

Tal Nitsan, "Guatemalan Feminists' Anti Violence Performances"

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Witches' Sabbath: Performances of Anti Violenceⁱ.

It was 8:00 am, a beautiful sunny morning in Guatemala City, Guatemala. A great crowd of activists, mostly, but not strictly, women, carrying banners and flags, wearing slogans, custom-made T-shirts, and other custom-made accessories such as bags, hats, and umbrellas, along with decorated cars and trucks, started to gather at the plaza by the Supreme Court of Justice. Their "activists' regalia" distinguished them from the daily crowd that usually occupies this central site – pedestrians crossing one of the busiest corners of town or waiting for transportation, employees of the Supreme Court of Justice, citizens that come to settle legal or bureaucratic issues, and street vendors.

Cars. People. Noise.

It was November 25th, 2010, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and this great crowd was preparing to start the annual November 25th march. The march was planned by the *coordinadora 25 de noviembre*, a coordinating committee composed of representatives from different organizations, assembled every year to plan and coordinate the events around this date. It was a moment of great joy. People met coworkers they see every day, colleagues from other organizations they don't meet that often, and activists and participants coming from the periphery they haven't seen since "the last big event". A few of the activists came accompanied by their partners or children, grandchildren, and even parents, who came to share this moment with them.

After the first half an hour of this "meet and greet", the different groups started to set themselves at the edges of the plaza, holding big banners. The banners identified the organization they were affiliated with, publicly denounced violence against women, and proclaimed their hopes and demands for a better future. *JUSTICE; For the defense of our bodies, land, and territory; Women are done waiting: stop violence against women and femicide; Our voices will never be silenced again; I'm a woman-I'm a citizen-I'm important-I'm happy!; For women's life, no more impunity, we demand justice!; We are looking for justice for women, we shall not forget nor be silenced; Equality!; I'm a citizen and I fight for full citizenship for women, I demand the eradication of violence against women; For the life of indigenous women, no more machismo nor discrimination; Access to Femidon; Discrimination is also violence, there are many ways to kill a woman; RESPECT; No more violence.* While the different groups were setting up, the designated spokeswomen read the well articulated, semi-juridical manifesto that the *coordinadora* put together for this event. The manifesto included the different organizations' joint vision of the situation of violence against women in the country, the causes, and a list of their demands from the different state institutions, agencies, and branches. Thousands of women were then standing in one of the busiest intersections in the city, in front of one of the state's most important symbols, the judicial branch. A few representatives of the judicial branch came to greet the activists before the march took off, and they distributed flowers, and stated their support. While the activists voiced their critiques and demands against the authority of the judicial branch, they were also clearly staging themselves for an audience of the different media representatives at the plaza.

Intro

For me, it was the second time I participated in this march, as part of my doctoral fieldwork in Guatemala City, Guatemalaⁱⁱ. In my fieldwork, I studied local,

civil society women's organizations' campaigns to eradicate violence against women. Through participant observations in different events planned for and by these organizations, as well as interviews with organization's employees and "independent feminists" I attempted to understand their (varied) views in regards to violence against women, and accordingly, the ways they choose to act against it.

The women's organizations I worked with are all located in the capital city (although some of the organizations had branches in different provinces, some of which are in the rural areas); most of their employees are non-indigenous women (although some, both in the capital and the rural areas are indigenous). Some organizations see themselves as feminists; others are uncomfortable with the term and use 'women organization' instead. They collaborate in different modes among themselves, with international human and women's rights organizations, and with local governmental agencies.

The different organizations work on a range of issues they understand as violence against women, some focus on reproductive rights, other on HIV or sexual rights. Some focus on education for citizenship and democracy and others on land or labor rights. Accordingly, they inhabit different spheres – education, media, legislation, political advocacy – and use different modes of action.

In this paperⁱⁱⁱ I discuss and analyze one mode of action that the different organizations share, a political act I call *anti violence performances*. Using examples from the November 2010 march^{iv}, and focusing on acts orchestrated by the *coordinadora*^v I claim that these public performances are politically designed to 1. Make visible an overlooked problem and 2. Denounce it and suggest an alternative, utopist reality. Further, I show how these performances are design to, on the one hand, change individual women's subjectivities, by (in)forming them into consciously rights-worthy citizens; and on the other hand, change the spaces in which they live to allow and encourage these new subjectivities, by (re)forming state policies, legislation, mechanisms, as well as functionaries attitudes. The performances of anti violence^{vi} allow us to see how these two processes are in constant dialogue with each other.

