Mayas is again enveloped in the essentialist label of the "mythic Indian of the past". In other words, the temporal position of the narrative is different for both discursive realities within the text, a spatial-temporal change that complicates the stability of Indigenous subjects. This difference is particularly palpable due to the blatant textual juxtaposition of the time-space continuum connoting Ladinos as contemporary and real in the text. Because Asturias juxtaposes temporalities in the text to highlight the conflict between the "archaic" character of the *Popol Wuj* and Indigenous characters, and "modern" Ladino textual subjectivities, I would argue that his use of antithetical pairs does not hold an emancipatory potential for discursivities regarding indigeneity given the politics of his aesthetic project. We mustn't forget that although Asturias signals a difference in the Maya and Ladino temporal realities, his objective was in fact to resurrect what Sanjinés calls the "lost wholeness" of the Western nation-building project, that is, to forge the "national soul" as a merger of both the Ladino and Maya subjectivities by emphasizing the Maya aspects of the national soul in his text. In this way, Asturias plays with iterations of Mayas throughout historicist time in a much different way than a writer like Fuentes y Guzmán. Instead of noting a linear progression from an archtypical past Maya to a contemporary, and declined, Maya, Asturias rather merges the contemporary Maya into the mythical Maya. By doing so, he

fails to mark a non-archetypical, contemporary Maya, forcing the Maya element of the 'national soul' he seeks to reside outside of the temporal 'now'.

Asturias's recurrence to myth in delimiting indigeneity also falls back on a well-worn characterization of Mayas as collective beings lacking individuality, a notion expressed in Herrera as "la indiada", understood to be the "mass of Indians". Arias notes that the Maya in *Hombres de maíz* still do not emerge as entirely individualized beings ("Aspectos" 567), while Gerald Martin argues that Asturias's accomplishment is precisely his capacity to give life to a "character-mass" in order to signal social problems ("Aspectos" 527). I would argue, however, that through the collectivization of Mayas via archetypical patterns among the male and female characters, Asturias ends up essentializing Mayas as mere copies of mythic characters in the *Popol Wuj*, that is, the male / female character counterparts without whom the final creation of humans cannot take place. Critic Gordon Brotherston argues that the hero twins in fact represent the male sun and male moon (they "walk up into the earth's horizon of light and then turn on into sky to join the Pleiades, male sun and male moon") (234). For Brotherston, these male characters parallel the female characters in the genesis story (namely Xmucane and Ixkik, the hero twins' grandmother and mother), and a parallel story is created in the *Popol Wuj* between the hero twins journey into Xibalbá and Ixkik's ascent from Xibalbá to the world on earth (ibid). These male characters and female characters together facilitate the creation of the men of maize, given that the female characters symbolize those with the power to cultivate maize and care for the crop, while the male hero twins set the necessary environmental harmony for maize to grow, as they "make the world healthier

to live in by containing the corrosive but necessary power of Xibalbá" (234). Asturias's use of the male heroes and the females who bear children reflects these parallel male and female characters, since the hero twin figures in *Hombres de maíz* defeat the underworld lords, while the female characters bear children successfully only after the male characters make the world healthier by checking the landowners' power. Additionally, another way of considering the *Popol Wuj's* use of male/female parallels is by considering that the hero twins in fact represent male and female power, although they are textually constructed as male twins. In the *Popol Wuj*, when Junajpú and Xbalanke ascend to the sky to become the sun and the moon, they mark the beginning of day and night cycles, the beginning of time permitting the growth of crops, particularly maize, which in turn provides the substance central to the successful creation of humans (Prieto 626). For the necessity of their celestial bodies to work together to create the environment for corn to grow, we can argue that Junajpú and Xbalanke represent male and female beingness; although both are represented as male, both of which are necessary for the reproduction of the maize people. Indicators that the twin heroes symbolize male and female forces is the association of the male body with the force of the sun and the female body with the force of the moon, parallel to the forces of fire and water that weave throughout the text and which work together in the cultivation of crops.[50] When the twins ascend to become these forces in the heavens, they take on the symbolic male and female forms of sun/moon, fire/water, opposites which combine so that life can spring forth with the growth of maize (Prieto 626). Further, it could be argued that the twins as a pair parallel other male/female pairs in the creation story, such as the "grandparent" creators

who appear near the end of the second creation in the *Popol Wuj* myth – the grandmother and grandfather day keepers, Xmucane and Xpiacoc.[51] Whether the twins themselves represent male/female subjectivities, or whether the marked male/female marked characters parallel those in the creation story, it is noteworthy that the *Popol Wuj* cedes near similar appreciation for male and female deities. While male protagonism in Asturias's *Hombres de maíz* is undoubtedly centralized in his text, with the female characters occupying an almost phantasmagorical position, in the final analysis of his novel, it is only when the male and female characters come together within a renewed environment (rid of Ladino landowning power) that new generations of Mayas can emerge through procreation. In this sense, Asturias's work capitalizes on the *Popol Wuj*'s use of male/female pairs – archetypes of man and woman – as central to the creation story.

Finally, Asturias's Indigenous characters tend to blend together such that one represents all. An obvious example of this lies in the description of Gaspar Ilóm as the only Maya that speaks for all Mayas: "Gaspar talks for all who have talked, all who talk and all who will talk" (Asturias 1993; 12) (El Gaspar habla por todos los que hablaron, todos los que hablan y todos los que hablarán" (Asturias 1992; 11). If Gaspar Ilóm symbolizes the Maya representing all Maya subjectivities, Asturias conflates Maya subjects into one identity through the act of speaking – one unified Word, coming from one voice. This citation makes the homogenization of the Indigenous (past, present and future) unmistakable in his text. In this maneuver, Asturias textually confirms what I consider to be a central tenant of the ego conquiro's vision of the colonial contract; the

denial of the Other's individualized subjectivity, and thus, of the Other's humanity. While Asturias does this unwittingly, given his work stands in stark ideological contrast to that of an author's such as Herrera, he nevertheless relapses into a denial of Maya subjectivities by recurring to archetypical characters with little to no discursive diversity.

While Asturias's treatment of indigeneity and the nation represents a major shift in identitarian discourses in this genealogy, it simultaneously reifies certain discursive "truths" of indigeneity within the context of Guatemalan debates on the so-called "Indian problem". Like the other texts visited thus far, the authorial gaze orchestrating how Mayas are read is still a Ladino gaze; Asturias authorizes himself to speak for the Maya in the nation, and in doing so, he reifies notions of the contemporary Maya as traces of a supernatural, "encantado", unreal, and mythic Indian. This self-appointed authority is yet another aspect of the expansive Ladino ego conquiro subjectivity. Martin Lienhard points this issue out forcefully, claiming that Asturias "explicitly defends the idea that the Ladino writer is also the spokesperson for the 'conquered'" (578).

If we accept, nonetheless, that Asturias's novel is a treatise on the Maya essence of the "national soul", the author articulates it as such by folding Mayanity into a Eurocentric notion, that of a "national identity" pertaining to a modern nation-state. The social problem Asturias fails to fully comprehend is the very imposition of a Western notion of the nation state and a Eurocentric identity purporting to be "national" on Maya communities from the Invasion on. The fact that the national soul or identity is still being defined by a Ladino author, and that the discourse articulated is still that of an idealized "homogenous we", shifts the vision of the Ladino ego conquiro from that of fictional

characters in texts to the Ladino author himself. While the fictional Ladino ego conquiro in *Hombres de maíz* is painted in a negative light, Asturias appears to have little to no awareness that by authorizing himself to speak for the Maya element of the nation, he creates an authorial ego conquiro subjectivity that positions himself as both the mouthpiece of Mayas and as the tutelary figure trying to fit a Maya episteme into a Eurocentric notion of social organization. A common self-appointment of left leaning Ladinos in and after the 1940s with respect to the "Indian Problem", this mentality of the Ladino mouthpiece for the entire nation is only seriously questioned in the 1970s and 1980s with the emergence of Maya voices critiquing leftist Ladino activists.

Revolutionary Social Policy and "Saving the Indian" in Monteforte Toledo's *Donde acaban los caminos*

Mario Monteforte Toledo (1911-2003) produced his most important indigenista texts during the 10 Years of Spring governments, registering a change in Guatemalan society that breaks with the Criollism and Ubiquista ideology seen in an author such as Flavio Herrera (Arias *Identidad* 44; 72). As discussed above, Miguel Ángel Asturias's writing also reflects a new era of indigenista consciousness in literature contextualized within the parameters of a changing notion of nation and an interest in assimilating Indigenous populations such that they are part of a modern Guatemalan national identity. While Asturias's national project aligned more with the IDAEH's cultural policies to valorize Mayas through a return to their mythic past, writer Mario Monteforte Toledo's works echo the IIN's social and economic policy recommendations for integrating Mayas

into the modern, Ladino nation. One might explain the differences between Asturias and Monteforte Toledo's literary projects by relating them to larger philosophies regarding their writing style: Arias notes that Monteforte Toledo's literature emphasizes Mayas' "lived experience", the day to day socio-economic reality experienced in the nation, while Asturias's emphasizes "an invented" experience for Mayas, one rooted in mythical history (*Identidad* 73). So, while Asturias deals with archetypes of the mythic Maya, Monteforte Toledo presents the "Maya of the present". Similar to Asturias's work, Monteforte Toledo's literature ruptures certain stereotypes inaugurated in Fuentes y Guzmán, Milla and Herrera, while simultaneously reifying other discursive "truths" about Mayas, in turn reflecting the paternalistic and tutelary side of indigenista policy and art. Given this context, in this last section, I consider how this concurrent destruction/reification of discourses of indigeneity operates in Monteforte Toledo's work with a special focus on his less studied 1952 novel, *Donde acaban los caminos*.[52]

Entre la piedra y la cruz and *Donde acaban los caminos*: Narrating the "Indian Problem"

Mario Monteforte Toledo's ideological adherence to the principles of the October Revolutionary governments was no doubt at the heart of his narrative work. Although he was an "independent intellectual", he was also a past president of the Congress and former candidate to the presidency during the revolutionary period (Liano *Visión crítica* 125-126). Additionally, in what is unusual for a Ladino intellectual of his time, he was married to a Maya Tz'utujil woman for some years, with whom he had a daughter. Given

his political and personal affiliations, major themes in Monteforte Toledo's work include the desire to mitigate the "bipolar" Guatemalan identity by integrating Mayas into the modern-capitalist nation through education, assimilation to Ladino culture and politics, health policy and diminishing the city/countryside divide, a binary seen to hinder national "progress". Two of his novels in particular address these issues: *Entre la piedra y la cruz* (1948) and its counterpart, *Donde acaban los caminos* (1952).

Briefly, in *Entre la piedra y la cruz*, an Indigenous man named Lu Matzar is confronted with his constant desire to enter the national reality (or the Ladino or mestizo world) after he has left his village and been educated, despite the extreme discrimination he faces within this world. This desire stands in conflict with his natural tendency to identify solely with his Maya cultural heritage. Matzar eventually becomes a dedicated devotee of the Revolution and marries a Ladina woman at the end of the novel. He represents a prototypical Maya, humiliated and exploited within the Ladino world, who becomes the Maya hero of the new nation by learning to fuse his culture with Ladino culture (Liano *Visión crítica* 133). At the heart of the novel is the Ladino desire to create a "homogenous nationality" through the integration of Mayas into the dominant Ladino culture (Aura Maríana Arriola 118).

Donde acaban los caminos (1952), published four years after *Entre la piedra y la cruz*, also presents a case of integration, but this time of a Maya woman through her relationship with a Ladino. However, while *Entre la piedra y la cruz* concludes with the realization of the indigenista integrationist dream for Mayas, *Donde acaban los caminos* warns of the challenges and dangers that emerge if Mayas do not assimilate to Ladino

culture. The novel is set in rural Guatemala in the 1920s during either the Orellana or Chacón presidencies, both militaristic regimes in the period between the Estrada Cabrera and Ubico dictatorships. To sum up the plot, the novel tells the story of Raúl Zamora, a young Ladino doctor from Guatemala City who travels to a rural, Indigenous mountain town to attend to patients in the surrounding villages. There he meets the Arriagas, a Ladino landowning family with several brutish daughters, one of whom falls in love with Raúl. He also encounters the region's local authority, a mano-dura General who is generally unconcerned about the issues facing the majority Indigenous population of the region.

Eventually, an Indigenous man named Antonio comes to Raúl's medical clinic seeking help for his ill wife, who Raúl later diagnoses as having typhus. Raúl notes that the majority of Antonio's village has the illness, and when Antonio directs the community to follow Raúl's orders for eradicating the disease, the town rids itself of the sickness. This enables Raúl to become increasingly accepted by this community, although he never loses his awareness that he is a foreigner. He is consistently reminded of the Ladino-Indigenous binary by both the Indigenous and Ladino characters' cues that the cultures must remain separate. Nonetheless, Raúl falls in love with María, Antonio's 16 year old daughter, who ends up living with him and becoming pregnant, which causes an uproar in the community.

When she is forced to choose between them, María ends up returning to her family despite her pregnancy, and Raúl's mother and sister convince him to return to the city. When he returns to the village a time later to bring María and his son back to the city

with him, María is again forced to choose between him and her family. However, realizing there is no future with Raúl, María flees into the forest with the child to escape. While in the forest her child perishes, and she vanishes into the jungle in a kind of intertextual nod to José Eustasio Rivera's *La vorágine* (1924).

Discursive Ruptures and Continuities: Monteforte Toledo's Indigenismo

Socio-politically and aesthetically, Monteforte Toledo's work is unique in Guatemalan textualities because he is the first to write a demystifying portrayal of Indigenous characters. In the two above-mentioned novels, Indigenous characters are represented as thinking and rational, with dreams and desires, and capable of expressing themselves (Arias *Identidad* 87). In this sense, Monteforte Toledo's work signals the "beginning of a process of reflection" for Ladinos to incorporate Indigenous peoples into their own worldview and their notion of the nation state (ibid). Additionally of note is that Monteforte Toledo is the first Guatemalan author to textually valorize the Maya as contemporary subjects with a unique episteme that differs from, but is not (necessarily) inferior to, a Western cosmovision. This is particularly true in the juxtapositions he presents between Maya and Ladino cultural practices in *Entre la piedra y la cruz*. In *Donde acaban los caminos*, however, I would argue that Monteforte Toledo distances himself from this stance in order to highlight the negative aspects of Indigenous culture that pose obstacles to Maya integration into the Ladino nation, a maneuver of indigenista policy of the period as discussed in Chapter One. In particular, he highlights education and sanitation, but he mixes these into a gendered scheme that reasserts a Ladino ego

conquiro subjectivity and textually reifies discourses of racial whitening as a means to Maya integration into the nation, which I will explore in the following section.

Conquering Hearts and Minds: The Revolutionary Ladino Ego Conqurio

In the beginning of *Donde acaban los caminos*, Raúl travels to the Indigenous town of Izmachí, and notes that he is going where "things are cold, like the hand of the dead" ("las cosas son frías, como mano de muerto") (10). In this deadened, cold countryside he wonders: "What could he get out of a poor town of pained people, with provincial problems, always within reach of the clouds? The clouds dematerialize the solidity of the earth and men become more primitive and insignificant" ("¿Qué podía sacar de aquel pueblo pobrísimo de gente adolorida, de fútiles problemas provincianos, siempre al alcance de las nubes? Las nubes desmaterializan la solidez del mundo y vuelven más primarios e insignificantes a los hombres") (12). In the description of this rural space of indigeneity, we find death and cold; another world that has lost its foundation, and resultantly, the Mayas who live there have become "primitive" and "insignificant". We begin the novel, then, with the rearticulation of a few discursive "truths", as well as a few contradictions: we have a reiteration of the "bare-life Indian of the present" tied to rural, distant places in the nation. We also find the juxtaposition of the city and the countryside and those who reside in these spaces as the enlightened urban doctor moves from the city to the *Heart of Darkness* rural regions of indigeneity. As in other narratives, the spatial-identitarian juxtapositions signal the failure of the Maya to be integrated into the modern state, adding to the nation's identitarian bipolarity. In this way,

we have a reiteration of Fuentes y Guzmán, Milla and Herrera's characterizations of the Indigenous as fundamentally separate from the rest of the nation due to their spatial location and their "primitive", "insignificant" (read bare-life) existence. However, in the optimism of the October Revolution, the Ladino doctor's task in this contemporary epic is to conquer the hearts and minds of the Mayas to the values of science, education and a homogenous national identity. Primarily, he does this through his medical practice.

Superstition and "Modern Medicine"

While Raúl's mission is to bring higher standards of health to the Maya population through his practice of Western medicine, the narrator informs us that despite his credentials, he may confront resistance from locals: "The doctor was too young to insight trust among the townspeople, who had been raised with the *curanderos'* miracle making" ("El medico era demasiado joven para infundir confianza entre los lugareños, que habían crecido cerca de la milagrería de los curanderos") (17).[53] Before any Indigenous character is introduced in the novel, the reader has the impression of a certain superstitious nature of Mayas due to their reliance on the "miracles" of local shamans, a reference recalling Fuentes y Guzmán's notion of the contemporary Maya as "given to fantasies and superstitions" and Milla's discourse of witchdoctors. Further, a local governmental bureaucrat in the rural town explicitly notes that for their deep-rooted belief in the power of "witches", "there is no way of making them understand that science is better than all that rubbish the witches feed them" ("no hay modo de hacerles comprender que la ciencia es mejor que todas esas porquerías que les dan los brujos")

(19). While the author may not have intended for the reader to empathize with this character's assessment, in a subtle twist in the story we can nonetheless perceive the dismissal of non-Western practices of medicine. How does this happen?

Early on in the text, the Maya curandero himself comes to Raúl so that he may cure his wife, which Raúl does, and which inspires other locals to come to the clinic for help (18). In this way, a hierarchy of medical practices is established in which Western medicine dominates the curandero's practices. Western medicine, a western episteme, is honorably defended when Raúl's "professional conscience and rebel attitude" (conciencia profesional y actitud de rebeldía) leads him to insist on additional resources for the clinic despite opposition from the racist local General (41). Raúl becomes the heroic savior of the "parasite infested" Maya who is brave enough to stand up to the General in a kind of discursive staging of the political tensions between the early 20th century dictatorships and the October Revolutionaries (19). The Ladino ego conquiro here has become not only a conqueror of the hearts and minds of the Indigenous vis-à-vis medical practices, but his bravery is reiterated in his paternalistic defense of Mayas before the symbol of authoritarian power. For this reason, Monteforte Toledo's work breaks with other discourses of liberal, authoritarian control of Maya populations seen earlier in this chapter, but it also re-states certain stereotypes regarding indigeneity in the nation: that contemporary Mayas are physically ill and weak, or lacking in appropriate sanitation measures. While the Ladino coffee elite in *La tempestad* see no reason to intervene in these problems, since for them Mayas are incapable of learning, in *Donde acaban los*

caminos, Mayas can learn and thus be saved (as dramatized by the Mayas who seek Raúl's help in the novel), but it is thanks to the Revolutionary Ladino's tutelage.

Saving Maya Women from Maya Men

Interestingly, the image of Raúl saving the curandero's wife, which thus enables the townspeople to begin to trust him, initiates another theme in the novel based on gender relations. By curing the curandero's wife, Raúl is represented as more capable than Maya men when it comes to "taking care" of the women in their lives. This theme emerges again when Antonio seeks Raúl's help in treating his daughter María's lice problem. In this scene, Antonio insists on cutting María's hair, but Raúl makes it clear that he can find medicine to treat it without such drastic measures. He is particularly concerned about maintaining María's beauty and is shocked by Antonio's remedy to the problem. As for Raúl's reason for saving her hair, the narrator notes: "All the femininity, flirtatiousness, inherent property of the Indian woman is in her hair; it symbolizes the docile strength of her condition and it constitutes the entire adornment of her beauty" ("Toda la feminidad, la coquetería, la ínsita pertenencia de una mujer india es el pelo; simboliza la mansa fuerza de su condición y constituye todo el adorno de la hermosura") (49). Thus we have the fetichization of and reduction of María's subjecthood to her hair by the narrative voice, like Herrera reduces Indigenous women to their physicality in order to justify the sexual violence they face by white men. Although Raúl objectifies and reduces María, he is nonetheless constructed as a savior who rescues her from her

father's bad judgment. Not surprisingly, Raúl falls in love with her after he kills her lice with Western medicine.

When María becomes pregnant and moves in with Raúl, Raúl is bent on teaching her the ways of urban Ladinity: specifically, he teachers her to write, a skill symbolically imbued with the lettered city's authority. Casey reminds us that the revolutionary junta expressed a "genuine concern for the traditionally disenfranchised Indians" by considering illiteracy to be a basic contributing factor in the "tyranny of repressive dictators and the segregation of Mayas" from the Guatemalan national imaginary (235). The fictionalization of the Revolutionary governments' literacy programs through the relationship between Raúl and María can be read as an attempt to warm readers to the Revolution's policies and to the possibility of solving the nation's social problems through integrative strategies. Given this context, the reader perceives details suggesting that such Revolutionary policies work in the national identity building process. For example, when she learns to write, María acquires "one of the supernatural power of the whites, which the Indian could assimilate" ("uno de los poderes sobrenaturales del blanco, que el indio podía asimilar") (127). The message is, if she learns to write, her integration into the white world is possible. This particular quote brings up, however, the issue of agency and literacy. One the one hand, since writing is described as a supernatural power, the message is that Indigenous "superstition" regarding this Ladino power does not preclude Mayas from learning the ways of the Ladino. On the other hand, that María considers literacy a "white supernatural power" suggests her utter astonishment with literacy. Said astonishment hints that literacy is so foreign to María

that the first time she experiences it is when Raúl comes to town. Literacy policies, it is important to note, were not categorically "imposed" on Indigenous communities, and many Maya communities wanted literacy programs and saw the value in them. However, in resistance to Ladino paternalism as to how such literacy programs should run, once they were able, Mayas initiated their own literacy campaigns. [54] The novel lacks attention to Indigenous agency in creating and implementing their own literacy programs, and thus subtly signals the primacy of Ladinos as those bringing literacy to an uninterested / uninformed Indigenous population. In addition to education policy discourses, the integrative power of public health policies are also praised in the novel but through a paternalistic lens. When María learns basic sanitation measures, the narrator notes that she "had truly become planted in the white world" ("había plantado de veras en el mundo de los blancos) when Zamora gives her a toothbrush") (130). The novel suggests then that health and education are two important policies in integrating and assimilating the Maya into the modern nation state, and that the Maya woman, at least, is able to assimilate these practices through Ladino tutelage.

In this context, discursive "truths" of indigeneity emerge in new and different forms. First, if the condition of the Indigenous woman is endowed with a "docile strength", as indicated in the citation above, we can interpret her "strength" as her general submissiveness. This breaks with *La tempestad's* discourse of Maya women as "vile", sexualized temptresses by swinging in the opposite direction and imagining Maya women as passive and in need of tutelary guidance. Second, we have the indication that María's father, like the curandero with his wife, is incapable of appropriately taking care of the

Indigenous woman, leaving a void of paternalistic authority in the Maya woman's life that the Ladino revolutionary can fill. Consequently, a third "truth" emerges suggesting that the Ladino ego conquiro subjectivity is the savior of Mayas based on his ability to guide Maya women and know better than Maya men. Thus we can perceive the reification of a previous "truth" regarding the ego conquiro subjectivity as "King-God", albeit in the new formation of the Ladino revolutionary "savior". While in Fuentes y Guzmán's *Recordación florida*, the Criollo ego conquiro / "King-God" saves the proto-nation from Maya "encantos y naguales", in *Donde acaban los caminos*, the revolutionary Ladino ego conquiro must save Mayas from their superstitions, and essentially, from themselves.

Obstacles to resolving the "Indian Problem"

While signaling through fiction how Mayas can be saved in the nation, readers can perceive a certain pessimism in the text regarding obstacles to resolving the national identitarian binary. These obstacles are the Mayas themselves and we can trace how they unfold in the novel. When Raúl falls in love with María and she becomes pregnant, the ultimate means of creating the Revolutionary "homogenous national identity" is revealed. Whitening via miscegenation appears in Monteforte Toledo's novel as it does in Herrera's *La tempestad*, although this time it doesn't occur through the violent attack and rape of Indigenous women, but in fact through consensual sex. However, María and Raúl's relationship—the symbolic union of Ladino and Maya culture – is fraught with difficulties from the beginning. When Raúl asks Antonio if he can be in a relationship

with María, Antonio remarks: "Turning a daughter over to a Ladino means selling her […] Ladinos on one side, natives on the other" ("Entregar una hija a un Ladino es vendérsela […] aparte son los Ladinos, aparte los naturales") – a statement that rigidly adheres to the view of the nation as a cultural contradiction between Ladinos and Mayas (92). When María and Raúl do eventually live together and she becomes pregnant, both the Maya and the Ladino populations at large resist the union. When María returns to her family after facing the community's resistance, Raúl comes to ask her back into his home. Antonio firmly reiterates that Ladinos and Mayas must remain separate, and this time María also agrees, sending Raúl away (233). In the end of the novel when María sees no possibility for a relationship with Raúl, she disappears into the forest with her son. There she breastfeeds him, but he is unable to receive nourishment from the milk, and he eventually dies. María walks on to the place "where the roads end" and also dies (276). In the context of Revolutionary nationalism's push for a "homogenous national identity", this ending seems to suggest that the Revolution has failed precisely because it is impossible to fuse Maya and Ladino cultures and subjectivities. Since this fusion is impossible in the text, the mestizo child/nation is unable to survive in its hybridized manifestation.

In this literary organization of the Revolutionary project, the Ladino ego conquiro reflects the tutelary Ladino state, tasked with determining which Indigenous practices are fit for the nation and which ones must be eradicated. Ultimately, the Ladino hero/state can teach the Maya new behaviors and practices, and Mayas despite their superstitions can participate in the process of creating a racially homogenized identity. However, for

the insistence on separation from both the Ladinos and Mayas in the novel, a racially and culturally homogenized national identity is impossible. While both camps resist mestizaje, the text frames Mayas as being the most resistive to integration, as the textual evidence signaling resistance originates mainly in the Maya community. In this sense, the blame for mestizaje's failure seems to fall more heavily on the Mayas than on the Ladinos in the novel. Further, it is of note that there is no solution presented in the text suggesting that Mayas can or should retain cultural autonomy while also being represented as part of the national identity. Instead, Mayas cultural separatism appears to be scapegoated as the main threat to a mestizo national identity because Mayas resist the project of the tutelary Ladino Revolutionary state. Monteforte Toledo's novel therefore suggests a quandary for the tutelary Ladino: the problem for resolving the binaristic identitarian state is indeed the "Indians" themselves and their insistence on maintaining their culture.[55]

Conclusion

When considering the aesthetic organization of indigeneity and identity in Criollo and Ladino texts over time, the political-ideological influences on authors and their corresponding historical moments determine how the genealogy of Guatemalan discursivity regarding identity unfolds. Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán presents in his text two foundational contradictions which set the discursive scene for years to follow: that of the "glorious Indian of the past" and the "miserable Indian of the present"; and that of the "Criollo ego conquiro" and the "barbarian Indian". These two

binaries function together to articulate the discursive "truth" of Criollo power more generally, as no discourses of contemporary Indigenous agency or resistance are allowed in his "history". These two binaries spin off additional, particularized "truths" regarding the nature of Mayas, such as contemporary Mayas as superstitious, and the Maya as naïve yet conniving, lazy and barbarian. But while the crafting of discursive "truths" regarding Indigenous subjectivities is rampant, the Criollo author also reiterates the "truth" of the ego conquiro subjectivity, rearticulating it from its 1550s, Valladolid sense which applied to conquistadors, and molding it to late 17th Century Criollos and later Ladinos. For these discourses, Fuentes y Guzmán maintains a discursive continuity with the spirit of the Invasion by centering Criollo elites as the dominant power in the emerging context of the proto-nation / proto-national text.

Milla's 19th Century historical novel *La hija del adelantado* is a return to the colonial past in which the presence of Indigenous agency and subjectivity is marked primarily by absences. In this sense, Milla's lack of consideration for Maya epistemology tells of the Ladino elite desire to understand the 19th century nation as non-Indigenous. However, when Mayas do appear in the text, they are ornamental, a threat to the colonial order because of their use of witchcraft, or an aid to those who threaten the colonial order. Milla's historical novel, like most historical novels, returns to the past to understand and/or imagine the present. The text's construction of Mayas in the past as absent, subversive or simply given to witchcraft, serves then as a justification for their subjugation in the present, since the novel implies that these so-called Maya traits exist as a historical given. Milla's novel, in the end, returns to the past to emphasize how the

historical exploitation of Mayas serves to normalize their exploitation in the present. In effect, Milla signals to readers that the declined "Indian" has always existed as such since the colonial period. The implied question for the local bourgeoisie readership then becomes, why change how the Indigenous are treated in the present?

Herrera's novel is of note because it breathes new life into several colonial imaginaries surrounding Guatemalan identity and indigeneity, and adds new discursive "truths" to the Guatemalan literary portfolio. First, Fuentes y Guzmán's central contradiction of Guatemalan society – the Criollo ego conquiro versus the "miserable Indian of the present"– is clearly recoded in Herrera's novel through his semantization of the King-God and exploited hero in contrast to the thieving, and/or sexualized Maya. Given the Mayas' transgressions of hierarchical, racialized labor codes in the text, the finquero considers himself justified in maintaining a privileged social and economic position over his Indigenous workers. In Herrera's version of the story, poor Ladinos, although not as loathsome as the "indiada", are lumped together with Mayas in order to symbolically represent a "sordid" underclass dominated by the elite finca owner. In this sense, class and cultural discourses merge together to maintain the finquero's racial and economic hegemony. Second, we have the emergence of an imaginary of Indigenous sexuality, particularly that of Indigenous women, that is viewed as abject and vile, bestial at best. Third, Fuentes y Guzmán's notion of the "Indio lleno de malicia" is reimagined in Herrera's text in the thief/moocher Indigenous figure, who is then codified as a linguistic other through portrayals of Maya Castilian. Finally, we have the Maya as "part of the landscape", a figure that morphs into a bare-life, naked shell – a figure possessing a trace

of the pre-colonial past – whose body is but a racialized stain and whose consciousness exists in a hypnotic, irrational desire for a dead past. With this new twist, the "glorious Indian of the past" versus the "miserable Indian of the present" contradiction reemerges in the view of the Maya, in general, as non-human, or unreal. Thus contemporary Mayas become a fiction in the nation / text.

