

RECKONING

The Ends of War in Guatemala

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UNDER THE SIGN OF THE VIRGEN DE TRÁNSITO

One is too few, but two are too many. Donna Haraway

I have two faces. Mayan catechist

There is at the head of this great continent a very powerful country, very rich, very warlike and capable of anything. The U.S. seems destined to plague and torment the continent in the name of freedom.

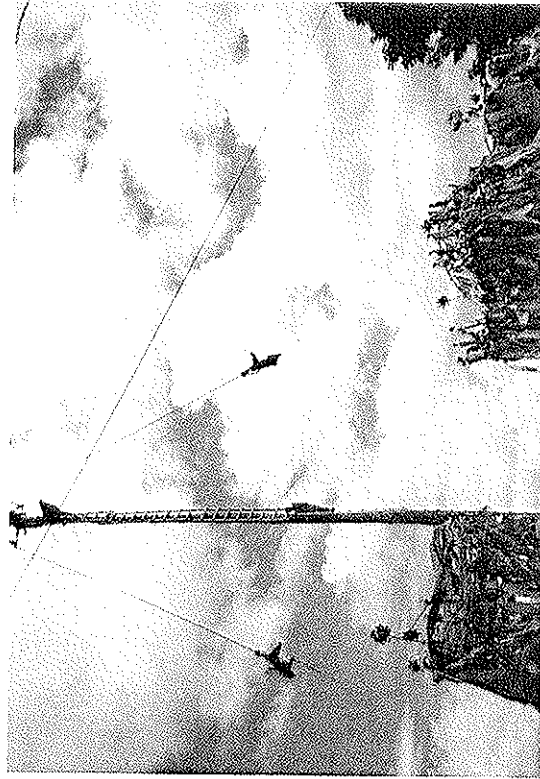
Simón Bolívar

MASKS AND DISPOSSESSION

A drum is playing and the thin reedy song of the oboelike *chirimía*. The sun is very hot for the mid-August titular festival in the highland town of Joyabaj. The streets are jammed with people, as everyone—even Evangelical Christians disdainful of the *fiesta's* paganism and depravity—comes down from the hamlets to sell or buy in the bustling market, to try the carnival rides and games, to watch a video, or to fulfill ritual obligations through dancing or hosting. At any one time there may be five or more dances going on, sometimes all at once, in the square in front of the church, whose facade was one of the few things left standing after the devastating earthquake of 1976.¹ Buses are busy bringing people back from work on the South Coast and from the capital, and children home from boarding school. Some Joyabatecos re-turn from as far away as the United States, where a sizeable number now live for a few months, years, or a lifetime. Mindful of luring workers to cut cane in the upcoming harvest, sugar plantations sponsor banners congratulating the town on its fiesta. Periodically a group of men dressed as angels and *monos* (monkeys) and often rather inebriated, approach the huge pole, fashioned from a single tree trunk, erected in the central square. Both climb up, and the angels hook their feet into stirrups on ropes wound around the top, and jump—the trunk turns, and they go twirling, circling, and slowly descending to earth.² All this is to honor the patron of Joyabaj, the Virgin of the Assumption, known colloquially as La Virgen de Tránsito (transition, transformation, or journey).³



Virgen de Tránsito, Our Lady of Assumption, ensconced in her magnificent frame, exits the Joyabaj church to take a turn about the town. August 15, 2003. Author photograph.



Baile del Palo Volador. In the central square of Joyabaj dancers repeatedly leap from the pole and circle slowly, descending to earth, while other dances are performed below. Author photograph.

Down a side street, dancers dressed in heavy costumes and thick wooden masks trace the back-and-forth steps of the Baile de la Culebra (Dance of the Snake). Unlike the Baile del Venado, in which humans are disguised as deer, or the Baile de los Monos, in which humans take the part of monkeys, in this the snakes the dancers handle are real and poisonous. In brown masks drawn from old Spanish images of “the Moors,” dancers repeat the yearly rituals of being contracted to work as *mozos* (laborers) on the sugarcane and coffee plantations on the fever-ridden Pacific coast. In the masquerade an indigenous man also assumes the role of a ladino, or nonindigenous, by

(cross)-dressing as a Spaniard, in blonde wooden curls. The agent of national and transnational capital in its local form, he bends one dancer over to use his back as a table to mark down the men’s names in a book, recording how much they owe for the drink he just bought them or for the cash advance they received when their child fell ill. It is an act I’ve seen repeated out of costume, that is, in real life, in the main square.* While in that life it is quite difficult to escape the combined forces of debt collectors and the iron law of wages, in the dance the names provided for the notebook are “generally nonsense names, or puns, or malapropisms. . . . The dancers have a lot of fun with each other and the specific exchanges are highly improvisational. . . . humorous non-sequiturs that turn on the miscommunications so common between ladinos and Maya” (Maury Hutcheson, pers. comm. 2004). However, experience on the *fincas* (plantations) is anything but fun. It is described as hateful, abhorrent *sufrimiento* (suffering) rather than work (McAllister 2003:85). It is a place where one goes to work without earning anything, where one contracts malaria.

Meanwhile, the *contratista’s* (contractor) two companions, his “wife,” a man (cross)-dressed in the *huipil*⁵ of the department capital, and his shaman, or *Maxe*, in the traditional dress of nearby Chichicastenango, seem to be dallying behind his back. In the slow rhythms of the dance the workers plan a revolt. Rituals are performed, including passing the snakes among the dancers so that each gets a solo with one around his neck, and as the master is sleeping they creep up and put the snake under his clothes. After much struggle he dies, and the workers rejoice. But their joy is short-lived, as the shaman performs powerful necromantic spells that bring him back to life. Things seem to go back to the way they were.

When I saw the dance in 2000 and 2002, amidst gales of laughter and shrieks when the snakes came too close, the audience yelled out, “Maxe necio!” (naughty Maxe), among other things. Maxe is a nickname for people from neighboring Chichicastenango, where everyone is reputed to be a shaman. People in Joyabaj call themselves Xoye. Both speak the K’iche’ language. As in the Dance of the Conquest—a Spanish dance commemorating the expulsion of the Moors in 1492, reworked as Pedro Alvarado beating the K’iche’ hero Tekum Umán, which is sometimes performed amid great cacophony right next to the dance I’ve just described—in the Baile de la Culebra the people united are defeated.

These are dances about loss and dispossession. They enact many of the tensions that interest me: tensions around remembering, forgetting, and actively covering up; identity and pain; fascination and danger; the rational-



Baile de la Culebrón, Dance of the Serpent. In the right foreground the figure in the straw hat is the Maxe from Chichicastenango who has doubled over the worker in front of him to use his back as a table for noting down his debts. Photograph by Felipe Natarano. Used with kind permission.

ization of everyday life (the debt notebook) and its magic. They are about embody/meant (the corporeal) and enjoy/meant (in both the sense of pleasure and, more fiercely, *jouissance*). They conjure unexpected allies, like the snake, not all of them human, and sudden, deadly reversals. The dances and this book are about relations between the highlands and the rest of Guatemala and with other parts of the planet. They are also about class, ethnicity, and gender, which are not things but relations — relations that accumulate capital. David Harvey, drawing on Rosa Luxemburg, calls them two-faced. One face consists of the everyday economic processes like those depicted in the *baile*, in factories or agricultural estates and mediated by transactions between capitalist and laborer. The other face is the rapacious and brutal “accumulation by dispossession” between capitalist and noncapitalist modes of production mediated via colonial policy, the international loan system, and war (2003:137). The dances are ways to co-memorate, or remember together, the experiences of dispossession and collective action. They contemplate the failure of that action to reach its immediate goal, all in the midst of ongoing exploitation and danger. They play with masks, truth, and power, and in that spirit I’ll situate the end of war (its conclusion) by telling a story about some ends (or goals) of people who participated in a rebellion similar to that of

the *mazos* against their *patrón* (boss). They were struggling for possession of land, labor, capital, dignity, and power, a struggle that has not ended.