To do so I will first briefly introduce the situation of violence that Guatemalan women experience in their everyday life, then shortly introduce the concept of radical street performances, and then analyze and discuss few anti violence performances that took place in the 2010 march.

Performances of violence

Different legacies and realities of violence – from internal armed conflict (that lasted 4 decades and cost the lives of 250,000 people) to structural poverty and racism – together with traditional views of gender roles, shape violent everyday life realities for women in Guatemala. Today, 15 years after the signing of the peace accords that officially ended the internal armed conflict the tolls of violence are higher than they were during the conflict time. In this aggravated post conflict violence, in a population of 14 million, two women die of violence every day^{vii}. Although violence against both men and women in Guatemala has increased since the beginning of the millennium, the murders of women are distinct for their rapid increase^{viii} as well as for their misogynistic nature. While most of the murdered men were killed without

intimate physical contact between victim and perpetrator, many of the women victims were first abducted, subjected to severe beating, rape, sexual mutilation, perverse torture, or dismemberment, then killed and subsequently deposited in relatively public areas.

Feminist scholars such as Jill Radford and Diana Russell claim that these acts and their public expressions reflect un/conscious responses of "those in power" who feel that their power is threatened or challenged by their subordinates (1992). Femicide, they claim, is "a form of terrorism that functions to define gender lines, to enact and bolster male dominance, and to render all women chronically and profoundly unsafe" (Russell, 2001:177).

Similar to other places, in Guatemala, violence against women and especially Femicidal violence has a performative nature: graphically abused, frequently mutilated and/ or inscribed women's bodies^{ix}, are found frequently in the public sphere. This staged horrific display keeps Guatemalan women, their family members, and the general public in a state of alert and terror (Trujillo Morales 2010:132). These performances of violence send a clear message that the streets or any other public place are not a safe space for women. These performances of terror encourage women to minimize their public participation, teaching them that the so called "traditional" gender roles of quite submissive femininity will protect them in both the public and private spheres. In the interviews I conducted, a common theme was the notion that simply walking in the streets, puts one in great, immediate, danger. This is not to say that Guatemalan women do not walk in the street (nor that the private sphere is a safe space), but they don't do so confidently, or leisurely, as fear always accompany them. Consequently, Guatemalan women of different social status and ethnic identities find different ways to minimize their presence in what they consider a non-safe space.

The state's response to this situation of violence is very limited, and in general does not establish a notion that the state rejects this violence or values women's participation in public and political life, nor that it views women as valuable, full, rights-wordy citizens. Although new legislations in favor of women's rights were passed and new mechanisms meant to facilitate these rights were established, most murder cases are not brought to justice^x, and frequently the women themselves are depicted, both by general society and the justice system, as responsible for their own deaths.

Radical (anti violence) street performances

Anti violence performances are radical street performances. Radical, as they question and re-envision the social arrangement of power; street, as they take place on by-ways with minimal constraints on access; and performances, as they are indicative and expressive behavior intended for public viewing (Cohen-Cruz 1998: 1). Radical street performances, Cruz-Cohen claims, strive to transport everyday reality to something more ideal (Cohen-Cruz 1998: 1)^{xi}.

It is hard to generalize street performances – they are varied in genres, sources and intended audience. The streets have been used to display and contest power and social structures since early history (church/ religious parades, army/ victory marches vs. situations where there was no other mode to express opposition). Traditionally, Cohen-Cruz claims, performance's role was to conserve a culture over time, not to change it (1998:219). However, there are few characteristics of the street performances that I find important to mention. Performing in the street allows activists to respond directly to events that took place in the street (specifically or

generally), but also reflects a desire to access “the popular masses”. Addressing the masses also implies using vernacular, sometimes culturally coded terminology (Cohen-Cruz 1998: 4). Since it is clear that public spaces are not equally accessible to everyone, the media is frequently used to mediate their message to the not-present public (Cohen-Cruz 1998: 2). Consequently, some activists claim that handling the media is just as important as creating the performance itself (Labovich 1985). It’s also important to emphasize these performances’ altruistic aspect, as the performers offer their bodies for some common goal, **without the safety distanced^{xii}**, sheltered stage (Cohen-Cruz 1998: 3). Unlike massive rallies, the smaller radical street performances sometimes reach a small audience, and they have the potential to modify people's opinions. Once this audience’s opinion is changed, they may influence their family and friends (Cohen-Cruz 1994:232).