Asturias's *Hombres de maíz* represents a wildly dissenting view in relation to these discourses, while at the same time his novel maintains contemporary Mayas at arm's length. He breaks with those discourses of indigeneity and national identity seen in Fuentes y Guzmán, Milla and Herrera by decentering the authorial gaze of the Ladino ego conquiro articulated through previous Ladino characters, and by protagonizing Indigenous characters as justifiably resistive to a history of racialized exploitation. Nonetheless, Asturias concurrently reifies the discourse found in Fuentes y Guzmán that the Maya subjectivity of importance in the nation / text is the mythical Maya. Consequently, Miguel Ángel Asturias as Ladino author (authority) denies Mayas a contemporary subjectivity, thus prohibiting a true break with prior discourses. His vision of Mayas in the nation is not radical enough to symbolically emancipate the Maya subject within Guatemalan textualities. This is because Asturias does not fully reject the subject position of the Ladino ego conquiro, but rather, embodies it in its authorial form.

Like Asturias, Monteforte Toledo also enacts an aesthetic break vis-à-vis the other authors studied in this chapter, but he too falls short in articulating a textual emancipation of Mayas due to his portrayal of Mayas as the tutelary subjects of the Revolutionary Ladino ego conquiro. He inaugurates new discursive "truths" regarding the Maya that

reflect the heroism of the Revolutionary Ladino subject, such that said Ladino subjectivity effectively "knows better" than Mayas themselves, particularly Maya men, what is good for them and the nation. In this schema, he rearticulates Herrera's discourse of Maya women as passive, yet sexualized. In both versions of female Maya sexuality, the Ladino who procreates with Maya women is doing a service for the nation and the Indigenous through racial whitening. However, while discourses of whitening and those of education in Herrera's text amount to an understanding of racial determinism for Mayas, in Monteforte Toledo, we see the turn to Ladino concerns regarding Indigenous cultural separatism as the major obstacle for Maya integration in the nation. The central binary in *Donde acaban los caminos*, like in Asturias, albeit in a very different way, reifies a cultural contradiction between Ladinos and Mayas. In Monteforte Toledo, the imaginary of the "Indian problem" is upheld through the author's general skepticism toward Ladino, but mainly Maya abilities to fuse cultural practices into an idyllic mestizaje.

In all of the authors described above, the textual organization of Mayas through the naturalization of discursive "truths" results in multiple contradictions that uphold visions of the nation as "bipolar". An additional common thread of the Criollo and Ladino textualities studied in this chapter is the consistent relegation of Mayas to certain spaces (the countryside, the mythic/magical) or to certain social roles or character traits (superstitious, laborer, thief, and sex object) within the nation/text. When Ladino and Criollo discourses do not configure the textual Maya according to these traits, they tend to erase Mayas all together by denying their contemporaneity: Mayas become irreal, non-

existent, bare-life subjectivities. As these arrangements of Mayas in text dialogue with the Criollo and Ladino imaginaries of Guatemalan national identity in the broader political context, it becomes clear that each non-Indigenous writer reflects the political-economic projects of the period in which he lived and worked.

In the colonial period, Fuentes y Guzmán reiterates or creates new discursive "truths" regarding the Maya in order to rearticulate Spanish justifications for exploiting Mayas during the Invasion. The politics of his textual project as such justify a transfer of power from peninsulares to Criollos through the creation of a hereditary line connecting conquistadors and Criollos, while maintaining Mayas in an exploitable position. For Milla, returning to the colonial system of political and economic power provides a reasonable model for justifying authoritarian power in 19th century Guatemala, particularly when it comes to manipulating Mayas while simultaneously imagining them as outside of the national imaginary. Herrera, maintaining those same imaginaries of indigeneity articulated in Fuentes y Guzmán, serves to discursively codify the concentration of power in the hands of landed Ladinos at a time when the legitimacy of liberal, dictatorial regimes and their allied coffee producers began to be questioned regarding the exploitation of Indigenous laborers in the context of emerging indigenista discourses. And, the political shift of the October Revolution in the 1940s and 1950s is reflected in both Asturias and Monteforte Toledo's work albeit in very different ways. While these discourses simultaneously break with Fuentes y Guzmán, Milla and Herrera's texts, they nonetheless continue to privilege the Ladino gaze of the author/authority regarding Indigenous integration into the Western national model.

Like in the political discourses regarding identity and indigeneity circulating during these different moments in Guatemala history, the corresponding textualities of these periods reify the discursive hegemony of the non-Indigenous ego conquiro subjectivity in imaginaries of national identity. As in the political realm and its corresponding policy debates emerging in the early 20th Century, the texts of the authors studied above do not allow for an emancipation of Maya subjectivities from the injurious, and naturalized, coloniality subjugating Mayas in the nation/text. For this reason, these authors participate in further discursive violence toward Mayas by iterating and reifying national "truths" regarding Maya subjectivities. This is because all of the discourses discussed above in one way or another maintain a hierarchical relationship between Mayas and non-Mayas, in which non-Mayas continue to determine what is best for the nation, at the expense of Maya participation in both the textual practices and political debates of the time period. Thus, we witness the continual semantic reconquest/re-invasion of Mayas in Guatemalan textualities through their unrelenting silencing and erasure within the textual field, and the continued imposition of a Western episteme regarding national identity on native communities. As we saw in Chapter One, in the political realm, it is not until the various insurgencies of the 1960s-1980s that Maya visions of identity, indigeneity and the nation begin circulating more forcefully in broader socio-political discourses. As we will see in the next chapter, the same holds for dissenting Indigenous voices, and primarily that of Luis de Lión's, within the realm of Guatemalan textualities.

[1] By proto-nation, I refer to the imaginary of the Guatemalan collectivity in its pre-Independence state in which it was still subject to colonial rule.
[2] Landívar's text is primarily an effort to emphasize the grandeur of Guatemala and Mexico to a European audience, in particular in terms of the pastoral beauty of the landscape itself. His efforts were most likely focused on elevating his own status as a recently exiled Jesuit from the Americas in Europe and that of other American Criollos. His work emphasizes a 'hybrid' view of American national cultures, but 'hybrid' in terms of a mixture of Criollo and European cultures, failing to acknowledge American ethno-cultural hybridization as the result of European and Indigenous or African mestizaje. In terms of Landívar's treatment of indigenous populations, his work is generally marked by an absence of attention to Mayas. He does, however, use the term "raza" to signal both Mayas and animals, thus subalternizing and dehumanizing Indigenous subjectivities. He tends to refer to both Indigenous and African subjects as "conquered races", thus creating a racial hierarchy that places European and Criollo subjectivities above both Indigenous and Afro-descended people.
[3] See Anibal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Latin America" in *Nepantla: Views from the South* 1(3), 2000: 533-580.
[4] See the Introduction to this study for a more detailed analysis of the ego conquiro subjectivity which includes Nelson Maldonado-Torres's view of the ego conquiro. I will refer to this article in Chapter Three of this study.
[5] In this work, I use the term Invasion for what has also been called the Conquest of the Americas or later the Encounter. I chose this term given the tendency among Indigenous scholars to characterize the "Conquest" as a brutal Invasion.
[6] "Letrado" or "lettered", signaling those who were exposed to a Western education, were literate and able to access texts and the written word, which historically contributed to an understanding of this kind of subject as learned and wise, and therefore deserving of power positions, in contrast to those who did not undergo Western-style education, were illiterate or framed as Others vis-à-vis Euro-identified subjectivities.
[7] While this heroic Indigenous figure has played a central political role in Guatemalan society as a symbol of Guatemalan indigeneity, recently arguments taking into consideration other accounts of the Invasion signal that Fuentes y Guzmán in fact invented the Tekum Uman figure. See *La mascara de Tekum = Ri uk'oj Tekum* by Guillermo Paz Cárcamo (Cholsamaj 2006) for Paz Cárcamo's argument that Fuentes y Guzmán invented the figure of Tekum Uman. Paz Cárcamo reviews several colonial documents, including Bernal Diaz's *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* and Alvarado's letters. The author first demonstrates the contradictions surrounding this "historical" figure according to the various texts by comparing dates, battles, indigenous alliances, and even origins and formations of Maya surnames. Some evidence he mentions includes the fact that no Spanish or indigenous text even mention the name of the indigenous military leader who came head to head with Alvarado (73). He also identifies errors in Fuentes y Guzmán's text regarding Tekum Uman's lineage, for example, when the colonial "historian" claims that Tekum was the son of the K'iche' king K'iqab'. Paz Cárcamo sites this as impossible given K'iqab' died in 1475, 50 years before the arrival of the Spaniards (75). Ruud van Akkeren, however, signals that recent scholarship questioning the existence of Tekum Uman is based largely on non-indigenous texts. In a presentation titled "Tecum Uman: ¿personaje mítico o historico?" van Akkeren signals a detailed description of the encounter of Tekum Uman and Pedro de Alvarado in the *Titulo K'oyoi*, along with other documents, to indicate the historical existence of this figure.
[8] "Encantos" here could be translated as "spells", "hexes" or "charms". I used "spell" for its meaning as not only a word or phrase having magic power, but also because it can indicate a "state" or time period of "enchantment", as in being under a spell, which signals here the Mayas' ability to command these magical states onto their enemies as weapons. "Hexes" is similar; although it seems to hold a more malevolent connotation, while "spells" doesn't necessarily imply evil as much as magic. The term connoting "evil" could certainly be applied as well, as the intention of demonstrating the Mayas as magically evil becomes evident in this genealogy.
[9] In this work, although in certain texts it is spelled as "nahual", I follow Paz Cárcamo's spelling "Nawal"

[10] Additionally, this author explains that for some Mayas, the path of life is populated with Nawales, which can manifest as animals that take over one's being to warn them of failures; others indicate that everybody is born with an animal that is their spirit and which they encounter along their life paths; others indicate that the Nawal is a force of magic and perdition (75). He goes on that for others, Nawales are more than conjecture that imbues fear and desperation; in fact, the Nawal signifies power and interconnection (ibid). Finally, he notes that the Nawal can be interpreted as an invisible energy that one cannot see but that is in each event and form of life (ibid).

[11] On numerous other occasions, Fuentes y Guzmán marks the indigenous as in direct communication with the devil ("hubieron de consultar el demonio" 16); or of the devil working through their bodies ("introduciéndose en ella el demonio […]" 16).

[12] As we saw in Chapter One, this image of the "glorious Indian of the past" becomes a key part of discourse of Guatemalan identity throughout the 20th century, in particular in developmentalist policies encouraging tourism following 1945.

[13] Palacios sees these descriptions as Fuentes y Guzmán's assertion that the "negative attributes of the Indio in the chronicle are a product of a deterioration of the Indigenous race: defeated, their body and spirit are weak" (30- 31).

[14] See Ileana Rodríguez *Transatlantic Topographies: Islands, Highlands, Jungles*, chapter 5, "Banana Republics, 19th Century Geographers and Naturalists" for her discussion of Central American land as viewed as an exploitable commodity, in particular in her analysis of Honduras as "important for building a railroad, for investment" (137).

[15] According to Lovell and Lutz, Criollo chroniclers of the conquest of Guatemala describe that: "In 1526, the Kaqchikels (led by Cahí Ymox, whom the Spaniards referred to as Sinacán or Sinacam) and the K'iche's (led by a king called Sequechul) joined forces and rebelled […] the uprising took place when Pedro de Alvarado was off in Spain. During his absence, Pedro de Portocarrero serving as acting governor, and in response to native unrest, assembled an army that advanced toward Quetzaltenango to crush the rebels […] among those who surrendered were 'Sinacam and Sequechul' who were taken captive and who remained in prision 'for fifteen years'" (43 Lovell and Lutz *"Strange Lands and Different Peoples": Spaniards and Indians in Colonial Guatemala*). Lovell and Lutz, however, considering the *Memorial de Sololá* signal that the Kaqchikel revolt against the Spanish broke out in 1524, lasting until 1530, and did not involve the K'iche's because early on in the revolt, the K'iche's were allies of the Spanish fighting against the Kaqchikel (46-47). Further, Lovell and Lutz explain that the names of the Kaqchikel lords captured in 1535 were in fact Cahí Ymox (Sinacam) and Quiyavit Caok, but that Fuentes y Guzmán's history of the conquest misrepresents the second figure as Sequechul, a "señor de Utatlán" (72-73n31). Sequechul, on the otherhand, was the K'iche' son of Chigna Huiucelet who was executed for the K'iche' plot to burn the Spaniards at Utatlán in 1524 (Lovell. *Conquest and Survival* 60). In order to avenge this death, which Sequechul attributed in part to the Mam, Sequechul allied with the Spaniards and offered to guide them in an expedition against the Mam (61).

[16] This, of course, is an ahistorical rendering of events. See the previous note for an explanation by Lovell and Lutz.

[17] Alvarado's comportment during the invasion of Guatemala is rendered quite differently in historical studies, both contemporary and colonial. See W. George Lovell's *Conquest and Survival in Colonial Guatemala* (1985), in which he explains: "According to Bartolomé de las Casas, for example, five million Indian lives were lost in Guatemala alone because of the tyranny of the conquistador Pedro de Alvarado […] Las Casas singled out Alvarado as being among the most rapacious conquistadores of all" (Lovell 147).

[18] See Arturo Arias, "*La gringa* de Carlos Wyld Ospina y *La tempestad* de Flavio Herrera: la confluencia del criollismo con el ubiquismo" in *La identidad de la palabra: narrativa guatemalteca a la luz del siglo XX* (Guatemala: Artemis-Edinter, 1998) for the most thorough treatment of Herrera's *La tempestad* in relation to the novel's ideological lens for understanding, defining and addressing the so called "problem" of Guatemalan society (43).

[19] The parallels between Herrera's life and that of his main protagonist are clear when considering his personal trajectory. Herrera was born into a well-to-do, land-owning family from Guatemala City with fincas in the coffee producing region around San Antonio, Suchitepequez. After completing graduate studies abroad, he traveled extensively in Europe before returning home to administer his family's fincas, given that he came from a line of landowners with interests in coffee production (Liano 111; Arias 1998, 68). A social critic born into the liberal, coffee-producing ilk, Herrera would eventually become politically active in the Arevalo government after 1945, acting as Guatemalan Ambassador to Brazil and Argentina.
[20] It is important to note here Ubico's contradictory policies toward indigenous workers. While Ubico instituted vagrancy laws, he also abolished debt peonage in 1934, which allowed him "to claim that he had 'rescued [the Indians] from slavery'", according to Jeffrey L. Gould in his essay "Indigenista Dictators and the Origins of Democracy" (in *The Great Depression in Latin America*, Duke UP, 2014). As we will see later in this section, Herrera's treatment of the coffee-elite identifies them as skeptical of urban indigenista discourses. Later in this section, I argue that the novel reflects the social discourses regarding the Indigenous that emerge in the 1920s and 1930s with indigenismo throughout Latin America, and in particular within Guatemala, through the coffee elite's critical stance toward indigenista policies that aid Indigenous populations. The finca owners in the novel who are critical of indigenista discourse coming out of the capitol are perhaps critical of Ubico's contradictory policies directed toward Indigenous laborers. As Gould notes, Ubico's abolishment of debt peonage "may have benefited Ubico politically", despite the fact that the vagrancy laws "did encounter some resistance" (205).
[21] Arias notes that Herrera constructs the finquero's sexuality as insatiable due to the tropical climate in which he lives: the tropical climate encourages a voracious sexual appetite (Arias 1998, 61).
[22] See Alan James Mayne, *From Politics Past to Politics Future: An Integrated Analysis of Current and Emergent Paradigms* (Praeger Publishers, CT: 1999). Mayne notes that in the early nineteenth century, liberal discourses in the US and Europe clearly favored "laissez faire liberalism" and capitalism as a result of the Industrial Revolution. "This variant of liberalism" he notes, "developed into neo-classical liberalism, which argued that government should be as small as possible to provide full scope for the exercise of individual freedom. The more extreme neo-classical liberals advocated social Darwinism, whereby the 'survival of the fittest' should apply to social and economic life as well as to wildlife" (124).
[23] Translating the speech constructed in these lines attempts to elucidate Herrera's construction of Indigenous speech. He has included incorrect verb conjugations, mispronunciations and elision of syllables in certain words. The translation into English tries to capture these three problems with the construction of Indigenous speech without mimicking any particular English sociolect. In other words, the English translation is not based on a particular English sociolect.
[24] Little to no published research is available on the Castilian varieties of native Mayan speakers or on Castilian varieties produced when Maya and Spanish come into contact. While describing a specifically Guatemalan "Maya" Castilian is impossible through published research, when taking some studies together, one can approximate a few characteristics of a Guatemalan "Maya" Castilian. Two studies that indicate some characteristics of a Castilian variety influenced by Maya pronunciation are Karl Lentzner's dated chapter titled "Observaciones sobre el español de Guatemala" (in *El español de Mejico, los Estados Unidos y la América Central*. Ed. Henríquez Ureña, Pedro. Buenos Aires: U. de Buenos Aires, 1938. 227-234) and sections of John Lipski's 1994 study *Latin American Spanish* (New York: Longman, 1994). Lipski notes that what is normally considered "Guatemalan Spanish" refers to the Castilian of upper and middle class speakers from Guatemala City and the border regions with Honduras and El Salvador (264). However, Lipski believes that while there are only a few syntactic characteristics that are "purely Guatemalan", one that may have ties to the influence of Maya languages is the structure: indefinite article + possessive + noun (266). An example is *una mi amiga*, a structure found in other Central American countries as well but thought to be caused by language contact with Amerindian languages (266). This construction does not appear in Herrera's rendering of a Maya influenced Castilian variety. Another characteristic Lipski notes in reference to a Yucatec variety of Castilian and in other areas where Maya languages are prevalent is the answering of a question with the repetition of the verb without the use of direct objects or other identifying signs, an example being: --¿Tienes hambre? / --Tengo; --¿Son baratas

estas tus manzanías, vos?/ --Son. (285). As seen in the above dialogue, these constructions are not available in Herrera's rendering of "Maya" Castilian. An observation Lentzner makes is the absence of the /f/ sound in Maya languages, which is substituted or confused with /p/ or /j/ (231). This results in the pronunciation of words such as falta>palta, familia>pamilia, fue>jue, fuego>juego. According to Lentzner, if this is not a Maya influence, it could be an example of "a case of the Castilian /h/ preceding the Latin /f/ (the Iberians did not have /f/)" (231). The substitution of /p/ for /f/ does appear in Herrera's rendering above, but is the only example of this change. In terms of other aspects of Yucatec varieties of Castilian, perhaps the closest to a Guatemalan "Maya" Castilian, Lipski notes the following traits: the pronunciation of a final /n/ as [m]; the debilitation of the phoneme /y/; the normally resistant /s/ is aspirated or dropped at times; the tendency of stressed vowels to be extended, and preceding non-stressed vowels to be weakened; frequent aspiration of the /p/, /t/ y /k/ which could be caused by a confusion with the glottal, which is a phonetic trait of Maya languages; and the loss or debilitation of the intervocalic /y/ when in contact with /i/ or /e/ (Lipski 265; 281). Of all these possible traits of Maya varieties of Castilian, Herrera touches only on one – the substitution of /p/ for /f/. What he does do, however, is invent other traits that ridiculize Maya Castilian varieties, such as the repetition of grossly incorrect gender or pronoun errors (grande > grando; dame > damo; el mais > la mais) or of a kind of adjacent metathesis (sirvo > sibro).

[25] I translate "cibaque" as rush fiber. It is in fact a light tan colored plant fiber used as the casing for Guatemalan tamales.

[26] See Arias, "Racialized Subalternity in the Short Stories of Luis de Lión" in De Lión's *Puerta del cielo*, Editorial Cultural 2011.

[27] Arias asserts a similar observation, when he notes that: "For the most part, indigenous subjects are still configured as 'invisibilized' bodies coexisting and intermingling with modernity, non-subjects excluded from conventional discourse, deliria of the secret threads of coloniality, of what Boaventura De Sousa Santos has called a 'sociology of absences,' meaning by this an attitude whereby under the gist of rationality, ruling elites condemn those subjects that they label as 'the ignorant, the residual, the inferior, the local, and the nonproductive' to social forms of nonexistence." (Arias "The Ghosts of the Past, Human Dignity, and the Collective Need for Reparation." *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* Vol. 5 No. 2 (July 2010): 207-218.)

[28] See Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. California: Stanford UP, 1998.

[29] Reflecting the consensus of elite visions of the Maya in the nation during the late liberal period, Elena Casaús Arzú discusses a similar construction of the Indigenous in the work of author and self-proclaimed anthropologist Carlos Samayoa Chinchilla, a liberal contemporary of Herrera. She notes that for Samayoa Chinchilla, "el indio era un elemento decorativo, formaba parte de nuestro 'paisaje', pero no era un individuo ni mucho menos era un ciudadano, sino que era una sombra, un ser agónico, un sonámbulo, cuyas energías gastadas le impiden seguir viviendo, al que habría que ayudarle a morir o eliminarle, […] y si no se lograba eliminarle, que sería lo deseable, habría que fusionar su sangre con representantes de la raza blanca" ("Incógnita" 398). Also see Chapter One for the discussion of Severo Martínez Peláez's assertion of the indigenous as "un-authentic" and in "need of deindianization" (a discourse articulated in his *La patria del criollo* 272; 287-289).

[30] See Chapter One for this intellectual history.

[31] *Encomendero* in this sense relates to the beneficiary of a grant by the Spanish Crown to a colonist conferring the right to demand tribute and forced labor from the Indigenous inhabitants of an area

[32] Casaús Arzú also notes that hygienist and eugenic theories emerged in Latin America after World War I, influenced by "the triumph of national-socialism and the application of a eugenic legislation which contemplated extermination and sterilization of many jews" in Germany; this contributed to eugenics becoming "in vogue" in Latin America. She notes, "The Conferencias Panamericanas proposed this ideology, especially in Buenos Aires, in 1934, from which several eugenics societies and federations emerged fighting for the implementation of these kinds of measures in the whole region. Guatemala was no exception […] some in 1938 fought for sterilization of Indians as a final solution" (Casaus Arzú "Incógn"ta" 399–400).

[33] See Arias 1996, 565 for a discussion of the centrality of maize in the Maya cosmovision. In the Maya creation story, Mayas are made of a mixture of yellow and white corn, and thus it is a sacred substance.
[34] Prior to the late 1960s, Asturias's work and principally, *Hombres de maíz* were considered structurally deficient and lacking coherence given the inability of critics to make sense of Asturias's narratives. Since the late 1960s, in particular after 1968, criticism on Asturias's work began to become more prominent as new theories regarding art, discourse and ideology circulated following post-structuralist and post-colonial critical movements; these theoretical shifts provided critics the tools for understanding works as complex as that of Asturias. Martin notes that *Hombres de maíz*, in particular, is in itself a complex Latin American myth and a treatise on myth itself; "it is only when literary structuralism began to propagate new approaches for examining mythology and the linguistic dimension of literature that it became possible to decipher a novel as complex as *Hombres de maíz*" (Martin 509).
[35] The gods' three "failed" creations are first animals, which cannot speak and thank their creators; the people made of mud and then wood, both of which were still insufficient and deemed "failures".
[36]For a more detailed analysis of the symbolism of fire and water, sun and moon, see Prieto, René. "Tamizar tiempos antiguos: la originalidad estructural de Hombres de maíz" in *Hombres de maíz*. Critical Ed., coordinator, Gerald Martin. 2nd Ed. Nanterre, France: ALLCA XX, Université Paris X, Centre de recherches latino-américains, 1996. P. 617-644. See also Rene Prieto's *Miguel Ángel Asturias's Archeology of Return* (Cambridge UP, 1993) for a discussion of Jungian psychology in *Hombres de maíz* and other works by Asturias, in particular the applicability of Jungian archetypes in his novel. Prieto identifies the ambivalence of Jungian psychology as a tool for understanding Asturias's use of archetypes, as he notes in his work: "Jungian psychology is not a particularly suitable tool [because] Asturias was striving to create allegorical characters […] his grand design calls for protagonists that are as little individuated as possible and function as emblems of good and evil. The drive toward individuation, which plays a fundamental role in Jung's grand design, is clearly antithetical to Asturias's aim to portray a family that represents – in its wide-encompassing, collective subset – the hombres de maíz as a whole" (Prieto 1993; 115).
[37] See Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator". Trans Harry Zohn. *The Translation Studies Reader*, Ed. Lawrence Venuti, New York: Routledge, 2004: 15-25.
[38] Arias, among others, identify this technique as the precursor to magical realism ("Aspectos" 568).
[39] See Emilio del Valle Escalante's *Nacionalismo mayas y desafíos postcoloniales en Guatemala: Colonialidad, modernidad y políticas de la indentidad cultural* (FLACSO 2008). The entire quote in Spanish appears as: "En lugar de ser sujetos del presente o de la modernidad, vienen a representar lo 'primitivo', un paradigma de originalidad o antigüedad que define una especie de artefactos del pasado y de la tradición, figurando como un pueblo ancestral en un tierra también ancestral" (56).
[40] We can relate Asturias's view of present day Mayas, then, to that of Severo Martínez, when he explains that present Mayas are not, in fact, Mayas. See Chapter One for a discussion on this topic.
[41] These two theorists signal: "hemos observado que para que el grupo 'indio' recupere su identidad, se despierte, se vuelva actor de su historia, se debe reanudar el hilo del tiempo en el momento en el cual fue cortado. Solamente a través de este proceso puede ponerse en marcha la historia guatemalteca como totalidad" (31). This ambiguous statement is particularly interesting because it too dialogues with this notion of the Maya as asleep, or unconscious.
[42] In terms of land tenure, this may well be accurate, but we must note that usurpation of indigenous land was a gradual project with periods of land concentration occurring after the colonial period, such as in the liberal coffee revolution of the late 19th Century.
[43] Interestingly, we have Gaspar Ilóm, and therefore all the other Maya men in the text, not only reflecting an archetype in their parallel to the hero twins, but also in that they reflect the Tekum Uman figure as the great hero of the Mayas. In *Hombres de maíz*, Gaspar Ilóm is described as follows by the elders of his town: "El Gaspar es invencible…Cascara de mamey es el pellejo del Gaspar y oro su sangre – 'grande es su fuerza', 'grande es su danza' – y sus dientes, piedra pómez si se ríe y piedra de rayo si muerde o los rechina, son su corazón en la boca" (Asturias 10). His greatness parallels that of the hero twins and the Maya warrior of the Invasion.

[44] Other characters are consistently referred to by their nawal animal, and in the case of the Goyo Yic, the narrator often replaces his name with, simply, "tacuatzin", signaling no difference between Goyo Yic and his nawal. See Asturias page 97 for a series of seamless transitions between the names of Maya characters and their nawals.
[45] An "other" interpretation would view "animalization" in a holistic, cosmogonic understanding of the full equality of all subjectivities, be them human, animals, plants or natural beings such as mountains, rivers or lakes.
[46] See note 11 in this chapter.
[47] Although neither of these critics signal a tangible sociolect, I would argue that Asturias, apart from certain lexical examples that could be considered more broadly "Guatemalan", nonetheless manipulates certain consonant and vowel sounds in order to signal a more pronounced "Maya" aspect of Spanish, or at least a non-standard variety, which is to stand in opposition to linguistically-marked Ladino characters. See /d/>/g/ as in "pudre">"pugre"; and /e/>/i/ as in "encuentra" > "incuentra" in the next in-text citation of this study.
[48] Translations of *Hombres de maíz* come from Gerald Martin's 1993 English translation of the text. U of Pittsburgh P: Pittsburgh, 1993.
[49] See pages 68-85 of *Hombres de maíz* in Gerald Martin's 2nd edition, critical version of the text. ALLCA: Paris, 1996.
[50] René Prieto notes in his essay "Tamizar tiempos antiguos: la originalidad estructural de Hombres de maíz" that in the *Popol Wuj*: "La conjunción de estos dos elementos aparentemente destructivos –fuego y agua – produce una creación, pues al momento se aclara que en el Popol Vuh la regeneración y el crecimiento son el resultado de una síntesis de contrarios" (Prieto 626). Prieto also explains that "el fuego y el agua […] trabajan junto para que la semilla pueda romper la superficie de la tierra y así completar el ciclo generador" (626).
[51] Additionally, there is some indication that Xbalanke's name itself begins with the suffix in Maya signaling a feminine nature, although this is up for debate, and that this twin actually switches gender to become the mythical moon goddess. (See *Gods, Goddesses, and Mythology*, Ed. C. Scott Littleton, New York: Cavendish, 2005, and Susan D. Gillespie's "Gendering the Hero Twins in the *Popol Vuh*" in *Género y Arqueologia en Mesoamérica: Homenaje a Rosemary A. Joyce,* Mexico: CEAM, 2013).
[52] In 1956, Monteforte Toledo is driven from Guatemala to Honduras, and would eventually land in Mexico (Liano 1997, 125). Due to his politics, his books and those of his contemporaries were "tacitly prohibited, except in University classrooms" after the overthrow of Arbenz, which made it difficult to acquire copies of his works until after 1975 (Liano 1997 126; 127). Hence, there is a notable lack of criticism of his work, in particular compared to that of Asturias, with the majority of the criticism that does exist focusing on his 1948 novel, *Entre la piedra y la cruz*.
[53] A curandero is a native healer or shaman.
[54] See Arias, Arturo. "Changing Indian Identity: Guatemala's Violent Transition to Modernity" in Smith, Carol A., *Guatemalan Indians and the State: 1540 to 1988*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1990. Print.
[55] In this sense, the more outwardly racist views of Fuentes y Guzmán and Herrera, for example, are less apparent in Monteforte Toledo's discourse because of the shift toward culture and away from skin color. However, as scholar Marisol de la Cadena argues in the case of Peruvian indigenismo, the focus in social debates on cultural traits and the power of education to change them in fact silences denunciations of racism, thereby rendering racism hegemonic "and most effective when it is 'mute'" (9).

