CORAZONAR WITH/IN MARÍA ZAMBRANO:
INSIGHTS INTO CRISIS, HEART, AND HOPE

by

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submitted by in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

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Abstract

Along with the different kinds of global crises we are going through, this thesis delves into the work of Spanish philosopher Maria Zambrano, whose critiques on the European modernity during the 20th century are more than ever relevant and can bring hope to these moments of despair. Through an exercise of exegesis and translation of three primary texts of Maria Zambrano, and based on three themes that I have found central in her work: crisis, heart and, hope, I weave connections between Zambrano’s poetic philosophy, with the Andean Kitu Kara concept of corazonar, along with insights about relevant topics that are currently shaking the world of education and humanity overall. The primary texts used are Hacia un Saber Sobre el Alma (Towards a knowledge about the soul) (1950), Los Bienaventurados (The Blessed) (1990), and Filosofía y Educación. Manuscritos (Philosophy and Education: Manuscripts) (2010). This study brings Zambrano’s rationalist perspective that integrates the intuitive, affective, contemplative and spiritual dimensions of life, that have been long undervalued in Western thinking. The themes of crisis, heart and, hope are developed as separate chapters and are weaved in with Zambrano’s call for integrating feelings and understanding, heart and reason, which are connected for the first time to the term corazonar. The word corazonar turns the heart into a verb, combines heart and thinking, means reasoning together and refers to a gut feeling or hunch. I explore Maria Zambrano’s ideas from my ever-present concern and love for Colombia and its path towards peace. This study is a major attempt to translate and interpret Zambrano’s ideas into English, contributing to the broader philosophical and educational studies beyond the borders of the Spanish language in which most of the scholarly work has been written in.
Lay Summary

This study brings a relevant reflection on crisis, heart, and hope through the view of Maria Zambrano, one of the greatest philosophers of Spain, who inhabited most of the tangled and violent twentieth century. It honors Zambrano’s work as it is weaved together with insights based on her offerings and as a scholarly contribution to an Anglophone readership just gaining access to her work. This thesis is a relevant exercise of bringing back María Zambrano’s thought, political activism and philosophy to current topics, as well as connecting for the first time her philosophical ideas with the Andean Kitu Kara concept of corazonar. Working with primary texts, translating to English, reflecting on current topics on philosophy and education, and creating value for the longevity of an author are some of the key contributions of this work.
Preface

This thesis is original, independent work by Maria Angélica Guerrero Quintana, that has not been previously published.
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Dedication

To the hopeful and wholehearted,
There is a brokenness
go of which comes the unbroken,
a shatteredness
out of which blooms the unshatterable.
There is a sorrow
beyond all grief which leads to joy
and a fragility
out of whose depths emerges strength.
There is a hollow space
too vast for words
through which we pass with each loss,
out of whose darkness
we are sanctioned into being.
There is a cry deeper than all sound
whose serrated edges cut the heart
as we break open to the place inside
which is unbreakable and whole,
while learning to sing.

—RASHANI RÉA, “The Unbroken”
Introduction

We live with an illusion of separation from many aspects of life like nature, the sacred and our other than human kin. Journeying with María Zambrano is remembering the encounter of connections within the illusion; it is a revelation of old new truths that will be unfolded in this work. In the following chapters, I delve into the poetic philosophy of María Zambrano by distilling it into three themes: crisis, heart, and hope. In dialogue with her offerings, I take these strands and weave speculative connections among them and with the concept of corazonar. Corazonar is a made-up term in Spanish that contains different meanings, it turns the noun heart into a verb, it combines heart and reason, it can also mean thinking together, or gut feeling.

As a weaver, I notice tangled webs, unraveling threads and interwoven strands all around and within me. I will be using weaving as a metaphor and a methodology throughout this thesis in order to sustain the process, explain the connections and envision the woven fabric this work entails. A weaving loom is a structure that you use to give your weave support and tension as you work; therefore, I will use the metaphor of the lap loom as a way to explain the different parts of this work. The warp thread is the thread that is strung over the loom vertically, the themes are the warp threads for my exegetical inquiry of these texts, along with my translations of her work from Spanish, they are the backbone of my weave. The weft thread is the thread that you weave between, around, and all over the warp threads. It creates patterns and designs in the weave. The weft will emerge during my encounters with the text, in a gesture towards a series of insights based on her pedagogical reflections and my introjections in relation to her work. The reader will find that there is a second voice unfolding throughout the text in the form of footnotes, where I offer my insights. The threads of the weft are diverse, colorful and made of poetry, dreams, and intuitions. The scholarly contribution of this work relies on bringing an
unexplored Spanish female philosopher to an English-speaking audience by doing interpretation and commentary that honors her voice, presence, and freedom. This work, which is both academic and personal, serves as a reflection on the alive, confusing, and difficult scenes I am in contact with in my motherland Colombia and the place I am living in as a guest in Canada.

Humanity is currently facing a global pandemic that is shaking our personal and collective structures to the core. We are faced with uncertainty, fear, and grief produced by all the threats that we have accumulated over centuries in the forms of colonization, economic disparity, patriarchy, racism, and catastrophic climate change, that become even more obvious in times like this. We are been asked to feel intensely and remember to dream and scheme of systems of change, even though tomorrow can feel especially bleak. In this overwhelming state, looking back can help us to look forward. As we will learn with Maria Zambrano, nothing new appears in times of crisis, crisis just brings evidence of the already embedded conflicts, and it is an opportunity for self-knowledge, and collective vulnerability and transformation. We are surrounded by the wisdom of those who have survived, resisted, innovated, and imagined possible futures. It is within the social demand of the crisis and the spiritual dimension of the crisis; that go hand in hand, where corazonar becomes even more relevant. Bringing back some of the ideas of María Zambrano has an added importance in these moments of despair. My offering is a small exercise of recalibration among our disoriented state, an invitation to tune into a different kind of love, hope, care, and awe.

María Zambrano was an Andalusian philosopher who inhabited most of the confusing and convulsive 20th century with personal and intellectual passion. Zambrano was part of the Generation of ‘27, one of the most important artistic and intellectual movements in Spanish
cultural history,¹ but usually the male members are the most widely known.² She did important theoretical work as an author, and she was also present in the active political and civic actions of the time. For example, she was among a committed group of individuals in Spain engaging the democratic process to push for women’s right to vote in 1931. Perhaps her oversight among the intellectuals of the time has to do with her being a female and a republican,³ or due to her itinerant life in exile since she lived in more than seven countries during more than half of her life. In many ways, her political trajectory was typical of other politically engaged intellectuals of her generation in Spain, but recognition for her unique philosophical contributions has been somewhat limited.

Similarly, outside of Spain, her ideas are largely unexplored when compared to other philosophers of her generation that had their lives marked by the crisis of modernity culminating in two World Wars.⁴ Despite the fact that her work is part of the same philosophical debates as other well-known philosophers from the Europe of her time, her critique has been largely unexplored in English.⁵ Most of the academic production on her works is written in Spanish and

¹ RTVE, *Las Sinsombrero*.
² Like José Ortega y Gasset, Miguel de Unamuno, and Xavier Zubiri.
³ Republicanism in Spain is a position and a movement that holds that the Spanish Monarchy should be a Republic. Spain has a long modern tradition of monarchy. The term Spanish Monarchy designates the political organization of the Government and the State in Spain. Its trajectory goes from the dynastic union of the peninsular kingdoms in the descendants of the Catholic Monarchs, reforming during the new regime until the current Spain. This has only been interrupted in the periods of the First Republic (1873-1874), the Second Republic (1931-1939) and part of the Franco regime (1939-1975).
⁵ For example, according to a search conducted on Web of Science database in early 2020, out of 215 records for “Maria Zambrano”, 147 are written in Spanish, 37 in English, and 19 in Italian. The research areas fall into Philosophy (86), Arts & Humanities (59) and Literature (56). The most common countries of publication are Spain (70), USA (25), and México (10). The most common types of publications are Articles (147), Reviews (48), and
mainly produced in Spain; with the exception of some articles in specialist journals, there are very few studies in English of her work.\(^6\) Whatever the combination of reasons, her work remains largely unknown by both the public and specialists throughout Europe and America.

Many of Zambrano’s revelations from the mid-twentieth century resonate with the current crisis\(^7\) we face and her insights into transcendence, education, freedom, hope, love and more are instructive for our times. She presented traditional liberalism as a failed movement, and claimed that western thinking was in decline, to which she brought her notion of \textit{razón poética} (poetic reason) that includes “affects and relationality with others”. According to Tania Gentic, this constitutes a path toward decolonizing the mind from within Western thought.\(^8\) Within

Editorials (8). This overview signals the importance of working with an author like Maria Zambrano, whose work could use more attention, care, and interest among scholars. The same search found that only five articles have been published in Colombia. These search results confirm my immediate reasons for doing this work.

\(^6\) There have been very few translations of her work into English, including only one book (\textit{Delirio y Destino}), some selected essays, and a few publications on her work (see Zambrano, “Two Essays on Ruins”; Omlor, “A Letter on Exile”; Johnson, “Antigone’s Tomb”; Zambrano and Maier, “Delirium and Destiny: A Spaniard in Her Twenties”; Lezra, “History as Tragedy”; Omlor, “I Love My Exile”; Arnold, “The Agony of Europe”; Kraniauskas, “The Metaphor of the Heart”; Cyganiak, “The Method of María Zambrano: An Analysis and Translated Selection of Essays Centered on the Concepts of the Word, the Person, Compassion and Love”; Lough, “The Reform of Spanish Understanding”; Derbyshire, “The Stages of Exile”; Mayhew, “Toward a Knowledge of the Soul”; and Zambrano, “Two Essays on Ruins.”) This landscape has changes as some of Zambrano’s works have now appeared for an Anglophone readership. These include: “Madeleine Cámara y Luis Ortega Hurtado (eds.), Between the Caribbean and the Mediterranean (Juan de la Cuesta-Hispanic monographs, 2014); María Zambrano in Dialogue. A Bilingual Anthology, a monographic issue of the Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies edited by Lena Burgos-Lafuente and Tatjana Gajic (January 2016); Beatriz Caballero, María Zambrano. A Life of Poetic Reason and Political Commitment (University of Wales Press, 2017); and most recently, Xon de Ros y Daniela Omlor (eds.), The Cultural Legacy of María Zambrano (Oxford, Legenda, 2017).” Balibrea, Lough, and Cuervo, “María Zambrano amongst the Philosophers. An Introduction.” Throughout this thesis I draw on some of these works, however, my take on Zambrano is only a small addition to the universe of possibilities that the potential of scholarship about this author entails.

\(^7\) By crisis I mean different experiences of trauma and danger; at the personal or collective levels, like the Covid-19 global pandemic, white supremacy, capitalism, fatphobia, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, misogyny, poverty, living with an abuser, not having enough to eat, all kinds of trauma, anxiety, depression & so on.

\(^8\) Tania Gentic argues that although Maria Zambrano’s philosophy does not engage with decolonization directly, her work shares similar concerns with some decolonial theorists. Burgos-Lafuente and Gajic, “Maria Zambrano in Dialogue.”
Zambrano’s poetic, philosophical and political voice, I find an ever-present connection to the concept of corazonar, a fascinating term offered by the Andean Kitu Kara people of South America that carries a constellation of meaning and possibility. María Zambrano never uses the term corazonar, this connection is my contribution to her work, weaving it into her own view of poetic reason. Corazonar is a transformed term that turns the noun corazón (heart) into a verb; it also combines corazón and razonar (to reason or think) and adds a third layer of complexity by using the prefix co- (union or company), to tie heart and reason together. Co-razonar can also be understood as reasoning together or alongside another one. Lastly, it relates to the term corazonada, which refers to a gut feeling or hunch. By threading this concept across the interpretations on Zambrano’s work, I will explore how this term works with/in her ideas on education.

According to María Zambrano, nothing really begins with us, as the continuity that makes up history is alive; for her we are all continuadores (the ones that continue), rather than the originators of reality. I continue by pausing, translating, and interpreting her ideas on the three topics of crisis, heart, and hope, that were present in my research and activism before I decided to work with María Zambrano. Finding these topics clearly across Zambrano’s thoughts allowed me to reflect on them specifically, as they were crucial in her way of being and view of the world, as they are for me. Across this thesis we get a glimpse of her reflections on the substance of life and the importance of rescuing our feelings and understanding from a division (heart/mind) that does not serve our vocation as humans. In what follows, I will outline the structure of the thesis:

In Chapter 1, I start with a section on lineages, as a window into who I am and where this thesis comes from. This reflection is a chance to honor some of the blood, nourishment, and
story connections that have allowed me to present myself as I do in this work. Then, I continue to explain what I mean by corazonar and how I attempt to use it with, in, and within Zambrano’s work, followed by the connection between corazonar and my chosen themes of crisis, heart, and hope. Next, I will reflect on the exercise of translation, some of my considerations during the writing process, and a brief introduction to the three primary texts I base my translations on. Lastly, I present María Zambrano’s biography in order to share the contexts that informed her ideas and the events that impacted her life, all of which remain imprinted in her words.

Chapter 2 examines Zambrano’s reflections on crisis in connection to her critiques of modernity, the forms of mediation sustaining crisis, and our ways of engaging with reality. Importantly, Zambrano views crisis as an opportunity for transcendence. Zambrano claims that as humans we live in a constant state of unease, seeking fulfillment; crisis constitutes the most favorable moment to clearly see our awakening into consciousness and discernment.

As the center of this work, Chapter 3 unpacks the centerpiece of our life, where a piece of the cosmos resides: the heart. I will attend to Zambrano’s use of metaphors as irreplaceable ways of interacting with life. I follow this with her take on the soul, alongside the ways that feelings have been condemned to exile by the light of reason. Lastly, I consider her efforts to balance both thinking and feeling, mind and body, heart and reason all at once.

Chapter 4 observes hope as the “very transcendence of life” as Zambrano says, as a function of crisis that is fueled by the heart. Zambrano considers hope as the substance of life that inevitably leads us towards a purpose, a vocation, that arises in times of struggle and that is strictly connected with the most decisive thing in human life: time.

Chapter 5 retraces the steps taken during the previous chapters, by first connecting the insights of the triad of crisis, heart, and hope. Then, I respond to some anticipated objections that
might arise towards this work, and finally I reflect on the impacts and connections of this work and the process of incorporating Zambrano’s ideas into my vocation as a human.
Chapter 1: Soul-Shaking Wonder

The extraordinary sense of ordinary miracles amazes me every day and helps me to metabolize despair, which alchemizes into a spark of hope. Zambrano confronted struggle and crisis, while believing in the fertile space of possibilities born from that. Poetry, love, and mysticism were the calls I initially attended to when I first read her. Her words reminded me of the clarity of a life lived without a lot of guarantees. Despite the ecological catastrophe and brutal violence this world is going through, I can still show up with my deep knowledge of unity, by being kindred with river and tobacco, surrendering to mystery. I remain motivated by love to share some of the brilliance of this woman. Encountering Zambrano has been a process of re-enchantment with ideas and thoughts in a way that has been humbling and that I will keep processing beyond this work.

In this first chapter, I will offer a window inside myself by embarking on a dialogue with María Zambrano. This section on lineages explores some things about my world that I attend to in this work: blood, inspiration, and pieces of my story that have brought me here. Next, I present a journey on the main concepts used in this work that are containers that keep being renewed with different meanings. Then, I will offer a reflection on the threaded concept of corazónar, and the three chosen themes I will use to distill Zambrano’s three works, as well as a short discussion on some of the decisions I made during the process of translation. Finally, because I hope Zambrano keeps being read, honored, and loved, I propose a condensed biography touching on key aspects of her life that are entangled across her writing.
1.1 Lineages

It has been said that we have three lineages: our blood lines, our milk lines, and our story lines.\(^9\) This triad enables some of our roots to be seen. Zambrano illustrates the importance of roots with this passage:

Life, by demanding from Philosophy to justify itself before it, asks it to reveal its origin, the roots of philosophizing, which, like all roots, sink into life. Justifying oneself is nothing more than showing the origins, confronting the being that one has become, with the original need that made it arise; In confronting the image that was made historical with the original image, there is a kind of innocence that remains—a pale shadow -after every historical realization.\(^{10}\)

Following the concept of lineages, our blood lines consist of the biological connection with our birth parents and their constellation of relatives, ancestors, and ways of being. Our milk lines are made of the people, environments, and ideas that have nurtured us, fed us, and that have carved out who we are. Finally, our story line is an account of a series of related events connected to the story we are trying to tell, the stories of our story. For the purpose of this work, the blood and milk line descriptions will allow the reader to have a sense about me, my roots, and the things I

\(^{9}\) I first heard of the blood, milk, and story lines when listening to a podcast of Carmen Spagnola, who now I consider a mentor. The beauty I find in this form of introduction is that it can take many shapes as those three lines hold infinite possible connections. Some potential ways of deepening into this way of introduction can include: In blood, thinking of ancestral legacies, intergenerational resilience, and trauma, broken bonds with blood family. In milk, we are referring to authors, mentors, spiritual allies, religious background, or ideologies that have nurtured us. In story, any anecdote, archetype, parable, myth, or symbol that is connected to the idea you are about to share is included.

\(^{10}\) Zambrano, *Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma*, 53. “La vida al exigirle a la Filosofía que se justifique ante ella, le pide que ponga de manifiesto su origen, las raíces del filosofar, que como todas las raíces se hunden en la vida. Justificarse no es otra cosa que mostrar los orígenes, confrontar el ser que se ha llegado a ser, con la necesidad originaria que lo hizo surgir; confrontar la imagen del ser hecho, ‘histórico,’ con la imagen originaria, especie de inocencia que queda –blanca sombra–, tras de toda realización histórica.” In the context of this quote and the expression “blanca sombra” (white shadow), there could be an association to ‘innocence’ with the symbol of “white”, and to ‘originary’ with the symbol of “shadow”, which by being located in the past, it has more shade than light. However, it could also be translated as “pale shadow”, meaning a presence that accompany us whether we notice it or not.
hold beloved and sacred, to which I make myself accountable. The story line will elucidate some of the main events that have led me to this project to accompany María Zambrano.

1.1.1 Blood Lines

According to Zambrano, humans have the privilege of having ancestors, as we are always children, heirs, and descendants of someone. As a result, Zambrano says, we have diverse traditions sustaining us, hence the “forgetfulness and also the successive rebirths”. In my case, I am the daughter of Amparo and Francisco, who raised me as an only child in the land of the Muiscas people, in a city today called Bogotá. I continue a historical responsibility from the outsized realities of Colombia, which Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez talked about as “that boundless realm of haunted men and historic women, whose unending obstinacy blurs into legend.”¹¹ My known relatives were mestizos (of mixed Indigenous and European heritage) and indígenas (Indigenous), and campesinos (peasants). My matrilineal relatives/ancestors lived in the mountain savanna, southwest of the Altiplano Cundiboyacense, and in the Magdalena Valley sitting in the central Cordillera of the Andes in Tolima. My patrilineal relatives lived in the south and west of the country, in Cauca and Nariño. Our complex history of mestizaje, which represents the shared history of most Colombians,¹² is connected to violence, trauma, and resilience, all of which are woven into our very being.

¹¹ García Márquez, “Gabriel Garcia Márquez – Nobel Lecture.” That Colombia of magic realism lives within us and determines each instant of the daily violence it endures, while it nourishes its people with insatiable creativity, full of sorrow and beauty, with a magic that is both the sickness and the medicine.

¹² According to the 2018 Census in Colombia, more than 80% of the population self-identified as mestizos or without any ethnic belonging, almost 7% as black, and almost 5% as indigenous. The census itself could be largely problematized, as well as the categories used for self-identification along with our cultural & social understanding of what each one means.
The lands known today as Colombia are part of Abya Yala\textsuperscript{13} (or America), a millenary land whose story started long before the arrival of European colonizers 500 years ago.\textsuperscript{14} The country has been impacted by the intricacies of its 200 years of independence from Spain, all of which is a complex and diverse history, as diverse as its lands and its people. My blood line has to do with all these intricacies; beyond the names of my genealogy and the meaning that those carry for me, there is much that is unknown and unknowable about those who came before me, the mystery continues when imagining possible futures. I trace my roots back to a nonlinear blend of ancestors in all of their identities, love stories, struggles, dreams and possible wrongdoings. Beyond what the words of mestizos, mulatos, zambos, criollos, cholos\textsuperscript{15}, meant, I embrace the complexity of roots and surrender to its entanglements by choosing the revolution, purpose, and love that are constantly becoming and emerging through me.\textsuperscript{16}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{13} Abya Yala is the name given to the American continent by the Gunas (also Runa or Kuna) people from the land today called Panamá. It means “land in full maturity,” “land in full bloom,” or “land of vital blood.”

\textsuperscript{14} The Spaniards came across the Orinoco river, as well as the Dutch, English, and Germans. The Portuguese came through the Amazon River and its affluent Black River. The Spanish Empire invaded present-day Colombia from the late 15\textsuperscript{th} century, extending its colonization during four centuries. The belief that Colombia is 500 years old is a myth that denies the historical tradition and cultural importance of the communities that were invaded, desecrated, massacred, and exploited. Colombia has a window to a deep and sacred world, dating at least back to 22,000 B.P., when the first human inhabitants of the Amazon left the oldest petroglyphs of the continent.

\textsuperscript{15} The Spanish Empire Casta System sought to differentiate the various “racial mixtures” of the Americas during and after colonization, privileging whiteness and embedding the racism that continues today throughout the continent. The system categorized people as: criollo, from white European parents; mestizo, from white father and indigenous mother (a large majority due to the primarily male colonizers and the rape and forced relationships with the indigenous women); mulato, from European father and black mother; zambo, from black and indigenous parents; cholo, from mestizo and indigenous parents.

\textsuperscript{16} During my three years of living in xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) land located in present-day Vancouver BC, my idea of ancestry has expanded due to the First Nations idea of seven generations teaching, which says that you go through the world carrying seven generations before you and impacting seven generations into the future with your actions. As part of a project for the Contemplative Justice program, I developed a collage based on my blood line ancestry using photographs of my parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. This was my attempt to acknowledge the generations before me. The Contemplative Justice Program Undivided is a year-long mentorship and leadership program for spiritual and systemic transformation, that I was part of during 2019. See a picture in Appendix A.
\end{flushleft}
1.1.2 Milk Lines

Since I was three months old, I grew up with loving and playful caretakers in a community of children.\textsuperscript{17} My pre-teen and teenage years were marked by curious explorations of my witchy, queer self, and by volunteer work that was strongly encouraged—and sometimes demanded—by my father, with organizations that were doing education and justice labour in Bogotá.\textsuperscript{18} At 10 years old I was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes, a lifetime illness that challenges me every day. Growing up with an awareness of the realities of homelessness, addiction, and violence inevitably sparked my political activism from a very young age, as well as early moments of grief and confusion caused by the country’s fifty-year armed conflict.\textsuperscript{19} My early memories of the armed conflict and confrontations between different actors exist alongside my awareness of hopeful movements working for peace, full of wholehearted people that have impacted my understanding of peace, justice, freedom, spirituality, and purpose.

Before college, I had the honor of visiting the lands of the Arhuaco and Wayuu peoples, where I first witnessed the reality of the colonial projects and the patterns of segregation that have impacted us all across the country.\textsuperscript{20} Before these visits, I had no idea of the immensity and

\textsuperscript{17} Párvulos was my neighborhood daycare and my second home.

\textsuperscript{18} I belonged to the YMCA programs of Loma Linda in Los Altos de Cazucá, Hogar AmaneSer in Santa Fé, Plan Padrinos (Sponsor Plan) from the Bienestar Familiar (ICBF, Colombian Family Welfare Institute), and Niños de los Andes Foundation, with the Rescue Patrols for the cartuchitos (un-policed streets of drug cartels and strongmen around the city).

\textsuperscript{19} The first time I remember the feeling of sadness and connection to the political violence was when Jaime Garzón—comedian, journalist, peace activist, and truth teller, famous for his political satire—was murdered at age 38 a few blocks away from our home in Quintaparedes. I was almost ten years old, but the act of showing up with flowers to the intersection where he was found, sparked a lifelong process of lessons for me, where the reasons for his death became a symbol that mobilized many of us to take part in movements for peace and against corruption.

\textsuperscript{20} At this trip to Nabusimake (“land where the sun is born”, in the Iku language, capital of the Arhuaca Nation) located in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, and to la Makuire (“smell of humidity or wild tobacco”, in
brilliance of these communities as ancestral stewards of those lands, and their connection to the other-than-human world. Those encounters became a departure point for a life-time journey of intentionally interrupting the patterns of detachment that had permeated my life, of weaving, and of remembering ways of wellbeing in dignity, integrity and beauty.21

My decision to study Anthropology in a country at permanent war entailed a commitment to paying attention to the history of colonization and violence, the armed conflict, and the structural and cultural issues underneath it. I engaged in Anthropology with a desire to explore and understand humans more integrally, accounting for the historical, social, cultural and biological realities that form us. What I found was a discipline that taught me to weave connections, build bridges, accounting for complexities, and embarking on the learning of community organizing. Knowing this, I made the choice to be accountable to life and the collectives I have belonged to for a long time. I have now lived a decade of feeling held and nourished by a resilient, emergent fabric of elders, kids, teachers, youth, healers, and activists who have been flipping the scripts; they all right the wrongs in the world and guide my path in different ways. These relationships and the knowledge I have gained have expanded my heart

Wayuunaiki, the only humid tropical jungle in the middle of the desert, in the land of the Wayuu nation) at the Guajira peninsula in the northernmost part of Colombia, I sensed a glimpse of the immensity of the wisdom of the indigenous communities in Colombia. This was a chance to learn about how they kept resisting colonization in the ways of religion, development/extraction projects, education, etc.

21 In Nabusimake, Mamma Sirena taught me how to weave the traditional mochila (knapsack). Soon after, due to a threat to my family, I had to leave the country and weaving found me again, becoming my place of solace and creation. Since then, weaving has been a constant part of my life; literally and metaphorically, weaving has been a way of thinking, of being in relationship with others, and of creating art with my hands. I often remember Mamma Sirena, and what the grandmothers of La Sierra always say: “You not only weave the mochila, you weave your thinking and you sweeten your words.” This has become another old-new truth of ancient wisdom, as I now read how researchers are finding that spider webs are actually an essential part of the cognitive apparatus of these creatures: the spider not only uses webs to feel but also to think. This is part of a theory in development called extended cognition that we humans also use. Zambrano also gives us clues that are connected to this sort of symbiosis.
and love, have shown me my vulnerability and need for individual and collective grief, which has become a constant thread and shapeshifting teacher along the last years of my life. Art, play, and theater became tools to re-imagine and re-enact different possible futures, along with my beloveds from Otra Escuela, a home and family who opened me to the world of peace education and conflict transformation and helped me find a sense of vocation.

During the last three years, I have been nourished by encountering my relatives in the north (Musqueam lands in what is now called Vancouver, British Columbia), and their teachings of bravery and fortitude, communing with spirit, honouring the sacred, and fighting against the systems that have perpetuated the exploitation of their territories and ways of being. I am continually shaped by my own recovery from illness and failure, by expanding my understanding of the spectrum of intuition and kindness, by learning to release certainty and be comfortable with ambiguity, by learning to sit with my silence and breathing, and by becoming more sensitively attuned to the human condition.

22 Corporación Otra Escuela (COE) is an NGO dedicated to the construction of communities based on pedagogies for peace. It has been working for 20 years in different regions of Colombia, Guatemala, and Spain. I have been part of Otra Escuela since 2013. We facilitate trainings through art and play, combined with relational neurobiology and popular education.