THE ENDS OF WAR: STRUGGLES FOR POSSESSION

It is difficult to define the postwar because the stains of five hundred years of accumulation by dispossession have kept war in people’s veins (Williams 1991). Ritual processes — like the dances performed in indigenous communities, the National University’s annual *Huelga de Dolores*, and Catholic masses for their martyrs — monuments, family storytelling, books, cassette tapes, videos, and DVDs co-memorate and motivate organizing, taking up arms, reform, democratization, coups, nationwide mobilizations, counterinsurgency terror, survival, and rebuilding. To tell part of that story, I’ll go back to 1978, when a goodly number of Guatemalans were actively involved in trying to create massive social change at every level, from the individual out through the family, community, church, local economies, regional politics, and on up to the nation-state — with many hoping, in turn, to transform Guatemala’s relations with the world. They were addressing both of Harvey’s faces of capital accumulation, which meant intervening locally, nationally, and transnationally, with Rigoberta Menchú Tum’s *testimonio* being the most incisive intervention in the latter. The status quo — a somewhat stabilized relation of subordination, always dependent on a great deal of violence — could no longer hold, as it became increasingly understood as an unnatural domination.

Activism took many forms, from holding Bible study groups to conducting electoral campaigns; from colonizing jungle areas inspired by utopian visions of dignified human communities and unalienated production to reconceptualizing the alphabets of Mayan languages; from unionizing workers across ethnic and linguistic identities to engaging in massive strikes for better wages and working conditions; from teaching in shantytowns to joining one of the guerrilla movements. Accounts from that time, and people’s current memories, evoke enormous hope, enthusiasm, effort, and learning. The names people chose for their organizations and the words they use today to describe these experiences suggest unstoppable forces and telluric entities — volcanoes, fire, streams flowing into rivers. People use terms like “euforia insurreccional” and “calor del momento revolucionario” (the heat of the revolutionary moment) (Bastos and Camus 2003:57), “acceleration,” or remember being “swept up in this dynamic,” this “vortex” (McAllister 2003:268).

Those who did take up arms also took on a second name, or *nom de guerre*—a name that inspired them to become another person, to assume a different identity than they had before. Likewise, naming guerrilla fronts after international symbols of resistance to violent imperialism like Augusto Sandino and Ho Chi Minh worked like a GPS, or Global (south) Positioning System, to call, via the sympathetic magic of the name, such resistance into being via the individual bodies of recruits. The groundwork for this effervescence was laid by decades of organizing around a host of issues. Also essential were the consciousness raising and practical experience gained through people's lived activities in institutions like the school, the church, the town hall, the cooperative store, the military, the health clinic, the land registry, the courts, and the multicultural barracks on the South Coast plantations, where families of *mozos*, migrant workers from all over the highlands—including indigenous and ladino poor people—lived together chockablock. All these coalesced with memories of hopes raised, shattered, and raised again through national experiences like the social and land reforms of the Guatemalan Spring of 1944-54 and the subsequent repression and insurgency—and with a moment of global crisis encompassing tenacious and ultimately successful anticolonial movements in Asia, Africa, and parts of Latin America, the Cuban Revolution, the nonaligned movement, the Tri-continental projects, and the worldwide May '68.⁶

In Guatemala these mobilizations involved an enormous amount of talking and thinking, reading and more talking, and practical experimentation. How do you organize a cooperative store? What crops grow in cleared jungle soil? How does a village respond to thieves? What do you do when your husband reacts badly when you tell him you've gone to a meeting? How do you organize a political action with someone who doesn't speak your language? How do you take care of a gun? Do you use *Usted*, *Tu*, or *Vos* (formal or informal "you") with *compañeros* of a different ethnicity? And then more talking. The mobilizations were laboratories, sites for trying things out and experimenting, then contemplating the outcomes. The talking and acting, aka *critica /auto-critica*, aka praxis, took place in USAID-sponsored bilingual education workshops, in kitchens, on sugarcane plantations during a strike, on the campus of the National University, in high schools and on elementary school playgrounds, on the production lines of factories, between rows of corn or banana trees. A ladina lawyer remembers going, in the mid-1970s, to the eastern highlands where the Arbenz land reforms had been most developed and, in the late 1950s, were most brutally overturned, to offer legal advice and consciousness raising to indigenous peasants. To her surprise, she says, they were way ahead of her. "The time for that is past,"

they said. "Where are the guns?" No more than the anti-British struggles in India, were these actions undertaken in a fit of absentmindedness (Cuba 1983:9).⁷

Increasingly, as the decade progressed, some people gave their whole lives over to these processes, living full time in guerrilla camps, aka "revolutionary schools for new men [*sic*]" (Andersen 1983, see also Hale 2006, Harbury 1994) or visiting and even residing among insurrectionaries in countries like El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Cuba, Vietnam, and Morocco. "Really," said an urban psychologist, remembering his student days, "you didn't know from one day to the next if you were going to up and head for the mountains. It seemed like every day someone else from our circle had gone to join the guerrilla." The Mayan leader Rigoberto Quemé recalled those times: "In the 80s there were three possibilities for the people in [the highland city of] Quetzaltenango working for social change: join the rebels, go into exile or stay in Quetzaltenango. The last option was, for many, a death sentence" (in Grandin 2000a:236).

People mobilized into a wide range of activities (only some of them armed) and for a number of different reasons, or ends. Projects that had been coalescing for decades became articulated—connected—in the late 1970s. It was a multiple-front process, and people changed their strategies as the terrain of struggle changed—as when peaceful protest was met by a hail of army bullets in the Panzós massacre of 1978 (Grandin 2004). The great majority of tactics were nonviolent, although by the early 1980s the counterinsurgency had pushed more and more people to take up arms, what few they could get their hands on. A turning point for many was the peaceful occupation in 1980 of the Spanish embassy by students and peasants involved with the Campesino (Peasant) Unity Committee (CUC), which was the culmination of a number of unsuccessful efforts to raise awareness about land usurpations and army murders in the mostly indigenous highlands. The army surrounded the embassy, it caught on fire, and almost everyone inside was killed, leading many to believe that unarmed resistance was futile.

However, the very breadth of the mobilization above- and underground in the legal, religious, educational, military, and productive realms gave rise to classic counterinsurgency prose (Guha 1988) denouncing it as two-faced. The military state insisted that legal protests and human rights work were nothing but a front for the lawless guerrillas, designed to dupe the government, international observers, and maybe even the activists themselves. In this view, although they *thought* they sincerely believed in economic and political justice, they were really doubled over, puppeting Communist propaganda, mindlessly repeating the "Havana line."⁸

In colonial discourse or counterinsurgency prose we will see again and again this deployment of duplicity as double. Resisters are two-faced, both above ground and clandestine, and therefore dupers. But they themselves are duped. Rebellion is clearly a *babosada* (idiotic act), so anyone who tries it must have been tricked or possessed. When the army offered people the choice between death and amnesty if they confessed to being tricked by the insurgency, or when David Stoll suggests that Rigoberta Menchú needs to find herself as a Maya and not as a leftist, rather than both, they are rehearsing one formula of the assumption of identities. The confession of having been duped (Assumption Two) opens the way to transformation (Assumption Three) into the nonduped — two faces are “fixed” into one.

The Guatemalan revolution challenged a system grounded in one of the most unequal distributions of productive resources in Latin America, condensed into the Baile’s image of dispossession in which an indigenous person is doubled over, contracting himself for labor in the export production system. It was met by an articulation of interests and counterinsurgency practices that also spanned class, ethnic, and national identifications, not unlike the Baile’s *contratista*, allied to lowland plantation owners, police, transnational accounting procedures, sugar consumers in the overdeveloped world, and his *Muxe* magician. Guatemalan elites, deeply sensitive to the fates of their Cuban and Nicaraguan brethren, were terrified of losing their access to land and cheap labor. Many also read it as the long-prophesied “race war,” the fulfillment of deep-seated fantasmatic fears of savages pouring down from the hills to murder, rape, and pillage. Elsewhere I analyze the voluptuous qualities of these oft-repeated tales. Like many horror scenarios and stereotypes, they stand constantly at the ready for revivification (Nelson 1999a, see also González Ponciano 1991, 1997). These “race”-based fears mobilized some poor ladinos to side with the military government against what might appear to be their class interests. But so did a number of poor indigenous people who felt themselves threatened by, in part, the modernizing and secularizing aspects of the insurgency.⁹

Tiny Guatemala, laboratory for emergent Cold War policies, was made a “showcase for the Americas” after the coup of 1954. It was “the first instance in history where a Communist government has been replaced by a free one,” as then-Vice President Nixon said (in *NACLA* 1974:74), and it would certainly not be left to its own devices to settle these affairs. The United States was strongly, though often unofficially, involved in the “anti-Communist” counterinsurgency. The Guatemalan military also received aid from countries that included Israel, Taiwan, and Argentina. In other words, in refusing popular demands for a more just distribution of wealth, more than one

father uttered the *non du père*, the No! of the father. The result was scorched-earth war that decimated the popular movement and the guerrilla forces and their bases. It destroyed a generation of incipient rural and urban leaders. It shattered the public university system and killed or exiled almost the entire progressive intelligentsia. But the war also sharply challenged traditional economic and political organization, forcing plantation elites to scramble to survive, and it articulated different class and financial relations from those that once held.