Chapter Three: Luis de Lión's Narrative as Decolonial "Grito/Llanto"

In both the political discourses on Guatemalan national identity and indigeneity studied in Chapter One, and the Criollo/Ladino textualities discussed in Chapter Two, we discover a continual semantic imaginary of reconquest/reinvasion of Mayas in Guatemala through their erasure and framing via Criollo/Ladino-crafted social myths and discursive "truths". However, with the emergence of the various insurgencies of the 1960s-1980s, Maya visions of identity, indigeneity and the nation begin circulating more forcefully in broader socio-political discourses, mostly, but not solely, from within a Marxist perspective, the hegemonic ideology in those times.[1] These visions articulate critiques of the Criollo/Ladino nation, of indigenismo, ladinization, and the violence faced by indigenous communities from the colonial period on. One of these voices of protest is that of Luis de Lión. In the present chapter, I argue that de Lión's narrative functions as a decolonial "grito/llanto" by problematizing Criollo / Ladino knowledge/power of the Guatemalan nation and by complicating discursivities that place Mayas in an inferiorized object position vis-à-vis the ego conquiro, Ladino subject position. I initially consider three of de Lión's short stories: "The Inventor", "Children of the Father" and "The Ape" in the first half of the chapter to demonstrate de Lión's interweaving of emancipatory discourses circulating during the time in which he wrote, and his upending of various social myths and discursive "truths" of indigeneity penned in Ladino policy and literature. The second half of the chapter provides a deeper analysis of de Lión's 1972

novel *Time Commences in Xibalba*, to analyze how his decolonial "grito/llanto" enunciates not only a condemnation of imperialistic biopolitics and coloniality, but also, a multifaceted emancipatory project that draws from, and complicates, imaginaries of revolution and identity within the context of the Guatemalan armed conflict.

I organize this chapter with a brief review of the concepts of coloniality, biopolitics, and the decolonial "grito/llanto". The latter of these builds on Enrique Dussel's theorization of the ego conquiro subjectivity considered in the previous chapter, and treated in more detail in the Introduction to this study. I then turn to a selection of de Lión's narrative work to analyze the ways in which he articulates a decolonizing critique that draws on themes tied to the various revolutionary movements reviewed in the first chapter of this project. These include, primarily, a clasista and culturalista approach to revolution within the context of the Guatemalan armed conflict. However, as we will see, de Lión's vision of a revolutionary, emancipatory project goes beyond these positions by incorporating critiques of spiritual and gender coloniality, both of which I will discuss below. In this chapter, we will discover the ways in which de Lión's narrative is both a political and epistemic decolonial project. Through this analysis, we find that de Lión's work plays with and problematizes the many social myths and discursive "truths" of indigeneity and Guatemalan identity rooted in the so-called "Indian problem" and the "Ladino-Indigenous" binary. In effect, one of his discursive strategies is to reify an oppositional vision of Guatemalan socio-political conflict in order to complicate it from a counter-discursive, subaltern positionality. Luis de Lión thus destabilizes the

essentializing foundation on which a binaristic ethno-cultural imaginary of Guatemalan identity is built.

Coloniality, Biopolitics and the Decolonial "Grito/Llanto"

As discussed in the Introduction to this study, Nelson Maldonado-Torres explains coloniality as the legacy of colonialism in Latin American societies:

> Coloniality refers to a pattern of power that emerged as a result of modern colonialism, but that instead of being limited to a formal relationship of power between two peoples or nations, refers instead to the way in which labor, knowledge, authority and intersubjective relationships are articulated through the global capitalist market and the idea of race. Therefore, although colonialism is like coloniality, coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in learning manuals, in the criteria for solid academic work, in culture, common sense and in the self-image of peoples, in subjects' aspirations, and in many other aspects of our modern experience ("Colonialidad" 131).
>
> (La colonialidad se refiere a un patrón de poder que emergió como resultado del colonialismo moderno, pero que en vez de estar limitado a una relación formal de poder entre dos pueblos o naciones, más bien se refiere a la forma como el trabajo, el conocimiento, la autoridad y las relaciones intersubjetivas se articulan entre sí, a través del mercado

> capitalista mundial y la idea de raza. Así pues, aunque el colonialismo se parece a la colonialidad, la colonialidad sobrevive al colonialismo. La misma se mantiene viva en manuales de aprendizaje, en el criterio para el buen trabajo académico, en la cultura, el sentido común, en la auto-imagen de los pueblos, en las aspiraciones de los sujetos, y en tantos otros aspectos de nuestra experiencia moderna) (131).

According to Maldonado-Torres, coloniality is latent in the intersubjective relationships that inferiorize and discriminate against people of color based on race in the context of globalized capitalism. He indicates that the ways in which Indigenous populations are inferiorized is varied and multiple. Inferiorization is found, for example, in the undervaluing or rejection of Indigenous epistemology, in social and political exclusion, and in the vision of the subaltern as inferior, a vision he notes is "cemented in the imaginary, in common sense and in social relations" ("cimentada en el imaginario, el sentido común y las relaciones sociales") in Latin America (133).

This last instance of coloniality he coins as that of being, and it is manifest in a "diversity of forms of dehumanization based on the idea of race, and the creative circulation of racial concepts among distinct populations" ("diversidad de formas de deshumanización basadas en la idea de raza, y a la circulación creativa de conceptos raciales entre miembros de distintas poblaciones") (133). The diversity of dehumanizing forms is linked, in turn, to the "imperial attitude" ("actitud imperial") that defines racialized populations as "perpetual servants or slaves" ("perpetuos sirvientes o esclavos"), whose bodies "come to form part of an economy of sexual abuse, exploitation

and control" ("vienen a formar parte de una economía de abuso sexual, explotación y control") (139). In this sense, Michel Foucault's reflections are useful for considering how this racializing gaze toward Indigenous people becomes translated into norms that regulate the body.

In his essay "Right of Death and Power over Life", Foucault signals the modern development of biopolitics, a term reflecting the multiple mechanisms that exercise control over the bodies and lives of subjects. Foucault describes biopolitics in part as the techniques of supervision and discipline of bodies imagined as machines that can be optimized in their utility and docility, and additionally, in the control of biological processes (139). The ways in which bodies are subjugated become norms or "laws" disciplining modern bodies either explicitly or implicitly.

As such, we can imagine coloniality as a matrix of power inferiorizing the Indigenous other, as well as the other's unconscious assimilation or internalization of the discrimination to which he or she is subjected. Biopolitics are social norms advanced by multiple social actors and manifest in culture and in the self-image and aspirations of peoples. If norms are mechanisms of control, we can think of a biopolitics of coloniality, which would be the totality of controlling norms maintaining indigenous bodies in an inferior position vis-a-vis the dominant race/culture. As we saw in the last chapter, these norms are rooted in discourse and practices marking Indigenous subjects as dispensable within the logic of the ego conquiro subjectivity (Maldonado-Torres "Colonialidad" 135). The Criollo and Ladino discourses reviewed prior articulate a biopolitics of coloniality by naming Indigenous populations according to stereotypes and social myths: the "glorious

Indian of the Past", the "miserable Indian of the present"; Mayas as "shamanistic" and "demonic"; Maya women as "sexual servants"; the essentializing view of Mayas as part of the "indiada", etc.

However, Maldonado-Torres finds within the framework of coloniality the possibility for subjugated populations to resist, contest and shift these disciplining discourses. Resistive discourse, counter-discourse, resides in the subaltern's "grito/llanto", which is an "interjection" ("interjección"), a "calling of attention to one's own existence" ("llamada de atencion a la propia existencia de uno") (150). Further, the grito/llanto "points to the existential condition" ("apunta a la condición existencial") of the marginalized and draws attention to the subaltern's "negation" ("negación") within the order of coloniality. In effect, the grito/llanto is a decolonial gesture, one that contends the ego conquiro's assumption of power, resists it and names it, in an effort to resignify the subaltern experience and subjectivity.[2] Through the framework of the decolonial "grito/llanto", we can understand Luis de Lión's literary project as an emancipatory project for Maya subjects in the nation. It articulates various decolonial "gritos/llantos" naming the power/knowledge of the ego conquiro subjectivity in its multiple forms and manifestations.

Re-thinking Capitalist Modernity, Re-writing History in "The Inventor"

In Chapter One, we saw that the state articulated a kind of ego conquiro subjectivity as the tutelary presence promoting Maya assimilation, integration and ladinization as part of the Ladino desire to create a "modern, capitalist nation", an

ideology of nation founded in the drive of capitalist modernity. One of the "darker sides" of capitalist modernity – the 1954 coup d'état – set in motion the formulation of a clasista revolutionary movement ascribing to a Marxist interpretation of Guatemala's primary national challenge. In what follows, I want to first turn to de Lión's story, "The Inventor" ("El inventor") to see how he incorporates (and complicates) a clasista revolutionary critique of capitalist modernity within a culturalista counter-discursive national history reimagining the "Encounter" between Mayas and Spaniards. In this discussion, I will also trace how de Lión problematizes social myths and discursive "truths" of Mayas as inhibiting the progress of the modern capitalist nation, and as depoliticized "barelife" subjectivities.

"The Inventor" is set in a Kaqchikel town based on San Juan del Obispo, de Lión's place of birth. San Juan del Obispo is a town adjacent to Antigua, where Guatemala's first bishop, Francisco Marroquín, established his palace and encomienda in the 16th century, relying on forced Kaqchikel labor to work his land (Sandoval n.pag.). In the story, the Bishop is a spectral, yet powerful presence, mentioned only as "the owner of the encomienda, the bishop" ("el dueño de la encomienda, el obispo") (de Lión 27). The Bishop as encomendero is associated with a values system rooted in what theologian John Cobb argues is a Western "economism" – a capitalist desire prioritizing the accumulation of economic wealth - that functions in direct opposition to traditional Christian doctrine, thus rendering the Bishop's dual role as owner and authority of the Catholic Church contradictory. The Bishop/encomendero's "economism" when contextualized by 1970s liberation theology in Guatemala is synonymous with a brand of

capitalism that favors the wealthy at the expense of the poor; a critique progressively made by both the revolutionary left and Catholic activist priests and base communities in Guatemala from 1965-1985 (Konefal 34). De Lión aesthetically frames this critique with his portrayal of the Bishop to show the continuity, since the colonial period, of the oppressive nature of agents of capitalist economism.

For de Lión, the figure of "economism" differs from other figures seen in the Criollo and Ladino literature studied in Chapter Two. De Lión's ego conquiro subjectivity here functions as a kind of hyper-ego conquiro subjectivity who is particularly insidious given that he uses his religious authority to enrich himself at the expense of Mayas. On the one hand, the Bishop can be viewed as a version of the Criollo King-God seen in Fuentes y Guzmán's *Recordacion florida*, who saves the proto-nation from Maya "encantos y naguales" by bringing them Catholicism. But on the other hand, this figure is combined with the ego conquiro finca-owning coffee producer who, in Herrera's *La tempestad*, is the glory of the patria, or the Ladino cultivator in Asturias, who exploits Mayas for his own enrichment – both ego conquiro subjectivities epistemologically rooted in the logic of capitalist modernity, and linked to de Lión's Bishop through their ties to large fincas and free or cheap Indigenous labor.

Opposite the Bishop, the town is populated with Mayas, who are simply referred to as various "juans". The narrator focuses, however, on Juan Tata, a statue of Christ accompanied by a little goat that the Bishop brought from Spain and placed in his cathedral (25). The narrator notes that Juan Tata came to town poor, dressed in rags, and accompanied only by his goat (ibid). When he arrives, he is bothered by the rich

adornments of the church, but he finds happiness when the first generation of inhabitants of the town surrounded and accompanied him (26). A humble Christ, Juan Tata feels joy because "being poor himself, he was around other poor people" ("siendo pobre estaba entre pobres") (26).

Juxtaposing the Bishop, Juan Tata symbolizes Catholic values rooted humility, compassion for the poor, and solidarity with the disenfranchised. For his desire to accompany the poor in town, Juan Tata embodies 1960s-1970s liberation theologians' pastoral mission for the poor. This mission found its justification in the "privileged place of the poor", which was a special status for the underprivileged based on their powerlessness, poverty, and systemic exclusion within the context of oppressive Latin American military regimes (Kammer 2009). Juan Tata as the humble Christ figure corresponds, then, to both a traditional interpretation of the teachings of Christ based in taking care of the community, and to a tenet of the 1970s liberation theology pastoral mission; that is, to accompany the poor as they grapple with the consequences of unjust oppression (ibid).

However, the Maya townspeople eventually forget about Juan Tata. As he is forgotten, Juan Tata's prior humanized form becomes "harder", and he slowly turns into a stiff wooden statue who is unable to shed tears and "the sadness in his heart" ("la tristeza de su corazón" (26). In this sense, he turns into a symbol of forgotten people, or even failed people, akin to the wooden men creation in the *Popol Wuj*. As the townspeople forget him, he becomes non-human. His literal objectification parallels the racialized objectification of the Maya juans, thus symbolizing a discursive link between

the Christ figure and the Indigenous as subjectivities emptied of meaning within the Bishop's modern capitalist worldview. Worse yet, when Juan Tata's little goat dies, the Bishop forces the townspeople to pool their money and purchase him a replacement golden goat. But, when they place the goat in his hand, Juan Tata feels like it burns: "he wanted to throw it but he couldn't. It felt like a sin" in his hand ("deseaba tirarlo pero no podia. Lo sentía como un pecado") (27). De Lión therefore clarifies that for this figure, the symbol of money is linked to a sin against God. But this "sin" becomes more than the will of the Bishop. As the townspeople abandon Juan Tata in the Church, de Lión signals their mediation by the Bishop's value system, and the impossibility for the now objectified Christ figure to save the people from sin/capitalism.

The narrator also notes that the townspeople over generations have been colonized by the Bishop's value system, resulting in the stratification of the population into those who accumulate and those who do not. He indicates that "from the generations of those poor first juans, now there were [those who had] adobe houses instead of shacks, who bought things made out of plastic instead of clay, and watches, radios, and even one or the other who bought a tv" (de unas generaciones de pobres que habían sido los primeros juanes, los de hoy […] tenían casas de adobes en lugar de ranchos, compraban cosas de plástico en lugar de las de barro y relojes, radios y, alguno, hasta televisor") (28). He continues describing the progressive mediation of the townspeople by a capitalist value system, which replaces former ways of life that are directly tied to ethnic traditions: "the women sometimes had children of different colors and everybody wore factory made clothes, shoes and regular hats" ("mujeres a veces tenían hijos de de otros

colores y todos usaban ropa de fábrica, zapatos y regulares sombreros") (28). Then the narrator moves from the third person to the first person, as he juxtaposes these people with himself when he says, "except for me, who continued being like one of the first [generation], with my woven shirt and pants, with my caites (sandals), and my petate hat" ("menos yo, que seguía siendo todavía como uno de los primeros, con mi camisa y mi calzoncillo de manta, con mis caites, con mi sombrero de petate") (28). Here we find out that this narrator is another "juan" in town, particularized as "juan without history". He differentiates his traditional dress with that of the younger generation; however he also notes a difference in the values system of this younger generation, which has replaced charity with greed. He observes: "of those who had originally been able to buy Juan Tata a golden goat, now all of them wanted to steal it, they had fought over it and they no longer trusted each other, they watched each other, and you could see their ambitions written on their foreheads" ("de unos cuantos que habían sido capaces de juntar dinero para comprarle un chivo de oro a Juan Tata, ahora todos se lo querían quitar, habían tenido pleitos por eso y se desconfiaban, se vigilaban, a cada uno se les marcaba la ambición en la frente") (28). Thus, the consequence of capitalist mediation via the Bishop's value system is portrayed as infecting the Maya population with greed, capitalist fetishism and mistrust of one another. The consequence for this Maya town is another "death of a Guatemalan village", however, it ironically upends Ladino myths that Mayas prohibit the "progress" of the modern, capitalist nation, since all of the Mayas in the town, except for juan without history, literally buy into the capitalist end of material accumulation. What de Lión signals in this text however, is that capitalist "progress" of

accumulation is also accompanied by greed, mistrust, ambition and the loss of non-Western traditions. Therefore, de Lión complicates the clasista discourse envisioning Mayas as mere victims of capitalist modernity at the hands of a Ladino elite, given that Mayas too are seen here as internalizing capitalism's negative values system. De Lión suggests instead that capitalist modernity is a mediating force sidelining a pre-Western, Indigenous values system. The decolonial "grito/llanto" counteracting this mediation, however, manifests in juan without history.

The narrator juan without history stands as a figure who is actually "backwards" within this darker logic of capitalist modernity. However, he is "backwards" in this logic only after a process of coming to consciousness regarding capitalist mediation. He identifies himself as a member of the latest generation of Indigenous juans to be born. He describes himself as "juan without a capital letter, juan without a last name, juan without a nickname" ("juan sin mayuscula, juan sin apellido, juan sin apodo"): juan without history (27). Although he wears his traditional dress, the narrator reveals that he has no history because he cannot recall it. His history is a black hole in his memory, "because who knows how I was born, from which mother, from which father […] the only thing I remember is that I walked the streets of the town and they simply called me juan" ("porque a saber cómo nací, de qué madre, de qué padre […] lo único que recuerdo es que caminaba por las calles del pueblo y que simplemente me decían juan") (27). Here we have a characterization of the Indigenous narrator that recalls certain Ladino characterizations of Mayas. The "miserable Indian of the present" in Fuentes y Guzmán, or the "mancha" or trace of Indigenous subjectivity articulated in Herrera, both recall

Agamben's barelife subjectivity: that subjectivity reduced to a naked, depoliticized state without official status or rights. De Lión's juan without history reflects this figure, tying his barelife subjectivity to the erasure of Maya history and memory. By naming the erasure of Mayanity in his subjectivity, juan without history signals the epistemological hierarchy established in the juxtaposition of the Bishop and the Indigenous, such that Maya epistemology is erased and/or colonized by the capitalist/religious force of the symbolic figure of the Bishop. The erasure of a Maya episteme converts him into what Abdul JanMohamed calls a "death-bound subject". Juan without history explains that he lives:

> Breathing because I had to live, and living because I had to die, yes, dyingliving, livingdying, dieliving, livedying; but never talking, never thinking, never dreaming because I didn't have the right to. I was juan without history… (27).
>
> (Respirando porque tenía que vivir, viviendo porque tenía que morir, si, muriendoviviendo, viviendomuriendo, muroviviendo, vivomuriendo; pero nunca hablando, nunca pensando, nunca soñando porque a todo esto yo no tenía derecho. Era juan sin historia…) (27).

This death-bound subjectivity is one that within the order of coloniality internalizes the constant threat of physical, verbal, and emotional violence: a subject exposed to the threat of death consistently from infancy on; who, by living with the threat of death, embodies a psychological death while physically alive. De Lión's death-bound subject does not

outwardly clarify the death he continually faces, but his last name signals that it is due to the erasure of cultural memory and history. This figure in de Lión's story is an iteration of the Criollo / Ladino discourse of the "miserable Indian of the present". Yet, de Lión employs it to mark coloniality as part of the larger phenomenon of the propagation of Western, capitalist modernity. Nonetheless, the narrator/protagonist breaks with the present Mayas' "misery" by indicating the potential for an emancipatory change for this subject. Juan without history informs the reader that he existed "dyingliving, livingdying" until:

> One crystal clear afternoon, standing in the empty plaza, […] I decided to think and, then, I realized […] I was man with nothing in heaven or earth […] nonetheless I also realized I wasn't alone, that there was another like me in the town, or like me in terms of his abandonment, but not in terms of his house (27-28).
>
> (Un mediodía de vidrio, parado en la plazuela […] decidí pensar y, entonces, me di cuento de que ya era […] un hombre sin nada nada en medio del cielo y la tierra […] sin embargo me di cuenta que no estaba solo, que había en el pueblo otro como yo, o casi como yo por su desamparo, aunque no por su casa) (27-28).

De Lión's announces an emancipation, one in which the character becomes "concientizado" in the way Guzmán Böckler and J.L-Herbert describe in 1970, noting his subscribed lot in life, but realizing he is not alone in it. Remembering Juan Tata in the

church, and intuiting that they share the experience of objectification and mediation, juan without history goes to the church and sees Juan Tata's sadness and the irony of his history (28). Juan without history then determines to assuage this sadness by going into the forest, and carving a little goat out of wood to replace the "sinful" golden goat causing Juan Tata's suffering. This process for juan without history, however, is more than a simple gesture of kindness. He describes it as a purifying artistic act, an almost spiritual experience:

> I went into the forest, looked for a guachipilín tree, I chopped it town, I cut it in half […], I cut off the white wood and I left only its heart, its beautiful yellow heart, and with glass chards of a bottle, I started scraping it, to give it the form I wanted, to polish it, to varnish it with my sweat … For several days and several nights I didn't eat I didn't sleep I didn't rest and I didn't go down to town (28-29)
>
> (Me metí en el bosque, busque un palo de guachipilín, lo boté, lo partí, […] le quité la parte de madera blanca y le dejé solo el corazón, su hermoso corazón amarillo, y con los chayes de una botella, me puse a rasparlo, a darle la forma que yo quería, a lustrarlo, a barnizarlo con mi sudor…Durante varios días y varias noches no comí ni dormí ni descansé ni bajé al pueblo) (28-29).

After this spiritual retreat to create the figurine, juan without history approaches Juan Tata at the altar, embraces him, and places the goat in Juan Tata's hand. Juan without

history gives Juan Tata the opposite of what the Bishop and the townspeople give him: love and compassion symbolized in a figure crafted from the wood's "beautiful yellow heart", instead of money as symbolized in the golden goat. Juan without history ends the story realizing, "we were brothers": "Juan Tata once again was happy, like when he had his real goat…Now, I am no long simply juan" ("Juan Tata ha vuelto a ser feliz como cuando tenía el de carne…Ahora, yo ya no soy juan simplemente") (29). In this way, juan without history's process of coming to conciousnes about his marginalization, and that of Juan Tata as well, occurs after he begins to think, and then removes himself physically from the environment of the mediated town and retreats into the forest. His territorial move is thus a biopolitical move, as he transports himself into a physical and mental space that is beyond the limits of the colonized town. In essence, his epistemic and physical transformation from a death-bound subject to an agent occurs because he resists the normalizing biopolitics that maintain him as a depoliticized bare-life subjectivity that simply "walks around" the town, not thinking.

Two additional readings emerge here. On the one hand, we can consider the "brothers" in this story as an allusion to the Hero Twins of the *Popol Wuj* who prepare the world for the creation of humanity only after several failures of creation take place. If Juan Tata and juan without history are "reborn" to their independent values systems through juan without history's coming to consciousness regarding capitalist mediation and his fabrication of the wooden goat, it is as if the slate is cleared for a new time to emerge in which this pair has begun anew. Considering the doubles in this light suggests that those mediated by capitalist discourses are examples of a failed creation, one which

has its roots in the Invasion and colonization of America, which set the stage for the development of a nation state mediated by a polarizing and corrupt values system.

On the other hand, juan without history's quasi-spiritual fabrication of the goat represents his transformation into an agent in his own history, as he is "no longer simply juan", but a subject who sees his own marginalization and that of Juan Tata before the mediating force of capitalist modernity. Symbolically, juan without history's resistance to capitalist discourses of wealth accumulation and greed culminates in his fabrication of the wooden goat to replace the golden goat. This act serves as a symbolic return to a pre-Western, pre-capitalist Maya values system for juan without history because his act of generosity toward Juan Tata diametrically opposes the logic of greed that has mediated the rest of the Mayas in town. But, this act presents a symbolic restaging of the "Encounter" between Mayas and Spaniards in the interaction between juan without history and Juan Tata. By giving Juan Tata a wooden goat, juan without history in effect recognizes Juan Tata's pre-Capitalist mode of Catholicism, since he returns to him his "lamb of God" fabricated from wood, thus removing the symbolic force of capitalist mediation (gold), which is "sin", from Juan Tata's hand. In this sense, the rhetoric of Catholicism as "saving Mayas from their idolatrous savagery" is reversed, as juan without history returns to Juan Tata a symbol of his core values system – one that is like juan without history's values system in that it is not capitalist. Juan without history thus "saves" Juan Tata from the mediation of capitalist modernity.

In this sense, we must remember the title of the story. The "inventor" is juan without history himself as inventor of counter-discourse. In the middle of the story, when

juan without history begins to frequent the church and contemplate Juan Tata's sadness, he signals, "then, I started dreaming up, inventing this story that I am telling you, me, juan without words" ("entonces, me puse a soñar, a inventor esta historia que les estoy contando , yo, juan sin palabra") (28). His is a counter-story because it centers a Maya narrative voice as the discursive authority, one that is aligned with non-Western values despite living in the modern, capitalist world. Through inventing, through creativity and story-telling, the Maya protagonist counters the erasure of Maya history and subjectivity by creating a new story, one in which a Maya coming to consciousness centers an Indigenous values system as that which saves the marginalized Catholic Christ from capitalist mediation. By locating this agency in the Maya juan, it is the Western Christ figure who, in the end, is saved by the Maya protagonist. This is how de Lión's story becomes a decolonial re-imagining of the "Encounter" narrative, one that merges the clasista critique of Western capitalism with the culturalista consciousness of Maya epistemology.

Merging Discourses in "Children of the Father"

To continue our analysis of de Lión's decolonial "grito/llanto", I want to turn to his short story titled "Children of the father" ("Los hijos del padre"). In this story, we become privy to de Lión's imagining of disenfranchisement and emancipation, couched in a dual-voiced clasista and culturalista discourse, with which he simultaneously upends several key discursive "truths" of indigeneity written into the Ladino canon.

In “Children of the Father” an Indigenous narrator explains that during Holy Week in the colonial capital of Antigua two wooden Christ statues are paraded in processions: one for Mayas and the other for Ladinos, but the narrator notes, nonetheless, that the Christs are “brothers” (“hermanos”), “they are children of the same Father” (“son hijos del mismo Padre”) (30). However, the brothers serve and reflect these different ethno-cultural groups. The narrator notes that the Christ from the city “makes miracles for the Ladinos…And the one from the village does little jobs for us, the mass of Indians, the poor of the towns” (“el que hace los milagros a los Ladinos…Y el de la aldea es el que nos hace los trabajitos a nosotros, la indiada, la pobrería de los pueblos”) (30). While the urban Christ answers the lofty requests of the Ladinos, the Maya Christ tends to simpler, banal requests – “little jobs” (“trabajitos”). The Maya Christ is not from the city, but rather from a village located “beyond the houses. Behind the Cerro de la Cruz. In a village stuck in a hole that those blue mountains form” (“más allá de la orilla de las casas. Atrás del Cerro de la Cruz. En una aldea metida en un hoyo que forman aquellas montañas azules”) (30).

Two juxtapositions emerge here immediately in the story. The first is class-based. As Arias notes, the processions on which this story is based are those of the Christ’s School Church with its upper-class Ladino parishioners from Guatemala City and Antigua, and the church of San Felipe, a town on the outskirts of Antigua, where the penitents are primarily Indigenous, and poor (Arias “Subalternidad” 13). Further, the requests the penitents make to their God point to the class differential because the prayers of each group are fundamentally different: great miracles versus banal appeals, signaling

a difference in the material desires, expectations and possibilities of each group. The term "pobrería" to describe the indigenous congregation emphasizes the differential between the "rich" and "poor" congregations. However, we cannot forget that in this one line, de Lión links the "mass of Indians" ("indiada") and the "poor of the villages" ("pobrería de los pueblos"), thus signaling the double disenfranchisement of the Maya group in comparison to the Ladinos. The narrator includes himself in the "indiada", ironically employing the term used in Ladino canonical texts to describe the "mass of Indians". He then indicates that he, along with "my mom, my dad and my dog" ("mi nana, mi tata y mi chucho") descend the mountains to "Antigua to accompany ours for a while' ("La Antigua para acompañar un rato al nuestro"), indicating that he and his family go to Antigua to watch the Maya procession and Christ, which he identifies as "ours" (30). The narrator is thus simultaneously an individual (the possessive pronoun "my" before his family members particularizes his relationships as unique to his experience), and part of a larger group (the 'indiada' and the 'pobrería'). The ironic use of "indiada" in this instance resists Ladino discourses of Mayas as a mass of non-individuals, given the narrator's individualization in the same line. Further, de Lión disrupts the image of the "indiada" as a mass by centering a distinct indigenous voice as the narrative authority, inviting the reader to accept the narrator's individual identity and perspective, as well as his association with a larger ethno-cultural group.

Also, in this initial juxtaposition between the groups, we have a geographical division between the two binaristic identitarian poles in Guatemala, which as we saw in the last chapter, is common in Ladino literature. Geographically in the story, the Ladino

is linked to the city, and the Maya to the not too distant countryside; the village just out of sight, beyond the houses and foothills, outside of the colonial capital.[3]

In de Lión's text, however, the geographical distance between the two groups is articulated differently than in the previously studied Ladino texts. Geographic Mayanity in "Children of the Father" is near, but still physically marginalized from the urban space. It is just out of sight, but close enough to the urban space of Ladino power that the Maya procession and protagonist can enter it. The protagonist and his family transgress the geographical and ethno-cultural division between the city and the village by, ironically, "descending" into it, from the mountains, to join the other members of his community. In this way, de Lión plays with space in his narrative to upend the social myth and complicate the binary that relegates Ladinos to the city and Mayas to the countryside. He does so by signaling mobile Mayas who traverse these spaces, in this story, with ease.[4] Further, the irony of Mayas having to "descend" into the Ladino space betrays the narrator's tongue-in-cheek uprooting of the myth of "superior" Ladino and "inferior" Maya cultures. De Lión is thus playing with altitude – a high altitude signaling indigeneity and a low altitude signaling Ladinity –as a sarcastic, and counter-discursive, version of the Ladino city / Maya countryside binary. By adding this other spatial dimension, he reveals both the simplicity of the Ladino geographical binary and suggests its erroneous link to the spatial construct of Ladino superiority and Indigenous inferiority.