23 My gratitude expands out to the territories, medicine, and people that held me during these years, in Cundinamarca, Cauca, Putumayo, Chocó, and Nariño in Colombia. In this north I have learned from the people of the Gitxan, Haisla, Nisgaa and Musqueam territories. Friends from across Abya Yala, Tawaintinyusu and Turtle Island, loved ones from the Arab world to the Arctic, mentors from Iran to Venezuela, teachers from Palestine to Wet’suwet’en. This journey has also presented me with authors that have impacted my whole being. In random order I think of bell hooks, Robin Wall Kimmerer, Sonya Renee Taylor, Rev. angel Kyodo Williams, Alok Vaid-Menon, Julio Cortázar, Jorge Luis Borges, Adrienne maree Brown, Rainer Maria Rilke, Jhon Paul Lederach, Silvia Rivera, Mireia Darder, Octavia Butler, Paulo Freire, Eduardo Punset, Enrique Dussel, Maxine Greene, Humberto Maturana, Johan Galtung, Eve Ensler, Mia Mingus, Jennifer Mullan, John O'Donohue, David Whyte, Brené Brown, Andrea Glik, Yolanda Obando, and all the others I am surely missing. For the countless hours of music, poetry, ritual and ceremony that have held my vocation while it grounds, roots and strengthens enough to keep going.

24 Maria Zambrano wrote that the maximum measure of the person appears in failure, as no one can take from you what is left from it. I believe this is true.
1.1.3 Story Line

Since 2012, when the government of Colombia started the peace dialogues with FARC-EP, I have intentionally learned, worked, surrounded myself with, and dived deep into the world of *las paces*, the peaces. I have been trying to find my way beyond the abyss of peace as a cliché, through the faults of a constitutional statement, and past the violence of pacification, ultimately finding power in the tenderness of resistance and the insurgent hope of love. In the midst of excruciating pain of loss and injustices, I have witnessed how we have found a place for joy, love, and hope; this has fascinated me and been a paradox for me. Along with my community and pedagogical work with peace education, *corazonar* has tuned me into paying

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25 FARC-EP Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia—Ejército del Pueblo (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army) is the largest guerrilla group in Colombia and oldest in Latin America, as well as one of the many actors of the ongoing armed conflict in Colombia. The peace dialogues were developed in Cuba and, after four years of work, the Peace Agreement was signed by the government and FARC. Since then, there have been backlash, escalations of violence, despair, rage, hope, and fear.

26 *Hagamos las paces* (Let’s make peaces) was probably the first phrase I ever recognized that included the concept of “peace.” *Hacer las paces* is an expression used to denote the act of reconciling with other(s), to make ‘peaces’ (yes, in plural). After a disagreement in a game with my friends on the block, a rude response to an auntie, or a fight. “*hagamos las paces*” was the petition for an agreement, an attempt at forgiveness, and a call for getting back together. This notion of peace from that expression denotes more than one version of what peace might be. This expression, alongside the *saludo de la paz* (passing of the peace) of Sunday mass, the “*déjame en paz*” (“Leave me alone”) of annoyance, and “*Que en paz descansen*” (“May they rest in peace”) when someone dies, are only a few of the many ways in which the concept of peace is used in Colombia. The different *paces* across Colombia’s history can be tracked alongside the themes of violence and armed conflict. Colombia has lived in an environment of permanent war, from the constitution of the Republic in the independence battles, to the bipartisan violence from the ‘50s that became a revolutionary struggle to this day, and through the modern war of narcotrafficking. These events have reduced understanding and conversations of peace to limited periods of truce and short-term dissension scenarios, that then gave rise to new confrontations.

27 When the peace agreement with FARC was signed, around the world we were celebrated for the end of the war, and the instauration of peace. The reasons to celebrate where countless, as well as the dangers of asserting such statements, when we know that the agreement was only with one of the armed groups, and that the post-agreement era was going to need institutional support, cultural change, and would probably last at least three decades of transition. This next to the fact that we know that the war has also been mobilized by other structural problems such as inequality, narcotraffic, resource extraction, and other factors that fall under certain ideas of development. So, beyond what appears or not in the Colombia’s Constitution, the wins and faults of the agreement, and the current and future challenges in the implementation of such agreements, there is a long path of thinking together what peace entails for different territories and parties.
attention to the body’s needs, hidden emotions, the importance of vulnerability, and the place between the mind and heart where collective healing takes place. The work we were doing in Otra Escuela in facilitating creative methodologies for building cultures of peace was transformative, inspiring, and exciting.

After my time with Otra Escuela, I found myself pursuing a graduate program in education, far from home, precisely in the moment where peace, peace builders, and social leaders were exposed to scrutiny and escalating violence. I felt eager to honor what was happening in Colombia, as well as responsible to my communities and my organization. Therefore, during more than a year and a half, I worked on the idea of a thesis based on the historical, conceptual, and transcendental accounts of peace in Colombia, focusing on the ways we have found peace when peace had failed, by entering more deeply into who and what we are as humans. One of my claims was that peace had already been happening in our thinking, loving, and community. However, in the discourses about peace, we were not clearly naming the role of love, hope, compassion, and spirituality that already existed within us. Communities across the country had been showing their disposition for peace, tying up their pain and trauma with a sense of hope. Even if there was no peace in one sense, it could be found in many other ways.

Here Zambrano entered my radar, giving me gifts to think through my aspirations for peace for my country, while I juggled with financial insecurity, ambitious ideas, moments of illness and depression at times, and feeling useless and often hopeless.28 When I started working

28 I was trying to include a life project into a thesis with limited time, funding and capacity. It felt overwhelming that the situation of Colombia was changing every day, the peace agreements had been attacked ever since they were signed and the escalation of violence against human rights activist had spiked terribly. Every day I was receiving some horrible news, in the comfort and safety of my university housing. Maria Zambrano may have said that I was perpleja (perplexed). For her, vital situations have a historical sense, informed by the situations that prevail at the time you have to live or the lack of solutions your world offers. So, for Zambrano, to be perplexed is to be among
for the Colombian Truth Commission as a volunteer interviewer to receive testimony of Colombians in exile living in Canada, I found solace in her book *Los bienaventurados* (The Blessed), and her reflections on her own exile. When my supervisor Sam Rocha asked me to think of an author that resonated with me, whose reading nourished me, sparked in me joy, love, and admiration, it was Zambrano who I kept coming back to. Zambrano became an elder that whispered to me old-new truths through her poetic reason. I began connecting her with the insurgent wisdoms of the heart that were guiding me in my own life; I was *corazonando* her ideas, the same ones that so many communities have insisted on for centuries that invite us into a process of re-enchantment, affection, responsibility, courage, and endurance in this path of being humans.

María Zambrano is only one of the many voices that contribute to a possibility of being human that is profoundly affective, as a major part of her life and work was to reconcile thought and poetry, emotion and reason, by finding a mediating logos that approximates the philosophical word to the poetic word, the divine to the sacred. Zambrano’s offerings do not define, they have barely perceptible limits, are iridescent and sometimes contradictory, but they can be received as an initiation, of something that only “reasoning with the heart” (*corazonar*) can grasp. These three windows of myself are not separate compartments, but instead act as emergent spirals of connection that keep on changing as the world keeps turning. Following is the next thread of this work in relation to the concept of *corazonar*, the themes and translation.

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several alternatives without deciding on any. Why? she asks, “No doubt because of lack of sufficient knowledge. Perplexity occurs when knowledge is such that leaves room for risk, when we have to take risks when choosing. The perplexed is a creature that has a wide field to choose from and to some extent a privileged situation (…) The secret is not lack of knowledge but a reluctance or a fear that immobilizes you. You cannot face the risk of life, the danger of saying yes or no.”
1.2 Corazonar with/in Zambrano

In this section I will introduce the concept of corazonar that will be threaded across this journey, both as an ever-present idea to approach the world as well as identifying it as an undercurrent in Zambrano’s ideas. Next, I will connect the themes of crisis, heart, and hope with the chosen translated excerpts and with corazonar as a nascent idea of education with/in Zambrano. Finally, I will reflect on the exercise of translation of this work and give a few examples of some of my translation decisions to give the reader better clarity about the process.

1.2.1 Corazonar

The concept corazonar comes from a spiritual and political call from the Andean Kitu Kara people to the people and government of Ecuador during the equinox moon of September of 2009. The Kitu Karas propose corazonar as a spiritual and political offer, asking for what Guerrero-Arias calls a “reintegration of the whole dimension of human condition, because our humanity rests in both the affective and the reason dimensions”. In the concept corazonar there is no center; it actually aims to decentralize and fracture the hegemony of reason as the core. It brings affectivity to reason, as a way of responding to the prophecies that the people of Abya Yala have announced. According to Guerrero Arias, corazonar is an insurgent political response towards the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being, because it shows how our

29 Guerrero Arias, “Por Una Antropología Del Corazonar Comprometida Con La Vida.”
30 According to the prophecies of the Kitu Kara, we are in the time of Pachakutik for the Andean world, which will bring deep and cosmic transformations in civilization, spirit, and consciousness. The prophecies from our ancestors say that during the time of Pachakutik, the condor—symbol of the heart that represents the peoples of the south of the continent—will fly in the same sky next to the eagle. Understood as a metaphor, the prophecy symbolizes the reason and thought of the peoples of the north. Elders announced that only when heart and reason join forces in freedom will humanity find its way to heal and save Mother Earth. Guerrero Arias.
humanity stems from the interrelation between our capacity to think, feel, and love. This understanding of being is connected with Zambrano’s balancing, symbiotic view of thinking and feeling, as shown below.

The concept corazonar contains different possibilities, given the multiple meanings of its constitutive elements. This made-up term turns the noun corazón (heart) into a verb, and it also combines corazón and razonar (to reason or to think) as wordplay, which is possible because of the sound and composition of each term. Also, we can identify a third layer of complexity if we split off a new term, the prefix co-(union or company). Thus, co-razonar ties heart and reason together, and, co-reasoning, thinking together. An additional meaning, but certainly not the last one I imagine it may evolve into, is corazonada, which is a name in Spanish for hunch or gut feeling.

Another term very close in meaning, spirit, and origin to corazonar is sentipensar. Sentipensar is defined as a “symbol of amphibian culture,” a path that was revealed and proposed by Fals Borda, a Colombian teacher, sociologist, and writer. Fals Borda learned the term from a river fisherman close to the Grande de La Magdalena river that merges its waters to the Atlantic Ocean. The fisherman told him “Look, we do believe that we act with our heart, but we also use our head, and when we combine both we are sentipensantes.” This word is a combination of the verbs sentir (to feel) and pensar (to think). This term combines into one

31 When conceiving the riparian culture as one that has amphibian or aquatic attributes, Orlando Fals Borda places the history and daily life of the Momposina Depression among the different landscapes of the region, where rivers, and swamps are scattered throughout the savannas that locals use for fishing and transportation. He said that it is across the streams, where towns and peoples are clinged to water and where they “develop their affective, cultural, productive and reproductive life.” Fals-Borda, Resistencia En El San Jorge.

32 This concept is often wrongly referred to as if the fisherman, whose name is never mentioned, was complaining to Fals Borda, saying, “You scientists think too much but feel too little”, but he claims the story was the one quoted
verb two actions that occur simultaneously, to reason and to feel, which are represented by body and heart. Its meaning is similar to corazonar, but corazonar attracts me because of the implication of “co-reasoning.” The attention to reason will be evident in the chapters developed below,\textsuperscript{33} as well as all my corazonadas,\textsuperscript{34} which will serve as a call for intuition, something I have been developing as I attend to focus, study, practice, and discernment in my soul craft.

Both corazonar and sentipensar honor thought greatly while concerning themselves with feeling, love, and the heart; these terms invite us to think of them as a whole, as their own microcosm of being.\textsuperscript{35} Zambrano requests that we accept this integration of ideas in order to transcend through hope and attend to our vocation. Zambrano tells us that feelings and understanding should have never been separated, that they exist in symbiosis, representing a revelation in terms of an intellectual and sensible intuition. For her, without the assistance of the

\textsuperscript{33} Another example of turning nouns into verbs, like making heart into a verb (corazonar), can be found in John Dewey’s interpretation of the mind as a function of human activity, like thinking and inquiry, thereby considering “the mind” as a verb rather than just a noun. Dewey, “Body and Mind.”

\textsuperscript{34} During the reading, re-reading, and writing process of this thesis, intuition or corazonadas have played an essential role. I will not name each instance where a hunch occurred and acted upon, but the intuitions have been taking form in the poetry excerpts, which I weave together with other ideas and authors, as offerings of intimate insights along the text.

\textsuperscript{35} The heart as a vital metaphor appears as a worldview in many communities around the world. Based on the research of Noemi Villaverde we get to glimpse some of the immensity of these metaphors through some examples: In the Maya Tzeltal language and culture, “yo’ taninel snopel” means to corazonar your thought or to think from the heart. Lopez Intzin explains that the word “O’ tan” is present in their daily language in different ways like stse’elil O’tan (laugther of the heart), mel O’tan (furrowing the heart, worry or sadness), sujtesel O’tan (to turn the heart back, to return to the path followed), kux O’tan (rest your heart, take a break, sleep), ch’ay O’tan (lose your heart, forgetfulness). Another example is among the Candoshi of the Upper Amazon, who say Magish tachitkich (heart that follows or walking with the heart) to express the determination of assuming a responsibility, even against the negative stand from others. In Nahaut language, maternal tongue of the Pipil de Kushkatan people from El Salvador, who say Yultaketza (to think, meditate, reflect), from Yulu (heart) and Takezta (speak), meaning to speak with the heart, to listen to what “the feeling and the thinking say.” Yultaketzalis means “mother tongue”. Villaverde, “Corazonar, sentipensar y sentisaber: un pensamiento alternativo de alternativas.”
heart the person is never fully present. It is about figuring out what is it that we feel by trying to perceive with some degree of clarity what is happening inside of oneself. This is, she says, a demand implicitly made of every person. Therefore, I inevitably present myself here along with my heart, and I assume corazonar as a demand of my path as a person who is in-process.

Corazonar and senti-pensar mean to me, to think from the heart and the mind together, as an art of living. It means to allow myself to feel what is pumping within me, to give my head a rest, and surrender to this connection of tuning-in different parts within this whole that I am. Whenever I am corazonando I get to think with a free heart, to nurture my thought with the impulse of life, with the will of being. Corazonar is an inevitable action that occurs independently of our awareness of it; however, noticing it strengthen and expand us. The beauty that I find in corazonar and sentipensar relies on the simplicity of what they mean, not as a disputed dichotomy, but as an emergent combination, a weaving of shared threads, a cosmovision. I believe all things that exist and live have a heart, and that the meaning of our humanity is above all in affectivity, as rational and sensible acting beings. Because of this, the way I am corazonando will not necessarily appear explicitly in this thesis as it is at its core. Hopefully, the reader notices how my way of corazonar appears in between the poetry, the interjections, the personal details and the reflections woven through the text. All the different pieces; visible and invisible of this thesis, have been nurtured greatly by my inner compass, a set of intuitions informed by multiple voices that guide me in finding a way of hope and action behind the pain.
1.2.2 Crisis, Heart, and Hope

Zambrano’s work has been highlighted as a journey of autobiographical or experiential vocation, because for her, thought and life were innately united in everything she wrote. She always placed crisis and hope close together. Both crisis and hope relate to reality, fear, and time, and both are connected to the possibility of transcendence as human beings. According to Zambrano, the connecting piece of crisis and hope is the heart, which is intrinsically connected to thinking and understanding, while simultaneously attending to the promise of the path we already are on. These themes of crisis, heart and hope, will be the warp threads that will function as the backbone of the thesis weave.

Before my decision to work with María Zambrano for this thesis, I had already explored the topics of crisis, heart and hope, along with others such as love, transcendence and spirit, for my previous thesis proposal that was centered in peace education and Colombia. The first book I read from Zambrano was “Hacia un saber sobre el alma”, and it became clear from the beginning that her thought included the poetic and the sacred, along with specific topics that where of my interest: heart, beliefs, crisis, being human, mediation, and transcendence, among others. Then, after reading “Los bienaventurados”; where she insists on hope as that which sustains every act of life, I found more connections and inspirations that spoke directly to our collective crises, war and longing for peace in Colombia. To my knowledge there is no other

36 Zambrano, Casado, and Sánchez-Gey, Filosofía y Educación.
37 María Zambrano, in Hacia un saber sobre el alma (Towards a knowledge about the soul), adopts the definition of transcendence based on the work of the Argentinian thinker Francisco Romero. Romero’s understanding of transcendence is the ability that humans have to take themselves beyond their own limits, to leave a trace on another being, acting beyond themselves as if their being ended in the other, therefore producing an effect, a mark. “It is an unstoppable tendency of the person”, says Zambrano.
study yet that focuses on these three themes together in Zambrano’s work. The possibilities to connect crisis, heart and hope emerged fruitfully, and I acknowledge that this is only one of infinite possible themes and fascinating connections that one can imagine when studying her.  

During her life, Zambrano lived and witnessed many personal, family, and political crises, which she reflected on in her essays and correspondence all throughout her life. Throughout her philosophical work, Zambrano represents three big crises: her personal life in exile, the reality of her homeland Spain deep in civil war, and the philosophical crisis of European systematic reason. To live in crisis, she tells us, is above all to live constantly uneased, in a kind of excessive uneasiness that is right on the limit of what is bearable. At the same time, crisis is also fear, and for María Zambrano “the worst thing about fear is that it is scary; the current wars are a product of mutual terror, of the fear of ones that frightened others.” In that inability to engage with what and who is different, fear and panic arises. That

38 From some of the works that other scholars have done based on María Zambrano, there are topics that go from the connections between Zambrano and authors like Miguel de Cervantes or Saint Augustine, to her autobiographical writing style, political thought, phenomenology of the divine, and the Zen elements in her thinking or her life in exile.. Plus, all the ones that have not been written yet. My hope is that all around the world we read more of Zambrano and we welcome her as a close voice for inspiration and insight.

39 Mejuto, “El Conocimiento Creador En El Pensamiento Educativo de María Zambrano.”

40 In her essay Para una historia de la piedad (For a History of Mercy), Zambrano tells us that in response to this crisis of fear, tolerance was invented, not as a way of understanding or treating others properly but as a way to maintain a respectable distance from that which is unknown, that which we cannot deal with. She says tolerance can end up being a positive value, but that it is generally the vein in the prevailing modern rationality that she criticized, stating that this value is not enough. In the face of corruption, making better laws is important, but nothing changes if the greedy individual remains greedy. She guides us into understanding affectionity as a way of knowing how to deal with “the Other.” Her thought on this reminds me of what we call in peace education “the image of the enemy,” built up by our socialization, which installs in our hearts and births the idea that a certain person or group is an enemy, and as an enemy they become dehumanized quickly. This leads directly to violence and crime. We are able to transform “the Other” through education, but it may require generations to unlearn the patterns within our systems that are deeply ingrained in our being.

41 Similarly, bell hooks says: “Fear is the primary force upholding structures of domination. It promotes the desire for separation, the desire not to be known. When we are taught that safety lies always with sameness, then difference, of any kind, will appear as a threat. When we choose to love, we choose to move against fear - against
anguish and terror were her the “European leprosy, the real ‘evil of the century,’”\textsuperscript{42} which we can say is also the reality today.

For Zambrano, life consists in filling what is missing within us, as we are always in a rush to constitute ourselves. But in making ourselves, we need others in the broadest sense: people, animals, nature, all the human and other-than human connections;\textsuperscript{43} this process reveals us as vulnerable. This is connected with what Zambrano says that as finite and fragile beings, we are inhabited by our ultimate substance: hope.\textsuperscript{44} It is in our vulnerability and confrontation with struggle where hope appears, and the ultimate mediator between this two is the heart. This triad of crisis, heart, and hope will be the basis from which to navigate Zambrano’s ideas throughout this project, along with the weft threads of corazonar, her significance to the field of education, and the series of my insights inspired on the whole weave.

1.2.3 Translation

Within the task of carrying meaning from the words on Zambrano’s shore to the shore where I am, there are many details that go beyond this thesis, which, as a document and project, is not the final stage of my thinking on Zambrano’s words. Any scholarly work is composed of process, connections, and pauses that remain unnoticed for everyone, including the writer. This

\textsuperscript{42} Zambrano, \textit{Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma}, 145.

\textsuperscript{43} We are wired for love.

\textsuperscript{44} Hope is \textit{esperanza} in Spanish; the word comes from \textit{esperar} and signifies “waiting for,” “expecting,” and “hoping.” Time, intention, and action are tied up in this concept, not only trust, wish, or belief. Time in \textit{esperanza} is projected in the future, the future is what always persists, attracts hope in, and draws a will of living. Zambrano tell us, “That is why we have time, we are in time, otherwise it would not make sense to consume ourselves in it if we had already been fully forged, if we had born full and finished.” Time here recovers meaning as it is key for the need to go beyond this fragmented and incomplete life, that is exposed to a constant rebirth endured by a continuous waiting. Zambrano, \textit{Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma}, 112.
may be due to a variety of reasons, but I will bring light to some of the meanings and challenges of working with primary texts in a primary language, focusing on the translation and dialogue with an author like María Zambrano.

The exercise of attention requires what Zambrano calls a “kind of inhibition,” a sort of “withdrawal of the subject them-self to allow reality to manifest itself” in order to obtain reality’s maximum manifestation. For Zambrano, attention is the basis of all activity. She defines it as receptivity taken to the extreme, perhaps is a similar way as the Husserlian concept of epoiesen (epoche: the act of limiting oneself to the examination of pure experiences as such, by reflectively returning to the experience; it is a fundamental change of attitude not only towards knowledge but also to reality itself). However, one can find in Zambrano’s notes on attention that she brings noticing, examining, and reflecting together. She proposes that to attain the optimal attention, the student should eliminate as much prejudice as possible.

The withdrawal of self; or of reality, can never be fully a disconnection, but more of an intentional quieting of the background. I apply this phenomenological concept of withdrawal to my own reading of Zambrano, as a way to focus initially on her voice while still noticing the insights awakening within myself.

45 See Teju Cole’s reflection on literature and translation, where Cole claims that translation is, after all, literary analysis mixed with sympathy, a matter for the brain as well as the heart. Cole, “Carrying a Single Life.”

46 Zambrano, Casado, and Sánchez-Gey, Filosofía y Educación.

47 She describes attention in these terms: “The attention must be like a crystal when it is perfectly clean, that ceases to be visible, to let diaphanously pass what is on the other side. If when we intensely attend to something, we do it by projecting onto it our knowledge, our judgments, our images, a thick kind of a layer will form, and it will not allow this reality to manifest itself.” Zambrano, Casado, and Sánchez-Gey, 56. Zambrano’s view of attention is similar to the mindfulness view of noticing before examining and reflecting, or the trauma-informed view of acknowledging what is arising as a response that makes sense due to the previous events that have affected you and produce your responses to reality.
Initially I read Zambrano as part of a number of authors that I was working with for a thesis idea that shifted a lot until this current work. Once I decided to focus on her as an author, I re-read her work, and focused on all the inspirational and potentially key teachings connected to my interests. Then I proceeded to the pre-selection of excerpts and the transcription from the excerpts in Spanish. Once I started the translation of the excerpts of the text, the excerpts served as a kind of puzzle. After translation, I entered into the process of exegesis, which took place by taking into account the source language, the translation process, and what happened when I read the texts. Exegesis comes from the Greek ἔξηγησις [exégesis] “to explain;” it is a term used to denominate the art of interpreting, translating, or explaining a text, taking into account the linguistic and historical facts that impacted what has been written. Translation and exegesis are the principal and most technical elements of my work, and both of them were necessary in order to interpret Zambrano and her context. Encountering María Zambrano through her books has required radical attention, listening, and allowing her thoughts to be, instead of pushing myself into them.

In most cases, for the translation I considered the passage as a whole in order to determine how to translate a specific word with multiple possible meanings. On translation, Mexican author Octavio Paz observed, “Everything we do is translation, and all translations are in a way creations.” Recognizing translation as something that occurs constantly in our lives—in

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48 The method for translation varied throughout the process. Initially, I wondered how accurate online translation could be, finding it gets miserably confused with the poetic language, the pronouns, and the Spain-specific sayings that I had to look up as I am not familiar with them. The process of organizing the themes and the corresponding quotes represents a kind of puzzle-making process, of printing the quotes once I translated them, cutting them up separately and then further organizing them into a first version of the text. This process can be appreciated by referring to the pictures in Appendix B.
multiple ways, through different languages, often unconsciously—is fascinating for me. Freire reminds me of this continuity when he tells us that “reading the world is an act that precedes the word;”\(^5\) he refers to writing and reading phrases and words as “alphabetization,” but the reading and writing of words must be preceded by the reading of and interacting with the world itself.\(^1\)

In this sense, translation is a methodological opportunity that opens up space for creativity in the form of dialogue and commentary, alongside with the connections I am making between Zambrano’s work, *corazonar*, and education. The labour of these translations is itself part of the analysis, and one of the contributions offered throughout this thesis.

When I embraced the task of doing translation and commentary work with María Zambrano’s texts, I found relief in crossing paths with the guidance of authors who were translators, many of whom served as inspiration for my own insecure work as a beginner. For example, Julio Cortázar inspired trust that honoring someone else’s work might allow my own

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\(^5\) The “text,” “words,” and “letters” of Freire’s context were also the songs of the birds, the dance of the trees, or the winds announcing a storm. Freire tells us that he was alphabetized in the floor of his house, in the shadow of a mango tree, with words of his own world and not from the grown-up world of his parents. The floor was his blackboard and the wooden sticks were his chalk. Freire, *La Importancia Del Acto de Leer y El Proceso de Liberación*.

\(^1\) Based on this, I am amazed by all the languages I am constantly interacting with: the ones I am learning, the ones I long for, and the others that I am clueless about. I grew up learning, speaking, and reading in Spanish, the language of the colonizers that occupied the territory of what is today Colombia back in the 1490’s. Spanish became the dominant language, and for 500 years it has guided the political, social, and economic systems in the country. However, today there are more than 80 native languages that still resist being disappeared. It is also the language I share with Zambrano. With regard to English, I have been learning it since middle school, with some initial resistance. However, it grew on me through literature, music, movies, and certainly thanks to all the references from U.S. imperialism that were reflected in different levels of Colombian society and culture. English has been one of the main struggles during my graduate program experience. These challenges stem from my (at times limited) capacity of attention, the dissonant sense of humor between languages, the cultural differences, different ways of expressing emotions, of grieving, etc.

\(^5\) Even though I have never been formally trained as a Spanish-English translator, it is a role that I have embodied multiple times within my communities, and I reflect on this role throughout this thesis.
voice to rise up.\textsuperscript{52} Jorge Luis Borges amazed me with his dedication for translation, which I only learned about through this process.\textsuperscript{53} May Ziadeh reminded me of the important work of elevating women’s voices in a world where we are still silenced because of the patriarchal system we live in.\textsuperscript{54} While thinking about the complexities of navigating different languages and their worldviews, I have been concerned about doing it wrong. There have been many times where translation has gone wrong, caused harm, misinformed, and erased someone’s true intentions.\textsuperscript{55} In \emph{Translation as a Reading}, Deborah Cook says that when translating or reading, it is common to ask: How can one, should one or does one do justice to the text?\textsuperscript{56} I worry about these questions too, and have no clear answer yet. However, before Cook’s questions, one can wonder if there is a public for the work I present in this thesis. According to Zambrano, “the

\textsuperscript{52} Argentinian author Julio Cortázar once advised “any young writer who has writing difficulties, to stop writing for some time on their own and to instead do translations of good literature, and then one day they will realize that they can write with an ease that was not there before.” Bermejo and Cortázar, \emph{Conversaciones con Cortázar}.

