

Migrant Stories: Zapotec Transborder Migration and the Production of a Narrated
Community

by

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This dissertation is dedicated to the members of the Guelavian community in Oaxaca and Los Angeles, for their incredible hospitality, generosity, and patience, without which none of this would have been possible. The openness with which I was welcomed into individual's homes to share meals, milestones, conversations and companionship provided was truly astounding, and deeply humbling.

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Notes on Transcription

Transcripts are selective representations of speech and interaction with political and social implications, as the details included can dramatically impact a readers' interpretation of the speakers represented (see Bucholtz 2000). Much is lost in the processes of writing words down on a page, including prosody, bodily comportment, gesture, facial expressions, and the richness of the interactive context in which words were uttered. The choices I have made in representing talk throughout this dissertation were made thoughtfully, in conjunction with the analytic process (see Ochs 1979, Duranti 2006, and Bucholtz 2000 on "reflexive discourse analysis"). The level of detail I include in my transcripts corresponds to the analysis and theoretical argument I make using that piece of linguistic data. I use the following conventions throughout my transcripts (see Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974):

- 1) **Spanish:** Spanish terms are marked by italics, e.g. '*español*'
- 2) **Zapotec:** Zapotec terms are marked with underlining, e.g. 'didxza'
- 3) **English translations:** The English translation of Spanish and Zapotec speech appears in the right-hand column, original language material is in the left hand column, e.g.

R: <i>Sí, voy a trabajar más tarde</i>	Yes, I'm going to work later on
--	---------------------------------

- 4) **Borrowings/bivalent terms:** assimilated borrowings from Spanish or Zapotec, and ambiguous or bivalent (see Woolard 1998) terms that contain elements from both varieties are marked with both italics and underlining, e.g. '*madrin*'
- 5) **Comments:** Any sound, facial expression, or gesture not spoken is placed in double parentheses, e.g. ((sighing))
- 6) **Sound lengthening:** I use colons to mark the lengthening of the sound that appears immediately before the colons, and the number of colons indicates the degree of lengthening, e.g. 'we:ll' or 'we:::ll'

- 7) **Intonation:** I mark intonation patterns in the following ways; (?) marks rising intonation, (.) marks falling intonation, (,) brief pause separating parts of utterance
- 8) **Emphasis:** I use bold face to a) mark syllables that are emphasized by speakers, and b) to mark utterances or phrases that I want to draw the readers attention to, e.g. a) '*legitimo*,' b) "*La primera vez si **sufrió mucho***"
- 9) **Latching:** = equal signs are used to indicate turns of talk that are spoken with no gap in between
- 10) **Overlap:**] brackets are used to mark places where speakers' turns overlap, or when several people are speaking simultaneously
- 11) **Cutoffs:** A dash is used to mark places where a speaker stops mid-word or utterance, e.g. 'ha-'
- 12) **Silence:** Prolonged pauses in speech are marked in parentheses with the number of seconds of silence, e.g. (3.0)
- 13) **Problematic hearing:** Portions of talk that are difficult or impossible to hear due to background interference or recording quality are marked in parentheses with periods, e.g. (...)

Notes on Orthography

For representing Spanish and English speech I use standard orthographies for both languages, which use Roman alphabetic symbols. There is no standardized orthography for San Juan Guelavía Zapotec (SJGZ), however, and therefore I have created a hybrid orthography based on techniques used by linguists and locals to represent the sounds of SJGZ, both sounds that do not occur in Spanish, and those sounds for which there are a choice of possible representation strategies. This hybrid approach is in part an effort to create an alphabet that did not require the use of special phonetic symbols, but also the result of an effort to avoid allying myself with any one orthographic system in particular, and accordingly the ideological and political contentions associated with them.

Vowels

ë /ɨ/ *Close central*

* Elongated vowel sounds are marked with repeating letters, e.g. ‘laab’ (he/she)

Consonants

<i>dx</i>	/dʒ/	Voiced postalveolar affricate
<i>ll</i>	/ʒ/	Voiced postalveolar fricative
<i>z</i>	/z/	Voiced alveolar fricative
<i>qu</i>	/k/	Voiceless velar plosive, word initial*
<i>c</i>	/k/	Voiceless velar plosive, word final

* I use ‘k’ for unassimilated Spanish borrowings, e.g. ‘kil’ from ‘kilo’

ABSTRACT

Migrant Stories: Zapotec Transborder Migration and the Production of a Narrated Community

by

Elizabeth Anne Falconi

Chair: Judith T. Irvine

This dissertation investigates how linguistic and cultural practices are shaped by processes of transborder migration, and how linguistic and cultural practices shape patterns of mobility. Drawing on two years of research in a Zapotec transborder community formed by migration between San Juan Guelavía Oaxaca and Los Angeles, California I explore stories of migration, told by or about migrants, and the migration of stories themselves as they circulate across borders, contexts and speakers. I use the concept of “second stories” to demonstrate how individuals’ narratives are organized and shaped to align with the narratives of other speakers, and how these efforts to align yield unintended transformations. I argue that Guelavians on both sides of the border comprise a “narrated community,” and explore how community members use narrative to make sense of their disparate experiences and (re)create ties to one another amid geographic and temporal separations. Conversely, I consider how Guelavians transform cultural categories and interpretive frameworks as they reproduce them in new interactive

contexts. Throughout the dissertation I investigate the interplay of mobility and rootedness, cultural tradition and transformation in: narratives of local labor migration, practices of linguistic differentiation, narrative histories of language planning, traditional Zapotec storytelling, and talk about ritual practices. I argue that membership in a transborder community involves a heightened state of reflexivity tied to the continual attempts of individuals to maintain continuity across geographic and social divides. This is especially true of membership in an indigenous transborder community whose members have been historically marginalized in Mexico, and comprise a minority within a minority in the United States. Guelavians face diverse forms of cultural and linguistic marginalization as they move across borders, which complicate efforts to reproduce cultural and linguistic practices across generations. An awareness of their socio-cultural location pervades the way they talk about themselves, and the way they move through their everyday lives. Through the analysis of second stories I illustrate the unintended transformations that result from the deployment of familiar linguistic and cultural practices in distinct social and geographic contexts. By comparing stories that Guelavians tell about themselves and others I bring to the fore the experiences and challenges associated with living across borders.

Chapter 1
Migrant Stories

I. Introduction

<i>J:</i>	<i>Cuéntale de la del japonés y</i>	Tell her the one about the Japanese guy and
<i>D:</i>	<i>(...que fiesta...es...) la cosa es que estaba un éste un mexicano y un japonés y un americano</i>	(...what party...it's...) the thing is that there was a uhm a Mexican guy and a Japanese guy and an American guy
<i>EF:</i>	<i>Aha</i>	Aha
<i>D:</i>	<i>En un barco. Entonces el japonés empezó a tirar sus perfumes</i>	In a boat. Then the Japanese guy began to throw his perfumes
<i>EF:</i>	<i>Aha</i>	Aha
<i>D:</i>	<i>Y le dijo el mexicano 'Oye japonés porqué tiras tus perfumes?' 'Es porque en Japón hay mu:chos perfumes' 'A' dice y entonces el mexicano empezó a tirar sus tequilas y que le dice el americano 'Oye mexicano porque tiras tus tequilas?' 'Es que en México hay mu:chas tequilas' dice 'A' dice, y que va el americano y que avienta el mexicano al mar, y el japonés dice 'Oye americano porque tiras el mexicano?' 'Es que en América hay mu:chos mexicanos'</i>	And the Mexican said to him 'Listen Japanese why are you throwing your perfumes?' 'It's because in Japan there are ma:ny perfumes' 'Oh' he said and then the Mexican began to throw his tequilas and then the American said to him 'Listen Mexican why are you throwing your tequilas?' 'It's because in Mexico there are ma:ny tequilas' he says 'Oh' he says, and so the American goes and throws the Mexican into the sea, and the Japanese says 'Listen American why do you throw the Mexican?' 'It's because in America there are ma:ny Mexicans'

Example 1.0, recorded 4/18/2008, SJG

The twelve-year-old girl quoted above who told me this joke had never set foot in the U.S., though her father, who encouraged her to tell it to me that day, had worked in Los Angeles for several years. By the time I recorded this performance I had heard subtle variations of the same basic joke several times, and each time it was told in my presence it got big laughs. I laughed too, at least in part because of the irony of who was doing the

telling, and to whom the telling was directed. Ordinarily one expects the target of a racist joke to be offended, but the punch line repeatedly brought down the house amongst an all Oaxacan (plus one Anglo anthropologist) audience. The Japanese foil in the joke, included to provide a third interlocutor who makes the joke work, is clearly the construct of a superficial racial stereotype grounded in ignorance, emblemized by a random symbol of national identity: perfume. However, the dehumanizing stereotype of the disposable Mexican laborer at the heart of this joke was very real to many people that I worked with both in the village of San Juan Guelavía, Oaxaca, and in Los Angeles, California, the two places where I conducted ethnographic research between February of 2008 and November of 2009.

The popularity of this joke seems related to the pervasiveness of migration in Guelavía, and the number of Guelavians living both in the United States and Oaxaca, who have experienced being perceived as tequila-toting Mexican among millions in a country whose economic and political system demands both their labor and their invisibility. For Guelavian migrants this perception is particularly rife with irony, as they hail from an indigenous community in Oaxaca whose members have historically faced myriad forms of marginalization and exclusion at the hands of the Spanish-speaking, Mestizo majority. Whereas in Mexico Guelavians are discriminated against for being linguistically and culturally other, in the United States they occupy a generic subordinate category in a racial hierarchy that denies both their humanity and their indigenous heritage.

I feel fairly certain that my presence prompted the telling of the joke shown above on many of the occasions that I heard it, and it served as a poignant reminder of who I

was and the structural inequity of my relationship to those I was working with. The irony of my own virtually unrestricted ability to move between the United States and Mexico as an American, studying the effects of migration on the social lives and communicative practices of this group of people whose lives had been deeply impacted by increasingly restrictive immigration policies, was not lost on anyone. I heard the phrase “*dichoso de ti*” (lucky you) innumerable times during my fieldwork on both sides of the border in response to accounts of my recent or future travel plans. As an economically privileged American anthropologist working amongst a relatively insular group of indigenous Oaxacans (who like all poor Mexicans have a *very* difficult time acquiring visas for legal travel to the US), my propensity to travel, and the financial and legal ability to go where I chose, was one of the most glaring factors that set me apart from community members that I worked with.

My easy mobility brought to the fore the glaring privilege associated with my citizenship and class status, and often made me hesitant to share the details of my next trip, or my last vacation to see my family, with anyone I worked with. But they would inevitably ask, and I would inevitably tell; in addition, I accepted the role of courier when crossing the border many times, taking specialty food items like handmade tortillas and chocolate to family members and friends in Los Angeles, cash and cheap clothing to people in Oaxaca, and video recordings of ritual events between both places. In my experience the exchange of goods and money and the circulation of videos played a crucial role in the ongoing creation of “structure[s] of feeling” (Williams 1977: 132) between separated kin that enabled the “inherently fragile social achievement” (Appadurai 1996: 182) that is transborder community life. In many instances, however,

these processes of exchange and circulation were found wanting. Expressions of longing to see absent children, siblings and other family members, as well as complaints and chastisements for their long absences, were a prominent feature of everyday conversation throughout the community. Nearly every week of my time in San Juan Guelavía, Oaxaca, I was asked by a middle-aged or elderly woman to sneak her across the border into the United States by telling border patrol agents that she was my grandmother. It is perhaps not surprising, given my privileged position, that so many Guelavians believed I had the power to facilitate their passage across the border.

While in Los Angeles, my privilege as an English-speaking American citizen became still more glaring. Whether or not individuals I worked with had been able to acquire the necessary documents to grant them legal residency in the United States,¹ everyone from Guelavia living in Los Angeles at the time of my work was affected by the problems associated with undocumented life. Undocumented parents and their U.S.-born citizen children feared the separation that would come with deportation. Others feared the loss of income that would come if they were sent back prematurely, and the consequent setbacks of construction projects, property purchases, weddings or other major events they were planning. In addition, nearly everyone I knew was physically restricted in where they could safely go due to the likelihood of border patrol sweeps. The tenuous legal and political position associated with “being en route” (Coutin 2005, see also Heyman 1995) to the United States corresponds with a heightened state of vulnerability, not only to deportation and arrest by border officials, but to kidnapping,

¹ In order to avoid divulging any information that could be potentially harmful to those I worked with I avoid explicit references to individuals’ legal status. When discussing issues in this dissertation, such as clandestine border crossings, or issues of documentation I speak generally about pervasive themes and experiences, or produce compilations of individual narratives, from which all identifiable and/or compromising information is removed.

ransom and murder at the hands of drug cartels, human traffickers, and other criminal elements. This vulnerability is perhaps the biggest deterrent for migrants who wish to return to their home communities more regularly, and in turn drives the long-term separation of family and community members around which so much of transborder life is organized.

This dissertation builds on scholarship that examines the culturally, linguistically, and in many cases legally precarious position of Latino populations in the United States (see Zentella 1998, DeGenova 2005, Hill 2001, Chavez 2008, Santa Ana 2002). In particular I draw on a literature that describes the ways in which racial and ethnic discrimination are enacted in and through language, and conversely how linguistic practices are racialized. Regarding her work among bilingual Puerto Ricans in New York, Urciuoli describes her goal to:

show in detail how people conceptualize and confront problem situations and map them onto English and Spanish focusing on the complexity, depth, and consistency of their constructions and reflections... [and to] emphasize the social and cultural dynamics that make peoples' lives hard because of what they are perceived to be...how they live with such prejudice and [how] the language boundaries that affect their lives and identities have become painful social facts (Urciuoli 1996:13).

The sociolinguistic circumstances of the Guelavians I worked with are still more complicated; as members of an indigenous transborder community they collectively face the “painful social facts” of linguistic, cultural and racial discrimination within Mexico *and* in the United States. Practices of discrimination and exclusion targeting indigenous populations in Mexico originating during the Spanish conquest have endured to the present, and remained a concern for Guelavians in Oaxaca and Los Angeles. Fears of language-based discrimination in particular were frequently described by those I worked

with, and are embroiled in the two simultaneous and mutually reinforcing patterns of language shift away from Zapotec occurring on both sides of the border. These shifts reveal something of the unique linguistic demands and consequences associated with membership in an indigenous transborder community, whose members have been historically marginalized in Mexico, and comprise a minority within a minority in the United States. Many scholars (e.g. Urciuoli 1996, Zentella 1998, Hill 2001) have described the negative impact of the pervasive zero-sum metaphor, in which the public use of Spanish is perceived as a threat to English, on bilingual communities in the US. Among Zapotec migrants these dynamics are more complicated: while Spanish serves as language of solidarity among diverse groups of Latinos in Los Angeles, for indigenous communities its use is also a potent index of Mestizo dominance in Mexico. Additionally, though many adults use Zapotec in their daily lives, indigenous language loss is widely assumed to be an inevitable consequence of migration and English acquisition, which is highly coveted. Nearly all contexts within which Zapotec use is encouraged and/or valued in Oaxaca are conspicuously absent in Los Angeles, as are elder Guelavian males, the speakers invested with greatest Zapotec mastery and knowledge.

Previous scholarship has often analyzed migrant populations according to the political boundaries of state and nation, obscuring both the impact of indigenous language use among migrants and the impact of migration on the use of indigenous languages. I address this lacuna by offering a linguistically grounded view of the social and cultural dynamics of indigenous transborder life within a multilingual community whose members speak English, Spanish and Zapotec with varying degrees of fluency.

Recent scholarship has suggested that immigrants and indigenous populations are scrutinized according to opposing logics:

...immigrants are requested to tone down their culture for the benefit of integration into the state, while, conversely, indigenous peoples are expected to demonstrate at least some cultural authenticity in order to gain special rights within the state (Kvaale 2011: 223).

What then of indigenous migrants, who belong to both categories, depending upon where they are at a given chapter in their lives, and what of the historical pressures placed on many global indigenous populations to abandon their cultural and linguistic practices under colonialism and then subsequently as a requirement for full assimilation into newly independent nations? Membership in a transborder community involves a heightened state of reflexivity; a taking account of oneself and others that is connected to the continual attempts of individuals to maintain relationships across geographic and social divides. Migrants and non-migrants alike must engage in “border thinking,” in order to assimilate multiple cultural frameworks and modes of thinking (see Mignolo 2005). In addition, the diverse forms of cultural and linguistic marginalization faced by Guelavians as they move across social and political borders, complicate efforts to reproduce cultural and linguistic practices across generations (cf. Farr 2006). An awareness of their socio-cultural location, both relative to other Guelavians and to others outside the community, pervades the way they talk about themselves, and the way they move through their everyday lives.

I have found it most helpful to examine the relationship between reflexivity, cultural reproduction and transformation in the linguistic and cultural practices of Guelavians through the analytic lens of storytelling. The main title of my dissertation, *Migrant Stories*, refers both to stories of migration, told by migrants or about migrants,

and to the migration of stories themselves as they circulate across borders, contexts and between speakers (see Spitulnik 1997; Bauman & Briggs 1990, 1992; Silverstein & Urban 1996). I focus on how community members use stories to make sense of their disparate experiences (Ochs 2004, Ochs & Capps 2001, Bruner 1991) and (re)create their ties to one another amid separations exacerbated by the increasing militarization of the U.S. Mexico border (Farr 2006, Smith 2006, DeGenova 2002, Urciuoli 1996). Conversely, I consider transborder community life as a “structure of the conjuncture” (Sahlins 1985: 125); Guelavian community members transform cultural categories and interpretive frameworks as they reproduce them in new interactive contexts (see also Kulick 1992). Chief among these transformations are the processes of language shift, referenced above, occurring on both sides of the border. These shifts counter the processes of communicative and material circulation community members engage in to maintain community and familial cohesion across borders, illustrating the challenges associated with “interactionally doing togetherness in difference” (Goebel 2010: 235).

II. Narrated Community

This dissertation investigates the ways in which the linguistic and cultural practices of Guelavians living in Oaxaca and Los Angeles are shaped by processes of transborder migration, and vice-versa, how linguistic and cultural practices shape patterns of mobility (c.f. Cohen 2004: 150). Members of the Guelavian community on both sides of the border depended heavily on language to maintain ties across distance and time. Through the comparative analysis of talk across genres, contexts, speakers and geographic locations I demonstrate the myriad ways in which members of this community stitch their

lives together across time and space. In phone conversations riddled with tangles of spatial deictics, ritual return migrations, and personal narratives Guelavians navigated the complex geography of transborder life, and negotiated the meaning of their movement and non-movement through the community. Community members' talk to and about one another amid geographic and temporal separation is crucial for the continuing maintenance and coherence of this transborder community. In addition to providing tellers with a coherent framework for describing events "narrative...situates tellers and their audiences within a web of historical and cultural expectations, ideologies, and meanings," thus fostering a sense of community between tellers and their audiences through the medium of the story being told (Baquedano-Lopez 2000: 429). I suggest further that among far-flung diasporic populations the organization of personal narratives and other speech genres (e.g. storytelling, ritual language) around a common frame of reference is a crucial medium for connecting people across time and space. For Guelavians that common discursive orientation is San Juan Guelavía itself, the geographic center of gravity for community members. The village serves as a physical, moral, spiritual, cultural and linguistic anchor for Guelavians and is continually evoked through their talk and other practices. In this sense Guelavians in Oaxaca, Los Angeles and elsewhere participate in, and constitute a narrated community.

The concept of community is intimately linked with the discipline of anthropology, as the analytical foci of most anthropological investigations have been small groups, or villages whose members were presumed to share an orientation to a common set of cultural practices (e.g. *The Nuer*, *Argonauts of the western Pacific*). In recent decades the notion of homogeneous cultural entities has come under fire for the

way such groups are placed “out of time” (see Fabian 1983) and apart from the global transactions and flows that shape all human populations. This shift in thinking has been echoed in linguistic anthropology in the way scholars conceptualize the relationship between language and community. The foundational concept of “speech community” has been debated and transformed as researchers have struggled with the problem of how to delineate and define aggregates of speakers. In general, speech communities have been defined according to the frequency and density of interactions between speakers with a shared body of cultural and linguistic knowledge, though the degree to which such knowledge must be shared, and the methods for assessing such knowledge have been the subject of much contention (see Gumperz 1968, Irvine 2006, Duranti 1997, Morgan 2004).

Across various definitions, however, the relationship between speaker’s knowledge and patterns of use remain a crucial locus for researchers investigating the relationship between language and social life:

The repertoire and its deployment in communicative practice are now seen as the crucial place where the relationship between language and social organization lies. Here we might observe how ways of speaking are linked with, and constitute, social groupings and identities, and how ways of speaking are situated in social activities (Irvine 2006: 691).

