Negative Emotions as a Sense of Injustice

by

Hollman Lozano

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Declaration of Committee

Name:	**Hollman Lozano**
Degree:	**Doctor of Philosophy**
Title:	**Negative Emotions as a Sense of Injustice**

Committee: **Chair:** **Özlem Sensoy**
Associate Professor, Education

Ann Chinnery
Supervisor
Associate Professor, Education

Masahiro Minami
Committee Member
Associate Professor, Education

Charles Bingham
Internal Examiner
Associate Professor, Education

Mario Di Paolantonio
External Examiner
Associate Professor, Education
York University

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is two-fold: a) to examine the role of negative emotions in post-conflict societies; and b) to make a case for anger, resentment, and grief as legitimate moral emotions, and as agentic spaces in the moral and educational domains. Drawing on the example of the mothers of false positives in Colombia, the thesis explores how anger, resentment, and grief can enable survivors of post-conflict societies to mobilize themselves and their communities from their experience of injustice towards moral and political action.

The general apprehension surrounding the negative emotions comes from an assumption that only negative outcomes can come from negative emotions. Therefore, rather than welcoming them in all their complexity, people and communities are encouraged to move on from their injuries and negative emotions. Further, the prevailing emphasis on rationality in moral and political discourses rests on an assumption that if we allow emotions to enter the political conversation, we won't be able to anchor the debate on objective standards of measure, and the conversation will become merely subjective. As a result, emotions, and negative emotions in particular, have tended to be overlooked in political discourse.

Of course, no amount of engaging with the negative emotions will erase the pain and suffering of the survivors, but denying or suppressing those emotions, or leaving it up to the individuals who experience them to deal with them, could have unintended consequences, such as laying the groundwork for new conflicts to emerge. The thesis therefore attempts to make a case for moving beyond the binary of negative versus positive in our understanding of emotions, and for recognizing that, even within the so-called negative emotions, there are positive agentic features that could help individuals and their communities move away from their experiences of injustice.

Keywords: anger, resentment, ressentiment, grief, false positives, injustice, negative emotions

Dedication

This Thesis is dedicated to the mothers of the False Positives who with their tenacity and determination continue to struggle for truth, justice, and non-repetition through an unwavering faith in justice. It is also dedicated to the victims of the Colombian conflict in general who continue to believe that another, better country is possible despite their pain and hardship.

Esta tesis está dedicada a las madres de los Falsos Positivos quienes con su tenacidad y determinación continúan luchando por la verdad, la justicia y la no repetición a través de su inquebrantable fe en la justicia. También está dedicada a las víctimas del conflicto colombiano en general, quienes continúan creyendo que otro, mayor país es posible a pesar del dolor y la privación.

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Chapter 1.

Introduction: Negative emotions and post-conflict survivors

The purpose of this thesis is a) to examine the role of negative emotions in post-conflict societies, focusing in particular on the experiences of the mothers of the "false positives" in Colombia; and b) to make a case for anger, resentment, and grief as legitimate moral emotions, which should be understood as agentic spaces in the moral and educational domains.

No society transitions smoothly from social and armed strife to peace, order, and good governance from one day to the next. Transitions usually take years and require a high level of commitment from all parties involved, especially from the survivors who have been undone by the irredeemable losses that the confrontation brought to their lives. But within transitional models such as those in Argentina, Chile, and South Africa, there has been little attention to the emotional needs of the survivors and the implications of those emotional needs. There does not seem to be much concern for the need of survivors to find alternative means to assuage their pain, nor for the ever-present possibility that their pain can be mobilized for the renewal of the confrontation, or for forms of punishment that are not in sync with the terms of the agreements that brought the confrontation to a halt. The implicit expectation seems to be that the survivors will overcome their emotions towards the painful experiences they endured through forgiveness and/or reconciliation. It is those who have suffered the most who are typically expected to pay the highest price, when governments request that they forego their request for justice in exchange for truths, if and when such truths arrive, or for the good of society as a whole, on the promise of better times. But the pain, the suffering and the loss of those survivors who could not and cannot publicly mourn, and whose lives have been shattered, need to be accounted for in ways that are not disempowering and or obliterating of their pain. We need to recognize the emotional responses that remain for the survivors who still need to articulate their wounds in ways that are empowering and

conciliatory. We need to give a social and political valence to the negative emotions that remain in people's lives and recognize that to force people to 'move on' from their pain may only alienate them further. As Priscilla Hayner (2002) argues in *Unspeakable Truths*, "when repression ends, a need to slowly learn to trust the government, the police and the armed forces, and to gain confidence in the freedom to speak and mourn properly" (p. 3) is essential to transition to more democratic models of government.

But, even beyond the experience of an orderly transition whereby the victims learn to trust the state, it is a matter of basic justice that those who suffered the most have their voices heard amid calls for conciliation. In principle, we need to recognize the presence and valence (Trnka, et al. 2012) of negative emotions in the lives of survivors, and acknowledge that they are there for a reason that needs to be addressed within the specificities of a post-conflict society and in the terms of the peace settlements. I will say more about this below, but working with negative emotions in post-conflict societies cannot become an excuse for veiled means of revenge to gain what courts of justice or peace agreements could not ascertain. The importance of addressing negative emotions comes instead from the recognition that a more inclusive democracy will not arrive more quickly, or better, if we simply pretend that the way in which the scars of conflict are written in the souls of people do not have long-lasting consequences in their relationships with themselves, their past and their political community. We need to be able to make negative emotions, such as anger, resentment, and grief, part of the conversation in a way that points towards a richer future. It is not enough to implore people to tell their stories, and record their telling, in hopes that the simple act of telling will have the therapeutic effect of assuaging the negative emotions (Villa-Vicencio, 2000, p. 72).

The kind of negative emotions this thesis seeks to explore are the emotions that come after someone has been wronged, and the means to alleviate that wrong have not allowed the victim to, borrowing Judith Butler's (2005) phrasing, deal with having "been undone" by the loss they have suffered. We are undone by the losses we experience and the fundamental ways in which those unexpected losses rewrite our lives in ways that we cannot fully and appropriately integrate into the narratives of our own lives. And the negative emotions that originate in response to those losses should be recognized as a

fundamental part of the conversation about people's pain and the role of that pain in transitions to democracy. Granted, there are some survivors who can put the good of the community above their own needs for justice and redress. But these survivors, whose supererogatory actions and feelings may be encouraging and necessary for the transition to post-conflict, cannot become an expectation for everyone (Benjabi, et al., 2001). For, if that were the case, supererogation becomes the norm and not the exception. That is, a kind of saintliness or heroism comes to be expected of the survivors, and, on my view, it is fundamentally unjust to expect that everyone will be either willing or able to meet such higher demands. When supererogation becomes expected of the survivors, their experience of injustice is minimized in the name of a better future for all (Shklar, 1992). That kind of erasure tends to land disproportionately on disadvantaged survivors, who often lack the access to decision makers to voice their grievances, and are simply not taken into account when such hefty demands are imposed upon them. However, as I will argue in what follows, we need to change the models that see the transition to post-conflict as one whereby the sides stop the conflict, people transition to their post-conflict scenarios, and, for most of them, reconciliation ensues. We need to be able to account, and be responsible, for the emotions that conflict brings up (Hutchison & Bleiker, 2008), and we need to take those emotions into account in scenarios of transition.

Emotions in general, and negative emotions, in particular, are part of the array of morally legitimate responses that are elicited by the painful experiences that survivors have endured. And we need to engage them by making them part of the conversation, as well as deploy them as sources of information and opportunity. So far, the common concern in transitions from conflict to democracy has been on making sure that the populations where conflict has taken place enjoy the material resources the conflict prevented them from enjoying, which may indeed be essential for the communities to thrive, but it is certainly not the only need they have. The assumption is that when material development arrives in populations that have been ignored or ostracized, political emancipation will ensue, as economic prosperity will allow people to address their material needs. To a large extent, that assumption holds up. But, as important as material development is, the negative emotions that are brought to the fore also need to be accounted for and made part of the transition. As Retzinger & Scheff (2000) explain, it

is often the negative emotions, such as anger, resentment, and grief, that complicate the possibilities of reconciliation—in some cases, even more than the material needs those traditional models of reconciliation have preferred to focus on.

In my view, we need to be able to integrate negative emotions into the conversation about conciliation and, rather than pretend they are not there, or expect the survivors to deal with them on their own, we need to make them part of the conversation before the confrontation is over. As such, this thesis seeks to explore the emancipatory and agentic role that the negative emotions of anger, resentment, and grief could have for survivors of social and political conflict. I will focus on survivors who have been expected to discard their negative emotions, seek reconciliation, and move forward for their own well-being, and for the well-being of their communities. To ground the discussion, I will focus on what has become known in Colombia as the "false positives." As they have been euphemistically referred to in the media, false positives are the murders of civilians that happened outside of combat, carried out by the Colombian army, and presented as enemy casualties in order to obtain either economic incentives or days off. The following sections offer some background on the Colombian context and the false positives.

Colombia

Different scholars locate the beginning of the Colombian conflict at different historical junctures, thus providing different rationales for the origins and development of the armed internal conflicts. Typically classified as an internal conflict of low intensity (EP Leongomez, 2002, p. 168), scholars have situated the Colombian conflict's origin at two junctures. Authors such as Ramon de Zubiria (2015) situate what he calls the protogenesis of the Colombian conflict between 1929/30 and 1957/58. At the first juncture of 1929 to 1930, the process of industrialization intensified in Colombia. However, it is a feudal industrialization that benefits a few landowners to the detriment of the Campesinos, who become the workforce of the emergent banana or coffee plantations in the northwest and southwest regions of Colombia. Sergio de Subiria (2015), Javier Giraldo (2015) and Dario Fajardo (2015) talk about a line of continuity between the

social tensions of the '30s and the violence of the '50s onwards, with its mélange of class, politics and the struggle for the land. Moreover, as Eduardo Pizarro Leon Gomez (2017) argues, the salient characteristic of the 19th- and the 20th-century conflicts was the conflict between a religiously centered polity, and one interested in liberal reforms and individual freedoms.

Against the interpretation of the conflict that sees it as a continuum, there are those such as Alfredo Molano (2015) for whom "the armed conflict begins with the Violence" (p. 1), to refer to the period between the death of Jorge Eliecer Gaitan in 1948 and the armed confrontation between liberals and conservatives that ensued through most of the regions in Colombia between 1948 and 1958. For Molano (2015), the continuity that Subiria (2015), Fajardo (2015) and Giraldo (2015) see between the 1930s and the 1950s obfuscates the substantive differences between the two. According to Molano (2015), this position confuses a struggle for labour rights in the '30s with the predominantly rural political extermination of the political enemy argued and abetted by the Catholic Church and Colombian state in the '50s.

A third line of interpretation presented by Daniel Pecaut (2015) and Francisco Gutierrez (2015) recognizes the significant differences between the two periods, while at the same time drawing connections between the two historical junctures which are "organically connected" (p. 1) and the social conflicts that emerged in them, for the question of land is substantive both in the '30s, and the '50s, even if articulated differently by the parties in conflict.

Although the three lines of interpretation of the origins of the Colombian conflict situate it at different junctures, they all concur that the assassination of Jorge Eliecer Gaitan, a well-known politician member of the liberal party, in the streets of Bogota, marks a time from which a new type of conflict emerges. The promise that Gaitan entailed for poor Colombian people was decimated with his death (Molano 2015). Gaitan's death was understood by the people who took arms against the state as a sign that the Colombian government had no intention of modernizing or accommodating itself to the needs of the Campesinos, who were trying to build alternatives to the conditions of

servitude in which they found themselves. In part as a reaction to the assassination of Gaitan, and as a response to the violence that was unleashed throughout various regions of the country, movements of auto-defense emerged in liberal strongholds to deter the presence of the police, the army, as well as their cadres that sought to unleash violence in the liberal regions.

Although, at the beginning, the liberal auto-defense groups sought to prevent the violence of the conservative party and the state apparatus in power, they eventually also moved to the offensive in regions or strongholds of the conservative party. From a purely self-defensive structure to a timidly offensive structure, the South of Tolima region's auto-defenses constituted what would eventually be called FARC (the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), the oldest guerrilla movement of the continent. Most scholars of conflict tend to give a prominent role to the Cuban revolution in the emergence of the guerrilla movements in Latin America. However, it is important to note that the emergence of FARC in Colombia predates the triumph of the Cuban revolution and is tied to causes organic to the internal conflict, not so much to the emergent Cold War's geopolitical dynamics. Unlike some of the other guerrillas who emerged in the subsequent decades, the foremost concern from FARC's inception was a concern for the land and its equitable distribution.

With regard to the other guerrilla movements in Colombia, such as The National Army of Liberation (ELN), M-19, Armed Movement Quintin Lame, or the Ejercito de Liberacion Popular (EPL), each group had specific areas of attention that coloured their demands in ways that differentiated it from the other insurgencies. For example, the ELN was more preoccupied with the exploitation of the Colombian natural resources and how the profit from such exploitation went mostly to foreign companies and not to the communities where those resources were extracted. The M-19, in part due to its emergence as a response to the fraud that prevented the return to power to General Rojas Pinilla in 1970, sought to instill democratic principles within the Colombian nation, which had arranged under the aegis of the influential political leaders the National Front, an agreement to share power, whereby each party governed after the next in an effort to calm the violence between liberal and conservative forces that had expanded through

even some of the most distant regions of Colombia. Instead, the EPL founded in 1967 was a Marxist-Leninist guerrilla movement that was initially an operative of the Colombian Communist Party. While the previously mentioned guerrilla movement had relatively specific causes and regions of action that allowed them to differentiate among themselves, the Armed Movement Quintin Lame, founded in 1984, was a predominantly indigenous movement originating in the South of Cauca. The intention behind the Quintin Lame insurgency was to serve as a defense to the strategies of land possession against the indigenous community that sought to occupy some of the large landholdings in the region (Giraldo, 2015).

One of the consequences of the emergence and development of multiple guerrilla movements was felt by the land- and cattle owners who began to receive extorsions to finance the insurgencies. At the same time, the ascendancy of drug traffickers and their alliances with the cattle, sugarcane, and plantain growers meant that there were groups of self-defenses created to deter the guerrillas' extortions as well as cattle raiding. In principle, these were semi-autonomous groups organized by associations of landowners who sought to prevent the presence of guerrilla movements in their lands (Giraldo, 2015). However, those movements of self-defense eventually migrated into offensive paramilitary groups that threatened union leaders and members of political parties who were perceived to be ideologically close to the guerrilla movement under the threat of being guerrilla sympathizers. From the 1980s' emergence of self-defense associations in charge of the safety of specific regions of the country, the paramilitary group AUC or United Self-defense Forces of Colombia emerged as a federation that massacred and displaced people from regions perceived as sympathetic to guerrilla movements or opposed to mining exploitations (Gutierrez, 2015), but also heavily involved in drug trafficking.

During the confrontation between the guerrilla and paramilitaries, the Colombian army opted to work with and allow the paramilitary groups to do some of the dirty work that they could not do as the international pressure against human rights violations increased in the early 2000s (Lopez, 2010). The growth and influence of paramilitary forces among affluent sectors of the Colombian population occurred amid the violent

excesses of the different guerrillas. The guerrillas would kidnap a person and demand ransom for their release two to three times, knowing that the person had died while captive or had been assassinated by them. The illegal drug trade is another factor that allowed the two factions to access funds and weapons they would not otherwise have been able to acquire. In 2002, while the guerrilla was gaining important military victories against the army and its regime of terror in the South, and the massacres and mayhem paramilitary groups were leaving in their path in the North, the government of Alvaro Uribe Velez came to power, with a promise of ending the insurgent movement within four years.

One of the mechanisms that the Uribe government used to bolster the military gains against the insurgency was to offer incentives to the military personnel. The military brigade that had the best results enjoyed monetary compensation or days off, as well as promotions, in exchange for their successful results. However, the policy turned macabre when soldiers would lure men from destitute regions of the country towards different regions with the promise of jobs, but then assassinate them and report them as guerrilla members who died in combat. At that time, only a few dissenting voices spoke to the media about how their disappeared relatives were in no way involved with the guerrilla movements (Sanin and Wood, 2014). But even then, there were the voices of a few scattered humble women and relatives speaking out against the Colombian army. At the time, Colombian President, Alvaro Uribe Velez, when asked, said, "they probably were not picking coffee," suggesting that if they were killed, it was for a reason. They must have been doing something wrong for it to have happened to them, for, as the Colombian saying goes, those things don't happen to good people. They would not have been innocent bystanders, and if they were killed, there was something that they should not have been doing—leaving a shade of distrust over the testimonies of the families and, in general, the people who had questioned the military incentives (Ortiz, 2014).

But against the power imbalance of the mothers who alone called for truth and justice against the word of the president, the army, and the Colombian state, the mothers' persistence meant that their clamors were heard. Eventually, the single cases spread to around 10,000 cases of civilians killed by the Colombian army, outside of combat, to

gain rewards for bodies that were falsely presented as belonging to guerrilla members who had been killed in combat.

False Positives

As explained above, "false positives" is a euphemism used in Colombia to refer to the Colombian armed forces' practice of luring men to distant regions of the country with offers of jobs, killing them and reporting them as deaths in combat. In principle, the term "positive" comes from military jargon to refer to the result of an action that has a positive result, be it the capture of an insurgent, the confiscation of subversive material, the dismantling of a guerrilla network, or the killing of a guerrilla member in combat. So, the false positives are named as such because the records and the stories were falsified so that what seemed like a positive military report ended up being a false positive, or a positive anchored in falsehood.

According to Human Rights Watch (2015), between 2002 and 2008, the Colombian armed forces systematically lured civilians, killed and reported them as part of the body count that was used to obtain benefits through the incentives that the government offered them if they increased the number of people killed in combat. The perverse tactic of measuring results by the increase in the number of enemy casualties per military division was carried out by ranking the number of deaths and comparing them against the previous month, as well as against a national average that valued dead bodies as the most important way to measure positive results against the insurgency. There were no other results, numbers of detained insurgents, or tactical gains that would weigh as much as the number of reported deaths under the false positives structure.

As different divisions began to report increases in the number of reported deaths in combat, military commands increased the pressure for similar or better results from the units under their responsibility. This pressure drove the practice of the false positives from a few specific divisions in Antioquia and Cauca's departments to a systematic and widespread practice that allowed the army to carry out their macabre plan with near-total impunity. Military personnel were not only able to dress civilians in military fatigues and

attach to their bodies weapons that had already been reported in previous cases; they were also able to process the casualties without reporting the deaths to civilian authorities, as the army had gained the ability to process such deaths under recently passed legislation. The same army unit that assassinated the youth was the one in charge of legalizing the death, which, for all intents and purposes, simply legitimized the actions of the military unit.

The few times that the army had accepted that civilians had been executed by active army members seeking to obtain benefits, the response had been that those individuals were a few rotten apples, and did not represent the institution. But as Human Rights Watch (2015) details, "prosecutors have identified more than 180 battalions and other tactical units, attached to 41 brigades, operating under all of the army's then-seven divisions…" (p. 1). The patterns across brigades, divisions and tactical units were so widespread that one cannot help but think that there was a structure above the few battalions and tactical unit commanders who have been convicted of the crimes. The level of reach and modus operandi could not have been attained without the high-ranking officials' approval and encouragement, or, at the very least, the turning of a blind eye to such heinous practices. Although soldiers and troop commanders have testified against the Colombian army, Generals such as Oscar Gonzalez Peña and Henry William Torres Escalante have not, despite being understood as some of the most prominent names responsible for the false positives, along with former general Mario Montoya. Instead of accepting responsibility, it was learnt through WikiLeaks that the army's inspector general told US diplomats that the army's top commander was trying to block the investigations into the false positives as they undermined the morale of the troops and the number of deaths in combat had decreased considerably (p. 4).

As Human Rights Watch (2015) reported, the practice began in 2002, with the presidency of Alvaro Uribe Velez's first presidential mandate from 2002 to 2006. On his second and final presidential mandate 2006 to 2010, the macabre plan of massacring civilians for monetary incentives and weekends off duty became a widespread phenomenon. Despite the Colombian government and Human Rights Watch agreement that the false positives ended around 2008, new documents brought forward to the

Special Jurisdiction for Peace, as well as research carried out by retired police officer Omar Eduardo Arias (2020), illustrate that in the Northern region of the country the extra-judicial killings continued until at least 2012 (p. 56).

In principle, the few voices that questioned the reported deaths in combat were relatives of the victims, who, with the certainty of knowing their kin, openly challenged the army's version. They went from seeking the help of the armed forces to looking for their relatives who had been reported as disappeared, to being confronted by the media and the national political power as a whole telling them that the loved ones they were looking for had been killed in an armed confrontation against the Colombian army.

Once the mothers of the disappeared accused the armed forces of assassinating their relatives and covering it up, they were ostracized, and the stigma followed in the communities where they lived. Some of them could not rent a place to live, as they were chastised as guerrilla sympathizers by their communities. However, it was the persistence of the mothers of Soacha, a poor suburb in Bogota's outskirts who demonstrated that, despite the assurances from the Colombian presidency, the minister of the defense, and almost every Colombian army general, that brought this practice to light. A few humble mothers were more committed to the truth of their relatives' disappearance than those in charge of caring for the community as a whole. And yet, the standing up of the mothers also meant additional suffering. They not only had to confront the state and deal with the day-to-day stigma of being seen as a sympathizer of the insurgency; the mothers also had to face the possibility of losing another son, as happened to Carmenza Gomez, who lost her second son, John Dilson, who, after six months of looking into the death of his brother, Victor Fernando, was also killed (Arias, 2017, p. 114). After losing Victor Fernando and John Dilson, the threats moved to Carmenza herself, who began the investigations into the death of Victor that John had been carrying out before being killed.

False Positives and Negative Emotions

My master's thesis (2018) was concerned with creating a space so that people who cannot forgive could find alternatives that were neither forgiveness nor vengeance— spaces somewhere in the middle, where the possibilities of agency emerged from their wounds and their refusal to accept forgiveness as the univocal horizon of their experience. The point was to make sure that survivors who could not bring themselves to forgive were not revictimized by hegemonic demands for forgiveness when the survivors were not ready, or simply could not fathom bringing themselves to forgive. But one question that lingered for me around the subject of forgiveness was what survivors are expected to do with the negative emotions that are elicited by their wounds. Some approaches to forgiveness do address the presence and reality that negative emotions create in the lives of survivors, but most do not even acknowledge them, expecting that, as survivors forgive, the negative emotions will somehow wither away. But true conciliation needs to factor in the emotional landscape of the strife, and keep in mind that negative emotions could potentially ferment the emotional landscape of conciliatory processes if left unchecked. For, even if survivors reach the critical state of deciding to forgive, we need to factor in the possibility that people may decide later to back away from the decision to forgive, or simply find that even though they had decided and wanted to forgive, they could not bring themselves to do it, and the reality of negative emotions settles in amidst the inability to reach the goal of forgiving. However, being unable to forgive should not entail that the armed and social conflict re-enters the scene in full force. There need to be alternatives that, within the limits of civility, manage profound and irreconcilable difference in an agonistic frame, without entailing the elimination or the maiming of the opponent. But we also need to recognize that negative emotions, such as anger, resentment, and grief, have not only a moral valence, but also a role to play in the space of a democratic society. A new society built from the ashes of conflict needs to consider not only those who are willing and able to move beyond their wounds; it especially needs to bring to the conversation those who are experiencing moral emotions that may not be as visible. Unless we allow those negative emotions to be part and parcel of the conversation about the scenarios of conflict, we won't be able to

move beyond patchy and incomplete processes of conciliation, and the cycles of violence and hatred may begin anew.

Having the above in mind, one of the core assumptions guiding my work in this thesis is that there is a positive moral valence (Tadros, 2011) in the presence of negative emotions in people's lives. This assumption runs contrary to the common belief that positive moral value is connected to positive actions and emotions, and negative value to negative actions and emotions. Within the terrible circumstances in which survivors experience negative emotions, I contend that positive agentic moral features can be deduced from the emergence of negative emotions, namely the recognition of oneself as an autonomous moral agent who, in this case, is in need of redress (Murphy, 2003), along with the need and capacity to assert one's self-worth among others. Those positive valences of negative emotions need to be recognized on their moral and political dimensions so that we can properly situate them among the array of responses to injury. By acknowledging negative emotions as legitimate moral responses to injury that need to be understood politically, we constitute an alternative to the discourse that requires survivors to move away from their negative emotions. Forcing someone to discard negative emotions, or refusing to acknowledge the role and origin of those emotions, can leave open wounds that can reignite cycles of violence in post-conflict societies. Forcing survivors to do away with their negative emotions can create a two-tiered layer of survivorhood, where some victims' emotions are recognized as legitimate and others as always already illegitimate, for they are not anchored in the expectations of post-conflict discourse. There is a need to deal with the scars that conflict writes on people's bodies and psyches. There are collective wounds that cannot be glossed over, for those may be the fuel that ignites a new iteration of conflict. But even if those wounds do not ignite new cycles of conflict, at the very least, we owe it to the survivors to create the conditions for them to explore and deal with the negative emotions that conflict brought to them.

Conceptions of Negative Emotions

Although there are various understandings of negative emotions, the most common ones characterize negative emotions as always already pernicious (see, e.g., Nussbaum, 2016; Cicero, 1886; Seneca, 2010). According to this view, none of the emancipatory potential that could come from the presence of negative emotions could outweigh the destructive cycles of violence and revenge that are to be expected if negative emotions are allowed to play a role in people's lives. On this point, Martha Nussbaum (2016) has been emphatic about the risks that anger could bring for those who consider the negative emotions as a source of emancipatory possibility. It is pertinent to note that there is a tradition of philosophy that recognizes self-control as the quintessential feature of engaging with the emotions, for, as Descartes (2017, p. 427) argued, "The principal use of prudence or self-control is that it teaches us to be masters of our passions." Along the same lines, Hsun Tzu (3rd C., B.C.E., DeBary, Chan, & Watson, 1960, p. 118) argued that "to yield to man's [sic] emotions will assuredly lead to strife and disorderliness...." Yet, as Megan Boler (1999) has made abundantly clear, "emotions are a primary site of social control" (p. x), for, depending on one's social class, race and gender, one is allowed or not to express emotions, especially negative ones. In other words, while Nussbaum's (2015) critique of the deployment of anger seems to be motivated by a concern for the well-being of both the individual experiencing it and her community, class, race and gender complicate the role and function of emotions in people's social and political lives. My project attempts to problematize Nussbaum et al.'s assumption, and, rather than chastise the negative emotions and those who experience them, my intent is to deploy them as sources of agency and responsibility for times to come. There is a value that is manifested in someone's feeling that they have been treated unjustly and demanding that their wounds be recognized and addressed in the same way as anyone else, irrespective of social or political power. There is a moral valence that needs to be acknowledged and articulated when the mothers of the false positives demand that their pain, anger and resentment be considered part and parcel of the web of relations that the confrontation generated. There is a pain that speaks. There is a grief that, from a sense of injustice, demands answers and refuses to accept the role of silent and passive

victims that they have been afforded. It is imperative to move societies from cycles of mistrust and violence to spaces that recognize the value of political dissonance where alternative perspectives are valued as enriching, rather than diminishing, the political space, keeping in mind the initial goal of conciliation as an essential feature of post-conflict societies. But such conciliation cannot come on the condition that those who have suffered the most simply deal with their pain in their own ways when and where no one sees them, silently and politely. We need to have a more empathetic and compassionate understanding of people's suffering in order to move towards post-conflict scenarios with those survivors, not despite them. We need to recognize that the transitions from armed conflict and strife elicit natural emotional responses, and that the lack of answers that besieges people's pain and suffering cannot be obliterated in the hope of a better tomorrow. We need to be able to bring negative emotions to the conversation about moral pedagogy for societies in transition, and think of new ways of being together that do not entail the erasure of people's suffering and pain. We need to think about the negative emotions of anger, resentment, and grief as part of the work that critical peace education (Zembylas, 2012) concerns itself with, in order to think and make possible new ways of being together and seeing each other as part of a being in common (Nancy, 1996).

Broadly speaking, the assumption regarding negative emotions is that there is something inherently wrong with the natural responses that people experience when coping with pain and suffering. But the general assumption that the natural response to pain and suffering is always already negative is not only a way of re-harming survivors who are already trying to deal with the circumstances of their pain. It also disempowers the natural response mechanisms that the body has to deal with the pain and suffering that it experiences, creating a double bind (Bateson, 2010), where, on the basis of morally flawed argumentation, one is expected to contradict the natural responses one's body elicits by having been undone by pain and suffering.

In what follows, I will center my case for the moral significance of negative emotions on three critical axes. The first is Michalinos Zembylas' (2012a) concept of critical emotional praxis (p. 21); the second is Judith Shklar's (1990) concept of injustice

(p. 2); and the third is Mihaela Mihai's (2016) concept of politically relevant emotions (p. 4). Theoretically speaking, my aim is to work from a Social Constructivist understanding of emotions anchored in Michalinos Zembylas' concept of critical emotional praxis (2008a, 2012a), Sara Ahmed's understanding of emotion (2004, 2005), Judith Butler's work on grievable lives (2004, 2009, 2015), and Megan Boler's understanding of emotions as anchored in social class, race and gender (1999). Lastly, I am inspired by the neo-Spinozist vital ontologies (Deleuze, 1998;1990), as Rosi Braidotti (2018) calls them. As such, my research understands knowledge production as "embedded, embodied, affective and relational" (p. xv), and seeks to challenge the simple linear causality that anchored a Newtonian understanding of physics, and continues to serve as the ontological ground of most of the research on emotion (Yan Li, et al. 2010). Instead, I will seek to explore, along the lines of the bifurcation model of affect structure (BMAS), an understanding of emotion and affect based in complex theory that sees the emotive experience as "a dissipative system that exchanges energy and information with the external environment. It reacts to environmental stimuli emotionally and presents as bifurcation (Yan Li, et al. 2010, p. 153).