We now live in a different time, a time when, despite Seattle and Porto Alegre, first home of the World Social Forum, the idea that collective action could effectively improve the world for the dispossessed has been made to seem ludicrous, a *babosada*, a dupe.¹⁰ We find the very words we might use to describe our fondest hopes have been hollowed out and parasitically inhabited by their polar opposites, so that freedom is on the march to the tune of Predator drones and depleted uranium devices, and “Democracy at Gunpoint” is a nonironic newspaper headline. It seems that we can no longer express ourselves without appearing to collaborate; the actions taken just to survive shame us into passivity.¹¹ This book reckons these genealogies of the present via duplicity, one mode of accounting, in the sense of narration or storytelling, for war and its end/s. I explore how accounts of duplicity articulate experiences of collaboration and of assuming identities that in turn trouble struggles over responsibility, impunity, settling accounts, and reckoning with who is winning that supposed war between good and evil.

Struggles for possession of land, labor, capital, dignity, and power continue to be hard fought in postwar Guatemala and increasingly turn on possession of new identifications like “Mayanness” and victim status. Because they are struggles over identity and authenticity, charges of duplicity become powerful weapons — their power drawing from a postcolonial paradox. While the term “identity” comes from a Latin root meaning “essence,” in Guatemala, five hundred years after the invasion, fifty years after the Cold War Arbenz coup, and forty years after the start of civil war, the sense of self-possession we associate with the word “identity” seems contingent on tenuous articulations among shifting sites of power and struggle. I call these identities. How self-possessed is the person doubled over so his or her back can be used as a table to annotate debt? They and their families and communities with them are tied into vast and long-standing networks of global exchange as well as to other connections among people that, for example, keep the Dance of the Snake going year after year. It is through identities that identification is assumed, but it is always haunted by the suspicion of Assumption Two, inauthenticity. In the dance these very exchanges are simul-

taneously commemorated and made ludicrous, as is the colonial stereotype of the Two-Faced Indian.

But that is only one two-faced figure haunting postwar Guatemala, waiting to be unmasked. Another is the war perpetrator, who committed dastardly deeds and then, seemingly acknowledging their badness, covered them up by "disappearances" and clandestine cemeteries, and by hiding illegotten gains off the books. And duplicity doubles back again through the complex ways in which actions—of indigenous people, perpetrators, *mozos*, bosses, et al.—are also effects of being acted on by systems of great power, bigger than those humbugs who can be unmasked and named, that take our hearts and minds as a battleground. Sometimes we have what I call the hula girl moment, when our most sincerely held beliefs, most deeply cherished desires, and most carefully considered home decorating decisions stand revealed as not, after all, an expression of one's self, but the effect of our possession by class, gender, ethnic, or national positions within historically specific relations of power.

Passing through such a *nacer de conciencia* (consciousness raising), people may begin to assume an identity that challenges these structures. This is a risky identification that often calls for swerves and evasions to sidestep a suicidal direct engagement with power's powerfulness, doubling us back to the stereotype of the less powerful as two faced, as "Indian Givers." Clandestinity is produced dialectically through engagement with the force of power's counterinsurgency and may produce this stereotype of the subaltern as untrustworthy, duplicitous. But power not only accuses its enemies of duping it (you say you are a war orphan, but you are really a dangerous guerrilla!). It also struggles to convince them that they are duped—by the very idea that another world is possible. It wants us to believe that resistance is futile. There is a strong current of fear and even despair in postwar Guatemala that the peace accords have duped people into thinking change was possible while behind the scenes *los meros jefes*, the ones really in charge, have consolidated their power. Yet the same people who seem so hopeless may take a different tack in the next breath, engaging a stubborn hope that recalls the powerful also suffering setbacks and unexpected reversals.

So I will address duping as multiple, acknowledging the many struggles to name names and to pull back the curtain on perpetrators, but also the more existential stakes in what Ackbar Abbas suggests is "the possibility that 'deception,' too, is not one thing and that there might even be special cases where we can know and act only through the detour of the "false" or the meretricious" (1999:352). Laboring under the sign of the Virgen de Tránsito, I try to show how reckoning is also, always, on the move. In this I fol-

low Akhil Gupta's take on the complex relations among duping, individual interests, and those powers no one really controls. He says:

I neither presume an identity between statements and interests nor do I assume that discourses are epiphenomenal to "real" interests. Both these positions are reductionist. It seems to be perfectly sensible that interested parties would employ discourses strategically so as to conceal, misstate, or otherwise modify the public "face" of their interests; at the same time, interests have to be articulated to be held, changed, and disputed or to persuade others to support them. Discourses, therefore, are the medium in which interests are articulated; representations of interests in discourses always have a strategic dimension. But that means that we have to pay attention to the manner in which discourses give shape and meaning to interests rather than assume that they are the hollow form occupied by ontologically prior, well-shaped interests. (1998:370)

ENGAÑO/DUPING

When postwar Guatemalans explain the war as the result of *engaño* (being deluded, beguiled, or duped), sometimes it is other people who were fooled—by the army, the government, the guerrilla, the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), or by the person telling the story. Others attribute their survival to the ability to dupe others, to live with two faces. But often people explained their own actions as being based on *engaño*, a result less of their own will than of someone else's will working on them.

Žižek says, "An ideology really succeeds when even the facts which at first sight contradict it start to function as arguments in its favour." He recalls the anti-Semitic stereotype that "hiding one's real nature, duplicity, is the basic feature of the Jewish nature" (1989:49) and how it is impervious to reality-based arguments. Some Guatemalans appear to assign this same "basic feature" to indigenous people (see chapter 5), but it is also rubbery, bouncing all over, affixing among both Maya and nonindigenous thinking to the opposite, the ladinos. Carlota McAllister worked in Chupol, Chichicastenango, an almost entirely indigenous town not far from Joyabaj. She says Chupolenses consider ladinos "*tramposos, mentirosos y engañadores* (cheaters, liars, and deceivers)" (2003:224). Diego Molina, who was a well-known ladino photographer, said of his people, "The ladinos are liars, traitors, charlatans, thieves, hypocrites, cowards, co-opted, sold out, and always taken advantage of." For a brilliant genealogy of these two-faced stereotypes, see the Guatemalan historian Severo Martínez Pelaez's *Patria del Criollo* (1990).

Similarly, in an interview with the indigenous mayor of Joyabaj (*alcalde indígena*) about the situation of *mozos* (agricultural laborers), he quite matter-of-factly began talking about the *patrón* (owner or boss), Julio Herrera, as a volcano; Herrera's family holds vast tracts of land around the township, as well as sugar plantations that stretch all the way to the sea. I had to interrupt him several times because I didn't understand. "Yes, yes," he said, "he is a man, and also a volcano." He meant, drawing on older notions of the accumulation of power (Hill 1992, Vogt 1990), that while Herrera might look ordinary when he comes to town on philanthropic visits, he has another face, a connection to the in-human. No ordinary person could amass such power. North Americans and other foreigners do not escape the sticky stereotype of having two faces, as we are suspected of being *robaniños* (child snatchers) or Satanists rather than friendly tourists or anthropologists. McAllister at first was denied access to Chupol because, people said, they "had experienced much deceit [*engaño*] so people didn't believe" her when she said she wanted to work there and help them (2003:45).

Perhaps people really *are* duped by some beguiling, insidious power, as I myself have been, but I am more curious as to why stories of two faces and *engaño* explain such a variety of things to so many different people now. I am also intrigued by how these stories double the uncanny sense in the Baile de la Culebra of being bent to the will of another.

To be duped is different from claiming ignorance, although that is also a way of remembering the war in Guatemala, as in many postwar.¹² It is also different from being forced to do something. Duping suggests you went willingly but under false pretenses. What you assumed to be true was not. What you took for granted was wrong. Perhaps you ended up doing something or being someone you did not intend to be. Claiming to be duped is a way to admit you did something but to avoid full responsibility. It occurred, but it's not your fault. If you've been duped, the deflation felt when the con is revealed can be laughing bewildered or red-faced embarrassment about being taken in. You assumed, and it made an ass out of u and me. You're a sucker, a rube.