Later, the narrator explains that the Maya procession has to pass "in front of the Merced church" ("enfrente de la iglesia de la Merced") "at six thirty in the evening" ("a las seis y media de la tarde"), the location where the narrator happens to settle in to watch

the events (30). This passage culminates in another reference to the Maya group's poverty: "Those who carried him were almost solely caitudos" ("Casi solo caitudos eran los que lo traían") (31). "Caitudos" refers to those wearing "caites" or rough sandals, a trope that denotes indigeneity because Ladinos do not wear caites. Caites also allude to poverty, since they are cheaply purchased or home-made. In this sense, "caitudos" is both a signifier of racialization and of poverty, and "caites" becomes a metonym for Mayas that synthesizes clasista and culturalista discourses identifying racialization and poverty into one succinct, ordinary image. Despite their poverty and racialization, the Maya procession is headed up by a "drum and the whistle; after, the cross and the processional candlesticks" ("el tambor y el pito; después la cruz y los ciriales") (30). The procession is subtly framed as a band ready for war, with its drum, whistle and caites; the Maya procession looks like an army of the poor.

The narrator then notes that as the Maya procession crosses in front of the church, the Ladino procession unexpectedly rounds the corner, bringing the two groups face to face. The narrator explains what would normally have happened in this instance: "Ours would have stepped aside so that the other could pass" ("El de nosotros se hubiera hecho a un lado para que el de los otros pasara"), in other words, the Mayas would have ceded to the Ladinos and thus would have adhered to the hierarchical binary that places Ladinos in a privileged position over Mayas, reinforcing the notion of Ladino superiority and Maya servility crafted in previously studied Ladino textualities. The narrator indicates that this time, something different happens because "between them was an alfombra…And this was the conflict" ("había a medio camino de los dos una

alfombra…Y esa fue la discordia") (31). With this reference, de Lión focalizes on a Holy Week tradition particular to Guatemala in which alfombras or carpets of decorated sand and sawdust are laid on the cobblestone streets of Antigua, over which the processions walk.[5]

When the two processions meet, they enter into a face-off, with the Ladino cucuruchos yelling for the Mayas to step aside so that the Ladino saint "could enjoy it [the alfombra] in its entirety" ("puediera gozarla entera"), understood as the Ladinos wishing to enjoy the full alfombra, without Maya footsteps crossing it at all (31). If the alfombra serves as a trope of Guatemalan identity given that it merges various images of Catholicism with images of Guatemalan people, Ladino and Maya alike, the desire to "enjoy it fully" signifies a Ladino drive to enjoy cultural hegemony in the nation/tradition. The Ladino desire to walk first, to be first, in the procession is symptomatic of Ladino ambitions to "walk first" in all other aspects of Guatemalan society – social, political, spiritual, and economic. However, the Mayas in this instance insist that their procession has always passed in front of the church at this time, and based on that long-standing tradition, they should also be able to "enjoy" the alfombra first. In the trope of the carpet, then, the Mayas here assert their desire to proceed, if you will, with a Maya version of cultural expression, without ceding first to the Ladinos. This is how the textual face-off between Ladinos and Mayas before the alfombra really becomes about the epistemological and ethno-cultural struggle between these groups to affirm, and practice, identity.

When it is unclear how to proceed, the Maya cucuruchos bow down to their saint; the Maya spectators joining them surround their procession to pray and ask the saint what to do in this instance, because "it wasn't a question of doing things without his consent" ("no era cuestión de hacer las cosas sin su consentimiento") (31). However, when nothing happens after they pray, "it occurred to someone to open the urn up for him. And…" ("a uno se le ocurrió abrirle la urna. Y…") (ibid). The urn here refers to the sepulchral urn, or tomb made of class and gold, in which the saint is carried during the procession. The narrator reflects at this point:

> The fact is, back then, it's said, the wooden saints actually spoke. They weren't many like there are now. The bad thing was that ours had always been dead. But maybe just a little air was all he needed (32)
>
> (Lo cierto es que en ese tiempo dicen que los santos de madera sí hablaban. No eran muchos como ahora. Lo malo era que el de nosotros siempre había sido muerto. Pero tal vez sólo un poco de aire era lo que necesitaba) (32).

With these lines, we have an allusion to a Maya episteme connecting signifiers in the *Popol Wuj* to post-Invasion Maya beliefs that the narrator recalls in the diegetic present of the story. How does this work? The image of speaking wooden saints is the key symbol. In the *Popol Wuj,* the Makers and Modelers create the wooden people, who are subsequently destroyed because, although they can speak, they lack memory and intelligence (Tedlock 70). In this sense, the wooden statues of saints can be considered

survivors of the wooden men later attacked in the *Popol Wuj* narrative, an allusion to a post-Invasion and contemporary Maya belief that wooden men, like Maximón, speak, not as saints of the Catholic Church, but rather as survivors of the wooden people creation.[6] When the narrator recalls that "back then" there weren't many wooden saints like there are now, he points to an increase in "wooden people" with the expansion of the imagery of Catholicism and Western epistemology in Guatemala.

But the quote is still more revealing. The narrator refers to a past moment in which saints spoke, which in the diegetic present of the story is recounted in oral tradition: "it's said" that back then the saints spoke. Here the narrator gives the impression that Mayas nowadays do not believe that saints speak, or at least the Mayas that he knows in his geographical location no longer believe that saints speak. If this is the case, the narrator shines a light on the consequences of policies of ladinization – past traditions of Mayas become encoded into oral traditions explaining belief systems, which in this story, no longer exist for this particular group of Mayas. However, the narrator in this same quote signals that "the bad thing was that ours had always been dead. But maybe just a little air was all he needed" (32). In these lines, we understand that the critique of ladinization really focuses on this policy's inability to stamp out Maya beliefs. First, the belief that the wooden people "had always been dead" reveals an internalization of the *Popol Wuj* narrative in the belief system of the narrator, because for the men of maize, including the narrator, who were created at some point following the failure of the wooden people, this prior failed creation had always been "dead" to them. And second, the narrator reveals his own belief that the Maya Christ wooden man might speak again,

if only he had some air, which reinforces the existence of a latent Maya cosmogony located in the *Popol Wuj* in the psyche of the narrator. The narrator, thus, reveals his deeper belief in the possibility of wooden people speaking, and thus reveals his internalization of the belief system in the *Popol Wuj*. This narrative revelation highlights the continuity in belief systems between "past" Mayas and diegetic "present" Mayas stemming from the *Popol Wuj* story, a move which denies ladinization's efficacy in erasing Maya cultural principles. Further, it goes beyond the syncretism (union) of Maya and Catholic beliefs by revealing a "mayafication" of Catholic images – Mayas view Catholic saints not for what they symbolize in Catholicism, but rather for what they symbolize in the *Popol Wuj*. This is, then, a decolonial "grito/llanto" underlining the "mayafication" of Western religious images as a response to ladinization as a policy of "culturcido" for Mayas.

But the idea that ladinization stamps out the view that wooden saints speak in the diegetic present is absolutely turned upside-down when the Maya procession opens the sepulchral urn to give the wooden man Christ air. Here, the narrator hints that the saint is revived, and only then, the narrator alludes, does he speak to the Maya procession. A bit of air being all that the saint needed to speak up is the metaphor for Maya resistance in this story; it is a metaphor that recenters an "other" episteme, one which leads to a confrontation between the groups. Once the wooden man Christ speaks, the processioners take action:

> And with his approval, they raised their heads, and with nary a thought, without sizing up the others, they began to walk ahead, with the drum and

> whistle sounding war…The hour had come. It was too much that our tatita couldn't enjoy his carpet, that the other one left him the scraps (32).
>
> (Ya con su aprobación, levantaron la cabeza y, sin medir, sin calcular a los otros, empezaron a caminar para adelante, con el tambor y el pito sonando a guerra…Había llegado la hora. Ya era mucho que el tatita de nosotros no gozara su alfombra, que el otro le dejara las sobras) (32).

The narrator explains in his memory of the event that once the saint approved of the Maya procession moving forward, the collective Maya crowd "lifted their heads", a striking image of a community awakening to the possibility of resistance and moving forward in the articulation of its procession. The sound of the drum and whistle announcing war adds to this conflict a feeling of violent resistance. This call to war speaks of a particular moment in time in which the hour for war-like, Maya resistance had arrived to defend and assert a Maya cultural tradition, recalling in fact the discourse of culturalista thinkers of the period who considered revolutionary action the means to ethno-cultural survival for the majority Maya population.[7]

Returning to the image of the alfombra as a trope of cultural identity in the nation, one that bears a trace of colonialism, marking both the absence and presence of colonialism and decoloniality, the narrator recalls that the Maya tatita had not been able to "enjoy it" for a long time. In other words, the Ladino drive for ethno-cultural hegemony in the nation left little space for Maya cultural expression. The "leftovers" of the alfombra call to mind spaces for Maya cultural expression that have been both

mediated and disarticulated by Ladino cultural discourses; the alfombra of cultural identity is trampled by Ladino feet and scattered after the Ladino procession traverses it. However, the Maya saint operates as a metonymy of Maya spirituality, thus generating agency among the bearers of the procession, a response that reconfigures the chain of signification. This in turn, generates a metonymic displacement that challenges the metaphorical stability of Ladinos' standing in the world, their desire to walk first, to be first as mentioned above.

The story ends with the narrator explaining that this event "occurred a stream of hours ago. I was still a little boy, but I do remember it well" ("ocurrió hace una chorrera de horas. Yo todavía estaba muy patojito, pero si me recuerdo bien") (32). Given his use of the term "hours" instead of "years", the narrator appears to speak about events that are not in the distant past, but rather, that occurred more recently in history. However, he distances himself from the action in time by indicating that it happened when he was just a child. Regardless, he claims that he remembers well what happened. The trustworthiness of the narrator's recollections is tricky, however, because earlier in the text, the narrator is fuzzy as to whether the rebellion of the Maya procession actually occurred. As the processioners open the Maya Christ's urn and hear him give his approval to rebel, the narrator notes: "Look, did we really hear him or did we invent it? Who knows. I had gone into the crowd, but I don't remember. My head can't figure it out" ("Mirá, ¿lo oímos de verás o inventamos? A saber. Yo me había metido entre la plebe, pero no recuerdo. Ya mi cabeza no da de sí") (32).[8] He claims that his mind does not work like it used to for remembering or understanding such events. This confusion or

haziness on the part of the narrator is a particularly fascinating aspect of de Lión's short story.

On the one hand, we can locate a profound Maya episteme in the narrator's distancing play. If we return again to the *Popol Wuj*, the second part of the narrative takes place during the creation of the wood people, but there is a textual interruption in the creation story to introduce a kind of hero-villain tale in the text. The character Seven Macaw arrogantly presents himself as the Sun in the text, as if taking the credit for creation away from the original Makers and Modelers of the animals, wood, and clay people. The Hero Twins Junajpu and Xbalanke in this section of the story battle Seven Macaw and his two, also arrogant, sons. After a few confrontations, the Hero Twins trick Seven Macaw by masquerading as dentists in order to place this villain in a vulnerable position. They pull and replace his teeth with corn, and worse yet, when Seven Macaw complains that he has pain in his eyes, the Twins pluck them out. The text explains, "And when the eyes of Seven Macaw were cured, he was plucked around the eyes, the last of his metal came off. Still he felt no pain; he just looked on while the last of his greatness left him. It was just as Hunahpu and Xbalanque had intended" (Tedlock 80). This anecdote is important in Maya mythology because it points to an episteme that links vision – the ability to see – with knowledge / power. When the Twins steal Seven Macaw's sight, they control his gaze by taking away his ability to know others through sight.[9] By stealing Seven Macaw's sight/knowledge, they articulate their power over him.

In de Lión's story, and in much of his narrative in general, the deep link to this Maya episteme occurs in the text through the narrator's play of uncertainty and

distancing, like with the quote previously discussed regarding whether wooden saints speak. Through his uncertainty here, the narrator shakes the reader's confidence that the Maya rebellion occurred because the reader isn't certain that the narrator is trustworthy. The reader cannot claim to know the narrator's truth, and as such, the narrator retains power over the narrative telling by essentially distancing the reader's certainty. Being unclear in this instance is the narrator's way of not being fully seen and known, and therefore preventing the reader from attaining the power of knowledge over the narration. Additionally, in this way, the narrator prevents his direct association with the events he narrates, perhaps a strategy that relates to the moment in which the author was writing. To distance narrative certainty away from events that were provocative and rebellious at a time of political conflict is to protect oneself from the authority's condemnation – a worthwhile strategy within the context of the Counterrevolutionary, dictatorial state.

On the other hand, another possible explanation for the narrator's uncertainty relates to the Maya subject's experience with the history of Indigenous resistance. As we saw in the Ladino texts that emerge prior to *Hombres de maíz*, Maya resistance is non-existent. Mayas in Fuentes y Guzmán, Milla and Herrera all lack the ability to rebel against Criollo and Ladino forces. In Severo Martínez Peláez's 1970 essay *La patria del criollo*, we also saw this erasure of Maya resistance. Maya armed rebellion against colonizing forces is silenced in both the fictional and official histories of the nation. Yet, a rich history of Maya rebellion is undeniable, as subsequent studies have shown.[10] In de Lión's story, then, the narrator's moves to a history of Maya resistance indicate a deep knowledge of Indigenous agency despite its silencing in national discourses.

Simultaneously, his moves away from this history prevent Ladino power/knowledge over the telling of this history. Maya rebellion and agency is thus spectral in this text, rooted in the narrator's hazy memory. This explains the mention of Indigenous oral history earlier in the text ("it is said") and the difficulty for the narrator to "figure out" or "remember" what the real history of Maya resistance is. In this way, de Lión constructs Maya rebellion as if it were a rumor just whispered in the pauses of official historical discourses. The narrator is therefore a product of the discourses of erasure of Mayas within the Criollo/Ladino state, given his hazy memory, yet there is no doubt that a deeper memory of Indigenous agency teams within his psyche; a memory that is implanted most likely through oral tradition. De Lión's short story counter-discursively reconstructs this Maya memory.

Finally, I would suggest that de Lión plays here with Western notions of linear time and progress. He holds his Maya narrator up to these Western paradigms by purposefully obscuring the notion of time in the text. We recall the narrator's explanation that the Maya procession's rebellion occurred "a bunch of hours ago", yet "when I was still very young". His description is obviously contradictory. If the narrator "was still very young", the reader has a sense that in fact he is recalling an event from his childhood or from a long time ago. However, the events took place a bunch of hours ago, in the very recent past. Imaginably hours stand in for years, decades or even centuries, but perhaps not. Perhaps de Lión is referencing the cyclic conceptualization of time on which the Maya calendar is based. Again, it is uncertain. I would suggest, then, that de Lión plays with time in this instance in order to indicate both the continuity and cyclical nature of

Maya resistance to a Criollo/Ladino worldview. Whether the rebellion of the Maya procession occurred in time a few hours ago or a many years ago is ultimately irrelevant. What matters is that Indigenous agency and resistance is constant. Here we can perceive how de Lión's text dialogues with J.L-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler's assertion that the Indigenous population has "resisted destruction, defended its threatened identity, affirms its solidarity, [and] rebels against the trauma of colonization" in the past, as well as in the present (56). Simultaneously, these theorists argue, the Ladino "denies and discriminates against the majority", and therefore, the "violent antagonism" that the "Guatemalan nationality" has faced since the Invasion is attributed to indigenous resistance to violent assimilative forces (ibid). By complicating the linearity of Maya resistance – by narrating it as a constant, cyclical agency that occurs simultaneously many years ago and a few hours ago – de Lión presents a fundamental break with the Ladino imaginary of the "glorious Indian of the past" and the "miserable Indian of the present" dichotomy discussed earlier. De Lión's play with time links Mayas of the past with Mayas of the present in a schema of persistent confrontation against an antagonistic hegemon, a confrontation nourished by an unbroken, deep ethno-cultural episteme latent in Maya consciousness. In this way, de Lión nods to Mayas' ability to resist assimilation and ladinization, and to preserve an Indigenous worldview located in the *Popol Wuj* from the Invasion on. De Lión's discursive break with the Criollo and Ladino practices erasing Maya resistance and differentiating Mayas of the past and Mayas of the present stands as a truly decolonial maneuver in his narrative.

"Children of the Father" is indicative of de Lión's multiple social preoccupations and critiques. It envisions a violent confrontation between the "poor" Mayas from the aldea and the "rich" Ladinos from the city, couched in war-like imagery. The revolutionary process as a violent confrontation is directed against the Ladinos from the city, yet a deeper revolutionary process in this story targets coloniality itself, in the form of ladinization policies seeking to erase Maya epistemology. De Lión reifies the Maya-Ladino binary, but to problematize Maya acculturation and ladinization as ultimately impossible. Because the story does not envisions an ethno-cultural reconciliation between the groups, de Lión throws into question any possibility for the emergence of an indigenista-style "national soul" through Maya "integration", a la Asturias, or via ladinization.[11] By reifying the binary in Maya terms, de Lión's pessimism regarding ethno-cultural assimilation signals a shift in discourses of ladinization as the only possible strategy for the formation of a Guatemalan, mestizo identity.

Critiquing Spiritual Coloniality: Complicating the "Indigenous-Ladino" binary

When we trace de Lión's narrative, we see a blurring of the lines distinguishing culturalista and clasista emancipatory projects, discourses that in the broader social debates are markedly separate until the late 1970s and early 1980s. De Lión's fiction, however, intuits the need to combine discourses to fight the revolutionary front on multiple levels and in opposition to various incarnations of coloniality, oppression, and disenfranchisement. In the next section, we further investigate one of the central preoccupations in his narrative – the spiritual "Indigenous-Ladino binary" – a theme

which he weaves into his clasista and culturalista critiques. As we will see, de Lión's narrative preoccupations become increasingly complex, moving his critique beyond those circulating in academic and political debates of the 1970s, all the while continuing to break down the discursive "truths" of indigeneity penned in Ladino discursive practices.

In Chapter One, we discussed J.L.-Herbert and Guzmán Böckler's argument that Spanish religious fanaticism and ideologies of purity of blood set the stage for the colonial government's attempt to destroy Maya religions, and for racism to simultaneously emerge as a cornerstone of colonial oppression (46). As such, religious persecution and discrimination based on skin color combined to polarize Guatemalan society from colonial times forward (48). The vestiges of discriminatory colonial power relationships based on spiritual beliefs and practices, or in other words, the reverberations of the spiritual conquest of Indigenous populations through Catholicism, can be called spiritual coloniality. In the genealogy of discourses imagining Maya belief systems, spiritual coloniality frames Maya epistemology as "superstitious", "demonic", "shamanic" and "mythical", characterizations seen in Fuentes y Guzmán, Milla and Asturias. While Fuentes y Guzmán and Milla both characterize Mayas as "nawalistic" and "demonic", Asturias constructs Mayas as shamanistic, irreal and mythical by imagining contemporary Mayas as prototypes of an esoteric spiritual belief systems based on the rhetorical aesthetic of the *Popol Wuj*. All of these discursive "truths" surrounding Maya spirituality fail to account for the multiple manifestations of Maya belief systems as contemporary, as hybrid, as syncretic, as influenced by cultural contact, and/or as impacting Catholicism through the "mayafication" of Western belief systems.

In “Children of the Father”, studied above, de Lión instead portrays Mayas as participating in a Catholic procession, although they carry figures of saints that epistemologically represent beliefs that are different than those carried by Ladinos. De Lión therefore breaks with prior characterizations of contemporary Mayas as “of a mythical past” by textually demonstrating the “mayafication” of Catholicism, in particular of the images of wooden Catholic saints, into a modern Maya belief system rooted in the *Popol Wuj* narrative. In this way, de Lión relocates Maya spirituality as a contemporary and dynamic, not an ancient, extinct, or debilitated phenomenon. But de Lión’s preoccupation with spiritual coloniality is not limited to the above-mentioned story. In fact, it circulates in several key texts in critical ways that shed light on this author’s nuanced interpretation of Maya spirituality and coloniality. In the next section of this chapter, I consider an additional short story in which a problematization of spiritual coloniality plays a leading role in de Lión’s decolonial literary project. His short story “The Ape” (“El simio”) is an example of his canny ability to move beyond the clasista and culturalista divide to problematize the notion of Guatemalan identities as binaristic.

Complicating Binaries in “The Ape”

De Lión’s story “The Ape” is narrated by a school teacher who has been placed in a Maya town during a period of dictatorship, most likely that of Ubico. The Ladino ego conquiro subjectivity in this text is thus an unnamed dictator, who wears dark glasses, lives in the not too distant city and controls the country through iron fist rule and terror. One Sunday, the townspeople learn that the Dictator plans to visit the village in order to

meet with a local shaman or curandero, Don Juan Bonito, and his nawal, a small monkey – Don Juan's animal double, his "soul" ("alma") (49). Although Don Juan Bonito and his nawal's powers are never directly mentioned in the story, the text hints that many people in town consult Don Juan and his monkey to foresee life events (56). Others visit the curandero simply to watch the spectacle of the nawal "inhabiting" Don Juan's body (49). Apparently, the Dictator believes in the monkey's power and comes to town to learn from the monkey whether a coup is planned against his government.

When the monkey dies after a night of drinking a bottle of whiskey the Dictator gave him as an "offering" ("ofrenda"), the Dictator calls for the monkey's burial in the local cemetery, a request that the townspeople find insulting and impossible (52). They claim that since the monkey is not human, he should not be buried in the cemetery. Nonetheless, the Dictator arranges an elaborate funeral for the monkey and threatens the local authorities with violence if they do not acquiesce to his request. In the end, the Dictator in fact falls victim to a coup, which installs another Dictator. The story ends with the emergence of a pattern. The new Dictator sends Don Juan another monkey so that Don Juan and his nawal can advise his government and forewarn him of future coups (56).

As Arias indicates, the crux of this story is the inversion of power between the Dictator and Don Juan and his monkey, such that the "real power lies in Don Juan Bonito" ("poder real descansa en don Juan Bonito"), who, as a curandero, represents a "Maya cosmovision" ("Subalternidad" 20). He argues that the story evidences Don Juan's superiority in the power relationship (ibid). Arias's reading of the text therefore

points to the cultural and political work of de Lión's "The Ape": Indigenous power is elevated in the story vis-à-vis Ladino power. This story's primary inversion for this critic lies in the ridiculization of the dictator figure, who, despite having "at his service a torrent of psychologists to implant terror" ("a su servicio un chorro de psicólogos para implantar el terror"), prays to the monkey nawal and drinks contaminated water that Don Juan leaves on his alter for all who consult the monkey (Arias "Subalternidad" 18-19; De Lión "Puerta" 51). I agree with Arias that this is a primary reading of the text. I also agree that it is one of the most outwardly political stories in his collection (Arias "Subalternidad" 18). However, I would argue in addition that the story's inversion goes beyond the ridiculization of the dictator figure and the repositioning of Maya power. When taken in conjunction with the genealogy of Ladino texts discussed earlier, the cultural/identitarian work of "The Ape" likewise resides in its ability to put into question deeply rooted social myths regarding Indigenous "superstition" and Ladino "rationality".

The Dictator as the supreme power of the nation (the dictator ego conquiro subjectivity) implies a figure endowed with rationality and control, which, according to a Ladino logic, juxtaposes the "superstitious", "irrational" Mayas. Wherein the Ladino ego conquiro subjectivity imagined in other texts is constructed through a realist linguistic production and as ascribing to a Western rationalism (as in the figure of General Godoy in *Hombres de maíz*, the finca owner in Herrera, or even the Ladino doctor trained in Western medicine in Monteforte Toledo's novel), de Lión presents his Ladino authority figure as particularly convinced of the clairvoyant power of the nawal, a belief that in fact reveals his own "superstitions". Don Juan Bonito and his nawal are imagined as

curanderos, shaman or even to some degree fortune tellers. The discursive "truth" constructed in previously studied Ladino discourse of Mayas as given to "encantos y naguales" and of Ladinos as rational, logical and therefore superior to "superstitious" Mayas becomes undone in de Lión's image of the Dictator consulting Don Juan and his nawal. In fact, de Lión constructs the Dictator as even more "superstitious" than the Maya community in this story.[12]

Beyond mere "superstition", the question of animal-human parity emerges in the text. When the monkey dies, many people in town oppose the Dictator's wish that the nawal be buried in the local cemetery: "How was it possible that an animal could be taken like that and buried in the cemetery?" ("¿Como era possible que un animal fuera llevado así y enterrado en el cementerio?") they asked one another (54). The cemetery is a space for humans, the local mayor indicates explaining to Don Juan Bonito: "I'm sorry, but it can't be done, Don Juanito. May he rest in peace, he is not a person and you do not have permission to bury him in the cemetery" ("Lo siento, pero no se puede, don Juanito. Él, que en paz descanse, no es persona y usted no tiene permiso para enterrarlo en el cementerio") (54). This is an interesting reversal of assumptions regarding Maya visions of animal-human equilibrium and parity. In the previous chapter we suggested that a divergence in Indigenous and Western epistemology is found in a Ladino, Western vision prioritizing a Kantian rationality placing humans above other natural phenomena, in comparison to a Maya vision of animal-human complementarity.

Slavoj Žižek argues that the construction of the Enlightenment subject is based in its need to distance itself from "animality", as part of the "ideology of universal Reason and the progress of humanity", such that:

> the subject 'is' only insofar as the Thing [animal] […] is sacrificed, 'primordially repressed' […] This 'primordial repression' introduces a fundamental imbalance in the universe: the symbolically structured universe we live in is organized around a void, an impossibility (the inaccessibility of the Thing in itself) (180).

In other words, the Western, enlightened subjected represses its animality, and thus is cleansed of irrationality associated with the Thing/animal. The other side of the coin reveals an Indigenous epistemology marking a symbiotic relationship of equilibrium and complementarity between humans and natural phenomena (animals in this case). Rosa Pu Tzunux argues that in a Maya cosmovision, the notion of the person is regulated by the Tzolk'in, or the 260-day calendar, which establishes certain qualities and capacities of a given child from its gestation on, and in turn assigns certain social functions that "a person conceived and born on determined days and in a determined year must execute" (25-26). As such, some Mayas perceive a person according to an "exterior" element marked by their birthdate, an element which relates to his or her subjectivity according to distinct elements in the cosmos, such as other people, natural elements including animals, and divinities (26). In this sense, the birthdate of a person plays an important role in identifying the "rajawal (nawal)", or origin of the person (ibid). For equilibrium to be maintained in the cosmos, the child or adult must comply with the mandates of his or her

day of birth, and thus with the characteristics or indications of the "exterior" element, or nawal associated with his or her birthday (26). While the relationship of the person-"exterior" element, which could be animal, upholds cosmic and social equilibrium and complementarity in the Maya order of things, in Ladino discourses, a human-animal hierarchy speaks to Ladino "reason". For Ladinos, human-animal (nawal) complementarity speaks to Indigenous "irrationality", or as we have seen it referred to in Ladino texts, "superstition".

In de Lión's text, however, we have a discursive problematization of the concepts of animal-human relationships, one in which we move away from the complexity of the Maya cosmovision regarding "external elements" and their relation to humans, and becomes instead centered in a human-animal binary. In this text, Mayas do not consider animals and humans as complementary subjectivities in the case of Don Juan Bonito's nawal, and therefore, the monkey cannot share a sacred burial site with other humans. In this situation, the Mayas rather place the human subject in a hierarchical spiritual position over the animal subject within the context of the sacred space of the cemetery. The Dictator, however, takes no issue with burying the animal in the sacred human space.[13] It is instead the quintessential figure of the Ladino oligarchic state, the military Dictator, the embodiment of Western reason and human-centricity, who appears to believe in human-animal parity, or even the nawal as deity. In this sense, he is articulated as more "superstitious" than the Maya community in terms of the value of the monkey. Otherwise, de Lión is alluding to the Indigenous origins of the very military dictators that oppress Mayas. If so, we can perceive a central contradiction within the dictator, ego

conquiro subjectivity; the contradiction lies in the dictator's oppression of Mayas while harboring (perhaps misinterpreted) Maya understandings of the relationship between humans and animals. The contradiction in turn signals the Dictator's own internaltization of racialization, of the coloniality of being discussed in the Introduction to this study. In this sense, the text reveals a subtle critique of the spiritual Indigenous-Ladino binary in that de Lión constructs the Dictator as participating in what is textually constructed as an Indigenous belief system – faith in the nawal, although again, the Dictator's understanding of this Maya cosmovision may be totally off-base. Nonetheless, de Lión complicates the reason-superstition binary established in Ladino texts which center "rationality", and thus an eschewing of Maya "superstition", in the ego conquiro Criollo or Ladino figure, and "irrationality" in the "superstitious" Indigenous who are "given to encantos and naguales".