Structure of the thesis

Although this thesis will be primarily about theorizing negative emotions, I will anchor the conversation in survivors' narratives of the 'false positives,' specifically the stories of mothers of the disappeared who, to this day, continue the struggle against the Colombian establishment, in their calls for justice and their search for the truth about what happened to their loved ones. Chapter 2 outlines philosophical conceptions of emotions in general, and the negative emotions in particular. Chapter 3 focuses on anger, tracing its traditional understandings to more recent moral and political variants. The main point of this chapter is to explore the possibilities that could emerge if we allowed the negative emotion of anger to speak from within its specificity, rather than condemning it beforehand. Along similar lines, Chapter 4 explores resentment and its emergence in response to experiences of injustice. Of course, not all experiences of injustice are the same, and not all entail the emergence of resentment, but I contend that there are experiences of injustice so egregious that we ought to recognize the presence of

resentment as a legitimate response to the intensity of that injustice. I first trace the history of the concept of resentment, distinguishing it from *ressentiment.* I then argue, drawing on the experiences of the mothers, that a particular type of active resentment may have unrecognized emancipatory potential. Chapter 5 explores the possibilities and consequences that grief may offer for the survivors who are unable to find alternatives to overcome their pain, ultimately allowing grief to sediment within their lives, but in a way that could also offer new possibilities. Chapter 6 takes a broader perspective, turning to Judith Shklar's work on injustice as a concept on its own, not only as derivative of, and dependent on justice. I then take up Miranda Fricker's work on epistemic injustice insofar as it relates to the mothers' experiences of seeking justice and truth through the Colombian Courts and tribunals. In Chapter 7 I offer concluding thoughts, a note on limitations of this study, and implications for future research. In particular, what this work has revealed is the need for a reframing of our understanding of the negative emotions in moral philosophy and education. In my view, a social and political community that values and encourages conflict, dissent and difference, while making sure that those do not become fuel for further strife, could make significant inroads into recognizing the implications and agentic possibilities of the negative emotions.

Chapter 2.

Emotions

If there is a defining characteristic of modernity, it is its unwavering faith in reason. The belief that only the light of reason will eventually save us from our unreasonable emotional attachments has pervaded the epoch, even amidst the denunciations of the faith in reason or calls to move beyond it. For all the calls made by the romantics about embracing nature and the sentimental side of the world, the discourse on reason has prevailed.

Even after the attempts to dethrone reason, carried out by Freud (1905, 1920, 2005), or the surrealist challenges to the imperium of reason by Andre Breton (1936, 1969) and others, or the denunciations of reason by Horkheimer and Adorno (1944, 2019), reason continues to be a substantive force defended by those who fear that anything other than reason will mean discord, disagreement and potentially violence.

Even complex, multi-disciplinary perspectives such as game theory (Neumann and Morgenstern, 2007) continue to be based on a traditional understanding of reason as the univocal axis around which decision-making processes take place, as if there were no other equally powerful determinants that drive people to make decisions that at times could be seen as akrasiastic or contradictory to their own reasonable best interests. And calls for justice, such as John Rawls' *Theory of Justice*, are premised on an assumption that, under ideal conditions, people will choose the most reasonable course of action independent of their own self-interest.

For all the calls by postmodernists (e.g., Lyotard, 1984, 1993, 2011), feminists (e.g., hooks, 2003, 2014; Hill Collins, 1990, 1998; Boler, 1997, 1999) and critical race theorists (e.g., Dixson, 2006; Delgado, 1995) to abandon the metanarrative of reason in order to constitute more inclusive alternatives, reason is still hailed when intractable conflicts emerge, and one of the parties in the disagreement, or a third party, acting as a

mediator, invokes reason in hopes that the sides will abandon their self-centered stances and recognize the perspective of the other through the use of reason.

Paired with the steadfast faith in reason, its opposite, emotion, was understood as too particular, too wild, too violent. Emotions were thought to be good enough for the private realm, and perhaps even the arts, but dangerous, uncontrollable, and unreliable for the public realm. Not in vain, when Hegel attempts to understand Antigone's plight in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1977), he asserts that she is obeying the law of kin, based implicitly on emotions, and sets up females against Creon, who advocates for the law of the state, or the voice of reason. Moreover, the binarism that saw reason as public and commended, and the emotions as private and discouraged, is also constitutive of how reason and emotions and their relationship have been understood, at least in Western thought. The presence of emotions almost invariably entails the contrasting call for reason, measure, and objectivity. From time to time, however, a lack of emotion in the private realm was understood as peculiar, perhaps even abnormal, as in the case of Thomas Gradgrind, a character in Dickens' *Hard Times*. But emotions are rarely summoned and affirmed, especially in the public sphere, in the way reason has been demanded since modernity. There were always sentimental calls in the name of the state, or patriotism, but rather than a concerted effort that sought to give credence to the emotive realm, the efforts to mobilize the emotions have sought to accentuate certain narratives to the detriment of others.

Within the binarism of emotion versus reason, there are a few caveats that need to be kept in mind when trying to tackle the debate on the emotions. The first is that we should be able to dissociate reason and emotion, as in the Stoics' views of emotions (Graver, 2007). Both the rationalists, for lack of a better term, and the Stoics (Tieleman, 2003), have a natural distrust of the emotions to the point that they question them as a source of proper information, as they are fallible and unreliable.

The second caveat, as Peter Goldie (2002) cautions us, is that we need to recognize the danger of over-intellectualizing the emotions. We need to be able to recognize emotions in all their might, without translating their force into conceptual

apparatuses that delimit their nature, while translating them into ready-made conceptual formulas that fail to capture their polyvalent richness. So, the model to grasp them should not be of the sort *p* emotes *q*, or, if *p* then *q*, which is the model preferred by cognitivist and analytic philosophers; instead, the language to articulate emotions should be replaced by a language that understands emotions as "complex, episodic, dynamic and structured" (Goldie, 2002, p. 5). We should talk about an ecology of emotions that sees them as plurivalent and interconnected, so that the changes in one could potentially, but not necessarily affect another. As such, understandings of the emotive self as different and separate from the rational self should be abandoned for a plurivalent nuanced understanding of the role of the emotions in people's lives, and their role in and with reason.

Lately, however, emotions have begun to be considered outside the private, artistic realm and as more integral to the constitution of knowledge, the decision-making processes of individuals, and more than simply the opposite of reason. And here the research that understands the presence of emotions in context-specific realities as rational expands on the seemingly sharp division assumed from Descartes (2017) onwards. Instead of the division of either-or, in fields as diverse as gender studies (Shields 2000, 2006; Ahmed, 2013), psychology (Ekman, 1999; Plutchick, 2002; Fosha, Siegen & Solomon, 2007; Tomkins, 2008), anthropology (Lutz & White 1986; Leavit, 1996; Beatty 2013), philosophy (Goldie, 2002, 2009), education (Boler 1997, 1999; Zembylas 2006, 2012a, 2012b) and geography (Pile 2010; Moisi, 2009), emotions have become a reality that is thought, understood, and acknowledged as constitutive of reason. The point is not simply to debunk reason as feeble and compromised, and in its place enthrone the emotions as richer and more nuanced, but to question the need for such divisions and the assumptions that sustain them, and find richer, inclusive understandings that prove agentic for individuals (Simondon, 1968) who are struggling to find alternatives to prescribed responses to violence and other morally and existentially untenable situations.

Although the research on emotions shows some encouraging signs, to the point that some have hailed ours the age of emotion (Perry, 2018; Healey, 2018), some of the work on emotions remains anchored in a binarism that supposes certain emotions as

positive and desirable, and others as negative and undesirable. Yet, despite some reservations on the divide of positive versus negative as Robert Solomon and Lori Stone (2002) have argued, "the distinction [between positive and negative emotions] finds a comfortable home in common parlance and is also widely found in professional social science research publications." (p. 417) Such a view tends to imply that the experience and consequences of negative emotions (such as anger, resentment, or grief) are necessarily harmful and detrimental (Pam, 2013), and that positive emotions (such as joy, serenity, hope and pride) engender desirable ends (Frederickson, 2009). Positive emotions are typically understood, following Frederickson (2009), as markers of happiness and well-being, and are assumed to allow people to be open to learning, engaging and platforms for future success. Unlike negative emotions, which Frederickson (2009) defines as originating as a rapid response to a threat, positive emotions are understood to be long-lasting evolutionary adaptations that help facilitate the wellbeing of those experiencing them.

Before moving on from the general discussion of negative and positive emotions I want to address the performative contradiction entailed in using the terms "negative" and "positive" to categorize various emotions when the purpose of the thesis is precisely to challenge the assumptions that sustain those terms, and to find ways in which there can be agentic positive valences within the materiality of the negative emotions. Acknowledging this contradiction, but in keeping with common convention and for simplicity of reading, I have decided to continue to refer to the emotions examined here (i.e., anger, resentment and grief) as negative emotions, albeit with 'negative' implicitly written under erasure.

Why negative emotions?

The drive towards happiness and self-improvement has cast a far too negative light on negative emotions, even though four of the six emotions considered basic (i.e., fear, anger, sadness, joy, disgust and surprise) are negative emotions (Forgas, 2017). Leaving aside for the moment the debate about the function, role, and propriety of the debate on basic emotions carried out by Ahmed (2004) and Goldie (2012), it seems

pertinent to recognize that negative emotions are more than a simple nuisance we could overcome if we just follow some simple steps to achieve happiness and personal fulfillment. We need to recognize them as more than a burden that directs us towards harmful states that should be avoided, and more as natural, perhaps even adaptive, responses (Forgas, 2017) that are elicited by the realities in which we live.

Even though there is a whole industry of self-help books and theoretical perspectives, such as the psychology of happiness (Argyle, 2001; Lyubomirsky, 2007; Ahmed, 2010; Najemy, 2001), which actively discourage people from dwelling on their negative emotions, the latter can be a resource and a site of resistance when typical mechanisms of response are not available and/or not as effective as they should be. There is an agentic feature—responsiveness—that emerges when a negative emotion comes to the fore, that we should value, embrace, and understand. Moreover, that response, that retort, is a moral response that answers a seemingly unfair, or unjust treatment, or perspective. There is also the gendered nature of negative emotions that feminist theory has brought to the fore (hooks, 1984; Hill Collins 1999; Zembylas, 2006). Typically, men, and particularly men in positions of power, are allowed to express their anger in ways that women, and or minorities could not even dream of, if they don't want to deal with the consequences such expression entails. In other words, the negativity around negative emotions does not happen in a vacuum; it is contextually based and allowed more for some genders and positions of power, even if frowned upon generally.

However, not all negative emotions are right, appropriate, or adequate. All emotional responses are eminently circumstantial. A full display of rage because someone steps on one's toe is not appropriate for the type of slight the injury entails. The injured person might understand the injury as a further example of a series of slights that she has experienced, but a response of full rage is not appropriate to the injury.

The conversation about the appropriateness, adequacy, or rightness of the expressions of emotions needs to be carefully articulated. Part of the challenge of dealing with emotions in general, and negative emotions in particular, comes from the constant policing of emotions whereby "proper"—i.e., socially sanctioned—behavior determines

where, how, and by whom negative emotions are expressed. Paired with the gendered policing of emotions there is also a pervasive assumption that a certain gender entails the expectation and other the exoneration to care (hooks, 1984; Hill Collins 1999; Zembylas, 2006). However, it is necessary to keep in mind that there is also an intersectional axis that determines who can express negative emotions, where and for how long. Not everyone can express their negative emotions (anger, fear or sadness) without damaging consequences and conduct policing, so the conversation about negative emotions relevant to this thesis is not about a broad understanding of the expression of negative emotions, but rather the expression of negative emotions by those who are typically not allowed to express them, namely women, racialized people and minority populations.

Negative Emotions as Political

Following the work of Mihaela Mihai (2016), we should recognize the role negative emotions can play in the polity, their relevance for what she refers to as emotional democratic socialization. Although the role of emotions in general, and negative emotions in particular, has not much concerned political science or political theory, I believe Mihai (2016) is onto something essential when she argues that "the emotional culture of the polity is part of its political culture" (p. 46). For a very long time the assumption underpinning the dominant understanding of the political has been based on rational presuppositions, or agreements the citizens are supposed to enter in order to deter the pernicious consequences of the state of nature. But even in attempts to position notions of justice (Rawls, 2009) that are more nuanced than simple utilitarianism, the basis has always been on reason as the main adjudicator of the justice, and not on the role that emotions play in social and political life. Instead, we need to recognize politically motivated anger, resentment and grief as bearing morally significance by being anchored in a response to an experience of the individual. We need to recognize negative emotions as anchored in a presupposition of equal worth that assumes that the actions that caused one's negative emotions need as much attention and recognition as those that happened to other people. We also, however, need to be careful of the type of expressions of negative emotions that we allow into the political realm, for there can also be "self-righteous, unduly moralizing, and disproportionate responses" (Mihai, 2016, p. 12) that could derail

the possibilities for conciliation, and become vectors for new possibilities of injustice and confrontation. Mihai (2016), as does Zembylas (2012), calls for attention to the dangers that work on emotions could lead to if emotions are not approached responsibly.

One of the most common assumptions regarding negative emotions is to individualize them and understand them foremost as pernicious forces that need to be preemptively dealt with before they take hold of the individual and collectives as a whole, and drive communities to avenge the wounds they experienced or ensnare them in cycles of self-destruction. But as important as it is to recognize the dangers of negative emotions, it is also imperative to recognize them as sites of opportunity and political legitimacy whereby new political regimes understand, acknowledge and work with the pain of survivors so that a new possibility of being in common can emerge. It is important to recognize that not all expressions of negative emotion are relevant or appropriate, and we should be able to differentiate between what Mihai (2016) refers to as legitimate and illegitimate negative emotions (p. 9), for there are authentic and inauthentic targets of negative emotions, as well as expressions that need to be considered. By this I mean that we need to be mindful, recognize and engage with the negative emotions that survivors are experiencing, but we also need to be attentive to the pernicious ways those negative emotions may have been deployed, and steer them towards agonistic conciliatory ways that strengthen the being in common rather than harm it.

Every political regime, especially those that are transitioning from conflict to democracy, has an opportunity to listen and acknowledge the wounds of those who were hurt during the conflict, and recognize those wounds as an opportunity to move forward, rather than a hindrance that each person needs to overcome on their own. For negative emotions, politically relevant negative emotions signal injustices in need of attention, and they offer guidance about the needs of the survivors who are looking for accountability. It is precisely the presence of those negative emotions that signal the direction in which some of the attention the transition to democracy elicits needs to go. It is an opportunity for regimes that are transitioning to be open, to take responsibility for the past that

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besieged them, and address it in ways that are empowering to the survivors, and which brings them closure.

It is important to recognize, however, the dangers of conjuring up negative emotions and the inherent risk that could lead to survivors becoming perpetrators by having their negative emotions and the memories that they bring up unearthed. We need to recognize that the intensity of the wounds, the fermentation of the emotions could become a site whereby the victims decide to avenge their pain and/or unscrupulous politicians deploy people's wounds for the purpose of exacting division. So, there is a need to be careful with the way those emotions are exposed, but that danger, the force that lies in negative emotions, can also be understood as a site of possibility. We just need to be aware that we are doing a disservice to the cause of conciliation if we romanticize negative emotions and do not acknowledge the dangers that they could bring if the forces that are unraveled are left in tatters.

Let us take anger, for instance. Perhaps the quintessential negative emotion, typically associated with vengeance and mayhem, and one about which examples abound, from Agamemnon (Browning, 1877) to Hera (Slater, 2014). However, a more nuanced reading that seeks to question beyond the obvious negativity of negative emotions, can see the inherently positive valences that arise from negative emotions. We could, for example, go back to the often-quoted statement about the propriety of anger from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (bk. 2, 1108b): "Anyone can become angry…That is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way—that is not easy."

We can situate this quote in relation to the neo-Stoicists, who also anchor their stance against anger in Aristotle. Or, shifting the focus somewhat, if one turns to Bishop Butler's sermons on resentment, one can begin to see that there are more nuanced perspectives that recognize positive features that are already present in a negative emotion, like anger, even in religious traditions such as Christianity.

While addressing negative emotions, we also need to be aware of the important research that has conclusively associated them with coronary disease, clinical anxiety,

and depression (Gerin, 2012). There is also research connecting negative emotions to cancer (e.g., Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2015), so we need to be aware of the consequences of unhinged negative emotions and the direction that health discourses have taken regarding negative emotions.

At this point, it seems pertinent to recognize the work on reassessing negative emotions that has been carried out by Alison Jaggar (1999) who, under the term 'outlaw emotions,' has tried to challenge the negative undertones, while keeping the agentic features of what the literature has referred to as negative emotions. While 'outlaw emotions' has a usefully political inflection, as mentioned above, I will continue to use the term 'negative emotions,' while at the same time acknowledging it as a conceptually simplistic and problematic term. As alluded to earlier, the division of emotions into categories of negative and positive is not only overly simplistic; it also fails to account for the valences that may be positive within the negative emotions and/or the negative valences of the positive emotions. There is more than one valence to the emotions and, depending on their intensity, context and propriety, there may be perfectly valid reasons for someone to experience negative emotions.

As will be explored later, my project will center on problematizing the simplicity of the binarism of negative vs positive emotions, as well as the assumed attendant pernicious consequences, not only for our understanding of emotions, but also for the lives of those experiencing them. There is a commonplace assumption that if people paid more attention to their inner state, they would notice the presence of as many positive emotions as they remember experiencing negative ones (Frederikson, 2018), meaning that the prescience of negative emotions has more to do with a cognitive feature of the memory that pays more attention to the negative emotions than the positive ones. In the example of anger, for instance, Nussbaum (2016) recounts the philosophical tradition of seeing retribution as inherent to the concept of anger, and Bishop Butler (1827) asserted that "No other principle, or passion, hath for its end the misery of our fellow creatures" (p. X). In other words, there is more to anger than the cognitive feature that allows negative emotions to sediment more profoundly in our minds than the positive emotions;

there are readings and perspectives that situate the negative emotions and read them differently.

Behind every negative emotion there is a motivation and a function, and negating those will only hinder their expression, further eroding the possibility of overcoming that which brought them up in the first place. There are, for example, those who police the emotions of those who have been harmed. In the case of the mothers of assassinated youth, they are asked to not be angry, but to be calmer or more patient until justice is served. This constitutes an erasure of their pain and its expression, which further increases their sense of the inappropriateness of their negative responses and their grievances.

There is a hierarchy instilled in the binarism of positive versus negative, a preference that advocates for one while depreciating the other. The presupposition, which is a simple but pervasive one, assumes that it is better to have positive than negative emotions. Considering the circumstances that the mothers of the assassinated youth in Colombia went through, it seems preposterous to talk to them about positive emotions. What they have gone through continues to remain unresolved, and their pain is ever-present, reminding them every day that justice has not been served, and that the truth of how their relatives were assassinated fails to come forward. Furthermore, it is precisely those negative emotions, among others, that allow the mothers to keep demanding justice and to resist the pressure from their community and the media to wait it out or move on. Chastising negative emotions as always already pernicious solidifies binaries that operate at a surface level, enforcing biopolitics of feeling on particularly vulnerable populations, conditioning even their affective realm. There is something else at play when the established media question the motivations of the mothers, or when political commentators hint at ulterior motives that could be driving their demand for truth, and the request, even if veiled, that the mothers should feel a certain way, i.e., other than the way they are feeling now.

We need to be able to recognize negative emotions as legitimate, multilayered responses that have a role and a function in the lives of people. We need to be able to

work with them beyond the fear of mayhem and anarchy. We need to be able to recognize emotions in general, and negative emotions in particular, around the axis of structures of feeling as understood by Raymond Williams (1977). For Williams, a structure of feeling arranges how society understands, relates, and conditions itself in an epoch. Without ever being fully articulated, structures of feeling come to define the epochs in which they occur, mediating the behavior of individuals in ways that they could not really articulate while being vehicles of its expression. The importance of the concept of structures of feeling comes from emotions and feelings being attached not only to the individual, but also their communal being, in a way that determines them in advance. For there are events, some conscious, some unconscious (Goldie, 2002, p. 6), that delineate structures of feeling for specific populations along the lines of what Worsham (2006) has described as "posttraumatic" cultural moments. Moreover, those traumatic events, those structures of feeling, affect both individuals and societies in unique ways that need to be acknowledged, understood, and dealt with so that we can end the cycles of injury and retribution.

Keeping the above in mind, my project is anchored in three distinct, but mutually connected, theoretical perspectives under the axis of critical emotional praxis (Zembylas, 2012a, 2015). The first is critical peace education and the role that emotions play in social and political life (Zembylas, 2015). Expanding on the work of critical peace education, I am concerned about emotions and their political instrumentalization to further specific political agendas. Considering that emotions and affect, in general, remain an insufficiently explored theoretical realm, we need to address the role that affects, and emotions play whenever disagreement emerges, not only in politics or conflict, but also in the process of reconciliation. Second, my project seeks to recognize the experiences of people who, disillusioned by their traumatic experiences, see the possibility of overcoming strife as always already doomed. Borrowing from both Zembylas (2015) and Megan Boler (1999), who argue that those feelings of irredeemability need to be assessed, critically addressed, and engaged, I want to explore the possibilities of reverting that sense of defeat through non-dialectic means, for those effects, those negative emotions, are a site of possibility whereby those whose traumatic experiences prevent them from articulating alternatives to their status quo, can explore

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the possibilities of a different future without negating or evading their experiences and the way those experiences affect their lives. Third, my project seeks to challenge the dependence on reason that critical pedagogy has had thus far (Zembylas, 2008, 2015; Yoon, 2005; Ellsworth, 1989). We need to be able to recognize ourselves and those we work with as complex emotional beings who can also connect at a level beyond sheer rationality. We need to be able to recognize and integrate what Newman (2011) calls "affective registers" in the interactions we have with people for emancipatory purposes. We need to be able to understand ourselves and others as kinetic subjects who carry certain weights of pain, trauma, and discomfort that we should sit with, rather than avoid at all costs, as some theoretical perspectives, such as positive psychology (Lopez, 2011; Boniwell, 2012; Carr 2013; Seligman, 2018) and the pedagogies of forgiveness (Loreman, 2011; Duffy 2009; Weston, 2017, Worthington, 2005, 2006, 2016) continue to advocate. We need to embrace a critical emotional praxis (Zembylas, 2012a, 2015) that questions the way social and political narratives arrange emotion and affect so that possible counter-narratives could emerge. However, let me first say a bit about Zembylas's conception of critical emotional praxis itself.

Critical Emotional Praxis

Put briefly, Michalinos Zembylas' (2012a) notion of Critical Emotional Praxis (hereafter CEP) is intended to "serve as a construct for building critical insights into teaching and for learning about traumatic conflict, healing, and reconciliation in schools" (p. 21). Central to CEP is a concern for, and commitment to conciliation and the end of strife, so the question that guides CEP is to find how the emotions brought up by the conflict can be mobilized for the purposes of conciliation and peacebuilding, rather than deployed for further division and in-fighting. Unlike other approaches to emotions that tend to be too analytic (Goldie, 2009), Zembylas' (2012a) concept of CEP manages to bridge the distance between an overly cognitivist philosophy of emotion and its focus in the areas of the brain where emotions are located (Goldie, 2002), and its opposite, a concern for emotions without a theoretical background (Goldie, 2000). Unlike most discussions about the nature, origin and end of emotions that have occupied the literature on emotions lately, Zembylas' (2012a) concept of critical emotional praxis is anchored in

a practical concern for a pedagogy of peace that seeks to move beyond the minutiae of exact definition and is more concerned about the practical implications of ending strife, while also being concerned for the emancipation of the survivors, their roles and possibilities.

Although Zembylas' (2012a) concept is deployed in a setting of international conflict, the Greek and Cypriot conflict, one could easily adapt it to the dynamics of internal conflicts, such as that in Colombia, without losing the emancipatory possibilities of critical emotional praxis. For, in the same way in which "emotions of resentment, fear, and hatred at the nation-state level are infectious and travel to constitute and maintain emotional distance between Greek-Cypriot children and those who come from different cultures" (p. 35), those same emotions constitute an us-versus-them divide in the Colombian conflict, where both sides recognize themselves as part and parcel of a broadly understood Colombian national state.

While Zembylas (2012) has focused particularly on fear as a negative emotion in need of attention, one could argue – and that is one of the purposes of this thesis – that his analysis can be extended to include other negative emotions such as anger, resentment and grief. Broadly speaking, I will follow Zembylas (2007b), who in turn is echoing Burkitt's (2014) understanding of emotion "as multidimensional (thinking, feeling, acting) 'complexes' that are both cultural and individual, and that arise in power relationships" (p. 37). As such, I will also borrow from the emergent field of emotional geography (Davidson, Bondi, & Smith, 2005), which argues for the need to understand emotions as relational, socio-spatial dynamics that need to be understood within the context in which they are articulated, rather than as neutral conceptual apparatuses that are brought to bear on the lives of people. Emotions do happen in the lives of people, but they do not happen in a vacuum. They are traversed by power relations that structure them in fundamentally relational settings, so the assumption that sees emotions as mere manifestations of imbalanced interiorities in need of adjustment does not bear on the reality of the emotional life of survivors, and people in general. This point is also consistent with Boler's work in *Feeling Power* (1999), to which I will return below.

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One of the common fears about negative emotions is that they could be exploited for political purposes that run counter to principles of conciliation and non-violent conflict settlement. As Zembylas (2012) recognizes, a "major challenge for critical educators in traumatized societies which struggle for reconciliation is that the emotions of trauma are often appropriated by social, and political institutions, including schools, to justify particular collective narratives and ideologies" (p. 19). Although Zembylas (2012) talks explicitly about emotions of trauma, I will argue that the same risk applies to the role and function of negative emotions, although teasing them apart is a project on which I have yet to embark.

We also need to question the place from which recognition of negative emotions comes, and the intended outcome of engaging with negative emotions, for they can be both a great source of reconstituting oppressed and marginalized subjectivities and allowing new political collectives to emerge, and a means of driving narratives of violence anchored in conservative discourses of patriotism and antagonistic calls to unity that do more harm than good to survivors and excluded minorities. As Sara Ahmed (2004) has demonstrated, the narrative of "good us, versus bad them," is mobilized through an affective discourse that builds coherent narratives that manage to explain away historical inconsistencies to constitute a narrative of subjecthood built upon manicheist divisions of us versus them. Once the confrontation has ended and the road toward conciliation begins, the struggle may shift from the field of open confrontation to the story that is told—or not told—about the confrontation.

The case of the Colombian conflict, and the later accounts of that conflict, could be used as a prime example to illustrate this point. During the armed confrontation, the Colombian army was not interested in the story that was told about their excesses and how much influence and support they offered to the paramilitary groups that were in charge of doing the dirty job the army could not do. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was created as part of the agreements the Colombian state made with the FARC insurgency. But once the armed confrontation subsided and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission began compiling testimonies of the victims, the army began to concern itself with the story that was being told, and requested the government appoint

someone close to their ideological position to retell the story in a way that 'recognized' their version of events. As such, the confrontation that was previously armed moved to an ideological confrontation, and the rationale used by the military to request that their version of the events take primacy over the versions of the victims, was anchored in emotional narratives, such the need to recognize the suffering, devotion and patriotism of the soldiers who gave their lives for the country.

Rather than focusing on the truth, or the need to be factually accurate as to how events unraveled, the rationale used for calls to rewrite the history of those heinous massacres was driven by the emotional needs of the soldiers who took part in the military actions, as well as the morale of the troops more generally. So, emotions do serve a role, not only as reasons to continue the confrontation through means other than violence, but also to position different narratives to try give different accounts of the details of the confrontation. In this case, it could be said that the appeal to emotions is a subterfuge through which the army used the means at its disposal to mobilize its strategic interests, but the fact remains that the mobilization of such strategic interests remains anchored in a valuation of emotions.

What I have not yet addressed is the focus in much of the recent literature on managing emotions (Gross, 1998b), so that we are not overwhelmed by our emotive experiences. The discourses in favour of emotional management, or emotional regulation, as it is also called, may seem like an improvement when compared to the discourse that sees emotions as always already pernicious, but the emotional management/ regulation discourse sees emotions as more of a nuisance, as something that has to be modulated, or a malady to be overcome. My point, however, is not that we ought to modulate the emotions, but rather embrace them in all their rich and nuanced complexity, as what they are, responses that come from one's experiences and whose origin is socially situated as an adaptive complex self-organizing system (Yan Li, et al 2010). In other words, the point is not to modulate the intensity of the negative emotions so that they are accommodated within the course of people's lives, but to recognize them as performative (Zembylas, 2003), with all the implications such recognition would entail.

While I find Zembylas' project, with its emphasis on societies that have experienced traumatic events, compelling, I think we should expand the focus to include societies where traumatic events are not as evident, but which could also potentially benefit from perspectives that would enhance the engagement of affect and emotion for progressive ends. I am specifically interested in negative emotions as potential sites of emancipatory possibilities. Echoing the call from Thomas Dixon (2019), for whom referring to emotions in general without zeroing on specifically which emotion one is talking about, is the equivalent of a safari guide pointing to a giraffe and elephant, etc. and describing them all as animals, we need to zero in on a specific emotion, fully cognizant of the interdependency of emotions and their capacity for elicitation and contagion, as well as the lingering negative perceptions of negative emotions. As such, the emotions I am zeroing in on in the next three chapters are anger, resentment, and grief. First, however, some broader considerations guiding this work.