\textsuperscript{53} According to Efrain Kristal, Borges was a writer with translation at the heart of his concerns. His methods as a translator and a creative writer have much in common, and they greatly impacted his views on literature as art. Kristal says of Borges, one of the most universally read Latin American writers, “One of his enduring legacies in Latin American literature is the license to rewrite assertively the works of other writers, in the process of fashioning a personal literary world.” Kristal, \emph{Invisible Work: Borges and Translation}.

\textsuperscript{54} May Ziadeh, similar to Zambrano, was an Arab feminist pioneer poet, translator, orator, essayist, and critic of Palestinian-Lebanese origin. She was perfectly bilingual with native fluency in both Arabic and French. She also had practical knowledge of English, Italian, German, Spanish, Latin, and Modern Greek. During her time, the literary scene in the Arab world was an arena dominated by men. Women’s education was almost non-existent. Indeed, it was hard enough for women to become literate let alone establish a reputation as a writer.

\textsuperscript{55} For example, one of the most popular books in Education in the U.S, Paulo Freire’s \emph{Pedagogy of the Oppressed} (sold over 1 million copies), suffers from a bad translation from its original in Portuguese to English, based on which the rest of the languages are translating from, reproducing the mistakes. Sam Rocha has written extensively on this, giving examples of wrongly translated concepts as well as fully deleted paragraphs from the original version. It is important to say that Bloomsbury who holds the copyright from the Freire family have refused to do a new critical translation. See Rocha, \textit{‘Ser Mais’: The Personalism of Paulo Freire}. Across this thesis I hold power and responsibility in my role as a translator of Maria Zambrano. I am part of the complexities of what language can generate and mean, which will be different things depending on the audience. I am not a language scholar and my bias certainty show across my work. But as a student learning to do translation, I have a commitment to be as transparent as possible with the decisions made throughout this work, knowing there will be many missing in this text.

\textsuperscript{56} Cook, \textit{“Translation as a Reading”} 144.
public of a work exists even before it has been read or not; it exists from the beginning of the work, coexisting with it and with the writer as such, and only will truly have a public, those works that had it from the beginning.”  

Hoping that there is a public for my work, I will describe two examples of decisions I have made in the journey of translation and writing in order to provide clarity to the reader, honor the public, and honor Zambrano by staying true to her work.

Firstly, Spanish is a gendered language; this means that all nouns are either feminine or masculine and are expressed with the corresponding singular and plural nouns and articles. As we will see throughout Zambrano’s biography, her work was a catalyst for feminist claims in her conceptions of the fight against patriarchy. Her writing is poetic, full of twists and mannerisms, and it is as gendered as everything written in her time. She was well aware of the male-dominated world she was living in and was critical about it. However, she often used the word hombre (man) when referring to humankind or a person, and she uses them interchangeably. In the translated excerpts, wherever she writes el hombre, los hombres I have translated those to “human” or “person” accordingly, and I have chosen to translate to the pronouns “they/them” when suitable. I believe that adopting gender neutral language in my translations is aligned with Zambrano’s purpose, for example in this quote: “Transcender es eso ante todo: mediar, ir y venir entre lugares extremos y si no es eso lo propio de lo humano, se quedará el hombre reducido a ser una criatura no muy diferente de las demás, se quedará privado de su situación singular en el mundo.” Zambrano uses the Word human and man in the same sentence, in my translated version I use instead humankind and human, accordingly, maintaining integrity in the

57 Zambrano, Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma, 41.
58 She also anticipated later postures of the feminist movements such as the Women’s Library of Milan Romeo Pemán et al., María Zambrano y Sor Juana Inés de La Cruz: La Pasión Por El Conocimiento.
message: “to transcend is this above all: to mediate, to come and go between extreme places, and if that is not a virtue of being human, humankind will remain reduced to being a creature that is not very different from the others, and will remain deprived of their unique situation in the world.”

Furthermore, I adopt the practice as an educational stance for inclusion. I am growing my knowledge about the necessary steps to promote environments where regardless of their gender identity or expression, every person feels welcomed, valued and nourished. Shifting words through my translations, while still doing justice to the text, feels like a right choice of recognition for myself, my loved ones and future possible readers.

Secondly, throughout the text all the translations are my own unless stated differently. Specifically, for Chapters 2, 3, and 4, each quote will have its original in Spanish for reference as a footnote. The footnotes throughout this text will serve as a subtext where I explore most of the weft threads of the thesis, with the connection of authors and ideas without interfering excessively in the flow of Zambrano’s voice. It will also be the space to make my interjections on her writing in connection to the continuous thread of corazón along side the text, as well as to indicate some of the conflicts that arise during the translation. For example, the title of the essay and book called Hacia un saber sobre el alma has been consistently translated into English.

59 Zambrano, Casado, and Sánchez-Gey, Filosofía y Educación, 113.

60 When those who have the power to name a reality choose not to see or hear others, this can cause a further discrimination against a world that is often neglecting your existence in different ways. Replacing terms with gender neutrality options is not only a contribution against sexism, but also a way of accountability to my own loved ones who are gender nonbinary, genderqueer, or fluid folks. In relation to this, Adrienne Rich said “When someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing. Yet you know you exist and others like you, that this is a game done with mirrors. It takes some strength of soul — and not just individual strength, but collective understanding — to resist this void . . . and to stand up, demanding to be seen and heard.” Rich, Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose 1979-1985.
as *Towards a Knowledge of the Soul*. For this work, I have decided to translate it as *Towards a Knowledge About the Soul*. I do not consider this a small difference, since “of” implies a possessive quality, and “about” implies instead “concerning something or someone.” María Zambrano walks with us in a journey through some of the things she knows about the soul, because she has a concern for it.

In Spanish one word can mean many different things, and *inquietud* is one of the many words I have struggled with translating. Zambrano uses *inquietud* a lot, and it means slightly different things, depending on the context of what she is saying. In other works about Zambrano written in English, the term has been translated differently. For example, Nadal Sanchez has translated this word as “restlessness” and “anxiety,” while Andrew Bush has chosen to translate it as “disquiet.” Those choices and others do not feel right for me, so I have ended up choosing to translate it as “unease” in the chosen excerpts, though in other excerpts that do not appear in this thesis it would have been appropriate to use options like “concern,” “restlessness,” or “wonder” as well. These are only some of the considerations I find important for the reader to know when interacting with this text.

In what follows, I present briefly some basic information about the three primary texts I base this thesis on. I introduce the books to contextualize each work as an individual piece, because it is possible that its individuality will get blurred due to the quotes being organized by themes and not by books within this thesis.

*Hacia un Saber Sobre el Alma* (1950)

Maria Zambrano infuses philosophy and literature in her essays included in *Hacia un saber sobre el alma* (*Towards a Knowledge About the Soul*) in an effort to narrow down her lens on reality, which she later described as poetic reason. Across the essays of this book, Zambrano
engages with the sacred that she has discovered and then poetically reveals it to us. According to her, revelation and being are the main subjects of life; there is no experience without being. Her writing combines dream, hope, and mystery, the sacred and the divine, and love as a source of creation. She calls for receptivity and contemplation as parts of human life that are not warped by the Enlightenment that mainly lifted reason above other extra-rational ways of knowing. Zambrano wonders how much wisdom has been silenced because it did not neatly fit in to the bounds of rationalism. Offering metaphor, poetry, and sacredness as alternatives, that reclaim an order of the heart, a chance to give voice and word to that hidden reason of the soul.

*Los Bienaventurados (1990)*

The title of the book *Los Bienaventurados* refers to the famous gospel of the sermon on the mount: “Bienaventurados los pobres en espíritu: porque de ellos es el reino de los cielos” ("Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"). *Bienaventurados* is often translated as “the blessed.” Zambrano began this piece about exile in 1988 when she was 86 years old, and it was edited one year before her death in 1991; it is her last publication while she was alive. In this book Zambrano reflects on the meaning of exile and banishment, drawing on the fact that she had spent more than half of her life exiled, returning to Spain only once Franco had died. She takes the readers through a journey on the phases of exile as a mirror of her own life; she also ties exile to the philosophical problems that are linked to every human being, whether they have suffered it politically or not. Zambrano offers us a view of the suffering endured by humans that reveals and allows us to experience a closeness to the divine, as it is

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61 María Zambrano was a tireless philosopher, who even in the midst of her fragile health she continued her commitment to think and write. Her delicate health forced her to rely on other people helping her with her manuscripts and transcriptions.
only in vulnerability that one can open up to someone who is struggling. For Zambrano, the bienaventurados were poets, mystics, thinkers, philosophers, prophets or any person who confronted an absorbing and violent society, who dreamed and stayed true to their truth. In this work she takes elements from Christianity and combines them with her own visions of a Nietzschean thesis.

*Filosofía y Educación. Manuscritos (2010)*

Maria Zambrano dedicates numerous texts to education, which have been compiled in the book “Philosophy and Education: Manuscripts” that includes her manuscripts between 1949-1950 and 1953-1964. According to the editors of this book, pedagogy is a field that has not received a lot of attention when it comes to Zambrano’s work, even though she wrote extensively about it. Throughout this set of manuscripts, Zambrano writes about philosophy and education, the mediating role of the teacher, poetic knowledge, pedagogical vocation, and integral development of the person, among other themes. Zambrano’s commitment towards education appears not only in her writing but is also evident in her life as a teacher in Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Spain. For Zambrano, no one can deny the tight relationship between philosophical thinking and educational action. She claimed that an authentic philosophy must be vigilant of the problems and requests of education, as a “hopeful song of a better world that can look like a horizon of pending tasks.”

The puzzle pieces and threads that compose this project began with some stories along my lineages, the arguments supporting my use of *corazonar* and the chosen themes of crisis, heart, and hope. As well as some reflections on the task of translation and some of the considerations made across the thesis. Now, we will move onto the stories, places and faces that impacted María Zambrano’s life.
1.3 María Zambrano Alarcón

I have never been able to go by; or it has rarely happened to me, to go by a place that has been sacred even though there is nothing there that manifests it, without starting to shake to the point that I, joking about myself - but within myself, because I had a certain modesty-, I said that I would be the perfect dog of an archaeologist who is looking for the divine. It happened to me that as soon as I reached a place that has been sacred, I started shaking and it was impossible to lay off, and I had to stay there, stuck.

And the divine? Well, in order to discover the divine, there is thought. The sacred is attached to a place, it is mute, it signals you, it attracts you, and one can stay stuck in there, but what saves us from there is the divine, so to speak. And in the divine the opposite happens, it is the transparency, the presence that we wanted to find, it’s always there, even if we do not find it, we know it is there. The divine is an orbit inside of (the) reason [...] And then afterwards came that definition, that I ask to be forgiven for, of philosophy, which is the transformation of the sacred into divine. That is, of the endearing, dark, attached, endlessly dark, that aims to be saved in the light, and as light I have always believed in the light of thought more than any other light, and the dawn becomes the mediator between the sacred and the divine and, as well as for me it seems that philosophy is transformation.

——MARÍA ZAMBRANO, *A modo de autobiografía* [As a way of autobiography]

According to Zambrano, the biography of a philosopher is their system; but before the philosopher there is a simple human who has traveled the long road of hesitation. For her, philosophy is not a sudden gift from above or a form of enlightenment but instead a long rational effort that emerges from chaos. But before the philosopher becomes a philosopher, they simply are, and they have no other choice than to be just a person. She affirms that life does not have parts, but places and faces;62 this is why the following notes on her life will allow us to pause on some of the places and faces that were part of her journey.

María Zambrano Alarcón, vibrant, radical and poetic philosopher, and essayist was born the daughter of Blas Zambrano and Araceli Alarcón and the older sister of Araceli Zambrano, in Vélez, Málaga on April 22, 1906. Since both her parents and her grandfather Diego Zambrano were teachers, she was always surrounded by words, and she considered her vocation to be to think.

Zambrano lived in Vélez for the first four years of her life. From 1910 until she was twenty-three years old, she lived in Segovia, where she finished secondary school as only one of two women. She considered Segovia to be the home of her intellectual origins. She studied philosophy at the Central University of Madrid from 1921 to 1927, a period of estrangement for her as a young woman studying philosophy in a male-dominated field. During this stage she took classes with known thinkers of her time like José Ortega y Gasset, Xavier Zubiri, and Manuel García Morente, in addition to becoming close with authors León Felipe, Federico García Lorca, and Antonio Machado. She was influenced by some fundamental authors like Saint Augustine, Spinoza, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Descartes, and Husserl, whose work invited her to rethink the notion of reason within the modern world.

63 Unless stated otherwise, the biographical information on Zambrano is based on what the Maria Zambrano Foundation has shared with the public. Fundación María Zambrano, “Biografía.”

64 She tells us, “My dad talked to me about the Platonic Academy, where there was the inscription «Let no one ignorant of geometry enter here», and I did not master it, so once in a while and impatiently I would ask my father - But when are you going to teach me geometry? and he would ask me back ‘What for?’, - Because I have to think. So, I have no other choice than to accept my true condition, that is, my vocation, which has been not to be, but to think, to see, to look, to have the limitless patience that I still had to keep living, thinking, knowing that I cannot do anything else, and for me to think is —above all-- to figure out what one feels.” Zambrano, “A modo de autobiografía.”
Her father Blas Zambrano initially connected María with the dissident republicans of Spain. He was a defender of the ideals of the Generation of ‘98, president of the Socialist Workers Party, and a close friend of Antonio Machado. Similarly, and perhaps as a way of relay from her father’s commitment, María was part of the Generation of ‘27, one of the most important artistic and intellectual movements in Spanish cultural history. She contributed important theoretical work, she was present in political and civic action, and she was committed to the democratic process pushing for women’s right to vote. María Zambrano partook in the tertulias (social gatherings with literary or artistic overtones) of the Occidente Journal as well as collaborations with several different newspapers. She was also politically active as part of the student movements in Madrid, through the Federación Universitaria Española (FUE). She promoted gatherings with politicians and intellectuals and founded the Liga de Educación Social-LES (Social Education League). Her period of dedicated activism was interrupted in 1928 when she came down with tuberculosis, an illness that forced her to stay in bed recovering for a year, and that impacted her life forever.

65 The Generation of ‘98 was a group of Spanish writers, philosophers, and poets who came together at the time of the Spanish-American War in 1898. Barnes, “Generation of 1898.”

66 Usually the male members are the most widely known: García Lorca, Jorge Guillén, Luis Cernuda, Buñuel, and Salvador Dalí. RTVE, Las Sinsombrero.

67 Tertulias are informal meetings where people discuss a certain topic. It appears that the word originated in Spain in the times of Felipe IV (1621-1665). During that period it became common to read and discuss the works of Tertuliano (Quinto Séptimo Florenso 160-245 d.C.), an ecclesiastic writer whose sermons were apparently better than those of Marco Tulio Cicerón; for this reason he was called Ter Tulio. Etimologias, “Tertulia.”

68 Her illness and all the health challenges María Zambrano dealt with impacted not only her wellness but also her way of thinking, her ideas and her way of interacting with the world. This makes me think of our own global challenge now with the Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic. This situation is impacting everyone around the world in different ways, and it is shaking to the core so many of the structures and lifestyles that have been in place so for long. Specific groups of people are suffering disproportionate impact of this disease, sick, disabled, elderly, HIV+, queer, immunocompromised, black, indigenous and people of color folks are have been often grouped as disposable in front of this crisis. It has made inequalities more obvious, highlighting issues engrained in violence, unsustainability and the extractive ways we relate to the world. From quarantined and isolated bodies, to mass deaths, from the impossibility of grieving, to fear and scarcity, it is also providing an opportunity for systemic
After recovering and coming back to the protests and promises of that period in Spanish history, she began to write again, which led her to publishing her book *Horizonte del liberalismo* (Horizon of Liberalism) in 1930. She then returned to Central University to lecture in metaphysics, while she worked on what would become her doctoral thesis: “The Salvation of the Individual in Spinoza.” She was never able to defend her thesis because of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and her subsequent exile. Zambrano was active as an intellectual at the same time that she was participating actively in republican meetings across different towns and cities of Spain. On April 14, 1931 she joined the Proclamation of the Second Republic at the Puerta del Sol in Madrid. She then volunteered for the Pedagogical Missions, an educational and social intervention aimed to help rural teachers with their training and to make educational progress in the remote areas of the Spanish countryside; while there, she established stronger relationships with intellectuals Luis Cernuda, Miguel Hernández, Federico García Lorca, Rosa Chacel, and Camilo José Cela. This was a critical time for her, as her health was deteriorating and she was worried about the intense political environment where fascism was evolving.

In her writing, María Zambrano adopted a critical stance towards liberalism and fascism. While she did not belong to any political party, she was close to leftist ideals and had friends in the Communist Party. Her radicalization of thought shows in and guides in her writings.

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change. How is this impacting the lives of everyone living in this era? How will this disease impact our hearts, ways of thinking and relating to the world?

Zambrano became intensely involved in this unusual popular education experience. García-Sampedro, “The Pedagogical Missions.”

She never lost interest in the religious, which was an important axis of her work. She says: “And beyond poetry and philosophy, there is the unity of religion. In this system, religious expression appears as much as poetry, although in a very different way; religion, poetry and philosophy have to be looked at again through a unitary view, without the grudges that grow with the nettle’s neatness. Only before such a view philosophy can be justified…Philosophy, poetry, religion, need to clarify each other, receive each other’s light, recognize their debts,
1934 her philosophy of feeling started to emerge, which she called “a knowledge about the soul”; with that term, she moved away from Ortega y Gasset, who stated that “the world of thought does not cease to belong to life.” Zambrano published several articles and essays where her philosophical style and political stand became clearer.

Zambrano spent a few years in Chile after marrying Alfonso Rodriguez, a historian who was designated as secretary of the Spanish embassy in Santiago de Chile. She actively worked for the republican cause and published three books: Federico García Lorca. Antología (Federico García Lorca: An Anthology), Los intelectuales en el drama de España (Intellectuals in Spanish Drama), and Antología poética de la guerra civil (A Poetic Anthology of the Civil War). According to Zambrano, she returned to Spain precisely because the war had been lost the same day that it broke out in Bilbao, in 1937. For Zambrano, the national was inseparable from the universal and from the destiny of other peoples around the world. She stated that the “tangible truth, the indestructible evidence is that our people fight for all the peoples in the world and they know it.” Zambrano worked in defense of the Republic through different roles and publishing several articles. She moved back with her family to Barcelona; her father died, and in 1939

reveal to the average person suffocated by their disagreement, their living and permanent legitimacy, their original unity.” Zambrano, Poema y sistema.

71 She begins her article on Descartes and Husserl with these words. Zambrano, Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma, 209.

72 Vázquez, Ética y política.

73 “El español y su tradición,” “Españoles fuera de España,” “La guerra, de Antonio Machado,” “La reforma del entendimiento Español,” “El pensamiento religioso de Maria Zambrano,” 68.

74 The Spanish republican exile refers to the Spanish citizens who, during the Spanish civil war from 1936 to 1939 and the immediate post-war period, were forced to leave their homeland and move to other countries. This was due to political and ideological reasons, or out of fear of retaliation by the winning side and the authoritarian political regime that was established.
she had to leave, along with her sister and mother and other intellectuals from the left, that were forced to abandon everything. She first travelled to Paris and then to Mexico only with her husband. About her journey to Mexico she says:

> It was like feeling about to be born through that unprecedented agony. How many of those rebirths I have gone through! To live was that: to die of different deaths before dying in a unique and total way that sums them all up, to also agonize, passing by facing life and death, to be rejected from life by multiple ways without death opening its doors because of that, to live dying.\(^75\)

In Mexico she collaborated with other Spanish intellectuals living there, and it also marked the beginning of many collaborations with different Latin American journals. In this period she also continued her teaching career; however, she constantly faced economical precarity. She taught philosophy at the San Nicolás de Hidalgo University of Morelia, as well as at the University and the Institute of Higher Studies and Scientific Research in Havana, Cuba, where she had many friends and admirers. In 1943 she moved to Puerto Rico where she taught at Río Piedras University, and joined the Assembly of University professors in exile.

After her mother’s death in 1946, Zambrano went back to Europe for two years. Her sister and mother had been living in Nazi-occupied Paris, where her sister Araceli was continuously harassed after the imprisonment of her husband Manuel Muñoz, who was subsequently extradited and shot in Madrid.\(^76\) In 1948 María Zambrano divorced her husband and, along with Araceli, she relied on the help and kindness of her friends, including Octavio Paz, E. Cioran, and Jorge Guillén. During this time Zambrano got in touch with the French

\(^{75}\) Zambrano, *Delirio y Destino: Los Veinte Años de Una Española*, 252.

intellectuals Malraux, Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Rene Char, and Albert Camus. After 1949 and during the next four years, she moved with Araceli between Mexico City, Havana, and Rome. During her time in Rome, she wrote abundantly, collaborating and exchanging correspondence with many of her intellectual friends. In 1955 she published one of her most famous books, *El hombre y lo divino* (Man and the Divine). Zambrano worked tirelessly during this time, often desperately, due to the economic scarcity under which she was living with her sister. In 1964 they were practically expelled from Rome due to the complaints of a neighbor about the multiple cats they had at their place. She always fed and loved cats, birds, and other animals. Later in her house in Geneva she would lie to hunters, assuring she had seen animals heading in one direction in order to disorient them.  

Zambrano and her sister moved to a small rural house in La Pièce, France, on the Switzerland border, where she worked and wrote more than ever, finishing and publishing several books. At this time, some articles appeared referencing her work, marking the beginning of the slow road of recognition for Zambrano; however, she remained widely unknown. A few days before her sister’s death in 1972 from acute thrombosis, Araceli told her sister, “Maria, untwist yourself, you are attached to me like a snake. Let me die!” Deeply impacted by her sister’s death and the days preceding it, Zambrano continued writing her book *Claro del bosque* (Clearings in the Forest), different from her other work because she dedicated this book as an offering to Araceli. Zambrano’s health started to deteriorate, and she returned to

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77 TVE, *María Zambrano, La Humanista Indignada.*

78 El sueño creador (The Maker Dream), Sueño y verdad (Dream and Truth), La palabra y el silencio (The Word and the Silence), and other works that will then appear in De la aurora, Los bienaventurados, Notas de un método, and Los sueños y el tiempo.

79 Angel Martinez, “María Zambrano En La Referencialidad Cervantina La Poética Razón de La Derrota,” 26.
Rome to live, retired, isolated, and without any cats. While living in Geneva in 1981 she won the first ever Prince of Asturias Award for Communications and Humanities, and she was declared Favorite Daughter by the town government of her hometown Vélez-Málaga. In 1983 Malaga University named her Doctor Honoris Causa. In that same year she fell ill with osteoarthritis, cataracts in both eyes, and severe anemia, all of which she survived.

Zambrano returned to Madrid ten years after Franco died, on November 20, 1984. Even though her health was delicate during this period, her intellectual activity was prolific, as she published papers, essays, and reeditions of her work. The María Zambrano Cultural Foundation was founded in 1987 in Vélez-Málaga. Afterwards, Zambrano agreed to donate her manuscripts and belongings to the Foundation in exchange for the economic, administrative, and editorial support that she had while living at its headquarters. In 1986 she published her book De la aurora (At Dawn), and two years later she reedited El sueño creador (The maker dream); in that same year she was named honorary citizen of Andalucía and in 1988 she became the first woman to be awarded the Miguel de Cervantes Prize. In 1989 Notas de un método (Notes of a Method) and Delirio y destino (Delirium and Destiny) appeared, both of which were written in Havana in 1952. She also prepared Los sueños y el tiempo (The dreams and time), which was published after her death. María Zambrano died on February 6, 1991 of a heart attack while she was hospitalized. Her body was moved to Vélez-Málaga, where she is buried between an orange tree and a lemon tree. As was her wish, on the tombstone is inscribed the legend of the Song of Songs: Surge amica mea et veni. “Levántate, amiga mía, y ven.” (“Arise, my friend, and come.”)

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80 Mora García, María Zambrano, El Pensamiento Filosófico Del Exilio.
1.4 Contact and Distance

By offering some points of contact between parts of my personal story and parts of Maria Zambrano’s personal story within this chapter, I hope that the reader now has a better sense of the person interpreting her work and writing these lines, including some of the motivations behind my decision to devote time and energy to this work. My intention in this first chapter is to acknowledge and be acknowledged. The points of contact also show other possible topics that were not incorporated. I embrace this distance without pressure and recognize that it may bring us closer or further as we delve into Zambrano’s work.

During these times,\(^{81}\) there are many opportunities and truths being unearthed along with the disease. Lots of grief, and feelings of distress, fear and anxiety for everyone and everything being impacted. In her book *Hacia un saber sobre el alma*, Maria Zambrano wrote that if we reviewed the titles of literary magazines, books of poems or essays from the years 1915 to 1930, the word *inyquietud* (unease or restlessness) would be the one that appears most frequently. What would be the word mostly used for this current global pandemic occurring in 2020? One word I notice being named amply is “uncertainty”. Zambrano tells us that all life is lived uneasily, but that certain crises have a certain kind of unease, or an excessive unease, beyond or right on the limit of what is bearable. We all know unease and uncertainty; some more than others, but the uncertainty of this particular crisis is coming with gorgeous brilliance, resilient practices, strong networks of mutual aid, pivoting cultural paradigms for collective care, and with robust offers from all artistic forms. As I am apprenticing to Zambrano, and tracking and tending to moments

\(^{81}\) As I write these words, we are facing the challenges of Covid-19, a viral disease now classified as a pandemia by the OMS that has greatly impacted societies all around the globe. There is a lot of uncertainty of how worst it can get, how long it is going to last and what will it take to recover, reimage and re-emerge from this.
of awe, I leave these coming reflections as a reflective offering, as a weave with different points of contact and, with enough space for creating more in the possible futures that we have already reimagined together.
Chapter 2: Crisis

“It does not seem too necessary to justify that we believe we are living in crisis; it is a commonplace of our days, and like many common places, it makes us run the risk of slipping on it, without entering [the place].”

—MARIA ZAMBRANO, “Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma”

From pure sensation to the intuition of beauty, from pleasure and pain to love and the mystical ecstasy and death — all the things that are fundamental, all the things that, to the human spirit, are most profoundly significant, can only be experienced, not expressed. The rest is always and everywhere silence.

—ALDOUS HUXLEY, “The Rest Is Silence”

María Zambrano lived through the tangled and violent twentieth century, marked by the crisis of European modernity and the threats of fascism and totalitarianism. The Civil War in Spain and the dictatorship of Franco framed her life in exile, as well as the challenges that she confronted in her personal life while witnessing a troubled world. Zambrano reflects on some characteristics of the crisis in modernity and reminds us that even though they manifest differently, they reveal common truths that are ever-present in the human experience. This chapter contains and examines translated excerpts of some of her reflections on modernity, on

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82 Zambrano, Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma, 99. “No parece demasiado necesario justificar que creamos estar viviendo en crisis; es ya un lugar común de nuestros días, y como tantos lugares comunes nos hace correr el peligro de que resbalemos sobre él, sin adentrarnos.”

83 The circumstances of exile in Zambrano’s life implied cruel characteristics such as persecutions, prison, torture, and death. Now, almost 70 years after Zambrano wrote Hacia un Saber sobre el Alma, and half a century after her activism in the anti-Franquista movement, Franco was exhumated from the mausoleum where he had been buried for 44 years next to the 30,000 victims of the fascist regime.
mediation\textsuperscript{84} as part of the crisis of reality, and on the opportunity for transcendence that crisis brings.

This chapter shares some commentaries relating Zambrano’s context with some of the crises we are confronting nowadays, as Mother Earth\textsuperscript{85} pacha and all of us—human and other than human—are facing in terms of extinction, exploitation, and genocide.\textsuperscript{86} Perhaps we share similarities with the time Zambrano lived in, as our very beings are still at stake in these struggles.