But duping can also be world shattering. Trust is deceived, betrayed. You've been double-crossed. Not only is confidence in the other shaken, but so is faith in one's own judgment. At the moment of becoming conscious of the duplicity the self splits into the pre-self that didn't know and the new self that is in the know. A familiar narrative is shattered, and the pieces fall together in a new configuration. The very I that thinks — and therefore is — becomes uncertain. If confidence can be defined as self-possession, its

loss raises the question of who then possesses the self? And how does one continue to act in the world after such revelations?

But the person claiming to have been duped could just be dissimulating, evading responsibility.¹³ How would you know?

DOUBLING OVER

In Joyabaj the violence of the civil war arrived on a motorcycle in July 1980, just as the festival preparations got under way. Two masked men roared up to the church, shot the Spanish priest, Padre Villanueva, and drove away. Not long afterward the army occupied the town, and several *cofrades*, members of the brotherhoods that customarily sponsor the dances, were disappeared.¹⁴ Then the army began massacring people in the surrounding hamlets, where many of the more traditional indigenous people live. With the violence, dislocation, and ensuing economic disaster, no one had the monetary resources or the temerity to put on the dances. This did not change until 1983, when the occupying military ordered the dances to be performed, following a rumor that the guerrillas had forbidden them: "People who refused to participate were ordered to appear at the military base, after which they were only too eager to comply" (Remijnse 2002:134).

If dispossession is partly the content of the Baile de la Culebra, during the war it thus became its form, as engaging in one's own culture became the sign of collaboration. The dance's performance of the worker acted on by the will of the contractor, doubling him over to act as a table, accepting the debt and plantation labor it entailed, is doubled by the dancers themselves, acted on by an occupying force. It seems less an expression of free will than an act of auto-ministry.

A month before I first saw the Baile de la Culebra I was sitting on a dirt floor covered with pine needles in a schoolroom in Patzulá, an outlying hamlet of Joyabaj. It was the first day in a week of mission work connected to the Vatican's Jubilee Year (July 2000). A catechist was in his second hour of speaking in Maya-K'iche' about martyrs. He linked the martyrdom of the biblical Israelites with Jesus Christ, then with the assassination of the local priest in 1980, and finally with the recent state-sponsored genocide of the "Mayan people."¹⁵ He is a corn farmer who also migrates to pick coffee and, unlike most men his age, wears *traje* (traditional clothing). Genocide was not part of the standardized lesson plan distributed by the church. It was, however, the major finding of the UN's CEH report, presented in February 1999. Several days after I heard his talk the catechist told me he had been the Civil

Patrol leader in the hamlet, the army-run militias responsible for atrocities during the war. "I have two faces," he said. "One I show to the army, the other I show to my people."

War survivors frequently use this term of self-dispossession when talking to ethnographers in postwar Guatemala (González 2002, Green 1999, McAllister 2003, Zur 1998) to explain how they lived through the government's counterinsurgency campaigns. The Civil Patrol system, or Patrulla de Auto-Defensa Civil (PAC), was instituted in 1981 and was quite diabolical, including community members to surveil, incriminate, and punish each other. This allowed the military state to keep some distance from these crimes, which in turn warped and undermined community solidarity.¹⁶ Throughout much of the country but especially in indigenous communities every man from age fourteen to sixty was incorporated into the patrols. Some leaders were former soldiers or military commissioners whose face already pointed toward the state; sometimes, however, these same people used their military experience to train local youth for the guerrilla. In many cases, however, the army laid this onerous task on respected local leaders, often catechists, cooperative members, or schoolteachers. Compared to other Latin American countries that had dirty wars, Guatemala was exceptional for the almost total incorporation of its civilians into the counterinsurgency. In addition to cover-ups, official denials, and even the murder of critics of the patrols, the density of collaboration achieved by these policies makes questions of both individual and aggregate responsibility difficult to assess (Montejo 1993a, Warren 2000). Attempts to blame the PAC for violence against civilians are made difficult by the fact that the patrols pretty much *were* the civilian population.

Primarily men patrolled, but because missing duty could result in fines or corporal punishment, women sometimes took the place of male kin. Women also had to collaborate in various ways: by picking up the labor men could not perform because of their patrol duties and exhaustion, by cooking special meals for patrollers, and by performing usually unpaid services for the occupying military, including cooking and laundry. In addition to performing sex work for soldiers, which was nominally compensated, in the highlands women were also kept in rape houses, sometimes for months at a time (González 2002), where they were forced to be available to both soldiers and patrollers. No one was exempt.

The role of the PAC, which the CEH found responsible for 12 percent of the state-backed atrocities in the war, makes reckoning especially fraught in Joyabaj. That is in part because the CEH based the ruling of genocide on four case studies. One was the township of Zacualpa, Joyabaj's neighbor, and in

many cases it was the men of Joyabaj who committed the atrocities that led to the ruling. They are still remembered by people in Zacualpa as "*fuerte*, *enojados*, *bravos* (strong, angry, out of control)" (see intertext 2). In the same way individuals like the catechist were split between two faces, hamlets and the town of Joyabaj itself were also deeply divided, and terrible things were done by Xoye to Xoye as well, as I examine in more detail below.

In 1993 Leonel Ogalde, the ladino leader of the Joyabaj patrols, was charged with the murder of Tomás Larés Ciprian, an indigenous Joyabaj man who was working to abolish the patrols. Ogalde simply denied involvement and was freed (Remijnse 2001:466). In July 2000, eight people were lynched in a hamlet of neighboring Chichicastenango by former patrollers after initiating a legal proceeding for crimes committed by the patrols. No one was ever tried. But not all enjoy impunity. Xoyes closely followed the three trials of Cándido Noriega, a patrol leader in nearby Chiché who, in the midst of threats and violence, was acquitted twice but eventually found guilty of multiple murders and sentenced to 220 years in prison (*Alianza contra la impunidad* 2001; see also Paul and Demarest 1988). Xoye also tell stories of other kinds of justice: how the patrol leader of the Xebaj hamlet, renowned for his brutality and arrogance, was flayed alive and left to die in agony. In a sort of unaccountable moral reckoning, it was not clear in the various tellings I heard if the agents of retribution were human or not.

Much of this book is concerned with the difficulty, but not the impossibility, of separating the two faces of victim and perpetrator. I find duping discourses intriguing because they explore what is in-between and because powerful people also complain of being duped. In postwar Guatemala the Civil Patrols, who have been loudly proclaiming their victim status since 2000, have become a central site for struggle over these faces. Later I address in more detail attempts to *account* for the patrols in the senses of (1) how people endure(d) them as a "mechanism of horror" that produced collaboration in acts of violence; (2) how to tell a story about them; and (3) how, as both patrollers and their victims demand reparations, to financially balance debits and credits and under what form of "audit culture." The patrols were not the only forms of self-dispossession of life during wartime. Most of the soldiers carrying out the genocide were also indigenous kids, many of them forcibly recruited (*America's Watch* 1986, Kobrak 1997, Manz 1988, Schirmer 1998).

Another site of struggle over two faces and naming names emerged in 1999, when the U.S.-based National Security Archive obtained and released a Guatemalan army dossier of disappeared people (NSA 1999). It revealed what had been assiduously covered up, and it terrifyingly suggested being

doubled over as well as proving that the left's insistence on clandestinity was not so paranoid. A document of the bureaucracy of death, it consists of page after page of names, photos, affiliations, activities, and fates.¹⁷ For many, it was the first official acknowledgment of what became of their loved ones. It caused a huge sensation as photocopies and CD-ROM versions were feverishly produced and distributed hand to hand. A Guatemalan psychologist who treats survivors of the violence said he and his colleagues were overrun with former patients who were suddenly and horrifically reliving those times. He said he himself was almost overwhelmed with flashbacks, as if it were those days again: "I felt exactly the same."

One of the more terrifying aspects of the dossier was the instances in which a name was followed by the name of someone from the same cell. Clearly people were tortured and forced to *delatar* (betray or denounce), leading to the capture, torture, and often murder of their comrades. It also turned out that the army had released some of those who had "confessed," making them work as spies.¹⁸ After the dossier appeared, several of the people who appeared in it contacted the newspapers to explain their experiences and offer tear-filled apologies to the families of their former compañeros. "I couldn't help myself," said one (Rosales O. 1999). An activist told me that during the war, immediately upon hearing that anyone from their cell had been arrested, everyone in the group tried to get out of the country. "We knew we had less than forty-eight hours. We told each other, try to hold out at least that long so we can save ourselves, but we knew that no one, no matter how strong, could withstand the torture any longer than that."