More recent research into the links between language and social organization has looked further a-field, beyond the bounds of communities to consider how such aggregates are linked to one another, through complex “speech networks” (Milroy & Milroy 1992) or through participation in various spheres of activity, or “communities of practice” (Eckert & McConnell Ginet 1992). Among the most influential developments in recent years has been the concept of “imagined communities” (Anderson 1991), which describes how

language serves as a medium of connectivity among large-scale populations of people who never encounter one another, as in a contemporary nation-state, who co-identify as a through their knowledge of a standard written language via their shared consumption of print media.

Whereas Anderson's imagined communities were dependent upon "the fatality of human linguistic diversity" and the creation of "monoglot publics," scholars of language have used his concept productively to describe how the circulation of discursive forms, both spoken and written, can create many kinds of "imagined" social groupings (see Spitulnik 1998, Eisenlohr 2004). For example, Baquedano-Lopez (2000) illustrates how the collaborative narration of the miraculous apparition of *La Virgen de Guadalupe* by teachers and students in a Spanish-language *doctrina* (catechism) class in Los Angeles facilitates the creation of a distinctly Mexican community among class members. Their sense of shared belonging is based on their orientation to a common language, shared moral values, and a shared ancestral homeland, in this case Mexico, a country that many students in the class had never visited. Other innovative work considers how talk about a shared secular identification with the Yiddish language among members of a revitalization movement constitutes a form of "metalinguistic community" (Avineri 2010) among speakers who rarely, if ever, use Yiddish productively.

I draw on this rich body of scholarship on the diverse manifestations of linguistically mediated communities in describing the Guelavians with whom I worked in Los Angeles, California and Oaxaca, Mexico as a "narrated community." In the chapters that follow I demonstrate that for highly dispersed populations, shared forms of narration, discursive patterning and in particular reflexive forms of talk can be a powerful means of

instantiating, and maintaining community amid separation and fragmentation. In so doing I build on literature that emphasizes the primary role of narrative in constructing individual and shared identity (see DeFina 2003), as “narrative is an essential resource in the struggle to bring experiences to conscious awareness” (Ochs & Capps 1996: 21).

Narrative provides resources to organize inchoate experience, for example the chronological dimension of narratives “offers narrators a vehicle for imposing order on otherwise disconnected experiences...coherence that is reassuring” (ibid 23).

Furthermore, through narrative tellers are able to “traverse multiple temporal domains” as they “bring memories of their lived pasts into their consciousness of the present” (Ochs 2004: 273). For transborder community members who are often separated for years, or even decades, this form of temporal synthesis is a crucial means for recalling past experiences that interlocutors shared together and imagining possible future moments of togetherness. Additionally, narrative settings provide an important means for situating stories, and “establish a rationale for the reportable event and/or its aftermath, e.g. depicting relevant times, locations, shared knowledge, prior events, and situational conditions” (ibid 271). Settings are of particular importance in the narratives of members of the Guelavian transborder community, who are geographically dispersed but share a tie to their common village of origin, a place invested with a great deal of potency.

Much of the scholarship on narrative has grown up out of the analysis of face-to-face interactions, among co-present individuals. I expand the scope of this scholarship by demonstrating how narrative works to mediate relationships between Guelavians separated by time and space, providing the foundation for the (re)creation and maintenance of transborder community. Of particular pertinence in this endeavor is

“narrative activity that draws interlocutors into dialogically piecing together frameworks for ordering and interpreting events” (Ochs 2004: 279). I have found the framework of “second stories” to be especially useful in analyzing how Guelavians collaboratively construct a narrated community across borders.

III. Second Stories of Transborder Life

The concept of “second stories” is used by Sacks (1992) to describe how speakers’ narrative renderings of experience are socially organized and shaped to align with the narratives of other speakers. In my work I apply the concept of second stories not only to narratives proper, but also to the investigation of a variety of other linguistic and cultural domains and practices. These include: local histories of labor migration, practices of linguistic differentiation within and across indigenous communities, traditional storytelling, local language revitalization programs, narratives of domestic violence, and transborder ritual life. In so doing I expand the scope of the concept beyond the discursive arena, demonstrating that the framework of second stories provides important insights into the dialogic construction of cultural forms in transborder and translocal communities. I focus on three aspects of Sacks’ second stories, which I discuss in detail below, that are particularly applicable to investigating the dynamics of transborder community life: 1) second stories constitute a form of exhibited understanding between speakers, 2) second stories are not bound to conversational time, and 3) second stories can reframe first stories through strategic shifts in story elements. I apply the analytic lens of second stories to the investigation of transborder community life, a context that is distinct from those studied by Sacks, namely monolingual English speakers in face-to-

face conversations. In so doing I illustrate the broad applicability of Sacks' insights beyond the domain of dialogic interaction, for understanding how this narrated community is forged and maintained over time between distant interlocutors, even in the absence of a common language.

In his work Sacks shows how the telling of stories within everyday talk quite frequently results in the telling of "second stories" by conversational partners, narratives which are characterized by their topical and organizational similarity to the "first stories" that prompted them. This form of narrative mirroring is the first feature of second stories that I draw on in my own work. An example Sacks offers of how this works is a conversation in which one party brings up having witnessed a car crash, and the other responds by bringing up a similar experience, such as witnessing an accident. He argues that the similarity of these second stories is a form of "exhibited understanding," or "interactional attention" that reveals something of the structure of listening:

...a second story may, in telling a similar story, be doing something to the first, telling the first something. And in the first place, in listening to the first to get a second, he may be doing some sort of interactional attention...in examining how the similarity is achieved we may be in a position to say something about...how people listen to each other (Sacks 1992 Volume II, Part IV, Lecture 5: 251).

The structure of second stories elucidates how speakers construct relationships of alignment to other speakers, as well as how individual interactions are linked to previous and future ones. Second stories constitute a particular form of "interdiscursivity" as they are produced in the context of an interaction through the creation of "structures of likeness" between bits of talk (see Silverstein 2005, Irvine 2005). The production of parallel narrative structures can be a potent medium for socially aligning speakers, as "displaying the same parts configured in the same relations can infuse narratives with

powerful iconicity, the ability to project seemingly direct, automatic, and natural connections” (Briggs 2007: 323).

The content of second stories is a rich site for exploring the multivocal character of speech, which is comprised of a “range of recyclings, transpositions, and cannibalizations of other discourse genres” (Spitulnik, 1997: 173), the echoes of other times and places, and the voices of other people (Hill 1995, Irvine 1996 & 2005, DeFina 2003, Bakhtin 1981, Woolard 2004, Mannheim & Van Vleet 1998). In his discussion of “*raznorecie*,” or “heteroglossia,” meaning the “internally dialogic quality of discourse,” (1981: 263) Bakhtin argues:

...language is heteroglot from top to bottom... as a living, socio-ideological concrete thing, as heteroglot opinion, language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the border between oneself and the other (Bakhtin 1981: 291-293).

Throughout my analysis of second stories I point to the particular ways that Guelavian community members forge interdiscursive links to one another through talk, and at the same time what the form and content of that talk reveals about them, the communities they inhabit, and the socio-cultural milieus through which they move. I pay close attention to forms, such as reported speech, that speakers use to voice the words of others, through direct quotation, paraphrase, or through the use of hypothetical narratives (see Voloshinov 1973).

The second dimension of Sacks’ second stories that I draw on revolves around temporality. First stories are bound to conversational time; to be mentionable they must pertain to the here and now of “today,” “or some day formulatable by reference to today,” whereas as “second stories don’t contain time” (Volume II, Lecture 1: 15). This does not mean that second stories are not organized chronologically, or don’t contain temporal

referents, but that the production of second stories is guided by a distinct set of pragmatic principles from those of first stories. More specifically, “second stories don’t contain time, or don’t need to contain time, or don’t need to contain time that is related to the time of the conversation” (ibid). One can produce a second story from any moment or context in their life, even a hypothetical one that is sufficiently similar to mark one’s understanding of the form, content, and goal of the first story. The relevance of a second story is ultimately determined by the clarity of its link back to the first.

A concern with the interactive construction of temporal frames within and across conversations and texts is salient across much recent linguistic anthropological scholarship (See Stasch 2011, Silverstein 2005, Irvine 2005 & 2004, Inoue 2004, Eisenlohr 2004, Cavanaugh 2004). Silverstein suggests that processes of interdiscursivity can “constitute relations of eval,” as they:

freeze the chronotope of independently occurrent and experienced social eventhood in a structure of likeness that is based on the nature of texts in relation to their contexts of occurrence (Silverstein 2005: 8).

Following his work, Perrino argues that the use of the ““historical present”” in oral narrative allows speakers to “manage the relation between representation and interaction,” (2010:93) by making events associated with the past relevant to present-day interactions. Much like Sacks’ discussion of the parameters of second stories, this work suggests that relations of interdiscursivity can become primary, subordinating the temporal and other contextual features of each respective text or utterance.

The temporal openness of second stories has been especially useful for untangling the communicative practices of transborder community membership. As Sacks points out, the specific dynamics of what is mentionable within conversations are shaped both

by conventions and the interactive histories of interlocutors. The frequency of interaction, for example, can influence the kinds of events and experiences that are mentionable in a conversation. Daily conversations may permit the mention of more minutiae than conversations that take place every three months, that is, “unless you’re able to manage your tri-monthly conversation as though it were a daily one” (Sacks 1992, Vol. II, Part I, Lecture I: 16). In fact, it is precisely this kind of temporal management that is crucial to communication between Guelavians living amid separations that can be life-long. Drawing on my research I build on the notion that second stories have no time, suggesting further that for members of a transborder community in particular they have no fixed place or language. This does not mean that they have no location, but rather that second stories enable speakers separated by space and time to interactively navigate the “hybrid geographies” they inhabit (Wassen 2006: 108 & 125).

The spatial and temporal openness of second stories enables family and community members to discursively produce shared localities despite separations, be they physical, temporal, emotional, linguistic or cultural (see Ghannam 1998). Locality, in this context, is productively viewed as “a phenomenological property of social life, a structure of feeling that is produced by particular forms of intentional activity and that yields particular sorts of material effects” (Appadurai 1996:182). Looking closely at the narrative productions of migrants and non-migrants within the Guelavian transborder community provides a window into precisely which “forms of intentional activity” are deployed in the phenomenological production of transborder localities, and what the social and material effects of these activities are.

It is important to reiterate, however, that second stories, and the shared discursive spaces they are used to produce, are not infinitely malleable or random, but are constrained by communicative and cultural convention. For example, when a mirror festival is held in Los Angeles to honor Guelavía's patron saint, *San Juan Bautista* (St. John the Baptist), on the same day as the festival is celebrated in Oaxaca the continual linguistic and semiotic references to *la mera fiesta* (the real festival), meaning the Oaxacan one, reflect a widespread preoccupation with cultural authenticity that underlies celebrations in diaspora. This reflects:

the fact that stories can be part of larger speech events embedded in social processes extending beyond the immediate social encounter is consequential for the construction of a story by a speaker and its interpretation by a hearer (Goodwin 1982: 799)

In mentioning the Oaxacan festival in the context of celebrating its counterpart in Los Angeles, Guelavians point to the way that local event is embedded in, and evokes, an entire history of ritual celebration in their community of origin. In addition, while locality is in part a phenomenological social construction, the evocation of the Oaxacan festival in Los Angeles points to the fact that the village of San Juan Guelavía, a tangible, physical locality, provides an anchor around which much of transborder life is organized.

The third feature of second stories that I draw on here is the way that they enable second storytellers to comment on, reinterpret, and reframe first stories through the strategic shifting of second story elements. Sacks suggests that the relationship between the characters in the stories and the storytellers is necessary for understanding how these strategic shifts unfold interactively. He argues that second stories are built from an:

...analysis in which the hearer of the first figures he's attending to the *telling* of the first and not just the first *story*. And there is, then, at least that kind of

obvious interactional character to the production of the two stories, i.e., that the second party feels with the *told* character of the first, in producing the second that he tells...By shifting the characters that the two tellers take, one can systematically get that the first and second are not merely similar or dissimilar, but that the second agrees or disagrees with the first, and a variety of such sorts of interactional features...then the relationship between the characters and the tellers can be quite crucial (Volume II, Part IV, Lecture 5: 256).

Building on these insights I suggest that such shifts can occur unintentionally, by virtue of the relative position of the tellers and stories (socially, geographically, culturally, or linguistically). For example, a shift in language during the course of an interaction occurring beneath the level of a speaker's awareness "can in and of itself create interactional and rhetorical effects" (Woolard 2004:79; see also Zentella 1997). In a transborder community such transformations can also be brought about by the disjunctures experienced in interactions between speakers who inhabit radically different socio-cultural contexts.

This capacity of second stories to shift the interactional ground on which they are built resonates with Irvine's observation of the "constructedness of...interdiscursive effects and the potential for creativity and strategy" that these entail (2005:74). In this vein, a growing body of scholarship in linguistic anthropology demonstrates how texts, or bits of discourse, can be lifted from their original context of utterance and quoted, or transcribed, and thus used in a new way "making [them] seem to carry a meaning independent of its situation within two now distinct co(n)texts" (Silverstein & Urban 1996: 2, see also Bauman and Briggs 1992). For example, the invocation of absent others in an interaction through direct quotation, or a shift in a participants' stance towards other speakers can create "shadow conversations" (Irvine 1996) that transform the meaning of a narrative or interaction (see Goffman 1974 & 1976). Through talk speakers can probe

into and revise the logic around which experienced events have been organized, and can “conceptualize and evaluate multiple versions of experience” (Ochs 2004: 279). This ability is of crucial for transborder community members and is part of the condition of hyper-reflexivity that I have pointed to as a defining characteristic of participation in this kind of community. The reflexive reconstruction of events, intentions, and interactions is a primary way for people to maintain connectivity and shared orientations amid the diversity of their lived experiences. For example, when a parent talks to their migrant child over the phone of their loneliness, and their longing for the child’s return, they frequently juxtaposed their emotional experience with their reflections on the challenges of economic survival, and the myriad obligations that keep their progeny away for years, or decades at a time. This synthesis of experience and reflection through narrative is an important way that Guelavians enact the narrated community to which they collectively belong.

In drawing on the concept of “second stories,” which was originally used by Sacks to describe conversational practice in monolingual speech communities, I illuminate the complex dynamics of transborder life. I demonstrate the practical, cultural and communicative challenges faced by community members in marking their alignment with one another in the absence of shared spaces, experiences, or even a shared language. In so doing I draw on a long history of scholarship that investigates the complex dynamics of multilingual communities. Such scholarship examines how speakers’ creative uses of their varied linguistic repertoires serve to index, or call up their affiliations with one or more social groups, and/or their exclusion from others (Woolard 1998, Gumperz 1982, Gal 1987, Rampton 1998, Farr 2006). Formal linguistic features

don't define linguistic varieties and communities of speakers: rather, they are defined by the perceptions of people invested in particular language identities, within the social, political, and economic contexts that imbue them with currency or social salience (Urciuoli 1995, Hill & Hill 1986, Gumperz 1968).

Of particular interest to me in this investigation are speakers' language ideologies, the cultural logics by which they connect language to other spheres of social life (e.g. politics, economics, gender) as well as how these logics are shaped by power relations, social institutions (e.g. schools, courts, media), speakers' perspectives and life histories (Gal 1998, see also Kroskrity, Schieffelin & Woolard 1998, Irvine & Gal 2000). Speakers' ideologies can be accessed both through their explicit statements about language and by implication in the discursive strategies they employ, including code and style choice, and narrative structures (Silverstein 1979, 1981; Hill 1998; Hill & Mannheim 1992). Through the close analysis of narrative, storytelling and conversation I demonstrate how speakers' perceptions of the relationship between linguistic forms and social identities both draw on and reproduce systems of social differentiation and affiliation (Irvine & Gal 2000). The framework of second stories elucidates this dialogic dimension of language ideologies, emphasizing their dynamic, emergent qualities, as well as their groundedness in particular socio-historical contexts. For example, some Guelavian migrants living in the United States avoid the public use of Zapotec, citing fears of discrimination as their rationale. The language ideology that motivates this practice is productively viewed as a second story, linked to a first story of Guelavians historical experiences of language-based discrimination in Mexico, now inflected by the dynamics of life in a city in which Spanish-speaking migrant populations are

subordinated relative to the political and economic dominance of Anglo English-speakers.

Throughout this dissertation I draw on the framework of second stories to explore the linguistic and cultural practices that comprise Guelavian transborder life. The joke that opens this chapter (see Example 1.0) is a poignant second story of migration. The humor of the joke depends upon the hearer's familiarity with the first story, in this case an ideology that devalues migrants, grounded in "the stigmatization of undocumented Mexicans—as a people reducible to the disposability of their labor for a price" (DeGenova 2002: 433, see also Urciuoli 1995, Hill 2001). The joke both replicates this first story and challenges it, primarily through the participant structure of the interaction in which it was told: by the daughter of a Oaxacan migrant to me, an American anthropologist studying migration. In the process the first story is reframed as blatantly, laughably racist. The Mexican in the joke is treated as analogous to bottles of perfume or tequila, objects to be tossed aside when they are no longer wanted. At the same time, some elements of this story resonate with people's experiences; many Guelavians I talked to recalled feeling disposable when pitted in competition against other Mexican and Latino workers for low-paying jobs that they desperately needed. The joke tells another kind of second story through elision; the pervasive stereotyping of who migrants are, where they come from, how they talk, or in this case what they drink is a form of silencing. There is no space for an acknowledgement of the linguistic and cultural heterogeneity of migrants within the parameters of the joking frame. For Guelavian migrants and their non-migrant kin these stereotypical renderings have become a part of the way Guelavians talk and joke about themselves.

In the chapters that follow I consider various kinds of second stories: humorous second stories, second stories of suffering, second stories of morality, second stories of belonging and community, and second stories of marginalization and exclusion. Across domains of social life the Guelavians I worked with made continual efforts to align with one another across temporal, geographic, social and linguistic divides, in so doing producing second stories that facilitated mutual understanding and community maintenance but which also yielded myriad transformations on both sides of the border. My focus on second stories is a way of emphasizing the importance of reflexivity in the production and maintenance of transborder community, as well as to investigate the diversity of effects that result from community members' reflections on their own and others' practices. For example, in the context of traditional storytelling, awareness of ongoing processes of language shift brought about a loosening of generic boundaries, which allowed for the use of Spanish in a traditionally Zapotec-dominant context. Conversely, in the context of ritual events, the widespread preoccupation with the mobility of ritual participants yielded an emphasis on the geographical boundedness of authentic ritual practice. This has shaped migrant mobility, and extended networks of reciprocal obligation and ritual kinship across borders.

In both of these cases, reflexivity was bound up with efforts to promote and maintain connectivity among community members; in the first instance shift towards the use of Spanish in storytelling are an effort to bridge the growing linguistic divides between generations of speakers, and in the second, the emphasis on migrants' ritual participation creates a forum for the physical reaffirmation of community members bonds to one another. Across much of literature that examines the cultural and linguistic

practices of migrant and diasporic populations there is a pervasive assumption that communities require physical proximity, and a correlated assumption that mobility promotes deterritorialization, and the disintegration of community bonds (see Appadurai 1996, Kvaale 2011). The concept of narrated community offers an alternative to scholars who suggest that transnational migration erodes communities, creating “deterritorialized subjects,” by describing the Guelavian transborder community and how it is maintained, while also emphasizing the challenges of fragmentation and transformation.

IV. Methods and Data

I was directed to my fieldsite by another researcher, Anjali Browning. At the time of our meeting I was struggling to find an alternative research site. I had previously conducted pilot work and language training in Isthmus Zapotec in the coastal city of Juchitán. During my time there I discovered that Juchitan was not an appropriate place to study the dynamics of language use among indigenous migrants, as migration rates from that region of Oaxaca are very low. I decided, based on further research and discussions with colleagues that the Valley of Oaxaca was the better option and Anjali pointed me in the direction of San Juan Guelavía, where she had just finished a two-year research project for her dissertation on the impact of trade liberalization on indigenous farming communities. She helped me immeasurably in the initial stages of fieldwork by making introductions on my behalf and coaching me in local protocol. With her guidance I established contact with a highly respected elder Guelavian male, whom I call *Isidrio, who has a long history of political and social service to the community. He assisted me in securing the necessary permissions from the municipal council to conduct research in

the community, and introduced me to many community members. He, his extended family (children, grandchildren, siblings, cousins, nieces, nephews), affinal, and ritual kin became crucial resources, friends, and mentors for me throughout my research in both Guelavía and Los Angeles.