I would argue that this is in fact one of the keys to understanding the complexity of de Lión's vision of Guatemalan identity. While on the one hand we can conceive of the spiritual Ladino-Indigenous binary as inverted in this story, I would argue that the binary is not so much inverted in this case as it is complicated, blurred, confused. The dividing lines between Ladino-Indigenous in this text reveal a borderlands spiritual and epistemological space, one in which Mayas and the Ladino Dictator internalize belief systems that fall somewhere between the extremes of the epistemological binary segregating the two worldviews of human-animal relationships. The borderlands space reveals the resulting hybrids of cultural contact and inter-epistemological mixing that has occurred in Guatemala between Western and Indigenous belief systems from the colonial

period on, despite the refusal of this hybridity in Ladino cultural interpretations. That the Ladino dictator believes in the nawal as much, if not more than many (but not all) of the Maya townspeople, reveals that his belief system is in fact markedly influenced by an Indigenous episteme. That the Maya townspeople question whether the animal should be buried in the human cemetery reveals a Western, and Christian, influence in the Maya town's burial traditions.[14] In this sense, we can turn back to an assertion Arias makes regarding the Ladino-Maya epistemological binary:

> If Mayas' own identity became hybridized and/or transcultural over time (simply meaning that after the consummation of the conquest in 1530, when the Kaqchikels were subdued, it no longer remained impregnable or unaffected by an occidentalist power deployment), it is also true that Ladino identity, also a result of miscegenation between Spaniards and Mayas, cannot be described as strictly European either (as it is also impacted by Maya culture on a daily basis) ("Footsteps" forthcoming).

By presenting borderlands, hybrid subjectivities throughout his texts, de Lión puts into serious question the assumptions latent in policies of assimilation and ladnizination, as well as the binaries constructed in Ladino discourses and policy from the colonial period on. If we recall from Chapter One, assimilation required "the abandonment on the part of the natives of all their cultural features", yet de Lión suggests the impossibility of this abandonment given that the "dominant" culture – embodied by the Ladino dictator – is just, if not more, invested in iterations of Maya spiritual beliefs and cultural features than the Maya in the story (Díaz-Polanco 46). The cultural contact mediating both groups

renders assimilation of Mayas to Ladino belief systems impossible, since a "pure" Ladino belief system does not appear to exist. In this way, de Lión's work mocks the policies of assimilation and ladinization as laughable, ridiculous propositions. In his mockery, he echoes discourses circulating in 1970s Guatemala regarding the "fallacy" of Ladino identity, and thus critiques acculturation, assimilation, mestizaje and ladinization as the basis for constructing a "national identity". For de Lión, like for J.L.-Herbert, Guzmán Böckler, and Antonio Pop Caal, the "fallacy" or fiction of Ladino cultural identity and history are the heart of the myth of the Ladino nation.

Gender Coloniality in *Time Commences in Xibalbá*

In the three stories studied above, de Lión offers fictional accounts that highlight the intersection of spiritual coloniality, classista and culturalista emancipatory discourses in the context of a Maya decolonial project. In the last section of this chapter, I want to turn to Luis de Lión's 1972 novel *Time Commences in Xibalbá* to indicate how this author builds on the intersectionality of these discourses while simultaneously offering a counter-discourse to discursive "truths" surrounding Maya gender suppositions. The novel, as we will see, also considers the issues of "concientización" and Maya agency in an Indigenous emancipatory project. But this time, the decolonial gesture lies in the protagonism of a contemporary female Maya character articulated through the imagery of the *Popol Wuj*. In this final section of the chapter, I first provide a basic character description of the four main protagonists in the novel, followed by a discussion of two criticisms of the novel within a decolonial framework. Then, I turn to the Maya female

character – Concha – and her "concientización", highlighting this character's intertextual links to the *Popol Wuj* creation story.

Time Commences in Xibalbá

The novel is critically placed as a kind of palimpsest of the *Popol Wuj*, like Asturias's *Hombres de maíz* discussed in the last chapter, in that the *Popol Wuj* is invoked in the novel through the cyclical, circular narration, and a stylistics reminiscent of the *Popol Wuj's* structure. Further, de Lión inserts a reference to the *Popol Wuj* in the title itself, Xibalbá, and even mentions the sacred book in the text as a passing reference.[15] For its circular narrative reflecting Maya cyclical notions of time, Arias calls it "one of the most complex novels ever written in Central America" (97). The text "destroys all possible attempts at any linear chronology", as it is told through flash-forward and flashbacks (Arias "Afterword" 97). Although much can be written about the structure of the novel, I am concerned with the elaboration of the four main protagonists. For this reason, I will briefly describe the novel with a focus on these characters.

The novel introduces two male and two female protagonists, the pairs presented as doubles or twins that reflect one another while simultaneously highlighting their differences. The first protagonists introduced in the novel are the female characters. Concha is a fifteen year old Maya woman, and her double is a wooden, white statue of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, known in the book simply as The Virgin. While Concha lives in a little hut at the edge of town, The Virgin resides in a glass case in the

local church. While Concha is free to roam the streets of the city, The Virgin is only allowed out of the Church once or twice a year during religious processions.[16]

The Virgin, we learn, is the primary object of desire of all of the Indigenous men in town, who fantasize about her because she is white and symbolizes the ideal woman. Concha is The Virgin's double because she looks just like the wooden statue, except that "she was dark" (de Lión 8). We learn that Concha is married young, and during her first sexual encounter with her husband he insults her by comparing her vagina to the "entrance to hell" (9). Although this is insulting to her, his comment results in the development of her insatiable sexual desire. After her husband dies, she becomes a prostitute who lives at the edge of town. All the men in town visit her and sleep with her because of her likeness to The Virgin. In effect, the men in town sleep with her in order to act out their fantasy of sleeping with the white, Ladina Virgin – the fantasy an impossible reality given the brutally racist nature of Guatemalan society. We will return to this issue later in this section.

The other protagonists in the novel are two Maya men, both of whom have had the opportunity to leave their village and explore the world, particularly, the Ladino world, in which they experience great discrimination. Nonetheless, both men desire to be a part of that world, and reject their Indigenous roots. One of these men, Pascual Baeza, is described as an insufferable child who terrorizes the town. For chopping of a playmate's finger with a machete, his mother serves time in jail on his behalf, and Pascual, starving, turns to the army as an escape from his town (38). He is a natural in the army for his cruelty, however, he later deserts and becomes a criminal, a mercenary, and

even “lived with a prostitute who never bore him a child because she didn’t want it to be an Indian like its father” (41). Due to his failure to integrate into the Ladino world, he returns to his village with a sinister plan in mind. To mitigate the discrimination and his rage at the Ladina prostitute “who he loved anyway because of her color”, he plans on robbing the statue of The Virgin from the church and sexually assaulting her – a dream shared by all of the men in town (ibid). As a character in an existential funk given his rejection in the Ladino work, his plan to rape The Virgin becomes a symbolic act of revenge toward the Ladino world.

Finally, Pascual’s double is Juan Caca. Juan is also Maya, the only son of peasant farmers who worked incessantly so that he could be educated in the city, and eventually, go to the seminary, travel Europe, and immerse himself in the white world. He too, for his indigeneity, is not accepted in the white world, and he returns to town with money, lands and an obsession with whiteness and cleanliness – he dresses in impeccable white clothes, his house is spotless, and the townspeople call his home the “White House” (de Lión 6).[17] He too desires the The Virgin, because she remains the symbol of the entrance into the Ladino world, yet he is presented in the novel as sheepish and pious, unlike Pascual. Since he is not willing to steal and have his way with The Virgin, Juan Caca decides to marry Concha, in part because his mother insists that he marry, but mainly because Concha, although Maya, most closely resembles The Virgin.

The novel’s plot revolves around these characters, and culminates in Pascual’s transgressive act of robbing The Virgin from the church and sleeping with her at his home. The townspeople are up in arms that she is missing and search every house in

town. When they find Pascual and The Virgin in his house, she appears to turn from a statue into flesh and blood, and apologizes to the "little Indians" for her behavior (62). At this moment, the town explodes into mass violence and revolt. The Indigenous men destroy The Virgin and replace her with Concha, who they parade around town as the new queen (65). However, during the procession, for her insatiable thirst, she flees, finds a pila – or a basin of water for washing – and suddenly turns into dust, sinks into the pila and the water pipes, and is swept underground back to the spring which provides the town with water. The men attack one another, their wives, dogs, animals, children, and the town blows up in death and apocalyptic chaos (67). The novel ends with the image of the proliferation and then rotting of the town's food sources. In the Prologue, which is actually the last chapter of the novel, the town is described as abundant, with blooming trees, fruit and a plentiful harvest, that slowly rots and decays. The last paragraph of the novel relates an image of a day at noon in the patio of Juan Caca's house. There, Concha is seen feeding a rooster who is beautiful, brilliant, proud and white, but who begins to cluck like a hen and lays an egg (84). The wind blows and sweeps through the town, just as the novel began.

Decolonial Criticism of *Time Commences in Xibalbá*

The novel has been critiqued as framing a Maya decolonial project, one that represents an emancipatory revolt against the coloniality facing Mayas, in particular, the coloniality of being, which relates to Mayas' internalization of racialization as discussed in the Introduction to this study. Emilio del Valle Escalante and Arturo Arias provide

critiques that most clearly dialogue the novel's decolonial project with the imagery of the *Popol Wuj* narrative.

Emilio del Valle Escalante argues that in the novel, "the principle concern should not only be the decolonization of the Indigenous subjectivity and the demystification of the Maya world, but also the forging of a nationalism based in a Maya cosmovision" ("la preocupación primordial no debe ser solamente la descolonización de la subjetividad indígena y la desmitificación del mundo maya, sino también la de forjar un nacionalismo a partir de la cosmovisión maya") (*Nacionalismos* 70). He argues that de Lión undertakes a deep reflection of the coloniality of power and its ability to domesticate an Indigenous community through the image of a wooden virgin, which has become the religious and sexual icon of the community.[18] Additionally, he asserts that de Lión responds to indigenista discourse, particularly that of *Hombres de maíz*, in order to rearticulate a Maya nationalism nourished by the imagery of the *Popol Wuj* (70).[19] Del Valle Escalante focuses on Juan and Pascual as political models that represent "two alternatives for the Indigenous world: interiorizing or assimilating the Occidental world, or promoting a decolonizing project that asserts a Maya nationalism based in Indigenous historical memory" ("dos alternativas para el mundo indígena: interiorizar o asimilar el mundo occidental, o promover un proyecto descolonizador que postule un nacionalismo maya a partir de la memoria histórica indígena") (70). He sees Juan as an incarnation of a Maya subjectivity that interiorizes ladinization and assimilation, for his obsession with whiteness and for his refusal to join the other men in town in their destruction of the Virgin statue (72). He reads Pascual as a militant, rebellious figure who sees the

townspeople as products of the internalization of coloniality. Pascual returns to his roots "where is umbilical cord is buried", with, according to Del Valle Escalante, "the desire to change the colonial character of the conditions of existence that continue in the community" ("el deseo de cambiar las condiciones de existencia de carácter colonial que perduran en la comunidad") (72). In this sense, he argues that the "rape of the wooden image can be seen as a radical transgression of the dominant world, an action that later culminates in a collective action to destroy the image or the symbol of domination" ("violación de la imagen de madera puede ser vista como una radical transgresión al mundo dominante, acción que posteriormente culminara en una acción colectiva que destruye la imagen o el símbolo de dominación") (72). For this critic, the destruction of The Virgin by the town's men is the radical transgression of Ladino power.

Del Valle Escalante proposes that after the image of The Virgin is destroyed, a symbolic shift in power elevates Concha, the Indigenous, flesh and blood virgin, as the new queen. As the novel indicates, she becomes the new "mother" of all the townspeople, and because of this, the town "discovered a new rite, there was a new queen that watched over them, who was going to give them, yes, her, eternal happiness" (75) ("se descubría un nuevo rito, había una nueva reina que los miraba, que iría a darles, ella sí, felicidad eterna") (75). Because her image is simultaneously infused with sexuality and death, Del Valle Escalante indicates that Concha breaks with the symbolic colonization rooted in The Virgin statue, which in turn represents the sacred, religious and Christian values that denote sexuality as a "sanctified practice" (75). With the installation of the "new queen", Del Valle Escalante argues that de Lión suggests a:

> new national project that substitutes Ladino values and norms, customs, and visions of the Indigenous world. In other words, de Lión seeks to define that the fundamental task of the Indigenous should be a political and epistemologically revolutionary battle to break with the (current) hegemonic modes of seeing, thinking and being, which block our capacity of seeing ourselves as political agents (76).
>
> (nuevo proyecto nacional que sustituya los valores y normas ladinas con los valores, costumbres y visiones del mundo indígena. En otras palabras, de Lión busca definir que la tarea fundamental de los indígenas debe ser una lucha política y epistemológica revolucionaria para romper con los modos hegemónicos de ver, pensar y ser (actuales), los cuales bloquean nuestra capacidad de vernos a nosotros mismos como gestores políticos) (76).

In this sense, Del Valle Escalante suggests that the story of Juan and Pascual could well be thought of as an "ambitious rewriting of Maya cosmogony" ("ambiciosa reescritura de la cosmogonía maya") seen in the *Popol Wuj* in which the Indigenous defeat the Lords of Xibalbá as a way of initiating a new "cosmogonic reconstruction characterized by Maya national restoration" ("reconstrucción cosmogónica caracterizada por la restauración nacional maya") (76-77). He sees this in a line in the novel in which after the destruction of the community, the townspeople begin to reconstruct the town in the "image they had of it in their brains for centuries" (de Lión 63). Although he does not make the

comparison explicit in his critique, the suggestion here is that Pascual and Juan, as symbolic twins, reflect the image of Junajpu and Xbalanke, as the protagonists who finally defeat the Lords of Xibalbá in the *Popol Wuj*. On the other hand, this critic's interpretation leads us to believe that the hero twins are reflected in the mass of the town's men that destroy The Virgin in a violent revolt, and replace her with Concha.

Arias for his part sees Pascual and Juan as symbolic twins more akin to the Hero Twins' dual fathers Jun Junajpu and Wuqub' Juanjpu who were defeated by the Lords of Xibalbá ("Subalternidad" 98). In the chapter of the novel titled "Epi…taph", Arias notes a "surreal psychic turn" in the narrative, in which the "reader further confirms that Pascual and Juan are, in reality, symbolic twins" ("Subalternidad" 109). He cites a moment when Juan looks at himself in a mirror to "console himself" and look "for his other" (De Lion 81). Arias further cites de Lión:

> When he thought that the whole him from the other side was there, he let his eyes cross the dividing line between them, to greet him, so that the other would greet him, so that he would tell him not to worry about it, that He would keep Him company (ibid).

Arias argues that this split personality is a trope of Jun Junajpu and Wuqub Junajpu, as well as "an epistemic metaphor of the Maya/Ladino split identity traversing both text and society" (Arias "Subalternidad" 109). He argues that the protagonists are emblematic of the internalization of racialization, and the resultant "difficulties confronted by Westernized indigenous subjects after becoming Ladinoized" (ibid). They are "Ladinoized" in that they both leave their village, and enter the Ladino world,

however, both experience the same racialized discrimination in the Ladino world that ultimately destroys their subjectivities as Maya men. In the mirror, both Pascual and Juan are "only bones . . . with a few chunks of flesh […] but not many, just a few rotten remnants" (De Lión 81). Arias argues that this is why the whole town is reflected as "dead": the internalization of the coloniality of being – or racialized inferiority – renders the protagonists, and all of the other indigenous men in the town, as "rotten" like the fruit and corn in the village, which in turn represents the end of a temporal cycle (Arias "Subalternidad" 109: de Lion 81; 84).

Unlike Del Valle Escalante, Arias sees no rebirth of the town and townspeople after the violent procession. Because no new temporal cycle begins, this critic sees the protagonists as reflecting Jun Junajpu and Wuqub Junajpu: "defeated and mutilated by the Lords of the underworld" (Arias "Subalternidad" 107). His reading of the transgressive procession does not represent a "new national project", as Del Valle Escalante argues, but rather it signals a "chaotic, failed spontaneous insurrection that, nevertheless, is transgressive, and represents a promise of further changes to come that will permanently challenge coloniality" (Arias "Subalternidad" 107). For Arias, then, the transgression represents a promise of change because it marks the end of a temporal cycle. The death sweeping over the town throughout the novel is presumed to lead in turn to a symbolic rebirth of Mayanity with the beginning of a new temporal cycle. However, this assumption is not verified in the novel.

On this point, I agree with Arias and Del Valle Escalante that the procession is a transgressive act. However, I agree with Arias that the beginning of a new temporal cycle

does not emerge at the end of the novel, such that what we are left with is a violent rebellion ushering in the end of a temporal cycle. Nonetheless, I do not read the promise of a rebirth for the community, and particularly for the men of the town, but rather the protagonism of Concha in her own rebirth, one that, like in other stories by de Lión, commences when she begins to think, which in turn leads to her coming to consciousness. In what follows, I want to explore Concha's protagonism within the context of de Lión's decolonial discourses to show how he combines an unprecedented critique of the coloniality of gender with discourses of classista, culturalista and spiritual coloniality, thereby nuancing and complicating his vision of a Maya emancipatory project. But first, let us turn to a brief review of gender coloniality to understand how it can be dialogued with *Time Commences in Xibalbá*.

Coloniality of Gender

As discussed in the Introduction to this project, Foucault describes biopolitics in part as the techniques of supervision and discipline of bodies imagined as machines that can be optimized in their utility and docility, and additionally, in the control of biological processes (139). The interconnectedness of coloniality and biopolitics results in a matrix of power inferiorizing the Indigenous "other" through the social norms advanced by dominant social actors, and are manifest in "culture, common sense, in the self-image of communities, in the aspirations of subjects" ("la cultura, el sentido común, en la auto-imagen de los pueblos, en las aspiraciones de los sujetos") (Maldonado Torres 131). Biopolitics regulating male and female bodies in different ways based on gender is what

we can think of as the coloniality of gender. In her article, "Coloniality of Gender", María Lugones describes this as the double process of racial inferiorization and gender subordination suffered by women of color (8). In this double process of subordination, the white, bourgeois woman is the only woman in society "who counts", while indigenous women:

> Were understood as animals in the deep sense of 'without gender,' sexually marked as female, but understood without the characteristics of femininity. Women racialized as inferior were turned from animals into various modified versions of 'women' as it fit the processes of Eurocentered, global capitalism, and heterosexual domination of white women (13).

This incarnation of coloniality as described as the animalization of women of color also harkens back to an image of the ego conquiro subjectivity vis-à-vis women of color as an "ego falico" subjectivity as well, one that in its racializing gaze imagines Indigenous women as at the service of the ego conquiro subjectivity as sexualized beings as well as racialized beings, differentiated from Euro-descended women in the paradigm of Eurocentric patriarchy.

The dehumanization of the Indigenous woman in de Lión's novel is rooted in the Christian image of the white virgin statue and the men's idealization of this "Ladina" as the model of femininity. In this sense, Catholic imagery translates into one of the "strongest indoctrinating and repressing systems" ("aparatos ideologizantes y represores más fuertes") in the colonization of Indigenous communities, according to Aida Toledo,

and particularly of Indigenous women (11). In the novel, the idealization of the white woman for her whiteness – her symbolism of the Ladino world – is linked to the imposition of a vision of The Virgin's perfection through institutionalized spiritual coloniality. The religious emblem of the Virgin Mary, transformed into a social myth of femininity, is a chaste, semi-divine, and morally superior woman who has an insatiable capacity for humility and sacrifice.[20] Del Valle Escalante argues that for this mythical vision, "the image of the Virgin embodies a fixed boundary that cannot be transcended or transgressed by the ideological and cultural ideology that it represents, 'the mother of all men'" ("la imagen de la virgen encarna un determinado confín que no puede ser trascendido o transgredido por la autoridad cultural e ideológica que representa, 'la madre de todos los hombres'") (63). In other words, the biopolitics signifying the Virgin's body as both the ideal and the norm of femininity creates in turn a situation in which Indigenous women who do not fit this description must attempt to conform to it because it cannot be transgressed through resistive agency. The regulating force of the coloniality of gender is evidenced through Pascual's mother, Piedad Baeza, who ironically desires that the townspeople see her as a virgin, although she has had a child and is a woman with many frustrated sexual desires (de Lion 33). Although she has sexual desires, she is incapable of transgressing the biopolitics upholding the idealized chasteness of the female body.

For the men in town, this form of coloniality is manifest in the paradox of being inferiorized in the Ladino world by Ladinas themselves, while simultaneously exercising a colonializing biopolitics over the female Indigenous body. This is evident in nearly all

of the men who sexually desire The Virgin and discriminate against Maya women. However, a more nuanced example of the masculine subject articulating gender coloniality is evidenced in Pascual. As mentioned earlier, in the city, he lives with a Ladina prostitute who does not give him a son because she doesn't want the child to be half "Indian" (41). Pascual's coloniality is evident in the Ladina's racial discrimination. Nonetheless, we understand that Pascual himself interiorizes coloniality because he loves the Ladina regardless for her white skin, which suggests his obsession with her whiteness and a desire to be a part of the Ladino world – a clear sign that he rejects his own indigeneity. Further, the Ladina's refusal to have a child with Pascual exercises a biopolitics controlling his biological paternity since she, as an emblem of whiteness, refuses to let him impregnate her.

Later, we see the inferiorization of the Maya mother before the Ladina, "mother of all men", when Pascual thinks about the death of his own mother. The narrator notes, "But you didn't mourn her either. That servant didn't so much as deserve a tear. What did hurt you was being alone, not having anyone to serve you while you dreamed about that world so far away from your village" (de Lión 31). Pascual, influenced by the norms of the ideal mother coming from the Catholic Church, employs the biopolitics of gender coloniality by imagining the body of his mother in the context of servitude. In this sense, de Lión echoes the "utility" of Maya women found in Flavio Herrera's *La tempestad*. In the previous chapter of this study, we noted that the Ladino finca owner in Herrera's novel views Maya women as servants who exist to fulfill his insatiable sexual needs. In *La tempestad*, the Maya woman is animalized in her abjection. She is "vile" and "sordid";

and sex with her for a finca owner is "sheer bestiality" (Herrera 219). The Maya woman in de Lión's novel as seen through Pascual's eyes, is also a servant, dehumanized in that her death does not even deserve a tear. The only reason Pascual is upset that his mother dies is because she can no longer serve him. In Herrera's novel, I argued that the finca owner embodies an ego conquiro subjectivity in his control of the Maya female body. In de Lión's novel, I would argue that Pascual assumes the role of ego conquiro subjectivity vis-à-vis his Maya mother. By viewing her as a dehumanized servant, he envisions her body "under his control, at his service, for his exploitations" (Dussel 166; 187).[21]

The case of Pascual leads us to the complicity of Indigenous men in the coloniality of Indigenous woman. Lugones describes this complicity as an expression of gender coloniality that affects both Indigenous men and women:

> It is important for us to think about these collaborations [between Indigenous men and whites] as we think of the question of indifference to the struggles of women in racialized communities against multiple forms of violence against them and the communities. The white colonizer constructed a powerful inside force as colonized men were coopted into patriarchal roles (Lugones 10).

The Indigenous men's complicity is precisely why Concha's trajectory in the novel is key to problematizing gender coloniality in de Lión's text. Concha is the Ladina's "other", since she represents the exact opposite of the "mother of all men". The racialization of her body and the identification of her sexuality juxtapose her as the illicit Indigenous

woman in the Marianistic Virgin/Whore binary. The novel's narrator tells us that although Concha:

> looked like the image of the Virgen de Concepción […] she had the same hair, the same face, the same eyes, the same eyelashes, the same eyebrows, the same nose, the same mouth and she was even the same size; the only difference was that she was dark, that she had tits, that she was flesh and bone –and, what's more, that she was a whore (de Lión 8).

If we were to limit our reading of Concha in the novel to that of a character solely occupying the "whore" role in the Marianistic binary – the physical and sexual opposite of The Virgin – I would argue that we would miss a unique, yet complex, vision of a gendered, culturalista emancipatory project based on this character's "concientización".

Sexuality as Hell and Transgressing Biopolitics

An understudied character in the criticism of de Lión's novel, Concha's identity as a racialized Maya woman is a central theme in *Time Commences in Xibalbá*. She is introduced in the novel as a whore whose "body was full of birds" and who received the men in town "enthusiastically" and "tirelessly" (de Lión 8). Although this is her character's initial description, de Lión explores her formation, explaining why and how she came to occupy this role.

During her first sexual encounter with her first husband, he says to her: "¿What have you got there between your legs, vos? It's as if it were the entrance to hell" (de Lión 9).[22] Insinuating that her vagina is "hell" is significant in the novel because it constructs

Concha's character in juxtaposition to the "divine" image of The Virgin. Concha's initial reaction to being characterized as "hellish" is that it is insulting. The narrator explains: "I remember that she took it as an insult. She was fifteen years old and this was her first real taste of life. So those words felt like rape to her ears – ears that were still as innocent as a bird's" (9). The metaphor of rape, or a forcible violation of her subjectivity as a sexual being, ties back to her coloniality as a woman of color, whose body is disciplined as "hellish" due to her race in contraposition to the "divine" Virgin. After her husband "rapes" her, however, her sexual desire becomes insatiable:

> Because as time passed, her body kept filling up with more and more birds. And those birds were hungry. And he had to feed them. So he wasted away to pure skin and bones from a real good case of tuberculosis. And he died (10).

One reading of this passage sees in her insatiable desire a re-signification of the "infernal" discourse of her sexuality from a masculinist and scornful position, to that of a feminine and transgressive position which destroys her husband, the perpetrator of her "rape". In this scene, Concha's corporal/sexual "language" subverts her husband's literal language.[23] Later, the narrator notes that after her first husband dies, "That's when her whoring started", which he refers to as her "power" (10; 12). Thus her sexuality is associated with a transgressive power, but one she must defend due to the controlling gaze of the townspeople.

First, Concha is described as alienated by the townspeople precisely because she is a desirous woman, yet she refuses to conform to the biopolitics policing her sexuality.

Her main opponent in town is the local priest, who demands, along with her parents, that she leave town due to her behavior (11). But she does not move out of town. Instead, "she simply moved to another little thatched hut down the road where, alone, she could act more freely" (11). As the priest continues to berate her and pressure her to leave, the narrator informs us that "she didn't budge" (11). Additionally,

> It didn't matter one bit to her either that the women – old mothers, young mothers, grandmothers, and single women – would make a cross with their thumbs and forefingers when they saw her, would burn dried chile as an antidote, would mistreat her, would try to knock into her on the street (11).

Regardless of the town's scorn, she continues to behave as she wants, transgressing the biopolitics that dictate what she should and should not do with her body.

She, in fact, asserts herself as a woman with a profound control of her body. Shortly after her husband dies, Concha gives birth to a stillborn child, a product of her first matrimony. The narrator reveals:

> It was common knowledge ever since a good while back that, when she had known her first man and then soon felt the pains of bearing a stillborn son, she had figured out the difference between the two sensations – in and out—and she had determined only to taste the first feeling and never again to give birth or death; and ever since that day she would bathe only once a month, but during that time of the month; and every day she would drink, as though it were her morning coffee, a concoction made of abortive herbs

> […]; and then when she found out that if the virus that causes the mumps goes down into a person's stomach, it causes sterility, she had let the virus go down to her stomach whenever she came in contact with it until she would be vaccinated against spermatozoids (17).

In this way, Concha possesses a deep knowledge of her body and she knows how to protect herself against getting pregnant, which she associates with pain. After coming to consciousness regarding her sexual desire, her vision of maternity is explained in an indirect manner. She notes: "-I'm an idiot if I ever let myself get pregnant with another kid – she would say --. I know that some of these guys want to knock me up, but so what" (17). The image of Concha as a desiring being, one that is resistant to maternity, as Karen Poe notes, "breaks with the myth of the Immaculate Conception" ("rompe con el mito de la Inmaculada Concepción") in part because Concha "has elected sex before maternity' ("ha elegido el sexo por encima de la maternidad") (89). As such, de Lión highlights Concha's capacity to distinguish between needs and pick strategies to protect and satisfy herself, and in this way, Concha has the agency to replace Catholic biopolitics with her own corporeal politics.

Once Concha marries Juan, the couple is put under a microscope by the rest of the townspeople and all expect that Concha will become pregnant. The women of the town insist that the "the miracle of her pregnancy had to materialize now", given that they believe that a married woman should also be a mother (17). As we know, Concha rejects this norm by preventing herself from getting pregnant. Beyond that, we come to understand that Juan and Concha do not sleep together, which bothers her so much that

she is left to only "pretend she is happy" and she leaves the house in order to satisfy her sexual desires (18). She visits Pascual, who also rejects her saying "You're not the woman I'm waiting for", given that his desire is to "wait" for the Ladina in town, the wooden virgin (22). Returning to her house at night, Concha climbs into her husband's bed, but he too refuses her, saying "Concha, don't be such a whore", again recurring to the insulting discourse reflected in the words of her first husband (23). The insult becomes more palpable for Concha because Juan then threatens her with a machete (23).

Given Pascual's refusal to satisfy her since he is "waiting" for The Virgin, and Juan's refusal to sleep with her, along with his threat of violence, Concha takes a dramatic action to mitigate the violence and the "hell" between her legs. She leaves Juan's bedroom and lights a fire in the kitchen:

> Standing alone in front of the fire, first she lets out a sigh, then she sobs quietly. After a short while, she picks up the piece of firewood with the reddest embers burning on the other end and comes back to the room, opens the door, looks into the darkness and stops […] she just lies down on the floor, opens her legs, wields the glowing piece of firewood, and little by little, as though it were a member, she slowly puts it up inside herself; puts it inside without a whimper (24).

One reading that emerges considers the decision to burn her vagina as linked to her insatiable sexual desire, which she finds necessary to destroy given the impossibility of satisfying it with the town's men, including Pascual and Juan. Although Concha violently mutilates herself, this can be read as an act of empowerment, because having burned her

vagina, she destroys that which the community has tried to control, and that which is linked to her racialization as a Maya woman, an unworthy whore in comparison to the idealized Virgin. In other words, instead of suffering violence and discrimination from Juan and Pascual due to her racialized sexuality, she destroys that which she perceives to cause the violence and discrimination. This reading stands precisely within the context of a decolonial, gendered emancipatory project. Why?