\subsection{Modernity}

According to Zambrano, the modern rationalism inaugurated by Descartes has led the human condition to be somewhat relegated to the sphere of reason, since he defined humans through rationality, not affect. “I am a thing who thinks, Descartes says as it is obvious. But with that, the person is reduced to only their condition of thinking to which they meet the evidence of

\textsuperscript{84} The word Zambrano uses is \textit{mediación}, which can be translated as “mediation”, “intervention” or “arbitration” I choose to use “mediation” because of the level of agency I feel that concept has, compared to intervention, which feels more disruptive. Both choices indicate a kind of active participation, but as I am informed by my background in Conflict Transformation, I associate mediation with a more conciliatory role between different parts, which is what I think Zambrano refers to when using \textit{mediación}.

\textsuperscript{85} Zambrano also thought of the earth as mother. She tells us: "Is the earth thirsty to drink life? The sprout, detached from the earth only metaphorically, affirms that it comes from the Mother Earth, that the Earth is Mother. For this part, the vegetable shoot and everything that is sustained on its own birth, everything born no matter how different it is, without rupture or separation, affirms the maternal condition of the earth, showing and glorifying it. Ballad of the herb, song of the entwined branches, anthem of the concerted trees.” Zambrano, \textit{Los bienaventurados}, 23. (‘‘¿Tiene acaso la tierra sed de beber vida? La sierpe, desprendida de la tierra sólo metafóricamente, afirma que viene de la Tierra Madre, que la Tierra es Madre. De su parte, la sierpe vegetal y todo lo que se sostiene sobre su propio nacimiento, todo lo nacido por alto que vaya y distinto que sea, sin ruptura ni separación, afirma la maternal condición de la tierra, la ostenta y la corona llegando a glorificarla. Balada de la yerba, canto de ciertas enramadas, himno de los concertados árboles.”)

\textsuperscript{86} During my writing process, through my loved ones I have witnessed all of the uprisings happening in Colombia, Ecuador, Haiti, Lebanon, Chile, Kashmir, Nigeria, Senegal, Costa Rica, Kurdistan, Hong Kong, Catalunya, and Wet’suwet’en. In all these places, people have been standing up for life in the face of terror, intimidation, violence, and greed. Communities are calling out the systematic discrimination, institutional genocide, and impunity that are in place across patriarchal, supremacist, homo/transphobic nation states.
their existence.” By being imbued purely in reason, the human becomes a stranger according to Zambrano. María Zambrano takes inspiration from Spanish poet Antonio Machado who said that modern reason was aggressive because it held within its organizing principles conquest and hegemony. By choosing only thought as instrumental reason, other aspects of humanity are neglected.

Zambrano points out that each era has a point that resolves in a truth. At the beginning of *Hacia un saber sobre el alma*, she states: “Every era is justified before history by the encounter of a truth that reaches clarity in it. What will be our truth?” Zambrano’s truth is often considered to be hope in times of crisis, which refers specifically to the crisis of European modernity at the edge of the twentieth century. Her approach to modernity weaves together references to the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, and the Romantic era, but overall for her modernity was characterized by the reduction of “art as propaganda, philosophy to simple methodology and science as the persecution of the useful.” Zambrano adds that this era’s crisis was manifested in an ill that resided in our very being:

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87 Zambrano, Casado, and Sánchez-Gey, *Filosofía y Educación*, 102. “Yo soy una cosa que piensa, dice Descartes como es tan notorio. Mas con ello el hombre queda reducido a su sola condición de pensar en la que se encuentra con la evidencia [de] su existir.”

88 Related to this, Audre Lord reminded us that “The white fathers told us: I think, therefore I am. The black goddess within each of us -the poet- whispers in our dreams: I feel, therefore I can be free.” Byrd, Cole, and Guy-Sheftall, *I Am Your Sister: Collected and Unpublished Writings of Audre Lorde*.

89 It is important to note that language is thought. When Zambrano tells us that thought is for thinking, we can understand this as an invitation to put what we think in front of us, to see it more clearly. “Languages are the remnant of thought,” I heard from Sam Rocha in a class. The better writer you are, the better thinker you become.

90 Zambrano, *Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma*, 21. “Cada época se justifica ante la historia por el encuentro de una verdad que alcanza claridad en ella. ¿Cuál será nuestra verdad?”

91 See Chapter 3 for the discussion of romanticism and rationalism specifically.

92 Zambrano, *Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma*, 76. “Reducción del arte a propaganda, filosofía a simple metodología, ciencia a la persecución de lo útil.”
Each epoch has its ills, even physically. It is known that humanity has not always suffered the same punishments. The Middle Ages suffered the punishment of leprosy. Romanticism suffered terror and tuberculosis. There is always leprosy and tuberculosis, but the modern soul has the strange peculiarity of loving its illnesses more than its goods, of being attracted to and almost bewitched by its ills. But, this fact of being attracted to its own illness, warns us of its [this epoch’s] special character, and where it resides. It is not in the body properly speaking; the one affected by illness is not an organ. When we are attracted by the illness it means that our very being is at stake. It is not about an illness that one has [italics mine], but that in some way, that one is.  

Zambrano observes that one of the shortcomings of the modern era is that it was unable to offer each person what corresponded to them, in terms of a notion of justice that dignified their existence no matter their differences. She adds,  

But what immediately follows is the sad inability of our modern era to give to each person their own: to each human group, to each sex, to each age. The inability to glimpse even in an effective, active and current way, that makes it not only law, but a habit and a custom, an idea of the human in its integrity, in all its extension as creature, whatever their determinations and social or physiological therefore emotional circumstances. Has the world run out of space for humans? But did it ever have it? Have they ever, seriously, the person as a whole, found a place, that is to say, multiple places to shelter themselves entirely?  

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93 This quote brings inevitable connections to what is occurring currently with Covid-19 across all territories.

94 Zambrano, 126. “Cada época tiene sus males, hasta en lo físico. Es sabido que no siempre la humanidad ha padecido los mismos azotes. La Edad Media sufrió el castigo de la lepra. El Romanticismo, el terror y la atracción de la tuberculosis. Siempre hay una lepra y una tuberculosis. Pero el alma moderna tiene la particularidad extraña de amar sus enfermedades más que a sus bienes; de sentirse atraída por sus males, casi hechizada por ellos. Pero, este hecho de sentirse atraída por su propia enfermedad, avisa el carácter especial de ella, de su punto de residencia. No es el cuerpo propiamente hablando, no es ningún órgano, el afectado por el mal. Cuando la enfermedad nos atrae es que en ella está en juego nuestro propio ser; que se trata, no de una enfermedad que se tiene, sino que de cierto modo, se es.”

95 This quote reminds me of the search for truth, integrity, and dignity represented by Colombia’s Commission for Truth Clarification, Peaceful Coexistence and Non-Repetition, also known as the Truth Commission. The Commission was tasked with piecing together the complex history of the country’s decades-long armed conflict. Members of the Commission witnessed and gathered the testimonies of Colombians in exile who had to leave the country due to the violence. The “sad inability” Zambrano talks about reminds me of the complicated emotions current and ongoing in our territories in Colombia. Similarly, Zambrano’s quote addresses an important claim of human dignity so needed today around the world. I would add that regardless of their ethnicity, gender identity, ability, sexual orientation, migration status, age, faith, language, people deserve to find a place to shelter themselves entirely.

96 Zambrano, Filosofía y Educación (Manuscritos), 95. “Pero lo que de ello se desprende enseguida, en modo inmediato y evidente por tanto, es la triste incapacidad de nuestra época moderna para dar a cada uno lo suyo: a cada grupo humano, a cada sexo, a cada edad. La incapacidad de vislumbrar siquiera en modo eficaz, activo y vigente,
This notion of wholeness reappears in Zambrano’s writing, as humans are whole even with all our contradictions and missing parts; the process of becoming itself is all part of our full being. For Zambrano, the question of wholeness in modernity is at risk in the turn of the person to only look after their own thoughts and needs, rather than the needs of others.

Maria Zambrano is critiquing modernity from a modernist perspective as she centers rationality like most post-Enlightenment thinkers. However, she intends to abolish the pedestal and praising where rationality is put. She critiques how the modern era’s trend is to have rationality as an idol and as an instrument of domination and dehumanization while undervaluing the intuitive, affective, spiritual dimensions of life. She seeks to challenge absolutism and unique truths, which feeds into the alienation caused by applying the modern conception of reason and suppressing those other dimensions of being human. In contrast with the modern reductionist era, Zambrano offers the passions and the reasons of the heart as an integrative experience, as a way to *corazonar* the reality by giving value and space to the unfathomable and irreducible existence of the person.

2.2 Mediation

For Zambrano, being is inherently relational, it needs mediation and the constant pursuit of thought. She writes that crisis, then, can only be crisis when the fate of culture itself or the historical unity hangs in the balance. Crisis, the current one and any other before, cannot be true

que haga no sólo ley, sino hábito y costumbre, una idea del hombre en su integridad, en toda su extensión de criatura, cualesquiera sean sus determinaciones y sus circunstancias sociales y fisiológicas, animicas por tanto. El que [en] el mundo se haya quedado sin lugar el hombre. Mas ¿lo tuvo alguna vez? ¿Alguna vez, hablando en serio, el hombre en su totalidad, ha encontrado lugar, es decir lugares múltiples donde albergarse íntegramente?”

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unless it is borne out of mediation. The mediation on the universe is *corazonar*, a way of mediation in itself, of thinking, feeling, and acting through this epoch’s ills. However, this can be overwhelming. Trauma and adversity can leave us stuck in a challenging space (also of mediation), as more questions are brought to light. To Zambrano, none of these questions are novel, but they do provide a space for contemplation and transformation. Zambrano adds:

> Nothing new appears in times of crisis, at least nothing that has not been there in times of fullness. It is just that the crisis, bringing into clear evidence human conflict in all its gravity, is the ultimate background of the human condition. It is the most favorable moment for self-knowledge that the person needs and pursues, since it is not natural for the human creature to show their vulnerability. It is the exacerbated conflict, taken to the extreme, that makes appear, not without violence, the hidden secret.

For Zambrano, the crisis of modernity has to do with our approach to reality, our disposition and our mediation of it. She maintains that humans have to “fulfill our being through reality” (see section 4.3 for more detail), but we have only intermittent contact with it while still taking it for granted.

One thing that has not been taken into account in this modern era, which can be defined as one of the crisis of reality, is the attitude towards it. And the attitude towards reality is a different thing from the conditions that knowledge requires beginning with the simple perception of reality. Thus, we enunciate that in a way at least equally radical that the conditions for the perception of reality, is that there is a disposition for reality in the human being, one that is metaphysical and practical at the same time: unitary. A need that is vocation, that is total need; vocation by virtue of which only the possibilities of the human being can be fulfilled. And so, among so many definitions that have been given of humankind, it could also be given that the human is the creature that has to

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97 Zambrano, *Filosofía y Educación (Manuscritos)*, 115. “La crisis pues, no puede ser sino la crisis de una forma, de una de esas formas de las que pende la suerte de la forma misma de la cultura o de la unidad histórica en cuestión. La crisis, ésta y cualquiera habida antes, no puede serlo verdaderamente sino de la mediación.”

98 Zambrano, 123. “Nada nuevo aparece en las épocas llamadas de crisis, nada que en las de plenitud no haya estado ahí. Sólo que la crisis, al plantear en toda su gravedad el humano conflicto manifiesta la evidencia, el fondo último de la condición humana. Es el momento más propicio para el conocimiento de si que el hombre necesita y persigue, pues que a la humana criatura no le es natural mostrar su intimidad. Es el conflicto agudizado, llevado al extremo, lo que hace aparecer –no sin violencia– el secreto celado.”
fulfill their being through reality, and is a creature predestined to reality.\textsuperscript{99} And in this sense, the vocation involves the sensitive, intellectual conditions of any order that perception and even the simple "contact" with reality - that awareness that we are between it [reality] - requires.\textsuperscript{100}

What we call reality is always given to us in an awakening, that is, in an intermittent way. And we find it as something "that was already there before I perceived it", and never in an indifferent way. Which means that we have the impression of reality in privileged moments and that in others, reality is taken for granted; we do not doubt that it is there. Reality is there at an earlier and later state by the moment we perceive it as such reality. Reality awakens us and in each daily awakening from the depth of the sleep, in each return of the absence in which the dream envelops us, we wake up properly when we feel both reality and time. Time in the form of freedom; in a way to free ourselves to move between reality, to make reality happen, because if not, without the temporary flow, the entire reality, immobilized before us would return us to the dream state, with or without dreams. Time makes it possible for the total reality to be fragmented, that we can attend successively to it, that there is communication, contact, and distance between it and human consciousness. Time frees us from reality, making it possible for us to deal with it, and to deal for the person is to know and to act. Reality - time - freedom is the equation of awakening, its figure. The equation that shows the adequacy between the human being and the reality that surrounds them by virtue of the mediating time, of the time in its successive aspect that is the time of consciousness - of discernment. But later, reality is tamely allowed to be colonized by habit, by the habits that people acquire in their daily life. And it almost disappears. Within that grid of habits, reality is de-realized, hidden, and as it fades it solidifies. Consciousness ceases to be awake and attends only to what is before it, to what it has to grasp at the moment. Time contracts itself, it divides, and its flow becomes imperceptible or tends to become. Freedom drifts off.\textsuperscript{101}

\textsuperscript{99} In \textit{El perseguidor}, Julio Cortázar tells us that reason offers us a sense of security that ultimately hinders our access to truth. For Cortázar, access to truth entails entering in the realm of death, which can be understood in relation to Zambrano’s claim about our constant rebirths. These rebirths are only possible because death is a necessary and continuous aspect of life throughout time; death acts as a form of mediation between the past and an opening to the future, in a continuum of living. This notion of death in Zambrano is also related to her personal experiences of exile and the quest for meaning, love, and belonging. However, Zambrano focuses her philosophy more on birth than death. Cortázar and Muñoz, \textit{El Perseguidor}.

\textsuperscript{100} We cannot understand Zambranian thinking around education without considering her concepts of mediation and vocation, both of which are connected to that figure of the teacher.

\textsuperscript{101} Zambrano, \textit{Filosofia y Educación (Manuscritos)}, 142. “No se ha tenido en cuenta, en esta época moderna que puede definirse como la de la crisis de la realidad, la actitud ante ella. Y la actitud ante la realidad es cosa diferente de las condiciones que el conocimiento empezando por la simple percepción de la realidad, requiere. Enunciamos así que de un modo a lo menos igualmente radical que las condiciones para la percepción de la realidad existe una disposición para la realidad en el ser humano, metafísica y práctica al mismo tiempo, unitaria; una necesidad que es vocación, es decir: necesidad total; vocación en virtud de la cual se pueden cumplir únicamente las posibilidades del ser humano. Y así entre tantas definiciones que se han dado del hombre, podría darse también ésta, de que el hombre sea la criatura que tiene que cumplir su ser a través de la realidad, la criatura predestinada a la realidad. Y en este sentido pues, la vocación envuelve las condiciones sensibles, intelectuales, de todo orden que la percepción y aun el
According to Zambrano, we inhabit a fragmented reality colonized by habits. How then can we choose not to turn our backs on the multiple forms of violence that keep these systems in place and that we have naturalized as habits? And what can we learn from the crisis we endure in order to transcend it and ourselves? In regard to this, Zambrano invites us to understand that those who live in crisis—including herself—have the privilege of being able to see more clearly amid so much misery. Zambrano traces topics like abandonment and shame, so attached to the experience of being human, yet at the same time she asks us: Is it possible to be human? And how? Crisis then seems to be more about reality and the attitudes and ways of mediation we live out in our human destiny as we fulfill our being through reality. This process of becoming is mobilized by hope and intertwined with beliefs and the vocation of our heart. To this Zambrano writes,

Crisis reveals the entrails of human life, the abandonment of the person who has been left without grip, without a reference point, of a life that does not flow towards any goal and that finds no explanation. Then, amid so much misery, those of us who live in crisis

simple ‘contacto’ con la realidad—ese aviso de que estamos ente ella—, requiere. Lo que llamamos realidad se nos [da] siempre en un despertar, es decir, en un modo intermitente por tanto. Y nos encontramos con ello como algo ‘que estaba ya ahí antes de que yo lo percibiese’, y nunca en modo indiferente. Lo que quiere decir que la impresión de realidad la tenemos en instantes privilegiados y que en los restantes, la realidad se da por sabida; no se duda de ella, de que esté ahí en un estar anterior y posterior también al instante en que la percibimos como tal realidad. La realidad nos desperta y así en cada diario despertar de la profundidad del sueño, en cada retorno de la ausencia en que el sueño nos envuelve, despertamos propiamente cuando sentimos al par la realidad y el tiempo. El tiempo en forma de libertad; en modo de dejarnos libres para movernos entre la realidad, para irla haciendo pasar, pues si no, sin el fluir temporal, la realidad enteramente, inmovilizada ante nosotros nos devolvería al estado de sueño, çcon ensueños o sin ellos. El tiempo hace posible que la realidad total, se fragmente, que podamos atender sucesivamente a ella, que entre ella y la conciencia humana haya una comunicación, un contacto y una distancia; el tiempo nos libera de la realidad haciéndonos posible que tratemos con ella, y tratar para el hombre es conocer y actuar. Realidad—tiempo—libertad es la ecuación del despertar, su cifra. La ecuación que muestra la adecuación entre el ser humano y la realidad que le rodea por virtud del tiempo mediador, del tiempo en su aspecto sucesivo que es el tiempo de la conciencia—del discernimiento. Mas luego, la realidad dócilmente se deja colonizar por el hábito, por los hábitos que el hombre adquiere en su vivir cuotidiano. Y casi desaparece. Dentro de esa cuadricula de los hábitos, la realidad se desprende, se oculta, y al par que se desvanece se solidifica. La conciencia deja de estar desperta y atiende solamente a aquello que tiene ante sí, a aquello que tiene que captar de momento. El tiempo se contrae, se divide y su fluir se hace imperceptible o tiende a hacerse. La libertad se aduerme.”
may have the privilege of being able to see more clearly human life, our life, as uncovered by itself and not by ourselves, as a revelation and not as a discovery. It is a distinct experience of crisis. And as history seems to tell us through several verified facts, we know that each historical crisis shows us an essential conflict of human life, a radical, ultimate conflict, an ‘it is possible, or it is not,’ because human life seems to be a land of possibility, of the widest possibilities and history was the process of hurrying these possibilities to their ultimate extreme and to their root. Hence, in moments of historical crisis, there are always martyrs, vulgarly called ‘extremists,’ who are responsible for bringing these possibilities of human life to their ultimate consequence and absurdity. And if we must be honest with ourselves, the conclusion we reach would always be negative. So far what arises from all of these experiences is that it seems that human life is not possible in any way, so a question is always reborn: Is it possible to be human? And how? In times of fullness, it seems to have been answered affirmatively in a certain way. The only way of responding affirmatively is not by abstractly saying yes, but instead by offering a way of life, a form of reality where the person has a certain task, and all their existence has meaning. In moments of crisis, life appears exposed in the greatest abandonment, to the point of causing us embarrassment. In these moments one feels the shame of being naked and the terrible need to cover oneself with anything. Escape and eagerness to find a form makes us rush into the most painful mistakes. What would be needed is to simply have a bit of courage to slowly look at this nakedness, to watch carefully not only the dream but more honestly the springs of the dreams themselves; to see how we are left when we have nothing left.”

102 Zambrano’s wisdom here invites me to think about this crisis of the pandemic as a global opportunity for structural changes. A possibility for reimagining connections and relationships between humans and other than humans. A chance to shift culturally from individualism to collective care, to rethink our ideas of governance, citizenship and justice. To sprout our already rooted resiliency through community, allowing space for rest, grief, and solidarity. To allow our dignified rage, demanding real change and accountability in this reality of wealth, ownership, capital, greed over the wellness of millions.

103 This reminds me of what Eduardo Galeano said during the World March for Peace and Nonviolence in 2009, about how no war has the honesty to confess the real goals of its existence, as he said “Wars always lie; No war has the honesty to confess: I kill so that I can steal. Wars always invoke noble motives: they kill in the name of peace, in the name of civilization, the name of progress, of democracy. And, if so many lies weren’t enough, the media is always ready to invent imaginary enemies to justify converting the world into a grand lunatic asylum and an immense slaughterhouse.” And he asks us, similar to Zambrano, for how long will this continue? For how long will peace be in the hands of those ones who make business out of war? Within this world we deserve another world. Galeano, Las Guerras Mienten.

104 Similarly, Freire offered us his theology of transcendence, of our ontological vocation of ser mais, “to be more,” that according to Sam Rocha, should be personalized in the redemption of love: we can be more through an emancipatory education. Rocha, “‘Ser Mais’: The Personalism of Paulo Freire.” It is worth remembering that both Freire and Zambrano lived in exile in Chile during dictatorships in their homelands; this fact certainly impacted their writing and ways of being.

105 Zambrano, Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma, 102. “La crisis muestra las entrañas de la vida humana, el desamparo del hombre que se ha quedado sin asidero, sin punto de referencia; de una vida que no fluye hacia meta alguna y que no encuentra justificación. Entonces, en medio de tanta desdicha, los que vivimos en crisis tengamos, tal vez, el privilegio de poder ver más claramente, como puesta al descubierto por sí misma y no por nosotros, por revelación y
It is in the moments where we have nothing left, that Zambrano invites us to pay attention to how we are mediating with what occurs within us and reality. The concept Zambrano uses across her writing is mediación, which can be translated as “mediation”, “intervention”, or “arbitration”. I choose to use “mediation” because of the level of agency I feel that concept has, as it can be linked with a more conciliatory role between different parts, which is what I believe Zambrano refers to when using mediación. She uses the concept to mediate in different settings like “soul as mediation,” “education as mediation,” or “time as mediation”. Zambrano’s philosophy is an attempt to give an account of the need for mediation, as she expresses her desire to reintegrate the scattered pieces of the person caused by the crisis. For this she relies on the possibility of transit, transformation, and transcendence, which are ultimately ways of mediation, emphasizing the risk of vulnerability they take by believing that a merciful, compassionate, mediating reason; that which is connected and informed by the heart and the emotions, can only achieve the impossible by hope.

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no por descubrimiento, la vida humana; nuestra vida. Es la experiencia peculiar de la crisis. Y como la historia parece decírnos que se han verificado varias, tendríamos que cada crisis histórica nos pone de manifiesto un conflicto esencial de la vida humana, un conflicto último, radical, un ‘se puede o no se puede.’ Ya que la vida humana parece que es el territorio de la posibilidad, de las más amplias posibilidades y que la historia fuera el proceso de irlas apurando, hasta su último extremo y raíz. De ahí que en momentos de -crisis histórica existan siempre unos mártires llamados vulgarmente ‘extremistas’ y que son los encargados de llevar a su última consecuencia, a su absurdo, estas posibilidades de la vida humana. Y si hemos de ser honrados con nosotros mismos, la conclusión a sacar sería negativa siempre. Hasta ahora lo que resulta de todas estas experiencias es que la vida humana no es posible de ninguna manera, al parecer. Y la pregunta, renace siempre, ¿es posible ser hombre?; ¿y cómo? En los tiempos de plenitud parece haberse respondido afirmativamente de una manera determinada. La única manera de responder afirmativamente no es diciendo sí en abstracto, sino ofreciendo una forma de vida, una figura de la realidad dentro de la cual el hombre tiene un determinado quehacer y toda su existencia un sentido. En los instantes de crisis, la vida aparece al descubierto en el mayor desamparo, hasta llegar a causarnos rubor. En ellos el hombre siente la vergüenza de estar desnudo y la necesidad terrible de cubrirse con lo que sea. Huida y afán de encontrar figura que hace precipitarnos en las equivocaciones más dolorosas. Lo que haría falta es simplemente un poco de valor para mirar despacio esta desnudez, para vigilar no ya el sueño, sino más honradamente, los hontanares mismos del sueño; ver cómo nos queda cuando ya no nos queda nada.”
2.3 Transcendence

According to Zambrano, every transcendence simultaneously means to recognize: “to transcend is this above all: to mediate, to come and go between extreme places, and if that is not a virtue of being human, humankind will remain reduced to being a creature that is not very different from the others, and will remain deprived of their unique situation in the world.”

For Zambrano, the unique situation for all humans in the world is that we are on the way to becoming. This highlights the core of her educational thinking, that our true being is entrusted to the future, as we are in a constant process of becoming. For her, education is understood as the humanizing task, in which each person is the protagonist of a life project to be carried out. In Zambrano’s words,

To know oneself of the other –to know a person- is to know what you really expect. The human is an odd creature whose true being is entrusted to the future, in a process of becoming. There is a more inexorable task than ‘making a living.’ It is the work of making oneself, through life, and through History. And only then do the sufferers of History achieve their meaning and achieve their glory; sufferings, necessary in this pursuit of the best way of being that each person seeks from to the day they began to walk out of the dark cave. And every Culture would be nothing more than a gigantic Essay to achieve this: an attempt to be human in a certain way; one version of the human condition. For what the person has from not being, from being ‘en route,’ in transit, they are moved by hope. But, for what is real, for what the person already is: soul, body; it is subject to necessity. Hope and need form and become intertwined, the ultimate secret background, which is veiled in the moments of maturity, under security -offered to the need - and by established beliefs, in which a somewhat dormant, hope is channeled.

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106 Zambrano, Casado, and Sánchez-Gey, Filosofía y Educación, 113. “Transcender es eso ante todo: mediar, ir y venir entre lugares extremos y si no es eso lo propio de lo humano, se quedará el hombre reducido a ser una criatura no muy diferente de las demás, se quedará privado de su situación singular en el mundo.”

107 This was also conceived of by Ortega y Gasset, but Zambrano insists that our difference with the other-than-human is that they are born at once, while the human has never been born entirely; humans have the job to rebirth themselves again or wait to be conceived. Zambrano, Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma, 112.

108 Zambrano, Casado, and Sánchez-Gey, Filosofía y Educación, 124. “Conocerse a sí mismo o a otro -conocer a una persona-, es saber qué espera de verdad. El hombre es una criatura impar, cuyo ser verdadero está fiado al futuro, en vía de hacerse. Existe un trabajo aún más inexorable que el de ‘ganarse el pan.’ Es el trabajo para ganarse el ser, a través de la vida, de la Historia. Y sólo así los padeceres de la Historia alcanzan su sentido y se transforman
Zambrano calls for the courage to be slow but never still. For her, to live in crisis is, above all, to live constantly in a state of unease. But all life is lived uneasily, she writes, “No life as it happens reaches stillness and calmness no matter how much we long for it. It is not uneasiness itself that characterizes living in crisis, but a certain kind of unease, or an excessive unease, beyond or right on the limit of what is bearable.” For Zambrano, the greatest teaching of crisis is that “humans are not made all at once, we are not finished but also not unfinished, nor incomplete or with a due date. We are not complete, and it is not clear what we need to do to become completed, how we shall accomplish ourselves is not fixed.” This is connected to the emergent characteristic of life and being, the constant process of becoming, the resurgence of en gloria; sufrimientos, necesarios en esta persecución de su mejor manera de ser que el hombre va buscando desde que echara a andar un día saliendo de la obscura caverna. Y cada Cultura no sería otra cosa que un gigantesco Ensayo para lograrlo: un intento de ser hombre de una determinada manera; una versión de la condición humana. Por lo que el hombre tiene de no ser, de ser ‘in vía,’ en tránsito, está movido por la esperanza. Mas, por lo que tiene de real, por lo que ya es: alma, cuerpo, está sujeto a la necesidad. Esperanza y necesidad forman, entrecruzadas, el fondo último secreto, que se cela en los momentos de madurez, debajo de la seguridad -ofrecida a la necesidad- y de las creencias establecidas, en que se canaliza un tanto adormitada, la esperanza."