In the two years of ethnographic research I conducted in Oaxaca and California I participated in daily life among Guelavians living in both places, and compiled extensive written observations. I worked intensively with one family in particular, and closely with six other extended family groups, whose members were living on both sides of the border. I spent many hours with members of all of these groups in their homes talking, listening, and recording interactions they engaged in across a range of social and geographic contexts. In addition to my work with these families I interviewed several other community members, and conducted participant observation across a range of other contexts and occasions. During the course of my research I also attended many festivals, birthdays, weddings and other events, and at the request of the events' hosts I often videotaped and took photographs, afterwards printing photos and making DVDs that they could send to distant kin. At the request of Guelavians I was working with in both Oaxaca and Los Angeles, I taught English classes. This proved to be a rich source of information about local language ideologies, such as how communicative competence in a given code is measured, and the values attributed to mastery of a given linguistic variety.

I shared the view that “ethnography is not a place but a stance, the construction of a frame of inquiry” (Urciuoli 1996: 13, see also Fox 1991) and my interest in the relationship between language and migration influenced each step of the ethnographic

process for me, from selecting a fieldsite, to crafting interview questions, to selecting data for transcription and analysis, and, of course, in writing this dissertation. During my research I collected audio and video recorded data in the following contexts: 1) household interactions between family and community members, 2) traditional Zapotec stories, 3) language lessons (people teaching me Zapotec and I teaching others English), 4) interviews, 5) phone calls with absent relatives, 6) mealtimes (both ordinary daily meals and special occasions) and 7) ritual events, such as weddings, patron saint festivals, and baptisms. In total, I collected over a hundred hours of audio and video data, much of which I have transcribed, either by myself or together with language consultants from the community.

A large portion of the data that I draw on in this dissertation is in the form of personal narratives, some of which developed in the context of open-ended interviews, and others of which emerged in conversation, or in the midst of other ongoing discursive activities, such as traditional storytelling. My data corpus, however, contains many other kinds of talk, such as ritual speech making, joking exchanges, parent-child interactions, multi-party interactions, prayers, and the like. These other speech forms provided me with a sense of the range of communicative activities in which Guelavians engage, and have served as rich resources for investigating how linguistic modes of expressing or describing experience differ from, and/or relate to communicative and cultural practices.

Throughout the period of my research I worked with native speakers of San Juan Guelavía Zapotec, the local variety of Zapotec spoken in the community, to produce transcriptions of the Zapotec portions of this data for detailed linguistic analysis, which I then compared to identify patterns of use. The process of transcription was deeply

ethnographic, and I learned as much, if not more about local communicative patterns, ideologies and discursive contexts (see Ochs 1979, Bucholtz 2000, see also Schieffelin 1990 for discussion of annotated transcription as method) from my language consultants during transcription sessions than I did listening to interactions the first time round. In addition, the translation of transcripts into Spanish with the help of consultants, along with language immersion in the field and classroom study of Valley Zapotec proved to be a very effective method of language learning.

The conditions of research in Oaxaca and Los Angeles were strikingly different. I began my research in Oaxaca, where I conducted research in 2008. While in Oaxaca I was based in an apartment in the capital city, and I visited Guelavía daily. When attending festivals or weddings I often spent a night or two at the home of the host, or a friend, so that I could be present for what were often multi-day affairs, stretching long into the night and early mornings. However, in general, because I was a single woman, often walking alone, I avoided nighttime excursions in Guelavía, and stayed only inside the homes of people I trusted. A stipulation of my permission to work in Guelavía was that I respect the local curfew of 10 pm and never walk around past dark unaccompanied. Both because of gender and my research schedule I spent the majority of time in Guelavía with women and older men who were no longer working, though mealtimes and festival occasions involved men and women of all ages. In general I spent my days walking from house to house, to the local market, the *casa de cultura* (house of culture), the municipal plaza, or the church talking, observing, recording, interviewing, and very often eating with Guelavians. My evenings were passed in my apartment writing fieldnotes, reading or relaxing with friends.

Life in Los Angeles is quite different from life in Guelavía, and my fieldwork experience in LA was accordingly very different. As in Oaxaca, I lived in my own apartment and visited people in their homes, though I had a bit more scheduling flexibility as a result of having a car. One of the most difficult things to adjust to was the general unavailability of Guelavians living in the area, due to the extraordinary long working hours of most people that I knew or came to know during my research in 2009. In addition, most people worked several jobs scattered all over the city, while also raising school aged children who required transportation and supervision, so they had very few free hours. As a result I needed to schedule times to be at people's homes, whereas in Guelavía I could arrive at a person's home throughout the day and find several people present going about their daily activities, talking and interacting. In Los Angeles interviews were easy to conduct, but it was difficult to find instances of "naturally occurring conversation," which, if they happened at all, took place in the wee hours of the night when anthropologists and their recording devices are most unwelcome. It was accordingly difficult for me to assess many of the everyday activities of life among Guelavians in Los Angeles, because I didn't have access to much of what people did, namely work. Due to the thorny issue of documentation and the precarious nature of many people's employment status I was unwilling to venture into workplace contexts; therefore I draw mostly on what people say about those experiences. During my visits to individuals' homes people usually told me stories about their lives and experiences (sometimes solicited by me, but often spontaneously) as they went about other quotidian tasks, producing personal narratives that stretched across multiple visits: in addition, I was able to hear some telephone conversations. I was able to observe and record

interactions more regularly on weekends when Guelavians often gathered for large family meals, children's birthday parties and other celebrations.

The several trips I made back and forth between Los Angeles and Oaxaca served as a unifying experience between the two phases of my fieldwork. For family and community members who have been separated for long periods of time, couriers play a crucial role in ongoing processes of resource exchange and circulation. During the course of my research I often served as such a courier, an experience that allowed me to personally see how these processes were organized and tracked, and to hear how they were talked about by both givers and receivers (see Ch. 7 for details). Additionally, I encountered several people who migrated during my fieldwork, either returning to Oaxaca or going to Los Angeles. I was able to observe them in interactions on both sides of the border across several communicative and social contexts, which greatly enriched my understanding of the relationship between the lived experience of migration and the way such experiences are narrated or discussed in conversation. The theme of migrant stories, around which this dissertation is organized, represents my effort to encapsulate this relationship.

V. Chapter Overview

In the chapters that follow I explore the relationship between migration and language in the daily lives of Guelavians living on both sides of the border within the orienting framework of migrant stories. Across all of the chapters I use the related analytic tool of second stories, which enables me to keep in view both the “social and institutional embeddedness of action” and the “dialogic ground” from which cultural and linguistic practices emerge (see Tedlock & Mannheim 1995). Each chapter treats a different theme

or domain of practice, but there are myriad overlaps and the chapters speak backwards and forwards, often providing different perspectives on the same events and interactions. While the themes and issues I discuss throughout this dissertation were salient in the narratives and conversations of Guelavians I came to know during the course of my research, I recognize that this account is partial and subjective.

Chapter 2, “Narrating Local Labor Migration,” provides an overview of the past and present of Guelavian migration through the personal narratives of migrants and non-migrants. I use these stories of migration as a springboard to explore the social, cultural and economic motivations for migration, the morality of migration, and the transformative effects of migrant mobility on Guelavian community life on both sides of the border. Of particular interest to me are the second stories to be found in the overlaps and disjunctures between how migration is talked about and reflected on by migrants and non-migrants respectively. A pervasive theme of suffering emerges across many of the narratives I explore, a theme that is variously dwelled upon, joked about, and made light of as an intrinsic element of transborder life.

In Chapter 3, “Degrees of Differentiation,” I describe the sociolinguistic context of Guelavía and its location within the Oaxaca Valley (a region characterized by extraordinary ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity) as it relates to local language ideologies about the relative value of linguistic varieties. I investigate how individuals draw on linguistic variation as a basis for differentiating themselves from, or aligning themselves with, others outside of the community. I then go on to explore practices of intra-community differentiation, describing the temporal dimensions of speakers’ language ideologies, which project Zapotec and Spanish onto the mutually exclusive

domains of the ancient and the modern. These practices of inter and intra-community differentiation constitute first and second stories about the Guelavian community, as well as how membership the community is defined.

In Chapter 4, “The Question of Portability,” I consider whether the ideologies and practices of differentiation that are rooted in the socio-cultural geography of the Oaxacan Valley retain their salience among Guelavians living in Los Angeles. There is a “critical mass” of Oaxacans in the Los Angeles area among whom Oaxacan-based categories remain relevant, but they are refracted through the polarizing black-white dichotomy that pervades social life in the United States. I explore how migration to and residence in Los Angeles has or has not transformed Guelavians definitions of linguistic varieties and communities of speakers, again drawing on the framework of second stories to trace discursive threads of continuity and transformation.

In Chapter 5, “The Ghosts of Language Planning Past, Present and Future” I begin with an overview of the history of language planning in Mexico from the revolutionary era forward. I use this overview to contextualize local histories of language planning in Guelavía, and discuss the implications of those histories for future-oriented plans to revitalize local Zapotec linguistic and cultural practices. In particular, I investigate a nascent language revitalization program in the community, spearheaded by the municipal president. Throughout the chapter I compare the narratives of policy makers and linguists with Guelavians’ own renderings of their experiences with language-based discrimination in local schools. The divergent perspectives expressed by these different categories of participants constitute second stories, which reflect on and reframe local histories of language planning in various ways. In comparing these

different second stories of language planning I illustrate the complex entanglements of education, politics, and religious sectarian conflict in the context of ongoing processes of local language shift.

In Chapter 6, “Code Choice and Temporality in Zapotec Storytelling,” I continue exploring the impact of local language shift in a different discursive arena, that of traditional storytelling. I focus on the performance and social circulation of stories across tellers and contexts, comparing salient ideologies of storytelling with the actual discursive practices of storytellers. Specifically, many Guelavians saw storytelling as a genre tightly linked to the local indigenous language San Juan Guelavía Zapotec (SJGZ), yet in actual practice genre and code were frequently disassociated, as a result of processes of language shift. This shift reflects the internalization by elders of a first story about local patterns of language shift among Guelavian youth: their response – telling stories in Spanish – constitutes the second story which links back to but also reframes the first. Towards the end of the chapter I revisit the language revitalization program described in the previous chapter. I suggest that the program goal to re-align storytelling practices with the local Zapotec language through the translation and performance of stories in Zapotec by local youth constitutes a kind of third story of local language shift.

In Chapter 7, “Transborder Circulation and Ritual Life” I use the concept of second stories to explore the strategies employed by Guelavians to maintain ritual practices across geographic and temporal divides, and the often unintended transformations that result. The celebration of rituals is a primary way for Guelavians to reaffirm their sense of belonging to a shared community with a shared orientation to a common set of values and traditions. The structure of ritual event participation

perpetuates the exchange of material resources, the circulation of people, and visual media (e.g. photographs and video recordings of events) across borders between distant kin. Migratory mobility is partially oriented around geographically bound, highly local rituals, which are nevertheless shaped by mobile processes. Within this context attempts at reproduction, or ritual second stories, almost inevitably produce transformation, altering the foundation on which future ritual first stories will be enacted.

VI. Conclusion

Membership in the Guelavian transborder community involves a heightened state of reflexivity tied to the continual attempts of individuals to maintain ties and reproduce cultural practices, such as rituals, or storytelling, across time and space. Such attempts comprise the “recursiveness of the duality of structure,” (Giddens 1979: 77-78) which shapes and is shaped by the monitoring of oneself and others in interaction (Duranti 2004: 466). In the context of transborder life, practices of cultural reproduction are almost inevitably transformed into something unique that alters the foundation on which future social and cultural practices are constructed, and subsequently reproduced. At the same time, Guelavians’ narratives and practices evince a common orientation towards the shared moral and geographic center embodied by San Juan Guelavía itself, a center which enables the construction of a coherent narrated community between disparate individuals.

Throughout this dissertation I draw on the framework of second stories to untangle the relationship between reflexivity, cultural reproduction and transformation, demonstrating that careful discursive analysis can yield new insights into the particular experiences and challenges associated with living across borders. My work speaks to the complex configurations and encodings of human agency, as:

the idea of agency, and the wider theoretical matrix of so-called practice theories in which it must always be embedded, is precisely concerned with the mediation between conscious intention and embodied habituses, between conscious motives and unexpected outcomes, between historically marked individuals and events on the one hand, and the cumulative reproductions and transformations that are the results of everyday practices on the other (Ortner 2001: 77).

The close study of the communicative practices of transborder community membership sheds new light on the nature of the relationship between human action and social structure, a theme that is of fundamental significance to the discipline of anthropology. In describing Guelavians as a narrated community I demonstrate that in diasporic contexts in which the dissolution of community bonds is often assumed to be inevitable, the interrelationship of talk, place, and belonging provides a powerful medium of connectivity.

Chapter 2

Narrating Local Labor Migration

What I share with many Mexican migrants is their emotional and material investment in Mexico, the sense that the migratory experience can be used for setting past situations right, and the ambivalent realization that the difficulties of the migratory process have changed us. The nature of our investments, the sources of our frustrations on the home front, the specific qualities of our transformations in the United States are different no doubt...I am, rather, interested in the ways in which immigration to the United States offers a critical perspective on Mexico and on the United States...My concern is to understand the conditions in which national distinctions emerge (from *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico*; Lomnitz 2001: xii-xiii).



Figure 2-1, Cantina “La Once” in San Juan Guelavía

I. Introduction

While living and conducting fieldwork in Santa Monica between January and November of 2009, I drove frequently across the middle of Santa Monica to pick up my transcription assistant, Dora, who lived a bit further south. On the days that we worked at my apartment I picked her up, brought her over, and later on drove her back home, often choosing to take 11th Street, a short cut for locals heading south who want to circumvent

the heavily trafficked Interstate 10. One of the first times I was driving her home, in early May of 2009, she was looking out the window as we passed a large group of *jornaleros* (day laborers), the men who wait outside the lumber supply company that is located there. Dora asked me what the men were all doing there and I began to describe the system of day labor that has grown up in many places across the U.S. where building materials are sold. All of sudden she asked me, *Estamos en La Once?* (“Are we on Eleventh?”), which she said like the name of a familiar place. When I said that we were Dora launched into an explanation about how people in Guelavía talk about *La Once* all the time, presumably because many have been there *parados* (standing), waiting for work. Then she told me that her cousin Gilberto has a cantina called *La Once* (see figure 1.0 above) right near her parents’ home in Guelavía. I later realized that *La Once* is on one of the central roads through town and I had walked by it almost everyday and had even photographed it without realizing its name or significance. As a cantina it was a male dominated space where I did not spend any time. I did, however, meet Gilberto, the owner of *La Once*, one day early in my fieldwork when he called out to me in English as I was walking by, and then approached me to tell me about his life in LA. He is a fluent speaker of Chicano English, a product of a youth spent in heavily Latino areas of Los Angeles. *La Once* was named in homage to those day laborers that spend their days waiting and hoping for work. Men living in Guelavía often gather to talk and drink outside *La Once* as they watch people walk by, and as Dora talked I wondered how many of them had stood waiting on the streets of Santa Monica as well.

What particularly struck me in the car that day was both witnessing and experiencing the moment when Dora, and through her I, suddenly gained access to the

experiences that had brought this name, *La Once*, into Guelavía where it had become a feature of daily life there. The cantina *La Once* is an example of a semiotic second story, it recalls the experiences of locals, including the cantina's owner, who spent long days outside a lumber company on 11th Street in Santa Monica, waiting to be picked up for work as day laborers. The bar constitutes a form of "exhibited understanding," (Sacks Volume II, Part IV, Lecture 5: 252) which aligns the bars' owners and clients with this first story about the hardships endured by migrants. In so doing it tells a second story about return migration and cultural circulation that reframe the meaning of *La Once*, making it at once local and global. These kinds of semiotic second stories have transformed the sociocultural landscape of everyday life in San Juan Guelavía and in Los Angeles, altering the ground from which future first stories will be built. A corresponding example that I encountered in Los Angeles is the money transfer office, Guelaguetza², that serves communities throughout the Oaxacan Valley. The name is a Zapotec term that refers to a system of reciprocal exchange practiced throughout Oaxaca, which I will discuss at greater length later in this and other chapters. The circulation of these place names among Guelavians across spaces and contexts comprises another medium for the production of a narrated community, grounded in shared orientations.

Returning to the scene in the car with Dora, during our conversation the cantina *La Once* became a second story for each of us, as we were both able to access its meaningfulness, as a structural embodiment of exhibited understanding and alignment

² This is one of thousands of similar examples to be found all around West Los Angeles: business names of Oaxacan origin, as well as transported place names such as *Monte Alban*, *Tlapazola Grill*, *Zandunga*, among others, given to restaurants, delis, and convenience stores. In the Oaxacan Valley this is evident in the pervasiveness of U.S. goods, like clothing items with UCLA, Raiders, or LA logos, and assorted professional sports teams on them, and the growth in popularity of restaurants serving "ethnic" foods that are popular in the US like Chinese and Italian. Many migrants get jobs working in such places in the US and then come back to Mexico and open similar places in Oaxaca.

with the migrant experience. While Guelavians define themselves collectively through their ties to a shared place of origin, not all community members have equal access to all levels of meaning contained within the semiotic environments they move through in their daily lives. Guelavian communities in Los Angeles and Oaxaca are internally differentiated economically, linguistically, and experientially. The notion of a “linguistic division of labor,” (Putnam 1975: 257) is particularly relevant for conceptualizing interactions among Guelvians who have had different degrees of experience with migration. The concept describes the uneven distribution of linguistic knowledge within any community and the corresponding need to “assess who are the experts...before [one] can make a guess at the socially determined extension [of a word or concept]” (ibid).

In the example above Guelavian migrants are “the experts” who possess enough first hand knowledge of life in both places to play with and decode the multiple valences of *La Once*, and other semiotic processes and practices that have moved with migrants and been taken up in new places and contexts. While the mobility of migrants affords them access to wider range of social spaces and contexts, they are not always the experts, as the very fact of their movement, and/or prolonged residence outside of Guelavía, can also result in their effective exclusion from participation in and or ignorance of many aspects of daily life in Oaxaca. Through the lens of second stories I consider the consequences of migration and non-migration in terms of individuals’ differential access to shared bodies of knowledge, communicative and cultural practices, and the ways that Guelavians strive to bridge the gaps that divide them.

Throughout this chapter I compare the narratives of migrants and non-migrants to highlight how their respective experiences, social positions, and cultural and linguistic

competencies shape the kinds of stories, and second stories they tell. To begin, I contextualize my own work within larger scholarly dialogues on migration and transnationalism. In the following section I describe the two places where I conducted research, San Juan Guelavía, Oaxaca and West Los Angeles, California, and provide a brief overview of the history of migration in the Oaxacan Valley. I then discuss the ways that both migration and talk about migration are patterned, both ideologically and in practice, drawing on my own observations and the analysis of personal narratives that I recorded. I pay particular attention to talk about the morality of migration among migrants and non-migrants respectively, in which the conflicting demands of economic need, familial obligation, and personal aspiration are voiced and debated. Throughout this discussion I demonstrate intensely personal moments and interactions that comprise “the conditions in which national [and myriad other] distinctions emerge.”

II. Theorizing migration

There has long been a close relationship between the development of social scientific scholarship and the study of immigrant communities (see Pedraza 2006), as exemplified in anthropology by the work of Boas, whose reinterpretation of anthropometric studies of ethnic and racial groups within origin and diasporic communities debunked several generations of racist scholarship that had bolstered the American Eugenics movement (Boas 1940 [1922]). Boas’ student, Manuel Gamio, conducted detailed research on Mexican immigration in the 1930’s, based on which he concluded that the experiences of Mexican nationals in the US were the root cause of the Mexican revolutionary movements of that era. Gamio believed that migration instigated contact between the

impoverished and exploited masses from Mexico and their wealthy privileged counterparts in the US, raising consciousness and increasing demands from the peasantry for change, which when unanswered sparked nationwide revolutionary mobilization (1971 [1930]: 160). Studies of immigrant communities were similarly foundational for American sociology, grounded in the Chicago School's concept of "cultural assimilation," often referred to metaphorically as the "melting pot" (Pedraza 2006: 40). Contemporary scholars continue to find new avenues of inquiry: for example the study of present-day forms of citizenship is important for understanding the experiences of migrants whose cultural and legal rights of belonging are often challenged as they move across social and political borders (Ong 2002, Rosaldo 1997). This scholarship highlights the importance of looking at "global ethnoscaapes" for conceptualizing and describing the practices of the "nomadic subject" in this era of heightened mobility (Appadurai 1996, Sassen 1999). More recent scholarship on Mexican migration patterns has also illustrated the self-perpetuating nature of transnationalism, which generates new social, political and economic contexts that in turn depend upon the continuing movement of people across geographic and political borders (Smith 2006).