If we think about Concha's protagonism as a prostitute in control of her body in a Western sense, we can consider her as a kind of sex-positive figure that resists the biopolitics stemming from the cult of the Virgin Mary that polices all women, regardless of color, to be "good" and "pure" sexually.[24] Her promiscuity is thus a direct challenge to the Western patriarchal model's biopolitical policing, in that she resists a patriarchal social structure perpetuated by the Maya men in town who are, first, colonized by this Western model of gender relationships, and, second, recreate it in the Maya community. But because the patriarchy in her town functions as a kind of simulacrum of the Western patriarchy rooted in the internalized coloniality of Maya men, Concha as a Euro-American-style sex-positive feminist who practices sexual freedom as a precursor to or as part of her individual freedom is insufficient in this instance precisely because of her racialization vis-à-vis The Virgin. In other words, the potential for her individual freedom before the patriarchy is complicated by her doubly-marginalized subjectivity; her racialization is yet another form of discrimination differentiating her from a white, Euro-American experience of gender subordination. In this sense, by burning herself, she rejects a Western sex-positive position, thus recalling Audrey Lorde's assertion that in

the contemporary Euro-American women's movement, "there is a pretense to a homogeneity of experience covered by the word *sisterhood* that does not in fact exist" (116). For her racial difference, sex-positivism as a Western feminist model is both inadequate for understanding Concha's reality and for her articulation of agency. Instead, she finds herself in a mimicked patriarchy, one rooted in the coloniality of being and the internalization of racialization that is markedly different than the patriarchal drive policing The Virgin's sexuality and subjectivity, as evidenced in Juan and Pascual's desire for whiteness and refusal of Concha. Therefore, when Concha burns herself, we can read her recognition that promiscuity as a mode of resistance to a racialized and colonized patriarchy ultimately does not cede to her emancipation as a woman of color. The option that remains for her given her circumstance as a doubly-marginalized figure is to opt-out of the racialized sexual environment which either values her for her likeness to The Virgin, or devalues her for her not being enough like The Virgin. She is in an impossible situation since she can never be The Virgin and can never not look like The Virgin.

Destroying her vagina, therefore, marks a key moment in the novel because she stops participating in her racialized sexual objectification. Further, her prostitution in the novel is questioned as an emancipatory gesture given that de Lión constructs her prostitution as ambivalent. On the one hand, it is her "power", or her transgressing of the biopolitics of coloniality, but on the other hand, she receives the men in town in a "tearful rite", which she considers a service (an "errand") or a job, that allows the men in town to live out their fantasy of sleeping with The Virgin: "it made them dream – and feel as if it

was true – that they were actually on top of the real Virgen de la Concepción" (de Lión, 11-12). If then her promiscuity is a service for the colonized men in town, she is in fact a party to the men's internalization of coloniality; she perpetuates their colonization in this sense. Her refusal to continue operating within this system of coloniality is what really marks her decolonial "grito/llanto". Her own self-mutilation symbolizes her coming to consciousness of the town's coloniality, and her role in maintaining it. Her physical decolonial transgression, symbolized in burning herself, is thus followed in the novel by a discursive one, in which she denounces Juan in a moment of clear recognition of the gender coloniality internalized by the men in town:

> That's just it. She's not our mother. She just another fucking Ladina; except that she was put here to show us up; you know, a town Ladina. The proof is in the fact that people come here from the city, go into the church, and they see her as nothing special. Sure, she's not the Virgin of their huge cathedral there in the capital, but she's not even a little whore from their cantinas. By contrast, the people here fall all over themselves for her, they have huge festivals for her, they treat her like the Queen, but it's clear why – it seemed like, while Concha was talking, she was emptying herself, though she were bleeding from an old wound, but one that was somehow still fresh -- ¿You know something? I've figured it out: when the men from here are in the city, they look for the face of the Virgen in the faces of the Ladinas; but when they're here in the village, they look for the face of the Ladinas in the face of the Virgen. That's why the Virgen is Queen

> and the Ladinas are all 'Miss This' or 'Señora That.' We, on the other hand, are 'la Juana,' 'la Concha,' 'la Venancia.' ¡We're yard chickens! ¿You know something? – her eyes lit up from some unknown source, like from another world, from some other blood: I don't love you […] because you never dirty your hands with shit (68).

Interestingly, her discourse permits her to "empty" herself of the inferiorization by naming it, and cure herself of the "ancient wound" of gender colonization and disenfranchisement as a Maya woman. The "ancient wound" that is "still fresh" relates back to Lugones's assessment of the dehumanization of women racialized as inferior who are imagined first as animals and then as "modified versions of 'women'" in comparison to white women within the heterosexual patriarchy (10). The old wound that is still fresh symbolizes precisely the erasure of Maya women's subjectivity as women within the colonial order: first, the ancient wound originates in the imposition of a Euro-centered patriarchy in the Invasion, and the wound that is still fresh is continuously reopened through the Maya men's internalized coloniality post-Invasion.

However, the ancient wound that is still fresh also symbolizes a disruption in the Maya order of things. If we think about heterosexual gender relations in the context of a Maya conceptualization of equilibrium and complementarity, we can understand male-female relations as a holistic system. We can again turn to Rosa Pu Tzunux's study *Representaciones sociales mayas y teoría feminista* (Iximulew 2007) and her assertion that the Maya system of representations should be understood as rooted in the social concept of totality, in which "woman and man are one, but at the same time two […]

each possesses autonomy as their own person, but has a specific relationship with their k'ulaj (encounter of two faces) and is part of a society" ("mujer y hombre son uno, pero al mismo tiempo dos […] cada uno posee autonomía propia como persona, pero tiene una relación específica con su k'ulaj (encuentro de dos rostros) y es parte de una sociedad") (23). This interdependent relationship between male and female pairs maintains collective equilibrium so that social harmony prevails (ibid).[25] The idea that nature and the cosmos were created in pairs (night and day, sun and moon, heaven and earth, woman and man) is rooted in this system of totality and equilibrium (ibid). She continues that given this perspective:

> neither woman nor man, night nor day, nor any of the elements that make up this taxonomic Maya system can be conceived of independently: the night doesn't exist without the day, the woman (or man), as such, doesn't exist without its 'complement' […] each element of the totality maintains relationships that are reciprocal and in solidarity with the other elements that form part of the system (24).
>
> (ni la mujer o el hombre, ni la noche o el día, ni ninguno de los elementos que componen el sistema taxonómico maya, pueden concebirse de manera independiente: la noche no existe sin el día, la mujer (o el hombre), por tanto, no existe sin su 'complementario' […] cada elemento del todo mantiene relaciones recíprocas y solidarias con los otros elementos que integran el sistema) (24).

Considering, then, (heterosexual) gender relationships as based in equilibrium and complementarity, we can read Concha's denunciation as a decolonial "grito/llanto" identifying the imbalance and incompatibility caused by racialized coloniality in social relationships. Concha in effect identifies the lack of solidarity between Maya men and Maya women, and the marginalization of Maya women by Maya men as an interruption of the natural order of intersubjective gender relationships. Thus, the Invasion and the imposition of a Eurocentric epistemology erasing Maya ways of knowing totality, equilibrium and complementarity result in a "world turned upside down" (a kind of Maya pachacuti). If we locate the initiation of a time cycle in which the world is turned upside down in the Invasion, and think of the diegetic present of the novel as a later moment in this same "world turned upside down" time cycle, we can understand the "ancient wound" that "is still fresh" as the imbalance of the Maya social order from the Invasion on. Concha's physical and discursive "grito/llanto" names the Maya men's complicity in maintaining this "world turned upside down", and thus the triumph of a Eurocentric, patriarchal episteme.

Considering that her denunciation is situated near the end of the novel, after the many insults received by the community and her two husbands, we see her decolonial "grito/llanto" as the culmination of her process of coming to consciousness. The image of light that shines in Concha's eyes symbolizes this new empowerment which is irreconcilable for Juan. For Juan, she seems to come "from another world" – one in

which the status quo of gender coloniality is questioned – which Juan is unable to understand.

Juan's incomprehension is emblematic of the totality of men in the town. They are unable to see their own collaborations with the biopolitics of gender coloniality, and in this sense, their inability to see / know translates into their lack of power within the racialized, patriarchal paradigm. In fact, when the men in town destroy The Virgin and name Concha as the new "Queen", they take her on a procession that turns violent and chaotic. Watching the scene, however, the narrator informs us that the women of the town try to "rescue" their husbands from their own violent upheaval:

> The women decided to rescue their husbands, their boyfriends, their fathers, their brothers, their sons; so they stationed themselves at the first corner, and when the procession showed up they called out to them, pleading –holding their palms together in front of their faces in the holy gesture of supplication – they called out in tears, but the men, instead of paying them any heed, grabbed them by their braids, dragged them to the ground, ripped their dresses; they struck them with machetes and with pieces of firewood […] until they left them lying there facedown or face-up in the streets, bleeding (65-66)

We recall that Del Valle Escalante argues that the destruction of The Virgin and her replacement with Concha inaugurates a new order based on a Maya cosmovision. Arias, in his interpretation of the novel, does not see in the procession a radical transgression and creation of a "new order", but rather "a destructive sign eliminating the possibility

for transformation" (106). In lieu of a "new national project", he sees a "chaotic, failed spontaneous insurrection that, nevertheless, is transgressive and represents a promise of further changes to come that will permanently challenge coloniality" (107). However, the Maya men's violence toward both the Virgin and the Maya women as an outcome of their continued coloniality rooted in the Eurocentric patriarchy lacks a critical examination. If a "new order" or even a "promise of further changes to come" is evidenced in the scene of the procession, how, then, are we to understand the violence against women during the procession?

In my reading, the procession represents a violent shift in power that upholds the mimicked patriarchal subalternization of Maya women, but also enacts violence against The Virgin for transgressing her role as a "chaste" mother, since she is seen in the novel as desirous, and as transgressing the norms policing her own body as that of a virgin. After her sexual encounter with Pascual, the narrator notes that The Virgin:

> Begged them all [the town's men] to forgive her, she said that she was ever so sorry but that it had been years and years, and she had only ever known the dove, and from then on […] she would go on being a virgin, that thanks so very much for forgiving her […] and that if she had gotten involved with him, it had been a result of pure accidenecessity (de Lión 62).

In this sense, we can think of the white Virgin as forced to represent the norm of femininity and chastity as imagined in the Eurocentric patriarchy, such that any "other" woman – be her a transgressive white woman (the desirous virgin) or a woman of color – deviates from the norm. Following Judith Butler in *Undoing Gender*, the Virgin as a

symbol enacts normative violence disciplining both non-chaste white women's and racialized women's subjectivities within the Eurocentric patriarchy. But when The Virgin sleeps with Pascual, and enjoys it, the town's men destroy her for deviating from what she as a statue symbolizes. It is remarkable that when she does sleep with Pascual, the narrator notes that she turns from her hardened form as a statue into flesh and blood, thus indicating her own transformation from a symbol (object) into a transgressive agent (subject) (de Lión 52; 61).[26] The Virgin, therefore, resists the normative violence of her own objectified state as the statue Virgin, ironically, by sleeping with a Maya man, thereby doubly resisting the Eurocentered patriarchy: she sleeps with the racialized other, enjoys it, and thus transgresses the biopolitics policing her body as "chaste".

However, The Virgin is seen as sullied after her encounter with Pascual, which results in physical violence against her, and in turn the normative violence of The Virgin symbol (object) cedes to physical violence against The Virgin as transgressive agent (subject). When we read the destruction of The Virgin, the violence against her is legible and even celebrated as a "new order" or a "promise of future changes". But this criticism of the procession scene is problematic because the Maya men do not destroy the statue as a symbol of whiteness, since they inaugurate Concha as the new Virgin because she looks like the old Virgin. Rather, they destroy the Virgin for her transgression of the norm of chastity she symbolizes. The narrator notes that the town's men get ahold of The Virgin after she sleeps with Pascual, and they "spit on her, insulted her with shouts of whore here and whore there" before eventually chopping her to pieces with their machetes (65). That they destroy her while yelling epithets of "whore" is significant for two reasons.

One, because the other men are jealous that she slept with an Indigenous man who, instead of being one of them, was the pariah they had previously cast away from the community. And two, because it evidences their disillusionment with her as no longer chaste; it indicates, therefore, their further complicity in upholding Eurocentric patriarchal norms policing white women's (all women's) sexuality.

But another key problem emerges in the procession scene. The racialized violence against Maya women in this context just *is*. It is a given, unproblematized and accepted. That the men beat their wives, mothers, and sisters to continue celebrating Concha – Concha as a stand-in for the Virgin – does not indicate a decolonial shift in the dominant values system, but rather the men's continued adherence to a Eurocentric patriarchal ideal, one they uphold in their search for power as racialized subjects. The violence against Maya women is ultimately normalized due to the doubly marginalized position of women of color within the Eurocentric patriarchy. There is no correction in the procession scene of the "world turned upside down" in the Maya sense (the disruption of equilibrium and complementarity in gender relationships), but rather, the men's revolt is directed against the "world turned upside down" in the Eurocentered patriarchal sense (the Virgin as transgressing the norms regulating her body). Further, Maya women are always, already dehumanized versions of women. Since the Maya men continue operating within this Western paradigm by disciplining The Virgin and beating Maya women, their "resistive" act in destroying The Virgin is one that reifies Western patriarchal norms, and thus it is not "decolonial" in the least.

The only decolonial aspect of the procession doesn't have to do with the men at all, but rather with Concha's agency. In the middle of the procession, Concha distances herself from it. At a certain moment in the procession, Concha comes down from the statue carrier to look for water in a pila because she feels a great thirst. She rejects the imposed position as the "new queen" when she quickly removes the crown, cape and dress that the men have put on her – formerly, The Virgin's clothes (66). Before getting into the water, the "only part of her that was flesh – black flesh" was visible for all to see (66). The water she gets into turns "into bones of water, whose ashes the wind dispersed; and the pila was left like a tomb without a single cadaver in it yet" (67). The men descend into violent destruction, "balling up their fists, picking up stones and sticks […] they set about fighting like beasts" at the same time Concha, along with the water, turns to dust and vanishes (67). This chaos and destruction, in turn, brings about "the exhaustion, the death, the final silence", turning the narrative back to the beginning of the text, in which a wind of death had overtaken the town. Tellingly, while the men destroy one another, and the women are left to identify their dead, Concha is the only character that escapes the scene, albeit through a death in the water turning to dust.[27] But her escape through death in the water, down through the pipes, "all the way back to the spring on Cucurucho Hill" is precisely her rebirth, and thus her "death" in the water represents a chain of signifiers associated with the *Popol Wuj*, announcing the possibility of a future dawn. To see how this works, I now turn to the intertextuality of the *Popol Wuj* and de Lión's *Time Commences in Xibalbá* to explore Concha's rebirth and symbolic role in the novel as life-giver, despite the near constant description of her with terms reminiscent of death.[28]

Xibalbá and Reading Ixkik in Concha

De Lión highlights Concha's grito/llanto using a symbolism that recalls specific images of the *Popol Wuj*. As both Del Valle Escalante and Arias, among others, have indicated, the relationship between the two texts lies in the novel's introduction of symbolic elements particular to a Maya cosmovision found within the *Popol Wuj*. These elements symbolize the initiation of a new Maya temporal cycle, one that marks the death of a former era rooted in the racialization and coloniality of Mayas. While most critics focus on the symbolism of Juan and Pascual as the hero twins, or their fathers, my interest is in understanding Concha's symbolic role in relation to Ixkik, the hero twins' mother. Below, I describe Ixkik and her protagonism in the *Popol Wuj*, followed by a discussion of the images of hell, fire and water which link Concha's sexuality and the new temporal cycle that starts in Xibalbá; and finally I consider the issue of Concha's sexuality in regard to the failed creations in the Maya genesis story.

In the previous chapter, I explained the story of the hero twins, Junajpu and Xbalanke, and their role in defeating the Lords of Xibalbá so that the final creation of humanity – the men of maize – could emerge. However, it is important to note that before these hero twins defeat the Lords, their fathers – Jun Junajpu and Wuqub Junajpu – are summoned to Xibalbá, or the infraworld, for playing their ball game too noisily. When Jun Junajpu and Wuqub Junapu go to Xibalbá, the Lords of Xibalbá trick them, laugh at them and eventually sacrifice and kill them, hanging Jun Junajpu's head on a calabash tree.[29] The narrative continues with the story of Ixkik, the daughter of one of the Lords of Xibalbá, Kuchuma Kik'. After the defeat of the first twins, Ixkik receives the saliva of

Jun Junajpu in her hand, since she approaches the calabash tree and enters into a conversation with the severed head of the father hero twins, and: "Right away something was generated in her belly, from the saliva alone, and this was the generation of Hunahpu and Xbalanque" (Tedlock 99). She becomes immediately pregnant after receiving the saliva in her hand. For her pregnancy, Kuchuma Kik', her father, sends her off to be sacrificed, but she escapes due to her intelligence and discourse, convincing the owls (the Lords of Xibalbá's messengers) to allow her to live. She gives the owls red sap from a tree telling them to give it to her father indicating that it is her heart. She says to them:

> It would not turn out well if you sacrificed me, messengers, because it is not a bastard that's in my belly. What's in my belly generated all by itself when I went to marvel at the head of One Hunahpu, which is there at the Place of Ball Game Sacrifice. So please stop: don't do your sacrifice, messengers (Tedlock 100).[30]

Saved by her discourse, Ixkik goes to the earth from the infraworld and visits Jun Junajpu and Wuqub Junajpu's mother's house. Their mother rejects her: "Then the mother said to her: / I don't want you as my daughter-in-law / What you carry inside is the fruit of dishonesty. / You are a liar" (Colop 78) ("Dijo entonces la [madre]: / - No quiero que seas mi nuera / Es fruto de tu deshonestidad lo que llevas adentro. / ¡Eres una embustera!"). The mother sends her to bring corn, a test to see if Ixkik deserves to be accepted. She passes the test by multiplying mazorcas and brings corn to her new mother-in-law (Van Akkeren *Xibalbá* 156). From then on, she is accepted by the mother, because, as the Hero Twins are associated with the maize plant, Ixkik's multiplication of

mazorcas is a symbol of her carrying the Hero Twins (ibid). She thus remains pregnant and gives birth to Junajpu and Xbalanke.

Ruud van Akkeren, in his study *Xib'alb'a y el nacimiento del nuevo sol* (Piedra Santa 2012), explains that Ixkik (whose name is translated as "señora sangre", Blood woman, or Blood Moon, depending on the translator) symbolizes various goddesses. First, she is seen as the pre-Hispanic Mother Goddess, which later syncretized with the Virgin Mary, who the Mayas considered the Catholic Mother Goddess, a particularly appropriate relation for our reading of *Time Commences in Xibalbá* for all of the similarities between The Virgin and Concha (van Akkeren 154). However, Ixkik is also imagined as the Moon Goddess, given she gives birth to Xbalanke, the full moon, and is the daughter of an infraworld Lord – the infraworld associated as such with the space of the moon and night (ibid). Further, her name also refers to "female blood" – menstruation – that is itself believed to be connected to the lunar cycle (ibid). Van Akkeren also notes that Ixkik's identification with the moon through her name may be related to the lunar eclipse, in which the moon's color becomes orange-red, and "in its rebirth" becomes a white orb, thus symbolizing Ixkik's "whiteness" as a symbol of her virginity (155). She is further associated with corn, as she is seen as engendering maize, and as having the power to multiply mazorcas to pass Xmucane's test. Van Akkeren argues that the moon plays an important role in the planting of maize since the yellow color of the moon corresponds to an abundant harvest; further, Q'anil, or the day corresponding to the harvest is a "feminine" day (156). Therefore, Ixkik is associated with the symbols of

Xibalbá and of the Hero Twins, being the fertile Mother Goddess, the Mood Goddess (Blood Moon), and the Goddess of Corn.[31]

With this brief review, we can think of Concha as a representation of Ixkik for several reasons. First, we recall that Kuchuma Kik', a Lord of Xibalbá, is her father, which suggests that Ixkik has the "blood" or heritage of Xibalbá. In other words, she is part of the infraworld of Xibalbá, she comes from this "place of fear". Given that some Christian commentators associate Xibalbá with the Christian hell, even though the Infraworld refers to a non-Western concept that has little if anything to do with the Christian inferno, in the novel Concha's sexuality is described as "hellish".[32] When Concha's first husband compares her to hell, he is making a reference to her as from Xibalbá. Then, when Concha marries Juan and denounces him, Juan notes that her eyes lit up with an unknown light, as if she were of some other world (78). The narrator invites us to think, therefore, that Concha is from another realm. Additionally, the association between Ixkik and Concha as an allusion to Xibalbá is implicit in the title of the novel.

The title *Time Commences in Xibalbá* signals a regeneration of the Maya community and culture, which begins in the space of the infraworld of Xibalbá. In the *Popol Wuj*, the era of the final creation of humanity – the men of maize – really begins in Xibalbá with the father hero twins' defeat by the infraworld Lords, given that their death allows for Ixkik to eventually become pregnant. Since Xibalbá is associated with a space of death, but actually marks a space where life begins with Ixkik's pregnancy, ironically, the constant reference to Concha's sexuality as "hell" in the novel suggests that Concha, particularly her vagina, is literally a place of birth. Further, if Concha symbolizes hell, or

the infraworld, then through the title, we can perceive that time begins, in fact, with her conception, which for Concha occurs not with the conception of the hero twins, but rather with her conception of racialized coloniality. If Juan and Pascual are the incarnation of the brothers Jun Junajpu and Wuqub Junajpu, Concha would relate to Ixkik, the woman who is pregnant by both. But considering that neither Juan nor Pascual penetrate the "hell between her legs", neither of them as symbols of Jun Junajpu and Wuqub Junajpu are able to spit into her hand and impregnate her. As such, it is impossible for Concha to get pregnant with Junajpu and Xbalanke. Thus, the world cannot prepare itself for the arrival of the men of maize. This argument is reinforced by the symbolic failures of the creation of humanity in the novel.

In effect, when Concha is impregnated by her first husband, she gives birth to a stillborn son, perhaps due to the fact that her first husband has insulted her as "hellish". This, I would argue, represents the first creation "failure" for the cosmic deities in the *Popol Wuj* (the Makers and Modelers). We recall that the Makers and Modelers seek to create beings who will "walk, work, and talk in an articulate and measured way, visiting shrines, giving offerings, and calling upon their makers by name, all according to the rhythms of a calendar" (Tedlock 32). Their first creation, however, are beings that "have no arms to work and can only squawk, chatter, and howl" (ibid). They are beings that are not fully formed and are unable to speak to honor their makers and "keep their days" (Tedlock 67).[33] The descendants of these beings are the animals of today. Thus Concha's failed pregnancy is a symbolic tie to the first "failed" creation, because she too produces a being that is not fully formed, in that her child is stillborn. Then, that Pascual refuses to

sleep with her, although she seeks him out because she "believes he's the only one who can give her what she needs", links to the second failed creation of the Makers and Modelers. In their second attempt, the Makers and Modelers craft people of mud, but deem it a failure because these beings do not worship the creators either; they are unable to walk or turn their heads (32).[34] Concha and Pascual's inability to procreate because they do not sleep together symbolizes this second failed attempt at creation. It is notable that the mud people are unable to turn their heads, which links to Pascual in that he is unable to shift his gaze away from his internalized desire for whiteness, manifest in his desire for The Virgin. He is unable to turn his head toward Concha, and therefore the possibility of a new creation with her cannot result. Further, the mud people are seen as solitary figures, like Pascual who has left the village and returns without engaging in relationships with others from the town. Being solitary, the mud people cannot reproduce themselves, and this is the case with Pascual as well, given he refuses to reproduce himself with Concha, cannot have a child with the Ladina prostitute, and sleeps with a wooden statue. Finally, Juan refuses to sleep with Concha as well, because he doesn't want to "dirty his hands" with her, being that she is Indigenous and he desire whiteness. The missed opportunity for Juan to impregnate her results in the third failed creation, that of the wood people, who according to the *Popol Wuj*, can speak, but who lack memory and intelligence.[35] Further, in the *Popol Wuj*, the wood people are considered to have the potential to multiply themselves, but they fail to "time their actions in an orderly way" and they "forget to call upon the gods in prayer" (32). Juan is linked to this failed creation, as a young man trained in the seminary to be a Catholic priest, but who leaves,

he fails to acknowledge the Maya deities because his spirituality is colonized by Catholicism. Also, his timing is off in terms of his interest in sex. At the moment in the novel when Concha leaves him, he laments not sleeping with her. The narrator reveals his internal thoughts: "If only he had tasted her, just once" (de Lión 70). Immediately after this scene, Juan goes to bed and is visited at night by a white woman figure either in a dream or in reality, it is unclear. The figure and Juan appear to sleep together, after which he thinks about "all the time with Concha that he hadn't put to good use" (73-74). Thus, Juan's misuse of time and lost opportunities with Concha reveal the third and final failure of creation in the novel, all of which again link to the *Popol Wuj* narrative.

Given all of this, it is as if Ixkik, symbolized by Concha, does come to earth from Xibalbá, but finds that the conditions are not right for humanity, and therefore, does not become pregnant. How do we know that this is the case? As we recall in the novel, the narrator notes that Concha takes measures to ensure she does not get pregnant. If this is so, then Concha may well know that the conditions are not right for her to become pregnant, and she therefore protects against the production of another failed creation. However, at a later point in the novel, when it appears that Juan is accusing Concha of being jealous of The Virgin, Juan or the narrator, it is unclear, accuses her that it's "bullshit you sterilized yourself! ¡Bullshit, bullshit, bullshit!" (de Lión 55). In this scenario, it isn't that Concha has prevented her pregnancy; it is that biologically, she is unable to get pregnant. If this is the case, Concha's womb cannot carry the symbolic hero twins. Whether we think of her as a woman who cannot get pregnant, or as a woman who prevents herself from getting pregnant, she still ends up burning herself, as if forever

terminating the possibility of creation in this era unprepared for the emergence of the men of maize. It is only after she burns herself and is finally sterile for certain that she realizes intellectually why the earth is not apt for the emergence of the new Maya humanity: coloniality still reigns.[36]

We also know that conditions are not right for the emergence of a new humanity because de Lión presents at the end of the novel images of Juan's penis as rotten and Pascual's penis as scraped and cut up after trying to penetrate The Virgin. Here the relevance of the phallus as a signifier of the symbolic order of masculine power is key to understanding the rotten/injured phallus as a symbol of coloniality and a critique of Eurocentrism. The rotten/injured phallus in de Lión's work is a complicated symbol for phallocentrism as the socially privileged place of men, which came with the imposition of Eurocentric notions of gender relations, and later their internalization by Maya men in the novel. On the one hand, the rotten/injured phallus in the novel symbolizes the Maya men's powerlessness vis-à-vis the white, ego conquiro subjectivity within the context of the heterosexual domination of white women and within the colonial matrix of power. But on the other hand, it also suggests that the Maya men's internalization of coloniality causes their powerlessness within the heteronormative Maya order of things, as their internalized coloniality causes a disruption of the equilibrium and complementarity of male-female pairs within a Maya imaginary, as discussed above. But further, the rotten/injured penises may symbolize, in fact, Concha's power. After Concha burns herself, it is as if she forces the termination of a time cycle with the "death" of her reproductive organs. If this move is a response to the men's simulacrum of the

Eurocentric patriarchy in the novel, Concha's self-mutilation can be read as a supremely transgressive act in the novel, so much so that it marks the death of the time cycle of coloniality. In this waning time cycle, we can perceive a move back toward equilibrium in that Juan and Pascual's genitals become rotten/injured to complement Concha's destroyed vagina. By burning herself, she refuses to uphold the status quo of gender coloniality, and perhaps that radical shift creates an ending of time, one in which Juan and Pascual are forced to, as is everything else in the novel, rot and disintegrate. Regardless, the end result is that all three of these protagonists are incapable of coming together to create new life in the waning time cycle in which the colonial matrix of power reigns.[37]

And finally, we understand that the time is not right for the emergence of the men of maize in the novel because in the *Popol Wuj*, when Jun Junajpu spits into Ixkik's hand, he says to her, according to Tedlock's English translation, "it is just a sign I have given you, my saliva, my spittle. This, my head, has nothing on it –just bone, nothing of meat. It's just the same with the head of a great lord: it's just the flesh that makes his face look good" (Tedlock 99). We recall that in one of the last moments of the novel, Juan looks at his own face in the mirror and sees only bones with a few chunks of flesh on it, signaling his link to one of the hero twin's fathers. However, because he does not sleep with Concha, he does not have the agency to leave spittle/semen in Ixkik's hand/Concha's womb. For all of these reasons, the protagonists do not witness the emergence of a new temporal cycle through procreation, although their progressive deterioration marks the end of one time cycle. Because of this impossibility, Concha disintegrates into the pila,

returning to the ground, or Xibalbá, to await another time in which the earth is prepared for the emergence of the true race of men of maize.

The last image to explore in the novel that appears in the *Popol Wuj* is the symbolism of fire and water, images which I discussed in Chapter Two in relation to Asturias's *Men of Maize*. Fire and water relate, I would argue, to the fact that Concha is not able for the reasons mentioned above to become pregnant with the hero twins, yet she does become "concientizada". De Lión suggests that Concha's pregnancy, if not physical, is rather intellectual in the sense that the seed that has been planted in her is that of being a thinking, conscious and aware woman. In the beginning of the novel, the narrator remarks that "time is shit, because it makes some eggs hatch and others rot" (de Lión 9). What appears to have hatched in the novel is Concha's awareness and understanding of coloniality. In juxtaposition, the eggs that rot are in fact Juan and Pascual, who are seen at the end of the novel as decaying doubles in the mirror that Concha has left at Juan's house.[38] For this reason, Concha is the only person in the novel who passes through a process of rebirth. And it is in this rebirth that the symbolism of the images of fire and water emerge.