A young university student who feels she was "untouched" by the violence told me the following story in 2000: "I was in class and we were asked to talk about our experience of the war and everyone realized how we are all *hijos de la guerra* [children of the war]. We've been marked by it—even the people who didn't suffer as much. It made me remember when I was little, a friend came into my house one day yelling, 'Hay un muerto! hay un muerto!' [someone's dead!]. We all went running to see, about two blocks from our house. I remember it so clearly. But I didn't think much about it then. Later I met a boy who lived around there, and it turned out that it was his father who was the dead man. Then, just recently, it turned out that his father's name was in the dossier! *Ay dios!* It was so emotional, so terrible—I just cried and cried! I saw him at the University and asked him if he'd seen the list. . . . I wasn't sure he'd want to. He said he hadn't, and I said I had a copy, was he sure he wanted to see it? He said yes, so we went off campus, to a little corner and I showed it to him and he just broke down. All I could do was hold him and try to make him feel better. What can we do? It makes me

5. MINOR ELVIDIO GERON CABRERA
(S) ALEJANDRO
Miembro del M.R.F.
12-09-83: Capturado en la Aduana Central
22-09-83: Entregado a la D.I.



6. RODRIGO MORALES LEMUS
(S) ROYNY O MANUEL
2ac. en Interferencias radiales del F.U. de la ORPA.
Viajó a Cuba
21-09-83: Capturado en la Colonia Belén, Zona 7 de Mixco.
CALLE 5-22 Zona 7, Col. Belén
Quedó libre para contactos.



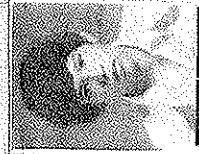
7. CESAR AUGUSTO OVALLE VILAFORO
(S) ALEJANDRO O PANCHO
Estudiante de Leyes y conocimientos de electrónica.
Miembro de Interferencias de la ORPA.
21-09-83: Capturado en la Escuela Tipo - Federación, Zona 12.
04-01-84: Se lo llevó PANCHO.



8. MIRIAM ELIZABETH DOMINGUEZ HERPETA
(S) MARILIA O KETHIA
Nombre falso: VIVIANA ARACELY ROMAS MOLINA
Miembro de la ORPA., dijo estar desconocida.
22-09-83: Capturada en una casa cerca del INCA.
Servía de pantalla a (S) ERNESTO O MANUEL
Enviada a Coatepeque.



9. JOSE MIGUEL GUDIEL ALVAREZ
(S) ERNESTO O MANUEL
Nombre falso: RIGOBERTO ALVAREZ TOBAR
Estudiante y reportero.
Estuvo en el Frente Guerrillero No. 6 de donde se desertó.
22-09-83: Capturado en el Parque Isabel La Católica.
Enviado a Coatepeque.



Death squad dossier. The dates of capture, ranging from the twelfth (12-09-83) to the twenty-second of September 1983, suggest they *delataron*, or revealed enough information for their companions to be captured. "Se lo llevó Pancho," or "Pancho took him," is code for death in captivity; note that this was not until January 1984. "Quedó libre para contactos" suggests he was released to be used as a spy. From the National Security Archives. Used with kind permission.

so sad." "And so angry," said her friend, who was also listening to this story. "Yes, enraged! I'm so angry about it! But I also feel sort of guilty, that I was not killed. The exiles make me feel that way too. Why didn't I have to go? What was I doing then? Going to parties? Why wasn't I doing something to improve things? Why wasn't I involved?"

"Did you know," said an elderly friend, "that the Jesuits found out how brainwashing works? After the Pellecer case they had to study the techniques, the special ones developed here in Guatemala, developed with help from the gringos, of course. The *chafas* [disrespectful term for the military] had lots of people to work on, to experiment with. Many didn't work. They turned into zombies so they would kill them or sometimes just let them go. But Pellecer, they brainwashed him. I remember seeing him on TV, his eyes, his face. It was him but not him."

The Jesuit priest Luis Eduardo Pellecer Faena was disappeared in early June 1981, and in late September he appeared on national television denouncing his former colleagues, saying he had been inculcated in the guerrilla struggle by the Church. My friend told me the story much as one would tell a ghost story, her voice lowered, pulling me close to her. The terror, for many progressives, that this would justify and intensify violence against the Church was matched by that of seeing a companion so doubled over. The spectacle itself was a mechanism of horror leading to "paranoia within reason" (Marcus 1999). People speculate. How did they do it? How would I react? What possessed him?

STRUGGLES AGAINST POSSESSION

Possession has been called nine-tenths of the law and has, since at least the 1600s in the global north, been the sign of full humanity, the seat of rights. In the postcolony, those who once were their own king are now dispossessed by the "sword and the cross," by the armies of soldiers, priests, merchants, and other camp followers mobilized under the banners of property and propriety. Indigenous people, nonindigenous people, and everyone in-between, including the anthropologists who study them, are involved in complex articulations of what possessing identity means and what role it might play in struggles over re-possession: of material goods, disappeared family members, tradition and modernity, community bonds, progress, a sense of moral worth, and the complex emotions surrounding collaboration in violence, even if this meant being uninformed.

In Guatemala these struggles are waged in the context of geno- and ethnocide, syncretism, ladimization, exclusion, militarization, and a myriad

of centuries-old divide-and-conquer strategies. While indigenous people are the majority in Guatemala, they comprise more than twenty ethnolinguistic groups (*K'iche'* being the largest) with extremely strong community identifications like Maxe and Xoye further fractioning this nonhomogeneous category. In turn, the idea that identity is singular, as in the word "individual," meaning not able to be divided, is not shared by all residents of Guatemalan territory.

In Mayan cosmologies identification may be understood as double or even more multiple. For example, the soul, a misnomer when rendered in Christian English, is in pieces, and parts of it can be dislodged as in *susto* or fright illnesses, or by witchcraft, or move about on their own. In turn, everyone, even gringos, has a companion spirit, often associated with an animal, whose personality and fate affect the human. The world itself is animated—telluric entities, ancestors, time, and other forces deeply influence human affairs (Cook 2000, B. Tedlock 1992, D. Tedlock 1993, Vogt 1990, Wilson 1995). Creatures like the *vajav a'a* may look and act human, but they peel off their flesh at night to roam about in another form (Warren 1993).¹⁸ One is acted on by internal forces, sometimes described as having certain blood types or humoral tendencies (sanguine, bilious). Or external forces may make one ill as a sign that she or he has been called to take up a responsibility (*cargo*) as a healer or because they neglected *costumbre* while undertaking service to a saint.

Abigail Adams describes how, even in a community in which people had converted to Protestant Christianity several generations ago, it was understood that a man's deadly fall while working on the new church was the building itself killing him for neglecting the proper rituals. In this same community several women began speaking in the voice of the *Tzuultaq'a*, or mountain owners, giving instructions on proper relations to the world (Adams 1998). Similarly, I know a young woman who had been born and bred into a family heavily involved in the church group Catholic Action and its projects to "purify" the church of "pagan" elements (more on this in chapters 2 and 5). She held no truck with such traditions and had been further secularized by her participation in the revolutionary movement and the experience of exile. She fell ill not long after she returned to Guatemala with a mysterious malady for which doctor after doctor offered remedies, but nothing worked. Friends even pitched in to send her to the United States for treatment, to no avail. She finally consulted a Mayan priest and was told it was the call to take up training as a healer herself. She emphatically resisted. Her political activities and NGO job plus her family took up all her time, and she didn't really believe the priest's diagnosis anyway. Several months

later, in increasing pain, she began the traditional training, and her health immediately began to improve.

In the western highland town of Momostenango, K'iche' men working with Garrett Cook included a number of activities in what they call *costumbre*, activities like praying correctly at the right time and place, sexual abstinence, and attitude. "When someone is not focused entirely on the enterprise, when they have second thoughts about the burden they have agreed to carry, when they are resentful of the expenses of service, then they are of two hearts (*quieb ru c'ux*). This can lead to insanity or death and is one of the greatest dangers of service" (Cook 2000:27). Further on we'll see that *costumbristas* are not the only ones concerned about the heart's relation to actions, especially its wholeness or lack thereof.