I use the term "transborder" (see Stephen 2007) in an effort to reflect the interconnectedness of the places inhabited by the people I worked with, both in Mexico and the United States, all of whom share a community of origin, San Juan Guelavía, Oaxaca. I choose this term as an alternative to the now ubiquitous concept of "transnationalism," which scholars have used variously in their attempts to describe migrant communities whose members are able to "forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Basch, Schiller &

Blanc 1994:7, see also Levitt 2001, Goldring 1996, Rouse 1987). However, in my own descriptions of the lives of the migrants and non-migrants I worked with I don't want to over-determine a narrative in which nations and movement between nations figure centrally. This is not to dismiss the importance of nations, which are undeniably significant, particularly in terms of their power to define citizenship and legitimate rights of belonging. The crossing of the US Mexico border without documentation is an especially perilous rite-of-passage that looms large in the narratives of many Guelavian migrants, and which in many ways structures the frequency and character of people's transborder movements. In fact border-crossing narratives constitute a crucially important discursive genre among Guelavians, one that I examine in detail in later chapters. However, to focus *exclusively* on movement between nations elides the myriad other forms of social and political boundary crossing that migrants have and continue to practice both within Mexico and in the United States. In addition, the focus on international borders as the primary point of contact between migrants and nation-states elides the many subtle ways in which state policies and officials intervene in very local contexts on both sides of the border. There is a great deal of "variation in the forms of transnational identity and transnational engagement" that merits consideration (Itzigsohn 2009: 140)

As Stephen argues regarding indigenous Oaxacan migrants, "when the Mixtecs and Zapotecs enter the United States, they are crossing a new series of regional borders that are frequently different from those in Mexico, but they can also superimpose them (for example the racial and ethnic hierarchy from Mexico that continues in Mexican communities in the U.S.)" (2007: 49). At the same time the racial and linguistic

discrimination faced by migrants from all over the world in the US forces many people to reconceptualize their own processes of identification “in relation to the dominant US racial polarity of Whiteness and Blackness” (DeGenova 2005: 2, Ong 2003, Farr 2006). Regarding these experiences of discrimination among Mexican migrants, Gamio argues, “He does not find in that country a true homeland even when he becomes naturalized, while the love which he has for Mexico is greatly increased” (1971: 174-77). Other scholars argue that transnationalism has made everything local through the creation of links that connect people simultaneously to multiple physical places, or “social fields” (see Levitt & Glick-Schiller 2004), facilitated by technologies of transportation and communication that have qualitatively altered the experience of migration (Pedraza 2006: 46). In building on these concepts it is crucial to emphasize that those connections do not permeate all lives evenly or equally. While migrants and non-migrants may strive for a sense of simultaneity with one another through the use of various communicative technologies, I question whether this is achievable to the degree that some scholars suggest. For example, whereas Guelavians living in Los Angeles may have high-speed internet access in their homes, such services do not exist in San Juan Guelavía, rendering this form of communicative technology irrelevant. The insufficiency of technologically mediate forms of communication are highlighted by the imperative among Guelavian migrants to engage in ritual return migrations to celebrate key milestones in their lives such as weddings and patron saint festivals (for details see Chapter 7). This is precisely because locality matters; as Smith and Guarnizo argue: “the social construction of ‘place’ is still a process of *local* meaning making, territorial specificity, juridical control, and economic development, however complexly articulated these localities amid

transnational economic, political, and cultural flows” (2004: 12, emphasis mine). Many scholars define transborder life and transnationalism more generally, according to the shared political and social goals of migrants in diaspora and their community and family members in communities of origin, which transcend the constraints of physical space (Farr 2006, Kerney & Besserer 2004, Fox & Rivera-Salgado 2004, Smith 2006). These shared orientations are indeed a big part of participation in transborder communities, but focusing so much on *what* is shared in some ways masks *how*, and indeed *whether*, that shared-ness is actually achieved. By closely examining the discursive and cultural practices through which Guelavians construct a narrated community, I provide insight into how transborder community members create this sense of sharedness, and the obstacles they encounter in the process.

The vignette presented above is in part an illustration of the degree to which daily life in Los Angeles and Oaxaca, among other places, is intertwined, such that one need not ever move out of either place to be affected by or experience elements of life in the other. As Cohen argues, “migration in Oaxaca is deeply ingrained into the repertoire of people's behavior, and values associated with migration have become part of the community's values” (2004: 6). There are patterns and protocol that govern people's decisions to migrate, as well as what migrants are expected to produce, achieve, and contribute to family members back in Oaxaca. However, this is *not* to say that migration out of the Oaxacan Valley has created a simulacrum of Oaxaca in diaspora in Los Angeles, nor that Oaxaca has become more like Los Angeles. These places are distinct, and as evidenced by Dora's moment of revelation, the routine of daily life in each place

differs dramatically, and is only fully understandable or accessible through direct experience.

Most Guelavians I worked with on both sides of the border shared the experience of living apart from family and friends for years and sometimes decades at a time. The ubiquity of this type of separation more than anything else defines the transborder community that I studied, along with the communicative and interactive strategies that people used to maintain social ties to loved ones across geographical and temporal divides. Feelings of community membership and belonging are collaboratively achieved, but the connective threads that bind people are fragile, and are remade continually through communicative interactions and the reproduction of local cultural practices. However, established cultural categories and interpretive frameworks are often transformed as individuals strive to reproduce them in radically different socio-political contexts (Kulick 1992). Among Guelavians these maintenance strategies are further complicated by the separation of family members and the problems of moving across heavily militarized borders without documentation (Farr 2006, Smith 2006, Urciuoli 1996). As Smith and Guarnizo argue:

...personal identity formation in transnational social spaces can best be described as a dialectic of embedding and disembedding which, over time, involves an unavoidable encumbering, dis-encumbering, and re-encumbering of situated selves (2004: 21).

Through the analysis of second stories in the cultural and communicative practices among Guelavians living in and moving between Oaxaca and Los Angeles I highlight the dialectic dimensions of transborder life.

III. Introduction to fieldsites:

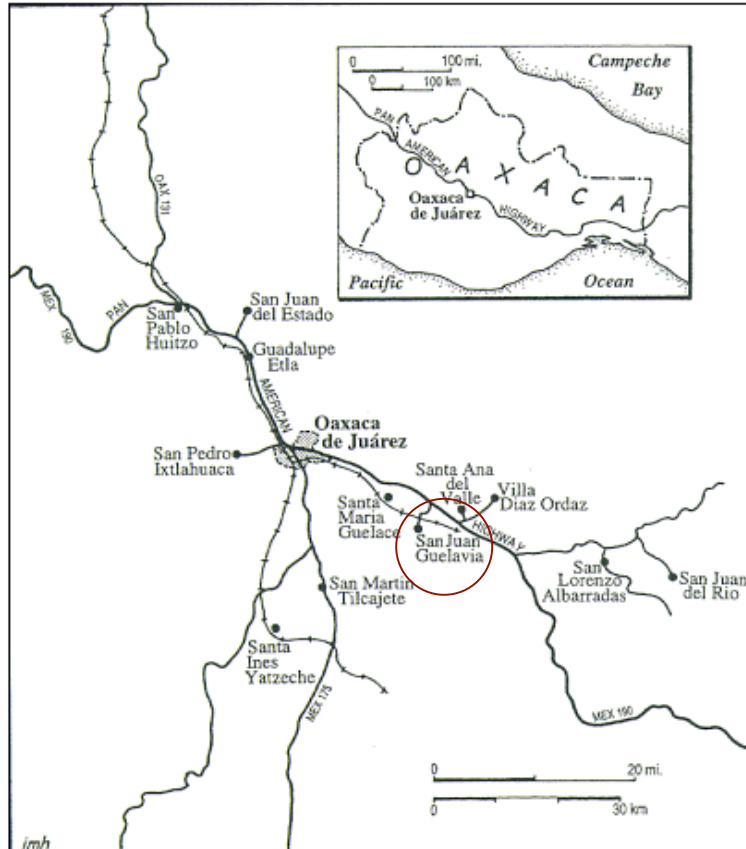


Figure 2-2, San Juan Guelavía, Oaxaca

i. SAN JUAN GUELAVÍA, OAXACA

The community of San Juan Guelavía (SJG) was officially founded in 1560, after the Spanish Conquest, when the Spanish consolidated disparate indigenous populations into centralized communities and towns (Stephen 1996, Guardino 2005). It is likely that the earliest inhabitants were Zapotec populations who settled nearby to extract salt from the soil alongside one of the local rivers. Many middle-aged people living in Guelavía today remember their grandparents and great grandparents harvesting salt, but the tradition has fallen out of practice in recent generations.³ Guelavía is located in the Tlacolula branch of

³ This general history is documented in the national encyclopedia of municipalities and unofficially confirmed by the current President of Guelavía on blog about the community and his future hopes for development projects.

the Valley of Oaxaca about thirty-five minutes by car from the state capital, Oaxaca City, and is home to approximately 3,000 residents. For many years Guelavía was part of the municipality of Tlacolula, which is the largest town in the area; in 1891, it became a separate municipality within the larger district of Tlacolula. Thus the community gained control of local governance, establishing an independent *cabildo*, similar to a town council, comprised of the municipal president and his board of officers who are elected every three years by popular vote. These officers preside over various aspects of community life, the mediation of disputes, land distribution, the maintenance of public edifices and spaces, public education, community celebrations, public safety and the administration of justice.

The valley is positioned approximately 6,500 feet above sea level, and is arid between October and early May, when heavy rains (usually) arrive and crops can be planted. Many people living locally farm and raise domesticated animals, and many families combine this with small-scale mercantile activities to produce enough food and earn enough cash to live on. The most common crops grown locally are corn, beans, squash, *magüey* (the plant from which the liquor *Mezcal* is produced), and alfalfa (used for feeding animals). These large-scale crops are often augmented with smaller home gardens, which provide various fruits like prickly pears and pomegranates, herbs and *nopales* (edible cacti), or with greenhouse-grown crops like tomatoes. Almost all households have small numbers of chickens and turkeys, that wander freely during the day and are penned up at night, and many people also keep sheep and pigs. Dogs are ubiquitous, both those kept and fed by people and used as watch dogs and strays that

http://www.e-local.gob.mx/wb2/ELOCAL/EMM_oaxaca,
<http://diagnosticocomunitarioguelavia.blogspot.com/2007/07/contrastaciones-entre-la-historia-oral.html>

roam the streets searching for food. Many families also have donkeys for riding and pulling carts, cattle, used alternately for pulling ploughs, rodeo bull riding, or meat, and a few people have horses. There are several local herders who depends on large herds of cattle, goats and sheep as their primary source of income.

Both crop cultivation and herding are male-dominated activities, meaning men are the ones who travel to the fields to till the soil, plants and harvest crops, and are responsible for taking the herd animals to and from their pasture every day. Men primarily ride and care for donkeys and horses, which are used for transporting people distances longer than a few kilometers, as well as hauling crops and other assorted agricultural activities. Those men who do not farm full time or herd are generally construction workers, auto mechanics, brick makers, musicians (in one of the many local brass bands), teachers, or taxi drivers. Local political offices were – in my experience – held exclusively by men, and a handful of these positions, including the Municipal Presidency and associated board of officers, are full time.

During the planting and harvest seasons women sometimes accompany their husbands to the fields, particularly if they are unable to afford hired hands, but more generally to provide food for men, who often work and sleep in the fields for days at a time. Women's spheres of responsibility revolve around the maintenance of the home (cleaning, gardening, clothes washing etc.), selling crops and other goods at the local market, food preparation, and daytime care of small children who are too young to be in school. In addition, women are largely responsible for the care of domesticated animals that live in and around people's houses and are not taken out to pasture, including chickens, turkeys, pigs, and dogs.

Many women supplement household incomes by engaging in small scale mercantile activities, providing services such as laundry, ironing, hair cutting, etc., selling products they make, and/or marketing catalog goods to their friends and neighbors in one of the seemingly infinite pyramid-structured businesses (similar to Avon or Tupperware) that sell household goods and beauty products. Additionally there is a growing trend for small groups of women to apply for funding to get additional vocational training through the local government of *Tlacolula* (the regional seat) to learn reed basket weaving, machine sewing and assorted other skills. Several local women own and operate small businesses selling clothing, shoes, meat, bread, and sundry grocery items, or operate food mills where corn and other products like cacao are ground. Even more women have stalls at the local market where they sell comestible items daily, and a few operate taco stands, *comedores* (eateries), and *estéticas* (beauty salons). Those women who engage in business activities that keep them away from their homes in the evenings often face resistance from their husbands and censure/stigmatization from other community members, who often talk about such women (behind their backs) as loose or morally corrupt. However, it is becoming increasingly common for women to seek out these local economic niches, which offer them some measure of financial independence from their husbands and families. Among women who have pursued their education past the secondary level, the most common professions pursued include teaching, accounting, office administration, nursing, internal medicine, and tailoring. A few local women, particularly younger women in their twenties, play music locally, both through the church, which has a vibrant youth music program, and very occasionally with professional bands throughout Oaxaca.

Though there are very wealthy and extremely poor families, most Guelavians live in one-story homes. These homes are comprised of two or three rooms; there is usually one room containing an altar and used for sleeping and another used for cooking and eating, as well as a roofed patio area in front where most meals are eaten. These homes are made of adobe, or concrete, and are connected to large courtyard areas with outdoor cooking and washing areas, as well as pens for chickens, pigs, bulls, and donkeys. The courtyards double as areas to receive large numbers of guests during frequently held parties, festivals and other large-scale social gatherings (see Chapter 7 for more details). Most households have a well, which provides clean potable water for drinking and food preparation, and all homes are hooked up to the municipal water system, though the latter is unpredictable and cannot be depended upon for daily use. On the days when the water is flowing, many people fill buckets and reservoirs to use for laundry and dishwashing. Nearly all homes are equipped with large outdoor concrete sink basins where dishes and clothes are washed, and which can accommodate very large cooking and serving equipment that is used for large social gatherings.

Most Guelavians live in houses with their nuclear families, which along with the houses of assorted relatives form part of extended family compounds. The homes are often arranged around one large courtyard shared by all of the households, which expand as children marry and have children of their own. Residence patterns shift over time, and throughout the course of the life cycle, though there is an overarching pattern of patrilocality in the spatial arrangement of the households of family members. The majority of newlywed couples spend at least a few years living with the groom's parents, where the bride is often expected to contribute to her new affines' household in the form

of domestic service to her *suegra* (mother-in-law). This period is often talked about as a rite-of-passage that all married women must endure. Because of the vulnerability of brides newly separated from their families, they are often exploited and sometimes even abused by their *suegras*, either verbally or physically during the course of their period of service, which often ends when the couple's first child is born. These periods are often described as difficult years for the newlyweds as a couple, as the husband's loyalties are divided between his mother and her expectations on one side, and his new commitment to his wife and children. Nearly every married woman I met had *suegra* stories, in which they detailed the tribulations of early married life and how they had overcome them.

Most Guelavians spend their time outside of work in the company of consanguineal and affinal relatives, though nearly all⁴ community members are also linked by networks of reciprocal obligation to religious ritual kin, known as *compadres*. Networks of *compadrazgo* have been described by many Mesoamerican scholars as social ties founded in processes of reciprocal obligation and mutual interdependence. The economic pressures of life are often cause a great deal of strain on extended family groups; *compadrazgo* helps communities to disperse financial and other burdens, creating larger, more flexible systems of resources and exchange that are grounded in Catholic moral frameworks (Hill & Hill 1986, Sicoli 2007, Nutini and Bell 1980). Another important form of reciprocal obligation is referred to throughout the Oaxacan Valley as

⁴ The only people that I encountered or heard about that don't enter into relationships of *compadrazgo*, (this encompasses both the relationship between godparents and godchildren, and the relationship between godparents and the parents whose children they have agreed to support financially and spiritually) are those who have converted from Catholicism to Protestantism, specifically Jehovah's Witnesses, who repudiate most forms of sociality tied to the Catholic church. I will discuss this further in Chapter 4: *The Ghosts of Language Planning Past, Present and Future*.

guelaguetza,⁵ which functions as a tabulated credit system where you repay precisely what you borrow, whether it be a bushel of sugar, corn, or a turkey. I describe these ritual kinship relationships and reciprocal exchange practices in greater detail in Chapter 7, “Transborder Circulation and Ritual Life.”

In addition to these exchange systems there are certain costs, similar to taxes, associated with Guelavian community membership. Families must pay allotted quantities to the municipality depending on their financial means, but individuals must also pay their dues through *servicio* (service). There are *servicio* roles associated with both church and civic life ranging from church bell ringers, to local police officers that locals must fill when they are publicly named by the municipal authority. One becomes eligible for *servicio* after marriage, after which you are considered to be a full adult member of the community, and these roles are largely unpaid. If the fulfillment of the role conflicts with the ability to work in one’s given profession, that hardship has to be endured for the length of service, which is usually one year.

Migration has complicated the *servicio* system by reducing the number of eligible married adults that can be called on to fill all of the vacant offices, and vice versa, *servicio* expectations often reshape migration practices. As the majority of young couples, including those living in Los Angeles, marry in Guelavía, they are often present for the process of *nombramiento* (naming) by which new *servicio* roles are distributed each year. This can impede, or in fact prevent young couples from returning to Los Angeles or elsewhere as they might have planned, for while there is a preference to hold marriages in Guelavía many couples wish to have their children in the United States.

⁵ Guelaguetza has been appropriated by the Oaxacan tourist industry and is the name of the annual dance festival, held each July, which features troops of dancers from each of the state’s seven regions.

There are many complicated reasons for these choices, and there are those who stay in Guelavía to be close to their parents and grandparents who will provide them with support networks in childrearing. For those who do elect to have their families in the United States among the most frequently mentioned rationales were the greater availability of high quality health care for low-income families, birthright citizenship, English acquisition and public education.

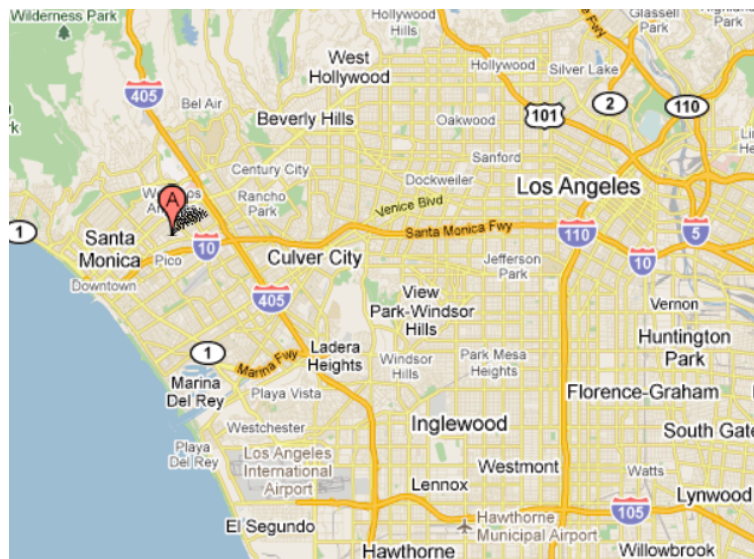


Figure 2-3, West Los Angeles, California

ii. WEST LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

As I described above, Guelavians have historically migrated to a wide variety of locations both within Mexico and in the United States; however the three most common destinations for those who choose to leave the Tlacolula Valley are Mexico City, Ensenada, and Los Angeles. Many people I worked with had spent time in more than one of these places over the course of their lifetimes, and all of these places were mentioned frequently in conversations I recorded in my corpus, both by people who have lived there

and by their family members. I chose among these locations to conduct follow up research in Los Angeles primarily because I wanted to compare the roles of English, the dominant language in the U.S., with Spanish the dominant language in Mexico, and San Juan Guelavía Zapotec, in the linguistic repertoires of Guelavians. I also wanted to do work in the United States because it offered an opportunity to compare the socio-political contexts in which Guelavians were living, and how these might be related back to differences in communicative practices, and vice versa. The very fact of long term separation between family members, and the strategies of long-distance relationship maintenance they employ, is specific to this political moment. Unlike other migrant populations separated by vast distances and oceans, frequent movement between Oaxaca and Los Angeles is possible (and in fact easy for those with permission like myself), due to geographic proximity, but impractical and dangerous because of political, legal and social obstacles. Additionally, many of the people I met who had migrated to or were living in Los Angeles had experience with domestic migration as well, and thus were able to speak directly to the differences between these categories of migrant life.