Broader Philosophical and Contextual Considerations

In light of the sketch of the negative emotions above, I want to ground the thesis in certain ontological commitments. First and foremost, I seek to explore the autopoetic (Varela, 1974) possibilities that negative emotions might generate in scenarios of conflict by being attentive to how survivors find themselves at a crossroad between a past that still creeps into their present, and a future that is tied to an affectively painful past, and which seems to make time, movement and affect circular, wounded, and irresolute.

From the beginning, my commitment is to the survivors, their pain and their wounds. The key driver of this thesis is to find ways in which those who unfortunately will find themselves in the same plight will hopefully find alternatives in the below, even if the realities on the ground and their commitments to justice will always guide them in the correct direction. The following section will explore in depth the social and political meaning of the false positives in the Colombian context as well as its relationship with negative emotions.

What are the "false positives" symptoms of?

During the Colombian conflict, the extrajudicial killings, or false positives, were engineered by high-ranking officials in the military to show an increase in the success of the government's counterinsurgency policies. Rather than increasing the pressure on the guerrillas, as was their mandate, the armed forces created a system to lure minors, low-income people, and people with disabilities with the promise of jobs and other opportunities in distant regions from their place of residence. Once there, they were executed, dressed up in fatigues and staged as if combat had taken place. But it was the determination of the mothers of the assassinated people that helped unravel the macabre structure that the army had created. Once the mothers reported their relatives as disappeared, their constant presence in the media led to the discovery that it was not a few random cases; there was a pattern of unexplained disappearances, especially on the outskirts of the big cities. Without any consideration for the victims, then-President Alvaro Uribe Velez, the minister of defense and the army generals, explained these disappearances as having nothing to do with the army's actions and more to do with the misbehaviour of the disappeared people. These disappearances seemed isolated until the bodies of some of the disappeared were found in a remote region of the country, in sites staged as combat zones, and the armament found close to their bodies was inconsistent with the army reports. These inconsistencies gave further credence to the mothers' claims that their sons and relatives had nothing to do with the guerrilla movements, and that they had been lured away from their homes under the promise of better-paying jobs. But, even then, the Colombian political power kept insisting, against the evidence, that those whose deaths had been reported in combat, were legal, legitimate deaths, even if there were inconsistencies, such as victims who had been reported as disappeared mere days before. The story was that they were deaths that occurred in action. The anger about the injustice that had been committed against them, as well as the resentment of the mothers about the treatment that they had received, not only from the Colombian political power, but also their communities, drove them to push even further, even if that meant that the pressure increased and some of them lost more relatives to violence.

Instead of assuming false positives from the traditional angle that sees them as violations of the individual's freedom and liberty, which they are, the challenge will be to think of them in ways beyond the obviousness of violated rights, taking up Nietzsche's dictum to ask what those actions are symptoms of. The assumption behind shifting the angle of the question is to think through the issue from another perspective, in hopes that shifting the angle to one concerned with symptomatology might yield a more nuanced perspective than a humanist project and concerns over rights and justice will provide.

Although I will be thinking about the role of negative emotions as grounding a sense of injustice, I will think that through the role of the mothers of the assassinated victims of the false positives in Colombia. I write about them from a sense of admiration for their tenacity and their commitment to the memory of their loved ones and, from that admiration, following Deleuze's (2004) claim that "if you don't admire something…you have no reason to write a word about it" (p. 144). I have attempted to write this thesis guided by the survivors' perspective, having their interests and needs foremost in mind, in a sort of activist/academic endeavor that seeks to claim a space for negative emotions as a springboard from which better futures can come into view.

Another aspect I will address is the role of pain and loss, and their relationship to negative emotions. The negative emotions that will occupy this thesis, namely anger, resentment, and grief, are substantiated on a loss that mobilizes responses that come from a shattered sense of self that aims to respond from within the midst of the tragedy, while trying to stay true to their pain. Pain has typically been understood as something to be avoided, anchored on an assumption of a lack, or a break with an established continuum. It seems pertinent to keep in mind the words of Commissioner Berstein (2020), in his letter to Commissioner Angela Salazar, who died in August 2020. As Berstein states, "este dolor es tambien tu presencia," which translates as, "this pain is also your presence." One could argue than the pain the mothers feel is also, among other things, a presence of their loved ones. It is a presence that anchors one's relationship to oneself through the pain instantiated by an absence. The pain is present, but it is there because of an absence. It comes from the absence of a loved one, but it is also a type of presence.

There are a few caveats I would like to mention regarding the future direction of my research, to illustrate where I am at this point. The first is the "dumb view of the emotions" (Spelman, 1982), and the need to steer away from purely cognitivist understandings of emotion. The second is the need to seek alternatives to the seeming dominance of the phenomenological model, and the third caveat is, as Peter Goldie (2000) cautions, to be aware of the risks of over-intellectualizing the emotions.

The "dumb view of emotions" is a term coined by Spelman (1982) to refer to the positivist view of emotions that sees emotions as fundamentally different from reason and sense perception. For positivists, emotions are more closely associated with bodily sensations and, as Jaggar (1989) argues, the colloquiality of mixing emotions with feelings is reflective of how deep the positivist understanding of emotions runs in our common understanding of emotions. However, that common understanding of emotions is further complicated when someone is not aware of the emotions they are feeling, or when the expression of those emotions is toned down and measured, such as when someone explains in a calm and equanimous way that they are outraged, but their demeanor does not reveal their outrage. The seeming disconnection between the awareness of the emotions one is feeling, and how they are expressed, further complicates the positivist attempt to distance emotions from reason and sense perception. But, as useful as it might be to try to analyze emotions isolated from the medium that makes them possible, trying to separate emotions from their sense-perceptive, rational components, only further complicates the possibility of understanding emotions as a complex array of mediated responses that can be modulated and appropriated for specific aims.

Although the dumb view of emotions (Spelman, 1982) has begun to lose ground, in recognition of the shortcomings of the positivist approach, on my view, the intentional or cognitivist models that have emerged since have not distanced themselves sufficiently from the original positivist model that we could claim that they have overcome the objections to the dumb view of the emotions. By this I mean that the cognitivist understanding of emotions continues to be predicated on an idea of emotions that assumes one can separate emotions from their seemingly rational content. However, if we

continue to accept the binarism of reason versus emotions or the sensuous, we continue to be unable to recognize how a seemingly irrational emotion can be anchored in perfectly rational needs in the context of the individual. If the conceptual apparatus to understand emotions keeps restricting the rich and polyvalent ways in which both positive and negative emotions inform the lives of people, we are making emotions fit the preconceived cognitivist model to the detriment of more vibrant, more nuanced, and sophisticated approaches to understanding emotions. This is the core reason I consider it unfit for my project.

The second caveat goes along the lines of my critique of the cognitivist model being too narrow, and too dependent on what Deleuze called an image of thought (1994), but, this time, in relation to the phenomenology of emotions. It seems to me that phenomenology used as a model to try to grasp the emotions is also an outdated conceptual apparatus that delimits, more than enriches, the study of emotions, even if we go to the Husserlian (2013) model of the *epoche* or phenomenological reduction. As Jan Slaby (2018) argues in *Affective Arrangements and Disclosive Postures*, there are mainly three camps where the phenomenology of emotion, or the philosophy of emotion that has accepted phenomenology as its methodology, coalesce. The first is affective intentionality, or how emotions reflect the information someone has about the world. The second is affect as both an individual and collective reality that manages to anchor both realms without superseding one or the other. The third is the concern that phenomenology continues to have with the embodiment of emotions (pp. 197-198).

While phenomenology continues to grapple with emotions as a vehicle through which the self and the communal being structure their perception of the world, the embodiment of such emotions at the core of the phenomenological approach to emotions. So, "intentionality, situatedness [and] embodiment" (Slaby, 2018 p. 197) are the three axes around which much of the work on the phenomenology of emotions centers. However, despite their richness, these three approaches continue to delimit understanding the emotions as a fundamentally first-person account of sense-perception. The model of "affective arrangement" Slaby (2018) expounds seeks to explore the phenomenon of

emotions from an understanding of emotions as nodes of coalescence that both supersede and integrate the self and the collective as part of the affective arrangement.

Traditional models of phenomenology are preoccupied with ascertaining the human subject—the self—and the objective phenomena affecting the person. Such models are thus unable to grapple with posthumanist challenges. Slaby's model, on the other hand, seeks to understand affectivity through nodes of coalescence, where subjective experience, rather than being constitutive of the 'I' of sense experience, is one in a chain of constitutive features of the affective phenomena. This affective arrangement model can integrate those features of the emotions that are part of the phenomenological model without providing them with the superseding influence they have had hitherto. In other words, rather than rejecting the Kantian model of the self as the fundamental unit of apperception, the affective arrangement model concerns itself with a critical analysis of the emotive dispositionality of the subject, the context of that emotive dispositionality, and the possibilities and or shortcomings that emerge from it on a postphenomenological basis (Withy, 2015). In brief, the post-phenomenological model aims to ground the understanding of the phenomena in a relational understanding that values both human and non-human presence, and their role in the emergence of the studied phenomena (Oksala, 2016).

The last caveat, which, in a way, subsumes the previous two, is the concern raised by Goldie (2005) of over-intellectualizing the emotions. Although addressed briefly earlier in this thesis, this concern takes on a more prominent role when we review the methodological shortcomings of the cognitivist and the phenomenological conceptual apparatuses, which seem to create units of analysis distant from the studied phenomenon, and which seem to force the emotions to fit into the method, not the other way around. Of course, no method will ever be fully transparent, and each comes with its baggage, vantage point and blind spots. However, we should attempt to get as close as we can to the phenomenon, seeking methods that interfere the least possible with the phenomenon being studied. To that end, let us now turn to the three emotions under consideration in this thesis: anger, resentment and grief.

Chapter 3.

Anger

Whenever we talk about negative emotions, the first emotion that comes to mind, or perhaps the most popular among them, is anger. Traditionally seen as a reaction to a slight, anger has been understood as a negative emotion linked to vengeance or the intent to respond in kind to the offending party. While the link between anger and politics has not always been part of the syntax of either anger or politics, anger has recently been characterized as "the essential political emotion" (Lyman, 1981, p. 61) or, as Simon Critchley (2007) puts it, "the first political emotion" (p. 130). So, there is an emergent trend that is seeking to reconsider the traditional understanding of anger as inherently pernicious, but this reframing of anger as a political emotion continues to be counterintuitive and not widely accepted.

Before going into the conceptual intricacies and potential uses of anger, I would like to locate the reality of the mothers' anger, so that we can keep in mind the question "useful for whom?" (Deleuze, 2004) and "who is capable of uttering it?" (Nietzsche in Deleuze, 2006, p. xvii). For the mothers of the false positives, the relationship between anger and politics, and the strategic use of anger, are multifaceted. For instance, the frustration that comes from having their stories told but not heard, and the names of their sons and relatives trampled by the authorities, becomes anger as the cases multiply and the lack of answers increases. The callousness of the situation makes it seem like their lives did not matter, that the only value they had was as bodies that could count on a tally, so that a Military Brigade could falsify the count of people killed in combat. The arrival of anger as a consequence of the frustration and injustice experienced by the mothers is heightened by the Colombian government's responses and the cold shoulder that most of their community gave them.

The mothers, conscious of the importance of bringing allies to their cause, and the need to stay clear of the preconceptions about women's anger, and poor women's anger in particular, have articulated their anger along the lines of what the philosophical

literature refers to as virtuous anger (Cogley, 2014; Cherry, 2018) or Lordeian anger (referring to Audre Lorde) (Cherry, 2021). The modulation of the mothers' anger, and its instrumentalization, has forced them to move between the expression of their pain and the modulation of that expression. Nevertheless, there are also instances in which even the threat of anger elicits negative responses, and the door seems to close for the mothers, bringing the ability to mobilize people through anger to a (temporary) halt.

In this chapter, I will explore anger as a 'negative' emotion and the implications of this categorization in our understandings of anger. I will also explore the origins of anger as an emotion and the usage of the word from the early Greeks to our day, highlighting the widespread assumption that our understanding of anger and theirs is somewhat similar. Finally, I will address how some of the issues around our definition and understanding of anger—both as a concept and as a lived emotion—directly impact the mothers of the false positives' struggle. Part of the motivation behind this exploration is to argue that anger can exist without the need for revenge or retribution, and that while there are different types of anger, there are situations where anger is a morally and politically necessary emotion that needs to be embraced and articulated.

Anger as a Negative Emotion

In this section, I explore the conception of anger as a negative emotion. The main goal here is to support my claim that the categorization of emotions as negative or positive should be contested. This categorization oversimplifies the emotions, reducing them to only one feature among many. Instead, I will argue, we need to expand the conversation about negative emotions in general, and anger in particular, to explore how anger came to be understood as a negative emotion and the specific ways it is considered negative compared to other negative emotions.

In principle, emotions have been classified by psychologists and other professionals (Colembetti, 2005) as positive or negative based on their valences. An emotion is classified as 'negative' for its negative ("bad" or unpleasant) valence or as 'positive' for its positive ("good" or pleasurable) valence. However, emotions are more

than the dominant valences that assign them to the negative or positive category. As Dagleish and Power (2010) argue, "Anger is generally held to be a negative (aversive) emotion, but one that involves an active approach, in contrast to the negative emotions of sadness and fear which involve inhibition and withdrawal, respectively" (p. XX). In other words, while anger, sadness and fear belong to the same overall category that designates them as negative emotions for their negative valence, within that same valence, there are differences that allow us to understand anger as an active, outward-directed type of emotion that incites further action. So, we could talk about anger as an active negative emotion, since it leads people to action and engagement, in contrast to sadness and fear, which should be understood as passive negative emotions.

A consideration of active versus passive emotions could broaden our understanding of the emotions beyond the surface categorization of anger as a negative emotion, with all pejorative associations the 'negative' label entails. When considering anger, we should reconcile the active, forward, propositive nature of anger, even if it is understood as being within the array of negative emotions. As such, rather than categorizing emotions in terms of their valences, perhaps we should follow Cox and Harrison (2003) when they argue that "the construct of anger [should be] considered to be multidimensional with distinct affective, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions and distinct physiological elements that contribute to both the experience and expression of the emotion" (p. 372). But, despite the attempts by Cox and Harrison (2003), among others, to move away from the oversimplification of anger, "most cognitive models of anger indicate that the experience of anger depends on the higher-order appraisal of events (p. 373). However, those cognitive models fail to recognize and integrate the specificity of people's cultural materiality and the role that specificity plays in the experience and expression of anger.

Regardless of what cognitive models might suggest (Cox and Harrison, 2003), not every person responds in the same way to the same challenges, and, even when anger ensues, it comes with what the scientific literature refers to as 'coping potential,' defined as "the person's perceived ability to deal successfully with the eliciting event" (Berkowitz and Harmon-Jones, 2004b, p. 110). The assumption behind coping potential is that if

people do not feel that they have the resources to respond to the situation that prompted the anger, they would not have felt anger, but rather depression or anxiety. As Nico Fridja (1986) argues, "Anger implies nonacceptance of the present event as necessary or inevitable; and it implies that the event is amenable to being changed" (p. 199). It can be said that, behind anger, there is a type of disobedience that refuses to accept as unavoidable the events that gave rise to the anger. In the specific case of the mothers of the false positives, it is more a case of David versus Goliath than one of relatively equal forces battling over a specific issue or event. In their disobedience, their act of angry rebellion, the mothers were conscious of the power imbalances present between them, as hard-working mothers standing tall and speaking their truths, and the military-juridical complex structure opposing them. However, before we dwell on the details and pertinence of the type of anger the mothers elicit, and the different responses to that anger, let us trace the most common understandings of anger, their evolution through history, and some relevant misconceptions. A full study of the evolution of the concept of anger goes beyond the scope of this thesis; however, I will sketch some of the most influential definitions in order to situate the mothers' anger and the concept itself through its multiple iterations and understandings over time.

Defining Anger

One of the most cited definitions of anger comes from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, where he defines anger as "a desire, accompanied by pain, for a perceived revenge, on account of a perceived slight on the part of people who are not fit to slight one or one's own" (Rh. 2.2.1378a31–3). However, in the *Nicomachean Ethics,* he also says that "anyone can become angry…That is easy, but to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way—is morally praiseworthy" (bk. 2, 1108b). So, while, in the *Rhetoric*, there seems to be a condemnation of anger, assuming that it always entails a desire for revenge, in the *Ethics,* the definition seems to give some room for *right* instantiations of anger. In more recent philosophical works, scholars such as Martha Nussbaum (2015) seem to center their understanding of anger on the definition Aristotle deploys in

the *Rhetoric,* without mentioning or even acknowledging the definitions of anger in *Nichomachean Ethics* and elsewhere.

However, even those like Nussbaum (2013, 2016) or psychologists DiGiuseppe and Chip Tafrate (2007), who recognize other definitions and integrate them into their understanding of anger, seem to maintain a widespread belief that there is a direct link between anger and aggression. The assumption, as Nussbaum (2015) claimed, is that anger that does not entail retribution does not exist. Herein lies one of the challenges of approaching the subject of anger. In the philosophical literature, there seems to be an understanding of anger inherited from a selective reading of Aristotle, without acknowledging the context and people for whom his definition was intended. So we need to go back to Deleuze's question of "useful for whom?," paired with the question of "who is capable of uttering their anger," in the context of power imbalances such the one experienced by the mothers.

As Konstan (2006) succinctly states after elaborating on Aristotle's conception of it, "Anger…involves judgment of intentions" (p. 45) and, in a claim perhaps more relevant to our current anthropological sensibilities about anger, "[A]nger depends on values, that is what one regards as good or bad" (p. 45). The intention behind the quotes above is to emphasize that, despite what neo-Aristotelians and neo-Stoics would have us believe, there is not a single, fully encompassing definition of anger from Aristotle that we can use, at least not in the way intended by Nussbaum (2016) or DiGiuseppe and Chip Tafrate (2007). Aristotle's understanding of anger is much more complex than we have generally assumed, and the "cherry-picking" of quotes to substantiate one's argument hinders, rather than facilitates, a broader conversation about the concept of anger.

That said, Aristotle is not the only one who has argued for a direct link between anger and vengeance. Anthropological studies seem to suggest a direct link between anger and vengeance (Fridja, 1994; Elshout, et al, 2015; Fisher, 2018; Vandoorn, 2018), but what I intend to argue here is not that the link between anger and vengeance has never existed, but rather that it is not as universal as scholars of anger would have us believe—and the mothers' case is an example where such universality cannot be found, at

least in principle. If the mothers are an example that being angry does not necessarily mean that vengeance is the only alternative, then we need to challenge the understanding that links one to the other and open the space for more nuanced understandings of anger.

Amongst the scholars who challenge vengeance as coterminous with anger, Nico Frijda (1987), in his book, *The Emotions*, denies that all types of anger involve a desire to harm someone (p. 217). In a similar vein, Thomas Brudholm (2008) questions the commonly held assumption that survivors of violence will be swayed by violence unless they forgive. This assumption seems to drive most attempts to move people away from negative emotions, assuming that such emotions would lead survivors to seek to avenge their wounds. Nevertheless, Brudholm (2008) goes further when he states that assuming all victims will become prey to the need for revenge is "grossly reductive with the variety of emotional reactions and wishes found among victims" (p. 9). The assumption that sustains most transitional justice processes, such as reconciliation, is the idea that vengeance is the univocal horizon through which conflict can be resolved if procedural justice is not an option. However, some of the survivors seem to think otherwise. And we need to think about alternatives to the discourse of reconciliation, precisely *from* those survivors, and not against them.

Now, considering that Aristotle's definition of anger is often cited and used as a benchmark to guide philosophical discussions about the concept of anger, we should pause and dwell on it further, even if only briefly, to get a sense of the gaps between an Aristotelian understanding of anger and the one we currently have. One of the difficulties of drawing from Aristotle as the primary source of the discourse and analysis of emotions is the seemingly implicit, but gratuitous, assumption that the current era is characterized by the same understanding of emotions as the Greek context in which Aristotle lived. As Deslauriers (2019) and Konstan (2006) argue, while we can relate to the Greek comedies and tragedies, it is not entirely clear that we indeed have the same emotions and identify those emotions the same way. As such, to paraphrase Foucault (1972), to articulate a better understanding of our present, our relations to our emotions, and how they constitute us, we need to challenge the assumption that not much has changed in terms of emotions since Aristotle, and perhaps even Plato. For, in the process of questioning those

widely held beliefs about ourselves, we can begin to understand ourselves and our communities otherwise.

Despite recognizing the problematic assumption that our understanding of emotions mirrors the Greeks', the ubiquity of the assumption forces us to continue engaging with it while trying to keep a critical distance from it. Another of the challenges of merely importing Aristotle's definition of anger, as Nussbaum (2016) among others does, while failing to explicitly situate it in the context of Aristotle's society, is that the definition seems to apply, in principle at least, universally. Since none of us is a slave, at least in theory, the definition of anger that is meant to apply only to free people should, at least in principle, apply to all of us, irrespective of our social status. However, a key feature of Aristotle's definition is that slaves could not be angry, in the proper sense of the term, as they were not equal to their masters. So, anger is an emotion that can be present only in the masters and not in the slaves, as it does not fit their status. Konstan (2006) argues, when discussing the story of Hecuba, "The Greeks owe nothing to Hecuba: they have conquered her city, and their power over her is complete. She thus has no motive for anger…" (p. 64), so the understanding of anger that Aristotle has is anchored on a hierarchical society in which legitimate anger is determined by one's social positioning and no other variable, such as the morality or immorality of the actions that are eliciting one's anger, or the moral compass of the potentially 'angry' person. Anger's presence and manifestation are possible only for free property owners who can dispose of other people's lives, but anger cannot be thought of as legitimately present in slaves. For the slaves and the dispossessed, the only function is to appease their masters. As such, the assumption that Aristotle's definition of anger in the *Rhetoric* (1926) can be transposed to our context fails to account for the status of person allowed to feel and express their anger in Aristotle's social context. In addition to Aristotle's conception of anger making slaves and the downtrodden unable to experience and express anger, there are also consequences for the presence and expression of anger for the free property owners. They are not allowed to be angry with their slaves or those beneath them socially, since enabling them to do so would entail lowering the masters' social position to the slaves' level (Konstan, 2006). In other words, Greek society's social and political context at the time of Aristotle differs significantly from ours, to the point that exacting

one definition of anger to drive its admonition does not seem accurate. There is a context in which that definition was put together and a type of person to whom it applied, and, unless one does the groundwork to dispel those two, the assumption that we can simply import the concept from that other time and place seems wanting. Therefore, as critical as it is to think about anger from Aristotle's perspective, it is also essential that we keep in mind with whom we are reading Aristotle, the type of society that person lives in, as well as their social and political context.

Now another question that might be worth dwelling on a bit longer is what is understood as retribution in relation to anger. Retribution could be a socially sanctioned return, similar in kind to the offence that was committed. It could be the need to address the cause of one's anger, so rather than a purely punitive mercantile tit-for-tat understanding of retribution, the aim would be to restore a balance that seems to have been lost through the action, or lack thereof, that provoked the anger in the first place. In that sense, Aubenque (1957) refers to the "*reattestation de soi*" (p. 310) when he argues for what Cristina Viano (2014) terms the "*reconstruction de soi*" (p. 9), or reconstitution of the self. This could give credence to the idea that, rather than an exact vengeance of the suffered offence, the intent would be to restore a balance that was lost, so the offended party can recover the sense of self it had prior to the injury. Rather than revenge in the proper sense, the type of retribution that Aristotle could have meant refers more to a balancing of wrongs, a redress that does not necessarily entail the offending party suffering for their misdeeds. So, the type of retribution that is present in his definition of anger may not be the one we currently associate with it. As Steven Names (2015) and Danielle S. Allen (2000) argue, we need to be able to tell the difference between the two terms that Aristotle uses to refer to retribution, namely *kolasis*, which can be roughly translated as punishment, and *timōria,* to refer to what we commonly understand as revenge, for there is not exact equivalence between our moral vocabulary and the one he uses. One could argue that punishment, revenge, and retribution are cognate terms, but not that they are the same thing. As such, without going into exegetical details that don't pertain to the overall purpose of the thesis, suffice it to say that the distinction drawn by both Names (2008) and in more detail by Allen (2000) problematizes both the

assumption that, since Aristotle, there has been only one meaning of retribution and that it translates unequivocally to our times.

Despite the discussion above, suppose we accept the presence of revenge in Aristotle's definition of anger, as understood by Nussbaum (2013, 2016) and psychologists such as DiGiuseppe and Chip Tafrate (2007). In that case, we would need to state that the mothers, who do not seem to have displayed or even made veiled references to vengeance or retribution, are neither experiencing nor expressing anger. However, if one is willing to accept that Aristotle's definition might not be as useful to the current context, we can situate the mothers' experience in the center of the discussion of anger. Retribution, or what Konstan (2004) refers to as the "dwelling on revenge in our minds (*dianoia*)" (p. 101), while integral to an Aristotelian conception of anger, is not present, either explicitly or implicitly, in the mothers' narratives. When Doris Tejada, the mother of Oscar Morales, whose body has not been found, speaks about her anger, she states that "… I began to take out that anger in empowering myself, in showing how good he was, the quality of person he was, which left a great void ..." (Cardona, 2019, own translation). In summary, then, either the mothers are experiencing something that is not really anger (as Nussbaum would suggest), or, as I would argue, the definition of anger as always already in need of vengeance is wanting and needs to be expanded to include the type of anger experienced by Doris Tejada.

But suppose we accept that the type of anger that the mothers experience is not the type of anger that Aristotle presents in the *Rhetoric*. In that case, we will need to continue reviewing some of the remaining influential definitions of anger to see if there is one that works better for the mothers of the false positives. After Aristotle's definition of anger, the next most popular stance on anger is Seneca's (2007), from his book on *Ire.* In the next section, I will look into Seneca's definition of anger and then explore how Christianity and Buddhism have shaped our current understanding of anger.

Seneca and Christianity

For Seneca, who will inform a great deal of the Christian tradition understanding of anger, and who is also cited in most philosophical stances against anger, the potentially positive outcomes of anger are far outweighed by the dangers it presents. While there seems to be widespread agreement that what Seneca is condemning in his book is anger, there is a growing chorus of scholars, such as Robert A. Kaster (2010) and Thomas Dixon (2020), who question the assumption that understands the Latin term *ire* for anger, when it could easily, and perhaps more accurately, be translated as rage. If one reviews the translations of Seneca's work to Spanish, Portuguese and French, the term commonly used is ire, and not the direct translations of anger, so Kaster (2010) and Dixon (2003) might be correct when they question the translation of Seneca on *ire* as anger.

Despite the terminological disputes about the exact term Seneca had in mind when admonishing against *ire*, the condemnation he posits leaves no room for doubt; for him, the only way to deal with anger was to avoid it altogether. According to Seneca, there is no strategic deployment of anger that could allow us insight or opportunity or agency. When anger enters, mayhem ensues, and the person becomes a slave to the emotion, seeing all of reality through the tainted prism of anger. Notwithstanding the influence that Seneca had on the Christian tradition and its relationship with anger, and Christianity's attempt to unify a doctrine against anger, there are contradictory patterns in the stance against anger in the Bible. While, in the Old Testament, stories of God's rage are ever-present, the New Testament tends to be more dismissive and even critical of the role that anger can play in people's lives. Other than the righteous anger of Jesus outside the temple (Matthew, 21:12-13), anger is seen as a capital vice within the Christian tradition, as described by Evagrius Pontus (Casiday 2013) and John Cassian (Lester, 2003).

Buddhism

In other religious traditions, the understanding of anger tends to be more condemnatory from a doctrinal perspective. However, those religious practices have also

deployed anger when it has been necessary to defend specific causes. One of the most complicated features of trying to understand anger comes from the difference between saying and doing, and the social and political realities that inform the concept. Take, for instance, Buddhism's stance on anger. If we were to guide ourselves purely by Buddhist doctrine, we would need to conclude that anger is always counter to Buddhist practice and theogony. Anger (*khoda* in Pali; *krodha* in Sanskrit) is, for Buddhism, a type of ailment that can only come about from the earthly, sensuous attachments humans have. As such, the Buddha's admonition to "abandon anger" (p. 18) appears to leave no room for the possibility that there might be ways in which anger could be deployed for positive ends, or be factored as a source of agency for those who experience it. For the Buddhist tradition, only harm and wrong can come from the presence of anger, and the only way to overcome such harm and wrong is to prevent the arrival of anger in the first place. In this sense, Buddhism seems close to the Christian admonition that anger is the door through which sin enters, put forward by St. Jerome (Liguore, 1952 Inc. xxix. Prov.). As PJ Vernezze (2008) argues, "according to what I will call the alternative view represented by Buddhism and Stoicism, anger is always a bad thing and is to be avoided even in the most extreme circumstances" (p. 2).

However, the admonition against anger has some exceptions. Despite the widely popularized understanding of Buddhism as being at odds with anger, there are views within that tradition that acknowledge deities such as Heruka, who takes different forms, some even akin to anger, to defend Buddhist teachings (in Tibetan, *khran 'thung*, literally translated as 'blood drinker' as well as the *Dharmapāla)* (Trungpa, 2010). While authors such as Yeng (2020) seek to give a place to anger within the Buddhist tradition, others (e.g., McRae, 2015) provide a detailed defence of the role of anger in the Tantric tradition. Speaking doctrinairely at least, the general view is that there is no room for anger, even if, in practice, it does seem to appear here and there. In other words, the Christian and Buddhist stances on anger can be summed up succinctly by quoting Samuel Johnson on the *History of Rasselas* (1889): "Be not too hasty," said Imlac, "to trust or to admire the teachers of morality: they discourse like angels, but they live like men" (p. 79). However, that apparent contradiction has not stopped Buddhism's emergence as one of the most popular ways to "deal with" anger.