This is a world in which, just as one may be acted on, one may also, unconsciously even, act on others. Understandings of *mal de ojo*, or "evil eye," hold that simply admiring something like a newborn may unleash, through the force of one's desire toward this precious thing, unintended danger. "It's never a *propósito* [on purpose]," said a Maya-Kaqchiquel friend. "You can harm without meaning to. You should touch the baby and then it will be okay. People should express these feelings." In other cases of unintentional harm, drunks and foreigners are seen as being hot, their simple presence endangering the vulnerable. Some Maya-K'iche' call the human ability to differentiate good from bad and to act on that understanding *conciencia* (McAllister 2003). Being able to do this oneself and to determine if others have *conciencia* is a fraught but essential hermeneutic project at all times. Like these other understandings of self in the world, however, it is different from enlightenment assumptions that value a one-to-one relation between face and true self.

For those who share these understandings, at the best of times this is a world full of risk: It is *muy delicado* (powerful, painful, dangerous).²⁰ Those who practice *costumbre* take great care in hedging themselves with proper practices to mitigate the force of these powers. They see these practices as part of their responsibility for the common good, for protecting their communities. Other villagers, however, began to develop more secular understandings of risk. They saw it as emanating from a system of unequal land tenure, exploitative labor relations, racialized hierarchy, and state-backed violence, and they began to work to ensure their own futures and those of their communities in other ways — through organizing to challenge these structures. Domingo Hernández Ixcoy, one of the founders of the Cam-pesino Unity Committee (CUC) near Santa Cruz del Quiché, about an hour's

bus ride from Joyabaj, said, "There was always activism, people fighting and seeking ways to develop. There were the cooperatives and trying to get fertilizer, but each offered only part of a solution. People would be blocked for a little while, and then they would become more active." As the world became more *delicado* and uncertainty grew about whom one could trust, people developed other protective mechanisms. In 2006 a member of the unarmed wing of the Guatemalan Workers Party (PGT) said, "With clandestinity, the main thing is that you are never ever direct about anything. You go around [she motioned with her hands]. Round and round about. You take the back ways. And that's not just in the everyday world, how you get from one place to another, but in how you talk, how you relate to people. And it's still strong." A priest who was sitting with us nodded in emphatic agreement. "It's part of every relation, every decision," he said. They take great care in hedging themselves with proper practices to mitigate the force of these powers.

People may begin to feel possessed by this fear that they never know whom to trust, as suspicion comes to mediate every relation. In turn, when an activist was arrested, disappeared, or killed, friends and family who had been kept in the dark, often to protect them, frequently felt betrayed at not being in the know, at being distrusted — especially if they agreed with the cause. "Why couldn't she tell me?" For many, finding out that someone they love lived a double life shattered their un/shared past and threw it into new, uncanny patterns. Guatemalans have a reputation in Central America for being *enconchados*, *encerrados*, closed off or turned inward like a snail in its shell. When asked about the effects of the war, many say it only increased these tendencies. "People, families, they shut down. They don't talk about things. There's a generation gap because young people don't know what happened in their families, if people were involved," said a young ladina woman who had recently joined the URNG political party.

In the course of the first postwar, the emerging indigenous rights movement became another way to reckon with sources of risk. For some it has come to be seen as emanating from the revolutionary left. This movement is assuming a relatively new identity — "the Maya" — one forged in struggle, both with and outside of the popular movement, both with and outside of the state. And it is dependent upon internal divisions like gender, whereby Mayan women maintain the link to traditional culture so that some Mayan men can modernize, in order to demand rights without losing their identity (Alvarez 1996, Delgado Pop et al. 2000, Chirix García 2003, Nelson 1996, 2001a, Stoltz Chinchilla 1998). It is community-bound, both tied to

and heading toward an always receding horizon, rather than always already existing (Nelson 1999a). This makes it hard to assume much of anything about these identifications.

But I have already deployed a translation that seems to define it, at least through its other. I did this by calling ladinos nonindigenous and associating them with the economic and political elite. Perhaps it's misleading to imply that indigenous men may dress up like them for festival dances but that everyone knows very well that ladinos are not Maya. Ladino means mestizo or nonindigenous but also not white, and the term is marked as much by class, culture, and clothing as by race. As a Guatemalan joke puts it "What is a ladino? An Indian with money." It may be taken as an insult, depending on the context, and decomposes into myriad terms that mark class, distinction, color, and history.²¹ The word comes from the Roman Empire, where it described colonized people who spoke Latin, giving the category its own frisson of two languages, perhaps two faces.

In turn, by suggesting the Maya work with and outside the state, I am assuming some border between inside and out when what I'm actually interested in is what lies between. So here, despite the linguistic cunning, I am caught in the prison house of language. Despite efforts to prove that gender or race or nationality or other identifications are assumed, aka false, that the personal is not separate from the political, or the state from civil society, once those linguistic divisions are made, we make believe that there *are* such things. I am acted on by these inescapable forms that distort my meaning. Even as I strive to convince you that these are, despite their real effects, false binaries, I am possessed by a force outside myself, yet without it I could not communicate at all.²²

Identity terms *do* describe things. State power and economic control *are* disproportionately held by people who would vehemently deny having any "Indian blood" (Casaus Arzú 1992). Indigenous people *do* tend to be the most dispossessed in Guatemala. Every time I go to Guatemala I *am* identified by Guatemalans of every station as a gringa, a representative of the great, rich, ambivalent power that Bolívar named. I am reminded over and over again by the Xoye in Joyabaj that I possess that great modern value of U.S. citizenship — an identity that means I won't die trying to illegally cross the border into Guatemala in order to earn my living. I will argue, however, that even these are not singular descriptions, but instead two-faced. That's because these are more sites and stakes of struggle than unproblematic possessions (Althusser 1971:147).

That may be why the stereotype of being duplicitous bounces back and

forth between Mayan and ladino and also between the state and its people. Not only does government counterinsurgency seek to unmask clandestine rebels, to fix two faces into one, but a counter-counterinsurgency hermeneutics reads the state itself as two-faced. When it claims to represent all the people, that is simply a cover for its docile service to a small class segment (most of whom have very pasty skin tones) — just as Bolívar unmasked the powerful as acting "in the name of freedom" when they actually plague and torment.²³ Here, the name (of freedom) is supposed to identify and fix, but it is just rhetoric, a false identity hiding true intentions. Words may hide reality, but if we work hard enough we can see through to the truths: of torture not justice, exploitation not freedom. Charges of duplicity may be an analytic talisman, a way to resist the lure of being acted on in the name of something that does not really have your best interests at heart. But just as I cannot escape the language I argue in (making it hard to talk about what's between state and people, between ladino and indigenous), perhaps we should not be too quick to deny the power of the name.

The state may also seem to have two faces because it is the carrier of both suffering and benefits. Both perpetrator and succor, it dispenses death *and* life. The scorched-earth counterinsurgency of the early 1980s, called *Cenizas 81* (Ashes), that killed so many Xoye in Joyabaj was enacted by the government of General Romeo Lucas García, who was replaced in 1982 in a coup d'état by General Efraín Ríos Montt. The new government unleashed a two-pronged strategy of "Security and Development" through a campaign called *Frijoles y Fusiles* (beans and bullets). The army pulled back in urban areas and offered food and other desperately needed support to those willing to submit to total army control, while an even fiercer attack was unleashed on those who remained in rebellion. Ríos Montt's later return to power under allegedly democratic rule — serving both as a congressman and leader of the governing party in the late 1990s as well as making a strong bid for the presidency in 2003 — hinged on interpretations of this strategy. Did it really improve things in Guatemala or was it two-faced: claiming to help but really more deadly than any government before or since? Currently the latter reading is winning. "El General" is now facing murder charges and a class-action genocide case.

Yet at the same time the military state seemed Janus-faced, omnipotent and all-seeing, it was also read as dupable, as the two-faced catechist suggested. He could show one face to the army and one to his people. In a larger frame, not only the traditionally subaltern struggle over the possession of identity. Decades of military dictatorship, civil war, international

SE BUSCAN



JOSÉ EFRAÍN
RIOS MONTT Y
LOS
INTEGRANTES DE
SU ALTO MANDO
MILITAR DE 1982

POR CRIMENES CONTRA LA HUMANIDAD Y CRIMENES DE GUERRA

BAILE DE LOS VIGILANTES
LA PAZ
SAN FRANCISCO DE LOS RIOS
TUCHUBI
QUENECALTO
PETENANC
SAN FRANCISCO DE LOS RIOS
MIBITZ
SANTO ANTON
PLAN DE SANCHEZ
RANCHO BELICO
SAN JAVIERO
CHIPASTOR
SANTA ANITA LAS
CANTON

"WANTED for Crimes Against
Humanity and War Crimes:
Rios Montt and his military high
command of 1982." The names
listed are "victim communities"
and the dates of massacres.
Poster published and distributed
anonymously.

opprobrium, and structural adjustment mean even Guatemala's apparently powerful—like national state actors and economic elites—seem dispossessed, illegitimate, acted on by outside forces like Cold War politics, trade agreements, NGOs, and debt refinancing packages.