It is impossible to say how many Guelavians live in the LA area, but based on the number of people that attended patron saint festivals, and the estimates of those I worked with, they likely number between 1,500 and 2,500. Almost every one I met in Guelavía had at least two or three relatives living in the US, so that is likely a modest estimate. The majority of Guelavians that I met and worked with in the LA area lived in and around West Los Angeles, which is situated between the city of Santa Monica, and Westwood, the home of UCLA. Some married couples with children lived in apartments with their nuclear families, but household arrangements differed widely because of the

scarcity of affordable housing. As such the pattern of patrilocality followed by neolocality that predominates in Guelavía is often untenable in the Los Angeles context. Newly arrived migrants often lived with family members scattered throughout the city wherever the rent is least expensive, sharing one and two bedroom apartments with five or more people, converting living rooms and family rooms into additional sleeping areas at night. There were also many neighborhoods and regions that Guelavians avoided due to the threat of border patrol sweeps, which speaks to the ways that “the distribution of space can instantiate particular systems of social control” (Keating 1999: 234). Groups of relatives frequently tried to block out apartments in the same neighborhoods and complexes to create extended networks of support close by. Many people I worked with lived in the same pockets, between wealthy neighborhoods, that UCLA students flock to for cheap housing close to the university.

There is a high concentration of wealth in close proximity to these communities, and thus it is relatively easy for migrants to find work in the service sector. The category of job that people worked, or felt they could aspire to work, was inextricably bound up with their grasp of and fluency in English, just as Spanish proficiency has long served as a gate-keeping device for indigenous populations in Mexico⁶. Most of the adult women that I knew worked cleaning houses in Santa Monica, Brentwood, Beverly Hills, Pacific Palisades, and Bel Air, among the richest communities in Los Angeles County. Many of these same women doubled as nannies for the families that they cleaned for, and a few worked as *encerradas*, which literally means ‘closed in,’ but is more appropriately glossed as ‘live in help.’ These types of positions are very similar to the kinds of jobs

⁶ I take up these themes further in Chapters 3, 4, and 5 in which I discuss the relationship between shifting linguistic repertoires, language planning and education.

these same women have or would have worked if they migrated to an urban center within Mexico. For example, several of the women I knew in LA who had grown up in SJG also had experience working as domestic servants and cooks for wealthy families in Mexico City. Women also sold makeup, specialty health drinks (e.g. MonaVie), and kitchen products through social networks as they do in Oaxaca. Nearly all of the men I came to know in Los Angeles worked in restaurants, cafeterias and eateries at large institutions like UCLA, or some other sector of the food service industry, and a small number worked in construction and home renovation.

Life among Guelavians in LA was centered around work, as it is for many Americans, and for those with children, between the competing demands of work, school, and childcare. The transition from doing fieldwork in Oaxaca to working in Los Angeles was abrupt and challenging; whereas in Guelavía people were often home interacting with one another at all hours of the day, in Los Angeles I had to schedule time to meet with people within very tight timelines (see Chapter 1 for more on methodological challenges). In fact the professional demands of life in the United States was one of the most commonly stated reasons among return migrants living in Guelavía for their return. People often said that they not only had no time to spend *conviviendo* (socializing, living together), but the rules and regulations associated with living in urban environments and the fear of attracting unwanted attention made socializing the Guelavían way – with large groups of people, loud music and open-fire cooking – extremely challenging. During the course of my research it was most common for large familial gatherings to take place on weekends in people’s homes, or for particularly large celebrations in local parks, or party halls. While many Guelavians attended churches in their neighborhoods there was one

central church where Guelavians would gather together for baptisms, first communions, patron saint festivals and other religious ritual occasions (see Ch. 4 & Ch. 7 for more details).

IV. Local histories of domestic migration

The practice of migration has a long history within the Guelavian community and other impoverished regions of rural Oaxaca. It is rare for people to grow enough surplus food to subsist on farming alone, but while many people also engage in mercantile activities, or operate small businesses in the community, these provide somewhat limited access to cash. The reciprocal exchange networks mentioned above greatly expand the financial and material resources that Guelavians can access over the course of their lives. Another strategy for expanding access to resources is migration out of Oaxaca towards urban centers where wage labor is more widely available, a practice that is extremely common. Among rural Oaxacans more generally, domestic migration has a very long history, tied to the structural inequalities of development in Mexico, which led to the concentration of wealth and power around urban centers (see López & Runsten 2004: 261). This pattern was firmly established during four and a half centuries of Spanish colonial rule, but likely dates back much further. Archaeological excavations in Teotihuacan, an Olmec stronghold located on the outskirts of Mexico City, have yielded evidence for a Zapotec ward, suggesting a pattern of pre-colonial Zapotec migration and/or mobility (see Sicoli 2007).

Many people I worked with, both in Oaxaca and in Los Angeles, had experiences as domestic migrants, particularly middle-aged adults. Prior to the sharp increase in

migration to the US it was common for parents to send their children to be fostered and educated in urban centers where they would be exposed to more Spanish and could continue their schooling. Until as recently as the 1980s, there was only a *primaria* (elementary school) in Guelavía, so that any one who wanted to continue his or her education beyond primary school had to go to Oaxaca. It is still quite common for Guelavian youth to attend *secundarias* (middle schools) outside of the community. I spoke to one women, *Leticia, about her experiences in school between the 1950s and 60s⁷, and she began by telling me about her older sister, who was the first in their family to leave the community:

Example 2.0, recorded 11/11/2008, SJG

L:	<i>Y seguíamos yendo a la escuela, y Lorena cuando ella terminó el quinto grado</i>	And we continued going to school, and Lorena when she finished the fifth grade
EF:	<i>Mhmm</i>	Mhmm
L:	<i>Pues con mucho dolor de mis papa:s y de ella, yo creo de todos, porque se tenía que ir a Oaxaca</i>	Well with a lot of pain from my pa:rents and from her, I think from everyone, because she had to go to Oaxaca
EF:	<i>Mhmm</i>	Mhmm
L:	<i>Allí tenía que quedarse, y dice que mi papa este pues la extraño muchísimo</i>	There she had to stay, and my father said um well that he missed her so much
EF:	<i>Sí:</i>	Ye:s
L:	<i>Que se puso pues hasta enfermo un poco porque en esa época no había pasajes como ahora</i>	That it made him well until he got sick a little bit because in that era there were no buses like there are now
EF:	<i>[Mhmm</i>	Mhmm
L:	<i>[Que hay cada rato allí no se cada dos o cada tres horas no, antes nada más había puro sábado, uno en la mañana y uno en la noche, a veces, cuando se descomponían pues ya pasó el sábado y no hubo hasta el siguiente (1) entonces más o menos, cada mes, cada treinta días, nos iban a visitar</i>	That there are every minute there I don't know every two or three hours, no, before there was only service only on Saturday, one in the morning and one at night, sometimes they broke down well Saturday came and went and it didn't come until the next (1) so more or less, every month, every thirty days, we went to visit
EF:	<i>A:h</i>	A:h
L:	<i>Primero se fue Elena y después me fui yo</i>	First Elena went and then I went
EF:	<i>A:h</i>	A:h
L:	<i>Pero a mi ya no me fue yo creo tan duro porque ella ya estaba allá</i>	But for me it was no longer so difficult because she was already there

⁷ Incidentally this is the same period of time when local children were physically punished for using Zapotec within the classroom, correspondent with a governmental agenda for castillianization which I will discuss in Chapter 4: Language Planning Past, Present and Future.

EF:	<i>En[tonces</i>	[So
L:	<i>[Entonces ya nos hacíamos compañía</i>	[So now we made each other company
EF:	<i>A:h</i>	A:h
L:	<i>Y afortunadamente la persona, que nos recibió allí ((sound of water pouring)) pues era muy buena con nosotras no?</i>	And fortunately the person, who received us there ((sound of water pouring)) well was very good with us right?
EF:	<i>Aha</i>	Aha
L:	<i>Claro había ocasión porque trabajábamos y estudiábamos, entonces trabajábamos en el día, y en la noche nos íbamos a la escuela en la nocturna que le llama (1) y este y ya de allí ya terminé terminó ella su primaria y luego yo allí terminamos en Oaxaca las dos</i>	Clearly there was occasion because we worked and we studied, so we worked during the day, and at night we went to school at the nocturnal they call it (1) and um and then from there I finished she finished her primary and later I over there we finished in Oaxaca the two of us

The experiences of Leticia and her sister Lorena were fairly typical of adult Guelavian women, most of whom had migrated out of the community in stages; first going to Oaxaca for school, then traveling to Mexico to work as domestic servants and/or pursue further professional training. As is apparent in her description, when women like Leticia went to Oaxaca they were young and extremely vulnerable, and were somewhat at the mercy of the elite wealthy families that they lived with and worked for. The same was true for these women when they migrated to Mexico City, even more so because of the distance from home. This type of migration, from rural areas to urban centers was, and continues to be, so common that most cities have a de facto, ethnically based class hierarchy in which the servant class (with its own internal gendered divisions of labor) is predominantly rural and indigenous. Perhaps because of the inherent vulnerabilities and dependencies bound up with such positions, it has become much less common for Guelavian women to work as live-in domestic servants in recent years; most younger women prefer to have their own housing at least to return to on weekends or days off,

Oaxaca City, the capital of the state of Oaxaca, with a population of approximately 350,000, is the largest urban center in the state and is home to the majority of the state's secondary and higher education institutions. The city center is about forty

minutes by car or bus from Guelavía, though the trip was much longer before the Pan-American Highway was expanded. In the generation prior to Leticia's, when most people used oxen drawn carriages for transportation, it was much less common for people to leave the community, and as such Lorena's departure was traumatic for the whole family. The transportation infrastructure that has grown up around commuting students, professionals and market goers was in its infancy when she first left. Whereas now there are hourly buses running between rural communities and the city center, as well as collective taxis leaving every ten minutes, in her youth a trip to the city was a difficult, all day affair. For those that were sent to Oaxaca for school, the experience often served as a gateway to migration to more distant destinations. Leticia herself went next to Mexico City, along with Lorena, and four of their other siblings. The sisters worked as live in domestic servants for wealthy families in the city, while pursuing other professional training until they were able to afford their own housing. Men of this generation also frequently migrated to Mexico City, but unlike their female counterparts were equally likely to travel to the US. These men never entered into domestic service, and often found work as factory workers, construction workers, custodians, landscapers, or other assorted laborers in order to earn money or to subsidize further studies. Beginning in the late 1960's, many adult Guelavians met their spouses (usually other Guelavians) in Mexico City because so many of the community's young people flocked there. A large number of families remained there, and like their transnational migrant counterparts they often keep houses in Guelavía to return to during festivals and special occasions.

V. "El Norte"

The distinction between domestic and international migration is somewhat artificial, particularly in the context of the United States and Mexico as the current border was not drawn until the 1880's, and was not strictly enforced until the late 1920's. Flows of people have been moving across what is now the US-Mexico border since long before the line between the nations was drawn, and "the immigration 'problem' is a creation of the twentieth century" prior to which "the border was not patrolled and migration across it concerned few people" (Lorey, 162). It wasn't until 1929 that crossing without documentation even became a crime; however, the pattern of Mexican labor exploitation is a long-standing one. Mexican workers were recruited to build railroads in the 19th century. Many of these workers were sent back to Mexico with the onset of the Great Depression, just as workers brought to the U.S. during the 1940's Bracero program to work in low wage agricultural positions were targeted in "Operation Wetback," during which over two million Mexicans were deported between 1953-55 (Lorey, 77 & 121). The Bracero Program has been cited as the beginning of the massive growth in undocumented migration from Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America. This is both because the demand for workers exceeded the number of laborers who were brought north by legal channels, and because less scrupulous employers found it expedient (and still do) to hire those whose salaries were not regulated by government contracts (Pedraza 2006).

More recently a combination of factors including ecological degradation and ensuing droughts, followed by the extreme devaluation of the Mexican peso in the early 1990's, led to a shift away from farming, and to a sharp increase in migration. The devaluation occurred at the same time as the drafting and passage of NAFTA, the North

American Free Trade Agreement, enabling the US to export highly subsidized corn crops into Mexico, flooding the market there with cheap corn and making it virtually impossible for family corn farmers throughout Mexico to continue to make a living selling their surplus crops. In rural states like Oaxaca people were left with less cash, in an economy where the cash they had could no longer buy as much as it used to. Thus for Guelavians struggling to survive during this period, migration became more and more attractive, as a way to bring the strength of the American dollar into the country and dramatically increase the purchasing power of individuals and families in the region.

The effect of the influx of dollars into the community is visible everywhere in Guelavía. Next to the municipal center is a currency exchange office, where people take envelopes of dollars sent home by relatives to change into pesos. Walking down the main street of town one can see numerous new construction projects, with freshly poured concrete walls and thin metal rebar springing out the of the roofs. As described above it is very common for newly married couples in Oaxacan Valley communities to spend a few months, a year or more with the groom's family, during which time the bride fulfills a period of service to her in laws. However, it has long been the practice for married couples to establish their own homes, either on a parcel of land allotted to them by the bride or groom's family or one they purchase themselves, as soon as they can afford to do so. The difficulty of accumulating sufficient wealth to build a new home can delay the process for many years, meaning that couples may live with the husband's family for an extended period of time.

Transborder migration has altered this process significantly, by providing a shortcut to wealth that has allowed many couples to build new homes more quickly than

in previous generations. Many newlywed women in particular favor this strategy because it reduces the amount of time that they are subject to their *suegras*. One man I spoke with explained his view that it was the increase in construction, more than anything else, that catalyzed the massive increase in migration locally:

Example 2.1, recorded 4/18/2008, SJG

J:	<i>Pe:ro de repente se comenzaron a ir así este muchachos (...) fue unos diez y esos que se iban par allá... al año o dos años que estaban por allí comenzaban a construir casas no? Dice (...) ‘Oye yo creo que sí hay dinero no?’</i>	Bu:t all of a sudden they began to go like that um young men (...) some ten went and the ones who had gone over there...after one year or two years that they were over there they began to build houses right? They would say (...) ‘Listen I think that there is money right?’
EF:	<i>Mhm</i>	Mhm
J:	<i>Y este entonces mucha mucha gente comenzó a ver eso no? ‘En un año hizo esto y segundo año ya compró un terreno y construyó una casa en dos años si compró otro carro’ y de esta (...viene), entonces empezó por allí la la fiebre de irse</i>	And um so a lot a lot of people began to to see this right? ‘In one year they made this and the second year they already bought a piece of land and built a house in two years yes bought another car’ and from this (...comes), so it began there the the fever to go
EF:	<i>O:h sí</i>	O:h yes
J:	<i>Y fue más que nada por el motivo del dinero no?... Y empezaron a irse, y de a ocho de a trece (...) a once y este grupos de cinco de ocho y pues se acabaron los (...) del pueblo en un tiempo que ya no había nadie de muchachos aquí</i>	And it was more than anything because of the motivation for the money right?...And they began to go, and from eight to thirteen (...) to eleven and um groups of five to eight and well they were used up (...) from the town at one time that there were no longer anyone of young men here

According to Jacobo this migration “fever” was spread by envious looks at migrants who owned *camisas cuadradas* (short-sleeved plaid shirts), *mezclilla* (denim jeans), cars, and two-story houses, and by the wistful conversations these possessions inspired. This period of intensified migration in turn produced a construction boom throughout the valley that has stimulated the local economy significantly over the last two decades, and increased the earning power of those who do *not* migrate. During my time in Guelavía I quickly learned that the number of houses in the community substantially exceeds the number of residents, because very often migrants send money back to buy land and build houses, but do not return themselves.

These houses, built to anchor migrants to the Guelavian community, often have visually prominent second levels that rise above the single level adobe and cement homes around them. Their very physical distinctness constitutes a kind of second story; it both demonstrates an understanding of the existing norm of house construction, and reframes it by creating a new context within which older, single level homes are now interpreted – namely as a sign of relative poverty. The prolonged emptiness of many of these homes constitutes another second story, demonstrating the insincerity of the first stories told by many migrants about their future plans to return to the community. By the time those living in the US and elsewhere have acquired the means to establish their own independent household back in Oaxaca, they often find it difficult to leave. Some have had children who are enrolled in school, others don't want to give up lucrative jobs they have secured, and some simply prefer living in Los Angeles and don't want to return to Oaxaca. These houses serve an important function, however, regardless of whether or not they ever have occupants. Due to the climate of hostility towards undocumented migrants in the United States, the increasing militarization and punitive approach of border enforcement, and the recession economy, Guelavians in Los Angeles occupy a tenuous position. Many recognize the need for a back up plan if and when the bottom drops out and they have to leave the country. These concerns are unique to those migrants who choose to come to the United States; in San Juan Guelavía rights of community belonging are established by birthright and retained by community service and cooperation, rather than by federal law.⁸

⁸ It is the case, however, that federal recognition of indigenous communities throughout Mexico, often based on indigenous language use, as well as federal poverty guidelines, impact the degree of state assistance, and the degree of autonomy allotted to a given community.

Even empty, the houses built by migrants become potent symbols of class tensions in the community. The influx of dollars through remittances has had a tendency in Guelavía, and elsewhere throughout Mexico, to exacerbate local class differences between those who have access to dollars coming in and those who don't (see also Smith 2006). In some ways the empty houses of migrants are a glaring reminder to those who are living in more austere circumstances of all that they could have but can't get. The structural distinctions of newly built homes demonstrate the way that spatial configurations can "[conventionalize] differences between people, and making such delineations material and substantive, as well as anchoring them within historical practice (Keating 2000: 234). The insides of these new houses were an equally salient source of class anxiety, an issue that was made most apparent to me when I visited people's homes for the first time and needed to go to the bathroom. There were people that were proud to show me their bathrooms, namely those who had flush toilets and running water, and those who were ashamed of them, those who had latrines, pit toilets, or simply areas of their courtyard that people used for this purpose. As an American associated with life in *El Norte* where flush toilets and running water are well known to be ubiquitous, my presence in people's homes either exacerbated people's sense of anxiety about not measuring up to these standards of living, or affirmed a family's sense of pride that it had invested in acquiring this potent local symbol of prestige.

It should be clear by now that economic concerns are extremely relevant factors in many individuals and families' choice to migrate. But it bears specifying to some degree the ways in which such economic concerns are conceptualized. As evidenced in Example 2.1, it is not always or even usually a lack of money or professional

opportunities that motivates people to migrate, but quite frequently the perception of their own economic situations relative to that of those around them. As Jacobo told me this was how the “fever to go” began to spread throughout the community, growing as people witnessed the material effects, in the form of clothing, houses and cars, of dollar based salaries during a period of recession in Mexico.

In conversations with various people living in Guelavía and Los Angeles, I heard a wide variety of rationales for migration which demonstrated that economic pressures and local class tensions are not the only, or necessarily the most important, factor in people’s decision-making processes. Migration provides many things to many people: a way to make a lot of money quickly, buy property, or build a house, as well as providing a short cut around many of the forms of reciprocal obligation and service described above. Migration to the U.S. can be appealing for young people who want to experience life elsewhere, and can provide a buffer from the responsibilities associated with adult life in Guelavía. For undocumented migrants, however, the dangers associated with border crossing preclude easy mobility, so that migration is patterned in correspondence with particular moments in the lifecycle when individuals, couples or families feel especially compelled to risk the journey. In my experience the most likely categories of people to migrate were: 1) youth between the ages of 16 and 25, 2) middle aged men, 3) newly wed couples, and 4) older women.

Migration to the United States was formerly a male dominated activity, and in the very early years it was most often adult married men who came to work for some period of time and then returned to their families. In the narratives of men who had migrated several times between the 1980’s and 1990’s the dramatic difference in living conditions

between early and later migration experiences often figured centrally. In the beginning there were no women, and the men had to learn to cook and clean for themselves, twenty men to an apartment, which at night was carpeted with sleeping bodies. Over time more kinds of people began to migrate, including more women and more families; there are now there are established times in the life cycle when the idea of migrating, or the perceived need to migrate, are more salient.