Cohen Cruz suggests a few categories for the different street performance (1998:5); here, I use two: 1. Witness – publically illuminating a social problem that needs to be acknowledged, in a site that directly relates to that social problem; 2. Utopia – enactment of another vision of social organization, temporarily replacing life as it is, often performed with public participation.

The anti violence performances I will discuss here are intentional, public, political actions, performed at the same public locations performances of violence take place^{xiii}. Using vernacular as well as transnational, semi-judicial language, the activists utilize their own bodies, in what is popularly considered an unsafe space, to critique and contest the social arrangement of power. Their performances are directed to the immediate, present audience, as well as the media-mediated public, and they are well prepared to speak through, not to the media. Overall, these performances are meant to make visible the overlooked and even ignored problem of violence against women, to denounce the existing reality and through performance in the present, to propose a new, utopist future^{xiv}.

Performances of witnessing^{xv}

Femicide and the Crime Scenes of Inaction

Back to the Supreme Court’s plaza, occupied by activists, state functionaries, media and casual pedestrians, a group of 50 women, dressed in black, carrying big placards, create a great circle in the center of the plaza. Their placards read: *I was not killed because I'm a sex worker; I was killed for being a woman. I was not killed because I have many male friends; I was killed for being a woman. I was not killed for using drugs; I was killed for being a woman.* These short statement of the cause of death, were taken from different recent verdicts concerning murder of women.

Once the circle was set, the eyes of the activists, random crowd, the judicial representatives, and the media were focused on it, the black-dressed women dropped to the ground mimicking their own deaths. Once there was no more movement, the spectators witnessed a collection of different verdicts that demonstrated how the justice system tends to see murders of women as individual cases, of women who facilitated their own death – and not of a pattern of women being killed for being women.

After a while, the "dead women" were “resurrected^{xvi}”, and the crowd of activists started marching, taking over the busy 9th Avenue. **HERE needs to come an additional section about the march: cars and tracks, crowd dressed up, music, reading**

of the comunicado de la presna, stating "por la vida de la mujer, ni una muerte mas", walking between banners, tshirts ... a river (forest) of symbols .

About an hour later, the marching group arrived the Guatemalan Congress and congregated there. Another group of 50 activists dressed in white were already positioned there, holding blue balloons filled with helium, to which names of different Guatemalan laws were attached. *Law against femicide and other forms of violence against women, Penal Code, Law of national registration, Law of urban and rural development councils, Municipal Code, Law for universal and equal access to family planning services, Law against sexual violence, exploitation and human trafficking.* The white-dressed- balloons-holder's group formed a tight cluster in front of the congress entrance, the women- dressed- in-black circled them, and the rest of the crowd slowly assembled around them. Thousands of women were now blocking one of the busiest avenues of the capital, standing in front of one of the state's most important symbols, the legislative branch. The banners they carried publicly denounced violence against women and proclaimed their hopes and demands for a better future. Few representatives from the congress came to address them, and the spokeswomen read the manifesto again. When the eyes of the public, officials, and media were focused at them, the activists let go of the balloons, singling the movement's vision of these new legislations passed by the Congress, the legislative branch, on the everyday reality. As the balloons were set off, the activists dressed in black fell to the floor, again, mimicking their own deaths. A short while later, the "dead women" resurrected again, and the crowd of activists continued marching, heading towards the national palace and the central parquet, still taking over 9th Avenue.