109 Her call for slowness reminds me of Fernando Pessoa, who told us, "No: slowly. Slowly, because I do not know where I want to go. There is in between me and my steps an instinctive divergence. There is between my being and what I am a difference in verb that corresponds with reality. Slowly. Yes, slowly I want to think about the meaning of this slowness.”

110 Zambrano, Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma, 100. “Vivir en crisis es vivir en inquietud. Mas, toda vida se vive en inquietud. Ninguna vida mientras pasa alcanza quietud y el sosiego por mucho que lo anhelas. No será la inquietud simplemente lo que caracterice el vivir en crisis sino, en todo caso, una inquietud determinada, o una inquietud excesiva, más allá o en el límite de lo soportable.

111 Zambrano, 104. “Lo que la crisis nos enseña, ante todo, es que el hombre es una criatura no hecha de una vez, no terminada, pero tampoco inacabada y con un término fijo. Nos estamos acabados de hacer, ni nos es evidente lo que tenemos que hacer para acabarnos; no está prefijado cómo hemos de terminarnos a nosotros mismos.”

112 Transcendence as movement and change requires detachment, allowing something to die to allow space for another transformed way of becoming. This connects with what Zambrano writes about fate or destiny: “Its fate will continue, the fate of life, of this life; to have to detach from everything, everything that is now body and movement of what life has for the moment. At the beginning of its journey, it only possesses what is possessed. The place at which the two forms of possession, active and passive, meet and cancel, marks the invisible place of being. The impenetrable place of being. Life’s eternity is already shown in its first appearance, as if being and life were congenitally united.” Zambrano, Los bienaventurados, 20. (“Proseguirá siempre así su suerte, la suerte de la vida, de esta vida; tener que ir desprendiéndose de todo, el todo que es por el pronto cuerpo y movimiento, de aquello que
connections and webs of feeling and thinking that are ultimately guiding us, allowing us to
transcend. In her words,

According to Ortega y Gasset, there is an area within beliefs where reality and our being
become embedded; it is how reality reaches us, through where reality makes itself
present. Francisco Romero the Argentinian thinker interprets reality as transcendence.
From the humblest degrees of being, transcendence is shown as the ultimate character of
reality that begins by showing itself in every set or structure, in which the whole is more
than the sum of the parts, that if they [the parts] exist it is because they penetrate each
other transcending themselves.113

This transcendent character of reality will clarify to us the reason for the solitude
in which we stay during times of crisis. It is simply the impossibility of transcending
where our life is at. As Professor Romero says, we have closed ourselves to reality and
reality hides from us, and the reality of our life, which is the greatest of this
transcendence, is in turn suspended. It seems to be that reality cannot be isolated and
ineffective, its principle character must be the transcendence. Transcendence is nothing
but the ability that beings have to leave themselves, exceeding their limits, leaving a
trace of another being, causing an effect, acting beyond themselves as if the being of
each one ends up in the other one. [It is] A transcendence that is sharpened and reaches
its extreme in human life in its ‘unstoppable tendency of the person.’114

113 There is a distinction between knowing and being, the who and the what. The question of who we are is not
determined by what we know necessarily, as we are emerging. We can be without knowing ourselves, as being does
not require knowing in one sense, because our body is continuously doing things and changing. There are four
realms of this: the known knowns, the known unknowns, the unknown unknowns, and the unknown knowns. To
illustrate another side of this, I am reminded of what I have learned about emergence thanks to the author, doula and
black feminist adrienne maree Brown. In her words “emergence is the way complex systems and patterns arise out
of a multiplicity of relatively simple interactions. It emphasizes critical connections, authentic relationships,
listening with the body and the mind. In emergence, the whole is a mirror of the parts. Fractal—the health of the cell
is the health of the species and the planet (...) emergence is beyond what the sum of its parts could even imagine.
nothing is wasted, or a failure. emergence is a system that makes use of everything in the iterative process. it’s all
data.” Brown, “Emergence.”

114 Zambrano, Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma, 105. “En las creencias, según Ortega, está la zona donde la realidad y
nuestro ser se insertan, es como la realidad llega a nosotros, se nos hace presente. El pensador argentino Francisco
Romero interpreta la realidad como trascendencia. Desde los grados más humildes del ser la trascendencia se
muestra como carácter último de la realidad que comienza ya por mostrarse en todo conjunto o estructura, en que el
todo es algo más que la suma de las partes, que si lo son es porque se penetran unas a otras trascendiéndose. Este
carácter trascendente de la realidad nos aclarará el por qué de la soledad en que nos quedamos en las épocas de
危机. Es sencillamente la imposibilidad de trascender en que se halla nuestra vida. Nos hemos cerrado a la realidad
y ella se oculta de nosotros, y la realidad de nuestra vida que es el máximo de esta trascendencia se halla a su vez
en suspenso. Así parece ser. Realidad no puede ser nada aislado e inoperante, y su primer carácter ha de ser, como
dice el profesor Romero, la trascendencia. Trascendencia que no es sino la capacidad que tienen los seres para salir
de sí rebasando sus propios límites, dejando una huella de otro ser, produciendo un efecto, actuando más allá de sí

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Zambrano’s ideas on transcendence keep appearing along her work, strictly connected to hope as the very transcendence of life, according to her, that flows and keeps us open for the world.

2.4 The Land of Possibility

It amazes me that after a lifetime of illness, exile, economic struggles, and living in survival mode, Zambrano keeps insisting that we welcome crisis as the opportunity for transcendence, where we get to see parts of our being that are finally revealed as part of our constant becoming. The journey to leave ourselves in the middle of the crisis by exceeding our limits confronts us with the inevitable impact we have on other beings. This aspect of both wholeness and relationality in Zambrano is what makes it possible to go through the crisis and end up transformed, within and beyond the crisis. The uneasiness of life is soothed by her offer of understanding it as a problem of mediation, as so are time, education, and corazonar itself. The commonplace of crisis requires entering into the reasons of the heart, across the passions of the soul, and throughout the fragments of reality in order for the person to fulfill their destiny. Crisis is a land of possibility, whether we decide to trust Zambrano or not, but what is impossible to foresee is that at the core of it—and all of us—there is a pumping viscera called the heart, working full-time, that keeps us alive in more than one obvious way. In the next chapter I will provide some of Zambrano’s ideas on the heart, along with a few interjections from myself.

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como si el ser de cada cosa terminara en otra. Trascendencia que se agudiza y llega a su extremo en la vida humana en esa ‘irrefrenable tendencia de la persona.”
Chapter 3: Heart

“But, will it stay like this forever? Will the abyss of the heart stay lightless, will the soul be left alone with its passions on the fringes of reason? Isn’t there a place for the soul within the ‘path of life’ that is Philosophy? Will its current overflow with the risk of becoming a puddle? Can’t the soul flow, gathered and free by the riverbed that opens the truth to life?”

—MARIA ZAMBRANO, “Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma”

“The quality of light by which we scrutinize our lives has direct bearing upon the product which we live, and upon the changes which we hope to bring about through those lives. It is within this light that we form those ideas by which we pursue our magic and make it realized. This is poetry as illumination, for it is through poetry that we give name to those ideas which are, until the poem, nameless and formless-about to be birthed, but already felt. That distillation of experience from which true poetry springs births thought as dream births concept, as feeling births idea, as knowledge births (precedes) understanding.”

—AUDRE LORDE, “Poetry Is Not a Luxury”

According to Zambrano the heart; that feeds us red nourishing blood, is the most literary organ of our body, a true symbol of truth passed down to us from the oldest traditions of India, Egypt, and Greek tragedy. It is present with/in us along each crisis and event we face. The heart has been the physical and metaphysical organ with the most fertile metaphors across times; around it there has been a wide system of allusions, analogies, and metaphors, all relevant for humans as symbols. The heart is a muscle out of which all of life depends, a complex clock-like mechanism, our original inner musical instrument, our secret rhythm, and a tireless center that keeps working while we sleep. Philosophers, novelists, and poets have tried to enlighten us about it, and Zambrano allows us to travel through her interpretation of that space where a piece of
cosmos resides. She leads us into reflecting that the heart, the place to which the gut sends feelings, is connected to our senses and consciousness, and must be always included when talking about thinking and understanding. The translated quotes below will be divided by her thoughts on the use of metaphors, the impacts on the heart abandoned by the light of reason, and the necessary balance between thinking and feeling.

### 3.1 Metaphors

For Zambrano, metaphors are a tool of knowledge that aim to reveal parts of what is impenetrable; they are an imprint of sacred time. Metaphors are not only a literary resource, but, most importantly, a way of clarifying a specific kind of thinking; they are one of the mediators of reason. According to Zambrano, metaphors have been key in the evolution of human knowledge, as they establish the existence of a reality that reason has not been able to define. They serve as a bridge that comes from the past, as an inexplicable form of ancestry, as the survival of something prior to thought that informs current life. Zambrano devotes herself to writing about the heart as a “metaphor”, “a betrayer”, and “secret viscera,” a “magical formula”, and a “condemned organ hidden from the educated life” often left aside by privileging the reason. Zambrano notes, “The first thing we feel in the life of the heart is its quality of dark cavity and hermetic enclosure;

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115 It is inevitable to see the connections between Zambrano’s take on the heart and soul and what I have heard from all sorts of poems, songs, prayers, and astronomers, all agreeing that we are or have the cosmos inside of us, that we are made of interstellar stardust (Joni Mitchell), that we are remnants of massive explosions in the galaxies. This reminds me of Atahualpa Yupanqui’s story about the piece of cosmos within us. He said “The cosmic particle that sails in my blood, is an infinite world of sidereal forces. It came to me after a long road of millennia when perhaps I was sand for the feet of the air. I do not study things, nor do I intend to understand them, as it is true that I recognized them, because before I lived in them. I talk with the leaves in the middle of the mountains and the secret roots give me their messages. And so, I go around the world without age or destiny, under a cosmos that walks with me. I love the light, the river, the silence and the star, and I bloom on guitars because I was the wood.” Quotes where Zambrano references the cosmos residing within us will be found throughout the text.

116 According to Carmen Spagnola, spirit speaks in metaphor. This is a principle that helps me integrate imagery, archetype and symbolism as if they were the visual library of my psyche, or our soul according to Zambrano.
of viscera and gut. The heart is the core symbol and representation of all the other entrails of life, the core where every other one finds its final nobility and unity.”\textsuperscript{117} She continues,

Its [the heart] history shows bigger ups and downs than reason. Even though the reason is tied to an organ, the brain, it does not consist of it. We do not know exactly what the heart does to the psychic life. If it does make something, it is so attached to it that it does not move away, unlike thought and brain. In spite of all the attempts of psychophysiological parallelism, the heart is so detached.\textsuperscript{118}

When writing about the heart, Zambrano helps us understand what she means when she relies on words like “depth,” “burn,” “light,” “weight,” and “wounds,” as she shows us below:

The burning heart, or the fire of the heart, is the metaphor, the form in which the heart has marked its historical appearances. But in the popular terminology, in that life that the «heart» has lived in its faithful territories, the heart is not fire. It instead appears to show itself in spatial symbols: it is like a space within the person that opens up to welcome certain realities— a place that houses the unexplained feelings that jump above the judgments and which cannot be explained. It is wide and it is also deep. A depth from which arise great resolutions and great truths that are certainties. And sometimes a flame burns within the heart that serves as a guide through complicated and difficult situations, a light of its own that allows a path to open up where there seemed to be no path, [allowing us to] discover the pores of reality when it appears closed. Finding too, the solution to an internal conflict when one has fallen into an inextricable labyrinth due to tangled circumstances. In this permanent culture of the heart, it does not burn as fire but as flame, a flame that does not produce pain but happiness. And it is light that illuminates the way out of impossible difficulties, a soft light that gives comfort. In this same culture, the heart has wounds, slow wounds often impossible to heal.\textsuperscript{119} It could be said that the wounds in it never close because they have a certain active character, they are living wounds, like wounds from which a drop of blood constantly oozes, preventing healing. And finally, the heart weighs; and it is the worst, it can make its

\textsuperscript{117} Zambrano, \textit{Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma}, 65. “Pero lo primero que sentimos en la vida del corazón es su condición de oscura cavidad, de recinto hermético; Viscera; entraña. El corazón es el símbolo y representación máxima de todas las entrañas de la vida, la entraña donde todas encuentran su unidad definitiva, y su nobleza.”

\textsuperscript{118} Zambrano, 62. “Su historia muestra altibajos más grandes que la razón. La razón aunque ligada a un órgano fisiológico, el cerebro, no consiste en él. El corazón no sabemos exactamente qué hace en la vida psíquica; si hace algo es tan apagado a él, que no se aleja como el pensamiento del cerebro del que, a pesar de todos los intentos del paralelismo psíquico-fisiológico, anda tan desprendida.”

\textsuperscript{119} Piedad Bonnett, Colombian poet and novelist, shares with us a poem that speaks closely to what I believe Zambrano is telling us here: “There is no scar, as brutal as it may seem, that does not contain beauty. A timely history is told in it, some pain. But also, its end. The scars, then, are the seams of the memory, an imperfect finish that heals us by damaging us. The way that time finds so that we never forget the wounds.” Bonnett, \textit{Explicaciones No Pedidas}. 
weight be felt, which is equivalent to that of the entire universe as if in itself weighed the life of someone who, in life, can no longer live. It is pesadumbre,\(^\text{120}\) that deeply Spanish word that always comes from the heart.\(^\text{121}\)

To this Zambrano tells us

Wouldn't this deep human desire for ‘catharsis,’ a perennial desire of possesing a transparent and clear soul, signal another deep need? Transparent is something we say in appreciating a crystal, or about one thing that is the medium to let pass through another thing. Depth is not the opposite condition, as it is a quality that we assign to a higher soul. A clear and deep soul…for which ultimate function in life does a person need it? What does the soul need to let pass through its transparency, what deep roots does it have to house in its profound depth?”\(^\text{122}\)

Heart and soul are essential concepts for understanding each other, and they often appear combined in Zambrano’s writing:

But that which is called ‘psyche,’ that it is called soul, where has it gone? Scientific psychology has become responsible for its study. But really, the soul remained as a

\(^{120}\) Pesadumbre is a physical or moral discomfort, unease or annoyance. It is also associated with grief, sorrow, or a heavy heart. The word’s etymology comes from the adjective pesado (heavy) and the suffix -umbre that indicates quality, set, and quantity. Barcia, *Primer Diccionario General Etimologico de La Lengua Española*.

\(^{121}\) Zambrano, *Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma*, 64. “El corazón en llamas, o el fuego del corazón es la metáfora, la forma en que se ha revestido en sus apariencias históricas. Pero en la terminología popular, en esa vida que el «corazón» ha llevado en sus fieles territorios, el corazón no es fuego, sino que parece presentarse en símbolos espaciales: es como un espacio que dentro de la persona se abre para dar acogida a ciertas realidades. Lugar donde se albergan los sentimentos inexplicables que saltan por encima de los juicios y de lo que puede explicarse. Es ancho y es también profundo, fondo de dónde salen grandes resoluciones, grandes verdades son certidumbres. Y a veces arde en él una llama qué sirve de guía a través de situaciones complicadas y difíciles, una luz propia que permite abrirse paso allí dónde parecía no haber paso alguno; descubrir los poros de la realidad cuando se muestra cerrada. Encontrar también solución de un conflicto interior cuando se ha caído un laberinto inextricable por obra de las enredadas circunstancias. En esta cultura permanente del corazón, no arde cómo fuego sino como llama, llama que no produce dolor sino felicidad. Y es luz que ilumina para salir de imposibles dificultades; luz suave que da consuelo. En esta misma cultura el corazón tiene heridas, lentes, a veces de imposible curación; diríase que las heridas en él no se cierran jamás porque tienen un cierto carácter activo, son heridas vivas, como heridas, de las que emana constantemente una gota de sangre que impide su cicatrización. Y, por último, el corazón pesa; y es lo peor, puede hacer sentir su peso, qué equivale al del universo entero, como si en él pesara la vida de alguien que, en la vida, no puede ya vivirla. Es la pesadumbre, esa palabra hondamente española, la pesadumbre viene siempre del corazón.”

\(^{122}\) Zambrano, 33. “[Se ha predicado insistentemente del alma la pureza, la transparencia]. ¿No indicará este hondo anhelo humano de ‘catharsis,’ este perenne deseo de poseer un alma clara y transparente, alguna hondo necesidad? Transparente es algo que decimos en alabanza de un cristal, por ejemplo, de una cosa que es el medio para dejar pasar otra. Y no es condición contraria, la profundidad, cualidad que igualmente adjudicamos a un alma superior. Un alma clara y profunda… ¿para qué última función de su vida necesita el hombre tenerla? ¿Qué tiene que dejar pasar el alma a través de su transparencia, qué hondas raíces tiene que albergar en su profundidad?”

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challenge. On the one hand the Reason of the person lit up nature; on the other, reason founded the transcendent character of the person, their being and their freedom. But between nature and the self from the idealist thinking, there remained in the person that piece of the cosmos called soul. What do we know about the soul? According to different moments in History, the soul has been preferably entangled with a zone in the universe and has been related to the other things that within the human are not the soul. It would be appealing to go about uncovering the soul using the ways that the soul has sought to express itself, leaving behind, for the moment, what the intellect has said about it. Uncovering those reasons that the heart itself has found, making the most of its loneliness and abandonment.

Zambrano makes numerous reflections about the senses, feelings, and affect, all indicative of her interest in an affective and sensitive education and way of being in the world. She tells us that human life moves itself among opposites, that it is a continuous movement where the metaphors of “the life of nature” are irreplaceable as they help us get an idea about what goes on in our soul.

3.2 Abandonment

Zambrano shows us a crack, an opening from the closed system of rationalist knowledge, that of the Cartesian world of consciousness, where something different about the heart emerges

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123 She asks us, “In what way has the person felt their soul, and in what relation, according to them and the world, have they felt those two poles of the world that we could call God and Nature. If the person does not consist of their soul —and today we know that clearly— how have they felt that piece of cosmos residing within them?”

Zambrano, 33. “De qué manera ha sentido el hombre su alma, y en qué relación, con respecto a sí mismo y al mundo, a esos dos polos del mundo que podríamos llamar Dios y la Naturaleza. Si el hombre no consiste en su alma —y hoy lo vemos claramente— ¿cómo ha sentido ese trozo de cosmos alojado en él?”

124 Zambrano, 25. “Pero esto que se llama ‘psique,’ que se llama alma, ¿qué se ha hecho? Se encargo la Psicología científica de su estudio. … En realidad, quedaba el alma como un reto. Por una parte la Razón del hombre alumbraba la naturaleza; por otra, la razón fundaba el carácter trascendente del hombre, su ser y su libertad. Pero entre la naturaleza y el yo del idealismo, quedaba ese trozo del cosmos en el hombre que se ha llamado alma. ¿Qué sabemos de ella?”

125 Zambrano, 34. “Según distintos momentos de la Historia, el alma se ha enlazado preferentemente con una zona del universo y ha estado relacionada con las otras cosas que en el hombre no son alma. Atrayente sería ir descubriendo el alma bajo aquellas formas en que ella sola ha ido a buscar su expresión, dejando aparte por el momento lo que ha dicho el intelecto acerca del alma que cae bajo él. Descubrir esas razones del corazón, que el corazón mismo ha encontrado, aprovechando su soledad y abandono.”
and it is noticed. She writes, “What we first feel when reading the Discourse on the Method and the Cartesian Meditations is that the rhythm has changed, the rhythm that we can say is from the heart, that the crises have exposed in the heart’s betraying sound which is not normally perceptible, as a constant ground where the voice of what is intelligible stands out.” It is sort of a two-sided view of the Western reason in the 19th century. On one hand, reason imposes itself on nature, pointing towards knowledge while abandoning other aspects of our humanity. On the other hand, there is an awareness of the poetic knowledge of the cosmos and nature that is unattainable; this idea was informed and exemplified by Romanticism, of which Zambrano tells us that:

The romantic, who with their reason subdues the forces of nature as never before, speaks poetically of nature, with terror, almost frightened. But nature was, for that romantic person, only a mirror in which they could see their soul reflected; their soul about which scientific reason had nothing to say; their soul that was left in charge of that emerging science called Psychology «independent of Metaphysics». The soul was looking for itself within poetry, in poetic expression, through enraged nature. ‘The unfathomable chasms,’ ‘the endless depths,’ the ‘thunderous storms,’ were the soul’s own chasms, its own storms, darkened by the abandonment of the light of reason.

Later, Zambrano continues challenging scientific formulas and humans’ attempts to reduce life while confronting an unknowable mystery that is and will be forever present. She writes:

That romantic person, whose reason subdued the universe to stop the lightening and break-down the water, was at the same time enchanted by the immensity of the seas or by the fulminating electric spark as if they were under a divine power. It was their own

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126 Zambrano, 52. “Lo primero que sentimos al leer el Discurso del Método y las Meditaciones Cartesinas, es que ha cambiado el ritmo, el ritmo que podríamos llamar del corazón, que las crisis ponen al descubierto en su delator sonido, y que normalmente no se percibe; constante fondo sobre el que se destaca la voz de lo inteligible.”

127 Zambrano, 26. “El hombre romántico que con su razón va sometiendo las fuerzas de la naturaleza como jamás se había hecho, habla poéticamente de a naturaleza con terror, casi con espanto. Pero la naturaleza era, para este hombre romántico, sólo espejo donde podia ver reflejada su alma; su alma, de quien la razón aplicada a la ciencia nada le decía; su alma, encargada al conocimiento de su naciente ciencia llamada Psicología «independizada de la Metafísica». El alma se buscaba a sí misma en la poesia, en la expresión poética. A través de la naturaleza enfurecida se buscaba a sí misma. «Los abismos insondables, las ‘simas sin fin,’ ‘las tempestades fragorosas,’ eran sus propios abismos, sus propias tempestades, entenebrecidos por el abandono de la luz de la razón.”
misunderstood soul, abandoned by The Light of Reason, which was directed by an
irresistible compensatory force towards that nature in what is unattainable by humans.
People can reduce the natural phenomena to mathematical formulas, but from those
formulas there is something unblendable and indomitable that transcends, leaving them
astonished by the mystery of its presence, by its striking beauty.128

These exaltations by the Romantics, where the heart was like a magic figure or a central dogma,
ended up hurting the heart more, according to Zambrano. Because when such Romantics
disappeared, “[the heart] ended up being the entity most relentlessly condemned to exile, the
most quickly expelled from the visible area of the cultured life.”129 Privileging reason and
abandoning the soul by reducing it to the concept of psyche has been only a veil; for Zambrano,
the technicalities and reasons for explaining life have become an imposition of “the colour of
empire”130

Almost unworthy of life, of the immediate life, we present ourselves today with
techniques, and technical reasons, also with analysis equally technical of the soul
reduced to psyche, to machine; invaders always, yesterday still and even today in war-
like fashion and then peacefully immediately after, industrially, where we are not being
called. Everything is the color of empire, of commercial imposition.131

128 Zambrano, 27. “El hombre romántico cuya razón sometía al universo para detener el rayo y descomponer el agua,
se encontraba al mismo tiempo bajo el encanto de la inmensidad de los mares o del fulminante de la chispa eléctrica,
como bajo un poder divino. Era su propia alma incomprendida, abandonada de La Luz de la razón, que se dirigía por
una irresistible fuerza de compensación hacia esa naturaleza en lo que tiene de inabarcable por el hombre.
Los fenómenos naturales pueden ser reducidos por el hombre a fórmulas matemáticas, pero de esas fórmulas
trasciende algo incombiable, irreductible que deja al hombre asombrado ante el misterio de su presencia, ante lo
impresionante de su belleza.”

129 Zambrano, 62. “(…) ha sido la entidad más implacablemente condenada al destierro, más rápidamente expulsada
del área visible de la vida culta.”

130 Zambrano calls out the Western culture and writes that it has all around “the colour of empire” as a “commercial
imposition.” She complains about how in the Western culture “we go where we are not being called, armed up with
technical reasons, and wherever we arrive the dance stops, the song is shut down”. This reflection draws on the
misery and domination created by colonization, to which we will refer to more deeply further down.

131 Zambrano, Los bienaventurados, 16. “Indignos casi de la vida, de la vida inmediata, nos presentamos hoy con
técnicas, razones técnicas también, análisis igualmente técnicos del alma reducida a psique, a máquina; invasores
siempre, ayer todavía y aún hoy guerreramente y en seguida pacíficamente, industrialmente, donde no nos llaman.
Todo es color de imperio, de comercial imposición.”

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For Zambrano, the problem of reason is with how it has been focused on and privileged as a form of domination and absolute truth. While the heart, soul, and all the sensory data we receive have been abandoned, they are still there, pumping life and waiting to be seen in order to inform the person in their act of becoming. That path requires hope and an integral notion of reason and emotion; it requires a re-encounter.

3.3 Balance

Zambrano uses the word “symbiosis” to explain how feeling and understanding can come together. Although she does not use the word corazonar, this is what I find behind her offerings: a sort of synergy, a combined effort, a cooperation for life. For Zambrano, the sacred, which is a constant concern in her work, is that ultimate background, the most creative, nested part of our intimacy that lives in our entrails. And from there, feelings and sensory data connect to consciousness in a balancing act. She says:

Feeling and understanding cannot come together except, like everything living or in the process of becoming, by a kind of symbiosis. Symbiosis, a dance at the beginning and during a time in which those who are going to meet occupy each other's place. There are changes of place, interweaving according to rhythm. The feeling awakens, enlivens and it is a revived fire through [the process of] understanding; the feeling that guides watching only on long dark nights, that is then sustained, guarded. Balance, as a symbol, is formed like this. It is formed, since in the case of this symbol itself and as a symbol of thinking — thinking, thinking as measure, thinking as feeling — it must be done in the thinking ‘subject’ that [the feeling] cannot limit it more, even if it is in one of its most modest and fruitful forms: that of coordinates. The hand should collaborate,

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132 According to Zambrano, transcending reality and connecting with destiny is only possible with the poetic word and truth as revelation. And education is what leads us to listen to the existence of the sacred as a call from the heart. In Los Bienaventurados she tells us about the revelations from exile as she writes, “There is that risk when having something revealed it is constantly rejected. The revelation has been confined to what is specifically religious, and it is about it or close to it that century after century a theology has been built in symbiosis with a certain philosophy.”

133 I find comfort in Zambrano’s descriptions of the symbiosis occurring between feeling and understanding, as well as the use of the metaphor symbiosis itself, to explain this part of life that is constantly moving in a balancing act that is reciprocal. But reciprocal does not mean the exact same thing for every part, but rather refers more to the action of whatever organism can do in its unique task and capacity, at the time it's needed, and at the amount it can; just like the universal mycelium involves a lot of teamwork and outrageous diversity, each connected, each essential.
no doubt, by drawing, in this symbiosis of feeling and understanding; the hand and the body, quieting down at the same time as moving or while still moving; The breath, the ear. The body cannot remain apart from the concentration, which is thinking without entailing untold consequences, for example: leaving the imagination to its fancy to fantasize, since the imagination is the most corporeal or bodily faculty of the human mind. The imagination walking on its own is the sad luxury born of abandonment, like so many others.\textsuperscript{134}

As Zambrano showed us in that last part of the quote, reason can never be removed from our being, nor can feeling. Deep down we know that, but we rarely notice it, therefore she leads us into understanding the importance of perceiving, slowing down, discerning, and breathing through what is going on within us. To continue understanding this, Zambrano tells us that what mostly goes on in our soul, what is constantly occurring in our senses, are feelings.\textsuperscript{135} They

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\textsuperscript{134} Zambrano, Los bienaventurados, 91. “El sentir y el entender no pueden reunirse sino, como todo lo viviente o en vía de serlo, por una especie de simbiosis. Simbiosis, danza en un comienzo y durante un tiempo en el cual los que van a reunirse ocupan el uno el lugar del otro. Cambios de lugar, encuentro según ritmo. El sentir despierta, aviva y es fuego reanimado por el entender; el sentir que guía velando solo en largas noches oscuras, luego es sostenido, custodiado. La Balanza, como símbolo, se forma así. Se forma, puesto que tratándose de este símbolo por sí mismo y como símbolo del pensar —pensar, pensar como medida, pensar como sentimiento— ha de hacerse en el «sujeto» pensante que no puede acotarla sin más, aunque sea en una de sus más modestas y fecundas formas: la de unas coordenadas. La mano debería colaborar, sin duda, dibujando, en esta simbiosis del sentir y del entender; la mano y el cuerpo, aquietándose al par que se mueve o sin dejar de moverse; la respiración, el oído. El cuerpo no puede quedarse aparte de la concentración que es pensar sin que acarree inenarrables consecuencias, por ejemplo: dejar la imaginación a su albedrío para que fantasee, ya que la imaginación es la facultad más corpórea o corporal de la mente humana. La imaginación andando por su cuenta es el triste lujo nacido del abandono, como tantos otros.”