Youth who have finished *secundaria* (middle school), and are poised to enter the next phase of education in *preparatorios* or *bachilleratos* (high schools) are among the most likely to migrate. At this age young people, who are frustrated with school and the difficulties associated with pursuing a professional career in Mexico, often decide that they would rather risk the journey north. Some emphasized the desire to get out of Oaxaca and see the world. For some people abstract visions of *El Norte* (The North) were the main attraction of migration, the specific manifestation of which, in my research, was the city of Los Angeles. The following two examples, excerpted from interviews with *Rufino and *Guillermo, speak to the salience of *El Norte* in talk about migration among young men in particular. Both of these young men had migrated, and subsequently returned to live in Oaxaca, and I asked each of them if they remembered what motivated them to leave the community the first time:

Example 2.2, recorded 12/14/08, SJG

<p>R: <i>Pues aquí:í en los pueblos cuando ya no estu:dias cuando o a veces la juventud siempre viene creciendo y dejan de ir a la escuela y ya ‘me voy allá al norte al norte al norte’</i></p>	<p>Well he:re in the villages when you no longer stu:dy when or sometimes youth always they grow up and they stop going to school and that’s it ‘I’m going to the north, to the north, to the north’</p>
--	--

Example 2.3, recorded 12/11/08, SJG

G:	<i>Sí no no mas (...) muchas personas dicen 'que el norte que el norte (...) vamos a conocer el norte'</i>	Yes no no just (...) many people say 'that the north that the north (...) let's go get to know the north'
L:	<i>Y que dijeron ellos del norte porque te dio muchas ganas de salir?</i>	And what did they say about the north why did it give you the desire to leave?
G:	<i>Que es bonito que</i>	That it's pretty that
L:	<i>A:h</i>	A:h
G:	<i>Si</i>	Yes
L:	<i>((laughing))</i>	<i>((laughing))</i>
G:	<i>Y sí es bonito bonito Los Angeles</i>	And it is pretty pretty Los Angeles

The desire for first hand knowledge of the mythical North loomed large in many of the narratives of migration I collected. In a way the danger of crossing the US-Mexico border can be alluring to young people seeking adventure and a way to escape the constraints and/or obligations of school and family life. Border crossing stories were often told like narrative badges of honor, attesting to the courage and ingenuity of their tellers.

*Rufino and *Guillermo both fell into this category, though Rufino was more oriented towards earning money to send home, and Guillermo was more focused on the experience of living in LA. Both of them chose to return to Guelavía to marry, have children and begin careers, Rufino in auto mechanics and Guillermo in construction. Further on in our interview Guillermo contrasted his time in Los Angeles very sharply with the life he had created for himself in Guelavía:

Example 2.4, recorded 12/11/08, SJG

G:	<i>Tenía (1) ganas de conocer, no es tanto por la situación económica sino que allí a conocer, sí y me fui muy chico (a los) quince años</i>	I had the desire to know, it isn't so much because of the economic situation, but to get to know over there, yes and I went very young (at) fifteen years old
EF:	<i>Bien chico ((sounds of G's baby daughter))</i>	Very young ((sounds of G's baby daughter))
G:	<i>Y para encontrar trabajo (.5) muy difícil [(porque)]</i>	And to find work (.5) very difficult [(because)]
EF:	<i>[De esa edad?</i>	[At that age?
G:	<i>De esa edad no se puede (andar) trabajo</i>	At that age you can't (go) work
EF:	<i>Aha</i>	Aha

	((later on))		((later on))
G:	<i>Sí estuve como dos años yendo a la escuela llegue como al diez al grado diez</i>		Yes I was for two years going to school I reached like tenth – tenth grade
EF:	O:h		O:h
G:	<i>Sí yo (a) pa' el once cuando me sali</i>		Yes I (to) for eleventh when I left
EF:	<i>((laughing)) y piensas en regresar a la escuela algún día o no?</i>		<i>((laughing)) and do you think about going back to school some day or not?</i>
G:	<i>Oh por ahorita no por lo que ya tengo ahora responsabilidad</i>		Oh for right now no because by now I have responsibility
EF:	<i>Pero tal vez en el futuro algún día</i>		But maybe in the future one day
G:	<i>Quien sabe porque aquí el trabajo es diferente</i>		Who knows because here work is different
EF:	Aha		Aha
G:	<i>Sí entonces solamente ir por allí tampoco, porque teniendo familia casi es los trabajos para poder hacer algo aquí porque yo cuando fui no hice nada, puro andar y conocer, a bailar y todo</i>		Yes so going over there alone either, because having a family it is mainly the jobs to be able to make something here because me when I went I didn't do anything, only hanging out and getting to know, to dance and everything

Guillermo's migration experience inverts the stereotypical idea of migrants flowing north, desperately searching for work and money. In the first minute of our interview he specified that he did not go for economic reasons, but to “get to know” and learn about life in the mythical place *El Norte* (see examples 2.3 & 2.4) that he had heard about since he was a child. He spent most of his time in school, and lived with his older sisters who paid his expenses so that he could study English for a few years until he was old enough to work. During his time in LA nightlife was his main priority: he “didn't do anything” and was “only hanging out and getting to know.” When I asked him about continuing his studies he associated being in school with that period of frivolity, incompatible with the responsibilities associated with his current life as a married man with children and a full time job.

In addition to single young men and women, young married couples frequently migrate to the United States following their weddings, often to earn enough money to pay off wedding-related debts and to build their own house back in Guelavía. Those couples that choose to have children while in Los Angeles often become established in the US

long-term. The following example is excerpted from an interview with *Gael and *Dora, who had been married the previous summer in Guelavía and had arrived in Los Angeles a few months earlier. The conversation took place in the living room of their apartment in Los Angeles, which they shared with two of Gael’s siblings. In the excerpt shown here Gael is describing his decision several years earlier to migrate the first time:

Example 2.5, recorded 6/12/09, LA

G: <i>...realmente salí de allí para (...) para hacer algo para tener algo mas que nada, tener algo porque ya de que va uno pues creciendo ya es un poquito ahm, como le dire, ya piensa uno diferente</i>	...really I left there to (...) to do something to have something more than anything, have something because as one goes on growing up now it is a little, how do I tell you, now one thinks differently
EF: Aha	Aha
G: <i>Y piensa uno diferente por uno mismo, si es cierto esta uno allí con los papas, hay que ayudarles pero (mas) ellos piensan pues en en est-en que estemos allá pero uno va a pensar en uno mismo, hay que hacer algo</i>	And one thinks differently for one’s self, yes it’s true one is there with the parents, one has to help them but (more) they think in in uhm-in that we are there but one is going to think of one’s self, one needs to do something
EF: Mhm	Mhm
G: <i>Sí, y pues por eso que aprovechando que se fue mi hermano por allá y pues ya este me vine con el</i>	Yes, and well because of that taking advantage that my brother had gone over there and well then uhm I came with him

Gael characterized his choice to migrate as a result of a shift in thinking, a shift from thinking about himself as part of his family to thinking about himself and his life independently. His narrative describes this change in thinking as a natural, inevitable part of growing up, but at the same time implies that his brothers’ prior migration shaped that desire. As a newlywed living with his wife in Los Angeles, the need to earn money to repay debts to family and community members incurred during their wedding was foremost on his mind. These concerns may well have influenced the organization of his narrative, and his central claim that, *uno va a pensar en uno mismo* (“one is going to think of one’s self”). In any case, the central focus on economic mobility in his narrative contrasts strikingly with Guillermo’s recollections (see Example 2.4.) of wanting to “get

to know” LA and have fun. Gael had opted to return to LA after his marriage; just as they finished repaying wedding-related debts Dora got pregnant, focusing their attention even more on their nuclear family needs.

In addition to single youth and newlywed couples, I also encountered several older women who migrated to the US; during my research in Oaxaca and Los Angeles, I was able to work with some of them in both places. These women were long past the age of youthful impulsiveness, and their own children were adults now having children of their own. All of the women I met in this category had gone to Los Angeles to be with their children and grandchildren and to share care-giving responsibilities. In contrast with younger migrants who were expected to work and earn money, the families of these older women were extremely reluctant to let them work, or even leave the house unaccompanied, because many of them had never before traveled outside of Mexico, or even Oaxaca. They generally centered their activities around childcare and cooking, often choosing to settle with children who were experiencing relationship or marital difficulties and needed extra support.⁹

The established pattern of migration among newlyweds is closely connected with the migration patterns of older women. This pattern constitutes a second-story of transborder life that reflects the conflicting demands of work and family life faced by young migrant parents. The demand for childcare support from grandmothers is so high that some women whose children and grandchildren are spread out in different locations find themselves being fought over by their children. The trend of migration of older

⁹ I don't know precisely why I didn't meet any men in this category, but I think there are two possible explanations: 1) many of the men in this age group living in Guelavía had already had migratory experiences, which was not true for many women, and had chosen to return to Oaxaca, or 2) men did not gravitate towards the same types of care-giving roles that these women filled for their families in LA.

women is another illustration of the transformative effects of migration that result from efforts of family members to bridge the temporal and geographic spaces that divide them. In this case the transformation is evident in the changing shape of migration itself; whereas at one time migration to *El Norte* was a male dominated activity, now there are increasing demands for the presence of women to help maintain growing migrant communities. In some cases the women were widows, or escaping from unhappy marriages, but in most cases they left behind husbands, children and other grandchildren, creating an inverse of the situation in the early 1990s when, *no había nadie de muchachos aquí* (“there were no young men here”) (see Example 2.1).

Regardless of their goals, motivations and needs migrants must grapple with the visions, expectations, and goals that others project onto their journeys. Many migrants that I talked to described a tension between their desire to further their own economic interests and their feelings of obligation to family members. As Gael explained above (see Example 2.5), *ellos piensan pues en en est-en que estemos allá pero uno va a pensar en uno mismo* (“they think well in in uhm-in that we are there but one is going to think about one’s self”). The competing and often mutually exclusive demands of transborder life, figured centrally across the narratives of many Guelavians I worked with.

VI. Between here and there

Regardless of the choices they made, to migrate or not to migrate, to return to Guelavía or to stay in Los Angeles, all of the Guelavians I came to know during the course of my fieldwork struggled with separations and the emotional tumult of transborder life. In many cases Guelavians described feelings and emotional bonds that deeply impacted the

shape, duration and experience of migration. The extended narrative I show below is a particularly clear illustration of how such issues are negotiated, in this case between parents and their children. The narrator is *Julieta, and prior to the first excerpt she had been discussing a time fifteen years earlier when she, her husband and her two children, *Wilber and *Casilda, were living in downtown Los Angeles. In the first excerpt shown below she explained to me why *Wilber decided to leave Los Angeles, leading the entire family to return to Guelavía:

Example 2.6, recorded 6/11/09, LA

J:	<i>...y el dice vaya pues no le veía futuro y todo el lo que quería y luego dice “Es mucho dinero para que yo quiero, yo quiero tener una carrera, estudiar, pero donde ustedes puedan darme el estudio” dice “Porque aquí veo difícil que me den el estudio, y todo, porque como somos ilegal pues no tiene uno los mismos derechos pues”</i>	... and he says well then he didn't see a future and all he that he wanted and later he says "It's a lot of money so that I, I want, I want to have a career, to study, but where you can pay for my studies" he says "Because here I see that it would be difficult for you to pay for my education, and everything, because as we are illegal well one doesn't have the same rights then"
EF:	Oh	Oh
J:	<i>Y ya después este y ya fue que nos fuimos por allá, y ya de allí ya el ya no quiso venir dice “Y no me voy” dice “si quieren regresar regrésense” dice “yo me quedo con Carmelita” este y pues ya l-ya me dijo el pues “Quedate con el” dice “y yo ya me voy” y me quede con ellos, me quede con Casilda y Wilber, pero Casilda extrañaba mucho a su papa porque, no se porque de chiquita Casilda siempre se pego mucho con su papá, siempre siempre se pego mucho con su papá, y este Wilber conmigo</i>	And that was it after uhm and it came to pass that we left for there, and then from there he no longer wanted to come he says "And I am not going" he says "if you want to go back go back" he says "I will stay with Carmelita ¹⁰ " uhm and well then h-then [my husband] said to me well "Stay with him" he says "and I will go now" and I stayed with them, I stayed with Casilda and Wilber, but Casilda missed her father so much because, I don't know why but since she was little Casilda was always attached to her father, always always she was attached to her father, and uhm Wilber with me

Wilber's struggle to envision the future he wanted for himself amid the vulnerabilities and obstacles of undocumented life in Los Angeles motivated their return to Guelavía, where he remained thereafter. This in turn led the family to separate, when Julieta's

¹⁰ *Carmelita is Wilber's aunt/Julieta's sister who lived next door to his parents' home in Guelavía.

husband *Hernan opted to return to his job in Los Angeles and Julieta remained in Guelavía with the children.

In the second half of her narrative Julieta described the painful separation of her daughter Casilda from Hernan, as the two were very close. Later on in the conversation she described another time period when they were separated, following Casilda’s wedding in Guelavía. After the wedding Julieta and Hernan returned together to Los Angeles, but Casilda stayed on with her husband and in-laws in Oaxaca. In the following excerpt, Julieta poked fun at Hernan and Casilda for their desperate attempts to stay in communication with each other:

Example 2.7, recorded 6/11/09, LA

J:	<i>Pues este e-ya cuando se vino Casilda pues el extrañaba Casilda también y Casilda a el también</i>	Well uhm u-then when Casilda well he missed Casilda also and Casilda missed him also
EF:	<i>O:h</i>	O:h
J:	<i>Cuando Casilda hablaba y a veces el no estaba y volvía Casilda a marcar hasta que lo encontraba y platicar con el pues... pues no se conformaba no más hablar con así conmigo por decir a veces el iba a trabajar y luego me decía “y mi papa?” “se fue a trabajar” le digo, luego dice “a:a a que horas llega?” y ya le digo a veces, y ya vuelve a marcar otra vez “Ya llego mi papa?” ... y cuando no le encontraba pues si sentía el muy triste y “Sí hablo Casilda?” “Sí” le digo</i>	When Casilda called and sometimes he wasn’t there and Casilda would keep calling until she found him and talked with him well...well she couldn’t accept only talking like that with me that is to say sometimes he went to work and later she would say to me “and my father?” “he went to work” I say to her, then she says “a:t at what time does he get home?” and then I say to her sometimes, and then she calls back again “Did my dad get home yet?” ...and when he didn’t find her well yes he felt very sad and “Did Casilda call?” “Yes” I say to him
EF:	<i>((laughing))</i>	<i>((laughing))</i>
J:	<i>((imitating husband’s gasp)) “No hablará otra vez?” o “Voy a marcar le” y ya así pues y todo y ya como estaban bien acostumbrada ya después ya el extrañaba dice “Ay yo”</i>	<i>((imitating husband’s gasp)) “Will she call back again?” or “I’m going to call her” and that’s well and everything and then as they were so used to [being together] after then he missed [her] he says “Oh me”</i>

Casilda and her husband eventually returned to Los Angeles, whereupon she was reunited with her father. Julieta’s narrative of their separation illustrates the gravitas associated

with the decisions made by migrants; each choice they make brings them closer to and simultaneously farther away from some number of loved ones.

As Julieta’s narrative demonstrates, decisions to migrate are often fraught with tensions and contestations, particularly between parents and children. In addition to children rejecting or refusing to accommodate their parents’ migration plans, many young Guelavian migrants I spoke with described their parents’ disapproval of their choices to migrate. Rufino (see example 2.2) experienced this directly in the form of a confrontation with his father over his decision to go to LA at the age of sixteen. During an interview with Rufino and his wife *Cyntia she began to tell the story of when Rufino’s father went north to Los Angeles to bring him home:

Example 2.8, recorded 12/14/08, SJG

C:	<i>Tu papá fue a traerte</i>	Your dad went to bring you
R:	<i>No pero la primera vez</i>	No but the first time
C:	<i>Ah</i>	Ah
R:	<i>Ah sí la primera vez mi papá fue por mi</i>	Ah yes the first time my father went for me
C:	<i>Fue por el cuando fue la primera vez</i>	He went for him when he went the first time
R:	<i>Aha sí</i>	Aha yes
EF:	<i>Oh sí?</i>	Oh yes?
R:	[<i>Sí</i>	[Yes
C:	[<i>(...que no se quería venir creo...)</i>	[(that he didn’t want to come I think...)
R:	<i>Sí a la misma quería venirse pero dice</i>	Yes at the same time he wanted to come but he said
C:	<i>Estaba muy chico</i>	He was very young
R:	<i>Aha estaba muy chico</i>	Aha I was very young
EF:	<i>Ah estaba enojado que fuiste?</i>	Ah he was very angry that you went?
R:	<i>Pues no tanto pero el también me extrañaba como [pues si</i>	Well not so much but he also missed me like [well yes
EF:	[O:h ((laughing))	[O:h ((laughing))
R:	<i>Estamos juntos siempre</i>	We were always together
EF:	<i>Aha</i>	Aha
R:	<i>Y de repente un día llegó allí estábamos un-una noche cuando llegó el</i>	And all of a sudden on day he arrived we were on-one night when he arrived
EF:	((laughing loudly))	((laughing loudly))
R:	<i>(Ahora...)</i>	(Now...)
EF:	<i>Como sorpresa?</i>	Like a surprise?
R:	<i>Como si sorpresa</i>	Like yes a surprise
EF:	((laughing))	((laughing))

Rufino's father, who had opposed the idea of Rufino going north because he was so young, finally decided to risk the journey north, appearing on the doorstep one night of the apartment in Venice, California where many Guelavian men lived together. The main reason both Cyntia and Rufino cited for his father's appearance was that he believed Rufino was too young to be there, and that he missed him, as they had spent so much of their time together. He stayed in LA for six months and then announced that they were leaving together, meeting Rufino's protests with the accurate observation that he was not working and wouldn't find work as young as he was, saying, *Que vas a hacer aqui? Ay luego* ("What are you going to do here? Oh later"). Without viable employment Rufino didn't have sufficient justification for remaining apart from his family; the only acceptable option was to return to Mexico, and to his musical studies.

Rufino found himself in his father's shoes several years later after he had returned to LA and found gainful employment when his younger brothers began expressing the desire to join him there. He was worried about their risking the border crossing, and the difficulties of finding work, and he wanted to spare them the pain he had experienced during the first time he went north:

Example 2.9, recorded 12/14/08, SJG (emphasis mine)

<p>R: <i>Yo soy el mayor sí de mis hermanos de mi familia si yo primero y la primera vez que fui para allá...era muy muy difícil muy duro...aha sí pero este la primera vez sí era mu:uy difícil muy difícil...y era difícil para encontrar trabajo luego te decían 'No estas muy niño no todavía no' (...) sí que teníamos era muy difícil para mí a mí sí me me costó mucho sufrí mucho, era muy muy duro muy triste</i></p>	<p>I am the oldest yes of my brothers in my family yes I'm the first and the first time that I went over there...it was very very difficult very hard...aha yes but uhm the first time was ve:ry difficult very difficult...and it was difficult to find work later they tell you 'No you are very young no not yet' (...) yes that we had it was very difficult for me for me yes it cost me me a lot I suffered a lot, it was very very hard very sad</p>
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The primacy of suffering and pain in his rendering of that first migration experience is emphasized through the repeated use of intensifiers such as *muy* (very), and *mucho* (much), to modify the adjectives *difícil* (difficult), *duro* (hard), and the verb *sufrió* (I suffered) throughout this excerpt. This narration of suffering framed his description later on of his efforts to dissuade his brothers from coming to Los Angeles. The struggle to reason with them about their own “restlessness” replicated his own negotiation with his father about when and why one should migrate:

Example 2.10, recorded 12/14/08, SJG

EF:	<i>Eran chiquitos</i>	They were young
R:	<i>Sí pues ya lo pasaste y tu no quisieras que tu familia pasa también por lo mismo</i>	Yes well you passed it and you don't want that your family passes also the same way
EF:	Mmm	Mmm
R:	<i>Sabes que es pena sí 'yo les mando dinero no se preocupe' 'No pero yo quiero lo mío yo' 'Bueno pues'</i>	You know it is pain yes 'I will send you money don't worry' 'No but I want my own' 'Fine well'
EF:	<i>Entonces hablaron así [antes de que llegaron</i>	So you spoke like that [before they arrived
R:	<i>[Sí, ah sí antes de que ellos fueron ya me decían 'Quiero venir' este 'Mira esperate que que necesitas? Que necesitas yo te lo doy.' Sí (...) ya ves que sabes que el dólar llegas aquí pues es un dinero ellos eran jóvenes y necesitan (...) 'Que necesitan yo te doy que necesitas quieres juegos quieres videos quieres que quieres yo te mando' pues 'No pero es que yo quiero lo mío que' 'Hijoles bueno esperate' sí ya bueno llegó Osvaldo y de repente Raul y 'Sabes que yo quiero venir' 'No pues que quieres sigue estudiando' porque el estudiaba la mecánica en Tlacolula [Raul</i>	<i>[Yes, ah yes before that they went they had already told me 'I want to come' um 'Look wait what what do you need? What do you need I will give it to you.' Yes you know already that the dollar arrives here well it's some money they were young and they needed (...) 'What do you need I give it to you what do you need do you want toys do you want video games what do you want I'll send it to you' well 'No but it's that I want my own that' 'Son of a fine wait' yes already well Osvaldo arrived and all of a sudden Raul and 'You know I want to come' 'No well what do you want keep studying' because he was studying auto mechanics in Tlacolula [Raul</i>
EF:	[Aha	[Aha
R:	<i>El estaba estudiando el 'Estas bien allí' le digo vam- 'Esperate y pues algún día vamos a hacer un taller y tu vas a ser el mero [mero'</i>	He was studying he 'You are good over there' I say we- 'wait and well one day we are going to make a shop and you are going to be the real [real'
EF:	[El dueño	[The boss
R:	<i>Aha 'No pues es que yo quiero aprender más y más' y no se que 'Hijoles'</i>	Aha 'No well it's that I want to learn more and more' and I don't know what 'Son of a'

Rufino’s description of his negotiations with his brothers *Osvaldo and *Raul differs strikingly from the way he characterized his confrontation with his father (see Example 2.8), following which his father physically accompanied him back to Guelavía. Rufino tried to appeal to his brothers’ desires for money or games, saying that they should wait, that he would provide them with whatever they wanted, to no avail. First one brother, then the next arrived on his doorstep; eventually all three of them returned to Guelavía and opened up a mechanic shop together, fulfilling the promise Rufino had made to Raul in an effort to convince him to stay in Oaxaca.