From the staunch criticism of anger in Seneca, to the ambivalent stance on anger in Buddhist and Christian doctrine and practice, let us now move on to the modern understanding of anger, which, while connected to the traditions described in the preceding pages, differs from them in significant ways.

Modern Understandings of Anger

In the following section, I will identify how Cognitive Psychology and a strand of the Humanities, among other approaches, understand and deploy the concept of anger in modern societies. I will focus mostly on the understanding of anger that emerges from socio-political approaches.

To situate the debate on anger today, Kim (2013) argues that there have been two distinct strands that approach the understanding of anger from seemingly opposing perspectives. First, both cognitive psychology and the related field of cognitive philosophy assume anger to be a universal phenomenon, irrespective of anthropological research that questions such assumptions. The second strand, which includes gender studies, ethnic studies, and postcolonial studies, focuses on anger's social and political features. It seems that these two perspectives have run parallel to each other, without considering the possibilities the other brings for a broader understanding of the concept of anger, and they seem irreconcilable. One assumes universality, while the other focuses on the particular social and political dimensions of anger from what we could call a bottom-up perspective (Kim, 2013). While there may be insights I could glean from the cognitive perspectives, this thesis's purpose and focus align better with the socio-political perspective, since the idea of a universal concept of anger seems limiting and out of place in a conversation about the multiple understandings and expressions of the negative emotions like the one intended here.

Following the socio-political approach to anger, Carol Travis (1989), in her book *Anger: The Misunderstood Emotion,* looks at the general contours of understanding anger. She argues for two understandings, one that focuses on causes and another that focuses on effects. Those understandings often seem to talk past each other, mainly

because "we do not always know why we are angry, let alone if we are indeed angry: [w]e all seek meaning to our emotions and actions, and we accept the explanation most in harmony with our preconceptions, needs and history" (p. 20). Herein lies one of the challenges to understanding our relationship to our anger: it is not always transparent. We do not always know what made us angry. How we understand anger and the tools we use to respond to it, assuming it is indeed anger, are determined by our social milieu, individual and social history, and the values we aim to uphold. So, the acceptance of and admonitions against anger, generally speaking, fail to address the specificities of anger, the context, and the relation to the individual.

From what we have been able to ascertain so far, it seems there is no scholarly consensus on what we mean, philosophically speaking, when we speak about anger. As Travis (1989) argues, "…cheerfully, we use the word 'anger' to mean whatever we want" (p. 21). We seem to apply the label of anger willfully as if it was all that there was, and to a certain extent, that could very well be the case. However, there is also a possibility that we lack the capacity to correctly assess and label the emotions we experience. Instead, we deploy the labels we have at hand, when the emotion we are experiencing could, in fact, be something other than what we have labelled it. If how we name our emotions has the consequences that Travis (1989) argues, the apparent mislabelling of anger could prevent us from engaging with the accurate label for the emotion we experience, which in turn could have deleterious effects on the relationship we have with our 'negative' emotions. Travis (1989) lists different ways in which we are said to be angry. It can go from being angry because someone stepped on my shoe, or because I missed my bus, even though the next one will arrive in five minutes, or angry about something a friend or a relative did to me, or because someone assassinated my relative. It is the same term, "anger," but the intensity of one experience compared with the others complicates the relationship we could have with the term and our understanding of it.

Anger or Rage?

If we recognize that continuing to lean on Aristotle's definition of anger and the translation of Seneca's work on *ire* as anger rather than rage does not allow us to situate

ourselves within the understanding of anger today, perhaps Peter Lyman (2004) is onto something when he argues that "anger and rage must be distinguished" (p. 139). Historically, we have confused one with the other, or at the very least, we have been unable to distinguish them, and such confusion may be one reason for the condemnation of anger. Suppose we follow Lyman's (2004) reasoning when he argues that there is a movement from anger to rage when we do not listen to others' expressions of anger, or we negate them. If that is the case, we ought to question the silencing of anger and focus instead on the emancipatory potential that being attentive to anger as a form of speech could make possible.

If we disentangle anger and rage, which have often been considered a single emotion, perhaps we could find alternatives to the Aristotelian definition of anger that assumes the need to avenge as integral to being angry (Lyman, 2004). We do need to recognize a desire to avenge as part and parcel of rage, but not necessarily of anger.

If not all types of anger entail the need to avenge, and if only certain types of anger that go unanswered eventually become rage and demand the need to avenge, then we could come closer to locating the source of the need to avenge, which has remained lodged in dominant conceptions of anger. However, we will also have to attend to the importance of addressing and honouring anger to prevent it from becoming rage, which is the emotion that seems to have the negative features we have commonly associated with anger. Not all angers are experienced equally, but, almost invariably, most of the negated or obscured angers become rage, resentment, or even hatred, if they go unanswered.

Types of Anger

A more helpful, present-day understanding of anger needs to be rooted in a recognition that not all types of anger are the same, and that we will be better served if we move from referring to anger in the singular to the plural and begin conceiving of 'angers' as a plurality of responses to specific events. Not only does anger manifest in a variety of different situations, and for different reasons; anger is also, at least somewhat, within our control. As Cogley (2014) notes, bullies select their victims rather than target

everyone, and so do we select with whom to get angry, or, at the very least, with whom to allow our anger to show. Based on this, one could say that even the most anger-prone individuals can withhold their temper when required or expected to do so, such as in airport security check-ins or other situations where anger might arise. So, the presence and expression of anger is not a volcano that explodes unbeknownst to us and which we can merely try to contain once it starts erupting. There are reasons and contexts in which anger happens, and a message beneath each expression of anger, which is why Lyman (2004) argues for anger as a form of speech. If we move from the condemnation of anger to recognizing anger as a form of speech, and consider its context, we will be better positioned to understand the message conveyed through the anger, rather than refusing it for its emotional tonality. Considering anger a form of speech, rather than an impairment to reason and rational action, could permit us to assess not only what prompted the anger, but also how to respond to it as a form of speech that requires a response.

That said, in recognizing anger as a form of speech, we need to acknowledge that not everyone is allowed to express their anger equally. As discussed above with regard to Aristotle's conception of anger, Spelman (1989) also argues that oppressed groups are encouraged, and sometimes required, to repress their anger. So, while a Neo-Stoic discourse of preventing anger seems to apply generally, it is typically more often applied to oppressed populations. These populations are expected to repress their anger when their feelings seem to be going in that direction, and whenever anger persists, its presence is used as an excuse to stop interacting with those minoritized communities that express their anger. In other words, not all anger has the same origin, and not all its expressions are equally condemned. As Lyman (2004) writes, "the expression of anger is a resource for the dominant" (p. 134), to the point that one could locate one's place on the social scale by the possibilities one has of expressing one's anger. And, judging by the response to the anger of the mothers of the false positives, it appears they are near the bottom of the social scale. However, within that context, and aware of the requirements and opportunities that their anger places upon them, the mothers have still been able to articulate and deploy it as they see fit. I will return to this point later in the thesis.

In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1974), Foucault traces the process of creating "docile bodies." The insidiousness of disciplinary power means that emotions, and negative emotions in particular, have played a significant role in the governmentality of the individual. If we understand the presence of negative emotions as contravening basic norms of moral and political culture, we will recognize that the prevailing stance towards anger (i.e., avoiding or repressing) is part of a scheme that seeks to moderate its social and political expression. The scheme seeks to modulate negative emotions so that certain kinds of speech can be used only by certain kinds of individuals. The technologies of the self that once focused on the individual through force and violence shifted towards a capillary modification of the individual's conduct, re-writing their very soul on a process of *docilification* (Foucault, 1995). So, the seemingly neutral policing of expressions of anger clearly has a social and political role to play by delimiting whose expressions of anger need to be curtailed and whose are permitted. It is important to note here that the recognition that disciplinarian technologies of the self are behind the policing of anger ought not to lead us to a blind celebration of anger, as if the expression of anger is, in and of itself, always already emancipatory, because it is not.

Moral and Political Anger

Being angry is neither the sinful door through which all other sins enter, as St. Jerome (Inc. xxix. Prov.) argued, nor is it the univocal door to equity and social justice, as some contemporary feminists (Chemlay, 2019; Traister, 2018; Cherry, 2021) seem to suggest. As with all other emotions, anger is much more nuanced. A proper assessment of anger and a recognition of its place in the cartography of responses to real or perceived injury needs to be mapped out so that we do not risk either discarding the response altogether because it is tainted by being a 'negative' emotion or blindly celebrating it for its emancipatory potential, as if it was all there was to it.

Despite the celebratory stances of anger's emancipatory potential, I agree with Mary Holmes (2004) when she argues that "anger is not inevitably emancipatory but ambivalent because it is part of a politics of struggle" (p. 211). However, the division between those who blatantly condemn anger as pernicious and those who celebrate it as

emancipatory seems not to recognize anger in all its polyvalent dimensions. As David Ost (2004) argues, emotions in general, and anger, in particular, are constitutive of the political, and there is no political party that does not mobilize emotions to promote their causes. If Ost (2004) is correct, and anger is indeed political, we should move away from its chastising and denunciation and learn to see anger as an inherent part of the political debate, as a form of speech for some and a nuanced opportunity for others.

If we stay with Ost's (0024) understanding of anger as constitutive of the political, it aligns with Holmes' (2004) argument when she states that, "it is better to speak of angriness as part of communicative processes that produce subjects in relation to others" (p. 213). So, rather than adopting an abstract understanding of anger that lends itself easily to practices of erasure that, as Sue J. Kim argues (2013), allow the othering of those who are not allowed to be angry, understanding anger as part of the communicative process in a way that relates subjects to one another creates a relation, a link connecting subjects to one another in particular emotionally modulated ways. If we were to understand anger in this way, as part of the communicative process, then we would be able to engage with it, rather than assume that it stops communication.

We do, however, need to keep in mind that the link anger creates can easily be defined as hostile. As Holmes (2004) argues, "anger becomes defined as hostility or aggression not when it breaks some mutually agreed rule but whenever it threatens to shift power elsewhere" (p. 213). So anger is not always pernicious and objectionable; it is only the kinds of anger that threaten to move power away from its established nodes and towards new centers that are openly challenged and denounced. This explains why people in positions of power, particularly men, can express their anger without fear of consequences, and, in that sense, Marilyn Frye (1983) argues that certain types of anger in certain domestic spaces are allowed for women to experience and express themselves. However, the type of public condemnatory anger the mothers of the false positives are articulating against the Colombian State seems to challenge the power structure of the Colombian State, or, at the very least, show the distance between what is said and what is done.

In general, the injunction to prevent the expression of anger is felt by women of every social class, except in those specific cases defined by Frye (1983) above. Moreover, as Holmes (2004) writes, white working-class women are most strongly traversed and constituted by discourses of niceness and affableness that prevent them from expressing their anger in ways that are empowering. However, especially relevant for the purposes of this thesis, Spelman (1989) suggests that oppressed groups (such as the mothers of the false positives) would also be discouraged from expressing their anger, as that would entail an act of insubordination. Perhaps this perception of insubordination is part of what drives the lack of empathy and social support for the mothers' plight. When the mothers express their anger, they are violating the social codes that seek to prevent them from doing so. That expression, that act of insubordination, of manifesting their anger, gets in the way of allowing them to be heard, rather than being understood as part of a dialogue.

On the point of gender, class and anger, Thomas (1993b) suggests that lower social status women are less inclined to express anger, let alone anger towards their superiors. However, Brown (1998) claims that it is not that women from lower socio-political status necessarily express their anger less, but that their anger is more likely to be ignored and dismissed, as the recognition and valuation of anger is anchored in capillary webs of power relations. Those power relations are anchored on lexical indices that do not allow them to deliver their message to the intended targets. In other words, the mothers are angry, and they are expressing their anger; however, it is their gender and their socio-political location that prevents proper listening to what they are saying and the demands they are making. They are articulating their anger as part of the communicative process, but their gender and socio-economic status mean their anger is not listened to.

Given the gendered expectations around anger, we also need to explore the role of anger within feminist movements (Lorde, 1984), and how, from the second to the third wave, the relationship with the concept of anger has shifted. In order to situate anger appropriately, we can turn to Sue J. Kim (2013) who argues that "[a] man's anger expresses, while constituting, his masculinity, while a woman's anger is anti-feminine" (p. 1). She then states that "the middle class defines and identifies itself through 'control'

of emotions and against the uncontrolled emotions of both the wealthy and the poor" (p. 1). Nevertheless, the mothers of the false positives are not middle class *per se*, and, if Kim (2003) is correct, the mothers would have been allowed to express their emotions as members of the poor population to which they belong. However, so far, they have not been allowed that expression, or at least it has not been heard as intended.

So, the presumption that both poor people and rich people are allowed to express their anger seems too general and inadequate to explain the mothers' anger and the means that they had to retort, to articulate their anger and make it more palatable for their intended audience. The mothers could have been allowed to express their anger within their social milieu of poor, working-class women who fill in their days with multiple occupations to make sure they make it to the end of the month. However, the anger expressed in that social milieu would not allow their voices to be heard beyond the corners of the humble barrios where the disappeared used to live. For the mothers to gather the support they needed, they had to articulate their anger and pain through the established channels of the middle-class codes and expectations, so their demands could be articulated, understood, and felt by others, even if the majority ignored them.

Despite the arguments for the political nature of anger or the role of anger in the communicative process, the expression, deployment, and exploitation of anger are class driven. As Lyman (2004) argues, "even as liberal regimes silence the anger of the powerless by depoliticizing it, they appropriate for themselves the right to mobilize anger in defence of the political order" (p. 134). However, as even a cursory review of the religious texts of the most influential traditions would confirm, silencing and chastising the expression of anger, only to later mobilize it as a moral force that will mobilize the *subdit* to defend the cause, precedes liberal regimes. And yet the anger expressed by the mothers is political, not only because it is expressed by poor, uneducated women against the representatives of the State, the judiciary and the Army, but also because the actions that motivated their pain were part and parcel of a political structure. The type of anger the mothers are experiencing and expressing is a form of speech as defined by Lyman (2014), for it becomes a vehicle through which they assert a message that otherwise they would not have the channels to deliver. And perhaps that is where at least

some of the uneasiness with the anger of the mothers comes from, as the political parties and movements have not been able to domesticate it in the way in which they were able to domesticate the palpable anger that ensued from the random kidnappings that took place among the Colombian highways in the 1990s. Anger, Lyman (2004) argues, is "domesticated"—or sublimated as he also refers to it—"by redirecting its energy to support socially useful goals" (p. 136). In other words, the type of anger that the mothers are mobilizing has managed to defy class and gender rules about expressions of anger. Their anger has managed to stay away from left- or right-wing coopting possibilities by staying committed to their calls for truth and justice against a state that fails to listen to them. It is their anger that amplifies their demands for truth and justice about the false positives. Moreover, the mothers have been able to stay clear of overt expressions of anger that would have driven condemnation of their plight as just a bunch of angry women who do not understand the justice system. However, the question remains as to whether their plight would have had the attention it has had if the mothers' anger was not as palpable, but precisely articulated.

In this chapter, I have tried to show that the assumption that our understanding of anger has not changed since the Greeks is wrong. The ever-present references to Aristotle, among others, to substantiate our understanding of anger fail to address the differences in context between his time and ours. The problem with borrowing a definition from one single text of Aristotle and deploying it as if it was the only one available, clashes when read against the mothers' statements and manifests for whom vengeance or retribution are not part of the repertoire of responses that they seek. As argued earlier, either the definition that Nussbaum and the neo-Stoics deploy on anger (i.e., as always already entailing vengeance) is lacking, or the mothers are misnaming their emotion when they refer to it as anger.

I also discussed types of anger to correct the misunderstandings of anger as always pernicious, drawing attention to a virtuous instantiation of anger that remains absent from blind admonitions against anger. I then moved on to explore moral and political anger in order to ground and defend the type of anger that I claim better characterizes the mothers' stance. In particular, I explored the gendered social and

political role that anger plays in the political sphere and how it is domesticated and de-politized, only to repurpose it for the specific political agendas of those in positions of power. In the next chapter I turn to a concept akin to anger, namely resentment.

Chapter 4.

Resentment

While there may be some degree of acceptance and recognition of the presence and inevitability of anger in certain circumstances, such recognition decreases when we shift to resentment. The general assumption regarding resentment is that it is a negative emotion that can only have negative consequences for the individual and their community. Also understood as a conglomeration of negative emotions that feed on each other, harming more than helping the resenting person, resentment continues to be understood as an emotion that needs to be avoided at all costs. Further, seen as positioned halfway between anger and the ultimate negative emotion, hatred, resentment is understood as an emotion that leads the resenting person into a cycle of negative emotions that end up imprisoning them. But perhaps we can find a way of legitimizing the resentment that arises in the survivors who continue to clamour for justice amid uncertainty, bureaucratic delays, and life threats, while at the same time grieving the loss of their loved one. Perhaps there is a way to argue for a moral understanding of resentment that benefits not only the survivors in their search for truth and justice, but also the communities where that search for truth takes place.

This chapter will aim to trace the concept of resentment, trying to differentiate it from cognate terms like anger and hatred. In doing so we will be attentive to whether resentment should or should not be distinguished from terms like *ressentiment,* how key scholars working on resentment have understood the concept, and whether the concept can aid the mothers' plight. If the case can be made for a morally principled type of resentment, perhaps we could elucidate a connection between resentment and injustice so that resentment can be legitimized when it emerges in response to injury, as a demand for truth and justice, rather than revenge. We might also find some redeeming features to resentment that make it stand up and demand a response, such as truth and justice, when such resentment emerges in the life of surviving victims.

Defining Resentment

Robert Solomon (1976) defines resentment as "the villain of passions" (p. 350), and Adam Smith (1982) sees it as one of the sentiments that we share with the brutes, "an unsocial passion" (p. 28). Resentment is often understood as a complex emotion that imprisons people in the past. It ties them to their wounds in ways that prevent them from dealing with their pain and limiting their ability to move on. The assumption behind resentment is that it is a wound that festers, and the longer it remains open, the worse it gets, preventing people from finding alternatives to redress for the wrongs that wounded them in the first place. But perhaps there is more to resentment than that.

For the purposes of this thesis, I take resentment "not [as] a universal emotion, but [as] a highly intellectual passion linked to the denial of fortune as a form of retribution, to the promise of an equalitarian and meritocratic society and to the democratization of mental illnesses" (Moscoso, 2003, p. 20). Following Moscoso, we could then say that resentment is a decidedly modern emotion that can be traced to social demands and expectations of justice, equality, and ideas of social and economic retribution.

While some scholars, such as Marc Ferro (2010), argue that resentment has remained unchanged since antiquity, others, such as Ashraf H. A. Hurdy (2018), deploy the Greek tragedy *Philoctetes* to argue for the presence and recognition that resentment already had a place within the array of emotional responses understood by the Greeks. Along with the genealogy of scholars who trace resentment as an emotion that precedes modernity, Gregorio Marañon (1939) uses the figure of Tiberius to elaborate and explain his understanding of resentment as ingrained in people who lack generosity, and who use it as a default response to the injuries that besiege them. For Marañon (1939), however, resentment is an individual pathology, a character flaw that besieges only certain feeble people.

However, other scholars of resentment, such as Dolores Martin Moruno (2013), following Moscoso's (2003) definition, argue that resentment is a decidedly modern emotion that cannot be traced to a historical moment before modernity. As Martín Moruno (2013) argues in the introduction of *On Resentment Past and Present*, "The

historical evolution of resentment can be perceived through a careful analysis of the changing meaning of the term used to describe this affective response, which did not acquire a moral connotation until the second half of the eighteen century" (p. 3). However, we need to tease out both the assumption that resentment is a modern emotion and the supposition that there was a point at which resentment entailed a non-moral way of feeling.

In principle, it could be argued that Ferro (2010), Marañon (1939), and Hurdy (2018) are speaking about an understanding of resentment that is decidedly not moral, as Martín (2013) argues. But there seems to be a moral tone when Ferro (2010) argues that "In history resentment has been the matrix of ideologies of protest, on the left and on the right" (p. 128), such that the argument for an understanding of resentment devoid of moral connotations seems to be wanting. It could be argued, however, that Ferro's (2010) argument in the quote above refers more to the political than the moral nature of resentment, but that alternative reading, in itself, does not remove or overcome the moral tones of the quote. The same could be said when we consider the understanding of resentment put forward by Marañon (1939). For Marañon (1939), more than being a response to an injury or an injustice, resentment is a personality trait, a moral failing in people predisposed to resent, rather than to understand. Both Marañon (1939) and Ferro (2010), despite their denunciation of resentment, seem to see resentment as decidedly moral, assuming personality treats as a moral characteristic, which seems explicit in Marañon (1939) and implicit in Ferro (2010), and complicates Martin Moruno's (2013) reading of resentment being initially a non-moral emotion.

Because Martin Moruno's (2013) acceptance of both a moral and a non-moral type of resentment could be a way to move past the gridlock of the two competing understandings of resentment, we need to explore her understanding of resentment disconnected from its moral sense. If, on the other hand, resentment is always already moral, then Marañon (1939), Ferro (2010) and Hurdy (2018) could be onto something when they trace a historical understanding of resentment to early Greek tragedy and Roman history.

Significantly, resentment as a concept is not present in most of the major philosophical works on emotions of Aristotle, Plato, and Cicero, and others. This absence raises questions about Marañon (1939), Ferro (2010), and Hurdy's (2018) reading of resentment, even if they can build an argument for the presence of resentment since antiquity. As such, the point is not to say that, if the concept of resentment cannot be found in the texts of celebrated classical philosophers, it did not exist. Rather, the idea is to problematize the assumption that resentment was always already there, just as we did in the previous chapter when we questioned the assumption that our current understanding of anger has remained unchanged from earlier conceptions. If what we understand as resentment today is a modern emotion, as Martin Moruno (2013) argues, there might be a misunderstanding in what Marañon (1939), Ferro (2010), and Hurdy (2018) recognize as resentment, and teasing it out might be helpful to understanding the resentment of the mothers of the false positives. Therefore, in the next section, I will explore the etymology of resentment, the historical junctures at which the concept's meaning appeared and changed, and clarify further what we have come to understand as resentment today.

A Genealogical Tracing of the Concept of Resentment

Etymologically speaking, resentment can be transliterated as "feeling again" from the intensive prefix *re* and the French verb *sentire* to feel. TenHouten (2018), however, argues that "these meanings are obsolete, for resentment no longer refers to the re-experiencing [of] sentiments in general, but only of negative sentiments relating to grievances, injuries, patterns of unfair treatment… and mostly generally unjustified suffering at the hand of another or others" (p. 1). In principle, it seems that TenHouten (2018) may be right since the etymology of resentment appears to refer to feeling again in general. For example, if one looks at the definition of resentment in *The Real Academia de la Lengua,* there seems to be support for the belief that resentment simply means feeling again, at least in Spanish. But it could also be that implicit in the etymology of resentment, is a sense that negative emotions linger and have moral consequences in the lives of those experiencing negative emotions. That is, looking past the simple dictionary definitions of resentment, there is evidence of an emphasis on negative emotions around

the 15th century that rendered this later understanding as different from the earlier definition of resentment as feeling again used in the 12th century in Old French.

Tracing the etymology of resentment allows us to draw a few conclusions about the specificity of the emotion and its historical evolution. The first conclusion is that there was a clarification between the 12th and the 15th centuries, between Old and Modern French, that designates resentment as the feeling again specifically of negative emotions. Implicit in that change is that the naming of the emotion cannot be traced to a period before the 12th century, which casts doubts on the understanding of resentment put forward by Marañon (1939), Ferro (2010) and TenHouten (2018), for whom resentment can be traced back to early Greek or Roman history.

This "change account" not only problematizes the assumption that resentment can be traced back to early Greece, but it also seems to question the presumed non-moral understanding of resentment Martin Moruno (2013) articulated. Perhaps we could speak of a nonmoral account of resentment in the 12th century, when it would have meant feeling again in general, before it specifically meant the feeling again of negative emotions; but is not clear that there was a particular point when a non-moral understanding of resentment was the dominant conception. The only other feeling again that could have a non-moral inflection would be the word 'remembrance,' which indicates the type of non-moral feeling that Martin Moruno (2013) articulated, but, on my view, remembrance seems too far away from our generally accepted understanding of resentment, thus calling into question non-moral accounts of resentment.

By itself, the references to the changes between the 12th and 15th centuries do not seem to indicate much beyond allowing us to ascertain the claims between TenHouten (2018) and Martin Moruno (2013) regarding resentment, except if one looks further and reads the change against the historical emergence of the early modern period, beginning in the 15th century. If there was a change in modern French that designates resentment as we understand it today, and it happened between the 12th and 15th centuries, Martin Moruno (2013) seems to have a point when she argues for resentment being a decidedly modern emotion. It is no coincidence that the clarification of the meaning of resentment

happened around what is historically referred to as the early modern period, for that is when the concern for the role of the individual, and the political comparisons between the individual and the societies in which they lived, emerged—a comparison made possible between the material reality of some and the promises of communal city life.

This tracing of the etymology of resentment allows us to determine that, like anger, assumptions about the continuity of the concept and meaning of resentment do not stand up to scrutiny. Because both resentment and anger have changed and evolved with the communities in which they were experienced, we need to be attentive to the possibilities and consequences of those changes.

Turning again to Adam Smith (1982) and his *Theory of Moral Sentiment*, we can confirm that, despite the fears Smith lays out in the introduction and first chapter of the book, he recognized a role for resentment tied not only to the injustice suffered, but also to the extent of the injury. For Smith (1982), "the violation of justice is injury...it is, therefore, the proper object of resentment, and of punishment, which is the natural consequence of resentment" (p. 79). In other words, for Smith (1982), there seems to be an intimate link between injury and resentment, anchored in the unfulfillment of one's expectation of justice, and that resentment will remain as long as the perpetrators escape punishment.

Elaborating further on the link between resentment and justice, Smith (1982) argues that "resentment seems to have been given to us by nature for defense and defense only. It is the safeguard of justice and the security of innocence" (p. 79). For Smith (1982), resentment is not an unnatural seething of the negative emotions that lingers and poisons the one who experiences it; rather, he seems to understand resentment in a way that connects it to injury, justice, and punishment, affording resentment a place within the array of positive moral responses to injury.

That said, Smith (1982) is concerned that the presence of resentment can animate a call for vengeful types of retribution that, rather than redressing the conditions of the injury, seek to over-injure those who injured us in order to outdo the original harm. Smith (1982) is insistent on the proportionality of resentment, on the need to look at the incident

that prompted resentment, and on the appearance of resentment through a third-person spectator's perspective that questions the self-centredness of the injured party. Here Smith's (1982) position on resentment predates Bishop Joseph Butler's stance on the subject, especially in their shared recognition that there are positive natural features to the presence of resentment in people's lives.

Bishop Butler (2006) was a prominent theoretician of negative emotions. While he agrees largely with Smith's (1982) understanding of resentment, Butler comes at it from a different angle. Where Smith (1982) anchors resentment on an understanding of the natural propriety of a response to an injury, Butler (2006) centers it on recognizing that if we are indeed prone to resent when we have been injured, then resentment is not negative per se. Otherwise, God would not have given us the option to resent, a claim that became the focus of his Sermon VIII, "Upon Resentment" (2006).

For Bishop Butler (2006) there are two kinds of resentments, one that is "hasty and sudden, [and the other] settled and deliberate" (p. 89). The first, the swift type of resentment, is typically referred to by Butler as anger. In contrast, the second kind was understood more as a deliberate type of resentment, commonly associated with malice and vengeance. But Butler (2006) leans on St. Paul when he argues, "be ye, angry, and sin not" to mark a difference between a justified type of anger and a sinful type of anger. The first, hasty, sudden type of resentment for Butler is merely an instinctual reaction that seeks to prevent harm through the instinctual activation of self-defence. Settled anger, or what we typically understand as resentment, is the main point of his sermon. This marks his understanding of resentment and anger as being coterminous, an understanding has continued, at least to some degree, to this day (Walker, 2006).

Butler (2006) argues that:

The degrees of resentment are in proportion, not only to the degree of design and deliberation in the injurious person; but in proportion to this, joined with the degree of the evil designed or premeditated; since this likewise comes in to make the injustice greater or less. (p. 93)

As such, it is not only that there must be something worthwhile for people if God allowed them to resent, but there is also a proportionality in resentment that centers on the degree of deliberation and premeditation. While Smith (1982) is more cautious about the possibilities and consequences of resentment, Butler (2006) seems to be less restrained about the moral benefits that the experience of resentment could bring to people, while also recognizing, along with Smith (1982), the connection that exists between resentment and justice. As does Smith (1982), Butler (2006) advocates for a third person perspective to evaluate the presence of resentment and the means to assuage that resentment, so that we can prevent resentment from running amok and playing a disproportionate role in the resenting person's life.

In contemporary debates, Jeffrie Murphy (2003), argues that "resentment stand[s] as emotional testimony that we care about ourselves and our rights" (p. 19). For Murphy (2003), the presence of resentment when we have been wronged entails that we are responding emotionally to the contravention of moral demands of justice and equality, embodying the intellectual discourse of morality. But we could also say, along with Jacques Rancière (2010), that the person resenting is taking equality seriously and demanding that promises of justice and fair treatment be held, and be inclusive of them, rather than giving up on them and seeking to avenge the wrong that prompted resentment in the first place. In this way, we could talk about an emancipatory feature of resentment, that demands inclusion and equity, rather than seeking to subvert the structures of power, and destabilize the political system. If we were to understand resentment from that perspective, it would not be hard to identify some edifying features of resentment that are tied to the need for redress and legitimate responses to injury.