To understand fire and water in de Lión's novel, we can turn to René Prieto's essay "Tamizar tiempos antiguos: la originalidad estructural de *Hombres de maíz*" in which he explains that when the hero twins Junajpú y Xbalanke go to the infraworld, they battle the Lords of Xibalbá, whom they eventually trick into believing they have died by throwing themselves into a fire. The Lords then throw their bones into a river, which causes their rebirth, unbeknownst to the Lords. Prieto explains:

> They are first burned, which means, they are apparently defeated by the fire. After, their bones are thrown into the river. The combination of these two apparently destructive elements – fire and water – produce a new creation, as it is clarified that in the *Popol Wuj*, regeneration and growth are a result of the synthesis of opposites (Prieto 626).
>
> (Se les quema primero, o sea, son vencidos aparentemente por el fuego. Después, sus huesos son arrojados al rio. La conjunción de estos dos elementos aparentemente destructivos –fuego y agua – produce una creación, pues al momento se aclara que en el *Popol Vuh* la regeneración y el crecimiento son el resultado de una síntesis de contrarios) (Prieto 626)

In Chapter Two, I noted that fire/water are a complementary pair reflecting the sun/moon, which themselves appear and disappear consistently in the form of day and night to maintain the cyclical nature of time and encourage the growth of corn. The hero twins passing through fire and water also encourages a (re)growth of their subjectivities in the Maya classical book. Like Junajpu and Xbalanke, Concha goes through a similar process of passing through fire and water. Given the impossibility of being impregnated by Juan and Pacual, figuratively, she burns in that she introduces the burning wood into her vagina. After, when she sees her burned flesh in the water of the pila, she sinks as dust into the water, going underground again to the infraworld, and infiltrating the source of water feeding the pila inside Cucurucho Hill.

Prieto notes that the symbolism of fire and water are central to the growth of corn in that "fire and wáter […] work together so that the seed can break through the surface of the earth and, in that way, complete a generative cycle" ("el fuego y el agua […] trabajan junto para que la semilla pueda romper la superficie de la tierra y así completar el ciclo generador") (626). This is precisely what is suggested at the end of the novel when we read of Concha with her hand full of corn, giving it to the hen on the patio of Juan's house. Concha is the image of the initiation of time in this final scene as she stands as the Mother/Moon/Maize Goddess on Juan's patio. The waning cycle of coloniality has come to a close for her, and she is reborn in a new time cycle. She goes down into the earth, breaking the surface and brining corn to the land. The animal to which she gives the corn doesn't know if it is hen or a rooster, a reference to the men who still operate in a world of gendered confusion and coloniality. Nonetheless, Luis de Lión suggests that the liberation of the Maya community begins with the process of coming to consciousness of Maya woman, who are capable of liberating themselves from colonizing biopolitics. The inability for the men in the novel to conceive of their own internalization of oppression prevents their "concientización". Rather, Concha becomes the figure which nourishes the community with the seed of awareness, and for that reason, the decolonial, and revolutionary, project which de Lión presents here begins with a Maya woman.

Conclusion

After analyzing multiple examples of Luis de Lión's narrative, it becomes clear that his literary project is an epistemic and political decolonial "grito/llanto" that calls to

attention to, in Morales Santos's words, the "world of the marginalized" within the context of the Guatemalan Counterrevolutionary period. The characters that populate his narrative articulate a voice of protest against a number of Ladino ego conquiro subjectivities and imperialistic institutions that maintain the status quo of racializing coloniality. While his decolonial "grito/llanto" shines through in his texts, his work entertains a constant dialogue with the various socio-political and revolutionary discourses circulating in 1960s-1980s Guatemala.

In the story "The Invetor", we analyzed the merging of classista and culturalista discourse in de Lión's critique of the imposition of modern capitalism through the figure of the colonial Bishop who exerts power over Mayas. This figure becomes the symbol of colonial mediation of a Maya values system which progressively corrupts Maya ways of knowing and being in the world. Yet, with a pair of doubles that represent pre-capitalist mediation, we find a counter-discursive telling of the spiritual conquest of Mayas, through the Maya protagonist as he "saves" the abandoned Catholic Christ.

In "Children of the Father", a classista and culturalista discourse combine in order to problematize the binaristic vision of Guatemala as hierarchical dichotomy in which Ladinos are in power and Mayas are subaltern. In this story, de Lión offers a counter-discourse of revolutionary class and cultural action in which a culturally and economically disenfranchised Maya cofradía initiates war with a rich, Ladino cofradía. This is one of the most outwardly combative stories in the collection, which envisions physical violence and revolt as the key to Maya emancipation vis-à-vis Ladino power.

Building on his classista and culturalista discourses, de Lión is particularly concerned with including into his critique an assessment of what we have called above spiritual coloniality. In his fiction, we can argue that he goes beyond the major essays of the 1970s – Severo Martinez Pelaez's *Patria del criollo*, and J.L.-Herbert and Carlos Guzmán Böckler's *Guatemala: Una interpretacion historico-social*, by incorporating an analysis of Catholicism into his classista and culturalista critique, particularly in the story "The Inventor". He builds on this critique in this story, and in "The Ape", to problematize binaries imagining the Maya as "superstitious" and Ladinos as "rational". And finally, in his novel, de Lión links Concha's protagonism to the *Popol Wuj* in a culturalista discourse, one that turns to the creation story as a matrix of Maya cosmovision articulating an Indigenous epistemology and values system. By combining a critique of the internalization of coloniality by the Maya men in the novel, especially as it translates into violence against Maya women, de Lión nuances his culturalista critique with an assessment of models of Maya masculinity that attempt in their racialization to approximate Ladino ego conquiro subjectivities.

This is a particularly exceptional aspect of de Lion's work, given that he intuits in 1972, a decolonial "grito/llanto" denouncing gender discrimination as an affront against Maya women from both Ladino and Maya men. This critique is not one that can be found in the initial iterations of a "New Maya Literature" emerging at the end of and after the armed conflict. In fact, I would argue, this critique is revolutionary because it goes beyond conventional thinking of the revolutionary period of the 1960s-1980s, and is articulated later first by Ladina women, such as Yolanda Colom's *Mujeres en la alborada*

(2000). De Lión's turn to gender is additionally revolutionary because his critique of it is not echoed by Maya women until the emergence of the post-war generation of Maya women poets, such as Maya Cú and Rosa Chávez, who include a critique of gender coloniality in their poetic works. In this sense, de Lión reveals a much more complex vision of Maya identitarian emancipation than his contemporary counterparts – both Ladino and Maya writers from the armed conflict or immediate post-war period.

Luis de Lión's narrative, however, produces an even more forceful decolonial "grito/llanto" in his methodical deconstruction of the genealogy of social myths and discursive "truths" that populate both Guatemalan policy and social debates, and Criollo and Ladino literature. By complicating the linearity of Maya resistance – by narrating it as a constant, cyclical agency– de Lión presents a fundamental break with the Ladino imaginary of the "glorious Indian of the past" and the "miserable Indian of the present" dichotomy discussed in Chapter Two. De Lión's play with time links Mayas of the past with Mayas of the present in a schema of persistent confrontation against an antagonistic hegemon, a confrontation nourished by an unbroken, deep ethno-cultural episteme latent in Maya consciousness. De Lión also breaks with essentializing discourses of Mayas as part of a collective "indiada" in his multiple particularizations of Maya subjectivities in his narrative. His classista critique reassigns social myths and discursive "truths" of poor Mayas as inert and unable to transgress socio-economic spaces, and thus he questions the myth that Mayas are relegated solely to the countryside, apart from the Ladino city. At the same time, de Lión forcefully complicates Criollo and Ladino social myths of Mayas as superstitious, and of the non-Indigenous as rational, by negating the ego conquiro

subjectivity's rationality, and presenting hybrid Maya spiritualities. He also upends myths about Maya women as passive, sexual servants in his critique of gender coloniality, by presenting a transgressive Maya woman who has come to consciousness regarding not only her own discrimination, but also the internalization of coloniality on the part of Indigenous men. In this sense, de Lión presents the theme of coming to consciousness regarding disenfranchisement, in order to challenge social myths characterizing Mayas as incapable of thinking – a myth that circulates in both the policy debates studied in Chapter One and the Criollo/Ladino discourses studied in Chapter Two. The ability to think, reason and become aware of one's oppression is central to the protagonism of many of his characters, and stands as a counter-discourse to Criollo and Ladino characterizations of Mayas, and also poor Ladinos, as bare-life, de-politicized beings. Through his deconstruction of Criollo and Ladino social myths of Mayas, de Lión's narrative stands as a critical counter-discourse to the manipulation of Maya subjectivities in canonical works. In his narrative, he mitigates the silencing of Mayas in literary and socio-political discourses by centering Maya protagonism in his narrative. In this way, de Lión offers the first decolonial "grito/llanto" interrupting the continual narrative of the conquest/invasion of Mayas from the colonial period to the mid-20th century.

For its multiple critiques and emancipations, de Lión's narrative taken as a whole intuits the kind of broad-based coalition between classist, culturalist and Catholic revolutionary projects that emerges in the late 1970s, and which nearly succeeded in toppling the capitalist and repressive Guatemalan State in the 1980s. But for the

foundation in his work of a Maya episteme, de Lión's narrative functions as a decolonial "grito/llanto" problematizing discourses that place Mayas in an inferiorized object position vis-à-vis the ego conquiro, Ladino subject position. His textual, decolonial "grito/llanto" enunciates not only a condemnation of imperialistic biopolitics and coloniality, but also, a multifaceted emancipatory project that draws from, and complicates, imaginaries of revolution and identity within the context of the Guatemalan armed conflict.

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[1] We cannot forget the work of Antonio Pop and the writers of Ixim, who further squarely culturalista critiques of Guatemalan society without a clear Marxist foundation.

[2] See the Introduction to this study for a more detailed look at the decolonial "grito/llanto".

[3] This spatial distance recalls Guzmán Böckler and J.L.-Herbert's assessment of the "Ladino-Indigenous contradiction" in which the city is imagined as the space of Ladino power, and the countryside as the space of Indigenous ethno-cultural resistance – a territorial division that combines with a racialized class stratification creating what these authors called "internal antagonisms" between Ladinos and Mayas (Guzmán Böckler and J.L-Herbert 64-65). This ethno-cultural and class-based metropolis-periphery division of the nation, as we saw in the last chapter, is reified in key Ladino texts. Fuentes y Guzmán, Milla and Herrera's characterizations of the Indigenous as fundamentally separate from the rest of the nation due to their spatial location and their "primitive", "insignificant" (read bare-life) existence results in a spatial-identitarian juxtaposition that signals the failure of the Maya to be successfully integrated into the modern state, as symbolized in the city. This in turn adds to the nation's identitarian bipolarity. We also recall in Mario Monteforte Toledo's *Donde acaban los caminos* that the great distance between the Maya countryside and the Ladino city is only traversed by the enlightened urban doctor, the novel's Ladino protagonist, who enters the "Indigenous countryside" in an effort to bring sanitation and health to the Indigenous population.

[4] De Lión's short story "Los zopilotes" (1966) provides an example of a difficult Maya crossing between urban Ladino and rural Maya spaces, as the protagonist in this story is stopped along the road connecting the village and city by police officers questioning him as to why he is going to the city. The biopolitical control of the Maya body in space, one that criminalizes the Maya body as subversive in his movement toward the Ladino, urban space, is exemplified in this story.

[5] These are covered in flowers and/or dyed sawdust to create a colorful design with Catholic overtones, floral patterns, images of Guatemalans, particularly Mayas, in their daily lives, etc., to celebrate Holy Week. They are temporary works of art that exist to welcome oncoming processions; they are there for the processions to pass over. Since only one procession can cross over an alfombra before it is trampled and ruined, they appear continually throughout Holy Week to greet the multiple processions. The interesting aspect of the alfombras, however, is that they often stand as an artistic expression of Maya and Catholic spiritual and cultural syncretism, as there is evidence that the use of alfombras was present in the Tz'utujil culture prior to and after the Invasion as artistic mats on which Maya religious ceremonies would occur (on pine and flower carpets). A similar tradition comes from Spain, in areas such as Tenerife and Toledo.

[6] Ruud van Akkeren notes that the "modern saint" Maximón is a contemporary incarnation of the wooden people, or the "dolls made of wood" which appear in the *Popol Wuj* as "mannequins" in the court of Xibalbá, but which are thought to be descendents of the wooden people creation (150).

[7] Here, particularly, we can consider the discourse of the Movimiento Indio Tojil, which called for an "explicit assertion of Maya nationhood and a call for political independence" through a revolution that would "reverse Ladino bourgeois economic and political domination" (Konefal 146, 147). This group, however, was marginalized within the broader culturalista movement, and I would suggest that de Lión is not providing in his narrative a vision of a "nationhood option". Rather, revolt here is a move that lends to practicing identity within the Catholic tradition, in the case of this text.

[8] I translate "ya mi cabeza no da de sí" in this instance as "my head can't figure it out", although with "dar de sí", there is a more literal translation possibility which could also fit along the lines of "my head can't stretch back that far" or "doesn't go back that far". He is either incapable of knowing what happened, or of remembering what happened, and thus knowing. A translation that gets to both knowing and remembering is more along the lines of "my head can't remember anymore", a possibility that when back-translated seems like too much liberty is taken with the original. For that reason, I leave it as "my head can't figure it out".

[9] The relationship between sight and power/knowledge is also reinforced in the *Popol Wuj* when the Makers and Modelers create the first four men of maize. The text indicates that these first humans had infinite sight: "they sighted the four sides, the four corners in the sky, on the earth, and this didn't sound good to the builder and sculptor" (Tedlock 147). The Makers and Modelers fear that the new humans, due to their infinite sight, would begin to rival their creators: "Their deeds would become equal to ours, just because their knowledge reaches so far. They see everything" (Tedlock 148). As a result, the Makers and Modelers veil their sight, so it would be partial, and as a result, their knowledge and power would be proportionately reduced from that of their own makers: "they were blinded as the face of a mirror is breathed upon. Their vision flickered. Now it was only from close up that they could see what was there with any clarity" (ibid).

[10] See Chapter One for a discussion of this issue, in particular with regards to Martínez Peláez's *Patria del criollo*.

[11] See also Emilio del Valle Escalante's *Nacionalismos mayas y desafios postcoloniales en Guatemala: Colonialidad, modernidad y politicas de la identidad cultural* (FLACSO 2008) for a discussion of de Lión's resistance to Asturias's promotion of the "vindication of the indigenous through cultural mestizaje" (79).

[12] When the Dictator consults Don Juan Bonito and his nawal, it is clear that this ego conquiro figure is not married to a purely rationalist vision of events in time, given that he believes consulting the Indigenous nawal will help him prevent a coup d'état.

[13] Two readings emerge here. Either, the dictator indeed considers humans in a hierarchical relationship with animals, but considers that the nawal can be buried in the Maya cemetery because he doesn't see Mayas as particularly human. Or, the dictator believes the monkey's burial in the cemetery is justified because the monkey is in fact a kind of deity, with a status on par with or even above that of humans. Regardless as to the reading here, the bottom line is that the dictator has no qualms about burying an animal in a human cemetery, whereas the Maya community disagrees.

[14] See *Cuerpos inhumanos en vasijas del estado de Campeche* (2010) by Albertina Ortega Palma and Jorge Cervantes Martínez for a discussion of pre-Columbian Maya burial rites, in which often bodies were buried along with the remains of animals, in addition to other sacred relics (69)

[15] As the local priest in the novel preaches against liberals, Protestants, Freemasons and Communists, the narrator describes that the townspeople do not understand what he is talking about because they are not familiar with the subjects he preaches against. Hearing about these groups "was, for the townspeople, like hearing someone talk about a distant Spain lost in the sea, or about a rare book called the *Popol Wuj*" (16). In other words, the distance of the townspeople from the *Popol Wuj* is marked as though to indicate that they have little knowledge about the creation story of their own lineages. Nathan Henne translates the original "un libro raro llamado Popol Vuh" (de Lión 2003 24) as a "rare" book, however another translation would be a "strange" book, which gives a meaning that I believe is more accurate to the townspeople's lack of familiarity with the book. It is "strange" in that they are *estranged* from it. In other words, their

estrangement from the *Popol Wuj* translates into their estrangement from a Maya episteme and the quintessential Maya cultural product.

[16] See Nathan Henne's footnote in his 2011 translation of de Lión's novel in which he describes these processions and the corresponding cofradía in charge of organizing them (Henne 8).

[17] As an aside, we can consider Juan and Pascual's rejection in the Ladino world in comparison to Mario Monteforte Toledo's *Entre la piedra y la cruz*, discussed briefly in Chapter Two. In this novel, the Mayas who venture out into the Ladino world have trouble fitting into it precisely because of their own desire to be Maya and because their Maya worldview, in effect, impedes them from becoming ladinized. In de Lión's novel, the Maya characters are rejected in the Ladino world and are thus forced back home. They are rejected due to the racism of the Ladino world. In this sense, de Lión offers a different view of the Ladino world than Monteforte Toledo, who sees the problem of assimilation in the Mayas, not in the Ladinos. This happens too with *Donde acaban los caminos* discussed in Chapter Two, since Maria can't and doesn't want to fit into the Ladino world. In this sense, there is a difference between these two authors in terms of who carries the weight of the blame for the failure of assimilation/ladinization.

[18] Del Valle Escalante notes, citing Serge Gruzinkski's 1990 study *La Guerra de las imagines*, that the occidental image, in this case of the Virgin, represents the symbols and artifacts of the imperial and expansionist enterprise that in general manifest the ideology and practice of imperialist expansion, and which have been used to passively seduce the Indigenous world within the context of colonialism (73). Del Valle Escalante indicates: "con el deseo de 'limpiar' la mente de los nativos, las imagines traídas por los conquistadores buscaban instaurar un nuevo orden Cristiano que estaba en peligro en Europa; a su vez, impulsaban un proyecto imperial por medio del valor de la imagen como un objeto privilegiado que era usado para asimilar y 'librar del engaño del demonio y las trampas de la idolatría' de los indios (74).

[19] He cites here de Lión's views on mestizaje, inherent in the indigenista discourses studied in Chapter Two of this work. De Lión is cited as explaining: "No puedo participar del llamado mestizaje precisamente porque lo hispano es la negación de mi lengua, de mi cultura" (Montenegro, 8 cited in Del Valle Escalante 79).

[20] See Stevens, Evelyn and Martí Soler, "El marianismo: la otra cara del machismo en América Latina" in *Diálogos: artes, letras y ciencias humanas*" 10.1, 2004: 17-24.

[21] Maldonado-Torres also insists that the ego conquiro subjectivity, within the logic of an "actitud imperial", "define a sus ojetos como entes sexuales racializados […] se les ve como perpetuos siriventes o escalvos, y sus cuerpos bienen a formar parte de una economia de abuso sexual, explotacion y control (Maldonado-Torres 139). In this case, the gendered Indigenous mother occupies the space of servant in the gaze of the Indigenous man who has internalized, and adopted, the ego conquiro's imperial attitude.

[22] Nathan Henne's translation includes the use of Castilian punctuation within the English translation. I maintain this aspect of his translation in this study.

[23] Following Burgess and Holmstrom's 1974 study "Rape Trauma Syndrome", Concha appears to fall into the "reorganizational" phase after suffering a violation, one in which she consciously or unconsciously seeks revenge for the violation against her. See also Michael Rothberg's "Decolonizing Trauma Studies: a response" in *Studies in the Novel*, 40.0.5, 2008: 224-234 for a discussion of the application of trauma theories to post-colonial literature. He notes that "turn-of-the-millennium trauma studies has remained stuck within Euro-American conceptual and historical frameworks", and for this reason, theorizing Concha's reaction in this instance through trauma theory may reveal itself to be problematic for its Eurocentrism. On the other hand, analyzing Concha's reaction to her "rape" may prove fruitful for the theorization of Indigenous trauma theory in the context of gender coloniality. In other words, Concha's revenge for her "rape" in the "murder" of her husband becomes a decolonial "grito/llanto" drawing attention to the ramifications in her existence of her husband's internalized coloniality.

[24] See Sofia Aboim's *Plural Masculinities: The Remaking of the Self in Private Life (*137-156).

[25] As understood specifically in a heterosexual context.

[26] Once again, we see a character in de Lión's work that shifts into and out of a statue figure. If the statues in his work represent the wooden men creation, we can think of The Virgin statue as a failed being, as a

wooden person, but when she moves into flesh and blood through transgressive sex with a Maya man, she becomes more human.

[27] As Nibbe notes, one of the few critics to signal Concha's protagonism, "Concha leaves Juan in his house, without leaving a trace of her existence there. The mass hysteria that led to the destruction of the statue with which the woman of flesh and bone has been associated, breaks the vicious cycle, and with this rupture emerges a human person, who is no longer a whore, nor a virgin, nor a wife; an intelligent woman, a human being that expresses herself with clarity and eloquence" ("Concha deja a Juan en su Casa Blanca, sin dejar huella alguna de su existencia allí. La locura masiva que llevó a la destrucción de la estatua con que la mujer de carne y hueso ha estado asociada, rompe el círculo vicioso, y con esta ruptura emerge una persona humana, que ya no es puta, ni virgen, ni esposa; una mujer inteligente, un ser humano que se expresa con claridad y elocuencia").

[28] We recall at the beginning of the novel when she starts sleeping with the men in town, the men began to become afraid that her "blackness" would infect them. Later she is referred to as the "anti-woman", and the Cofradía that inaugurates her as the "new queen" is the "Cofradía of Death" (66).

[29] In regards to the trials faced by the twin fathers, Colop's versión of the *Popol Wuj* indicates: "Cuando llegaron a la casa de consejo de los Señores de Xibalbá / fueron vencidos de nuevo. / Los primeros que estaban sentados eran un muñeco de madera y / un maniquí adornados por Xibalbá. / A ellos saludaron primero: / -¡Buenos días, Jun Kame! le dijeron al muñeco de madera. - ¡Buenos días, Wuqub Kame! le dijeron al maniquí. / Pero no lograron vencerlos, / y de ahí que se rieran a carcajadas de ellos los Señores de Xibalbá, / se burlaron de ellos porque prácticamente estaban vencidos." (Colop 68). An intersting link exists between the image of the wooden Virgin in de Lión's novel and the "wooden doll" that the Lords of Xibalbá use to trick the brothers. The wooden Virgin in the novel imagined as the Xibalbá wooden doll contextualizes the Virgin in the *Popol Wuj's* comsmovision as an obstacle for the Mayas to undertake the initiation of the men of maize.

[30] In Sam Colop's version, Ixkik says to the owls: "Todavía no debo desaparecer / No me maten, mensajeros porque no he fornicado, Lo que llevo en el vientre se generó por sí mismo […] ¡Así que deténganse! / ¡Que no haya sacrificio, mensajeros! Dijo la doncella cuando les habló […] / No deben forzar a la gente hacia la muerte" (75-76).

[31] Also of note is Ixkik's symbolism as a Young Moon Goddess, associated with fertility and creation, as a waxing moon; one of her pairs is Ixchel, considered a waning Mood Goddess, or an older, "grandmother" figure who is depicted as having claws, being a warrior, and symbolizing waning fertility. Ixchel and Ixkik share traits such as their association with the moon and therefore rain, as well.

[32] Although it has been associated with the Christian hell, Xibalbá cannot be confounded with it. Xibalbá is the underworld, more a passage through which all the dead have to go through, regardless of good or bad behavior. It is another dimension, one associated with suffering and disease, which all beings have to traverse. Symbolically, Mayas associated it to those times when the sun was invisible (the night), or when the moon was invisible (the day). Non-beingness in the visible world seems to imply being in Xibalbá. But, since everything is cyclical for the Maya, all beings that cross through Xibalbá have the potential to return, as do the sun and moon every day, after completing their respective cycles. Xibalbá is associated with the underworld, one ruled by deities of disease and death, known as the "place of fear", it is described as a realm below the surface of the earth, ruled by twelve gods or powerful rulers known as the Lords of Xibalbá. Some Christian commentators have associated Xibalbá with the Christian hell, however it is more like another dimension, one associated with suffering and disease which all beings have to traverse (Arias "Afterword" 91-92) Since everything is cyclical for the Maya, all beings that cross through Xibalbá have the potential to return, as do the sun and moon every day, after completing their cycle. When the hero twin Junajpu and Xbalanke defeated the lords of Xibalbá, "they are symbolized as corn seeds that, in the infraworld, germinated, bloomed and were harvested. In this sense, Xibalbá is simultaneously the place of death as well as the space underground where life germinates when there is enough water and sunlight. It is the space under the ground where seeds have to be planted, and where they transform themselves in order to germinate, ultimately emerging as new corn seedlings into the outside world" (92).

[33] In Tedlock's English translation, the Makers and Modelers create animals and tell them: "'Talk, speak out. Don't moan, don't cry out […] Name now our names, praise us […] pray to us, keep our days,' they were told. But it didn't turn out that they spoke like people: they just squawked […]. 'It hasn't turned out well, they haven't spoken […] this will not do'" (Tedlock 67).
[34] In Tedlock's translation: "So then come the building and working with earth and mud. They made a body, but it didn't look good to them. It was just separating, just crumbling, just loosening, just softening, just disintegrating, and just dissolving. Its head wouldn't turn, either […] It couldn't look around. It talked at first, but senselessly" (68-69).
[35] Tedlock translates that the wood people came into being, but "there was nothing in their hearts and nothing in their minds, no memory of their mason and builder. They just went and walked wherever they wanted. Now they did not remember the Heart of Sky" (Tedlock 70).
[36] Interestingly, Concha's final unwillingness to partake in procreation ties into Asturias's *Hombres de maíz* in that Asturias's indigenous characters, if we recall from Chapter Two, are unable to procreate several times before the Ladino landownerns are defeated and the world is prepared to receive the creation of the men of maize. We can recall that all of the Indigenous males in the story have wives that leave them, and it is only in the end of the novel when one main protagonist reunites with his wife and defeats the Ladino landowners that they can procreate and fill the world with children. De Lión appears to tell this story from the opposite stance, from the woman's view, in Concha, given that Juan and Pascual are the ones who leave the village, and Concha stays the whole time. This is a plausible reading, because as Del Valle Escalante reminds us, De Lión was very concerned with the work of Asturias as well as his version of Guatemalan identity and indigeneity (See *Nacionalismos Mayas* p 65).
[37] Here we can also argue that Concha, as a woman who is "concientizada" after the length of the story, represents a figure akin to Ixchel, the Warrior Goddess who is associated with the waning moon. In this sense, once Concha is "concientizada" she gains a knowledge that transforms her from a young moon into an older, wiser moon.
[38] See Arias's "Afterword" to Nathan Henne's translation of *Time Commences in Xibalbá* (2011).

Conclusion

This study has built on the criticism of Luis de Lión's narrative work as a decolonial emancipatory project. However, given that de Lión produced much of his most political narrative during the 1960s-1980s, including his novel *Time Commences in Xibalbá*, I argued that in order to understand his work as decolonial in the time he was writing, it must be situated within the broader socio-political and literary context of 1960s-1980s Guatemala, a context entailing intricacies that have been understudied in the criticism of his work. Further, understanding the complexity of his decolonial project in relation to other literary production labeled New Maya Literature necessitated a deeper discussion of the discourses of Indigeneity and national identity circulating in political and academic debates primarily in the 1944-1984 period, which produced a series of social myths about Mayas. Additionally, the naturalization of these social myths into social imaginaries through literary discursive "truths" had to be addressed in a genealogy of texts from the colonial period to the mid-20th century. In this contextual relocation of his work, I asserted that Luis de Lión's literary project can be understood as decolonial precisely because he problematizes the violence of the social myths and discursive "truths" about indigeneity and national identity articulated in Guatemalan society and literature not only during his lifetime, but throughout colonial and post-Independence Guatemalan history.

This work thus stems from Arturo Arias's assertion that Luis de Lión is a "pioneer" of a decolonizing New Maya Literature emerging in the 1990s. However, it also contributes to the understanding of New Maya Literature and Luis de Lión's position in relation to it by signaling that this author decolonizes imaginaries about Mayas prior to the emergence of activism surrounding Maya languages and nationalism, and by dialoguing "clasista" and "culturalista" discourses central to the 1960s-1980s revolutionary movements in Guatemala. I also signaled, further, that de Lión's work goes beyond these discourses as he intuits New Maya Literature's preoccupation with what I have termed spiritual coloniality. And finally, his work is also intuitively decolonial because of his inclusion of a forceful critique of racializing gender coloniality, a move that is not articulated in the New Maya Literature of the 1990s and that only emerges with Maya women writers of the post-war generation some 20 years after de Lión's death.