These two actions invite the present, immediate public, as well as media-mediated public, to witness two (related) overlooked social problems: violence against women, and state inaction against it. In the first act, spreading these different verdicts, coming from different courts in Guatemala at the Supreme Court stairway, the activists' performance mimics the spread of bodies in the street, and redirect the blame from the murdered women to the state, whose institutional discrimination, sexism, or simply inaction, facilitate these killings. Consequently, the spectators are first invited to acknowledge that violent killing of women are a common reality in the country. Then, presenting these statements from the Courts together, the public is invited to consider the second phrase in every sign: 'I was killed for being a woman', and to see these deaths as part of larger general phenomenon, femicide, the killing of women because they are women, a phenomenon that needs to be addressed as such.

In the second act, spectators are again invited to witness, through the performance of death, the violent everyday reality of women-killing, as well as the state's inaction against it. At this stop it is made clear that what can be seen as the state action, passing new legislations in favor of women's rights, does not have an actual impact, as it has "no weight" in real, actual reality. The non-practice of legislation leads to more killing of women. In these two performances of anti-violence the audience is invited to witness not only the acts of violence terrorizing women and their families, but also the less discussed issue of the state's accountability for this reality.

Witnessing, claims Cohen Cruz, supposes a connection between knowledge and responsibility (1998:65). In his work about Greenpeace, Steven Durland states: 'A person who bears witness to an injustice takes responsibility for that awareness. That person may then choose to do something or stand by, but he may not turn away in ignorance' (1987). Similarly, the *cordinadora* perform an overlooked problem for the present spectators and mediated spectators, obliging the spectators to acknowledge it. Like the Argentinean *Madres de plaza de mayo* (Taylor 1998:84), their performance challenged the onlooker. It is now up to the national and international spectators to choose to applaud their actions or look away, to do something or to stand by; but these spectators can no longer shelter themselves with ignorance.

THIS WILL require additional explanation about 16 days of activity
 Sobrevivi estoy aqui estoy viva – actoras, 2009
 Aquellare, MPA 20190
 he private in the public, TV, 2011

Performances of Utopía

The acts I have discussed above, call spectators' attention to an overlooked problem, and challenge them to act upon it. However, these acts have an additional function I will discuss in this section: they enact another vision of the social organization. A different, welcoming, safe, democratic sense of the public sphere; confident, able, and worthy women subjectivities; and a healthier relations between the (re)formed space and (in)formed women. In doing that they are presenting in the present an utopist vision of the future. The performance of this alternative utopist reality allows the women themselves and the public in general to not only observe this utopist vision, but to participate in it, even if only for a short while; a tangible, realistic short experience. An utopist alternative that once practiced in the presence, will hopefully generate a greater mobilization acting to make this performed possibility an actual future.

Public space has different meanings in different societies and areas. Going back to ancient Greek polis and the agora, public space (re)produced and (re)shaped political life. It was the site where civil participation took place, to which partaking was restricted to the privileged few, rights' worthy citizens (excluding women, slaves, and other common people). Neil Smith and Setha Low claim that this narrow definition of public space is surprisingly appropriate to present time (2006:4). According to Habermas, the public sphere is the space between civil society and the state (2001: xi). As such, the public sphere represent arena of social and political contest and struggle (Smith and Low 2006:12). Democratic states are thus expected to secure a safe space for civil society to thrive in. Failing to do so, or intentionally preventing it, indicate the attempt to oppress any potential social and/or political contest and struggle.

During the prolonged internal armed conflict in Guatemala, the state did not welcome any political or social contestation, and the public sphere was created as a non safe space, that did not encourage any civil participation. In post conflict Guatemala, the state is no longer rule out civil participation, but as the situation of everyday violence is so grave, it is de-facto, not inviting a healthy participating civil society. The women's movement's march itself, and even more, the specific performances I described above, send a very clear message about what they vision to

be their right for this public space. As the public sphere defines citizenship, their presence in it, a massive, loud, visible presence enacts their worthiness for this space and the civil privileges it embodies.

Like the students in Tiananmen Square, discussed by Richard Schechner (1993), the marching women use the public sphere as a natural space to celebrate life - eat, drink, dance, and enjoy each other's company. They erect and wave banners, make theater, dress up, and wear masks to perform and celebrate an unthinkable, alternative reality. In post conflict Guatemala, these expressions of fun, comradeship, ironic civil participation do not pose a direct threat on the official state as happened in China. However, it is still subversive in the sense that the march itself and the specific performative acts I discussed above, by performing an utopist reality of civil participation, clearly demonstrate the state's failure to secure safe, inviting public space that will encourage healthy, open, vibrant civil participation, characterizing the democratic state it claims to be.