In the case of the mothers, from their pain and the locality and insularity of their injury, they are not demanding that what was done to their relatives be done to the perpetrators. On the contrary, they are demanding that the trials and due process that were not given to their loved ones before they were executed be granted to the perpetrators. And they go around, whispering their injury, resenting what happened, for, as Doris Tejada, one of the mothers, states, "resentment, for me, resentment is to be wounded by the justice that does not advance, that does not involve the murderers, and we call them

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like that, because we can do it" (Quintana, 2018, p. 180, my translation). Here, when the mothers invoke resentment, they seem to understand it in relation to the absence of justice, and that allows authors such as Laura Quintana (2018) to argue, against Solomon (2014) and what she calls the moralizing readings of resentment, it is not that resentment evokes justice, but that it arises when justice is absent. In this reading, Quintana (2018) seems to imply that, if justice were served, resentment would not have arisen. But various injuries prompted the calls for justice. And each one of those injuries calls forth its own type of resentment, so we could talk about a compounding series of injuries, a compounding of violences that elicit resentments in the plural. The first one is the assassination of their relatives, followed by the moral injury of passing them off as members of insurgent groups, the lack of acknowledgement of the assassinations, despite proof, and the justice that does not seem to arrive. And those resentments, or at least the way the mothers understand them, allow them to wait for the right time to deploy it in ways they deem useful. As Tejada argues, "With resentment...right now, I have it like this, there stored. It's there dormant, [waiting] to get it out [when] I really need it, to be able to let out that resentment that I have and twist it around, [turn it around] and transform it better…." (in Cardona, 2018, my translation).

In other words, the resentment that the mothers experience and recognize within the grammar of the emotional responses to injury is understood as something that can be turned around. It is a resource that can be deployed when they deem it necessary, so they keep it there, waiting for a resolution, presumably cautious that it does not feed what one could call the negative strand of negative emotions and the calls for vengeance or a politics that only understands justice from a punitive perspective.

While we could argue that, broadly speaking, Smith (1982), Bishop Butler (2006), Murphy (2003) and the mothers have a positive understanding of resentment, its role, and possibilities, we also need to consider scholars who see resentment from a negative perspective. Amongst those, perhaps none has been as influential as Nietzsche in his vilification of resentment.

Resentment vs Ressentiment

As Ashraf H. A. Rushdy (2018) indicates, the origin of Nietzsche's concept of ressentiment seems to come from his reading of the French translation of Fyodor Dostoevsky's (1864) *Notes from Underground*, particularly the section when the narrator compares "l'homme de la nature et de la vérite" (a Rousseau-like man of nature and truth) and a "timid and resourceless mouse" (p. 99). The difference between the two centers around how they respond to injury. Whereas the Rousseau-like character calls justice his exacting of revenge, the mouse, "as a result of its heightened consciousness, denies it any justice and responds with bitter spite" (p. 99). As such, spite is the mouse's response to the world, and it will savour the little details of the offence and fantasize about avenging those offences.

However, to elucidate the differences between resentment and ressentiment, as Nietzsche seems to have understood them, I will quote at length his definition of ressentiment:

> The slave revolt in morality begins when ressentiment itself becomes creative and gives birth to values: the ressentiment of natures denied the true reaction, that of deeds, and compensating themselves with an imaginary revenge. While every noble morality develops from a triumphant affirmation of itself, slave morality from the outset says No to what is 'outside,' what is 'different,' what is 'not itself,' and this No is its creative deed. This inversion of the value-positing eye—this need to direct one's view outward instead of back to oneself—is of the essence of ressentiment; in order to exist, slave morality always first needs a hostile external world; it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli to act at all—its action is fundamentally reaction. (Nietzsche, 2008, p. 64)

To better elucidate the difference between resentment and ressentiment, we need to read the quote above closely. If, according to Nietzsche (2008), ressentiment entails a creative inward-looking response to an injury, then resentment would entail the outward-looking affirmation of the self through the demands for justice for the aggravations one has suffered. Unlike the person driven by ressentiment that inverts the values through a creative process, the resentful person stands for the values demanding equal treatment. The resenting person is not escaping reality through creating a safe inside and hostile

outside, but denouncing that the values of justice, equity and fairness that were promised were not upheld in their case, and that needs to be redressed. As Yamina Audi Celso (2013) argues, not all cases of resentment are cases of ressentiment. And we need to differentiate between those two, keeping in mind the rationale behind Nietzsche's (2008) uses of the French term ressentiment rather than popular cognate terms equivalent to resentment. As Audi (2013) explains, ressentiment entails creating a vision of the world, an episteme with rigid antinomies, such as us versus them and good versus evil; but that does not seem to be what the mothers are trying to do.

Ressentiment entails the creation of injured people, who understand themselves as inherently good and morally superior, against those who oppose them, who are thereby morally inferior and always already suspect. From this perspective, a couple of things are already elucidated. The first is that there seems to be a distinction between resentment and ressentiment centered around the creation and/or inversion of a set of values whereby the injured party understands themself as morally superior and builds the understanding of their world in that inversion. The person who resents and seeks justice from an injured understanding of self and strives to seek justice, despite repeated attempts to prevent their access to it, should be understood as different from those under the aegis of ressentiment. On this point, R. Jay Wallace (1994) puts it rather elegantly when he argues that "ressentiment is essentially about one's lack of some value or good, whereas resentment is about the breach of demands" (p. 247). Ressentiment reneges on the possibility of engaging, and circles back internally, whereas resentment seeks amendments for wrongs committed. Or, as Rushdy (2018) argues, the difference between the two terms can be simplified by speaking about ressentiment for perceived denial and resentment for injury (p. 109). The person driven by ressentiment moves inwards and disengages. In contrast, the resenting person remains engaged and challenges the terms of equality, justice, and fairness of the unequal treatment that was suffered and prompted the emergence of resentment.

If the distinction between ressentiment and resentment is correct, could one say that Jean Amery's (1990) objection to Nietzsche, "who morally condemned resentment" (p. 68), is based on a misunderstanding of the subtle, but noticeable, difference between

resentment and ressentiment, and not on an actual Nietzschean indictment of resentment? At no point can one say that the negative emotion described by Amery (1990) is the type of ressentiment through which people fail to recognize their value, other than in relation to the master from whom they silently try to differentiate. "Ressentiment can be seen in terms of an active and continuous work of submission, of continual giving up of freedom and the insistence of one's domination" (Newman, 2018, p. 18). But the type of response of negative emotion that is elicited and displayed by Amery (1990), the actions he carried, seem closer to resentment than ressentiment.

In other words, on Amery's (1990) view, and consistent with the mothers of the false positives, rather than ressentiment, they seem to be experiencing resentment. As Amery (1990) before them, the mothers do not engage in the inward-looking delusion of creating a different set of values against those they see as their opposite. They are not insulating from reality, creating alternative worlds whereby those who oppose them are, by virtue of that opposition, bad and evil, and those who stand next to them, by virtue of that solidarity, inherently good. I want to suggest that both the mothers and Amery (1990), as well as the survivors who have not relinquished on the promise of justice, despite the uncertainty of its arrival, are experiencing resentment and not ressentiment. They are angry and resentful, but demanding truth and justice about what happened, rather than creating artificial manicheist divisions of us good vs those who disagree with us as bad.

If we understand ressentiment and resentment as responses to injury that situate themselves differently in relation to the injury, we should have a more informed conversation about the limits and possibilities of resentment within the array of morally valid responses to injury. And that recognition of the connection between resentment and injustice, the denouncement that resentment entails, the clamour that seeks an answer, an acknowledgment and a redress for the wrongs experienced, legitimizes resentment as a moral response to injury.

Having ascertained the difference between resentment and ressentiment, we will now move on to consider the perspective of those who understand resentment from a

fundamentally negative perspective. According to Allan Schwartz (2012), "resentment is corrosive because it involves thinking obsessively about the insults and injustices committed against the self" (p. xx). Those who consider resentment a dangerous emotion assume it as a loop of negative, self-defeating emotions that prevent people from dealing with negative emotions in healthier, agentic ways. For Enright & Fitzgibbons (2015), resentment leads to unhappiness, irritability, anxiety, and depression, which affects the psychological and physiological health of the resentful person. From a political perspective, authors such as Francis Fukuyama (2018) have understood resentment in a way that links it to the upheavals of Brexit or the political support that brought Donald Trump to power. The assumption behind such understanding of resentment connects it with discussions about recognition. From this understanding of resentment, the only alternative to overcome the perilous effects of resentment is for people to forgive. As Coleman (1998) argues, "when forgiveness becomes a part of your life, little resentment is left" (p. 79).

While it is not the purpose of this chapter to dwell on the merits or limitations of forgiveness as opposed to resentment, the fact remains that resentment is considered a negative emotion that can impair one's life. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu (2015) claimed, "Without forgiveness resentment builds in us, a resentment which turns into hostility and anger. Hatred eats away at our well-being" (p. xiii). Here Tutu (2015) seems to be inverting the understanding of a unilinear direction from anger to resentment and eventually hatred by placing resentment anterior to anger, but eventually tied to hatred if left unresolved. Irrespective of the order in which Tutu (2015) understands the sequence of negative emotions, he seems to understand it, along with Schwartz (2012), Enright & Fitzgibbons (2015) and others, as a negative emotion that people need to do everything they can to overcome.

In the Latin American context, scholars such as Luis Kancyper (2010) understand resentment as, "the permanence of an undigested rumination of an afront that does not stop, the expression of a grieving that cannot be processed…[I]t is this thirst of talionic vengeance that can be perpetuated through generations…" (p.14, my translation). But none of the actions of the mothers, nor their language, nor expressions, can be said to

embody the type of resentment that Kancyper (2010) describes, which seems to be closer to what we have termed as ressentiment than resentment.

Contextualizing Resentment

Switching gears from the particular to the general, resentment is broadly understood as a cycle that harms the resenting person, drawing them further away by "incriminating others and promoting oneself, [which] is one of the characteristics of resentment" (Ferro, 2010, p. 130). There is also an assumption that the resenting person sits quietly ruminating on their pain instead of acting on it, poisoning herself on a cycle of negative emotions that only harms the victim. In *True to our Feelings*, Solomon (2006) argues that an "oppressed people that rises up and fights back is heroic, win or lose, but resentment just sits and sulks, all the while congratulating itself on its righteousness and abstemiousness, interpreted as virtue" (p. 110). In other words, on Solomon's view, resentment becomes an excuse through which people appoint themselves as morally superior, when their perceived superiority is anchored more on an inability to rise and fight for what they perceive as right than on a real superiority.

For Solomon (1976), resentment is an emotion of inferiority, while the cognate emotion, hatred, is an emotion of equality, and contempt an emotion of superiority. Unlike the hateful or contemptuous one, the resentful person recognizes himself as inferior, yet is unable to alter or accept the structures that sustain that inferiority; they are forced to live with their resentment, rather than acting on it, or simply accepting the situation. They interpret their reality from the position of their victimhood and refuse to attempt to subvert the position they interpret as inferior and or harmful.

Jean-Paul Sartre (1993) argues that resentment is a way to avoid being responsible for the world we live in, thereby acting in what he calls bad faith. For Sartre (1993), bad faith entails that the resentful person is living an inauthentic life in the sense that they are allowing the pressures bestowed upon them (facticity) to lead them to accept conditions of life that are not of their choosing, as such living in itself, rather than living for itself. In other words, for Sartre (1993), resentment prevents people from owning their freedom

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and living their lives in authentic ways. By accepting the roles and responsibilities that society has placed upon them, the resentful person has conceded the freedom to live up to a series of expectations that are not of their own choosing. The one who resents recognizes their inferior position, but does not accept it; however, that lack of acceptance does not mean actions are taken towards the feeling of inferiority or addressing the causes that led to that feeling. The repressed wound, paired with an inability to seek means to alter it, prevents them from challenging those who caused the injury, or seeking means to heal it. The resentful victim assumes an outward attitude of acceptance, accompanied by an inner attitude of refusal, and the clash between the two has negative consequences for the psychic and moral life of the resentful person.

From a psychological perspective, resentment is understood as "a noxious emotion that can exist in sublimated form as a result of being subjected to inferiorization, stigmatisation, or violence" (TenHouten, 2018, p. 1). Or, as Kancyper (2010), a psychoanalyst, argues, "the resenting person is someone who prefers to avenge, rather than cure [themselves]" (p.169, my translation). And yet, for Rushdy (2018), the concept of resentment is eminently political due to its resurgence along with cognate terms such as apology, forgiveness, guilt, etc. that are already recognized as political. As such, resentment has entered the vocabulary of transitional justice to the point that the final declaration of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1998) calls for the need to continue "renouncing resentment, moving past old hurt." The challenge remains, however, of what moving past old hurt entails, and the assumption that the hurt is not being repeated or people revictimized. If renouncing resentment is carried through the satisfaction from the demands for justice and truth that the victims have, then the presence of resentment gives the resentful a political agency that they did not seem to have through the normal tribunals of justice. If, on the other hand, the renouncing of resentment is premised upon the assumption that people will move on from their injuries and seek conciliation despite the lack of truth or justice, then it seems that we are not affording resentment the agentic space it requires, and may be creating the conditions for it to fester and sediment.

Part of the challenge in how we respond to resentment comes from how we understand it. If we think resentment is a pernicious negative emotion that we need to move away from, even if that means that there may be further injustices committed through the effort of moving away from injustice, then we need to be aware of the political consequences of that decision, both on the mid- and long-term horizon.

If we insist that resentment is necessarily pernicious, and simply try to rush past (or through) it, we are failing to recognize the potential that resentment could bring to the post-conflict process. John Rawls (2005), for example, says that "resentment is a moral feeling" (p. 553). For Rawls (2005), "if we resent our having less than others, it must be because we think that their being better off is the result of unjust institutions, or wrongful conduct on their part" (p. 533). If resentment is both a political emotion and a moral feeling, then an argument can be made for the mothers' experience of resentment that goes beyond them being unable to move past the wounds that could fester in them. As Michael Ure (2015) argues, "resentment is also concerned with the identification and protection of shared norms that regulate social and political relationships" (p. 3). So, when the mothers appear resentful, speaking from the condition of victims who lack truth, recognition, and commitment of no repetition, they are also demanding that a series of rules, or what Ure (2015) calls social norms, be upheld so that the delicate social tissue of trust can be restored. Behind the appearance and sustained presence of resentment, there is what Ure (2015) calls, "the judgment that we have suffered a deliberate injustice, [for] resentment explicitly or implicitly identifies norms of justice that we believe do, or ought to regulate social and political interaction" (p. 3). So, resentment, while recognizing that there has been an injury, demands the recognition and response to that injury in terms defined by the social norms and the justice system. If that is the case, then we need to recognize that, rather than an emotion that isolates and festers inside the victims, resentment is a 'negative' emotion that demands equal treatment, thereby being intimately tied to a sense of justice.

Along the lines of an understanding of resentment tied to a sense of justice, Peter Strawson (1974) argues that resentment is based on "an expectation of, demand for, the manifestation of a certain degree of goodwill or regard on the part of other human beings

towards ourselves" (p. 15). If resentment arises when social norms have been violated, then there is a clamour, the demand for a response-ability that sits at the root of the emergence of such negative emotion. It is a clarion call to social, penal, political, affective injustices that need to be addressed.

Keeping in mind the two types, or conceptions, of resentment outlined above, let me try to elaborate them further. One conception assumes it is a condition of victims unable to act and or move from their victimhood. The other understands resentment as intimately tied to upholding the promise of justice once one has been wronged. The first emphasizes the individual and how the individual responds, or fails to respond, to their wounds, and is inward-looking. The second conception focuses on how an individual responds to the injuries, the contexts that elicited the injury, and the response to it. For those who understand resentment as always already negative, there does not seem to be much space for a redeeming feature of the experience of resentment. But for those who understand it as intimately tied to feelings of injustice, the perceived negative consequences seem to be outweighed by the agentic features of the resentful individual standing up for their values and demanding that the promises of justice and equal treatment be upheld. Herein lies one of the interpretative disjunctures between the two perspectives. The negative understanding of resentment sees it as an always already passive response that prevents positive action from taking place, complying without accepting the perceived harm. On the other hand, those who understand resentment from a positive perspective assume it as a response that comes from an injured sense of justice that seeks redress, irrespective of material actions being taken to address the injury.

For Solomon (2006), the kind of resentment that leads to people sitting idle, instead of taking actions to address the cause of their resentment, should be understood as a pernicious emotion that has eminently negative consequences for the lives of those who are experiencing resentment. In this way, we could argue that Solomon is following Sartre, whom he describes as his intellectual hero (p. 234), in his understanding of freedom. For Sartre (1993), accepting the conditions that led to resentment without actively seeking to change them leads people to live inauthentic lives that allow others to decide how one's life should be lived. But the type of resentment that the mothers are

experiencing does not seem to align with the kind of resentment that Solomon (2006) condemns and Sartre (1993) associates with bad faith. Rather than silently and passively accepting the reality of what happened, the mothers have engaged and demanded truth and justice so that the memory of their loved ones is not allowed to be tarnished.

The point here is not to argue that those who understand resentment as a moral-political emotion, intimately tied to a sense of justice, disregard the possible implications that could spring from the experience of resentment. As Rawls (2005) explains a few paragraphs after the line quoted above, those experiencing resentment need to be able to articulate the reasons for the presence of that emotion, indicating that the presence of the emotion does not make it unquestionably moral. Those experiencing resentment should be able to articulate the rationale behind its presence and the possibility that the emotion is anchored in a misunderstanding. The point is that those who understand resentment as a moral and political emotion also recognize the moral obligation of the community to answer to the wounds that created the conditions for resentment anchored in a sense of injustice that needs to be addressed. Understanding resentment that way would mean needing to rethink the way post-conflict scenarios relate to the concept of resentment and its moral and political possibilities.

Problematizing Resentment

One of the challenges of studying emotions is that their meanings change over time, and the certainties we seek need to be further corroborated. Much Western philosophy follows a narrative according to which what we know and who we are can be traced back to the Greeks. However, regarding emotions, that narrative seems incorrect, at least considering both resentment and anger, and this has consequences for how we relate to those emotions, and how we relate to ourselves and our communities through those emotions. However, if the meaning and presence of resentment and anger are not set in stone from the early Peloponnesian period, but have evolved and changed through the different societies in which we live, perhaps we can also rethink our relationship to those emotions, how we understand them, how we relate to them, and what provokes them. In other words, if we have not always lived and experienced ourselves and called

our experiences and emotions the same thing, we can find other ways of naming, experiencing, and relating to our emotions, even the negative ones, in ways that are agentic for ourselves today, and not shackled to understandings of ourselves and our emotions to assumptions that do not stand up to scrutiny in the present.

If, for example, resentment emerged at a specific historical juncture of early modernity, we should be able to dislodge what that emotion does to us in the context of our modern understanding of the self, and thus build a different way of relating and narrating the experience of resentment in ourselves. In the case of the mothers, we need to question the claim put forward by Marañon (1939), that a resentful person is a person without generosity, as if the opposite of resentment is generosity. He goes on to say that the generous person does not need to forgive because she can understand it all, so the generous person, as opposed to the resentful one, cannot be offended in a way that requires forgiveness. But I would argue that the resentment of the mothers does not come from a lack of generosity; it comes from a lack of justice. It comes from the double injury of experiencing the grief of seeing the bodies of their relatives assassinated, along with having their moral characters trampled, just so the people who were supposed to protect them can have a few days off or earn a promotion.

The mistake that Marañon (1939) makes in understanding the request for justice, equality, and fair treatment as necessarily being resentment is a mistake that is also evident in Ferro (2010). For Ferro, all revolutions have been driven by resentment, as if the individual virtue of justice and the agentic features of negative emotions, such as resentment, did not have a place in the array of responses that could provide positive solutions to those who have suffered. Ferro (2010) does not seem to recognize that, rather than avenging those injustices by their own hand, the mothers have committed to working within the system to redress the harm done. That civic, moral responsibility needs to be honoured and recognized, even if, or especially because, it comes from the negative emotion of resentment experienced by someone who has been victimized and continues to be re-victimized. Remarkably, that ongoing harm has not diminished their ability to demand justice, nor meant that they have changed their demands.

We could also question the understanding of resentment put forward by Marañon (1939) from a different perspective. For Marañon, the appearance of resentment does not depend on the injury but on the individual who receives the injury. He says, "the resentful man is a human being poorly endowed with the capacity for affection; and, accordingly, a human being of mediocre moral quality" (p. 10). As such, for Marañon, resentment does not depend on the type of injury one suffers, but on the personality traits that predispose a person to be generous and understanding, or not. But the kind of generosity that Marañon seems to require from people connects with the requests of supererogation that Cherry (2018) poignantly criticizes. We cannot expect that the victims, on top of their injury, must let go of their demands for justice in the name of some sort of ulterior demand to forgive, for that is only a veiled type of supererogation. At this point, the cries of Paulina from the *Death and the Maiden* (1998) seem a pertinent contrast to Marañon's (1939) stance and the criticism of resentment in particular: "Why does it always have to be people like me who have to sacrifice, why do we always have to make concessions when something has to be conceded?" (p. 66). We cannot continue to expect that the weight of supererogation be carried by the survivors as if promises of justice and equality were not valid for them. We cannot continue to expect that the survivors will always have to concede and sacrifice themselves for the promise of a better future.

Like Paulina, who is trying to obtain a confession from the military doctor who raped her multiple times when he was trying to obtain a confession from her, the mothers are refusing to concede to the army's lies and the politicians who benefit from the status quo. The mothers are demanding the truth of what happened so they can begin to grieve properly, and the memory of their sons can be unsullied. As such, the type of resentment that the mothers experience should be understood as an agentic, moral, emotional affective response that seeks both recognition and addressing of the wrong, from a presumption of equality and unwavering faith in the institutions of justice—also including those hitherto excluded, as Rancière (2010) would have argued. Otherwise, the mothers could have pursued a different path to publicly sanctioned justice, perhaps à la Paulina, or by other means, with varying degrees of violence.

When we think of resentment from the perspective of Paulina and or the mothers of the false positives, it is an error of perspective to argue that a resentful person is a person without generosity. One cannot expect that the mothers simply accept the plight of their children, those children whom they did not birth for war, as Luz Marina Ospina has repeatedly stated—as if it was the normal course of life, because it is not. Their children have been taken from them by a war that is effacing their bodies and rewriting their characters in ways that do not align with who they were, constituting a second injury to the mothers. One cannot continue to lay such a heavy burden on the shoulders of those who have experienced such heinous injustices, and guilt them into being generous toward those who harmed and maimed them.

There is a resentment that arises from the mothers that we need to address as a society. The mothers' resentment is understandable and justified considering that a state killed their children and presented them as guerrilla members, and threatened the lives of at least some of those who questioned the veracity of the state actions. If we read the reality of what the mothers have done against the general definitions of those who understand resentment as an eminently negative emotion that should be avoided, we see dissonances. Those dissonances go through the need to acknowledge that there is a morality in resentment, that it is "in response to the amoral nature of the atrocities from the perspective of the perpetrators that resentment takes on its moral dimension" (Vivaldi, 2018, p. 75). In other words, the morality of resentment arises from being a response to the amorality of the injury. The resentment that comes from a suffered injustice has a moral valence, the cloud of which grows the longer the offence remains unanswered.

The point here is not to simply discard what has been written about resentment and state that it is a negative emotion with positive emancipatory features that can be actualized. Rather, we need to recognize that there is not one single type of resentment; there are at least two. There is one that we could perhaps call a passive type of resentment. This type of resentment is understood as a resentment that is not propositive and that, rather than seeking justice, folds inwards, becoming an ongoing resentment of the perpetrator and their allies. Echoing the description sketched in the first pages of this

chapter, we could define it using Nietzsche's term as ressentiment. The second type could be characterized as an active type of resentment, which folds outwards. It is expressive and denunciatory, demanding justice and equality for those treated unfairly.

If we were to understand resentment from these two perspectival axes, we could differentiate the type of resentment that harms the victims from the type of resentment that could have emancipatory qualities. The moral, propositive, but denunciatory resentment that the mothers express demands an answer for the crimes committed and refuses to accept the unequal treatment they suffered. The compounded injustices they suffered, paired with the lack of answers and the postponed, continuous grief, as well as the empty promises from a state that refuses to care for its victims, legitimize the moral and political resentment that continues to be present in the lives of the mothers of the false positives.

In this chapter, I have sought to question the assumption that resentment is always already negative. I have also considered the extent to which, besides what we refer to as passive resentment, there are other types of resentment such as active, moral, and political resentment that arise from having been injured and demanding an answer to that injury. I have also tried to dislodge the meanings of resentment and ressentiment in order to differentiate them and build a case for a connection between a propositive type of resentment and a passive type of resentment. Lastly, I have tried to show that the type of resentment that the mothers experience is closely aligned with an active, propositive type of resentment, an outward-looking type of resentment, which creates a connection between resentment and injustice, but which also has positive consequences for the mothers and their pain.

Chapter 5.

Grief

The false positives have been understood and addressed as immoral crimes that violate the conventions of war. They constitute crimes against the rights of people, and the conventions against torture and disappearance, of which Colombia is a signatory. Some essays and papers have dwelt upon this at length (Moran & Salamanca, 2016; Gordon, 2017; Aranguren, et al,. 2021). But neither morality nor the internal or supranational laws against torture and forced disappearance really address the role and agentic possibilities that grief could play in the lives of the mothers. The purpose of this chapter is to read the grief of the mothers as an effort to contest the lack of regard for the lives and the humanity of those killed, and to recognize the type of grief they experience as propositive, rather than paralyzing.

The concern for the kind of grief that the mothers are experiencing and displaying comes from a challenge evident in their grief about the common understanding of grief. Through their sustained and public grief, the mothers have sought to challenge the dehumanization constitutive of their children's assassination. At the same time, we must be mindful of the questions about the mothers' grief that arise from those questioning the motivations behind the grief and the sentimentality of that grief. So, to situate grief as a response to loss, and the type of expression of public grief challenged by certain sectors of the Colombian population, I will try to elucidate the mothers' grief, both as mothers and as victims of the internal armed conflict. Here the words of the former Colombian guerrilla leader and former presidential candidate Antonio Navarro Wolf on the suicide of his son resonate stridently: "We made peace so that the parents did not continue to bury their children, and I could not prevent it from happening to me. I am crushed" (2015). Navarro Wolf's lament resonates with the grief of the mothers on two levels. On the first, the political, level, Wolf's comment resonates with the successful implementation of the peace agreements in Colombia. The peace settlement the M-19 guerrillas signed in the 1990s, and the subsequent two peace settlements that the Colombian government signed with other armed actors, have not deterred the internal armed conflict, but have instead

continued to force parents to bury their children. Like Navarro Wolf, the mothers too could not prevent the loss of their loved ones. However, despite sustained efforts to silence the mothers, some of them even losing their own lives and the lives of other loved ones, or experiencing social isolation through the political instrumentalization of their grief, the mothers continue to articulate their demands for truth, justice, and non-repetition.

Navarro Wolf's words (2015) also serve to locate the false positives in the history of the Colombian armed conflict and the excesses that have been committed against a civilian population in the name of a better future. The Colombian conflict is a conflict that continues to leave traumatic scars on the lives of civilians, even those who have not been directly affected by the conflict. Concurrent with the armed conflict, a social conflict advances a certain narrative of allocating social resources to a violent conflict, rather than addressing the social one. So, when the mothers lose their loved ones, they lose them in the context of a social conflict that has left them living day to day without access to education or health care, and barely making ends meet, leaving them and their families vulnerable to feeble promises of jobs elsewhere. The grief the mothers experience is thus a compounded grief. There is the prescient grief for the death of their loved ones. But there is another type of grief that comes from seeing that, despite doing the best they can, the opportunities for them and their people never fully appear. And yet, as Mario Di Paolantonio (2001) argues, when exploring the case of Argentina, there is also fear, for "the absence of a formal death ritual, the symbolic's utter failure in protecting and responding appropriately and singularly to death, incites a fear beyond words." (p. 445) So the compounded grief of the mothers for the assassination of their loved ones is also accompanied by a fear that that there is an excess of the event that cannot be fully encompassed in the description or the juridical procedures that try to establish the truth of what happened. And that excess cannot be fully encompassed even if the victimizers were to come forward and give a description of what happened, with all their details as accurate as possible. Nor will it wither away if the maximum punishment is allocated to the victimizers and the nation as a whole comes to honour the mothers, for that fear will be a constitutive part of their life long after the experience of their loss.

Locating the False Positives in the Colombian Context

It is important to locate the understanding of the false positives in the Colombian context of today. Except for fringe extremist right-wing circles, there seems to be a general recognition that the Colombian army killed civilians and dressed them in fatigues and put arms next to their bodies to present them as having been killed in combat. However, the debate continues in terms of total numbers. NGOs that have done research on the ground claim there are upwards of ten thousand people, whereas the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has found verifiable evidence of 6,402 cases, and the Office of the Attorney General of Colombia has estimated a total of about 2,000 cases. It is in this context that the mothers continue to grieve the lives of their loved ones, while demanding that justice be served and those responsible for their deaths be brought to justice.

The grief experienced by the mothers is not experienced in the vacuum of a privileged life untouched by trauma. On the contrary, even before the loss of their loved ones, there was a social conflict that left grievable scars on the lives of the mothers and their communities. So, when the army kills their loved ones, it is a further slap in the face after years of abandonment and discrimination. In other words, there is grief for having lost their loved ones, compounded by years of abandonment and a general feeling that their lives do not matter. This feeling is sadly further corroborated by the fact that the lives of their loved ones did not count as human lives in the first place, but as mere bodies. In the next section, I will discuss various definitions of grief, how the concept has evolved, how it differs from mourning and melancholia, and the general critiques that have been made of the most popular understandings of grief.

Grief

As Heidegger argues in *Being and Time* (2010), few experiences are as formative and defining as losing someone significant to one's life. Despite this, few of us are sufficiently prepared to deal with that experience. When loss comes, it almost always seems to be by surprise, even if we know we are losing someone dear to us, and we are forced to try to accommodate ourselves to the new materiality of a world emptied of a

loved one. Yet, nothing can prepare a mother to lose her children, especially in the violent way in which the mothers lost their loved ones at the hands of the Colombian army.