Conflicts over migration pervaded the narratives of many Guelavians I spoke with, even those who had migrated domestically. The following example illustrates some of the ways such conflicts were gendered. Whereas negotiations between male migrants and their kin usually revolved around economic independence, young women’s decisions to migrate often involved a desire to escape the moral constraints of community life. In the following example Leticia (see Example 2.0) describes her confrontation with her mother over her decision to leave Guelavía and go to Mexico City:

Example 2.11, recorded 11/11/2008, SJG

L:	<i>Y le dije a mi mama le digo ‘yo quiero que me que me deje ir’ y que no se que y puedes que en ese momento esta uno yo creo en la adolescencia que no sabia yo realmente lo que queria</i>	And I said to my mom ‘I want you to let me go’ and that I don’t what and you can that in that moment one is I think in adolescence that I didn’t really know what I wanted
EF:	<i>Mhmm</i>	Mhmm
L:	<i>Y luego andaba de ya de novia con un muchacho este que vivia aqui que no es de este pueblo</i>	And later I was going around as a girlfriend with a boy um who lived here who isn’t from this town
EF:	<i>Aha</i>	Aha
L:	<i>Que es de otro pueblo, pero no los conocian bien todavia</i>	Who is from another town, but they didn’t know them very well yet
EF:	<i>A:h</i>	A:h
L:	<i>Entonces mi mama estaba enojadísima porque me ve ella platicar con este muchacho</i>	So my mom was really mad because she sees me chatting with this boy
EF:	<i>((laughing))</i>	<i>((laughing))</i>

L:	<i>Me dijo que ‘Con ese no que porque no es de aquí que no lo conocemos, que no se que mañas tenga’ bueno cosas así</i>	She said to me ‘With this one no because he isn’t from here that we don’t know him, that I don’t know what guiles he has’ well things like that
EF:	<i>Aha</i>	Aha
L:	<i>Entonces yo dije ‘bueno ay pues mejor me voy’</i>	So I said ‘Well then it’s better if I go’

Leticia described feeling constrained by the xenophobic attitudes of her mother towards her boyfriend, a young man from outside of Guelavía that no one in the community knew. In her own words Leticia was at a stage of her young adulthood when she didn’t know what she wanted, or rather knew she wanted something different from life in the village, and was intrigued by the prospect of a romance with a mysterious young man with unknown “guiles.” Leticia’s mother equated her desire to date this questionable character with a rejection of the moral and ethnic constraints of life in the community, which her mother fiercely defended. As a result of their conflict Leticia opted to leave the community, traveling to Mexico City, where she eventually pursued a career in nursing and married a non-Guelavian that she met while living there.

As it is inextricably entwined with familial relationships, migration is a fraught practice. In the narratives of migrants shown above, the opposition of family members to their decision to migrate loomed large, as they created a moral dilemma for migrants. To choose to migrate often means choosing to leave behind family and kin, or to abandon a way of life that is cherished by one’s loved ones. This moral tension is particularly salient in the narratives of non-migrants about the migratory practices of the relatives and loved ones, a theme to which I now turn.

VII. The Morality of Migration

Many of the narrative excerpts above suggest that there are (at least) two dimensions involved in decisions to migrate: 1) an overt rationale, and 2) an underlying moral order that guides individual's actions and shapes the ways that migration is conceptualized by migrants and non-migrants alike. Across the other narratives I collected the moral dimensions were more clearly foregrounded in talk about migration by non-migrants.

In general, non-migrants had a narrower vision of why one should migrate, namely to work and earn money, and considered deviations from this purpose to be morally suspect. I encountered on such individual, *Lorenzo, during my time in Guelavía. Lorenzo is the only one of his seven siblings who never left Guelavía; his five sisters and his brother all left either permanently or for long periods of time to settle in Mexico City and Ensenada respectively. During our conversation he described the impulse to migrate, described by many of the young male migrants I spoke with, as a phase that he endured and overcame in the process of conforming to life in Guelavía (see Examples 2.1-2.8):

Example 2.12, recorded 3/2008, SJG

L: <i>Que es lo importante (1) sí (.5) ahora pues uh ahora pues ya están grande mis muchachos no? Pues ya no (esta...) ya no ya cambia (.5) ya siente uno siente uno ser conformes pues, con lo que (...) conformista, porque cuando es uno joven no? Quiere uno superar uh (.5)</i>	What is important (1) yes (.5) now well uhm now well my children are already grown right? Well no longer (are...) no longer it changes (.5) now one feels one feels they should conform well, with what (...) conformist, because when one is young right? One wants to rise above uhm (.5)
EF: <i>(((laughing)))</i>	<i>(((laughing)))</i>
L: <i>[Conseguir algo mejor pues</i>	To find something better well
EF: <i>Sí</i>	Yes
L: <i>Hasta el imposible (.5) pero ya de-de ya de grande por la edad, uno ya creo que por la fuerza (.5) pues uno ya acepta ya queda uno conforme no pues (.5) aunque uno dice que no es bueno no? Pero pues no es que (.5) la fuerza ya no es igual que cuando es uno joven pues</i>	Up to the impossible (.5) but now of-of now of old age because of the age, one now I think because of the strength (.5) well one now accepts and now remains conformist no well (.5) even though one says that it's not good right? But well it's not that (.5) the strength is no longer the same as it is when one is young well
EF: <i>Sí, [Sí</i>	Yes, yes
L: <i>[Entonces ya con lo que se conforma uno no pues esta bien hasta aquí (.5) Y así pasaba de que no-no fui pues. (Tengo muchos amigos) y paisanos no? Que están, viven allí (...) muy bonito porque pues (es) cambio un</i>	So now with what one conforms no well it is good here (.5) And that way it happened that I didn't didn't go well. (I have many friends) and compatriots right? That are, that live over there (...) it's very beautiful because well (it's) change a

<i>cambio de-de vida pues.</i>	change of-of life well.
EF: <i>Sí:i</i>	Ye:s
L: <i>Uh (.5) y por eso les digo a mis muchachos no? Les digo 'Si quieres ir? Vas.' (...) a mi muchacho "si ya no quieres estudiar (...quieres) ir al norte a la buena pues vas (...yo...) ayudaremos (...) la manera de conseguir un pasaporte (.5) para que vaya adelante pero que trabajas"</i>	Uhm (.5) and for that I say to my children right? I say to them 'If you want to go? Go.' (...) to my son 'if you no longer want to study (...you want) to go north to the good well go (...I...) we will help (...) in the way of getting a passport (.5) so that you can go forward but that you work'

Lorenzo reflected on his own “impossible” youthful aspirations for a better life, his desire to “rise above,” his youthful energy “to find something better” like other Guelavians he knows who live “beautifully over there,” in contrast with the acceptance that he learned with age. In contrast to his many friends and family members who chose to pursue their fortunes in Mexico City, Ensenada and elsewhere Lorenzo decided to stay. He described his choice as a process of conformity that he positively valued, concluding, “well it is good here.” In contrast to Guillermo’s narrative of adventure above (Example 2.4), Lorenzo’s view of migration was sharply delineated around work, recalling telling his own children that his support of any decision to migrate on their part was contingent on a commitment to work. Incidentally, neither of his children chose to go to the US; his daughter remained in Guelavía to study accounting, and his son followed Loreanzo’s brother to Ensenada where he now lives with his wife and young daughter.

Much of the moralizing discourse about migration that I heard and recorded emerged in the talk of non-migrant parents who criticized their migrant children for all manner of shortcomings. The first time I heard this kind of moralizing talk I was in the middle of a Zapotec lesson and conversation with *Gilberto, a man in his seventies, at his home in Guelavía. Gilberto was wearing a tee shirt with a map of the city of Los Angeles printed on it. Over the years his children have lived in Mexico City, and are now divided between Los Angeles and Guelavía. Gilberto showed me on his tee shirt where his

children have lived over the years in and around Los Angeles, and I did the same, noting how familiar he was with the names of various neighborhoods that he had never visited. I then began to comment on how many people I had observed throughout Oaxaca, walking in the streets, on buses and in taxis, who wore clothing from Los Angeles, or with the logos of LA area sports teams like the Lakers, or the UCLA Bruins:

Example 2.13, recorded March 14th 2008, SJG

EF:	<i>Y a veces cuando esto:ya en el camión</i>	And sometimes when I a:m go-on the bus
N:	<i>En el camion</i>	On the bus
EF:	<i>Viniendo par aca hay mucha gente [con</i>	Coming here there are many people [with
N:	<i>gente</i> [Mucha	[Many people
EF:	<i>Camisas de la [UCLA</i>	Shirts from [UCLA
N:	<i>[Sí sí sí muchos este</i>	[Yes yes yes many uhm
EF:	<i>Y sombre:ros</i>	And ha:ts
N:	<i>Yo apenas este</i>	I just this one
EF:	<i>Sí</i>	Yes
N:	<i>Como casi no me mandan nada</i>	As they send me almost nothing
EF:	<i>((laughing))</i>	<i>((laughing))</i>
N:	<i>Ahora hasta ahora cuantos años tienen no</i>	Now until now how many years they have no
N:	<i>...No les cuesta nada si nada hasta este hasta ahora me trajo esta me trajo dos dos playeras así</i>	...It doesn't cost them anything yes nothing until this until now they brought me this they brought me two shirts like this
EF:	<i>Mmm mhm</i>	Mmm mhm
N:	<i>Pe:ro hasta ahorita pues</i>	Bu:t until this moment well
EF:	<i>((laughing))</i>	<i>((laughing))</i>
N:	<i>Sí, ya cuantos años (...) ya veo muchos que se ponen estos, los de-tienen sus hijos por allí</i>	Yes, already how many years (...) already I see many who wear these, those from-who have their children over there
EF:	<i>Sí</i>	Yes
N:	<i>Sí ya que pero yo digo cuando me lo-luego poner como no tengo</i>	Yes already that but I say when I la-later wear as I don't have it
EF:	<i>((laughing))</i>	<i>((laughing))</i>
N:	<i>Sí</i>	Yes
EF:	<i>Para mostrar su orgullo de los hijos allá</i>	To show your pride of your children over there
N:	<i>Sí pues ellos si luego luego ah le mandan</i>	Yes well they yes later later uhm they send
EF:	<i>Sí</i>	Yes
N:	<i>Sí pero yo no para nada (1) sí pues (1) ni modo pues</i>	Yes but to me no for nothing (1) yes well (1) whatever well

Gilberto responded to my observations about the ubiquity of clothing from LA with a poignant criticism of his children's failure to provide him with the proper accoutrements

due the relatives of migrants living in the US. The paucity of tee shirts seemed to be an index of the infrequency of contact that Gilberto had with his children, or possibly the lack of financial support that he expected. He brought sharply into focus the expectations placed on those who leave the fold, as well as the lens through which their actions are interpreted in the context of a community rife with internal class tensions. For example by claiming that these trinkets and souvenirs *no les cuesta nada* (“don’t cost them anything”), he attributed a degree of what could be read as indifference or selfishness to his absent children. As in many other categories of social life, his perceived lack was judged relative to those numerous other parents in the community that he had observed wearing the prestigious sartorial evidence of their migrant children’s successes in *el Norte*. Perhaps most importantly such tokens are a crucial semiotic resource for non-migrants to display their social bonds to distant children and family members, to prove that they haven’t forgotten them.

In other examples parents commented more directly on their children’s presence or absence from the community, or the frequency of communication that they maintained. The following exchange occurred during a conversation I had with *Ermelinda, a woman in her early eighties; she is not a fluent speaker of Spanish¹¹, and often switched to Zapotec to help me learn and because she preferred it. However as I had just asked her, in Spanish, how many children she had, she responded in kind:

Example 2.14, recorded 6/2/2008, SJG

E: <i>Per *Selena se llama Selena *Gomez Burgos</i>	But Selena Gomez Burgos
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¹¹ I will discuss the distribution of linguistic knowledge in greater detail in the following chapter. Ermelinda is one of a category of older Guelavians who grew up speaking only Zapotec and did not learn Spanish until much later in life. As a result they are not completely fluent speakers, though still quite able to communicate.

EF:	Mhmm	Mhmm
E:	<i>Mhmm todos *Alma Gomez Burgos, *Cristina también, todo y La La:ura y Pa:co también</i>	Mhmm all of them Alma Gomez Burgos, Elena also, all and La-and Laura and Paco also
EF:	<i>Cinco?</i>	Five?
E:	<i>Cinco [cinco</i>	Five five
EF:	<i>[Cinco hijos</i>	Five children
E:	<i>Cinco, cuarto mujer, [y un hombre</i>	Five, four women, [and one man
EF:	<i>[Y un hombre</i>	<i>[And one man</i>
E:	<i>Un hombre (no más) (.5) es Laura el-la ultima pero más grande (...) muy alto muy alto ((sighs deeply)) quien sabe si (...) esta esperando esta platicar cuando esta platicar por teléfono, para saber pues que tiempo, si de verdad o si mentira ((laughing))</i>	One man (no more) (.5) it's Laura the-the last but the biggest (...) very tall very tall ((sighs deeply)) who knows [am] (...) [am] waiting [am] talking when [am] talking on the phone, to know well what time, if truly or if it's a lie ((laughing))
EF:	<i>((laughing))</i>	<i>((laughing))</i>
E:	<i>Y ojla-ojlajala yo ya viene pues</i>	And would to-would to god that now now she comes well
EF:	<i>((laughing)) Sí va a venir sí pues</i>	<i>((laughing)) Yes she is going to come yes well</i>
E:	<i>Mucho piensa pues</i>	<i>[I] think about it a lot well</i>
EF:	<i>Trabajando trabajando trabajando</i>	Working working working
E:	<i>A:ha</i>	A:ha
EF:	<i>((laughing))</i>	<i>((laughing))</i>
E:	<i>Por eso ahora sí trabajar trabajar para ...aha para dinero (1) primeramente Dios Dios Dios más ayuda pues, porque yo que tanto ayuda (2) ay Be::ti, no viene por aquí todo el tiempo?</i>	For that now yes work work for...yes for money (1) first and foremost God God God God helps more well, because me what amount of help (2) ay Be::ti, won't you come here all the time?

This conversation took place in early June, about two weeks before the patron saint festival honoring St. John the Baptist, which takes place twice a year, on the 24th of June, and the 24th of January. Ermelinda was expecting her youngest (but tallest) daughter, Laura to return in order to participate in the festival and represent their family in the *convite*, a parade that marks the start of the week-long celebrations.¹² Ermelinda and her husband *Pedro lived alone in Guelavía, and their five children and numerous grandchildren were spread between Las Vegas, Nevada and Ensenada, Mexico. They did not see them very often, but usually spoke to one or more of them on a weekly basis, and Laura had recently called to inform her mother of her plans to visit. When she began to

¹² I discuss the practice of ritual return migration in greater detail in Ch. 7, Transborder Circulation and Ritual Life.

talk about Laura's visit she became emotional to the point of tears, and while she made an off-hand joking remark about whether or not Laura's plans were true or a lie, she was clearly worried about the possibility that she wouldn't show up. The joke was in part a commentary on the reality of her situation; her children frequently call and talk of plans to come and visit, but because of work and family obligations cancel more often than not. At the same time she was thankful for their employment, and always repeated the refrains *Gracias a Dios* (Thank God), and *Primeramente Dios* (God is first and foremost) when referencing their good fortunes.

Ermelinda blamed their circumstances of poverty and the lack of local opportunity for her children's absence, as well as her own lack of education and her own inability to provide them with monetary resources, as when she said above, *Porque yo que tanto ayuda?* ("Because me how much do [I] help?"). She judged her own economic and educational shortcomings, much as Gilberto above judged the inadequacies of his migrant children, against those of others around her who she perceived to be more successful, more 'helpful,' than she could be. I witnessed Ermelinda's disappointment on more than one occasion and felt the intensity of her loneliness for her absent progeny most clearly when she asked me if I would stay and live with her permanently. She often became especially emotional when talking about Laura, who as the youngest in the family had remained in the community until just before my arrival in the beginning of 2008. Thus it was no accident or whim that led her to become attached to my presence in her home, which I visited frequently because she was so amiable, available, and willing to teach me Zapotec. She loved having company when running her errands about town,

so I often went with her to local markets, the mill, the butcher, the local clinic where she received injections, et cetera.

During these interactions with her I occasionally caught glimpses of the pressure I'm sure her children experience each time they talk to her and hear the longing in her voice, and the impulse to make promises, even false ones, about future intentions to be more present in her life. In one conversation, while talking about the rarity of telephone calls she receives from her older daughter Selena, Ermelinda said this:

Example 2.15, recorded 3/23/2008, SJG (Spanish in italics, Zapotec underlined>, English translation in right column)

E:	<i>Pero pura de pobre pues pura pobre pues voy a trabajar aquí, también Selena, voy a trabajar, pura trabajar, toda la noche, toda el día, cuando hablar conmigo a vec vaya a vec cuando hablar 'Ay mama porque no hablar pues' dice vaya dice yo 'Porque no hablar Selena? Porque ya ya se murió tu mama?' ((laughing)) dice yo vaya...</i>	But only poverty well only poverty well I go to work here, also Selena, [goes] to work, only work, all night, all day, when [she] talks to me sometimes well sometimes when [we] talk 'Oh [daughter] why don't [you call] well' that's what I say well 'Why don't [you call] Selena? Because your mother has already already died?' ((laughing)) I say well... I I say well 'Has your mother already died' ((laughing)) I say to her
EF:	Ah	Ah
E.	<i>Yo yo yo dice vaya 'Taba <u>guti xnanu'</u> rapiebi, a ver que dice pues? 'Taba <u>guti xnanu quëtru ni cuend güenquë quëtrunu cuend iniu teléfono cun xnanu... nare ana nabania, xinii quëty rguiliu xnanu nare'</u></i>	I I I say well 'Has your mother already died?' I say to her ok what did I say well? 'Has your mother already died you don't even notice well you don't even notice that you call on the phone to find out where your mother is... I am alive, why don't you look for me I am your mother'

Again she began with talk about how much Selena works, and the poverty that drove her to work all day and all night. In this case though it was partly to indicate in advance of her joking banter that she really understands why Selena doesn't call her as often as Ermelinda might like her to. Many of her interactions with her children, like the one she replicated above, are strategic moral reprimands; she wants them to know that they are missed and that she is lonely without them, and most importantly that they should be

calling her and visiting her more often, particularly now that she is aging and struggling with myriad health problems.

In the many actual telephone conversations I heard (some of which appear excerpted in later chapters) she often said similar things; in fact her switch into Zapotec at the end of the excerpt was a direct quote from her most recent conversation with Selena, which took place in Zapotec. Many Guelavians adhere to a communicative convention of quoting the speech of others in the language in which it was originally uttered, so her switch represents her own words from a previous conversation with her daughter, spoken entirely in Zapotec. I elaborate on this quotative pattern in Chapter 3, *Degrees of Differentiation*. She was at the same time trying to teach me the Zapotec phrases she spoke, repeating them, and asking me to tell her what they meant.

Ermelinda's joke, 'Taba guti xnanu?' rapiebi ("Has your mother already died?" I say to her"), was doubly poignant because she often described feeling that she had aged beyond the point of utility, reminiscing about what she used to be able to accomplish daily, before her knees and other joints began to stiffen painfully. She has consistently rejected the invitations of her children to go and live with them in Ensenada, citing her inability to adjust to life outside of the community as the main reason. When she is out of her element, in places such as Ensenada where no one but her family members speaks Zapotec, her feelings of agedness and vulnerability are heightened and so she has chosen again and again to remain in Guelavía. She and her children continue to negotiate the fraught moral terrain of transborder community life, in each phone call and visit.