During the march and the performative acts, they take over, monopolize for a while, an area of the public sphere. By taking over the space^{xvii}, they perform their (civil) right for these spaces as Guatemalans. For this short while, these national spaces, that have a different quotidian function, become (street) stages for an enactment of women's civil rights, when the taking and the performing equally constitute the utopian notion of civil participation they advocate for. The potency of this aspired civil participation is further movement of the march. In the march, the women's movement doesn't only demonstrate its (civil national) right over specific civic national public place, but further perform its right for movement in and between spaces, with greater and lesser civil national significance. They perform an utopist right to move safely in the streets of their own Capital City, a right that their state is failing to secure.

Gender, claims Judith Butler is an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of bodily acts. It is a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, comes to believe and to perform in the mode of belief. Butler further explains that in its performative character resides the possibility of different sorts of repeating, i.e., the possibility of contesting it (1988:519-520). Therefore, there is always the possibility to perform this identity in different ways, and by performing it differently, constituting additional versions for this same identity. Butler emphasizes that individuals' acts, individual as they are, produce these individuals' situation of gender. Yet, although performed by embodying individuals, these acts are shared experiences and 'collective actions'. Both political instrumental actions done in the name of women, and acts in and of themselves, Butler claims, can equally challenge the category of women itself in the endeavor to institute a more just social and political relations (1988:523, 525).

I see the march itself, and the different performances that took place in it as an endeavor to challenge the category of women and the general structure of social and political relations in the country. Individual women, walking together, confidently, leisurely in the street, proudly and loudly drawing attention to their visible presence in the street, celebrating it and themselves with music and costumes, are not and everyday sight in the Guatemala City, thus it represents a subversive embodied performance. They enact themselves as fear-free citizens who have the right and the ability to celebrate life, their lives, with their friends and family in the midst of the public sphere.

Additionally, they are declaring themselves as rights-worthy citizens, not only employing their right to the public sphere, but also make clear, public, loud and visual, demands to the state, embodied through its institutions.

Standing by the judicial branch they declare it to be unjust, discriminatory, an active actor- by its acts of inactions - in the widespread violence against women. Standing by the legislative branch they further perform its failure to protect women's life, to account for their safety and prosperity, as declared in the Guatemalan constitution, and the following, newer laws in favor of women's rights^{xviii}.

Repeatedly, as individuals performing a collective act, they bodily enact a new way to do a woman's identity: happy, confident, rights' worthy citizen^{xix}. By doing so, they contest the existing expectation of women's identity and constitute additional versions for this same identity. Through this performance, unconceivable acts, became possible, and then constitutive; what people were not able to imagine, was suggested to them as something they can will. Similarly to Peter Handke's analysis of the Berliner Kommune (1969), I see the march as performance of their thesis, their argument right in the middle of reality.

Handke concludes his analysis with the hope that they will go on performing until reality too becomes once single performance area. This aspiration takes me to the next section, discussing the weight of these interventions on present and future life realities in Guatemala.

Social change or carnival?

This section is "under construction", please ignore

The inevitable question raised by carnival in the context of social change is what happens after the celebration? Is carnival, or any acting out of utopia, just lets of the steam? Is there a way to capture that energy, stay grounded in that longing, and make permanent change? (Cohen-Cruz 1998:168)

Utopia is a critique of the official history of society...