\textsuperscript{135} This passage is further illuminated by what Zambrano tells us about the senses: “Do we even know how many senses we really have? Aren’t there unknown senses yet, involved in other or located in unidentified places of the nervous system? It is not from a physiological point of view, but psychological how we approach feelings here. And even more true, more than a psychological consideration it is in these notes, this is about a modestly phenomenological consideration, a reflection on the data of our feelings. Because it is about what we feel first of all. Deciphering what one feels, perceiving with some clarity what happens within oneself, is a requirement of being a person. The life that flows within us asks for a certain transparency. The senses, that is what comes to us through them, are cropped on a certain background. Sensory data involves and carries with it a whole world, perhaps the whole world. More in a certain way. A sense is a path to reality, a way of accessing it. Which happens without a doubt because the reality is inexhaustible. And because we have lost, if we ever had it, immediate contact with it”. Zambrano, Casado, and Sánchez-Gey, Filosofía y Educación, 53. “¿Sabemos acaso cuántos sentidos en verdad tenemos? ¿No existirán sentidos desconocidos todavía, implicados en otros o emplazados en lugares del sistema nervioso no identificados todavía? No es desde un punto de vista fisiológico, sino psicológico como nosotros abordamos aquí los sentidos. Y aun verdad más que de una consideración psicológica, se trata en estas notas, de una consideración modestamente fenomenológica, de una reflexión sobre los datos de nuestro sentir. Pues de lo que sentimos se trata antes que nada. Descifrar lo que se siente, percibir con cierta nitidez lo que dentro de uno mismo pasa, es una exigencia del ser persona. La vida que dentro de nosotros fluye pide una cierta transparencia. Los sentidos, es decir lo que a nosotros llega a través de ellos, se recorta sobre un cierto fondo. Un dato sensorial supone
happen to us in the sense that they affect us, and sometimes “pierce” us. Zambrano remarks that “they extend through the time of consciousness and affect everything that happens in it; nothing escapes feelings, entire groups of thoughts, series of perceptions and even the memory is affected, and sometimes, subjected to, several mixed feelings or just one that takes them as elsewhere and still changes their structure.”  

For Zambrano, while feelings go on within us, we are also constantly dwelling in our thinking, given that “thoughts are for thinking.” But for her, often scientific and sometimes even philosophic thinking has removed the sacredness from the human. And so she offers a poetic thinking, a sort of corazonar, in unity of feeling and reason that is safe from the method and the question, a feeling that surrounds the being and at the same time reveals it, “since thinking for now is to decode what one feels as freeing it from the obscurity in which it is captured.” Zambrano adds,

To think properly is to dredge up something from the bowels of reality in any of its aspects and modalities. Well, if the reality/ies, plural and one ultimately, according to the a priori of the human being, if it were entirely visible, meaning homogeneously visible, it would be just a matter of time and attention to see it as it is presented, without any need to enter it, because it would not have an inside itself. The inside is not the same as within, but both have in common being something that does not appear in sight, something that is behind what at first sight manifests itself. The interiority gives an idea of an enclosed space, the inside of something hidden, captured and even imprisoned in this space. And even of something without its own space, prisoner, inmate, imprisoned, entangled, captive. Something alive, then. A gut is something that can't live in principle manifesting itself in visibility, unthinkable, since the field of the thinkable has been made to coincide with the field of visibility, of manifestation, according to the initial metaphor of Greek thought, of the intellectual light of the intelligible light, extreme and

y lleva consigo todo un mundo, quizás el mundo todo. Mas de una cierta manera. Un sentido es un camino hacia la realidad, una vía de acceso a ella. Lo cual sucede sin duda porque la realidad, ella, es inagotable. Y porque hemos perdido, si alguna vez lo tuvimos, el contacto inmediato con ella."

136 Zambrano, Casado, and Sánchez-Gey, 79. “Y son así los sentimientos; se extienden por el tiempo de la conciencia y afectan a todo lo que en ella sucede; nada escapa de los sentimientos, grupos enteros de pensamientos, series de percepciones y hasta el recuerdo queda afectado y en ocasiones, sometido a los sentimientos varios entremezclados o uno solo que los lleva como a otro lugar y aun cambian su estructura.”
decayed, as we must see more closely by Western philosophical tradition — including that of Islamic philosophy.\textsuperscript{137}

Reality is not entirely visible; one of Zambrano’s invitations resides in identifying its manifestations and our ways of mediating with it. She works to give reason the capacity to assume a human dimension, in that a person can create and create oneself, one can produce, and in that production we become comprehensible.\textsuperscript{138} The balance or regulation, Zambrano claims, is within our properties of feeling and understanding. She states:

A symbol has to be captured in the plurality of its meanings, in a single act of thought. This cannot happen if feeling does not accompany understanding; if feeling does not precede as a guide to understanding and does not continue to be guided by it. Feeling and understanding should have never been separated. In that beginning of knowledge which is somewhat indifferent to be placed or not at a certain time, in a more or less

\textsuperscript{137} Zambrano, \textit{Los bienaventurados}, 92. “Pensar propiamente es arrancar algo de las entrañas a la realidad en cualquiera de sus aspectos y modalidades. Pues que si la realidad, plural y una en último término, según el a priori del ser humano, fuera enteramente visible, quiere decirse homogéneamente visible, sería tan sólo cuestión de tiempo y de atención el irla viendo según se fuera presentando, sin necesidad alguna de adentrarse en ella, pues que no tendría un dentro propiamente. El dentro no es lo mismo que interior, pero uno y otro tienen de común ser algo que no aparece a la vista, algo que está tras de lo que a primera vista se manifiesta. La interioridad da idea de un espacio encerrado, el dentro de algo escondido, apresado y hasta prisionero en este espacio. Y aun de algo sin espacio propio, prisionero, recluso, apresado, enredado, cautivo. Algo vivo, pues. Una entraña es algo que no puede en principio vivir manifestándose en la visibilidad, impensable, ya que el campo de lo pensable se ha hecho coincidir sin más con el campo de la visibilidad, de la manifestación, según la metáfora inicial del pensamiento griego, de la luz intelectual de la luz inteligible, extremada y decaída, como hemos de ver más detenidamente por la tradición filosófica occidental —incluida la de la filosofía islámica—.”

\textsuperscript{138} This is why her poetic reason contains a deep sense of corazón as it refers to doing, to generating in an act where we create our own meaning. Zambrano was ahead of what today’s neuroscientists affirm about reality and consciousness. For example, neuroscientist Anil Seth says that “what we consciously see depends on the brain’s best guess of what’s out there.” According to Seth, our experienced world is a combination of what comes from the inside out and the outside in, as in a “controlled hallucination” where “we predict ourselves into existence.” Now, Zambrano claims something similar to Seth, that we do not just passively perceive the world, but that we actively generate it.
precise tempo, because every beginning is at the same time a goal. There where all its active purity occurs, is the place of ‘the knowledge that is sought.’

For Zambrano crisis shows the changes from the heart, and it is part of what makes us human. According to Zambrano, “the experience is from a being, this who is the human, this who is me, that I am becoming by virtue of what I see and suffer and not of what I reason and think.” She follows,

There is nothing more contrary to get out of this situation than forcing oneself to get out of it. On the contrary, we must stand in that emptiness of the mind with a firm heart. And then, only then, is when the answer emerges: an answer even more precise than we thought we had. Between the question and the answer there must be, to mediate, a void, a pausing of the mind, a certain suspension of time. For different reasons that will be shared, there is one that we want to point out above all: the heart must attend in every sense of the word the act of responding to something, because to respond is first of all to respond to something, to be present to something. And without the assistance of the heart the person is never fully present.

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139 This quote reminds me of Octavia Butler’s famous quote, “All that you touch You Change. All that you Change Changes you. The only lasting truth is Change. God is Change.” Butler, Parable of the Sower. Butler’s quote is a spell, a prayer, a visionary and prophetic affirmation, a symbol that, as Zambrano says, has to be captured in the plurality of its meanings. Both these authors offer entire universes to learn from, both reflect on change and plasticity, as change reflects yielding against a force yet remaining, to some extent, intact. They acknowledge that anything in question is changeable, no matter how traditional or conservative; it is and always will be moving.

140 Zambrano, Los bienaventurados, 89. “Pues que un símbolo ha de ser captado en la pluralidad de sus significaciones, en un solo acto de pensamiento. Cosa que no es posible que suceda si el sentir no acompaña al entender; si el sentir no precede como guía al entendimiento y no sigue luego guiado por él. El sentir y el entender no debieron estar separados en un principio, en ese principio del conocimiento que es un tanto indiferente situar o no en un determinado tiempo, en un illo tempore más o menos preciso, pues que todo principio es a la par una meta: allí donde se da en toda su pureza activa es el lugar del ‘conocimiento que se busca.’”

141 Zambrano, 30. “La experiencia es desde un ser, este que es el hombre, este que soy yo, que voy siendo en virtud de lo que veo y padezco y no de lo que razono y pienso. Porque el hombre se padece a sí mismo y por lo que ve.”

142 Zambrano, Casado, and Sánchez-Gey, Filosofía y Educación, 48. “Nada hay más contrario para salir de esta situación que el esforzarse para salir de ella. Por el contrario, hay que sostenerse en ese vacío de la mente con un corazón firme. Y entonces, sólo entonces es cuando aflora la respuesta: una respuesta todavía más precisa de la que creíamos tener. Entre la pregunta y la respuesta debe de existir, de mediar, un vacío, una detención de la mente, una cierta suspensión del tiempo. Por varias razones que procuraremos ir manifestando, mas ante todo por esta que ahora señalamos: que el corazón debe de asistir en todos los sentidos de la palabra al acto de responder de algo, porque responder es ante todo responder ante algo, presentarse ante algo. Y sin la asistencia del corazón la persona nunca está del todo presente.”
With a heart pumping blood throughout the body, feeding the whole circulatory system, supplying it with oxygen and nutrients and a whole list of unknown and unknowable things, we continue this journey, acting as though each beginning is already a goal, as its continuation is inevitable. The emptiness that Zambrano claims, –that pause and the void–, are all spaces of fertility and potential, and all of them require the heart’s help.

### 3.4 Beginning as a Goal

The inevitable change that occurs in everything we do and in ourselves has a rippling effect that is hard to grasp, especially when taking into account Zambrano’s idea that as humans we are in a continuous state of becoming through different births that come from the heart. Zambrano challenges our understanding of reason as the place of our moral faculty, where having a conscience, a heart, a soul, and intuition become part of the moral faculties that inform our being. Through her use of metaphors and her call for balance, Zambrano guides us into sitting with the strange entity we know as “the heart,” and she asks us to bring it back from the exile we have put it in. When she calls the heart in, she does not want us to forget about reason, but instead to realize that they do not exist separately—just as corazonar is not about one or the other,—but as a whole in relation to these parts that contain and nourish each other. The heart functions as a crystal to let something else pass through it, something that is deep, ancestral, and sacred, and that helps us to capture the plurality of reality by channeling the data from our senses and feelings. She looks to bring back the heart to its originary unity, where the creative power of the person resides. But this can only happen because the heart mediates between crisis and the possibility of sustaining itself on hope. To elucidate this connection, hope will be explored in the following chapter.
Chapter 4: Hope

The hope that is rescued from doom is the true freedom. It is the hope already held by consciousness and that is on its way to finding its argument. Only the hope that survives the enigma and affirms itself by deciphering the enigma, is the one that shapes and informs consciousness, [that hope is] also the one that rescues consciousness from its rivalry with life, by transforming its cold clarity in living light.

—MARIA ZAMBRANO, “El Hombre y Lo Divino”

On the Pulse of Morning
Here, root yourselves beside me.
I am the Tree planted by the River,
Which will not be moved.
I, the Rock, I the River, I the Tree
I am yours--your Passages have been paid.
Lift up your faces, you have a piercing need
For this bright morning dawning for you.
History, despite its wrenching pain,
Cannot be unlived, and if faced
With courage, need not be lived again.
Lift up your eyes upon
The day breaking for you

—MAYA ANGELOU, “On the Pulse of Morning”

Maria Zambrano’s philosophical and political work aims to bring to consciousness a hopeful horizon, one that helps us to move beyond the tragic division between reason and life. Within her approach to the universal condition of exile, it is hope where Zambrano finds shelter. She tells us that there is no social system that prevents us from dealing with alienation, so her offer is an ethical one that proposes developing knowledge through the inevitable crisis and challenging the tragedies of history through a continuous rebirth. For Zambrano, this is the constant purpose in human history, which is revealed as hope, as a value that transcends the
individual. The chosen excerpts from her work referenced below will be organized according to her reflections on hope as the substance of life and as a function of struggle, and its relationship with reality and time.

4.1 The Substance of Life

María Zambrano takes shelter in hope and asks us why we do not have a history of hope, as for her hope is the true human history. She tells us, “Hope is the hunger to be entirely born, of bringing into fullness that which we only carry as a project.”\(^{143}\) In this sense, hope is the substance of our life, its ultimate background, born from struggle; it asks us to surrender. She states that we are living problems and, therefore, we have a life-long crisis, but it is precisely because we lack that we wait and hope, because we suffer from incompleteness. But we are also a promise that requires attention\(^{144}\) and education, and this demands hope:

\(^{143}\) Zambrano, Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma, 112. “La esperanza es hambre de nacer del todo, de llevar a plenitud, lo que solamente llevamos en proyecto.”

\(^{144}\) When Zambrano calls for attention, I cannot help but to connect it to contemplation as a way in education. For Zambrano, the exercise of attention is the basis of all activity; in a way, it is life manifesting itself. She says that not paying attention is not true living, and she continues: “But it is a complex exercise, of an entire education, of the education of the whole organism and of the human being and not only of the mind or of the senses. But the more the attention takes on, the more dispersed it is, the more wandering its course becomes, but it can be said that it is pursuing something beyond or underneath it all; something like the center or knot of the argument. A distracted person may actually be a deeply attentive person, a person embedded in attention in search of their argument. But one does not look so steadily for what in a way one already has. And the unitary assumption of all these various forms of attention is, of course, the same as the intimate, substantial assumption of all the planes that make up the structure of the human being: the need for argument, which involves purpose. That inalienable purpose that demands again and again and always invincible hope.” Zambrano, Casado, and Sánchez-Gey, Filosofía y Educación, 103. (“El ejercicio de la atención es la base de toda actividad, es en cierto modo la vida misma que se manifiesta. No atender es no vivir. Mas se trata de un ejercicio complejo, de toda una educación, de la educación de todo el organismo y del ser humano y no solamente de la mente ni de los sentidos. Mas cuanto más abarque la atención, cuanto más dispersa esté, cuanto más errabundo sea su curso, más se puede afirmar que esté persiguiendo algo más allá o bajo todo ello; algo que sea así como el centro o nudo del argumento. Una persona distraída, puede ser en realidad, una persona profundamente atenta, una persona embebida en una atención en busca de su argumento. Mas no se busca tan sostenidamente lo que en cierto modo no se tiene ya. Y el supuesto unitario de todas estas diversas formas de la atención, es el mismo, naturalmente, que el supuesto íntimo, sustancial de todos los planos que compongan la estructura del ser humano: la necesidad de argumento, que envuelve la finalidad. Esa finalidad irrenunciable que demanda una y otra vez y siempre la invencible esperanza.”)
After the history of facts will have to happen the history of hopes, the true human history. The unity of a culture comes from the system of hopes upon which it is drawn. But because this system of hopes and despair often comes after the facts, it has been not only unknown but avoided with that fear of the modern person towards that which goes beyond a simple event. But, it will be said that it is fundamental to find the place where such hopes are manifested in order to grasp them, because if by trying to get them we engage with the shadow of such hopes, we will never clearly know what to expect, specially in times of confusion and crisis.\(^{145}\)

For Zambrano, hope initiates culture, and is as transcendent as life itself.\(^{146}\) It is related to our fears and our needs,\(^{147}\) and channels ways of being across time.\(^{148}\) As relative, imperfect,

\(^{145}\) Zambrano, *Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma*, 149. “A la historia de los hechos tendrá que suceder la historia de las esperanzas, la verdadera historia humana. La unidad de una cultura proviene del sistema de esperanzas que en ella se dibuja. Pero como este sistema de esperanzas y desesperaciones suele estar detrás de los hechos, ha sido no solamente desconocido sino rehuído, con ese miedo del hombre moderno ante lo que va más allá de un simple acontecimiento. Pero, se dirá, es menester ante todo encontrar el lugar donde tales esperanzas se manifiestan para captarlas, pues si recurrimos con su sombra al intentar apresarlas, pues rara vez sabemos a punto fijo qué hemos de esperar y menos en tiempos de confusión y crisis.”

\(^{146}\) Zambrano follows this idea by saying, “Hope, before manifesting itself as such in the various ways in which we have pointed out, is the ultimate background of life, life itself — we would say — that in human beings is inexorably directed towards a purpose, towards a beyond; life that is enclosed in the form of an individual overflows it [hope], transcends it. Hope is the very transcendence of life that ceaselessly flows and keeps the individual being open.” Zambrano, *Los bienaventurados*, 100. (“La esperanza, antes de manifestarse como tal en las diversas formas en que hemos señalado, es el fondo último de la vida, la vida misma —diríamos— que en el ser humano se dirige inexorablemente hacia una finalidad, hacia un más allá, la vida que encerrada en la forma de un individuo la desborda, la trasciende. La esperanza es la trascendencia misma de la vida que incesantemente mana y mantiene el ser individual abierto.”)

\(^{147}\) Here I offer an important clarification in terms of how Zambrano differentiates hope and need. She says: “There is nothing more illegitimate than to assign the content of hope to need. The need is always “immediate”, urgent, unyielding and at the same time ephemeral. When it has been met, it leaves a place, luxury of time and attention of the mood that can and should go on to something else. The purer hopes are the more capable of sustaining a lifetime with only a weak sign of fulfillment. Need cannot be deceived because it wants immediate realities; Hope can be [deceived], because in its essence is the transcendent being. And so, it has no due date and the purer, the freer [it is] from its immediate fulfillment. Only in this way, moving away, it gives encouragement to all life, instills confidence and even in its agony unleashes the creative impetus, as if the human being did not wait for hope to be fulfilled and decided to create something that would feed them. Like art.” Zambrano, Casado, and Sánchez-Gey, *Filosofía y Educación*, 126. (“Pues nada hay más ilegítimo que el adjudicar a la necesidad el contenido de la esperanza. La necesidad es siempre “inmediata”, urgente, inexorable y a la vez efímera. Cuando ha sido satisfecha, deja un lugar, lujo de tiempo y de atención del ánimo que puede y debe vacar a otra cosa. Las esperanzas cuanto más puras son más capaces de sostener toda una vida, con sólo un débil signo de su cumplimiento. La necesidad no puede ser engañada pues quiere realidades inmediatas; la esperanza puede serlo, porque en su esencia está el ser transcendent. Y así, no tiene plazo y cuanto más pura, más liberada de su cumplimiento inmediato. Sólo así, alejándose, da aliento a la vida toda, infunde confianza y hasta en su agonía desata el impetu creador, como si el ser humano no aguardase a que la esperanza se cumpliese y él mismo se decidiera a crear algo que la alimente. Tal el Arte.”)

\(^{148}\) Zambrano tells us that the roots of hope, or rather the land where those roots nest and sustain, “appear in various ways: in some of them it is sometimes unrecognizable. It confines, as you know, with faith, it is its ally; but faith
incomplete beings, we are constantly renewing or updating ourselves, which can be an exhausting process. Our suffering is only telling us to be open, to be exposed, to endure, and experience these intimate feelings, this constant tragedy. Following this idea Zambrano writes that “there are times in the history of a culture that enjoy greater transparency of their hopes because they [the times] are less afraid or ashamed of contemplating what they hope for. Each era can be defined by the mirror in which it dares to look to find its image, the image of what it wants or what it thinks it is.”

To continue understanding this Zambrano states,

Because of our soul, we are the offspring of our dreams, of what we do not see, nor we can prove. Thus, we trust our life in its fulfillment to something that is nothing yet, to an uncertainty.

Hope gives the agonizing character to human life, its never-satisfied desire, its limitless effort, because there is not enough labor to fill this groaning hope: ‘We know that the whole of creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until the present time’ says Saint Paul.

Humans have an incomplete birth. That is why they have never been able to settle with living naturally and have always needed something else, religion, philosophy, art or science. They have not been born or grown entirely for this world because they do not fit in it, nor it seems like there is anything prepared in [this world] for their comfort.

Their birth is not complete, nor is the world that waits for them. Therefore, humans have to finish being born entirely and they have to make themselves their world, their niche,

sometimes presents itself as a pure will and when it falls, as impure imposition. Charity, grace, offering seem to be conditioned [to hope] at times, while [hope] pours out by itself; there is a desperate generosity. And there is hope, the rather waiting for something concrete: an event, the action of a person, and even the existence of a person whose hope hangs, since it has concentrated there as its definitive or transitory object. And we must wait for it to come closer to waiting and to refer to something closer, immediate and that does not have to be so definitive, so decisive.”

Zambrano, Los bienaventurados, 97. “Las raíces de la esperanza, más bien la tierra donde esas raíces se anidan y sustentan, es lo que querríamos considerar. Aparece la esperanza en diversos modos; en algunos de ellos resulta a veces irrecognoscible. Confina, como se sabe, con la fe, es su aliada; mas la fe a veces se presenta como un querer puro y en su caída como impura, imposición. La caridad, la gracia, la ofrenda parecen estarle condicionadas en ocasiones, mientras se derrama por sí misma; hay una generosidad desesperada. Y hay la esperanza, el esperar más bien de algo concreto: un acontecimiento, la acción de una persona, y aun la existencia de una persona de lá que la esperanza pende, pues que se ha concentrado allí como su objeto definitivo o transitorio. Y hay que aguardar que se acerque al esperar y que se refiera a algo más cercano, inmediato y que no tiene por qué ser tan definitivo, tan decisivo.”

149 Zambrano, Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma, 149. “Mas, hay épocas en la historia de una misma cultura que gozan de una transparencia mayor de sus esperanzas, que temen o se avergüenzalas menos de contemplar aquello que esperan. Cada época puede definirse por el espejo en que se atreve a mirarse para encontrar su imagen, la imagen de lo que quiere o se cree ser.”
their place, they have to endlessly give birth to themselves and the reality that houses them. It is a fact that human culture is founded in hope, and hope reveals an incomplete birth in an inadequate and even hostile reality."

Zambrano recognises the difficulty of this human fact and locates her analysis in the physical area of the heart, which is compounded by impulse, vitality, feelings, and different forces that get mixed up, renewed, and tangled but that ultimately represent a whole. When thinking of hope within time, Zambrano adds nostalgia to hope as basic orientations for humans, only differentiating them from each other because of time itself, because consciousness has split them up.

4.2 Struggle

Throughout her work Zambrano reflects widely on different times of violent and bloody struggles in human history, mainly the ones in Spain’s history which she bemoans with sadness. She claims that the struggle of the people to confront the various versions of history in search of truth must go across the labyrinth of mirrors in their quest to reconvert themselves, their reason to be. It is through struggle that the encounter with hope returns us the vision of our vocation, our

150 Zambrano, 112. "La esperanza es hambre de nacer del todo, de llevar a plenitud, lo que solamente llevamos en proyecto. En este sentido, la esperanza es la substancia de nuestra vida, su último fondo; por ella somos hijos de nuestros sueños, de lo que no vemos, ni podemos comprobar. Así fiamos nuestra vida en su cumplimiento a algo que no es todavía, a una incertidumbre (...) Esperanza que da el carácter agónico a la vida humana, su ansia jamás satisfecha, su esfuerzo sin limite, pues ningún trabajo es suficiente para colmar esta esperanza que gime: ‘Porque sabemos que todas las criaturas gimen una a una, ay aun están de parto hasta ahora’ dice San Pablo.

El hombre tiene un nacimiento incompleto. Por eso no ha podido jamás conformarse con vivir naturalmente y ha necesitado algo más, religión, filosofía, arte o ciencia. No ha nacido ni crecido enteramente para este mundo, pues no encaja en él, ni parece que haya nada en él preparado para su acomodo; su nacimiento no es completo ni tampoco el mundo que le aguarda. Por eso tiene que acabar de nacer enteramente y tiene también que hacerse su mundo, su hueco, su sitio, tiene que estar incesantemente de parte de sí mismo y de la realidad que lo aloje.

El hecho de la cultura humana se funda en la esperanza, y la esperanza revela un nacimiento incompleto en una realidad inadecuada y aun hostil.”
purpose, or destiny: to be more, *ser mais*. But first, Zambrano reminds us that all this happens within and directed in relation to reality and time. In her words:

All of the beliefs and also the ideas that refer themselves the order of the world, to the figure of reality, are submitted to hope. The person, who is at the same time fallible and solitary needs to make itself a whole reality to dwell in. This is why they build objectivity. The objectivity that is the current stability, the command that arrives and covers everyone, that orders and quiets everything.\(^1\) Hope is also directed to the time in which our life goes by because this recovered time would be our fulfilled unity. Here too, there is the undoing and the rebirth; the detachment of time and the desire of gathering it all. The hope that wants to erase time and the one that becomes anguished in picking it up and dispersing it moment to moment.\(^2\)

\(^1\) Zambrano further reflects on objectivity along these lines: “The objectivity on which hope rests also limits it and locks it. The two may find themselves in contradiction and even in dispute. The flame of hope consumes everything and there are mysterious changes in the very root of our life, in the guts where trust and mistrust exist, where hope, the love that enslaves us to reality and the desire to reduce reality to a reason that frees us, are. There is an objectivity in crisis, perhaps a very polished objectivity that is completed by the work of thought which is no longer the reservoir of hope, nor it promises that new conceiving of which we have spoken. There are moments of dissolution of all objectivity in which the person no longer accepts anything nor becomes supportive of anything. They do not allow anything to remain and truly be because they do not want to be enslaved anymore. And all objectivity enslaves us in some way. These are the most terrible conflicts, the ones taking place between the objectivity that has already been reasonably established and hope. The hope for which our unfinished self wants to be realized”. Zambrano, 118. (“Porque la objetividad, en que se apoya la esperanza, también la limita y aun la encierra. Pueden llegar a encontrarse en contradicción y aun en contienda. La llama de la esperanza todo lo consume y existen los misteriosos cambios habidos en la raíz misma de nuestra vida, en las entrañas donde existen la confianza y la desconfianza, la esperanza, el amor que nos esclaviza a la realidad y el anhelo de reducirla a razón que nos libere. Hay una objetividad en crisis, objetividad quizá muy pulida y acabada por el trabajo del pensamiento, que ya no es el depósito de la esperanza, ni promete ese nuevo engendramiento de que hemos hablado. Hay instantes de disolución de toda objetividad en que el hombre ya no acepta nada, ni se hace solidario de cosa alguna. No permite que nada permanezca y sea verdaderamente, porque ya no quiere esclavizarse. Y toda objetividad nos esclaviza de algún modo. Son los más terribles conflictos, éstos que tienen lugar entre la objetividad ya establecida razonablemente y la esperanza. La esperanza por la que quiere realizarse nuestro inacabado ser.”)