The experience of grief in Colombian culture is heavily influenced by a popular understanding of Catholicism that assumes one's loved ones will remain in one's life in some ethereal way or interject on one's behalf to the gods above. To that extent, shrines are built, and penances paid for the interjections the dead do on one's behalf. Around the experience of grieving and loss, there are conceptions such as Bowlby's (1961) and Kübler-Ross's (1987, 1997, 2011, 2014), which suggest that grieving occurs in progressive stages, despite recent research that challenges those interpretations (e.g., Friedman & James, 1998; Neymeyer, 2002; Bonnano et al., 2002; Maciejewski, et al., 2007, and Stroebe, 2017). Despite the prescience of the stage narrative, as Friedman and James argued in 1998 on their *Grief Recovery Handbook*, cited by Michal Shermer in Scientific American (2008) "no study has ever established that stages of grief actually exist, and what are defined as such can't be called stages."

A more nuanced and less teleological reading of grief is advanced by Doka and Martin (2010), who argue that "the energy of grief, generated by the tension between wishes to retain the past and the reality of the present, is felt at many levels – physical, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual – and expressed in a wide range of observable behaviors" (xx). In other words, it is not that people move through the stages of grieving until they finally overcome their sense of loss. Instead, grief should be understood as the process through which the bereaved person is trying to reconcile the dissonance of the present loss against the continual spectral presence of the lost one. There is a material reality, current and immediate, where the loved one is still present, but only as an emptiness filled by the affective spectrality of that loss. During that period, there is an extended process whereby a person tries to resignify their lives and the physical and emotional spaces they inhabit, and the roles that need to shift to accommodate their loss. This specific type of long-term, complicated grief, through which a person tries to learn to live without the deceased one, is exemplified by Freud's (1917) *Mourning and Melancholia*.

Whether one accepts or rejects Freud's claims in *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917), it continues to be a frequently referenced text in philosophical conversations about mourning and grief. For Freud, mourning is understood as the period in which a person undergoes the change that entails losing an object of affection. In this sense, he differentiates mourning, as a process where we know the lost object, from melancholia, in which we mourn, but we lack the missing object. For Freud, mourning is defined as "the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or the loss of some abstraction, which has taken the place of one, such as the fatherland, liberty, an ideal, and so on" (p. 153).

In principle, the assumption is that, after a period, the mourner will move some of the affections that were placed on the lost person or object towards something else that, even if incompletely, manages to occupy that same affective space. However, not all mourning is the same for Freud, and he asserts a difference between mourning and profound mourning, wherein:

> the reaction to the loss of a loved person, contains the same feeling of pain, loss of interest in the outside world…loss of capacity to adopt any new object of love, which would mean a replacing of the one mourned, the same turning from every active effort that is not connected with thoughts of the dead. (p. 153)

In other words, the reaction to the loss permeates almost every realm of the individual. Feeling the loss until a new object is found, or the feeling is displaced towards a new object that, while not entirely replacing the affection of the lost one, at least allows the grieving person to move on.

But not all responses to the loss of a loved one are paralyzing. There might be an initial moment when those dealing with the loss are paralyzed, but, as the mothers demonstrate, the grief and pain of their loss can also be mobilized as energy for propositive action. And that propositive action does not make the grief of the mothers any less present. However, it situates the mothers, as Woubshet argues, "as subjects who employ grief to enfranchise themselves" (p. 5). So, while there is a type of grief that is paralyzing and isolates the grieving person from their community, we need to consider and open space for propositive types of grief like that experienced by the mothers. Such

recognition is necessary not only because policing expressions of grief further infringes on how the bereaved deal with the materiality of their loss, but also because it is precisely through that active propositive deployment of their grief that the mothers mobilize their sadness and pain for the hope of a better future. There is something powerful happening when the mothers counter the narratives that demand they don't show their grieving, and instead choose to manifest their pain in ways that are useful for them. They are grieving, but their grief is public and enunciative. This open denunciatory type of grief that the mothers are carrying through brings to mind the funeral of Emmett Tilt and his mother's refusal to close the casket. Like the mothers of the false positives, Mamie Tilt Bradley decided to challenge the rules of grief so that the world could see the violent injustices that had been committed to her loved one. However, it is important to note that it is not that they are relocating the love of their son towards a new object, as Freud (1917) suggested, but rather that they are managing to strike a balance between the Freudian model of grieving and the understanding of grief as a passive, inward experience that disengages the grieving person from the world. In that sense, we could talk about a propositive type of grieving that allows the mothers to deploy the energy of their grieving not inward, but in an outward-looking way that seeks answers to their loss, while striving to make a world a better place.

Regarding the relocation of affections, which Freud insists is critical for the process of mourning (1917), Judith Butler (2003) writes, "I don't think that successful grieving implies that one has forgotten another person or that something else has come along to take its place, as if full substitutability were something for which we might strive" (p. 11). The object of affection can never be fully replaced. The assumption about the substitutability of the loved one fails to recognize the unique ways in which our affections imbricate and constitute us in ways that are determinant for ourselves and our relationship with others. As Paul Ricoeur (2009) argues, in speaking about the consequences of experiencing the loss of a loved one:

> the loss of the other is, in a way, the loss of self...The other, because other, comes to be perceived as a danger for one's own identity . . . are we not able to anticipate, on the horizon of this mourning of the other, the mourning that would crown the anticipated loss of our own life? (p. 359)

In principle, one could argue that Ricoeur (2009) is onto something when he argues that the loss of a loved one works as a reminder of our own fragility (see also Heidegger on the concept of being towards death in *Being and Time* (2010)). The impending fear of one's own death presents as immediate the univocal horizon of our finitude. But it seems that there is more to it than that, and the pain of the quote from Antonio Navarro Wolf (2015) on the suicide of his son manages to articulate some of the assumptions that are challenged when a parent loses a child. The common assumption is that children will outlive their parents, and when that assumption is challenged, there is an additional grieving that takes place. There is an emptiness of the world, a link that is broken, a solitude that goes against one's expectation that one's kin will hold the space in the world once one disappears.

Moving away somewhat from the philosophical debates about grief, a clinical understanding of grief work, or what Freud (1917) called mourning, sees it as a compound of multi-faceted emotions that arise in response to a loss. Broadly speaking, the experience has been divided into normal and complicated grief. The experience of losing a son is generally labelled as complicated grief, based on the thwarted assumption that parents will pass before their offspring. Normal grief, however, refers to the emotional and physiological responses that arise in response to a loss, and is typically temporary. It is intense in the weeks and months after the loss, but the expectation is that the intensity will decrease as time from the traumatic experience passes. On the other hand, complicated grief recognizes that there are types of grief that have a long-lasting effect on the grieving person's life.

Today, however, we seem to be moving into the pathologizing of certain practices of grief that are being labelled as prolonged grief disorder (PGD) (Schaal et al., 2010). The argument behind the idea of prolonged grief disorder is that the symptoms of complicated grief should subside by a year after the traumatic experience. However, the pathologizing of certain types of grief runs the risk of problematizing experiences of grief like that deployed by the mothers, since it does not follow the normalizing expectations of the PGD discourse. While the mothers have not experienced the framing of their grief

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along the lines of PGD, the fact that PDG appears in the *Mental Health Gap Humanitarian Intervention* (2015) illustrates the horizon against which the experience and manifestation of grief will be understood. As such, I want to argue that we need to understand experiences of grief within the context in which the person grieves, being particularly attentive to how grief compounds itself with prior griefs that further nuance one's grieving process, and that, in cases where justice has not been served, the accepted grief discourses can become a tool to further revictimize survivors.

As I posited earlier in the discussion about grief in general, the complicated grief the mothers experienced is not a passive, inward-looking, lamenting type of grief. Of course, it would be perfectly understandable if their grief were that, but the mothers' grief is instead a propositional type of grief that seeks to redeploy their pain to fuel the calls for justice and truth, in hopes that no other mothers go through the same experience. They are victims of what happened to them, but that is not all that they are, for they have mobilized their wounds and repurposed their pain, so that the world knows about their pain and that the memory of their loved ones can remain unsullied. In this effort to seek change from within their pain, the mothers are echoing a tradition that is manifest in Dagmawi Woubshet's (2015) writings.

At first glance, there does not seem to be much connection between the themes that occupy Woubshet's (2015) book on AIDS, race, and sexuality and the experience of the mothers. But when one reads the quote below alongside the reality of the mothers, we can begin to see connections that do not immediately seem apparent. As Woubshet (2015) writes,

> inevitably, we also developed a heightened political sense of loss—how the state used death as a political instrument, how it disposed of its disprized citizens, how it exercised authority over the living and the dead, how it exacerbated grief by denying or delaying the bereaved from carrying out the work of mourning that was their birthright.

When Woubshet (2015) dwells on the significance of the political funerals at the beginning of the AIDS pandemic, and the struggles with police that sought to prevent

acts of resistance, such as the request of Tim Bailey, a gay activist who requested his body be thrown over the gates of the White House to denounce the abandonment of people with AIDS, there are echoes of resistance that resonate with some of the actions the mothers have carried out. Perhaps less confrontational than the cases Woubshet (2015) describes, the mothers were also "willing [the] body [of their loved ones] to have a political afterlife" (p. 1), even if in a different sense.

The mothers have insisted that the justice their loved ones did not get in life be served in their death by uncovering the truth of what happened and by the sentencing of the perpetrators of those crimes. The mothers continue to deploy the memory of their loved ones so that the crimes are not forgotten, and they are recognized as sons who were loved and had a value beyond the sheer instrumental value of their bodies. Through that deployment, through the persistent denunciatory type of public remembering, the mothers declare that their loved ones were killed. Still, they are "later reembodied with a remarkable posthumous life and political agency" (Woubshet, 2015, p. 3).

There is a point that Di Paolantonio (2001) makes regarding the incommensurability of what happened and the inability of the justice system to do actual justice for what happened, for as he argues, "no legal endeavor (whether it be exemplary, prudential, or retributive) can ever really do justice to this event" (p. 456). And yet, the mothers' request for justice is anchored on a need to clear the names of their loved ones who have been summarily condemned by the Colombian state and to force those structures of the State who took part on their assassination to come to terms with the violence that was done in the name of the fight against insurgence. There is also a concern for dignity that we need to factor in the conversation.

I want to dwell a bit longer on the political meaning of the grief that the mothers are carrying through, for they are demanding the recognition of value and worth of their loved ones that was not granted when they were killed. Through the posthumous assertion of a humanity that they were not perceived to have—otherwise, they would not have been killed that way—the mothers are both mourning and trying to heal themselves

and their communities. By their public, political grieving, the mothers are demanding that the state apparatus own up to its crimes, and that the perpetrators own up to their deeds.

Mobilizing Collective Political Grief

One of the challenges of the mobilization of political grief is the fear that some may see it as mere sentimentality, as Burkhard Liebsch, et al. (2016) argue. Although he does not expand on this idea and moves rather quickly to the political instrumentalization of grief to further colonial, imperialist agendas, the concern about mere sentimentality needs to be considered on its own, because of the risk that the space grief holds will be dismissed as mere excess, and that the mothers need to recognize and deal with their loss while justice runs its course. The charge of the sentimentality of grief tends to be levied not against those who silently continue their grief but particularly against those who continue to argue publicly from within their pain for responses to their loss.

The point behind the charge of sentimentality is that it seeks to invalidate the wounded emotive position of the mothers, because it remains public and unconditioned by conventional standards of grief. Along with the challenges that seek to police grief as a response, and predetermine its length and intensity, there are also normalizing overtones that seek to determine whose life is grievable (Butler, 2009, 2015), how public grief should be, who is allowed to grieve, and for whom one can grieve. In other words, what the calls about the sentimentality of grief are requesting is the normalization of grief, based on standards of politeness and propriety, but falling short of pathologizing grief. While calls for the de-sentimentalization of the sustained expression of grief stop short of pathologizing it, the fact remains that some people are bothered by public displays of grief and demands for justice anchored on that grief. Granted, critics of political grief are not saying to the bereaved that it is acceptable if they grieve only if their grief is not bothersome to others, but what the critics do find problematic is the type of grieving they find over-sentimental.

The question that arises from the consideration and ascription of sentimentality is what it does, and how it requires people to respond. What is implicit in the denouncement

of the sentimentality of grief is that it is always already sentimental. In principle, the complaints about sentimentality do not negate the veracity of the wound or the type of response to the wound, but rather the intensity of the response, both in length and degree. In other words, those who problematize the presumed over-sentimentality of the grief of the mothers are not questioning the 'what,' but the 'how' of their grieving. And beneath that questioning, what remains is a refusal to recognize and respond to the call that demands an answer at both emotive and political levels. These critics see and understand what happened; they are not questioning the veracity of the facts. Nor are they accusing the grievers of weaponizing their pain, but the denouncement of the sentimentality of grief refuses to answer at an emotive level what is already known at an intellectual one.

When there is a denunciation of the mothers' grief as being over-sentimental, what is occurring is a refusal to accept the open invitation to share the emotive space of their pain. And here we should be able to attend to the peculiarity of the difference between an invitation to share the space of their pain and an obligation to do so. The mothers have not obliged anyone to share the emotive space of their pain, nor do they have the means to do so. My point is not to say that there cannot be instances of sentimentalization of grief. Yet, in the specific case of the mothers, the concerns about sentimentalization fail to grasp the complexity of their wounds, and how they have had to occupy a particular liminal space of grieving that needs to be attentive not only to their own needs, but also to how their needs can be interpreted and misrepresented by the political system and the populace in general. However, if grief can only be expressed in predetermined ways that need to stay away from sentimentalization, how are we to accommodate the dancing and singing and partying, which are also ways of expressing grief in communities such as Pogue (Riano-Alcala and Chaparro Pacheco, 2020)? More importantly, who are we to police how people experience and express their grief, particularly when neither the experience nor the expression of the grief harms them or their communities? How can we proscribe the mothers' expressions of grief when they are anchored in the call to right an injustice, and which seeks redress for the injuries they experienced? The proscription of the experience of grief that the mothers are experiencing is not anchored on critiques such as those put forth by Virginia Woolf (2021) or William Faulkner (2011a, 2011b) that sought to problematize and take distance

from Victorian rituals of mourning, which they denounced as overly pompous, dubiously sentimental, and tremendously prescribed (see Clewell, 2009). Rather, the requests that the mothers tone down the sentimentality of their grief seeks to keep the lives the mothers mourn as ungrievable, or at least not politically grievable, for the demand is for their mourning to remain private, contained, and barely whispered. The request for the mothers to modulate the sentimentality of their grief seeks to move the grieving from the public, political space into the private realm, thereby depoliticizing their grief and making it individual, personal, and singular.

This shifting of mourning spaces is an opportunity to highlight the narrative that the Colombian state concocted to kill innocent people for the sake of building a triumphal narrative of winning an internal war. The state's intention is to hide the horrors that were committed when innocent, humble men were misled with promises of jobs elsewhere so that they could be killed and their bodies left where no one knew them. Questions about the sentimentality of the mothers' grief are not innocent requests concerned solely with the propriety and tonality of the expression of grief. The concern about the type of public, political grief that the mothers are expressing seeks to disband them from the communities of feeling they assembled when they connected with fellow mothers and realized that their pain was not unique, creating the Colectivo Madres Falsos Positivos (MAFAPO).

The False Positives as Homo Sacers

Although Butler's concept of a grievable life (2003, 2007, 2009, 2015) seems to echo Giorgio Agamben's concept of the homo sacer (2020), I find more commonalities between Agamben's (2020) homo sacer and the concept of grievable lives than the ones Butler explores. Agamben's (2020) homo sacer, which refers to an arcane legal and political concept of Roman Law, refers to a type of person who could be killed but could not be sacrificed. Thus, the homo sacer's life did not matter in a political sense, to the point that their lives could be terminated, but could not be sacrificed, as they were deemed unworthy of that possibility. In other words, the homo sacer is declared to be outside the law by a law that renders them less than fully human.

Although no law *per se* describes the false positives as homo sacers, there seems to be a de facto denial of their lives as grievable (Butler, 2003), which makes them practically homo sacers. When the false positives are reported as killed in combat, the legal proceedings that account for their death further corroborate their status as homo sacer. Since those proceedings simply ratify the version of the army that used them as mere bodies, they could be counted on a tally for others to obtain benefits, but they did not count as humans with lives that matter as such. The victims were placed outside the law by the legal proceedings that report the death as being in combat, despite some of them being killed by a shot in the back of the head from a short distance, namely a summary execution, rather than in combat. In this sense, we should be talking about two crimes: the first crime being when the army kills the person and reports them as a death in combat, and a second crime when the juridical entities, rather than researching the details of the deaths, simply accept the army's statements and corroborate as truth unsustainable facts.

What the Colombian army did, and the legal entities condoned, was to act against lives they considered ungrievable. What the mothers are doing with their public, persistent and denunciatory acts of grieving renders the lives lost as grievable, thereby reasserting the humanity that they were denied when members of the Colombian army executed them. The persistent requests for truth and justice are anchored in the pain of losing their loved ones, and on the need to clear their memory. The mothers are deploying their grief politically so that the names of their loved ones can be cleansed of the stain placed on their name through no fault of their own. The mothers are grieving so that the guilt placed on their children by the words of former president Alvaro Uribe Velez, who, when asked about the false positives, said, "They would not be picking coffee," be dissociated from the memory of their loved ones. Through their public, political grieving, the mothers are making the lives of their loved ones matter, repeating their names, and carrying their images, so that the victims have a face, a name, and someone who speaks for them, especially now they cannot do so themselves.

The Mothers of the False Positives and Antigone

When the mothers articulate their grief through calls for justice and redress, their plight is evocative of Antigone, as victims of the war who speak truth to power undeterred by the threat and reality of the consequences of defying the powerful. Like Antigone (Anouilh, 1946), the mothers are concerned about their loved ones' memory and the circumstances of their burial, as their bodies were disposed of in unidentified graves, another sign of their lives being considered not grievable.

However, unlike Antigone, who opposes Creon, the mothers are antagonized not only by the former president of Colombia, who, without any proof, accused their loved ones of criminal intent, but also by the military tribunals that ask the mothers if they knew that their loved ones were guerrilla members, or arms dealers or drug traffickers, when they were none of those. They are also antagonized by the media coverage of the false positives, which still leaves an air of doubt about what happened when the bodies were found, and even after some of the low-ranking militia who had participated confessed to their involvement. Despite all the evidence, there were also people who preferred to believe the institutional account that the assassinated children and youth were participating in illegal activities, and they refused to rent the mothers a home, or to stay in community with them, out of fear that they were indeed connected to some illegal group, and that the government was correct.

Compounding the mothers' grief, some of those who were killed were children with cognitive impairments, who would never have been fit to be soldiers or guerrilla members. On this point, Luz Marina Bernal's case is perhaps the most telling. Her son, Farid Leonardo Torrez Bernal, was 26 years old and did not know how to read or write, nor did he know how to identify the value of money. Yet, the army and the juridical institutions assumed and maintained the story that Farid was a criminal, despite a cognitive disability, and, as his mother argued, had a mental age of nine years, despite being in an adult body. This is the same Luz Marina Bernal, who, like Antigone, received half of her son's body, which she, in turn, buried as received, without knowing where the

remaining half could be, as she attests in the theatre piece, *Antigone's Tribunal of Women* (2014).

Antigone's Tribunal of Women (2014) was assembled initially as a theatre piece in which four actual victims tell the stories of women who have suffered the inclemency of the war intertwined in the history and present of the Colombian conflict, and how that conflict writes itself on women's lives. Besides the story of the false positives, there is also the story of the assassinations of the members of the political party, Patriotic Union, created to aid the transition of the FARC into political life. They also mention the persecution and profiling of the Collective Jose Alvear Restrepo, leader of an NGO that has denounced the Colombian state in international tribunals, to ensure those crimes committed are not forgotten, and that truth and justice be served. The fourth story in the play is the disappearance of student leaders taken from their homes by the Colombian army and disappeared as if their lives did not matter.

Grief and Activism

One of the challenges of how grief has been understood is that it complicates the possibility that grief can be comprehended as an outward, propositive action that mobilizes, instead of an ostracizing inward-looking emotion that retracts the grieving person from the social sphere. This latter assumption, which I have attempted to problematize in this chapter, complicates the possibility that we can locate the type of grieving that the mothers live out within the array of possible and accepted experiences of grief, especially considering the kind of loss the mothers have experienced. As Cindy Milstein explains in her book, *Rebellious Mourning* (2017), "I have witnessed pain transformed into a weapon, wielded by caring communities in the fierce battle for a slightly less painful world" (Loc 105 of 4059). We can argue that the mothers are doing precisely that, by transforming their suffering into demands for "truth, justice and a compromise of non-repetition" (*Antigone's Tribunal of Women*). But it is almost as if there are two conceptions of grief that are not in dialogue with one another. On the one hand, there is an understanding of grief that periodizes and temporalizes pain, irrespective of the circumstances of that pain, assuming that all grief should be experienced equally

and that those who deviate from that experience should be pathologized. On the other hand, there seems to be those, like Milstein (2017) and the mothers, who have understood grief as a negative emotion that contains agentic possibilities that can be deployed for a better future. One of the differences between the two understandings is that while those who seek to pathologize grief assume that their understanding is generalizable, Milstein (2017) and the mothers recognize that the type of grief they mobilize may not work for everyone, and they are careful not to universalize their experiences.

The strategy of mobilizing grief towards organization is echoed in Joe Hill's labor movement call, "Don't mourn, organize!". But, in drawing parallels, one needs to be careful about the subtleties that are lost, and the nuances that are erased, when we simply celebrate the possibility of mourning being repurposed without being attentive to the days and the moments when the grieving needs to stay grieving, and the struggle, the public and the street, are too much—when the only solace is the memory of the loved one, in whose memory the grieving mothers battle so that their children's lives will not have been lost in vain. In other words, when discussing the link that goes from grief to activism, we need to be attentive to the fact that the transition from grief to activism is not a unidirectional path whereby all negative emotions are repurposed in a way that magically becomes empowering.

We need to recognize that the type of grief the mothers are displaying is not the "vengeful grief that calls for counterviolence," as Liebsch and Goodwin (2016) argued when exploring "grief work." As such, when one reads Liebsch's (2015) question, "[C]an enduring grief really be anything other than a pathological phenomenon?" (p. 235), against the reality of what the mothers have gone through, one of the questions that arises is why there is an assumption that grief needs to have an expiry date of sorts, so that it is not pathologized. Now, the argument can be made that the mothers' experiences are exceptional and that those who are concerned about the time parameters of grief do so from a general understanding of grief, inattentive to cases like the false positives. However, we should not understand grief from the everyday, quasi common, experiences of loss that generate the types of grief that occupy most of the psychological literature. We should understand grief with cases like the mothers in mind to prevent those

psychological theories designed to deal with general and relative grief being applied in cases like the mothers, expecting them to get over their grief after a predetermined period of time. For even the most compassionate theories of grief recognize that the mothers' experiences challenge the parameters of the understandings of grief that we have developed hitherto. Some of the mothers have not received the bodies of their loved ones. So, in silence, some of them still hope their loved ones will show up at the door, and life will begin anew, just like those who lost family members on Siege of the Palace of Justice, who, after thirty-five years, continue to wait for their loved ones to come home unannounced, any day. One recognizes from afar the futility of that hope, but it is an everyday reality among relatives of the disappeared.

In many cases, the hopes that the rest of us might qualify as futile are the very ones that allow them to continue with their day-to-day lives. We need to open our understandings of grief so that we see it in all its richness, and give credence to the waves of pain that may come back from a smell that suddenly brings the memory of a loved one, a song on the radio that abruptly brings them back to the present, or a sea of nostalgia that flares up in the griever's eyes. We need to give room for experiences of grief like the ones displayed by the mothers so that we understand other ways of grieving besides the ones that have already been prescribed. In the next section, I will explore the similarities and the differences that exist between the mothers of the false positives and the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo.

The Mothers of the False Positives and the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo

Perhaps one of the earliest connections that one makes when first encountering the work the mothers have done is to think of them in relation to the work of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo. Like the mothers of the false positives, the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo also lost their loved ones at the army's hand, and, for many of them, the bodies of their loved ones were never found. Like the mothers of the false positives, the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo also wanted trials and punishment for the perpetrators and, 50 years after the disappearance of their loved ones, they are beginning to see glimpses of the justice

they have demanded since the Argentinian state of siege in the 1970s. Through sheer persistence, the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo were able to move past individual cases to build a narrative that challenged the excuses and half-answers that the army kept giving them, in an attempt to turn them away. Along the same lines, the mothers of the false positives got together after realizing that there were more cases like theirs, and that there was a pattern of behavior by the Colombian army. As a result, they were able to identify a pattern of extra-juridical executions that took advantage of marginalized youth. However, one of the differences between the two groups is that the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo have managed to exploit the iconography of the headscarf to symbolize their plight.

In contrast, the mothers of the false positives have not been able to build their case around a specific iconography that delivers their message in the way that the Argentinian headscarf has done for the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo. In principle, the headscarf seems like an irrelevant detail until one realizes that the memory of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo comes whenever the headscarf is depicted in black and white. The reality of what happened is conjured by that simple image that allows them to communicate their plight without articulating it all, as is still required of the mothers of the false positives. The headscarf icon creates a link between the group and their actions, simplifying the connection between who they are and what they stand for, thus making it easier to communicate.

One would have assumed that the Argentinian mothers would have found a common cause with the Colombian mothers of the false positives. However, it remains unclear why there were no synchronicities or shared lessons the mothers could have learned from the Argentinian experience. Perhaps the issue has more to do with an implicit need that the mothers have to chart their own path. There are groups of women, such as the Pacific Route of Women, or the Association of Families of the Disappeared, who, in principle, could be thought to have a common cause with the mothers and could perhaps have amplified the case of the false positives. Still, there seems to be a need for the mothers to control their own narrative and highlight how their grief is unique, even if there are similarities with other cases and other plights in the country and continent.

Another difference between the context of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo and the mothers of the false positives is that while the disappearances and assassinations in Argentina occurred during the dictatorship, the false positives in Colombia happened during a period of democracy when not even a state of siege was declared. Hence, the full gamut of constitutional guarantees provided by the constitution of 1991 was entirely in place, despite which the false positives were not prevented. In principle, it seems that the difference between the two cases is a minor detail until one is forced to recognize the expectation that the constitutional guarantees ignored during a dictatorship must prevail in a democracy. However, the fact is that it was mostly the mothers, along with some NGOs, who first questioned the veracity of the versions put forward by the army and the juridical system.

From Grief to Mourning

From Gilgamesh grieving Enkidu's death (2016) to Achilles' grief for Patroclus's death (2003), the prescience of stories about grief can be found throughout ancient and modern literature and cinema. We see it when Bambi grieves the death of his mother, or when Simba grieves the death of his father, or when Ferdinand realizes that his father not coming back to the farm, meaning that he is dead. For many people, neither Bambi's, nor Ferdinand's, nor Simba's grief amounts to a realization that loss looms on the horizon for all of us, and these stories become their first exposure to feelings of loss and the ensuing grief. Yet, nothing seems to prepare us properly to deal with real grief. Perhaps this is because, as Derrida (2001) argues, "whoever thus works *at* the work of mourning learns the impossible—and that mourning is interminable. Inconsolable. Irreconcilable" (p. 143). And yet, most of the psychological understandings of grief seek to do precisely the opposite, namely, to terminate, console, and reconcile the grieving person, so that the page can be turned, and the living go on living. However, the presence of the absent loved one writes itself on the lives of the grieving person, disrupting the day-to-day.

In *The Work of Mourning* (2001), Derrida writes, "In mourning we find ourselves at a loss, no longer ourselves, as if the singular shock of what we must bear had altered the very medium in which it was to be registered" (p. 5)—and it does alter one. One is no

longer the same as one was before the death of the loved one, and, in most cases, people can remember the exact moment when they received the news that their loved one had been assassinated. So, there is a change that we undergo, a being-with, a relationship that goes unanswered, a series of affects that will no longer be reciprocated. But as Heidegger articulates in *Being and Time* (2010):

> In such being-with with the dead, the deceased himself is no longer factically 'there.' However, being-with always means being with-one-another in the same world. The deceased has abandoned our 'world' and left it behind. Nonetheless, it is in terms of this world that those remaining can still be with him. (p. 230)

So, there is an affect that will not be reciprocated. Here, Hegel's indictment of Antigone's grief for her brother as insufficient for recognition points the way to the open arms of love that will not be echoed by the loved one who is no longer of this world. But in the quote above, Heidegger seems to suggest that it is precisely through the specificity of the world the deceased no longer inhabits that one can still be with him, for every articulation of being-with entails being in the same world, even if that person is no longer of this world. As such, mourning could be understood as a process of "being-with" that tries to learn to "be-without," a feeling of being lost, cut from the affects that are constitutive of one's being, from a presence that was integral to one's own. The process of learning to be-without entails recognizing one's finitude and one's affective injury since one is left empty-handed waiting for a loved one who will not return. A portion of oneself also goes away with that loved one. Mourning entails learning to live in a world devoid of someone whose affection was constitutive of one's being. As such, when one mourns, one grieves for the deceased person, but one also grieves for the changes that her departure entails in one's life. And one tries to piece together the parts left behind and carry on trying to make sense of a life that has lost its meaning or at least a portion of what made it meaningful. We try to learn to live without and arrange the space so that the presence of the absence stings less and less, but, in order for that to happen, we need the truth. We need to know the circumstances leading up to the death so that we can go over and over the events, the sensations, the sorrows, and the infinite chain of never-ending what-ifs, only to realize the facticity of a lost one who will not come home, and with

whose absence we are to keep on living. But when one is confronted with the violent death of a loved one, the sudden immediacy disorients one, and the lack of answers only compounds what is already a complicated grief.