Carnival is an old and persistent way of acting out utopia. Michael Bristol

Sometimes street action bring about change – as in Eastern Europe in 1989/ but mostly such scenes, both celebratory and violent, end with the older order restored. Frequently, the old order sponsors a temporary relief from itself. Obeying strict calendars, and confined to designated neighborhoods, the authorities can keep track of these carnivals and prepare the police. (Richard Schechner :179)

Carnival (Bakhtin)

Mikhail Bakhtin resuscitated the idea of carnival as a critique of the status quo. Describing such events as playful, non-hierarchical and sensorily excessive, Bakhtin conjectures that:

The carnivalesque crowd in the market place or in the streets is not merely a crowd. It is the people as a whole, but organized in their own way... outside of and contrary to all existing forms of the coercive socioeconomic and political organization, which is suspended for the time of the festivity. The festive organization of the crowd must be first of all concrete and sensual... the individual feels that he is an indissoluble part of the collectivity. (Mikhail Bakhtin 1968:225)

Ritual (V. Turner)

Carnival is ritual (Richard Schechner)

The carnival, more strongly than other forms of theater, can act out a powerful critique of the status quo, but it cannot itself be what replaces the status quo (Richard Schechner 206).

The role of the revolutionary is to create theater which creates a revolutionary frame of reference. The power to define is the power to control... the goal of theater is to get as many people as possible to overcome fear by taking action. We create reality wherever we go by living our fantasies. Jerry Rubin (1970: 142-3)

It's important to distinguish between simple transformations, which operate within a given structure, and real change, revolution if you will, in which the structure itself is transformed (Ortner 1984:136).

Going back to my general theme, I will go back and bring together the ways in which these acts influence the public sphere [(Richard Schechner (1993/1998) concludes that carnival can critique but not replace the status quo. And critique, like Taylor shows us (1998: 64) " The fact that the madres could not do everything (change the junta) does not mean they did nothing"]
how they influence the individual [Peter Handke, (1969) suggests it gives them a recipe to live, while earlier they didn't have the will to will).

The dialogue between these processes and the power the street, as an open, visible, public space, facilitates these complex relations – how bringing demands in a public way is more powerful (for instance policy changing wise, and empowering)?

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ⁱ The full name for this chapter will be "Witches' Sabbath: Anti Violence Performances." It was inspired by an action by the organization *Mujeres Positivas in Accion*, for World AIDS Day, December 1st 2010, called *aquelarre* (= Witches' Sabbath). I hope to include it in a future version of the chapter, especially since it connects to a greater imagery used by these organizations I employ along the dissertation, namely witches and butterflies.

ⁱⁱ Preliminary work in the summer of 2008, was followed by living in Guatemala between June 2009 and December 2010, and followed by a short visit in the fall of 2011.

ⁱⁱⁱ This paper is the last chapter in my PhD dissertation and deals with the practice of human rights, more specifically in the Guatemalan women's organizations' campaign to eradicate violence against women, using the context of "women's rights are human rights." This is thus a project about a social movement, about a way in which human rights struggle is enacted. In the grand scheme of my dissertation, I discuss a process in which the organizations I worked with attempt to create a dual, dialectical change: on the one hand, changing individual women's subjectivities, (in)forming them into consciously rights-worthy citizens; on the other hand, changing the spaces in which they live to allow and

encourage these new subjectivities, by (re)forming state policies, legislation, mechanisms, and functionaries. These two processes are in constant dialogue with each other.

^{iv} The march traditionally (for at least 10 years) leaves from the Supreme Court of Justice and ends at the National Palace, across from the central park. The march starts with a great gathering at the Supreme Court's plaza and ends in a great ceremony at the park. The walk itself is quite eventful. The traditional route is along 6th Ave., but in 2010 due to construction work, there was a need to find an alternative course, and the busy 9th Ave was chosen by the *cordinadora*. The route was not approved by the police; nonetheless, this was the route they took... Also it's important to note that the movement hold few marches, following similar route and with similar themes and performances- in a given year –other big marches take place in March 8th – international women's day, May 28th – international day for action in favor of women's health, September 8th – day of the women citizen, and many more.

^v In future versions I will probably incorporate acts by specific organizations that took place in the march. Most important I find to include performances (Tierra Viva) denouncing private-sphere violence against women in the public sphere. It is also important to show the variety of voices, and how they are presented as part / or not of a whole movement. Also – there are “good women” who married a bad man, and there are “bad women” - sex workers, HIV+ people, transsexuals, and lesbians.

^{vi} Unlike other processes of formation I discuss in other chapters (such as education, legislation) the fact that these political acts take place in public, makes it easier to see how they affect each other.