Tracing Social Myths and Discursive "Truths"

To address the ways in which de Lión's work is decolonial given the time he was writing, the first two chapters of this study sought to understand how indigeneity is colonized in the discourses that precede his work. For that reason, the first chapter provided an analysis of national identity and indigeneity in the historical, anthropological and sociological discourses prevalent from the colonial period to the mid-1980s. In this section, I began by offering a brief analysis of the colonial period, in which Mayas were viewed primarily as a natural resource to be exploited through their labor, a vision

resulting in a polarized, racialized class structure benefitting a minority of Criollo and later Ladino landowners, at the expense of the majority Maya population. Class and racial polarization thus became a foundational conflict within the proto-Guatemalan nation. In the post-Independence Liberal era, maintaining exploitative labor policies was coupled with the emergence of specific ethnic policies aimed at "assimilating" Mayas into a national capitalist imaginary. These ethnic policies were rooted in then-popular anthropological theories of cultural evolution, in which societies were categorized as "superior" or "inferior" according to their degree of material and social "progress", such that cultural differences became the prominent means for understanding Guatemalan social polarization. As we saw with the emergence of indigenismo in the 1920s and 1930s, and continuing into and after the 1944-1954 October Revolutionary period, the view of national identity moved from a cultural "superior" versus "inferior" binary into what becomes called the "Indigenous-Ladino" binary. This binary imagined national identity as a conflictive opposition between ethno-cultural groups in the nation, however, in Ladino political debates this binaristic imaginary was framed in the racializing assertion of an "Indian problem" plaguing the nation. Thus the "Indigenous-Ladino" binary became a byproduct of a more central issue in the Ladino vision of the nation, the "Indian problem", which as we saw in the discussion of tutelary ethnic policies during the 1944-1954 period, reveals a racializing Ladino gaze in which Mayas are seen as more than just the conflictive opposite of Ladinos, since they become the problematic presence in the Ladino nation. This oppositional vision of national identity and the image of Mayas as a "problem" articulated a pervasive social myth, one rooted in the Ladino drive to

maintain economic and epistemological dominance in the nation. That is, the bifurcation of Mayas into another binary negating Indigenous ethno-cultural continuity: Mayas are imagined in State policies as either "glorious Indians of the past" to be celebrated and attract tourism, or the "miserable Indians of the present" standing as a barrier to national progress. This bifurcation of Mayas from indigenismo's introduction into Guatemalan policy debates and through the Counterrevolutionary regimes into the 1960s justified three trends in ethnic policies, all of which aimed to mitigate the problematic barrier to national progress that Mayas presented, and all of which ultimately aimed at the erasure of contemporary Maya culture in the nation: assimilation, integration, and ladinization. As we saw in Chapter One, these culture-concerned ethnic policies sought to"raise Mayas' cultural situations", which was veiled speech for doing away with Maya ways of being and knowing, and was ultimately an obfuscation of deeply-rooted racism inherent in the Ladino gaze toward Mayas. Assimilation, integration and later ladinization were eventually criticized by Maya and some leftist Ladino activists and intellectuals in the 1970s and 1980s. Antonio Pop saw as "culturcidio", and Carlos Guzmán Böckler and Jean Loup Herbert understood it as blantant racism. ORPA also centered racism as the culprit of binaristic social relations in the nation. In the ethnic and economic policies coming from the State throughout Guatemalan history, we found a constant reification of both the "Indian Problem" with regard to national "progress", and the "Indigenous-Ladino" binary as central to understanding the barriers to a "homogenous", read Ladino, national identity.

Finally, the first chapter of this study found that in response to repressive Counterrevolutionary regimes, two major dissenting discourses appeared within academic debates and popular movements based on different understandings of social polarization in Guatemala. The "clasista" view was rooted in a Marxist interpretation of class schisms between, on the one side, poor Mayas and Ladinos, and on the other, bourgeois and/or elite Ladinos. The other dissenting camp viewed ethno-racial discrimination in the nation as the defining problem of Guatemalan social relations, and thus came to be known as the "culturalista" camp advocating for Maya cultural and human rights, and an end to state policies of "culturcidio". While in the late 1970s it appeared that these two revolutionary projects were incompatible, in the 1980s both class-based and culture-based revolutionary projects increasingly forged alliances to challenge the Counterrevolutionary state. The latter, fearing mass resistance from this leftist front, embraced a literal, militaristic policy of ethnic erasure: genocide.

Next, using a genealogical approach to trace discursive "truths", I determined how the imaginaries of indigeneity and national identity became normalized in discursive practices in Guatemalan textualities throughout time and leading up to the moment in which de Lión produced his narrative. I engaged in a study of the genealogy of literary discourses from the colonial period to the mid-20th century in which we saw the reification of the social myths established in political discourses in that the binaries discussed above became translated into discursive binaries and "truths" about Mayas and Ladinos in literature. The inaugural binary found in colonial "historian" Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán's *Recordación florida* normalizes in discourse two

fundamental binaries imagining the so-called "Indian Problem" and national identity: 1) the bifurcated Maya as the discursive "truth" revealing the "glorious Indian of the past" and the "miserable Indian of the present" dichotomy, and 2) the hierarchization of the ego conquiro subjectivity in relation to the bifurcated Maya. However, in literary discourses, additional discursive "truths" emerged which served to provide evidence of the first binary, and to justify the second. These included "truths" framing Mayas as superstitious, unreal, mythical bare-life subjectivities which we saw in Fuentes y Guzmán's text, José Milla's *La hija del adelantado,* and Flavio Herrera's *La tempestad*. Herrera's text is particularly violent toward Mayas in that it characterized "the miserable Indian of the present" as lazy, moochers, thieves and linguistic "others" in the nation. Herrera also introduces the first narrative account of Maya women, in which he produces the contradictory "truth" that they are simultaneously sexually vile and exist as sexual servants for the Ladino man. Thus Herrera appeared to be the most vehement of the authors studied in his racializing gaze toward Mayas and his naturalization of the imaginary of the "miserable Indian of the present". Additionally in this chapter, I evidenced how two indigenista texts, Miguel Ángel Asturias's *Hombres de maíz* and Mario Monteforte Toledo's *Donde acaban los caminos,* reify prior imaginaries of the bifurcated Maya. Asturias does so by relegating contemporary Mayas to unreal, mythical spaces and forging them textually as non-individualized prototypes of the *Popol Wuj* hero twins. And Monteforte Toledo reasserts the Liberal-era period discourse of Mayas as "backwards" in their sanitation practices, as unhealthy, and as incapable of caring for themselves physically and intellectually. I concluded that all of these discursive "truths"

are violences done upon Mayas in Criollo and Ladino literature that parallel the myriad of violences – from economic to physical, from the Invasion to genocide – wielded upon Mayas in the tradition of non-Indigenous aggression toward Mayas beginning in the colonial period.

Luis de Lión's narrative, however, given the context in which he wrote, signaled a literary, decolonial project – a decolonial "grito/llanto" – because it recalled and problematized Criollo and later Ladino discourses enacting violence toward Mayas in the nation/text (whether these "violences" were discourse, policy or military-based). As discussed in Chapter Three of this study, de Lión enacted this textual problematization of violence by breaking with the Ladino imaginary of the temporally and culturally bifurcated Maya because he signaled Indigenous resistance as a constant, cyclical agency, particularly in his short story "Los hijos del padre". In this same work, he also broke with essentializing discourses of Mayas as part of a collective "indiada", and more generally in his narrative as a whole, in his multiple particularizations of diverse Maya subjectivities. These particularizations themselves evidenced de Lión's internalization of a merger of clasista and culturalista revolutionary fronts, in that his characters problematized racialization and ethnic policies such as ladinization, as in *Time Commences in Xibalbá*, while at the same time underlying critiques of inequitable class stratification affecting Mayas, as in the short story "Los hijos del padre".

Nonetheless, de Lión's work goes beyond clasista and culturalista discourses by forcefully complicating Criollo and Ladino "truths" of Maya spiritual difference as "superstition", in opposition to the "rational" non-Indigenous, particularly in his short

story “El simio”. In this piece, he negates the ego conquiro subjectivity’s presumed reason and lack of “superstition”, while also presenting hybrid Maya spiritualities and problematizations of Ladino belief systems. Further, and unprecedented in the initial works of the New Maya Literature, “truths” regarding Maya women as passive, sexual servants were certainly critiqued in de Lión’s textual meditations on gender coloniality, in which he presented a transgressive Maya woman who has come to consciousness regarding not only her own discrimination, but also the internalization of coloniality on the part of Indigenous men. In this sense, de Lión asserted the theme of coming to consciousness regarding disenfranchisement in order to challenge social myths characterizing contemporary Mayas as “miserable”, and thus, incapable of thinking, or as depoliticized “bare-life” subjectivities – an imaginary that circulated in both the policy debates studied in Chapter One and in the Criollo/Ladino discourses studied in Chapter Two.

Identifying de Lión’s Work as Decolonial

Naming Luis de Lión’s work as decolonial required two central analyses: first, identifying the colonial matrix of power in Guatemalan political, social and literary discourses; and second, identifying how de Lión’s literary project reflects a decolonial emancipatory project for Mayas by problematizing the imaginaries of Ladino power, and thus power/knowledge, in Guatemala as a Eurocentric nation. In the following section, I will address each of these separately to signal how I showed de Lión’s work as decolonial

given its upending of social myths and discursive "truths" regarding national identity and indigeneity.

First I addressed how, in Guatemala, the colonial matrix of power (the coloniality of power) emerged as the underlying logic for the development of Guatemala as a Eurocentric product of Western colonialism; one which depended on the binaristic vision of national identity as rooted in the "Indigenous-Ladino" divide. In that sense, the first chapter of this project delineated how power became organized in Guatemala as the domination of Criollos and later Ladinos over Mayas through the exploitation of the latter by the former, and through continual practices of discrimination resulting in socio-economic inequalities and epistemic imbalances marginalizing Mayas from power. This domination was, from the colonial period forward, imagined as a Ladino right. I showed that the colonial matrix of power was first articulated through labor exploitation justified by racial and ethno-cultural discrimination, becoming institutionalized with economic laws and policies, such as forced labor and debt peonage. However, as Guatemalan society moved further away from the period of formal colonization, marginalization of Mayas from power was articulated in ethnic and social policies in addition to economic policies, thus centering race and culture-based discriminatory practices through state institutions. In the 20th century, these practices emerged in tutelary policies in which power was centered in the figure of the President or the state to determine which aspects of Maya ways of knowing were appropriate for the Eurocentric nation, and which aspects were barriers to "progress" in the modern, capitalist nation. In this sense, I explored how coloniality was maintained through the state via the figure of the president as the

principal, “official” ego conquiro subjectivity in the Western nation. Tutelary policies of assimilation, integration and ladinization became racializing practices linked to the Eurocentric national project in this sense. In other words, into the 20th century, power was organized by Ladinos in an epistemic, ethno-cultural, and/or racial erasure of Mayas from the nation. When the colonial matrix of power concentrated in the Western state appeared to be challenged by a united front of leftist revolutionaries in the early 1980s, I signaled a shift in how power was organized such that the Ladino state moved away from policies based on exploitation and epistemic erasure of Mayas so that they may “become Ladinos”, and rather translated the central tenet of coloniality – Eurocentric domination – into genocide. In the above ways, the first chapter of this project indicated precisely how the colonial matrix of power became articulated through state practices and policies of discrimination, policies that sought to erase Maya epistemology, but to maintain Mayas as a mass to be dominated through economic exploitation, as if reenacting another, or a continual, “conquest” of Indigenous populations in Guatemala.

Chapter Two showed, in turn, how the colonial matrix of power became articulated in literary discourses that normalized social imaginaries of the Indigenous as “inferior” to Criollos and later Ladinos based on racial, cultural and epistemic bases. Chapter Two proved that literary discourses became part of the colonial matrix of power because power, following Foucault, is inextricably linked to knowledge, such that power controlled and defined knowledge about the nation and about Mayas and Ladinos in it. Social imaginaries were converted into discursive “truths” (knowledge) in literature, and power worked through literature to normalize this knowledge. In the case of Guatemala,

therefore, Criollo and Ladino power manifested through literature produced knowledge that reified relationships of economic and epistemic domination of Mayas by Criollos and later Ladinos. Therefore, Chapter Two identified literary discourses as a primary venue for tracing the articulation of knowledge (what I call discursive "truths") that subsequently reified inequitable power relations in the nation. Given the primary findings in Chapter Two discussed earlier, the knowledge that is produced about Indigeneity and national identity pointed to the Criollo and later Ladino ego conquiro subjectivity, in its myriad of forms, as manifesting a Western, Eurocentric model of rationality, reason and progress. Its opposite became an unreal, non-being Maya, or what I have called the bifurcated Maya. Thus, Criollo and Ladino power / knowledge relied on the binaristic imaginary of the "Indigenous-Ladino" opposition, and viewed the Indigenous more generally as binaristic non-subjects – "Indians" who were "glorious" in the past, but "miserable" in the present. Tracing the genealogy of this discourse, and its accompanying discursive "truths", I evidenced how the colonial matrix of power became encoded into literature, crafting language that naturalized racializing views of Mayas in a relationship of subordination vis-à-vis the ego conquiro Criollos and Ladinos, whether these were imagined as the figure of Pedro de Alvarado, the Ladino finca owner, or the indigenista authorial subject. Thus this constant reification of the ego conquiro subjectivity in contraposition to the bifurcated, non-being Maya became evidence of the coloniality of power operating within the Guatemalan national canon. The binaristic social myth of the "glorious Indian of the past" and the "miserable Indian of the present" negated Maya beingness by distancing contemporary Mayas from an ethno-cultural history and tradition

that was both different from and independent of Euro-based ethno-cultural traditions. Discursively constructing contemporary Mayas as non-beings in the nation became yet another means of erasing contemporary indigeneity from the national identity, a key component of Guatemalan coloniality of power.

Once we discovered the specific ways in which coloniality became articulated within socio-political and literary discourses of Indigeneity and national identity, the next step in this dissertation was to prove that Luis de Lion's work was not only decolonial in nature, but further a decolonial emancipatory project operating within the revolutionary context of his time. As discussed in the Introduction to this project, if decoloniality, according to Mignolo, is both a political and epistemic project, I was tasked with revealing how de Lión's literary project reflected both of these fronts. In my analysis of *Time Commences in Xibalbá*, we saw a clear indication that de Lión's decolonial project was based in part in the articulation of a resistive Maya episteme, one that challenged the dominant position of Eurocentric epistemology and subjectivities in the nation. He articulated a challenge, or a decolonial "grito/llanto", to the imposition of an imaginary of whiteness as superior, in the image of the Virgin, and darkness as inferior, as in the image of Concha in his novel. However, I showed that his decolonial critique was "epistemic" for several other reasons.

First, he located the internalization of Ladino racialization in Maya men, thus indicating a colonization of being that was challenged only by a Maya woman in the text. In this sense, the Maya men underwent an epistemological brainwashing, an overwriting of their ways of knowing and valuing Mayanity. Therefore, his critique of what I referred

to in Chapter Three as internalized coloniality in Maya men is clear evidence of an epistemological, decolonial "grito/llanto". Second, we saw intertextual links to the *Popol Wuj*, and particularly Concha and Xibalbá as, respectively, a creator and a space holding the potential for a new time cycle to begin – a cycle defined by Maya emancipation from Ladino epistemological imposition. By intertextually lacing the tenets of a Maya cosmovision located in the *Popol Wuj* into his narrative, de Lión recenterd the Maya classical book as a foundational narrative for epistemological emancipation. Further, de Lión incorporated elements of Maya cosmovision found in the *Popol Wuj* in the context of contemporary Mayanity – with references to the diegetic present as a real place, with Mayas struggling with then-current issues, and in which a realist linguistic register was used, as opposed to Asturias who signaled Maya agency as linked to a mythical space inhabited by prototypes of the *Popol Wuj*. I therefore argued that by connecting contemporary Mayanity to a cosmovision found in the *Popol Wuj* de Lión produced a decolonial "grito/llanto" drawing attention to the fallacy of the bifurcated Maya established in Ladino discourses of indigeneity, and the epistemological imposition of Ladino racialization on Mayas. In other words, by marking a connection between contemporary Mayanity and the *Popol Wuj*, de Lión cracks the rigid "glorious Indian of the past" – "miserable Indian of the present" binary.

Second, I evidenced that in fact de Lión's decolonial project is a political one in which, on the one hand, he criticizes the ethnic policies of erasure coming from the state discussed in Chapter One. In his novel, through the characters of Juan and Pascual, de Lión asserted a counter-discourse to the policies of ladinization with examples of

Indigenous men who have tried to become part of the Ladino world, but who did not succeed not due to a lack of wanting to, but rather due to the severe racism of Ladinos themselves, which ironically renders ladinization impossible. This critique was developed in narrative as a counter-discourse to official state policies racializing Mayas, and thus, de Lión participated from the margins in the official debates discussed in Chapter One regarding ethnic policy through the venue of literature. Given he, and many others, as Indigenous subjects were marginalized from direct participation in these debates, narrative became his means of political participation in a state that from the colonial period had not considered Mayas as political beings, but rather as "depoliticized" bare-life subjectivities.

On the other hand, his decolonial project was shown to be political because of the discourses he incorporated simultaneously in his work, that is, the clasista and culturalista understandings of revolutionary emancipation circulating during the time he was writing. These emancipatory discourses intertwined in this texts, such as in "Los hijos del padre", in which Maya characters problematized the supposed incompatibility of culturalista and clasista camps before the formation of the URNG by identifying themselves as both racialized and exploited in terms of class relations. Finally, I showed that de Lión's work is in fact a decolonial political project through his presentation of dictatorial ego conquiro figure who reveals his own traces of Indigenous identity in "El simio", and Mayas who have adopted diverse views of human-animal parity. These hybrid characters problematized the central "Indigenous- Ladino" binary in the nation by underlining

national subjectivities that fell somewhere between the oppositional extremes of the "Indigenous-Ladino" spectrum.

De Lión's work was therefore based in a positionality asserting multiple political and epistemic decolonial "gritos/llantos". Many were specifically directed at the Counterrevolutionary governments of the 1960s-1980s, and many paralleled the social critiques of leftist activists, academics and resistance movements of the second half of the 20th century. However, in addition to showing the above, I found that not only was de Lión's work significant in that it incorporated clasista and culturalista discourses, but it also moved beyond the emancipatory political and epistemic projects of the time he was writing, first with his critique of the spiritual coloniality, and second, and more forcefully, with his problematization of gender coloniality in Maya intersubjective relations. In this way, his project identified in Ladino discourses two major discursive "truths" about Mayas that were not discussed in larger debates in the 1960s-1980s, but that appeared in the genealogy of Criollo and Ladino literary discourses as spin-off "truths" justifying the power of the ego conquiro subjectivity over Mayas. With the inclusion of these two social critiques, -- spiritual coloniality and gender coloniality – I evidenced that de Lión's decolonial project was both epistemic and political, it upended prior social myths and discursive "truths" of indigenieity and national identity, and further, it intuited decolonial critiques that did not manifest in the broader revolutionary, emancipatory project.

New Knowledge of Luis de Lión's Literary Project

Given these findings, it is appropriate to highlight the knowledge that this study has uncovered, and the pre-existing views that have been challenged. First and foremost, this study contributes to a growing corpus of research in Indigenous Latin American Studies considering textual production "from the margins" of epistemic power/knowledge paradigms within broader national discursive practices. Luis de Lión's work as an epistemic and political emancipatory project is revealed as producing a shift in the conceptual lenses surrounding Indigeneity and national identity in Ladino Guatemalan discourses because his work frames Indigenous peoples as political agents in their collective and individual self-representation. For this reason, his work contributes to a "de-centering" of epistemic thinking beyond Western and Eurocentric conceptualizations in national political discourses and national literary production. By inserting a decolonial vision of Mayanity into Ladino imaginaries and textualities, de Lión shifts the knowledge/power prototype of Eurocentered conventions in Guatemala by discursively de-linking Mayas from the social myths and discursive "truths" confining them to racist, discriminatory imaginaries. While this is not the only study to center de Lión's decolonial literary project, it is the first to understand his decolonial project in the context of both literary and political discourses of the 1960s-1980s, which is a necessary contextualization if we are to appreciate the multidimensional nature of his decolonial, emancipatory literary project. Moreover, Luis de Lión's de-liking matters because it decenters the "center", that is, the sum of discourses produced in the Guatemalan, Ladino canon racializing Mayas. He decenters the center by locating its inconsistencies,

contradictions, and underlying desires (economic domination, sexual satisfaction, etc.). His work then asserts an "other" episteme rooted in a Maya cosmovision and challenging Ladino essentialization of Mayas; an "other" imaginary occupying a space within Guatemalan textualities that expresses an experience of and reflection on indigeneity from an Indigenous vantage point. He is, as far as we know at this point in time, the first contemporary writer of Indigenous origin to challenge Ladino imaginaries of indigeneity and to assert an Indigenous view of indigeneity in Latin America in this way.

Second, considering de Lión as the first contemporary writer of Indigenous origin and knowing that a Maya cosmovision is a central part of his work, we can safely agree that he is in fact a "pioneer" of New Maya Literature, an assertion discussed in the Introduction to this work. However, a question that remained from the Introduction to this study asks whether de Lión is also a "pioneer" because he establishes in his work a discourse of Maya Nationalism within the contemporary Maya Movement. The present dissertation answers this question in a link between Chapter One and Chapter Three. It is therefore critical to return to the conclusions we drew from the first chapter of this study. We recall that the tensions over the imaginaries of national identity, both economic and ethnic, at all points from the mid-1940s to the mid-1980s caused deep conflicts among different social groups, and culminated in a genocidal civil war. The end result makes it clear that ideologies of the modern Guatemalan nation rooted in a singular, Western national identity at no point sufficiently addressed the complexity of Guatemala's economic and ethnic reality and the multiple demands of national actors. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the progressive alliance building among clasista and culturalista camps

and the shifting discourse of some of the revolutionary guerrilla movements led to a unified front with the URNG. But, whether the groups associated with the URNG were prepared to overthrow the military regimes and install a state model in which Maya autonomy was a guarantee, is not at all clear from the documentation of the period. In fact, based on the documents reviewed in Chapter One, I would suggest that a Maya nationalist project was not part of the combined revolutionary clasista and culturalista front at all. Rather, allegiances were made in response to ever-increasing chaos and violence perpetrated by the military state. It is only after 1985 that we witness the first appearance of the contemporary Maya Movement which developed out of the Círculo Lingüístico described by Demetrio Cojtí Cuxil in Chapter One, along with continued efforts by Maya intellectuals in the creation of the Academy of Maya Languages in the 1990s.

In this study, I showed that de Lión, predating both of these movements, is decolonizing imaginaries about Mayas prior to the emergence of activism surrounding Maya languages and nationalism. De Lión was thus framing decoloniality in his work by exploring the complexity and entanglement of marginalizing, racializing and discriminatory practices in Guatemala within the context of a violent state model. Therefore, his decolonial critique of Guatemalan society, then, includes a fierce assessment of the military/dictatorial state, of economic violence, and of class stratification in the 1970s-1980s. Given these aspects of his work, the present study challenges the view that de Lión's work articulates a Maya Nationalism based in a new vision of a revamped pluriethnic nation. Rather, I read in his work a critique of

racialization of Mayas, discursive and physical violence toward Indigenous peoples within the context of the nation-state, and a problematization of the essentialization of Mayas according to Ladino discursive "truths" about who Mayas are. In the layered complexity of his discourses and that of the characters populating his narrative, we find a pioneering rupture of imaginaries of Mayas confined to one of the racial-cultural-identitarian ends of the national identity spectrum, the "Indigenous-Ladino binary". That, I argued, is the true nature of his decolonial, and emancipatory, literary project, and thus this study offers this view as a relocation of his work into the complex context in which he was writing.

Third, I would suggest that a new reading of de Lión's story "Los hijos del padre" and of certain aspects of *Time Commences in Xibalbá*, such as the question of Concha's fertility, presented in this dissertation highlight another, previously unexplored, link between a contemporary Maya episteme, as suggested by de Lión, and a story in the *Popol Wuj* in which the hero twins steal Seven Macaw's sight. As discussed in Chapter Three, when the hero twins steal Seven Macaw's sight an episteme emerges that links vision – the ability to see – with knowledge and power. The Twins pluck out this villain's eyes in order to control his gaze by taking away his ability to know others through sight. By removing Seven Macaw's sight/knowledge, the twins articulate their power over him. In de Lión's work, the narrator of "Los hijos del padre" and Concha in the novel, in particular instances provide contradictory information regarding, respectively, whether a Maya revolt occurred and when, and whether Concha can or cannot get pregnant. In both of these cases, the reader is left uncertain as to what actually happened in the stories,

because the narrators reveal contradictory information. In this way, the characters, the events and the information they convey is ultimately unknowable. These aspects of the stories become indecipherable, illegible.

What is fascinating about this aspect of de Lión's work is that it functions in direct opposition to the Ladino insistence on creating identitarian binaries to explain Guatemalan national identity and indigeneity. Binaries present a relationship of opposition and mutual exclusion, and in doing so, they make each party of the relationship knowable based on how it differs from the other. Thus in the "Indigenous-Ladino" binary, if Ladino is "rational", Indigenous is "irrational"; if Indigenous is "a thief", Ladino is "honest", etc. Consequently, binary constructs created by Criollos and later Ladinos in Guatemalan textualities make the Maya knowable to them in their opposition to how they view, or would like to view, themselves. De Lión's distancing plays, untrustworthy narrative and contradictions creates a situation in which Mayas are in fact unknowable, undecipherable and illegible, and thus in his work Ladino knowing of Mayas becomes slippery. This slippage lessens Ladino power over Mayas. De Lión does this not only in the examples given above, but also in the presentation of many different kinds of Maya characters, with different insights, ideas, dreams, and struggles. This way of knowing that is "not knowing" in de Lión's work, I suggest, is a way of "not knowing" Mayas that problematizes Criollo and later Ladino binaries seeking to "read"/"know", and thus have power over, Mayas. In a word, through illegibility, de Lión unhinges Eurocentric binaristic constructions determining power/knowledge over Mayas.

Two additional issues emerge here. First, in this unhinging is a critique of binaristic thinking as limiting subjective nuances in individuals who also happen to be Maya. This gets back at the idea of the "indiada" as a knowable, readable group; a character mass that opposes the Ladino individual. De Lión presents Mayas that are part of a group but also particularized as individuals, thus nuancing characters as both distinct from and part of a larger group, a discourse that complicates Ladino notions of the "indiada". Second, the illegibility of Mayas or of Maya-related events in de Lión's work is, I would suggest, part of an epistemic survival strategy in which being unknowable interrupts the power/knowledge paradigm in Ladino-Indigenous relations, thus permitting Mayas to survive the violence of Ladino power/knowledge. This aspect of de Lión's work, which appears in more stories than discussed in this study, is a new contribution to understanding his work and his problematization of Ladino binaristic thinking about Mayas.

Lastly, this project is the first to identify and discuss in depth the figure of Concha in *Time Commences in Xibalbá* as a female, decolonial figure who comes to consciousness of her own discrimination as a Maya woman before both Ladinos and Mayas alike. De Lión's problematization of gender coloniality predates both Ladino and Maya cultural production addressing this issue, and I would argue, he is the only male author of Indigenous origin who so blatantly signals Maya men's internalized gender coloniality. Further, this study is the first to connect the figure of Concha with the *Popol Wuj* character Ixkik, a link that restores to contemporary Indigenous textualities a

recognition of the creative and generative power of the female presence in Maya epistemology.

As we saw in our review of the criticism of de Lión's novel, the vast majority of critics highlight the intertextual link between Juan and Pascual and the hero twins, or even the hero twins' fathers in lieu of analyzing Concha's protagonism. I would suggest here that this reality is itself a reflection of a masculinist way of knowing that becomes translated into criticism of *Time Commences in Xibalbá*. This is particularly problematic because a masculinist reading of de Lión's text in relation to the *Popol Wuj* forgets male-female balance and female protagonism in the Maya classical book. In addition to Ixkik, we also recall that the Makers and Modelers were male-female pairs, the oldest daykeepers Xpiacoc and Xmucane were male-female grandparent figures, and that even the hero twins reflected a male-female pair, although they are represented in the text as male. In this sense, reading Ixkik in Concha problematizes the critical masculinist gaze toward de Lión's work, and perhaps, in Indigenous textualities in general. For these reasons, the reading of Concha and Ixkik in this study serves as a re-centering of female protagonism in Maya textualities and cosmogony.

Areas for Future Research

Several areas of investigation emerge from this study that are not considered in this work in detail, if at all. I will briefly mention two that are areas for future scholarship regarding de Lión's work and regarding Guatemalan state violence and its connection to coloniality.

First, because de Lión's work evidences various emancipatory discourses, tracking ideological shifts in his life and work could prove fruitful for a more thorough understanding of his writing in the context in which he lived. There is evidence that his thinking about Guatemalan revolution shifted over time, changes that could be tied to the fluctuating discourses of revolution in Guatemala – clasista and culturalista – and to the spaces in which de Lión circulated both personally and professionally (rural schools versus Guatemala City's University of San Carlos, for example). Future work on his Marxist poetry, some of which is as of yet unpublished, is in line to understand how this author balanced his decolonial critiques of the imaginaries of indigeneity and national identity with his participation in Ladino, Eurocentric political movements, such as the PGT. With this future work, we could perhaps better understand de Lión as a subject and his work as intuiting a kind of critical border thinking, following Ramón Grosfoguel, in his hybrid emancipatory clasista and culturalista discourse. Along with his poetry, what stands to be problematized is the struggle in his life and work to speak from a critical border positionality, one that traverses various identities and identitarian spaces, while also grappling personally and textually with internalized coloniality and dis-identification as a person of Maya origin operating within the context of the urban Ladino milieu, in which he lived and worked in the latter part of his life.

Second, in regards to first chapter of this project, I raised the issue of the state moving away from ethnic policies of cultural erasure (assimilation, ladinization) and toward a final solution to the so-called "Indian problem" by way of genocide in the first part of the 1980s. Because of this move, I question whether the theoretical category of

coloniality as a means of understanding the Guatemalan state in the first half of the 1980s is insufficient. Although complete genocide did not occur in Guatemala given the number of survivors, we cannot downplay the atrocities of what has been called "The Silent Holocaust" of Mayas during this period. The reality of genocide shows the measures power will take to perpetuate itself within the colonial matrix of power. The question is then, what kind of theoretical framework can be developed that traces coloniality up to or into the stage in which holocaust occurs, and what does a theory of holocaust that results as a consequence of coloniality look like?

Luis de Lión knew that his assassination by the Ladino state was a risk he was taking, he even mentioned it in his narrative in several instances. But he chose to resist the violence of the state in his activism and in his writing. In doing so, he produced a corpus of short stories, poetry and one novel that stand as a decolonial "grito/llanto". His work redresses racializing imaginaries of Indigeneity in Guatemala and provides other versions of Indigeneity that are as multifaceted and complex as the time period in which he lived. His work stands as a counter-discursive monument to both his political and epistemological challenge to power and his assertion of Guatemalan indigeneity.

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