Part of the clamour of the mothers for justice is also an attempt to get to know as many details as they can about the truth of what happened, so they can try to reconcile with the reality of a world without the deceased one. And the more the juridical processes drag on and the murkier the details get as the excuses and the effort to cover up increase, the mothers are less and less able to continue with a process of grieving that is endlessly interrupted. Here the point is not to say that without truth, the mothers will always already continue to grieve. Instead, the point is to highlight that the demands that they move on from their grief when the specific conditions of the death of their loved ones have not been ascertained could only re-harm them, while failing to be attentive to the mothers' needs.

If mourning entails learning to be-without, to inhabit a world without the person one has lost, perhaps Maurice Blanchot's (1997) text, when speaking about George Bataille, will offer us a different way of understanding the process of loss. Blanchot argues that "when the event itself comes, it brings this change: not the deepening of the separation but its erasure; not the widening of the caesura but its leveling out and the dissipation of the void between us…." (p. 292) The metaphor of death typically entails that one has lost the deceased forever. But Blanchot (1997) seems to suggest that, rather than losing them, we gain them, but in a different sense. However, to achieve this gain, we need to understand the transition from the outside to the inside. Still, to move from one realm to the other, the Colombian state needs to stop arguing against the mothers in court and recognize their own fault at the national and institutional levels. Every time the mothers must confront the state negating the obtuse facts of the responsibility of the assassination of their loved ones, the wounds open again, and no one could be expected to grieve when the wounds just keep opening again and again.

 If one integrates the requests for truth and justice as part of the grieving process and treats the grieving process with the respect it deserves, one could get closer to

creating the spaces such that those like Dr. Miranda (from *Death and the Maiden*, Dorfman, 1991) will not have to see the physicality of vengeance of a wound that was not given the proper conditions to heal. I am not stating that unless the mothers are allowed to grieve and justice be served, they will take justice into their own hands. But someone else might. And that never-ending cycle of violence and retribution is the one the mothers seek to halt.

Mourning without Justice

One of the challenges of the type of mourning that the mothers have had to go through is the fact that justice, in the broadest sense, has not been served—either in the traditional punitive sense, or in the alternative justice system of the Peace Tribunals instituted by the Peace Agreement of 2016, as part of the peace settlement with the FARC guerrillas. Instead, the mothers are asked to move on, despite having to relive and retell their experiences every time their case is reassigned, or a tribunal approves a proof, or someone somewhere says something that will bring some light to the endless list of uncertainties that constitutes their grief.

As a society, Colombia seems to expect the mothers to take the supererogatory route of leaving their pain behind and stoically allowing the tediously bureaucratic processes to run their course, as if the wounds were not still open, and every time the name of their loved ones is uttered, and the details of the assassinations and the accusations are made, the pain does not come anew. But justice takes time, and procedural justice needs to take its course because the perpetrators need to be given all the constitutional guarantees they did not dare to provide to the people they assassinated and reported as dead in combat. And while justice fails to arrive and the truth seems more elusive as the days go by, the wounds of the mothers only sediment further, and their trauma constitutes the ethos of their lives. Despite the slowness of a justice that limps its way to the truth, the mothers keep insisting on truth, justice, and non-repetition. However, if the case is still being litigated, the proofs are being constantly reviewed, and the testimonies must be rendered again and again, can anyone reasonably expect the

mothers and those seeking justice to grieve and mourn following socially sanctioned prescriptions and the expectations of the psychologists?

To conclude, it could be argued that if the mothers hold onto the promise of justice and insist on it, eventually justice will prevail, so long as they stay the course. But recent events of the Special Jurisdiction of Peace have brought to the forefront the story of Mariela Barragan, the wife of Bernardo Jaramillo Ossa, assassinated on March 22, 1990, after returning from exile to become a presidential candidate after the assassination of the leader of his party Jaime Pardo Leal. Today, when Mariela Barragan cries telling the story of how her husband Bernardo Jaramillo was assassinated in front of her, she repeats his last words: *"My love, I do not feel my legs… these sons of bitches have killed me. I am going to die. Hug me and protect me."* Despite the fact that over thirty years have passed since Bernardo Jaramillo's assassination, Mariela Barragan's rage and emotions are not out of place, because justice has not yet arrived, and the case continues to go from tribunal to tribunal. Of course, I am not suggesting that every case of the false positives will take over thirty years to settle. However, we should be mindful of the burdens we place on the shoulders of the survivors, when we cannot deliver on the expectations and the demands of truth, justice, and non-repetition.

Chapter 6.

Starting from Injustice

In the preceding chapters I explored anger, resentment and grief in the lives of the mothers of the false positives, and I have suggested that these negative emotions could have a positive moral valence, despite their being understood as negative. The last anchor of this investigation into the role of negative emotions in a moral life comes from a broad understanding of what Judith Shklar, in her *Faces of Injustice* (1990), calls the sense of injustice.

A common understanding of injustice sees it only in relation to justice, as if injustice only arises from the absence of justice and is always already dependent on it. The dependency of injustice on justice assumes justice as the ideal, the norm, and injustice as the deviation, the contravention of that ideal. So, addressing or solving injustices goes through closing the gap between the ideal of justice and the materiality of injustice. But perhaps there is a better way of understanding injustice than as subsequent to justice or a mark of its deficiency. According to Shklar (1990), instead of assuming justice as the default and the deviation from which injustice ensues, injustice should be understood on its own. Granted, linguistically and conceptually the root word of justice is very present in injustice, so one cannot see them as entirely separate. But the point here is to problematize the assumption of injustice as dependent on justice, and to open the space for injustice to be understood (as much as possible) as a separate concept that needs to be understood and explored as such.

Thinking injustice on its own will allow us to think both justice and injustice from the ground up, allowing us to see the blind spots and the neglected perspectives that ideal theories of justice (e.g., Rawls) tend to overlook. Thinking about injustice dislodged from justice will also allow us to understand how criminal justice, while seeking to establish the truth of the false positives, ends up revictimizing the survivors in whose name justice is sought. The callousness encountered in the search for truth turns the victim into another accused within the normal course of an investigation, further revictimizing

survivors that the State has repeatedly victimized, let down and abused. This mistreatment of survivors starts from the negative experiences of the victims or what Renault (2019), following Axel Honneth (1998), refers to as the primacy of negative social experiences. It continues with the ethos of this project that seeks to understand the experience of negative emotions from the injured party's perspective in an activist, academic endeavour that seeks to listen to the pain of the survivors, recognizing their experiences, and trying to imagine the world from their perspective. Starting from the experience of injustice, instead of an ideal theory of justice or the written letter of the law, allows us to constitute an alternative anchored in the lived reality of the survivors— not the ideal of how it should be, but the materiality of how it is and has been.

As such, if we think injustice on its own, perhaps we could enrich what Shklar (1990) refers to as "the normal model" and recognize how injustices have a role to play and a series of consequences in people's lives. Some small actions and inactions have long-standing consequences, decisions not taken, sometimes even gray areas where people decide to "play it safe," without realizing the damage already done. Failing to see injustice on its own prevents us from seeing "the full, complex, and enduring character of injustice as a social phenomenon" (Shklar, 1990, p. 9), that goes beyond tribunals and courts of law. These are small cuts that, taken together and read against the active acts of injustice, add insult to injury and solidify the sensation of abandonment and lack of institutional and communal care that is felt by survivors like the mothers of the false positives.

Now, if we were to understand the plight of the mothers from the commonsense understanding of injustice as the absence of justice, we end up in the courts requesting that the soldiers and others who participated in the false positives be tried in a court of law. That is admittedly necessary, and it is already happening to a degree. But if we broaden the quest and try to understand the plight of the mothers from the perspective of injustice, we might understand the reality of the false positives as the most visible, or perhaps even the culmination of a series of injustices that besieged them, long before the assassinations took place and continuing after that. So, rather than an isolated event that focuses specifically on those who pulled the trigger and created the conditions that made

the crime possible, we would be able to point to those responsible for investigating and who could have stopped the carnage, rather than looking the other way or opting to wait for someone else to take action. We can also point to those who opted for doubting the mothers and their testimonies because "We never really know, do we?" is a common response when the injustice is not done to us or those dear to us, as we look on from the comfort of, "It is not me, so it is not my problem." Except it is. Those injustices, those small cuts, furthered what was already a deleterious wound, and thus also need to be part of the conversation about injustice in general and the case of the false positives in particular. There were not just a few rogue soldiers who decided to kill for their own benefit. There was also a society that opted for doubting the victims until the proof of what happened was so glaring and unquestionable that, for a while, it seemed it was the victims who were on trial and not the soldiers, the generals and the brigades who had committed the murders. The mothers had to defend their honor and integrity, and that of their loved ones, against the accusations of wrongdoing from the judges and the media. It was as if it were already certain that the mothers were wrong, and the army could only be right. So, in order to properly ground the reality of the false positives in an understanding of injustice that, while not tightly tied to the executions, but makes them possible, let us explore the concept of passive injustice, which grounded the conditions that make the reality of the false positives possible.

First, however, I want to address a question that could emerge from a traditional understanding of justice that questions the concerns about passive injustice as a strategy that is merely delaying the proper juridical justice of the tribunals. Such a concern might be framed along the lines of, "Why not simply try to establish the truth of what happened through the courts, condemn the guilty parties, and hope that the victims can reconcile and forgive once justice has been served, rather than dwell on things like passive injustice that don't address the specific issue at hand which is the execution of the false positives?" But this traditional understanding of justice is precisely the one that that is being challenged as insufficient and deaf to the negative emotions of the mothers, and the consequences that continuing to ignore them has for the mothers themselves, but also for democracy.

If we think about the case of the mothers along with Shklar's (1990) argument that, "If democracy means anything morally, it signifies that the lives of all citizens matter, and that their sense of their rights must prevail" (p. 35), then we must be able to articulate the pain and the injury of the mothers, so that they feel that their pain and injuries matter beyond the specificity of the tribunals. If democracy means anything, it means that the pain of the mothers matters and must be raised in social and political conversations about the materiality of democracy for those who typically have not counted. For, in the name of protecting the State against the harms of the insurgency, the State, the army, and most of the constitutional powers opted to look the other way and assume that the words of a few humble mothers could not contain more truth than the word of the entire army.

If we fail to consider the reality of injustice in the case of the mothers and restrict the analysis of what happened to the normal course of justice, we will overlook not only the conditions that made it possible that it was largely the sons of the poor in the outskirts of Bogota who were chosen to be killed in return for a few days off and a promotion for the perpetrators, but also the silent institutional alliance that denied the possibility that the mothers could be correct and that the army was killing innocent civilians. The point is not to equate the injustice of the killings with the injustice of those who doubted the victims' innocence. Rather, we need to broaden the conversation to include those who, without having participated in the active injustice, nonetheless took part in what could be called passive injustice of looking the other way or accepting as unquestionable the version of the army when so many mothers had evidence to the contrary. In a sense, the aim of unravelling the plight of injustice seeks to question the attitude of those who, like Pontius Pilate, washed their hands in the face of injustice and raised their arms as innocent, taking a couple of steps back, as it was not their problem.

Passive versus Active Injustice

The "normal model of justice," as Shklar (1990) calls it, seeks to establish direct responsibility for what Cicero (1995) calls "active acts of injustice" while leaving aside passive types of injustice that, while not impugnable by the normal model of justice,

harm the victims and delay the arrival of truth and justice. By active acts of injustice, Cicero (1995) refers to the actions or inactions that are impugnable and have a direct relation to the injustice caused. Shklar (1990) takes the concept of passive injustice and expands it further to consider how public officials' acts of injustice have more significant consequences in people's lives. I will return to this point below. For now, however, suffice it to say that acts of passive injustice are acts and/or omissions that, while considered minor in the broader context, have long-standing consequences for the relationship that the survivors have with the legal and political institutions, but these acts of passive injustice also seek to persuade survivors that their case is not worth pursuing, as the assumption is always already that they are wrong, and the institutions and those who harmed them were right. Take, for instance, the military judges who were straightforwardly questioning the mothers about their knowledge of their criminal activities of their loved ones. Through a line of questioning that was a thinly veiled type of accusation, the victims went from mothers who are trying to establish the truth about what happened to their sons, to sympathizers of criminal activities, without any evidence to substantiate those accusations. Now, one might argue that in order to establish the truth, the military judges needed to uncover every possible avenue of investigation.

However, as the Coordination Colombia, Europe, United States (CCEEU) argues in its 2012 report, the military judges were privileging a narrative of guilt from the victims, and it was the victims who were having to defend themselves and their loved ones from the judges' accusations; according to the report there was no regard for the pain and suffering of the mothers (CCEEU, 2012, p. 117).

As the CCEEU report argues (2012, p. 275), from the moment they pursued the case through the legal channels, the mothers became suspects. As such, most judges and investigators opted to look for evidence that could reveal cracks in the mothers' testimony without stopping to think about how their actions were instances of passive injustice that were compounding the active injustices of the assassinations (2012, p. 203). My point is not that the questions cannot be asked, but rather to argue that there was an accusatorial tone in which the questions were asked that entailed that the victims felt accused, eroding further the trust in institutions and public servants. As such the victims'

perception was that the state and the army were not interested in exploring the lines of investigation that followed from the events. There were preferred lines of inquiry, and, in order to privilege those preferences, the mothers needed to be interrogated and the victims vilified, so that the word of the mothers would be weakened, if not dismissed entirely.

Regarding the public officials, there were exceptions. Some governmental officials opted to trust the mothers and aided them to the best of their ability in searching for the truth. But those individuals were few and far between, to the point that the perception ingrained on the mothers and those close to them was that the state as a whole was trying to protect itself by pretending to investigate crimes it did not have the will to uncover. As such, there were ongoing passive injustices that were committed when proper resources were not allocated to the search for justice and truth.

The passive injustice of the public officials who were supposed to protect and serve needs to be part of the conversation about the consequences of the false positives and the state responsibility for them. As Shklar (1990) argues, injustice often comes from "the very people who are supposed to prevent injustice who, in their official capacity, commit the gravest acts of injustice, without much protest from the citizenry" (p. 19). As the false positives confirm, it was not rogue, common criminals who opted to kill civilians, but active members of the Colombian army—those sworn to uphold the constitution and the law. I will return later in this chapter to the deleterious consequences of passive injustice on the relationship between communities and the authorities. In brief, when the social fabric is torn apart by distrust and deep-seated antagonism, communities cannot hold together. A clear example of this is found in Didier Fassin's (2013) investigation of the French banlieues and their relationship with the police. In other words, even if the killings of the false positives were to be thoroughly investigated and every perpetrator punished, there is a lasting erosion of trust in the communities from which the victims were taken, resulting in those communities seeking alternative means of addressing their needs, rather than putting their trust in state agents. After such a rupture of the social fabric, it would take years of sustained effort, if it is possible at all, to regain that social trust.

However, within democratic societies, as Shklar (1990) argues, "everyone deserves a hearing at the very least, and the way citizens perceive their social and personal grievances cannot be ignored" (p. 35). She further states, "the democratic ethos assumes that we all have a sense of injustice and that it plays an essential part in the way we judge each other and our society" (p. 35). So, when we argue for creating the conditions for the social and personal grievances of the false positives to be addressed, we are not merely advocating for the inclusion of those who have been excluded and ignored; we are also seeking to tap into the sense of injustice of those who have been excluded.

If we recognize that the victims do have a voice and a story to tell that is constitutive of the collective narrative of the polity, we need to allow those stories to come to the fore alongside the story of how their exclusion has been constitutive of the narratives of the nation that the victors were allowed to tell. But we also need to provide the space for the expression of the negative emotions that came from the experience of exclusion and the official negation of that exclusion, for failing to do so, and failing to work with the positive agentic potential of those emotions, I would argue, may result in long term harmful consequences for the victims and their communities.

Now, if, as Shklar (1990) argues, "the voice of the victim, of the person who claims that she has been treated unjustly, cannot, …as a matter of democratic principle, be silenced" (p. 35), we need to create the conditions for the voices of those victims to be heard, and for their experiences of active and passive injustice to be addressed as a matter of political democratic principle and justice. In the next section, I explore a critical distinction in Shklar's (1990) consideration of injustice—i.e., the line between misfortune and injustice, and the link between those two and truth—grounding the discussion again in the context of the false positives.

Justice/Injustice and Truth

The first lines of Shklar's (1990) introduction to *The Faces of Injustice* pose a question that is directly relevant to the plight of the mothers: "When is a disaster a

misfortune and when is it an injustice?" (p. 1). In principle, it could be argued that the line between misfortune and injustice is a blurred one. The difference between the two is the presence of a volitional agent who carries responsibility for the action. If such a volitional agent can be identified, then one can talk about an injustice, but in cases where the misfortune originates from an accident, or the volitional agent cannot be properly established, there can be no consideration of an injustice, and we should speak instead of a misfortune. When a natural disaster occurs, we seem to agree that it is a misfortune rather than an injustice, for there is no clear volitional agent who can be responsible for the natural disaster. But Shklar (1990) insists that such a division between misfortune and injustice is too tenuous to hold, and instead, "the difference between misfortune and injustice frequently involves our willingness and our capacity to act or not to act on behalf of the victims, to blame or to absolve, to help, mitigate and compensate, or to just turn away" (p. 2). So, rather than a volitional agent on whose existence we learn to ascertain moral responsibility, the distinction between misfortune and injustice depends more on how we respond, how we locate ourselves in response to the event, than on some pre-established moral rule, on which we rely to try to make some sense of the world.

If the distinction cannot be sustained on a quasi-Kantian formula, whereby we try to ascertain volitional responsibility, but rather on how we situate ourselves in response to the event, then we need to keep in mind the "passive injustice which is the refusal of both officials and of private citizens to prevent acts of wrongdoing when they could and should do so" (Shklar, 1990, p. 5). Unlike the bystander effect, according to which the more people there are who witness an event, the less likely someone will intervene, the passive injustice that Shklar has in mind refers specifically to individuals who are in positions of responsibility and care, but who, despite that, fail to act accordingly. For Shklar (1990), passive injustice occurs whenever we fail to intervene in what is commonly referred to as minor theft, and or when we turn a blind eye when corruption occurs. More than the habitual indifference to the adversities of others, passive injustice entails a failure on one's part to engage from a sense of morality and to address the issue that is raised.

Perhaps somewhat controversially, Shklar (1990) claims that citizens are typically passively unjust (p. 3). However, she goes on to say that public officials tend to be more passively unjust than private citizens because the expectations of their roles do not allow them to deviate far from the specifics of their roles (p. 6). They are typically mindful of their routines, their superiors, and about not straying from the line. However, the consequences of the passive injustice of public servants are often far more significant than the passive injustice of private citizens. To illustrate, Shklar (1990) recalls the story of Joshua DeShaney. Joshua was a boy who was severely beaten by his father to the point that when doctors intervened and did emergency brain surgery, he became paralyzed and was left profoundly disabled when he came out of the induced coma. Despite his caseworker having dutifully annotated the severe beatings Joshua's father was inflicting on him, the caseworker failed to do more for the child's well-being than to keep record of what was happening. Here we see the parallels between Joshua's caseworker and the various governmental institutions in Colombia that failed to prevent and properly investigate the crimes of the false positives. Although this point will be elaborated later, suffice it to say for now that the moral indictments levied against Joshua's caseworker could also be levied against those who declined to intervene and prevent the false positives, and those who continue to delay the juridical procedures.

Grounding Passive Injustice

In principle, there may not seem to be much connection between the false positives, passive injustice as Shklar (1990) understands it, and the case of Joshua DeShaney, other than the one sketched briefly above. In the case of the false positives, there was a criminal enterprise at work that the mothers and the Special Tribunal of Peace are doing everything they can to bring to justice. There was a level of organization, coordination and execution that reached all but one brigade of the Colombian Army. Concomitant with that criminal enterprise, at both an institutional and individual level, a particularly callous type of passive injustice occurred when those directly or indirectly involved preferred to look the other way while the false positives were taking place, and when they excused themselves in the chain of command when the illegality and immorality of the false positives came to light.

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There were memorable exceptions to the silent, passive injustice of the Colombian army, such as the son of Raul Carvajal, Corporal Raul Antonio Carvajal. Corporal Carvajal was killed by his own army for refusing to take part in the practice of false positives. Carvajal's father spent the last twenty years of his life on a wagon in the center of Bogota, standing in the Plaza de Bolivar, day in and day out, demanding justice for the killing of his son, until the father's death in 2021. But the fact that we can single out the case of Raul Carvajal's son only points out the extent of the passive injustice of the Colombian army.

Another example is the battalion of counterinsurgency, Atila I, that, in 2008, refused to kill a female minor captured in combat. The entire unit was fired from the army as the commandant of the corps told them he was being promoted to the rank of Colonel and captured insurgents did not help his promotion; he needed dead bodies. Besides the female minor initially captured, the soldiers also captured the insurgents who later surrendered to the military as they occupied the territory and waited for them. But once they were back in the battalion and had reported the captures, the soldiers were stripped naked and jailed for over two weeks for having committed the act of indiscipline by not killing insurgents who had surrendered in combat. Less than a month later, they were fired from the army without cause, and, to this day, they continue to argue their case in tribunals for wrongful dismissal. The army continues to claim that they were fired for indiscipline, even though none of the eighteen soldiers had a single incident of indiscipline before their dismissal. All the while, the commandant of the unit who disciplined them for not having killed the insurgents was allowed to retire and enjoy his old age in the South of Colombia, peacefully unbothered by the crimes that he orchestrated.

The fact that the false positives were so widespread across so many brigades of the Colombian territory problematizes the discourse of the Colombian government. According to the official versions, there were rotten apples within the institutions or illiterate soldiers who misunderstood the instruction given, as General Montoya (2020) claimed when asked for his responsibility for the crime of the false positives. But some military personnel, while not actively participating in luring innocent civilians, their

killing, and their reporting as being killed in combat, knew enough about it and preferred to look the other way. The stability of a career and the possible repercussions bore more weight for them than the certainty of the criminal activities carried out in the name of a fight against the Colombian insurgency. And it is those who, without actively participating in the false positives, but kept quiet, we can argue, committed the same type of passive injustice as the one committed by the caseworker in Joshua DeShaney's case. There might have been some who suspected but did not have any proof to substantiate their suspicions. There might have been those who could have foreseen the consequences of tallying deaths over captures as the best mechanism to measure the success of the counterinsurgency strategy. Still, every one of those who knew and/or suspected, yet refrained from denouncing, could, at the very least, be said to have committed passive injustice against the victims of the false positives, their mothers, and families—if not active injustice for seeing a crime and refraining from stopping it.

A different level of passive injustice can be assigned to the Colombian population more broadly and the Colombian government. Despite feverish attempts to continue to claim innocence, the fact is that the false positives occurred, and that there were between 6,000 and 10,000 innocent people killed and presented as killed in combat. But despite that, years went by, and the mothers have yet to receive the justice they deserve. The truth continues to elude them not only because those responsible continue to deny their responsibility, but also because institutionally, the army and the Colombian government refused to acknowledge that there is an institutional responsibility and a trust that has been tarnished. So far, there are no real steps to mend that trust. Thirteen years after the events, and with enough evidence to formally charge former General Mario Montoya, he has still not been formally indicted. However, beyond individual responsibility on the part of politicians and generals who had command over the troops, there continues to be a line of argumentation according to which the moral responsibility for the crimes committed is individual and not institutional. For as the Colombian General Attorney Francisco Barbosa (2021) continues to argue, he is "not indicting the Colombian army, but the black sheep who have to be separated from what has been a decent institution for a nation like the Colombian" (my translation). But it is precisely the institution that needs

to take responsibility for the crimes and the continued injustices committed against the mothers in their plight to establish the truth of what happened.

If one considers that there are eight divisions in the Colombian army, and there are confirmed and indicted cases in seven of those eight divisions, the argument of the black sheep or the rotten apples cannot be sustained. The practices of the false positives were widespread throughout the Colombian army and executed throughout the territory in a race to outdo the other divisions, so that the commanders could look for promotions and incentives. There are 25 brigades within the eight divisions of the Colombian army. When 10,742 persons were investigated, and 1,750 people have been condemned for their responsibility for the crimes, as the Colombian General Attorney states, one cannot continue to speak about individual cases, bad examples, or rotten apples. This practice of individualizing penal responsibility continues as passive injustice, while trying to establish the truth of what happened in the name of justice. There was a level of coordination, a competitiveness that ensued through the army that entailed a level of systematicity that could not have come about if the crimes of the false positives were simply the result of a few rogue military officials.

At this point in the analysis, we should pause to consider procedural penal justice and the consequences it has had for the mothers of the false positives. One could argue, as mentioned earlier, that the investigations to establish the truth of what happened continue to be carried out, based on a belief that the false positives were a misfortune befallen on the lives of the mothers and their loved ones, rather than an act of injustice. On this point, however, as I have discussed above, one can argue that it is not a misfortune—not because the volitional agents have been established up to the highest chains of command in the Colombian army, but because the Colombian State has refused to cross the political line that differentiates misfortune from injustice. And, in that failure, in the presumption of innocence that continues to be afforded to the army as an institution, and the presumption of guilt with which the mothers are still heard, there continues to be a passive injustice that upholds the innocence of the army.

If the line between misfortune and injustice is a political one, as Shklar (1990) argues, then the question of how we situate ourselves in response to injustices, and how we engage or not, entails a positionality in response to the event that is anchored in a sense of injustice. So far, there have been only languishing attempts to establish the juridical responsibilities at the unit, and perhaps the brigade, level. But there has been a refusal to recognize the institutional and political responsibility for the injustices of the false positives, not only to the mothers, but also to the former soldiers of the counterinsurgency battalion Atila I and the family of Raul Antonio Carvajal, the army official mentioned earlier, who was killed by members of his institution for refusing to participate in a false positive.

The militaries that took part in the false positives deserve all the legal guarantees that the penal court provides them. Through that process, one can only hope that many of the unknowns that remain to this day will be uncovered. But we need not wait for the whole gamut of legal proceedings to recognize that, independently of the total number of deaths, there is sufficient evidence to recognize the institutional responsibility regarding the mothers and the soldiers who, twelve years after, continue to go from tribunal to tribunal to fight for their rights and the good name of their loved ones. In contrast, the Colonels and Generals and the politicians peacefully carry on with their lives, unencumbered by the injustices they have committed. At this point, an observant reader might argue that the former minister of defense and former president Juan Manuel Santos, and former president Alvaro Uribe Velez, have already asked for forgiveness for the false positives. But those requests and apologies have come only after they have left their governmental positions and are, on my view, too little, too late.

There is an institutional responsibility that begins with the Colombian army and continues with the Office of the General Attorney and all the governmental organizations that allowed the crimes to take place or at the very least, looked the other way until the pressure to begin investigating was unsurmountable. As such, the line of argumentation according to which the responsibilities for the false positives are seen as individual, not institutional, as former president Uribe has argued [*Magazine Semana*, June 2021],

further corroborates that the false positives continue to be understood as misfortunes rather than injustices.

The proper transition from a misfortune to an injustice goes from trying to establish the juridical truth of what happened, recognizing, and acknowledging the institutional responsibilities, and engaging with the victims to seek ways in which their pain can be eased by all the means at their disposal. In other words, there is an individual juridical responsibility that the Courts are still trying to establish. But there is also the institutional and political responsibility that the Colombian army and the Office of the General Attorney need to acknowledge and address with the victims. It is not enough that those institutions issue public statements and carry on, business as usual. It is morally wrong for the army generals to ask the mothers for forgiveness for the false positives when the Colombian army and the Colombian government continue to fail to own up to their injustices as if they were misdeeds that had befallen upon the victims, rather than crimes that were carried out in the name of the defense of the state against the insurgent threat.

If, as Shklar (1990) argues, "the voices of victims must always be heard first, not only to find out whether officially recognized social expectations have been denied, but also to attend to their interpretations of the situation" (p. 81), we need to create the conditions for the mothers to be heard and the injustices that they have experienced to be addressed. We know, for the most part, what the public officials and the civil society think about the social initiatives that are carried out in their name. But we don't know enough about the consequences of those policies in the lives of the victims, so their insight, their perspective, could be a way to have a richer, more nuanced understanding of the consequences of policies that affect them. Listening to the victims and providing an institutional space whereby the mothers tell the story from their perspective echoes Shklar's (1990) insistence on including victims and hearing their voices. But there is more to it than that. Listening to the voices of the victims also affords them a space that has agentic features whereby they can articulate in their own voices the consequences of what they went through, seeking what they need to address their wounds. Echoing their voices, modifying how the penal system confronts victims of state crimes so that they are

treated as victims and not "guilty until proven innocent" will be a small way in which the plight of the mothers could be alleviated. But let us now turn to the social, epistemic, and political conditions that made the crimes of the false positives possible in the first place.

Epistemic Injustice

Passive injustice always takes place in a particular context. There is a reality anterior to both active and passive injustice that sets up some people's words to be given credence over others, and which has a lot to do with class, the ability to express oneself in the language of the courts, and familiarity with different legal and political settings in which legal proceedings take place. This inequality in how people's words are heard or read has been referred to by Miranda Fricker (2007) as testimonial injustice.

From the beginning, the mothers were saying that their sons did not vanish, or go to party, or go with another woman, as the police suggested. But the assumption at the time was that the mothers were wrong and that their sons would indeed show up a few days later, as sometimes happens when people are reported as disappeared. Yet, as details began to appear that showed cracks in the versions of the Colombian army that seemed to indicate that the mothers were right, there continued to be a refusal to accept the possibility that the army could have overstepped its mandate and killed innocent civilians outside combat. There continued to be a refusal to accept that the mothers were correct, and that a few humble women knew more about their sons than the state knew about those entrusted to defend it. And there, in the refusal to accept that the mothers might have known better than whole military brigades, was a kind of epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007).