^{vii} These are the official numbers by the PNC (National Civil Police); different state agencies [like *INACIF*, *OJ*, *La(s) defensoria(s)*] have different numbers. In a *cordinadora* meeting (November 2011), different numbers were presented- violence, they claim, kills about 10 Guatemalan women each day. Two women are killed by physical violence – criminal, gang, drug related, or interfamilial, another two die out of unsafe abortion, two more from cervical/ breast cancer, two of HIV, one out of a general state of poverty and another of lack of access to medical care/hospitals. Women, especially indigenous women, are more prone to live in a situation of poverty; they have less access to education, to medical care, and information in regards HIV, cervical cancer, breast cancer and their prevention. In a country where abortion is illegal, women do not always have access to information about family-planning methods, when they are informed, they do not always have access to different modes of contraceptives, and even when they do have access, they are not always at liberty to make decision about using them. Consequently, the everyday realities of Guatemalan women are influenced and shaped by the experiences of violence that they experience and the experiences of violence that they fear and try to avoid.

^{viii} 2001: 303, 2002:317, 2003: 383, 2004: 497, 2005:518, 2006:603, 2007:590, 2008:722, 2009:773, 2010:675, 2011:651. But violence against women is wider than murder; in 2010 the *Ministerio Publico* reported 65,000 complaints/ reports (denuncias) for Interfamilial violence. In 2011 they reported more than 44,000 denuncias for violence against women and 22,000 for Interfamilial violence. The committee against sexual violence and human trafficking registered 2810 cases of trafficking between January and June 2011.

^{ix} Inscriptions are usually found on intimate body parts like inner thigh, and tend to be derogating and sexual.

^x In 2010, out of the registered 15,373 *denuncias de violencia contra la mujer*, only 218 ended with a sentence, i.e. 1.42% were resolved. In relation to murder cases (nation-wide, in relation to killing of both wo/men), less than two percent of the cases have been brought to justice.

^{xi} Although we tend to see alternative, utopist reality as related with the political left, David Welch (1983), when discussing the film "Triumph of the Will" (1935), reminds us that it is not necessarily so, as he claims that the Nazi party rallies were also an enactment of utopia.

^{xii} **Butler also has a comment about it.**

^{xiii} Here I refer to both acts of active violence by different general society actors and acts of inaction by the state. And see the public space (street, plaza) and specific and metaphorical crime scenes.

^{xiv} I hope to discuss performances of specific organizations (like UNAMG, *actoras de cambio*) who focus on the past widespread military rape during the armed conflict, of mostly of rural indigenous women, in the final version of this paper. However, although they discuss "the past", the situation of impunity surrounding it, as well other factors, clearly influence on the contemporary situation of violence.

^{xv} I hope to have at least 3 sections here – the official, joint voice of the *cordinadora*, denouncing the crime scenes of inaction, the voice of unresolved history--no justice, impunity--that continues today (UNAMG, *actoras*), and the private sphere brought by TV. Another possibility is to include acts that took place outside the march (but within the "16 days of activity": an activity by *actoras de cambio* November 26th 2009, and by MPA in Dec 1st 2010 – past abuse and HIV+.

^{xvi} One can see them as sacrificing themselves on behalf of the greater community, singling with their own body the suffering womankind is enduring. They are doomed to (metaphorically) die and resurrect again in the next act.

^{xvii} They are not always authorized to do so. As I mentioned before, in the 2010 November rally the police did not approve the route they chose to take, and yet, they took it, using children (of employees) and participating youth to block the roads and allow the march to cross; a role usually done by the police.

^{xviii} The following year, November 2011, they took another step further and actually entered two state institutions INACIF (National Institute for Forensic Science) and the constitutional Court, denounced their inaction and handed them a list of their demands. (I plan to have this action part of a longer version). In a country like Guatemala, where not to long ago, 37 representatives of other minority group, Maya leaders (also known as the Spanish Embassy Massacre, 1980) were burned alive for daring to claim their citizenship and make demands to the state, this is quite a daring act.

^{xix} Maybe this whole section should be named after CODEFEM's slogan: *Soy Mujer! Soy ciudadana! Soy importante! Soy feliz!* (I'm a woman, I'm a citizen, I'm important. I'm happy!)