\(^2\) Zambrano, 114. “Todas las creencias y también las ideas, que se refieren al orden del mundo, la figura de la realidad, están sometidas por la esperanza. El hombre, que es al mismo tiempo algo fallido y solitario, necesita hacerse una realidad entera donde vivir. Por eso edifica una objetividad. Objetividad que es la estabilidad vigente, el orden que a todos llega y cobija, que todo lo ordena y lo que. La esperanza se dirige también al tiempo, en el que transcurre nuestra vida, pues este tiempo recobrado sería nuestra cumplida unidad. Más también aquí hay el deshacer y el renacer; el desprenderse del tiempo y el querer recogerlo todo entero. La esperanza que quiere borrar el tiempo y la que se vuelve angustia de recogerlo en su dispersión de instantes idos uno a uno.”
In times of crisis, hope also pauses and hesitates and sometimes withdraws completely.\(^{153}\) “Why does hope hesitate?” Zambrano asks. “Is it that in times of crisis it runs away, or it diminishes?”

Rather, burning despair shows the opposite: there is a widening of hope, or a new hope that timidly emerges, bundled up and confused.\(^{154}\)

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\(^{153}\) Zambrano writes that there is only one situation in which hope seems to have withdrawn completely, “leaving its headquarters to the blind need: it is not that of hunger but the one of the excess that fears before a real or imaginary danger. In it we find the opposite of hope, its shadow that faithfully accompanies it: fear. Fear, shadow of hope, negative hope, moves the satisfied need that does not want to stop being, creating then a backwards hope, a blind fortification of the need that only asks to continue. And then the scream is heard, an undercover cry that is not born of any hope, but of the panic of a satisfied need.” Zambrano, Casado, and Sánchez-Gey, *Filosofía y Educación*, 125. (“Existe sólo una triste situación en que la esperanza parece haberse retirado por completo, dejando su sede a la ciega necesidad: es no la del hambre sino la de la harta que teme ante un peligro real o imaginario. En ella encontramos lo contrario de la esperanza, su sombra que tan fielmente la acompaña: el temor. El temor, sombra de la esperanza, esperanza negativa, mueve a la necesidad satisfecha que no quiere dejar de estarlo y crea así una esperanza al revés, una fortificación ciega de la necesidad que ya no pide sino seguir. Y se oye entonces el grito, clamor encubierto que no nace de esperanza alguna, sino del pánico de una necesidad satisfecha.”)

\(^{154}\) In a reflection from Zambrano about the oppression and exploitation of the West, in her words: “In historical life, such a way of pure, unassisted hope, freed to itself or surrendered to immensity, occurs sometimes for a very long time in oppressed peoples or races, and more than oppressed: helpless. Have we, the civilized people of this West cared much, in general, about these peoples who have lived in other latitudes for centuries in this helplessness? And even more: when we have remembered them, has it been for anything other than to subject them to slavery if was judged as necessary? Peoples, entire races in a state of tribulation, of hunger, of humiliation, populate the planet threatened with annihilation by misery - according to the statistics of the corresponding organisms - continue here, on the same planet as us. And if they have resisted and if they resist, it must be, necessarily, by the superhuman force - the word comes by itself - of this hope that keeps them suspended over time, over life, generation after generation; while in the civilized west the growing well-being - always somewhat limited - coexists with anguish, with the emptying of soul and mind, with the intellectual sport of aesthetic and literary despair, with the use of the intelligence that seeks to govern reality without having contact with it; with the fragility facing the suffering, with the astonishment that awakens when verifying that happiness is not a fruit that is collected by itself, that it must be done, sustained, created and, even harder, know how to receive and collect it when it arrives.” Zambrano, *Los bienaventurados*, 99. (“En la vida histórica tal modo de esperanza pura, desasida, libráda a sí misma o entregada a la inmensidad, se produce a veces por larguísmo tiempo en pueblos o razas oprimidas, y más que oprimidas desamparadas. Los civilizados de este Occidente ¿nos hemos preocupado mucho, en general, de estos pueblos que en otras latitudes han vivido durante siglos en este desamparo? Y más aún: cuando de ellos nos hemos acordado ¿ha sido para otra cosa que para someterlos hasta la esclavitud si necesario se juzgaba? Pueblos, razas enteras en estado de tribulación, de hambre, de humillación, pueblan el planeta amenazados de aniquilación por la miseria —según las estadísticas de los organismos correspondientes—, continuaban ahí, sobre el mismo planeta que nosotros. Y si han resistido y si resisten ha de ser, forzosamente, por la fuerza sobrehumana —la palabra llena por sí misma— de esta esperanza que los mantiene suspendidos sobre el tiempo, sobre la vida, generación tras generación; mientras en el occidente civilizado el creciente bienestar —siempre un tanto limitado— coexiste con la angustia, con la desocupación de alma y mente, con el deporte intelectual de la desesperación estetizante y literaria, con el uso de la inteligencia que pretende regir la realidad sin tener contacto con ella; con la fragilidad ante el sufrimiento, con el estupor que se desperta ante la constatación de que la felicidad no es fruto que se recoja por sí mismo, de que hay que hacerla, sostenerla, crearla y, aún más dificilmente, saberla recibir y recoger cuando llega.”)
A new hope, a new phase of our hopes that may appear confused with delirium, with folly, with absurdity. These are the moments in which hope expands the most and yet it has nowhere to be fixed. Moments of beliefs without creed, of unassisted faith and wandering hope. In those moments the person is more than ever a being without asylum, a wandering refugee.\(^\text{155}\)

But it is in these moments of despair that hope appears visible, precisely when we feel locked down or in a dead-end situation, to which Zambrano remarks, “the situation without exit offers an indefinite variety of modalities, of degrees; but however absolute, as human as it may be, it can be relative. And this, the fact that every situation with no way out can be relative, is what is discovered in the light of hope. And hope has to be increasing, deepening, vivifying to allow understanding to refine and discover the exit where there was none.”\(^\text{156}\) Ultimately it is in the moments of hardship and difficulties with no apparent way out that Zambrano believes that hope may surmount the absolute obstacle.\(^\text{157}\)

### 4.3 Living Mysteries

Time is part of how we experience the world and our self. Time is another variable that gives nuance to the Zambranian hope: “That is why we have time, we are within time, otherwise, it would not make sense to consume ourselves in it if we were already completely forged, if we

\(^{155}\) Zambrano, \textit{Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma}, 120. “Una esperanza nueva, una fase nueva de nuestras esperanzas, que puede aparecer confundida con el delirio, con la insensatez, con el absurdo. Son los momentos en que la esperanza cobra mayor anchura, y sin embargo, no tiene donde fijarse. Momentos de creencias sin credo, de fe desasida y esperanza errante. El hombre es en ellos más que nunca un ser sin asilo, un refugiado errabundo.”

\(^{156}\) Zambrano, \textit{Los bienaventurados}, 102. “El conocimiento que el ser humano tiene de sí mismo proviene de lo negativo: de aquello que siente que le falta o de la falla que lo sostiene. Y así, la esperanza salta visible en la desesperanza, en la desesperanza y en la exasperación que advienen por un suceso habido en la intimidad del ser entregado a sí mismo, o encerrado dentro de una situación sin salida.”

\(^{157}\) Following this quote, Zambrano tells us that it is in the negative where hope finds its field, its place; but in the end, according to her, when life is truly or symbolically missing, earth is the place that sustains us. The symbol of the earth encompasses everything that continually sustains us. Aligned with this, Brené Brown says that hope is not a feeling or a need, “hope is a function of struggle.” It is not an emotion either, but a cognitive behavioral process that we learn when we experience adversity, when we have experienced relationships that are trustworthy, when we have faith in our ability to get out of a jam. Brown, \textit{Becoming Wise}. 78
had been born whole and finished.” According to her, in this perspective time recovers meaning based on the underlying human need to feel whole. There are different dimensions of time that Zambrano offers us, different visions to move forward within ourselves: that which is foreign to time and that which is subdued by it. In Zambrano’s view, “in human life the decisive thing is time. But, the time in which we live seems to be already the product of a rift. Hence the irresistible eagerness, born out of nostalgia from that lost time, that if it is reflected in some art it is in poetry, because poetry seeks its resurrection among this declining time.” She says that the nostalgia is from a time before every lived time. But it is not the same nostalgia that the modern person is used to, which works only around their individual history. She calls it humility and she adds:

158 Zambrano, Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma, 112. “Por eso tenemos tiempo, estamos en el tiempo, pues no tendría sentido consumirnos en él, si ya estuviésemos forjados del todo, si hubiésemos nacido enteros y acabados.”

159 In thinking about time and ways of understanding it, I bring the reflection of Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, who often relies on an Aymara aphorism that reads: “Qhip nayr uñtasis sarnaqapxañani” and can be translated as “looking to the past to walk through the present and the future” It is about the interconnection of different temporalities that coexist in each present, breaking with the linearity of time. Rivera Cusicanqui tells us that according to this aphorism, the future is not ahead, but behind. It is a burden that we carry on our backs, which forces us to deal with it and confuses us, because the attempt to orient ourselves by it (the idea of progress for example) misleads us and makes us renounce the present. What lies ahead is the past, and from ahead it guides us in our walk. “Quiñayra” is the past that can be future and that breathes in the dreams and actions of the present. Rivera Cusicanqui, Un Mundo Chíxi Es Posible. Ensayos Desde Un Presente En Crisis.

160 Zambrano, 45. “Y en la vida humana lo decisivo es el tiempo. Más, el tiempo en que vivimos parece ser ya el producto de una escisión. De ahí el irresistible afán, nacido de la nostalgia de ese tiempo perdido, que si en algún arte se refleja en la poesía, pues ella parece procurar su posible resurrección, dentro de este tiempo en decadencia.”

161 To continue understanding this, Zambrano adds, “Hope sometimes presents itself all leaked, like floating above every event, especially over every concrete being, visible, all alone, hope just like that. It then escapes from all reasoning, of all reasoning more or less dialectic: it does not get fed, it seems, on anything and can sustain the life of those who feel it and remove itself—hope that has so much to do with time—as time goes by and it plunges—for that person who feels it—into a kind of single-time supratemporality: one point only which has the capacity to house the extension of time all in its flow indefinitely. All contradictions are then abolished, and history does not tell us. It occurs rarely, individually in people who have lost everything and who do not expect anything in particular: it seems that hope has become the substance of life and that life acquires by virtue of it the characters of the substance: identity, permanence through time, consistency, individuality in extreme degree.” Zambrano, Los bienaventurados, 98. (“La esperanza se presenta en ocasiones desasida, como flotando sobre todo acontecimiento, sobre todo ser concreto, visible, ella sola, la esperanza sin más. Escapa entonces de todo razonamiento, de todo discurrir más o
And recognizing oneself in the mirror of hopes represents a deep humility of feeling yourself without being your finished self, of trusting everything to the future. An infinite audacity can be kneaded in this humility, this humility is usually the firmest starting point to embark yourself onto an unlimited adventure. Other times instead, such as that of Europe whose heart is the cartesian thought, prefer to look at the mirror of what they already are, looking for that image of their accomplished being within the mirror of reason, without trusting their definitive revelation to the future. But the current era keeps the mirror veiled to avoid running into the self-image. What is ‘expected is not known,’ or perhaps one does not want to know. Reason has eclipsed, it has sunk among the facts. This is why we must look back to the past, to the moments that are our root, that are still our past and where we can find the lost hope.162

In Filosofía y Educación, Zambrano offers a revision of the philosophical thinking going through Descartes, Hegel, Comte, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche, ultimately concluding that “at the present time there is no philosophy that offers in all its fullness, making visible the human, the very human act of vocation. And we add now, that it must be vocation, one of the ways by which the integrative thought can be revealed.”163 As we have seen, Zambrano insists that humans are born unfinished, and need to complete themselves within society, in relation to others, combining

menos dialéctico: no se alimenta, al parecer, de nada y puede sostener la vida de quien así la siente y sustraerse—ella que tanto tiene que ver con el tiempo—al transcurrir temporal y sumir el tiempo mismo—para esa persona que la siente—en una especie de supratemporalidad de instante único: un punto sólo que posee la capacidad de albergar en su inextensión la extensión del tiempo todo en su fluir indefinido. Todas las contradicciones quedan entonces abolidas y la historia no cuenta. Se produce raras veces, individualmente en personas que todo lo han perdido y que nada en concreto esperan; tal parece que la esperanza se haya convertido en sustancia de la vida y que la vida adquiera en virtud de ello los caracteres de la sustancia: identidad, permanencia a través del tiempo, consistencia, individualidad en grado extremo.”)

162 Zambrano, Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma, 150. “Y el reconocerse en el espejo de las esperanzas significa la profunda humildad de sentirse sin ser propio y acabado, de fiarlo todo al futuro. En esta humildad puede ir amasada una infinita audacia, que la humildad suele ser el punto de partida más firme para lanzarse a una ilimitada aventura. Otras épocas en cambio, como aquella europea, cuyo corazón es el pensamiento cartesiano, prefieren mirarse en el espejo de lo que ya son, buscando la imagen de su ser logrado en el espejo de la razón, sin fiar al futuro su revelación definitiva. Pero la época actual mantiene el espejo velado para no topar con la propia imagen; lo que se ‘espera no se sabe,’ ni tal vez se quiera saber; la razón se ha eclipsado, ha naufragado más bien, entre los hechos. Por ello hemos de volver la vista al pasado, a los instantes que son nuestra raíz, que son todavía nuestro ayer para encontrar a la esperanza perdida.”

163 Zambrano, Casado, and Sánchez-Gey, Filosofía y Educación, 105.
instinct and culture. This is why education becomes the key social factor of mediation with reality. To educate, she says, “will be first and foremost to guide those who begin to live in this responsible march through time.” To educate and help the person find their vocation, means to defend the human quality of transcendence, of living the hope of knowing that we can be more, fulfilling what we only have as a project.

Living is not enough for the human being, they only really live when they are living a story, individual and collective, that manifests a meaning. It is based on hope that the meaning of personal history is already achieved, despite all the differences that can be discerned between personal history and the so-called history itself, that of the community to which they belong, that of all humanity in the end, the hope placed in them, what history has promised that despite all the changes it is being fulfilled, this is what gives it its character as a human story, which allows it to be told. A story without hope is ineffable.

For me this last quote always acts as a soothing ointment for my paradoxical wonder about how come we keep hoping and finding joy within the struggle and the despair we experience. I cry every time I encounter this idea, as it activates something true and deep within me. Una historia sin esperanza es inenarrable (A story without hope is ineffable), I keep repeating to myself. A sort of mantra I now carry for when I look beyond.

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164 Maxine Greene asked us “How, in a society like ours, a society of contesting interests and submerged voices, an individualist society, a society still lacking an ‘in-between,’ can we educate for freedom? And, in educating for freedom, how can we create and maintain a common world?” Green is a relevant voice to weave into conversation with Zambrano, as her work also confronts us with deep moral questions, and the myth of modernity as a performative contradiction of freedom. Towards her critiques she offers us imagination, literature, and the arts as alternatives.

165 Zambrano, Hacia Un Saber Sobre El Alma, 111. “La esperanza es hambre de nacer del todo, de llevar a plenitud lo que solamente llevamos en proyecto.”

166 Zambrano, Los bienaventurados, 106. “No le basta vivir al ser humano, solamente de verdad vive cuando está viviendo una historia, individual y colectiva, que manifieste tener un sentido. Es en función de la esperanza como el sentido de la personal historia se alcanza ya, a pesar de todas las diferencias que puedan discernirse entre la historia personal y la llamada historia propiamente, la de la colectividad a que se pertenece, la de la humanidad toda en último término, la esperanza depositada en ella; lo que la historia tiene de promesa que a pesar de todos los avatares se va cumpliendo es lo que le da su carácter de humana historia, lo que permite que sea contada. Una historia sin esperanza es inenarrable.”
4.4 Towards a Beyond

The Zambranian hope is a love song, an incentive that keeps alive the illusion of living. It is an individual and collective manifestation of meaning, a thing capable of sustaining a lifetime even amid the worst anguish and despair. *Corazonar*: her hope is to acknowledge it in its shapeshifting kind, found behind the facts, with unrecognizable roots that interact with our unfinished selves during our constant rebirths. Thinking and feeling, loving and reasoning, together and among us, are possibilities where the cosmos resides. Hope will inevitably leave us confused at moments, but it is ultimately what leads us into defining the human quality of transcendence: that which leads us towards a beyond. But the beyond for Zambrano does not come from a projection of what we already are, but instead in trusting in what we are becoming. Crisis, struggle, and despair are all at the service of hope, making it widen and expand, as well as allowing creativity to bloom. A mediation with facts is possible through hope; it connects us to an old, divine origin without which our stories would be unspeakable.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

“And if thought doesn’t open the horizon and doesn’t hold it, and by holding it, it doesn’t enlarge it, is it thought?”

MARIA ZAMBRANO, Diálogos – Interview

With my bare feet I have traveled the path of the ancestors where the grandmothers walked with firm and potent steps under the sun of many springs to not die here I am with my basket of word with a song for their history and their memory the words are strength, courage, road and they go weaving our being words that build up worlds.

— CELERINA PATRICIA, “Natsiká” (Viaje, Journey)

One of María Zambrano’s gifts is holding thoughts and enlarging them. Reading her is like going through an initiation rite, as her writing has to do more with vision than with facts, as it is mystical, leading us to the unspeakable, that which can mostly be felt but not told. I have tried to take us across her evocative language and poetic intuitions, showing how I have been moved and expanded, and hoping you have been as well. I have loved, respected, and honoured her words, intending to enact the dispositions and spiritual work I have been trying to make explicit across my studies. My wish is that you have also felt some of the luminous experience María Zambrano has been for me, among the metaphors, the paradoxes, and the dispersed and imprecise ideas. Now I will retrace my steps in order to reveal the tapestry piece that has been woven together. First, I will display the connections between each theme and the undercurrent of corazonar alongside some insights that stay with me after this process. Next, I will respond to some anticipated objections that this work could potentially encounter. And lastly, I will finish
with some thoughts on the hardest challenge of the ceremony that has been writing & weaving this thesis, which is the incorporation of what has been learned.

5.1 Crisis, Heart, and Hope

Crisis, heart, and hope are an inseparable triad to understand the gifts María Zambrano offers us. Warping the loom with these threads allows the patterns of insights to be combined, intertwined and knotted accordingly. For Zambrano, the common place of crisis, that mediated stage between us and reality, forces us to confront the fact that we are loaned to the future, constantly in a process of becoming and earning our very being as we live. The originary crisis relies on the insufficiency of the person who, in order to finish being born, must recompose their relationship with the real. Therefore, we are always in transit. Our relationship with time is where our ability to transcend manifests within us, through hope. The variable of time in Zambrano gives hope nuance, as she tells us that we have time, we are in time; otherwise it would not make sense to consume ourselves in it if we had already been fully forged. For Zambrano our bodies cannot remain apart from thinking, nor we can escape feelings. The symbiotic dance she talks about can be understood as a way of coronar, both heart and reason, and our co-reasoning alongside one another is key to our humanity. Zambrano tells us that we need the assistance of the heart to be fully present, and we need hope as both an agonizing character and as that which offers trust in the fulfillment of what is yet to come. The eclipsed stage of reason has passed, as we rescue it from a handful of facts. It is by combining hope and the heart that we can manifest individual and collective meaning and are able to tell the story.

Zambrano rescues transcendence from the theories that have reduced life to absolute immanence; she points to the need for mediation to help us solve the disintegrated pieces of ourselves provoked during crisis. Zambrano’s transcendentalism has philosophical, religious, and
mystical strands, all of which rely on a conception of the self on a deeper level. Her critique of rationalism is that it relegates being to only one idea, and excludes everything else outside of it. Her call is to respond in community with others by developing new ways of seeing and looking, attending to all the possibilities of our humanity beyond the psychological or intellectual realms exclusively. Hope lightens our human heart, giving love as a reason toward our existence. Zambrano knows that the inequitable social structures of modern capitalism are a threat to our humanity and to hope itself. Through the Zambranian hope, there is always a minimum of hope that is enough to sustain life.

For Zambrano, our attitude towards reality is something deeper than intellectual operations captured by one method only; the human condition requires searching for reality in a quest for knowledge. For that we need vocation, will, and a sensitive heart, which are all ways of mediation. Her poetic reason, or the corazonar that spans her work, is an answer, a path where life and thought, reason and love, are interdependent. This path orients life and transforms it without taking it over, as it allows memories to come back from the totalizing imposition of reason. Remembering is key for us, and Zambrano claims also that the other-than-human also remember, as memory is the heart of all that is alive, and she treasures what has not been born yet and will someday be another memory to remember. Zambrano’s triad appears braided here, leading us to attend to our heart, that place in our gut where feelings, pains, and warnings are sent. The heart is also where we attend to the hope arising, lighting up and shining in the midst of what we have felt to be impossible. It is where we become true to our being. There is no need to remove the weave from the loom yet, as patterns will continue to emerge, new threads will be added, as well as possible repurposes of the tapestry you find here. Naturally, the spaces of trouble, tension or lack of attention will be visible in the weave, as there are many possible
considerations and limitations about the work performed here, some of which will be described
next.

5.2 Education

María Zambrano’s commitment to educational issues emerges throughout her work, as a
reflective axis in her ideas about humans’ constant becoming; it is a vital part of her experience
on her journey as a one in exile, a teacher, and a lover, across her life. Even though she was not
very explicit about it, she develops a lot of ideas that we could think of as “formation” or
informal learning through reflection, observation, and tuning into our humanity in a unitary idea.
She shows education to be a humanizing project that is both individual and social. From the
individual standpoint, she explores the person in their complexity, calling for attention to the
body, mind, senses, intelligence, and intuition. From a social standpoint, education contributes to
creating “a space adequate for the human, this being, the possibility of an authentic
democracy,”167 which accounts for education in the being and the becoming of the person.
Within the system of her ideas, philosophy and education belong together, as she affirms that:
“No one can deny, not even ignore the tight relationship between philosophical thinking and
educational action.”168 María Zambrano understands that philosophy demands attention to the
problems and requirements of education, as it invites knowledge— as an instrument to becoming.
She showed this across her work, although in this thesis I focus mainly on three of her books. For
Zambrano, the educational task is “like a firm song of hope that a better world is possible thanks

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167 Portela, “María Zambrano: Educación Para La Democracia.”
168 Zambrano, Casado, and Sánchez-Gey, Filosofía y Educación, 149.
to education, and that, in a way, it can be seen as a horizon of still pending tasks.”

For Zambrano, philosophy and education must guide the knowledge of life, as they can offer ways to mediate; bringing things together, with life in the best possible way.

What Zambrano threads into her offerings is the constant creative root, which emphasizes not the receiving of knowledge but the discovering of it within ourselves and in relation to others. But she claims that there is a need to offer to educators an “idea and an image of a human, of reality and the cosmos,” a kind of “knowledge of the person in their exceptional position in the universe,” but also an itinerary of human transcendence across all the forms of reality in which they move. She also warns us of the possible masking that intellectuality and knowledge often become when they neglect their heartbeats and connections to the world. The origins of fascism during her lifetime serve as an extreme example, which was also critiqued by thinkers like Dewey and Arendt.

Reason can become a dogma, which can result in homogenized methods of teaching. Philosophy and education need more feeling, brought from the depths of the guts, where education speaks to all the dimensions of the person, in order to humanly bringing to light feelings and intelligence simultaneously. Her poetic pedagogy reclaims a lived education, attending to what emerges in the individual. From experience and awareness emerges what she calls attention. An education should be in charge of attention.

Zambrano does not argue for anti-intellectualism, she dwells in concepts, in the logos, in the word, in those concepts that are symbols and have multiple and unfinished meanings.

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Concepts are necessary in order to take feeling and thinking to the level of what is knowable. That is why she initially relies on a type of reason that emerges from enigma, a poetic space. Zambrano questions the perfectionist aim of education, asking about the benefit of perfect conduct and moral perfection if soon afterwards we can achieve the most perverse extremes of indignity as humans. To that end she proposes getting in touch with the immediate reality, to revendicate the matter and submerge ourselves in life, through a process of education that teaches us how to look. Which is more a way of clarifying the circumstances, to really look, attending to what is changing, noticing the change and having awareness while we move through it. Education needs the word, the intimacy of language, that is being constantly renovated and reborn, not a limitation on our expression. The one who thinks is also born, learns, love, hates, and dies. And education must include the vulnerability, sickness, pain, and trauma that all humans experience. This is why Zambrano’s poetic word, and her claim for poetry in life, is so powerful. It reminds me of Sandra Cisneros’ beautiful spell, when she tells us: “I have similar wound inside my heart right now. Just as tender and raw, except I have no ointment to salve it. I think it requires poetry. Maybe all the pain in the world requires poetry. Write two poems and call me in the morning. That’s my prescription for you today, world, and for me.” In the face of the rejection of the body and everything embodied, Zambrano offers attention to our insides—our guts, our entrails—and our logos: meaning and feeling at the same time. Zambrano claims that one of the demands of being a person is to decipher what one feels with some clarity. She invites us to use words that abound in meaning and are harder to name, like hope, trust, faith, and mercy.

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171 Sandra Cisneros is a poet, short story writer, novelist, essayist, performer, and artist.
In her description of exile, Zambrano confronts us with the need for an education that results in ceaseless transformation, a continuous initiation. Education then is a sort of exit, a renovated abandonment when it embraces the reborn within the crisis. According to Zambrano’s idea of the person as an incomplete being, education is necessary in the transit towards becoming. Since humans are not fully born as other living beings, becoming is necessary for humans to get to be what they are. Reluctance born out of our refusal to be ourselves, or from pretending to be something else, risks that we forget what we were, and what we are. In order to realize their potential for growth, human beings need care, compassion, knowledge, and land; we need to be guided in our continuous transit, through the uneasiness and the crisis that have hope always in the background. In the corazonar of Zambrano, she brings back poetic thinking and hope as things that transcend feeling, a vital nerve that leads to completion what we carry as projects as human beings. Zambrano’s claims resemble what we hear in the field of relational neurobiology in this moment, the idea that hope is defined as a cognitive behavioral process that we learn when we experience adversity, when we have relationships that are trustworthy, and develop faith in our ability to overcome harm.\footnote{See Brown, “The Power of Vulnerability”; Peyton, Your Resonant Self: Guided Meditations and Exercises to Engage Your Brain’s Capacity for Healing.} I reaffirm her call for an integrated way of seeing ourselves,\footnote{This question has been going on for a while in different areas. I am reminded of Dewey, who said that the question of the integration of mind-body in action “is the most practical of all questions we can ask of our civilization.” He continues: “It is not just a speculative question; it is a demand: a demand that the labor of multitudes now too predominantly physical in character be inspired by purpose and emotion and informed by knowledge and understanding. It is a demand that what now pass for highly intellectual and spiritual functions shall be integrated with the ultimate conditions and means of all achievement, namely the physical, and thereby accomplish something beyond themselves. Until this integration is effected in the only place where it can be carried out, in action itself, we shall continue to live in a society in which a soulless and heartless materialism is compensated for by soulful but futile and unnatural idealism and spiritualism.” Dewey, Body and Mind.}
that which is undiscoverable by formalities. As we reinstate sensing and loving—pedagogically, politically, and in connection with the word—we encounter the feelings that legitimate life.