So, this book is also about that other meaning of possession: as with the tortured Father Pellecer transformed into a zombie or the kind Adams (2000) describes, in which the *Tzultuqa'a* mountain deities speak through a woman's mouth. This is the kind of possession portrayed in U.S. horror films like *The Exorcist*: the magical sense that one has been taken over, acted on by an outside force, bent to act to another, alien will. This is both a horrifying and a fascinating possibility, leading, perhaps, to the popularity of horror films, which make possession and two faces a central concern. These two faces—terrible and fine—swerve through different valencies of what it means to assume an identity.

ASSUMING IDENTITIES

Some people assume an identity for pleasure. The Baile de la Culebra is a form of hybrid comedy grouped under the name *Tz'ul*, referring to "foul-mouthed tricksters, fools, or contrary persons" (Cook in Hutcheson 2003:79) and relying on "spontaneity, acrobatic horseplay, verbal improvisations, and

perverse or contrary behavior that irreverently pokes fun at the norms of daily life" (Hutcheson:81, see also Clendinnen 1991, Bricker 1973, García Escobar 1998, Tedlock 1992). In Momostenango Cook says the *Tzulab* open the way for the resurrected Jesucristo, "as rain prepares the earth for planting and opens the germinating seed" (2000:172), and it is full of explicit ribald sexuality, corporal punishment, live snakes with their whiff of danger and associations with ancient powers like plumed serpents, and connections to twinned mythic figures.²⁴ Little historical documentation of these dances exists, and Hutcheson suggests this is because "the disruptive jesting of the players continually subverts attempts at explanation" (77)—a more general problem for anthropologists. And in Joyabaj the audience members were doubled up with laughter at the jokes, most of which I could not understand.

Masquerades, like the *baile* and many other narrative genres, play with the pleasures of assumptions that turn out to be wrong, although these forms tend to be judged as popular or low entertainment rather than great art or social science. Many jokes are based on double entendres. Suspense, mystery, and horror all turn on keeping the audience guessing about guilt and innocence, about the epistemic status of the data proffered. The good caper film provides a trick ending, a "gotcha," its quality evaluated on what it gives away and when—if it's too soon it spoils the fun. Unless some yahoo has ruined it, the final surprise reveals you've been duped, negating everything that went before and forcing a re-viewing with the new knowledge. It creates an entirely different story as the audience puts the same pieces back together again in a new configuration. In other words, there's a con in the text—and that's part of the fun.

You are reading a text and perhaps wondering if it deserves your confidence, especially given Bronislaw Malinowski's warning about the ludicrous position of the anthropologist (1961). He was referring to attempts to seize hold of something at the very moment it was supposedly melting away. But ludicrous can mean variously "laughably absurd," "to play," and "to rebuke." Much anthropology styles itself as a rebuke—to ethnocentrism, orientalism, heteronormativity, racism, and neocolonial violence²⁵—by providing context, that is, by explaining history, economics, politics, kinship relations, and spiritual understandings. And we often borrow suspense genre tropes: first, an apparently unfathomable behavior is described, such as sailing long distances to exchange greasy pieces of shell, believing a witch made a gravenary fall on you, or enjoying guilt-free sex as a woman. Then the behavior is contextualized and shown to be perfectly rational within the "cultural whole" in which it occurs. I've started to do that here by showing how fantas-

tic creatures like Two-Faced Indians and duplicitous states, both murderous and legitimate, can exist and even make sense — and make believe. However, anthropology itself has been rebuked for a range of crimes and misdemeanors, including being duped by its own good intentions and, knowingly or not, collaborating with the very structures of power it claims to resist. “Unthinking” racism, heteronormativity, Eurocentrism, and self-righteousness is a lot easier as an adjective than a verb. They are deep assumptions in the social sciences of the global north (Asad, 1973. Said 1978, Starn, 2004, Trinh 1989).

CONTEXT AND CONS IN THE TEXT

So, is there a con in this text? Indubitably. The anthropologist is in a ludicrous position, armed with theories of suspicion honed to see through deception, yet haunted by fears that the nonduped err. She is trained to turn the image in the camera obscura head over heels. But doing so may dispel the very beguiling luminosity that attracted her in the first place. You may be confident that interesting stories will be told and audacious theoretical insights proffered, but I would be a charlatan to suggest this book will be the last word on any of these matters. As Žižek warns, “those in the know are lost” (1989:42).

For one thing, I claim to explore postwar Guatemala, but perhaps there is no such clearly defined, freestanding thing. Writing about the postwar means accounting for the war, but its end/s — temporally or its objectives — are ludicrously unclear. Guatemala itself may appear to be a demarcated place, yet not only do at least one-eighth of its population live in Mexico and the United States, but also its history, politics, economics, tastes, and possibilities for the future are defined at least as much in relation to other places, especially but not only the United States, as they are essential to some imaginary geographic entity. I find it much more adequate to explore postwar Guatemala as a network as much as a thing, one which has effects in the world as an organized political and geographic unit, yet one strung together through popular culture, coups, arms markets, revolutionary examples, solidarity activism, remittances, ideas about eugenics and other theories of development, movies, organizational models like bookkeeping, and consciousness.²⁶ While power is unequally distributed through and via this network, it is not a site for solely unilateral action by any one part on any other. Each node is a multiconductor. Influence goes in multiple directions. Even the United States is affected by this relation. These *relational* identifications may make the one face of postwar Guatemala seem two-faced.

There are other cons in this text — ones I’ll explore at two levels, and the first is precisely the metaphor of two levels: the power of the idea of a double reality, of duplicity, with its implicit promise of a transformation into singularity and transparency. This is one of the most powerful theoretical tools in Western metaphysics. It undergirds Plato’s cave, Marx’s camera obscura, Freud’s unconscious, Du Bois’s double consciousness, and the many projects grouped under the proper names of structuralism and poststructuralism. Marie Langer, the liberation psychologist and founder of the Argentine Psychoanalytic Association, said, “Behind what appears to us as reality, Freud and Marx both discovered the actual forces that govern us: Freud, the unconscious; and Marx, class struggle” (in Hollander 1997:48). It lies deeply enconced in anthropology’s cherished methods of interview, observation, and participation, which assume you can’t really trust what the “natives” say or what they show you. Instead, you have to embody it yourself to be in the know. It animates current anticorruption campaigns like Transparency International and “audit cultures” more generally (Power 1997, Strathern 2000). And to what else do we owe the frantic polling, surveillance, biometrics, and mainstream justifications for torture if not to the state’s and the corporation’s deep anxieties that the supposed one-to-one relation of representational democracy is actually a dupe, that the populace, the immigrant, the teen, the housewife are all hiding other identities: desperation, plans for disruption, subversive intent? Assuming there are two faces is part of many progressive projects, and my aim is neither to do away with this potential, nor to delegitimize those moments of insight when one realizes that her or his privilege, or lack of it, is not natural. Such a move would simply reinstall the double relation between error and truth, duped and nonduped.

Assumed identities can be fun, but they also, rightly, raise suspicion. That’s because it may be done to advance one’s interests, in the sense of increasing compensation or creating an advantage. Taking off or, now, putting on traje can make it easier to get a job. A democratic election can enhance a country’s credit rating, regardless of how national decisions are made. The famous “aka,” shorthand for “also known as,” on FBI wanted posters points to the nefarious sense that suspected criminals are hiding their real identities to rip you off, escape justice, or take your identity.²⁷

On what I hope is the other hand, anthropology’s participant observation could be seen as one long assumption of identity, like any development or training. One is not born a Ph.D., farmer, bureaucrat, punk musician, or woman. But as long as one works hard and goes through the proper channels, rituals, and accreditation, we tend to take it for granted that these new identities can be assumed. Anthropologists may repeat this ritual nu-

merous times, apprenticing to other people's culture in order to "speak for" them. We may be compensated for our troubles, if we're lucky, through book contracts, speaking engagements, and teaching gigs — aka authority. But because it's assumed, this identity is open to question, both through the discipline's well-known self-reflexivity and the Oedipal and Oresteian gestures exposing famous anthropologists as both duped and duping.