For Fricker (2007) epistemic injustice occurs when there is what she refers to as a credibility deficit (p. 17) that prevents certain people being understood as truth-tellers, and they are therefore not listened to in the same way as others. The term 'credibility deficit,' which is often coupled with credibility excess, refers to the prejudices that "will tend surreptitiously to inflate or deflate the credibility afforded to the speaker, and sometimes this will be sufficient to cross the threshold for belief or acceptance…" (p.

17). In the case of the mothers of the false positives, the credibility deficit meant there was a refusal to accept that the mothers' love for their sons did not blind them and prevent them from seeing their sons for who they really were, whereas credibility excess meant that the false accounts of the Colombian army were accepted as true. Some might argue that it was not an epistemic injustice that did not allow the Colombian society to trust the mothers, but rather a cautious distrust of the mothers' versions based on the supposed blindness of love. However, the line of questioning opened by the military judges and the Office of the General Attorney supports the theory that testimonial injustice prevented those hearing the accounts from accepting the truth of what the mothers were saying.

Credibility deficit and excess are in turn informed by "identity prejudice" (Fricker, 2007), which taints the degree of credibility afforded to someone's testimonies, based on their "economic, educational, professional, sexual, legal, political, religious" backgrounds (p. 27). So, when the mothers tell their version of the events, there are negatively prejudicial lenses through which the judges, public officials, the media and the public in general read and hear their words. At no point were the mothers listened to outside the prism of their identity markers.

Now one might argue that Fricker's theory of epistemic and testimonial injustice does not apply to the mothers, that the duty of those in charge of uncovering the truth of what happened is to distrust every statement so that personal preferences do not blind them, and the course of justice can continue its path, unencumbered by prejudice. However, the personal preferences and prejudices of the judges were more than "innocent error[s]" (Fricker, 2007, p. 21); both military and civilians took issue with the statements of the mothers and sided with the army until international pressure to get to the truth became insurmountable. In summary, then, there was a credibility deficit when the police and the investigators heard the testimonies of the mothers and a credibility excess when the police and investigators listened to the testimonies of the army and its soldiers.

When the army went to find poor, unemployed men who could be swayed to accept offers of a job elsewhere, or simply dragged away from their neighborhoods to be

killed elsewhere, they went to poor communities where they expected that those killed would not be missed. If missed, none would be searched for, beyond a file being opened in a regional judicial office that would soon be forgotten. And one can argue that the place they chose to grab people from was anything but accidental. They knew that those who would report the missing people would not be trusted, excuses would be given, and the cases would not be taken seriously. So, the crimes of the false positives, the assassination of innocent people who were chosen to be killed but not sacrificed (Agamben, 2020), occur against a backdrop of epistemic injustice in which the perpetrators assume that the relatives of the victims will not be believed when they report their loved ones missing.

A further kind of injustice in the case of the mothers of the false positives is the gendered injustice described by Wendy Brown (2002) as "vulnerability to losing our children…" (p. 421). The mothers' fear of losing their sons is already part of their interactions as mothers, their understanding of themselves as mothers, and their relationship to their sons and their communities. However, in the Colombian context, that fear materialized in a way that not only corroborates their fears, but also marks their inevitability. As a chronicle of a death foretold, the mothers tried to educate their sons, and sought to discipline them and made their best efforts to make sure that they did not end up in trouble, only to realize that the univocal horizon of their fear was unavoidable and that their rights as women and citizens did not matter when they should have mattered the most. Their children were killed despite the mothers' best attempts to ensure that their sons did not have issues with the law, when it was the law, or at least the representatives of the law, who decided to kill them.

A fuller discussion of Brown's work goes beyond the scope of this thesis, but the relevant aspect for our purposes here is that there is a gendered nature to the injustice committed against the mothers. This gendered injustice, paired with a class prejudice, assumes that the testimonies of the mothers are tainted by their emotions, by their love for their lost ones, creating a credibility deficit that does not allow the message of the mothers to come through.

Emotions, Justice and Injustice

Within the dominant understanding of justice, emotions are seen as an impediment to the proper reasoning of justice, and the recommendation is that those who have been injured or who are involved in the administration of justice should set their emotions aside and bring reason to the conversation. The assumption that emotions, and negative emotions in particular, are deleterious to justice is anchored on an understanding that sees them as opposite to reason and always already problematic. But there is research that recognizes the role of emotions in reason (Artz, 2000; Kochan, 2015; Cochrane, 2019). Despite the assumption of those who consider that reason and emotions are at odds, Shklar (1990) argues that there are emotions at work in the experience of justice that are significantly different from those experienced in the sense of injustice. For Shklar, "there is no physiological response to the calm enforcement of the rules, whereas the frustration of denied expectations, rage, and fear involve physical reactions as well as moral ones" (p. 101). In other words, there is no equivalence between the emotive, moral, and physical reactions that the experience of injustice entails and the one that results from the calm of enforcement rules. For, as she goes on to argue, "injustice and justice are not psychologically complimentary or symmetrical, nor are they exact opposites" (p. 102). As a result, we need to be particularly attentive to the negative emotions of the experience of injustice not only because they are intimately tied, but also because there are consequences for leaving them unaddressed. If we agree with Shklar (1990) that there is no equivalence between justice and injustice, and that the experience of injustice seems to have a heavier emotive content that the experience of justice, then we need to be attentive to the experiences of justice and find the means to make sure that if and when the normal justice of the courts is not possible, for whatever reason, the negative emotions of the experience of injustice can be repurposed in a way that is beneficial for those who have been wronged and their communities.

When an experience of injustice has become entrenched, the negative emotions will look for an outlet for their expression. As Shklar (1990) puts it, "when the victims of disasters refuse to resign themselves to their misfortunes and cry out in anger, we hear the voice of the sense of injustice" (p. 83). And when the voice that speaks in the midst of its

pain, against the misfortunes, is agentic and assertive, "the sense of injustice is eminently political" (p. 83). As such, if refusing to accept the fate of the misfortune is already an expression of the sense of injustice, then we should recognize that there is a political feature to the anger, resentment and grief of the mothers of the false positives.

There is a link between the negative emotions the mothers are expressing and the political sense of injustice from which the mothers are asserting themselves. There is a recognition that there are communal values, that were socially agreed upon, that are being transgressed by the sense of injustice that is experienced. And, in that assertion, in their refusal to accept what happened, and their continued arguing against the Colombian state apparatus, there is a need to articulate a wound, but it is also a painful choice. The mothers are choosing day after day to continue to go to the trials and the protests, and not let the case of the false positives rest, in an attempt to ensure that those who chose to instrumentalize the lives of their loved ones do not get a free pass on their crimes. For various reasons, some other survivors who endured similar losses have been unable to pursue the struggle, choosing instead to carry their sense of injustice in silence. These people have totally valid reasons for not pursuing their cases through the courts, but we need to recognize that the mothers are doing a communal service when they continue to believe in a justice system that has consistently failed them. In their continued struggle, they have transfigured (Strong, 1988) their hurt, redeploying the negative emotions that anchored their sense of injustice. However, not everyone is able to redeploy their negative emotions in a way that channels them for purposeful means. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore how survivors are able to transfigure their negative emotions, but it is imperative to recognize that such transformation, or transfiguration, does happen, and that it can have a tremendous impact on the lives of the victims and their communities.

There are roughly three ways in which negative emotions can be accommodated in the context of injustice. The first, and perhaps the most common, is that people will choose not to pursue the case through the Courts, not because they don't believe that their experience was an injustice, but because they lack the means, the will and/or the disposition to pursue the matter. These survivors may very well fear the consequences if

they go public in their pursuit of justice, so they choose to move on with their pain in silence, knowing fully well that what they experienced was an injustice, but they are unable to challenge it. The other alternative to deal with the kind of negative emotions that provoke a sense of injustice is going straight to vengeance without giving justice a chance. The third, and arguably the hardest, is to insist on demanding justice irrespective of the chances of succeeding or the potential consequences for the survivors and their communities. In this third group we can locate the mothers, who continue to argue their case despite over a decade of delays and bureaucratic quagmires. Whatever else can be said about choosing this path, it needs to be acknowledged that society has a lot to learn from the courageous persistence and the unwavering faith in justice of the mothers of the false positives.

However, we still need to address the other two responses. Between those who opt not to pursue justice but rather to keep their negative emotions inside, and those who go straight to vengeance, or justice by their own hand, lies a theoretical and practical challenge in regard to the negative emotions. Those who opt for vengeance refuse to give the avenues of justice a chance and unleash the furies of vengeance without measuring the consequences of their actions and the potential for creating further cycles of violence. On the other hand, those who bottle up their negative emotions, and refrain from acting on them, carry wounds that remain unprocessed and a dormant (or suppressed) sense of injustice that may lead to harmful consequences down the road. Much work remains to be done on the agentic possibilities of the negative emotions in post-conflict societies, but let me now draw this study to a close with some concluding comments and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 7.

Conclusion and the Road Ahead

One of the patterns that we have established through this thesis is that there is more to the negative emotions than being simply negative. The three negative emotions explored here—anger, resentment, and grief—do have an outward-looking, propositive valence that tends to be overlooked because of the fear and stigma that has been placed on negative emotions. There is also a strong tradition that has focused predominantly on the negative valence of negative emotions which has had a significant role in both philosophical discussions from Plato to Cicero to Kant to Nussbaum and everyday discourse. The typical injunction is that people need to reduce or manage their anger, resentment, and grief, and only on rare occasions are people questioned about the lack of those negative emotions in their lives. However, the point here is not to say that those who have called attention to the negative valence of the negative emotions are wrong, or that the negative valence is not there from the beginning. Rather, the point is to open space for the possibility that there is more to the negative emotions than what the philosophical tradition has presented, and to consider alternatives from which we can work with the experience of negative emotions.

We cannot avoid the presence of negative emotions. We cannot simply will them away, or request that people forgive or reconcile as a means to move away from discomfort or conflict. There might be some for whom forgiveness and reconciliation work, but others might need to stay with their negative emotions. Amongst those who stay with the negative emotions, some manage to explore the positive agentic potential of those negative emotions and transfigure them into a force that allows them to insist on justice, equity, and truth. However, not everyone can transfigure their negative emotions, and I have tried to be cautious about grand celebrations of the negative emotions (see e.g., Traister, 2018). We need to be cautious about the consequences of how we engage with negative emotions because the potential to be destructive (for both the one experiencing the emotions and their communities) remains. But we also need to be attentive to the positive agentic features the negative emotions can bring about. In other

words, the point is neither to condemn nor to celebrate negative emotions blindly, but to try to strike a middle ground, having in mind the survivors who are working through those negative emotions and repurposing them for agentic means for themselves and their communities.

Implicit in the need to chart a different perspective for narratives of negative emotions is the hope that, if we manage to successfully challenge the prevailing stances against emotions like anger, resentment, and grief, people who are avoiding the discomfort of their negative emotions for fear of the perception that negative emotions typically have, can take the time to process them and heal. If this challenge is successful, and we can show the benefits of engaging with negative emotions, we might have an opening to understand ourselves, our present and our reality through a lens that is more propositive and agentic amidst pain and suffering.

The purpose of this thesis has been to challenge the assumption that only negative outcomes can come from people allowing the presence of negative emotions in their lives and to demonstrate, as the mothers clearly show, that there are positive agentic, individual and collective features that come from the presence and engagement with negative emotions. The invitation is then to allow negative emotions to be recognized— not only their origin, rationale and intent, but also how engaging with them can be productive for the people experiencing them, their communities and society in general.

Individually and collectively, we have done a disservice in how we relate to the negative emotions, which is often from a place of fear and guilt. There may well be cases in which negative emotions are either mistaken or inappropriate to the situation at hand, but we need to differentiate between the negative emotions of someone whose life has been undone, such as the mothers of the false positives, and the negative emotions that come from a simple misunderstanding.

In principle, however, it seems necessary to recognize that one of the main issues that comes from the perception of negative emotions as inherently harmful springs from characterizing them as negative, together with the associations that immediately come from such an assumption. Anterior to the problematic division of emotions as negative or

positive, there is a tendency to oversimplify and categorize them in a simple and accessible way. But emotions are complex, intertwined realities that inform our response to the world and are permeated by our social milieu and our own position within that milieu.

The challenge in this thesis has been to argue that if we sit with negative emotions, allow them to speak, and listen attentively, those negative emotions can be a voice for justice, truth and agency that can be cultivated, rather than only harming the one experiencing the emotions and their communities. However, we need to challenge the current discourse in order to understand the negative emotions in a more nuanced way. One of the ways to do this is to show that the naming of the emotions has not been the same since the Greek period, and that the negative emotions have changed through history. If the ways we name emotions has not always been the same, and the meaning of those terms has changed through history and the social classes to which they applied and how they relate to us, then we need to think twice before we accept the assumption of the inherent negativity of negative emotions. Part of that work of challenging the entrenched understanding of negative emotions in this thesis was to go back to the etymology of the terms we use and trace the changes in meaning and usage depending on the social position, gender, and class of the one experiencing and expressing their emotions.

In the case of anger, for example, if we are successful in demonstrating that there are disagreements about what it meant for Aristotle and the different stances through some of the most important religious traditions, then we have grounds to challenge the assumption that there has always been a common understanding of anger and its implications for a moral life. As I have attempted to show, the intricacies of meaning of what we understand today as anger differ in important ways from the type of anger that Aristotle had in mind when he wrote about it in the *Rhetoric* and elsewhere. The social and political contexts are different, and the people from whom and with whom Aristotle thought about anger differ significantly from our own. For example, looking at anger through the axis of class and status meant that a male property owner was prevented from getting angry with a slave, for that would demean the status of the property owner to that of the slave. Despite the important work that Konstan (2006) and others have done to

untangle and explain those intricacies, they seem to get lost in the literature that dwells on the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the negative emotions, and of anger in particular.

So, when we talk about anger today, we need to be mindful of what we mean by it, the context in which we speak, and the authors with whom we engage in dialogue about the emotions. For it is not entirely certain that we mean the same thing, and the condemnation or approval of an emotion and its implications may be based on a facile assumption that we all know what anger is, what it does, etc. In other words, context is more than a condiment added to a term that flavours it one way or another. Shifting to grief, I concur with Rosenblatt (1997) when he argues that "one may think of grief as a human universal… but the reality is that grief is quite different from culture to culture" (p. 41)—and, I would add, from one person and situation to the next.

That said, I am not arguing that every experience of an emotion is always already particular and contextual. There are general contours that emotions follow, but understanding those broad contours has taken precedence over the lived and expressed experience of the emotions. In my view, the prevalence of the idea of a universal experience of negative emotions continues to prevent the exploration of those emotions in all their multi-faceted, nuanced agentic ways. We need to be able to attend to the peculiarities of the negative emotions devoid as much as possible of the preconceptions we build around the experience of our own emotions and the preconceptions with which our social milieu infuses our experiences of negative emotions. We will never fully challenge or overcome the perceptions that constitute us regarding negative emotions, but we can begin to question them and show different readings and alternatives that can point to cracks in the certainty that only negative outcomes come from negative emotions.

Shifting now from the theoretical to the lived reality of the mothers, we (either collectively or individually) will never be able to assuage the mothers' pain of losing their loved ones. No amount of counselling or political accommodation or understanding of their negative emotions will ever bring their sons back. While it seems self-evident, it also seems necessary to state here that even the most accommodating process of making

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the mothers' voices center stage in a post-conflict democratic society will never fully alleviate their pain. It will continue to stay with them as a wound that does not fully close, which will hurt more and less from time to time. But short of that, there are ways in which a collective Colombian understanding can help assuage their pain, even if only slightly. One of those ways comes through recognizing the social and political role the negative emotions can have in the lives of survivors, and the social and political features the expression of those emotions has for the communities in which the survivors live. We can allow empowering and liberating expressions of those emotions, or we can ask the mothers to avoid their negative emotions and engage in practices of conciliation so that hopefully, one day, what happened to them will not happen again. But we have seen again and again in the Colombian conflict, and other conflicts elsewhere, that the erasure of the negative emotions of the survivors, and the neglect and trampling of their sense of injustice, isolates and revictimizes them, eroding the trust they could have in the social and political institutions. This erosion of trust between the survivors, the communities, and the social-political institutions creates an antagonism wherein dialogue becomes difficult, if not impossible, and the *vias de hecho* become the means through which conflict is processed. The tearing apart of being-in-common, along with the sedimentation of the wounds of the negative emotions, can create the conditions for political projects that seek to exploit the division, creating policies of hatred and violence in which speaking in the name of the survivors whose wounds and injustices were not heard is simply instrumentalizing them to drive agendas that are ultimately contrary to their interests.

It is imperative to recognize that allowing space for the negative emotions to be processed does not guarantee that the tearing apart of communities will not occur. But if the mothers were allowed the conditions to engage with their negative emotions in agentic, meaningful, and politically anchored ways, further cycles of vengeance or retribution from their communities might be prevented.

It is also worth pausing here for a moment to consider the extent to which allowing the negative emotions of the victims to dwell on what it means for them to have lost their loved ones at the hands of the army could do for them and their communities.

Granted, a deeper exploration of their experiences of negative emotions does not provide the mothers and their communities with the means to assuage their pain. But it is a start. When we stop and listen, we can begin to recognize the wounds that have been inflicted on the lives of those marginalized communities whose members have been instrumentalized so that some meager benefits can be obtained. But listening is not enough. The mothers have spoken and expressed their pain and told their stories in almost every venue that anyone has cared to listen, but the listening, in and of itself, has not assuaged the mothers' sense of injustice. On the contrary, it may help them persist in their struggle for justice in the hope that there will be a day in which the names of their loved ones will be unstained. And for those listening attentively to the mothers' accounts of the injury and sustained pain caused by the unjust killing of their loved ones, and what it means to live with the presence of the absence of those loved ones, the mothers can help to inform possibilities for a new future based not on the ideal perspective of a justice that should have been, but from the materiality of an injustice that was. From that specificity, we can constitute a political ontology that recognizes the injustice of the killings, the injuries of the mothers, and the negative emotions that are the expressions of that injury.

There is an affective materiality in the mothers for the experiences of loss and the negation of the loss they have had to endure, and we could dwell on their resilience and encourage other survivors to follow their steps and find means to challenge their wounds and seek means to move beyond their pain. But, as Brad Evans and Julian Reid argue (2014), such celebration of resilience manages to 'forgo the very power of resistance' (p. 82) that the mothers, in particular, and victims, in general, have managed to achieve to deal with their injuries. And in there, in the tenuous, but palpable difference between resilience and resistance might be a pedagogy of a different way of engaging scenarios of post-conflict that center on the negative emotions of victims not as a hurdle to be overcome by cajoling them into commitments of reconciliation, but as a genuine place of resistance from which a new, inclusive demos could emerge.

The constitution of a political ontology based on resistance instead of resilience, anchored on the moral legitimacy of the negative emotions as agentic responses that

emerge from the injuries that they are confronting, will need to be accompanied by a pedagogy of practical and inclusive justice. Such a pedagogy would start not from the ideal theory of Rawls, or the universals of Plato, nor from the ideal of how the relationship between governmental forces and civilians ought to be, but from the materiality of what that relationship has been, and from the materiality of a pain and injury that has left the mothers with scars in their soul, and a need to accommodate their unreconciled pain in a world devoid of their loved ones, while they insist on making meaning of it. A pedagogy of practical and inclusive justice cannot therefore come top-down from the Government or NGOs that might bring their own agendas. Rather, it will need to come from the ground up, with the mothers, so that their voices and their needs are heard before the voices of the experts cloud the conversation.

Fully fleshing out a pedagogy of practical and inclusive justice for post-conflict communities goes beyond the scope of this thesis, but it is work I look forward to pursuing in the future, drawing on Zembylas (, 2010, 2012a, 2012b, 2015, 2018 , Szkudlarek (2018) and others who ground their educational scholarship in politically challenging contexts. Expanding on the work Zembylas, I want to explore the possibility that other negative emotions, besides the ones explored in this thesis and hatred (also Yanay, 1995, 1996, 2002a, 2002b) and shame (also Williams, 1993) could offer to communities that, having been victimized, are still unable to engage with their sense of injustice in a way that articulates their plight through agentic means that make possible other ways of inhabiting their pain. I also want to consider a response explored by Streich (2002) and Di Paolantonio (2018) that I have not explored here: that is, the right to forget. While Streich (2002) answers the question in the negative from the perspective of state actors who could mobilize policies of forgetfulness in order to sidestep conversations about past injustices that they refuse to face, I am drawn to the way Di Paolantonio (2018) envisages survivors exploring their right to forget what happened to them as injured individuals, not as state actors.

A brief note on the weaponization and memorialization of victimhood

One of the challenges of wounds that are left open and unaddressed in reconciliation processes is that we could be leaving them open for someone else to weaponize for further agendas of hatred and revenge, in the name of the injustices that were not addressed. In this, the history of Colombia is a glaring example of how, if those wounds and negative emotions are not addressed, there is a possibility that others will seek the means to deploy them for purposes that further divide and erode the trust of the communities, rather than bring them together. There is no guarantee that, if we allow the negative emotions of the survivors to come to the fore, there will not be someone down the road who eventually will be able to revive those negative emotions and redeploy them for strife and division. But if we simply ask the survivors to accept the past and move on from their pain, the likelihood of those wounds being readily available for someone to weaponize them will only increase. When we dismiss the negative emotions that have been addressed in this thesis—anger, resentment and grief—as well as other related emotions, we might be unintentionally leaving the door open for nefarious political actors to redeploy them so that vengeance and retribution become an alternative way to assuage those negative emotions. So, if instead of asking the survivors to move on, forgive and forget, or question the status of the mothers as victims as some presidential candidates in Colombia have begun to do, we create the conditions for the negative emotions to be transfigured, we might be opening the door for other, more just and beneficial, ways of being in common.

One fear, not so much from what the mothers have accomplished thus far, but from the consequences of those who have written and thought about the false positives, is that we may end up simply memorializing the victims. And through that process of memorializing, we may end up robbing the deceased of their humanity by constituting them as objects, as victims who were defined by what happened to them, and building an aura of untouchable sanctity around who they were, and, in that process, dehumanizing them. By flattening them into victims who were materially undone by what happened to them, we might be foreclosing the space for them to be understood and seen in all their

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rich and nuanced personalities. Such memorialization can become a way of objectifying them as always already victims, as if their entire lives could be summed up by their disappearance and death, and as if their lives only mattered until they did not matter for those who executed them. But before and beyond their victimhood, the false positives were sons and fathers and members of their communities, and some of them could very well have made mistakes, as we all do in varying degrees and ways. The point here is not to question the character of the victims or to cast a light on their mistakes, so that those who continue to argue against the recognition of the crimes find ways of assassinating the character of the victims. Rather, the point is to move away from memorializing them as only, always already victims. At the same time, we need to be attentive to how the efforts to understand them as more than victims of a crime could be deployed by those like former President Alvaro Uribe Velez, who continues to insist that some of those who were killed by the army were petty criminals known to the security forces—as if one's life only mattered so long as one observed the rules of law and propriety, and that the moment one deviated from it, for whatever reason, all bets were off. In other words, we need to be able to humanize the memory of those executed by the Colombian army.

Politics After the False Positives

If we follow Bernadette Baker's (2005) understanding that modern states can be understood as "systems of relations and methods of getting things done" (p. 55), then we should be able to understand that things have been not set in stone, and there are alternatives, new ways in which the systems of relations can invoke themselves so that different things get done in different ways. A certain path has taken the modern Colombian state in its current direction, and the false positives are perhaps the most glaring example of the instrumentalization of lives in the name of security. But there are other ways of relating to one another and other things that need to be done, along with different ways of doing them that do not go through state-sanctioned criminality and violence. The point here is not the reinvention of the Colombian State or the revaluation of all the different entities related to one another. There is work already started by the mothers. There is already a path the mothers have traversed, despite having the opposition of the established powers. The mothers persisted with their truth and forced

the Colombian Government to acknowledge that they were correct and that the generals, General Prosecution office, and former presidents were wrong. There is a pedagogy explicit in the actions of the mothers that could model the epistemic conflicts that are to ensue in the years to come. We need, however, to be cautious about what Di Paolantonio, (2014) refers to as the pedagogical features of trials for State crimes. The assumption that is widely shared by scholars of transitional democracy, and which Di Paolantonio (2014) challenges, presupposes that people will learn about the crimes that were committed by the state and a univocal narrative of the past that binds together the nation will come out. But as the experience of the previous peace processes has demonstrated, such assumption, even if hopeful, does not hold, as each side continues to see, understand and explain the conflict through the prism of their own political leanings.

Limitations of the Thesis

Two specific limitations have determined this project's path. The first is the language in which the project is written. There is a distance, sometimes seemingly unsurmountable, between the beautiful colloquialisms the mothers use to describe their plight and academic English. English is not, and will never be, my language, so there is a sense in which I am inhabiting a language that, after so many years, remains foreign to me from time to time, especially to articulate the plight of the mothers. The limitations of language and the untranslatability of some of the colloquialisms that the mothers use to describe their pain have been both challenges and opportunities. I have had to think about their plight from what they say and what they mean. It has been a challenge to render it in another language, trying to be attuned to the meaning and context of what and how they are enunciating their experiences.

The second limitation of the project comes from its nature as a philosophical investigation rather than field research. There was often a need to clarify an answer that was not clear, an explanation that could have been given as an answer to a wrongly posed question, and the mothers were there, technologically within reach, to be approached. Still, the rules of engagement of the project determined that such a step would have required getting through the bureaucratic quagmire of ethics boards. Implicit in the

decision not to pursue empirical research was the question that I could never positively answer about what this thesis could offer them that would make a difference for them. They have charted their path and argued their case in a way that can only serve as an example for future generations that, unfortunately, will end up going through the same experience of losing their loved ones at the hand of government forces. And here perhaps we can extend Zembylas's (2003, 2010) and Boler's (1999) pedagogical projects. We can take the experience of the negative emotions from the mothers' experience and how they have managed to transfigure their experiences and begin to think about how their lessons can be applied to other scenarios that might not be as intractable. The persistence of the mothers, their way of staying with their discomfort and deploying it not only for their own needs for truth and justice, but also for the needs of their communities, could in turn serve as a springboard for other communities to answer to their own experiences of pain and injustice.

Afterword: After Injustice

As I mentioned earlier, but it bears repeating here, besides the statements and the acts of contrition, the mothers of the false positives and their communities need real concrete action. The perpetrators and those in charge of institutions responsible for the false positives must take responsibility and recognize the crimes committed, the violence caused, and the pain that ensued, in a way that grants the mothers their good name and in recognition of their sustained faith in the institutions of justice. But the real transition from injustice to justice starts with validating the victims in the Courts and tribunals charged with hearing the case of the mothers, and in supporting the independent efforts that have been undertaken to assign responsibilities and establish patterns of conduct. Speaking about justice and reconciliation while the State continues to contest the truth of the mothers in Court only exacerbates the feeling that the state and its agencies are continuing to silence the mothers so the country can "turn the page."

The juridical process seems to be on its way to trying to establish some individual responsibilities for the crimes committed, but the social and political institutions have failed in their duty of care by failing to prevent further harm to the mothers and the victims' relatives. In that failure, we can see overtones of the passive injustice that Cicero and Shklar (1990) point out. But I would argue that a closer examination of the extent of the institutional actions and inactions would reveal them to be not a passive type of injustice, but an active one. In principle, one could argue that to speak of active injustice by institutions fails to acknowledge the difference between those who designed and carried out the killings and those who, through their bureaucratic misdeeds, failed to investigate and prevent the harm that ensued from the crimes committed. But the harm done to the mothers by the different levels of governmental bodies is arguably almost as bad as the assassinations themselves and, taken together, constitute acts of active injustice.

While the charge of active institutional injustice might seem to go too far, we could return to Shklar (1990) and her argument that the difference between a misfortune

and an injustice is the political will to recognize certain misfortunes as injustices. In other words, if we muster the political will to understand what 'normal justice' (e.g., the process of the tribunals) sees as a misfortune and redefine it as an act of injustice intended to continue the practices of silencing the survivors that has already been carried out by some of the military forces, we would be able to have a different conversation about the injustice of the Courts against the mothers. But, in order for that to happen, we first need to challenge the prevailing assumption that the slow arrival of justice, and the incriminating ways in which the mothers were confronted, are just part of an objective search for truth. For what happened to the mothers in their experience with the justice system was an uncoordinated, but not for that matter less successful, attempt to silence them by blurring the line between the witness and the accused, and by trying to wear the mothers down until they no longer have the strength or resources to continue fighting.

In the preceding chapters I have attempted to argue that there is an expression of value that comes from the experience of negative emotions that is closely connected to, and becomes articulated through, the sense of injustice. By giving the negative emotions a space to be articulated through democratic debate, and by creating a space for the injured to seek redress, both the furies of vengeance and their tempting presence, on the one hand, and the lack of faith in justice which may lead survivors to bottle up their negative emotions and ignore their sense of injustice, on the other hand, may become less appealing alternatives.

Unfortunately, no one can totally avoid being injured in some of the ways the mothers have been injured. But by making the negative emotions and the sense of injustice part of the public conversation about injury, and by creating the conditions whereby the victims do not feel that the state and its institutions are siding with the perpetrators rather than with the victims, we may be able to foster the conditions wherein distrust and apathy are not the default from which communities engage with each other.

As I have argued throughout, the anger, resentment, and grief the mothers experienced are natural and legitimate responses to the unjust killing of their loved ones, and we need to recognize the positive agentic valence within those emotions, so they can

become part of the larger conversation about injury, justice and the possibility of meaningful conciliation in post-conflict contexts.

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