5.3 Objections

The objections to this work can be just as important as the work itself. While weaving, and writing, one always has a possibility of noticing mistakes on time, when it makes sense to undo and redo accordingly. Also, there are patterns that arise in the weaving that inform about the unnamed things affecting the weaver, causing extreme tension or its opposite loose threads. Noticing all of these details and amending them is not as easy as I wish, and the way I value the limitations of this work now, will surely change after some time. However, I will only pause to discuss some of these objections (knots or disconnections), since they are not the main point of this work but are still part of it.

One could wonder why I am bringing light to a European philosopher, when I could have chosen someone else. There is so much brilliance and wisdom written across all Abya Yala and beyond, and I have already been impacted and inspired deeply by writers whose identities expand beyond what we can imagine.\textsuperscript{174} I am inspired by those voices that, just as Zambrano, deserve to be read, honored, and loved. The privilege of being an international student and have devoted time to read, think, and write provided me with a unique opportunity. As I mentioned in section 1.1.3. Story Line, I was trying to embrace my commitment to Colombia, to my

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\textsuperscript{174}I imagine sharing, writing, and translating back to Spanish the work of so many authors, poets, and spoken word artists that I have found in the world wide web, where internet and social media have played a huge role. They are all artists, some of them are also “Instagrammers,” “Twitterers,” astrologers, life and death doulas, and advocates of education who have chosen to share their work using different media. And I think as well about how beautiful it is that my mother and my communities can connect to Zambrano as well, even with the barrier of English as the principal language of this thesis. Their ability to read through the footnotes and the original quotes in Spanish is already a gain for getting Zambrano’s ideas out into the world.
\end{flushright}
communities, to a shared dream of peace and social justice. However, the idea became bigger than life itself, and it consumed me in an unhealthy way that got worst when the time and funding had run out. Though I did choose Zambrano, she also chose me, and saved me. We share language, in my case the colonized language that her ancestors brought to my land. I was amazed by her poetic prose, her affective rationalism, and the way she unapologetically relied on love and vulnerability. She was a philosopher that reclaimed the spiritual, who was deeply impacted by living in exile in different countries in Latin America and deeply loved each country that adopted her. She was influenced by the Zen world, and was a reader of Sufism and Arab literature. She was a woman, a feminist, an anti-fascist, an alchemist. She loved animals and got in trouble for defending life. All of these we have in common. I cried while reading her and went through a series of corazonadas when I was facing the possibility of changing topic for my thesis. All of the above were enough of a sign to pursue this work with rigor and passion.

When talking about hope and love, it is easy to fall into despair and cliché. Some may claim that hope can keep us in denial, complacency, and naïveté, distracting us from what needs to be done. This fear is true and can be tracked back to the myth of Pandora’s box that contained all the evils of the world that then slipped out of the jar, with only one remaining: hope. James Hillman reaffirms this opposing stance on the concept of hope, saying that “hope is a force of life and a fundamental deceit.”175 Hope then is an evil of the world because of its future-oriented impulse, as it might prevent us from seeing how here and now in which we are facing the devastating consequences of racism, exploitation, and ecological catastrophes. Similarly, with love, the saying that “we cannot live out of love” could be as true as the saying “hope is not

175 Hillman, James Hillman on Changing the Object of Our Desire.
necessary to proceed.” And I agree that hope is not really necessary, but it really is simply unavoidable. It just is, already there in the root of the hopelessness and the impossible problems, among the ills that we are, according to Zambrano. But in the most cruel, harmful, terrible settings, hope and love do not pretend that things are perfect, but rather they fuel what is needed to act for change; just like peacemaking is not passive, and love is not silent in the face of crime. It may be that having “too much heart” is actually a thing (one that I have been accused of), and in the case there is really a measure, I am ok with mine.

Aligned with the objections on hope, the worry might arise that Zambrano’s ideas might be defending crisis, as injustice or violence, for the sake of having the capacity of surviving it, as if pressure, crisis, and struggle are things to embrace, as if they are truly unavoidable; as if our own capacity to exceed our limits lies in transcending them. This worry makes sense, as understanding crisis in this way might seem as enabling, since the argument is that we have to continue to struggle because it is a viable option. I agree that struggle is not always an option. Often the only options are rest, distance, quieting the mind or the body due to pain, trauma or capacity. Even if I often wish that I had infinite capacity, I have learned that I do not. My unique gifts do not always align with where and how I am being called to be in service. But choosing not be in service (permanently or temporarily) is also an option, an allowed, embraced option of care and freedom. We are not being called to coexist with anguish, oppression or exploitation, this is just a reality we are all living in and the ways of mediating with it come in an infinite

\[176\] According to Carmen Spagnola, this saying is attributed to the Dutch people who suffered so horribly under the Nazi occupation in World War II. “They say 70% of the Jews in that country were killed. Families, friends, lovers, children, home, land, culture – all gone,” but the story of this saying actually comes from William of Orange in the 15th century who said, “It is not necessary to hope in order to act, nor to succeed in order to persevere.” Spagnola, “Beyond Hope: Leaning into Pandora’s Legacy.”
spectrum of ways. I want to act as though together we embrace the microcosm that we are, and act accordingly by embodying all the possible liberation, justice, pleasure and honesty in the universe. This I think, will impact ourselves, our communities and ultimately challenge current structures.

Finally, based on Zambrano’s biography and extended work, it is fair to question the selection of the three primary books, as well as to wonder the impacts of pulling up decontextualized excerpts and reorganizing them according to my thoughts and chosen themes. The three primary sources I am drawing on are placed in a sort of chronological order, as they were written in the beginning, middle, and end stages of her life. These works show the continuum of her ideas, while connecting them with topics that were already of interest to me, such as exile, education, affective philosophy, mysticism, and poetic writing. Exegesis and translation require technical analysis and sympathy work, as in “together” and “fellow-feeling”, and it is possible that the quotes are missing other ideas around which they had been originally written. I trust that this organization will inspire in the reader a curiosity for Zambrano and her writing, as well as attention to her as an original source. Hopefully more attention will bring the resource and dispositions needed to fully translate her books and essays in the future. I surely have my own list of works to read from Zambrano and about her that I will continue to dive into beyond this work.

All the knots, cracks, and mistakes of this thesis belong here. Despite these objections and all the limitations that may not have been taken into account, this work is presented with a curious and edifying spirit. It will continue to be metabolized within the months and years to

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177 Brown, Pleasure Activism.
come. Some of the reflections I am lingering on will be discussed in the next and final section below.

5.4 Lingering In & After the Threshold

María has given me the faith in intuition and the desire to keep on corazonando, rescuing hope from fatality, embracing this auroral light of an integrative, inclusive, whole way of being. The dualism that Zambrano critiques contrast with her offer to reincorporate spirituality and the idea of a soul that is part of the world. I also learned a lot from her thoughts on transcendence as our ability to leave ourselves, exceeding our limits, leaving traces on other beings, and acting beyond ourselves. Transcendence that is sharpened and reaches its extreme in human life is the “unstoppable tendency of the person.”

Zambrano’s concept of transcendence has expanded my sense of wonder, allowing me to connect with meaningful stories that have marked my life. For example, Article 12 of the Colombian Constitution states “No one will be subjected to forced sequestration, torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.”178 This article was translated to the Wayuunaiki language as: “Piece Ten-Two: No one can take anyone over their heart or hurt their person even if they think and say differently.”179 Two years before he was murdered, Jaime Garzón told us that if we embodied the way the Wayúus translated this article, we would be able to save the country, or at least have a more pleasant country to live in. Since then, many Colombians like myself have tried to embody this teaching despite the violence, thereby finding

178 Capítulo 1, Derechos Fundamentales, Artículo 12. “Nadie será sometido a desaparición forzada, a torturas ni a tratos o penas crueles, inhumanos o degradantes.”

179 Wayúu translation: “Pedazo Diez-Dos: Nadie podrá llevar por encima de su corazón a nadie ni hacerle mal a su persona, aunque piense y diga diferente.”
hope and peace when they are failing and lacking. Colombia was the deadliest place on earth for human rights and community leaders in 2019.\footnote{According to Front Line Defenders, more than 300 human rights leaders were killed last year in 31 countries, and nearly half of those killed were targeted specifically because of their environmental activism. The Philippines, Honduras, Mexico and Brazil all ranked among the deadliest of countries after Colombia, where the slayings of 106 human rights activists were documented in 2019.} At the same time that violence escalated all across the Colombian territories, there has been a broadening of hope and creativity that keeps us pushing for daily relational changes, and for structural transformations that will take several generations to show.

In some ways we are alone, but in many others, we simply cannot be alone in the world;\footnote{This reminds me of what Camus said of the collective value of our seemingly disconnected lives: “Some will say that this hope lies in a nation; others, in a man. I believe rather that it is awakened, revived, nourished by millions of solitary individuals whose deeds and works every day negate frontiers and the crudest implications of history.” Camus, “Banquet Speech, The Nobel Prize in Literature 1957.”} Zambrano knew of this paradox and was saddened by how we live on the same planet and yet we forget about each other. Another example of being in the world together is the now famous concept “Ubuntu,” “Soy porque Somos,” (“I am because we are”), that has been adopted all around the world in different ways. In Colombia in particular it has guided many of the indigenous movements and land-defense claims of sovereignty and healing across our territories. Likewise, in the plaque on the doors of her Foundation in Zambrano’s hometown, Vélez-Málaga, these words can be found: “One is only really free when one weighs on no one; when one humiliates no one. In every person lies all humanity.”\footnote{“Solamente se es de verdad libre cuando no se pesa sobre nadie; cuando no se humilla a nadie. En cada hombre están todos los hombres.”} Similarly, echoes of this idea appear again in what Teju Cole brings back from a codex of the Mishnah written in Parma in the mid-thirteenth century: “Whoever destroys a single life is considered by Scripture to have destroyed...
the whole world, and whoever saves a single life is considered by Scripture to have saved the whole world.” Cole tells us that exactly the same thought is expressed in Surah Five of the Qur’an. It is hard to transmit the wonder I feel when encountering these common threads—all of which say the same thing in different ways—and to keep finding these as ever-present ideas across Zambrano’s writing. If you ask me who am I becoming today, I am informed by all of this, in my aspirations for living a life with care, purpose, and love. I am motivated to keep looking for reasons of what makes this option of living corazonando, irresistible. I continue to be inspired by my reality as a pupil of a brilliant list of teachers that, as Zambrano said, have drawn me to them so I could become more like myself.

As I am writing this, I am reminded that every rite of passage or ceremony comes with a long list of challenges. The hardest challenge is not the threshold, or the divisions, but instead by the incorporation that comes after. The weaving itself, as wise elders have said, sweetens your thoughts, and it is a process of thinking in itself. Beyond the printed words, or the structure checkmarks of a thesis, the impacts of this process are woven deeply into my being and my

183 Cole, “Carrying a Single Life.”
184 In España, Sueño y Verdad, Maria Zambrano dedicates a chapter to Ortega & Gasset where she writes: “Few words are as difficult as talking about the thought of a teacher. The thought of a teacher, even if it is in philosophy, is an almost impossible aspect to separate from their living presence. Because the teacher, before being someone who teaches something, is someone we have felt living before, in that specific relationship that comes only from the intellectual value. The teacher's action transcends the thought and wraps it; sometimes their silences are worth as much as their words and what they imply may be more effective than what they clearly expose. If we have really been their disciples, it means that they have achieved from us something apparently contradictory: that by being drowned to them we have become ourselves.” Zambrano, España, Sueño y Verdad. (“Pocas palabras tan difíciles como la de hablar del pensamiento de un maestro. El pensamiento de un maestro, aunque sea de Filosofía, es un aspecto casi imposible de separar de su presencia viviente. Porque el maestro, antes que alguien que enseña algo, es un alguien ante el cual nos hemos sentido vivir en esa específica relación que proviene tan sólo del valor intelectual. La acción del maestro trasciende al pensamiento y lo envuelve; sus silencios valen a veces tanto como sus palabras y lo que insinúa puede ser más eficaz que lo que expone a las claras. Si hemos sido en verdad sus discípulos, quiere decir que ha logrado de nosotros algo al parecer contradictorio: que por habernos atraído hacia él hayamos llegado a ser nosotros mismos.”)
185 Queer Nature, “Incorporation within White Supremacy & Settler Colonialism.”
understanding of the world. The learnings I have adopted have formed new threads, new patterns, new messy wrapped knots within me. As I think of Colombia, I am often overwhelmed by how much shock, trauma, devastating loss, challenges, and disorientation humans and other-than-humans have lived there for centuries. Of course, this is not a unique experience of those of us born on that piece of land. All around the world our stories and ways of being have been stolen, distorted, colonized, erased, and pressed into the service of dominance. There is a level of accountability of knowing this, and a surrender to a vocation towards remembering connection, embodying healing, and integrating learnings for the future. This requires an education in Zambrano’s sense, “that will help them awaken to reality in a way that reality does not submerge their being, that being that is their own, nor oppresses them, nor crumbles on top of them.”186 To educate on history and in emotion, in spiritual surrender—corazonando—is a task I will keep assuming now and as I plan my return to Colombia.

Nothing in this thesis process has been wasted or is a failure: it is all part of the tissue, threads of the weave. Just as in Octavia Butler’s spell “everything you touch you change, everything you change, changes you,” I feel impacted by, and constantly changing due to everything that has been emerging from this graduate school process. When thinking about the moments of incorporation, my soundtrack includes Mercedes Sosa who sings, “Who said everything is lost? I come to offer my heart. So much blood the river took away, I come to offer my heart, it won’t be easy, I know what’s up, It won’t be simple as I thought, how to open the

186 Casado and Sánchez-Gey, “Filosofía y educación en María Zambrano,” 152. “Educarle será despertarle o ayudarle a que despierte a la realidad en modo tal que la realidad no sumerja su ser, el que le es propio, ni lo oprima, ni se derrumbe sobre el.”
chest and take out the soul, a stab of love."187 I will keep offering my heart, engaging in the work of repairing relationships and communities, rebuilding trust, practicing hope as Freire says, to make history, diving into intuition and metaphor. I will keep encountering the world with wonder in my eyes as I encounter each symbol that carries mystery, and embody it in my pedagogy, my way of being.

187 “Yo vengo a ofrecer mi corazón,” composed by Fito Paéz, recorded in 1985 by Mercedes Sosa.
Epilogue

The final segment of this thesis was written after the thesis was completed, with the purpose of serving as a letter to María, my committee and friends, that I would read to the committee for my defense presentation. This document was an opportunity to reflect on the substance of the thesis, as well as to share both a retrospective view and some prospected avenues that I envision for my work.

April 7, 2020.

Remote Defense

_Buenas tardes_, good afternoon everyone.

As I ground, center and breathe, here with all of you, at the exact mid-point of the lunar cycle of today’s full moon, I am being summoned to reflect on my process during this graduate journey, and to offer you some details on the threads, rhythms and cycles that this process has entailed. To begin, I would like to offer my deep gratitude for everything and everyone that has made my existence, transformation, and continuous becoming, possible. For the Musqueam lands that are my current home and shelter, for all the ancestors of the lands we all inhabit and for all of our relatives, whose wisdom; I believe, we are constantly interacting with.

This thesis named: _Corazonar with/in Maria Zambrano: Insights into Crisis, Heart, and Hope_, concludes one of the last two requirements for my MA program, along with the current defense we are gathered at. As expected, this thesis started at a very different place from what it is today. So, I will share some retrospective details on the story behind it. As a weaver I know that every powerful pattern is created with the tiniest details, so I will try to share a bit about some of those details, the “whys” and “hows” that led me to be accountable to this particular
written product today. Then, I will lay out what I consider is the substance of the thesis. As well as What the thesis is to me now. And finally, I will reflect into how I envision its emerging impact and transformation beyond my graduate program.

According to María Zambrano, we are all continuadores (or the ones that continue), nothing really begins with us, everything that makes us up, history itself is alive and emerging constantly from what was there before. So, the threads I am about to share are part of a wider, infinite web of connections and continuations. My graduate studies journey started almost three years ago, but really began a year before that, when I landed in Vancouver, with two clear tasks, one being a supportive partner to my PhD student husband, and two finding creative ways to keep working with Otra Escuela, the organization I was, and still am part of, in Colombia. This was happening during a crucial time for my country which at that moment was about to sign the peace agreements with one of its oldest and largest guerillas. As someone working in peace education, conflict transformation and community organizing this moment was vital. And in the distance, I tried to embrace it, celebrate it and also grieved it. A lot has happened since then. Many good, celebratory news, and many shameful heartbreaking things that continue today in the forms of violence, injustice and inequality. At that time, I never really imagined the lush ecosystem of people, medicine, knowledge, and struggles that I would end up encountering.

As a non-student that was surrounded by graduate students it quickly became obvious to me that I had a bias against academia that was manifested by apathy and mistrust; which was already there before, but it only became more visible in this new environment. This situation was as exhausting as it was stimulating, and it actually ended up leading me to join Graduate school. That was one of the first surprises I surrendered myself into. Because before coming to Canada I hadn’t really thought of engaging more with higher education. I was devoted to the urgency of
the work we were doing in Colombia, filled by theatre, art, and community projects, in response to the violence. That I never found much space to wonder about graduate school. And so, I welcomed the opportunity to do my master’s in educational studies, with a vibrant passion to do some continuation of the work I had been doing in Colombia. I thought that this was going to be the perfect opportunity to take a step back and do something that we were not being able to do at Otra Escuela, because of capacity and priorities, but that now thanks to the distance I thought I was going to be able to take a moment to attend to us as an organization, to look into our pedagogy, our impacts and results, and so on. But what I never imagined is that I was going to end up taking not one, but many steps back, back and within, in a very vulnerable and unique way. During this time, I found myself with an amplified grief, pain, and sadness, as well as a tuned responsibility and dreams to do something useful for our times. I wouldn’t believe back then that I was going to end up doing a work on translation of a Spanish philosopher, whose ideas where more relevant than ever, whose time was also now. But not only the now of Colombia, but the now of a quarantined world that is going through a collective trauma in the midst of a global pandemic. I would’ve never believed it.

Initially, in the process of defining my topic, I was working with the concept of peace, I wanted to account for the widest context of peace, the embodied existence of peace and for the spiritual between those two. I was interested in how we were finding peace in Colombia even when it was failing, that where there may seem to be a scarcity of peace, we could actually find a surplus of it. I was inspired by all the work that countless communities had been doing since the armed conflict started, including the one I was part of. But while I was entering this new academic, scholarly space, I also encountered mental and physical health challenges, and reality became too much to deal with, it became a burden to try to go after everything out there. From a
very privileged situation, of not having my life at risk, but being hyper aware of all the dangers to my loved ones, and witnessing the escalation of the violence against leaders, and the worries of a peace process that was being backlashed for many different reasons, it became harder to work on that idea of thesis. So, I stopped.

And when I was finally able to come back to pick up the pieces, I realized I needed to distance myself from that initial idea. I was not well, so I had to change gears entirely. I wanted to talk about everything that was going on, I was not willing to let go any of the pieces that I considered relevant. And that seemed too ambitious for a master thesis, with deadlines and many limitations, and just heavy. So, I was asked by Sam, if there was any author that I had encountered, which whom I resonated with, that would immediately come to my mind when thinking of the readings that nourished me. And it was María Zambrano who came to my mind. So, we both started wondering, what if my project is just a series of commentaries on Zambrano? I will do my own translations, I’ll try to distill her thinking in a gesture towards a series of insights for the work I’m committed to, in relation to education and to Colombia. This possibility gave me enough intuitive faith (or corazónada) to press the reset button. And so, I did. I committed to re-read her books and to think beside them, with my own interests and my own pressing ethical demands.

And now in this thesis; that is an academic and a personal exercise; that is still a work in progress, I delve into the ideas of María Zambrano. One of the many wonderful women that came before me. She was an Andalusian philosopher, who lived in exile more than half of her life, all across Latino América and Europe. And whose critiques on modernity and the idealized rationalism of the 20th century are today radical ideas with a lot of potential for the troubled times we are living. I chose three topics to distill Zambrano’s thinking that are Crisis, Heart, and
Hope, that where topics already in my own work and concerns as part of my life and political activism, and I’ve found they are really embedded into my commitment to being a person. I develop each concept individually, but they are really intertwined across her work. Because María Zambrano has not been largely translated into English, my work of translation is the true mark of rigor of this thesis. The common thread I use to weave these topics together, is the concept of Corazonar. Corazonar, is this made-up word that I love, and I’m so grateful to have learned from the Kitu Kara’s of the Andes for offering this concept to the world. It means different things, it turns the noun heart into a verb, it combines heart and reason, it can also means thinking together, and even gut feeling or intuition. All of these meanings make so much sense to me, and I feel the potential of one concept that takes so many forms, and that has shaped the way I interact with the world. For me, corazonar also resembles closely to María Zambrano’s affective rationalism, her offerings are an invitation to embrace the intuitive, affective, spiritual parts of life alongside reason and thinking. In the thesis my main task consisted in curating, and piecing together, excerpts that referred to crisis, heart and hope, to translate them and to weave them together by offering some of my insights in connection to education, to Colombia, and the demands of being a person.

Today in these moments of sheer panic, where so many of us are trying to give grief a shape, of melancholy and uncertainty, this thesis feels quite alive and relevant; even though the last bits have been incredibly hard to write and focus on. Zambrano’s take on crisis and hope, resembled on my concerns for how to find peace when it was failing, and how to find the surplus among the scarcity. What Zambrano tells us is that crisis, that moments of exacerbated conflict, where we appear truly vulnerable as we are, are the most favorable moments for self-knowledge, are times for consciousness, where we see clearly what was already there. She says that those
who live in crisis have the privilege of being able to see human life more clearly. Perhaps applies for what we are globally going through now? Is this a global opportunity for that? I wonder.

Zambrano says that in times of crisis hope hesitates, and we react with burning despair, but that it is in that precise moment where there is a widening of hope. Whenever hope has nowhere to be fixed, is when it expands the most. She claims that we are living problems, that human beings are constantly becoming, and that life is an essay to achieve our completion. As human beings we don’t born finished, we are constantly in a process, that is the emergent and transcendent characteristic of life. Because we get to exceed our limits, by acting beyond ourselves; as if each of our beings ended up in the other one, we leave a trace and cause an effect in everything/everyone we interact with. And very much like today, María Zambrano lived a time of confusion, agony, sickness, death, and what she considered urgent to save was to rescue hope from the darkness of those tragedies. And it is the heart, the affective, the one that mediates between crisis and the possibility of sustaining itself on hope. She claimed that modernity was impoverished because it was privileging only the reason, its hyper focus on thought forgot everything else that made us humans. We could say it is similar today, where it seems that we keep reducing our relations between each other and this mother earth that hold us, from a place of extraction, productivity, consumption, capital. And the relevance of Zambrano’s insurgent invitation back then, and now, relies on embodying the reasons of the heart, of corazonar our life, our affections, relations, dreams and give space for the divine and the sacred. For her, we can engage with the horizon of pending tasks, by embracing hope as a vital nerve of the human being. And this is why the heart, which is a metaphor that she relies on all across her work, becomes that key figure of connection to life. The heart has an inside and moves us by moving itself. The heart supports us and integrates us into the universe, because without its support we
are never fully present, according to her. She says that “the history of our hopes is the true human history” and that “a story without hope is ineffable”, inenarrable, she says. And I believe that to be true.

I feel proud for allowing myself to see María, and to devote my time to sit with her ideas, and to commit my thesis to translating her work, because she has giving me a lot, and I’ve had to come to terms with my own judgments and doubts for such choices. It feels meaningful to be able to share the gifts that she gave me at a time where we are ready to read her. I know that the words in this thesis, the translated ones, and my own insights, will become many different kinds of weavings, once this thesis is released publicly. I am sure this process will reveal some of the many deviations it has. As a work in progress I have already identified a few of these limitations, which I mention in the text. But also, I’ve noticed some new ones. It has really begun to land on me that the exercise of translation was an enormous task, and parts of that process brought me a lot of frustration and others brought me constant joy and excitement. Especially with what started emerging across the subtext through my footnotes. Noticing how I would travel to all sorts of connections, memories, poetry, mentors, related and unrelated thoughts, that where inspired by the process of reading and translating her ideas. This has showed me that the subtext is only the beginning of a long-term reflexive process. Its flaws are a matter of consistency, trust and rigour specially with some of the new concepts that I introduce but that I don’t necessarily ground or fully connect between each other.

Also, I name some of the decisions that had to do with the translation and my interpretation choices. Though I do try to offer transparency of some of the steps of what the task of digging across two languages meant; for example by citing the original quotes in Spanish for
reference, I don’t process some of the cases where I am not as flexible, and that I’ve found that were affected by my stubbornness more than anything else.

One last limitation I can share is that within the nature of this thesis, there is a deep-seated sense or aim for a comprehensive understanding of education, humanity and my own way of being. Though I want to keep that open, the reader might miss an extra effort to link and tie together more concrete ideas on education. I only give some hints according to Zambrano’s teachings, where education is what allows to achieve the goal to find ourselves, to possess ourselves, when that sacred-divine-human connection is updated and integrated in our life, allowing us to engage with a transparent reality. Where education is key to defend that human quality of transcendence and the task of finding our vocation, according to Zambrano. But there is certainly space to keep weaving in these pieces more.

I can say that ultimately this graduate journey, and this thesis, have left me with a lot of open questions. The conceptual freedom that I was invited and pushed to take, and the different communities that welcomed me during these three years have truly fostered my intellectual capacity, have expanded my soul, and have left me with more tools than when I started. And mainly more information about who I am, and who I’m becoming. I am glad that the lifetime career that has been opening up for me is aligned with generative ways of being in the world and with others, with concrete teachings on humility facing my ego, my previous apathy towards academia, and with a countless number of blessings and sacred medicine that are already woven through me.

While we’re gathered here, we’re all facing the covid-19 that is now a worldwide, ongoing trauma. It is hard to escape from it, it is hard to make sense of it, and personally it has brought up quite an awareness of pain, fear and grief. And it is impossible to me not to relate
what is going on with so much of what Zambrano wrote. For example, she said “Nothing new appears in times of crisis, at least nothing that has not been there in times of fullness”, and I want to believe that this can leads us to yes agreeing with her in that we are all living problems, and that by being able to see more clearly; among the hesitation, burning despair and scarcity of what is going on now, we can transform our preconceptions of reality and be more sensible to our human condition. My wish is that we find that hope she talks about, that is expanding within us, showing us different ways to be more. I hope that 30 years from now I get to see how Zambrano’s poetic prose, affective philosophy, her notions of justice and vulnerability, are inspiring people, and are reclaiming the intuitive, emotional and sacred parts in our humanity. And until then I will keep corazonando, and exploring what does it mean to be human? And how, as she asks us. What does the refusal and fear to be ourselves entails? How can I foster self-compassion and a sense of humor while still acting to disrupt the systems that hold back justice, resiliency and community? I also hope to keep exploring topics that I left pending with her, like more of her poetry, her metaphysical ideas, her writings about the soul, and her thoughts on this constant way of being in the world, of fully showing up in life with our hearts.

Thank you for listening and for being here.
Bibliography

Angel Martinez, Lara. “María Zambrano En La Referencialidad Cervantina La Poética Razón de La Derrota.”


Appendices

Appendix A

I made this collage made in April 2019 for my project as part of the Undivided Leadership Program. All of the pictures (except the eyes on the top) are from my personal collection of photographs of my parents, grandparents and great-grandparents; that I have permission to use, mixed with cutouts from magazines.
Appendix B

Picture of myself in January 2020, while working to organize the puzzle pieces of my translated excerpts into the thesis draft.