Is this why U.S. anthropologists are so often read as being two-faced? Not the eager students we claim to be, but CIA agents, spies, child robbers, blood and fat suckers like vampires and *pishtacos*, or, alternatively, as Communists or otherwise threatening (Adams 1997, Metcalf 2002, Price 2004, Rabinow 1999, Weismantel 2001)? Does the in-betweenness that is supposed to help us make the strange familiar and the familiar strange, that makes us feel at home in several places, also make us uncanny, *unheimlich*? Does the inter-estedness of our work, the fact that we gain something from it in the other world we live in, make us seem two-faced?

In the film *The Wizard of Oz*, a tale chock-full of two faces, the Wizard tells the wanderers that they are each missing something that would make their identities real. To Scarecrow he says, "Where I come from we have universities. Seats of great learning where men go to become great thinkers. And when they come out they think deep thoughts and with no more brains than you have. *But* they have one thing that you haven't got — a diploma," and he hands him a "degree in thinkology." The Scarecrow immediately begins rattling off mathematical formulas. "Oh Joy, Rapture, I've got a brain!" For the Tin Woodsman it's a testimonial, and for the Lion it's a medal. Each of these things is a warrant, a guarantee, of the credibility or authenticity of an assumed identity. But at the very moment such accreditations seem to fix, they simultaneously unsettle. Wasn't the Scarecrow already smart, the Woodsman already kind, the Lion already brave? Didn't their actions prove this? Why do they need these trinkets, and what is the authority that thinks it can grant them?²⁸ This inconsistency at the crux of authentication raises a doubt: is there ever a process so pure that it lies beyond the suspicion of impropriety?

I want to reiterate the pleasure, even ecstasy, of our playful assumptions of identity — think of theater and film, Halloween, role-playing games (RPGs), carnival, drag and transvestism, and all the everyday formations of fantasy that enliven our workaday worlds. If you're good at it, you may make a little money, but usually no one gets hurt, no great interests are at stake, and while a bit uncanny, it is rarely denounced as deception or betrayal (Schwartz 1996). Sometimes, as with art forgery, it's because such a denunciation would threaten the entire system, while delighting all those

who chafe at the rule of experts. But many relations across identity boundaries *are* haunted by suspicions of two-facedness. Is interest in someone else's culture, as in, say, classic and modern-day minstrelsy, a sincere form of flattery? Or is it outright appropriation, aka stealing? As bell hooks asks, when Madonna metaphorically "blackfaces" her show is she a soul sister or a plantation mistress (1992)? Charges of being a wannabe, a waspafarian, a jafaikan, a wigger, and so forth are both jokes and carry a stinging accusation of fakery. How can the more powerful engage with difference without simply appropriating it? How can the less powerful acknowledge being recognized and the political or financial support, it may bring, while remaining the inappropriate(d) other (Trinh 1986)?

On the other hand, some people must assume identities in desperate attempts to survive when their own identity becomes a target. Regardless of what you truly believed, if, in Guatemala in the 1980s the army assumed you were subversive, it meant death. For example, because *traje* is site specific, during the war you could be disappeared simply for wearing clothing from an area known to be a guerrilla stronghold. To survive, many Guatemalans assumed another identity: indigenous people began wearing Western clothing and many people changed their names, their addresses, or their work. "I hid in the private sector," one activist told me. They developed two faces and by doing so hoped to escape the singular identity of victim. But the horrifying thing about the Guatemalan genocide is that it was often neighbors, friends, even family who carried out the dispossession. It was often victims who assumed the identity of perpetrators. One of the most important sites of postwar politics has been the struggle against impunity for crimes committed during and after the war. Yet how is responsibility to be justly reckoned in the face of two faces?

Then there are the nefarious cons, the plots, as in the apparently disinterested broker who really robs you blind, and conscious, well-planned cover-ups of economic and political malfeasance: the Allende coup, Iran-contra, the Panama deception, Enron, weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), and so on. The interested parties may assume the mantle of freedom fighters, innocent bystanders, or victims of duplicity themselves, but they stand to gain enormously in financial, political, and cultural capital. *These* assumed identities can have terrible consequences: as the bumper sticker says, "He lied, They died."

So, is asking *cui bono*, who benefits, the recipe for discovering truth behind the mask? Do we just need to follow the money? Would this dissolve two into one?

Given that in Guatemala the slightest hint or most unfounded rumor that

one had ties to the revolutionary movement was an automatic death sentence, clandestinity, read as duplicity, was actually *produced* by state policy. Given popular demands that the state live up to its rhetoric to be of, by, and for the people, cover-ups of violence and corruption may be produced by democracy. In other words, could both sorts of duplicity be part of a single productive network? Or does that lose the vital critical insights of Marx, Freud, and other masters of suspicion? If there *are* two faces, what happens to our analysis when we focus on what lies between them — on milieu, interesse? In turn, what if the con is in the very promise of being in the know, of being nonduped, of adequately accounting for, of reckoning? If so, can we still struggle for justice?

I started with a traditional dance that, like Bruce Lee, a schlocky martial arts star, and a range of actors I'll explore throughout — including a war memorial, the testimonial of a young indigenous woman, a cartoon, a twelve-volume UN report, a court decision, an accountant's ledger, a water pump, a U.S. horror movie, this book itself — is a media representation deployed in and through postwar Guatemala. All are about make-believe as they struggle to say something that, if the struggle works, can begin to go without saying, that is, become an assumption. Yet, in the end I hope this book works like a good caper story in which the conclusion, rather than shutting down possibilities, opens the narrative up to active reconfiguration. I'll try to make you believe that being in the know is an ongoing process, a horizon, not a fixed state. It is a continuous, contradictory assumption of identity.

This text reckons with great horror, terrible pain, and dispossession, but I began with dances performed in Joyabaj, a place that suffered and perpetrated genocidal violence, because people also laugh and transform. Ecstasy/ecstasis means coming out of stillness. The identities I examine throughout — indigenous, ladino, gringo, anthropologist, accountant, victim, perpetrator, survivor, heroine, or healthy — are not one (Irigaray 1985). They cannot be fixed or bound to singularity or stasis but are mobile. Their patroness is the Virgen de Tránsito. Donna Haraway says that one is not enough to contain these identifications, these uncanny possessions. But two — as in clear-cut divisions between unconnected entities — is too many. Later she revises herself to say two is only one possibility (1991). There are always alternatives to singular visions, but to keep from making asses of ourselves we need to carefully interrogate our assumptions and our selves.

♦ Intertext One ♦

THOSE WHO ARE TRANSFORMED

Farce [Fr., stuffing; used to fill interludes between acts] 1. an exaggerated comedy based on broadly humorous, highly unlikely situations; 2. something absurd or ridiculous, as an obvious pretense

Crux *n.* [L., CROSS] 1. a cross; 2. a difficult problem, puzzling thing; 3. the essential or deciding point

Account [OFR < *aconter* < to tell < *computer*: to determine (a number) by reckoning] to consider or judge to be; *value* — *vi* 1. to furnish a reckoning (to someone) of money received and paid out; 2. to make satisfactory amends; 3. to give satisfactory reasons or an explanation; 4. to do away with as by killing

DOUBLE AND TRIPLE WORDPLAY

This book explores possession, duplicity, and hopes of being in the know as ways people live in postwar Guatemala and elsewhere by looking at assumption as a process and as a triple wordplay. The *Baile de la Culebra* is a form of dance called *Tz'ut* or *Patzkarin*, meaning “those who are transformed” (Hutcheson 2003:77), and I mimic this meaning to elaborate on assumptions of identity as a series of traversals rather than a state or essence. But there's that pesky language game again — setting up one thing rather than another, in this case a divide between being and becoming.

Now, notions of ontology or being have been under assault for centuries in the Western tradition by thinkers far more sophisticated than I. But identity has a stubborn habit, in common sense and elsewhere, of preserving the sense of essence, stasis, authenticity (Jackson 2006). In everyday relations with people we struggle to uncover what they are really like.¹ In our mundane political actions we seek the hidden meanings behind the spin, the submerged interests that drive policy, regardless of whose name it's in, by following the money to the other, truer world lurking behind this one.

As I said earlier, I am curious about this image of the world as two-faced