VIII: Conclusion

The above excerpts were an effort to illustrate some of the ways that migrants and non-migrants negotiate the meanings of their movement and non-movement through the transborder Guelavian community. A theme of suffering underlies many of the narratives examined throughout this chapter, as so many Guelavians struggle with the pain of separation from family and friends throughout their lives. Among migrants, talk about suffering is particularly salient in their descriptions of their first experiences with migration. Phrases like: *La primera vez sí era muy difícil muy difícil* (“The first time was very difficult very difficult”), or *Me costó mucho, sufrí mucho* (“It cost me a lot, I suffered greatly”), *Era muy duro, muy triste* (“It was very hard, very sad”), and *Con mucho dolor* (“With a lot of pain”), pervaded their narratives. Stories of border crossings themselves were similarly emphasized the difficulties and pain that comes from long days of walking without sufficient food or water. Others described the fear and terror of apprehension, fleeing from immigration enforcement agents, or the even greater dangers of the drug cartel violence that dominates the borderlands.

Stories of migration both align with and challenge scholarly understandings of personal narratives, which have been described as “a recounting of human plans gone off track, expectations gone awry” (Bruner 2002: 31) or as devices for coping with unexpected life events (see Ochs 2004: 270-271). These stories are often harrowing and compelling, as they center around individuals’ efforts to overcome the dangers, constraints and challenges of living in a “state of exception” (Agamben 2005). However, within the cultural schemata of transborder community life these tales are utterly commonplace and ordinary, and in fact serve as a marker of in-group membership; those

who truly belong have some such story to tell, either about themselves or their loved ones.

These tales have their counter point in non-migrants' narratives of abandonment, neglect, longing and loneliness. Many of the narratives of non-migrants shown above tell of the emotional, and sometimes even physical consequences of migration on those left behind. Looking back at Example 2.0, Leticia described how her father became physically ill from the pain of missing her when his eldest daughter departed for Oaxaca the first time. On one occasion I observed a session with a *curandera* (healer) who was performing a *limpia* (cleansing ritual) on a woman who had become sick with grief when her husband left for Los Angeles. These are second stories of migration in a literal sense; they follow migration, and reflect speakers' alignment with, and/or criticism of the actions of absent migrants. The rights of tellership of these kinds of second stories belong exclusively to non-migrants living in Guelavía, as they are the ones that have been "left behind" by the departure of their children, parents and other kin members.

These second stories can motivate the telling of third stories of a sort, stories told by migrants in diaspora that speak to the guilt or tension that they feel about their conflicting obligations to family on both sides of the border. In these stories the moment of migration often becomes the temporal anchor around which both subsequent and prior events are organized. For example I was recently told a story by *Julieta about the period of time after she left Guelavía several years ago, leaving behind her adult son Wilber. Several months after she left he got in a car accident while driving under the influence, and in her narrative she described the timing of this event relative to her own departure eight months before. As Ochs' argues narratives are organized:

in terms of human time [such that] when tellers recount narratives of human experience, they tend to become enveloped in a temporal frame that resonates with their experience, memory, anticipation, and imagination...interlocutors may traverse multiple temporal domains in the course of ordering a sequence of events in narrative form. These temporalities are brought into dialogic consciousness through the medium of narrative (2004: 273 & 275).

The temporal framing of Julieta's narrative, which referenced back to her departure from Guelavía, resonated with her fears and guilt about leaving him alone, a preoccupation that resurfaced across many other conversations we had in the future. Thus, in her rendering of events, her departure seemed causally linked to her son's accident. Leticia's narrative about her sister's departure (Example 2.0) established a similar causal link between that departure and her father's subsequent illness.

Individual's characterizations and interpretations of their own and other's actions are heavily influenced by the local socio-cultural contexts they inhabit. The patterned ways in which Guelavians narrated their experiences, as migrants, non-migrants, parents, and children respectively, are both shaped by, and constitute, the Guelavian transborder community. I continue to examine the dialectic relationship between narrative and community in the following chapters through a description of local linguistic practices, language planning, processes of exchange and ritual life, and the social circulation of stories. In the next chapter, I explore the complex entanglements between ideas about economic mobility, cultural competence, and the relative value of linguistic varieties, both within and across the various nodes that comprise the Guelavian transborder community. How one speaks is both ideologically and practically tied to what one can do, the degree to which one can survive, or indeed flourish as a particular kind of Guelavian (e.g. an adolescent or a community elder), as a Mexican, as a transborder migrant in Los Angeles, in rural or in urban spaces. However, as in all domains of social

life, the perceived and practical associations that people construct between linguistic varieties and domains of social life are fluid and shifting, both across individuals and contexts. The sociolinguistic dynamics of Guelavian transborder life are the subject of the next chapters.

Chapter 3

Degrees of Differentiation in the Oaxacan Valley

I. Introduction

Throughout the previous chapter I emphasized the importance of attending to locatedness, the particular socio-cultural and geographic contexts that inform and shape the ways transborder community members talk about themselves and their experiences. In this chapter I continue to explore these themes in the investigation of linguistic practices, namely how Guelavians talk about language, the speakers of particular languages, and the relationships between them. Using the lens of second stories I elucidate processes of interdiscursivity that link episodes of talk across time, space and interactive contexts, and the ways such links are deployed by speakers to comment on, reframe, or reinterpret the talk of others.

I begin by describing the sociolinguistic landscape of the Oaxacan Valley, focusing in particular on practices of linguistic differentiation among Guelavians living in Oaxaca. I use ‘linguistic differentiation’ to refer to the ways that individuals draw on linguistic variation as the basis for distinguishing themselves from or aligning themselves with others, both within and outside of the community (see Irvine & Gal 2000). Such practices confirm that “sociolinguistic ‘knowledge’ is not just a tape recording of utterances, but rather an ordered, cognized, and filtered set of representations,” (Irvine 2006: 694) tied to a particular social, historical and political context. Within the Oaxacan

Valley, a region characterized by remarkable ethnic and linguistic diversity, combined with extreme localism, the way a person speaks, whom they can understand, and who can understand them marks their place on a highly detailed and complex sociolinguistic map. Participation in this network of differentiation and affiliation is dependent upon a rich and varied linguistic repertoire of local valley languages, the transmission of which is being compromised by dual processes of language shift occurring on both sides of the border.

In both interviews and in conversations among Guelavians about the speech practices of others, it was common for people to project judgments of social distance onto judgments about linguistic distance, both through the structure and the content of their talk. This perspective is informed by a widespread language ideology which links language with personal essence, exemplified by the preference among Guelavians for fidelity in reported speech, or quoting others' words in the language in which those words were originally uttered. Direct quotations work as indices of personal affiliation, pointing to the interactional histories between interlocutors, and as iconic representations of other speakers, which mark their place relative to the narrator on a continuum of linguistic and social difference (see Irvine & Gal 2000). Within the framework of this discursive practice those whom one knows, and whose language one understands, can be quoted with greater fidelity than those who are less familiar or intelligible.

However, the Guelavian transborder community is multilingual, and knowledge of San Juan Guelavía Zapotec (SJGZ), Spanish, English, and other linguistic varieties is unevenly distributed among migrants and non-migrants, and among speakers of different generations. This heterogeneous sociolinguistic reality complicates idealized models,

which posit community identity and language as isomorphic. In the latter half of this chapter I describe practices of intra-community differentiation, which are tied to competing language ideologies that simultaneously valorize and stigmatize indigenous linguistic and cultural practices. These ideological frameworks are infused with “chronotopes,” (Bakhtin 1981, see also Irvine 2004;) underlying temporal narratives that frame Zapotec indigeneity as tied to the ancient Pre-Hispanic past, a past that was purer and more authentic, but also steeped in poverty and primitivity.

Within these frameworks Zapotec and Spanish are projected onto the mutually exclusive domains of the ancient and the modern, an opposition fueled by many adult Guelavians’ experiences with language-based discrimination in schools and other Spanish-dominant spheres outside of the community. In turn, these views and experiences are bound up with a shift away from the use of SJGZ towards the use of Spanish among younger Guelavians in both Oaxaca and Los Angeles (see Chapters 4 and 5 for more detailed discussion). These shifts have the potential to disrupt and/or transform local communicative patterns, including reported speech conventions, which both reflect and enact the ideological tie between community membership, language and personhood.

The language ideologies and practices of linguistic differentiation investigated in this chapter are productively viewed as first and second stories about who Guelavians are, and more specifically, how they talk. Practices of inter-community differentiation tell a first story about belonging and the definition of community, a story that is reframed and retold in a second way through the negotiation of intra-community differentiation. This chapter in turn comprises a first story, around which the following chapter, *The Question*

of Portability, is organized. Here I describe the socio-cultural context that has informed and shaped Guelavians' language ideologies and communicative practices, and how they are enacted in interaction. In the next chapter I investigate whether and how these ideologies and practices migrate, and if they retain their salience across geographic and socio-cultural contexts.

II. The Zapotecan Languages

The terms 'Zapotec'/'Zapoteco' are used variously by lay people, researchers, and government officials to reference an ethnic group, a particular linguistic variety, and an entire group of languages. The Zapotec language group belongs to the Otomanguean family, which is comprised of eight language groups, Zapotecan, Mixtecan, Otopamean, Chinantecan, Popolocan, Huave, Amuzgo, and Manguean (though all in this last group are now extinct) (Marcus&Flannery 2003: 4, Swadesh 1947). Some linguists argue that there are as many as forty distinct Zapotecan languages spoken throughout the Mexican states of Oaxaca and Veracruz, many of which are not mutually intelligible, and twenty-five of which have been described by linguists working with the *Summer Institute for Linguistics* (<http://www.sil.org/Mexico/zapoteca/00i-Zapoteca.htm>).¹³ There are more speakers of Zapotecan languages in Oaxaca than of any other indigenous language group; according to the last census out of a total of 1,091,502 indigenous language speakers in Oaxaca, there were 357,107 speakers of Zapotecan languages¹⁴.

¹³ I will discuss the S.I.L.'s history in Mexico more broadly and in San Juan Guelavía more specifically in subsequent chapters.

¹⁴ Numbers taken from online version of census, available at: <http://www.inegi.org.mx/est/contenidos/espanol/soc/sis/sisept/default.aspx?t=mlen23&s=est&c=4169&e=20>.

In spite of some significant differences in phonology, tonal systems and pronominal categories, there are many similarities among the varieties spoken in the Valley of Tlacolula. These varieties follow a general Verb-Subject-Object order, have inflectionally complex verbal systems, elaborate third person pronominal systems, and share many features of their tonal systems in common. Contemporary varieties of Valley Zapotec bear the mark of the history of Spanish colonialism in the region, which began in an official capacity through the compilations of the *Relaciones Geograficas*. These were sociolinguistic surveys mandated by the crown and collected throughout Mesoamerica between 1577 and 1648 during which time the Franciscan Friar Juan de Cordova produced the earliest known Zapotec-Spanish dictionary, *Vocabulario en lengua çapoteca* in 1578 (Suarez 1983: 1).

III. Language Contact

In this section I provide a brief overview of the history of language contact among Zapotec-speaking communities, to provide a contextual framework for understanding the contemporary practices of Guelavians, and their attitudes regarding the various languages they deploy in daily life. There are some accounts in the grammatical descriptions of linguists of the degree to which Spanish has influenced Zapotecan languages lexically and structurally. Paul Radin discusses the impact of such contact in his piece entitled, “A Preliminary Sketch of the Zapotec Language”:

A representative series of grammars, dictionaries and confesionarios beginning with 1578 and extending to our own time enables us to get a fairly good insight into both the phonetics and the structure of the language throughout the vicissitudes of the last 350 years. For a language like Zapotec, which has incorporated so many Spanish loanwords into its vocabulary, this is of considerable importance. At a moderate estimate no Zapotec dialect today has

less than 20% Spanish vocabulary...strangely, in spite of this great influx of Spanish loanwords, the structure of the language itself has been entirely unaffected by Spanish...(Radin 1930: 64).

Radin's baseline assumption, namely that there is a unified Zapotec language comprised of various dialects, obscures the wide diversity between various Zapotecan languages. These varieties are spoken in regions with divergent socio-political histories where contact has occurred very differently with different results, including language shift and death in many places. However, his central claim is of interest; among those varieties that are still in use, contact-induced change has been largely restricted to the lexical level – and by implication the phonological level – as the incorporation of non-native words often involves the incorporation of non-native sounds.

In his paper, "The Phonemic Structure of Proto-Zapotecan," Morris Swadesh considers the impact of such sound changes:

Many Spanish words have been adopted into all the Zapotec dialects and the sounds have been fitted into the Zapotec scheme. Indeed they have bolstered the weak-strong contrast, since the strong stops p, t, k are not very common in original native elements and have become much more so by the addition of Spanish words...(Swadesh 1947: 220).

The degree to which non-native sounds have been incorporated has been studied in several Zapotecan languages. In his comparative study of loanwords, Sicoli points out that such changes can be dated in either relative or absolute terms, and as such speak to "the intensity of social contact during the history of a multilingual contact situation" (Sicoli, Master's Thesis, 2005: 395-397). For speakers of Lachixío Zapotec, more recent increasing levels of bilingualism correspond to an increasing ability of speakers to incorporate words containing non-native patterning, in contrast with earlier borrowings, which were assimilated into Zapotec phonological systems (ibid. 406). Similarly, in their

dictionary of San Lucas Quiavini Zapotec (which is closely related to the variety spoken in Guelavía) Munro and Lopez point out that there are pervasive borrowings both old and new, some of which “reflect older pronunciations and words that are no longer used in modern Spanish, providing a valuable record of these earlier speech forms” (Munro & Lopez 1999: 30). Through migration, speakers in Oaxaca come into contact with California Spanish varieties that contain many English borrowings, which in turn have been borrowed into Zapotec, such as the term ‘bas’ borrowed from the English ‘bus’ (Munro & Lopez 30).

Among the speakers of San Juan Guelavía Zapotec that I worked with, both older more assimilated Spanish borrowings, and newer unassimilated Spanish borrowings were common. Older, more fully assimilated borrowing included lexemes such as Spanish names for individuals, as in *Zic*, for *Francisca*, or *Lux* for *Luis*, *Lluan* for *Juana*, and other items such as *yallily*, from the Spanish *silla* (chair), *mniny*, from the Spanish *niño/a* (boy/girl) and *probeenza*, from the Spanish *pobrecita* (poor thing diminutive). Other common less-assimilated borrowings include items such as *pes*, from *peso* (Mexican currency), *Dios* (God), *milagros*, from *milagroso* (miraculous), *mandad*, from *mandado* (errand), and the names of government poverty alleviation programs that provide locals with financial assistance such as *Progreso* and *Tercer Edad* (Progress and Third Age/generation). Among Zapotec-Spanish bilingual speakers, borrowings often emerged in the course of ordinary conversation in the form of codeswitching between Spanish and Zapotec, at both the intra and inter-sentential level.

The following transcript excerpt, taken from a conversation between a husband (F) and wife (C) and their niece (K), demonstrates both types of borrowings (shown in bold face) as well as this type of codeswitching (Zapotec underlined, Spanish italicized):

Example 3.0, recorded 6/5/2008, SJG

1. K:	<u>Chiya xa ti gaqui?</u>	And then in how much time will they do it?
2. C:	Vay ini ëë termë de gay dxi termë de <u>gay dxi</u>	Well that they will do in five days, in five days
3. K:	<i>O sea es que este me conviene es menos a mandar mas ((laughing))</i>	Or like it's that this is convenient for me it is less to send more ((laughing))
4. C:	<u>Chiy nde zeleza gunu seguri</u>	And this also you can secure
5. K:	<i>Exactamente</i>	Exactly
6. C:	<i>No hay pierde allí vaya</i>	There is no loss over there well
7. F:	<u>Irate gëll nuu ruq are</u>	The whole town is over there
8. C:	<i>Casi <u>ira bëny rapi irate deb lla</u></i>	Almost all of the people all of them well

This excerpt demonstrates the use of assimilated borrowings like, *termë*, from the Spanish *termino*, (term or period) which is incorporated into Zapotec phonological structures through the word final use of the close central vowel, represented here with the character ‘ë’ a sound that does not occur in Spanish. The less assimilated borrowings, shown in this excerpt in bold text, are **vay**, from the Spanish *vaya* (discourse marker roughly equivalent to “um” or “like” in English), **seguri**, from the Spanish *seguro* (secure), and the Spanish word *casi* (almost). At several places throughout this interchange, the speakers switch into Spanish for one or two utterances and then return to Zapotec, as in lines 3, 5 and 6.

Sometimes such switches are motivated by an ethos of linguistic accommodation, wherein interlocutors speaking Zapotec may switch to Spanish to make their conversation accessible to those individuals, who like myself, are more fluent in Spanish than in Zapotec. Parents are also likely to switch into Spanish when addressing their young

children, a pattern that is related to a community wide shift away from the use of Zapotec as the primary language of child socialization, which I will discuss at greater length in this and other chapters. In the context of conversations between Zapotec speakers, like the one shown above, such switches may be motivated by any number of factors, not all of which are conscious or deliberate.

This type of codeswitching was often referred to negatively by community members, who characterize contemporary Zapotec, as it is spoken by many locals, as *revuelto* (scrambled), in contrast with the *Zapoteco original*, or *legitimo Zapoteco* purportedly spoken in the past. The following excerpt exemplifies this attitude towards mixing:

Example 3.1, recorded 4/29/2008, SJG

EF: <i>Y cuando ustedes estan platicando entre ustedes puro hablan Zapoteco, o que hablan?</i>	And when you are speaking between yourselves do you speak all in Zapotec, or what do you speak?
B: [<i>Bueno pues</i>]	[Well uhm]
D: [<i>Sí, sí hablamos Zapoteco pero no no hablamos el legitimo Zapoteco pues</i>]	[Yes, yes we speak Zapotec but we don't we don't speak the legitimate Zapotec um]
EF: <i>Ay pues</i>	Oh well
D: <i>Lo revolvemos con Español pues</i>	We scramble it with Spanish well

I think the first comment made above by *Dominga may have been prompted by a misunderstanding of my question about patterns of language use, interpreting it as a question about the purity of the Zapotec she and her sister *Berta spoke. In any case her words indicate a preoccupation with the authenticity, or as she says the legitimacy of the variety spoken amongst them relative to the imagined ideal Zapotec. This type of purist attitude is not unique to Guelavía, and is in fact common to many indigenous communities throughout Mexico, and the Americas more generally (See Friedrich 1971, Meek 2007). Similar attitudes have been documented amongst Mexicano (aka Nahuatl)

speakers in the Malinche Volcano region of central Mexico. Even the Spanish terms used to describe discursive mixing and fidelity are similar in both communities. The Mexicano term to denote mixing has incorporated the Spanish borrowing *revuelto*, used in the above excerpt, which becomes *ticmorrevolveroah*, meaning ‘we mix it up’ in Mexicano:

To say ‘we mix’ is a condemnation. To ‘mix’ speakers believe, is to debase an older, purer form of Mexicano which is called locally *legítimo mexicano* ‘genuine’ or ‘authentic’ Mexicano, in which speaking was a more perfect index of the underlying system (Hill & Hill 1986: 55).

Guelavians also use the term *legítimo* to reference the idealized vision of a more perfect Zapotec that was spoken by some unidentified speakers at some point in the past. In practice the variety of Zapotec that best exemplifies the ideal of *legítimo Zapoteco* is that of ritual emcees known locally as *huehuetes*, or in Zapotec tsëgul.

Tsëgul are lauded among Guelavians for their mastery of the reverential register of San Juan Guelavía Zapotec, which is highly valued for its antiquity and prestige, and is used during ritual celebrations and events of all kinds (e.g. weddings, patron saint festivals, posadas). The register, also referred to as didxzac (good words), is characterized by the repetition of reverential pronouns (e.g. Datmbaly (Godfather), Nambaly (Godmother)), which honor ritual kinship networks, and local systems of reciprocal obligation.¹⁵ The term tsegul literally translates to ‘ten elders’ and is comprised of the morpheme tsë (ten), and a contraction of the term bënygul, bëny (people) and gul (elder). Thus a tsëgul is someone whose deep knowledge of local tradition, ritual custom and the ritual register make him equivalent to ten elders (pc, T. Jones 01/2011). In analyzing the speech of Guelavian tsëgul, however, I found that it

¹⁵ In Chapter 7 – Transborder Circulation and Ritual Life, I describe the events and contexts in which tsëgul use this register in greater detail, and its relationship to local networks of ritual kinship.

was pervaded by codeswitching and Spanish borrowings, in large part due to the religious character of the talk, in which references to *Dios*, (God) and *Maria Purisima*, (the Virgin Mary) were made continually. Perhaps such switches into Spanish are not criticized, as their direct link to biblical discourse enhances the prestige of the talk, in contrast to the perceived corrupting influence of ordinary codeswitching.

The conceptualization of mixing as a mark of linguistic degeneracy has implications for Zapotec use among younger speakers, who may view their imperfect mastery as a liability, opting to avoid speaking at all rather than speaking a stigmatized variety. This reinforces the importance of attending to the question, “How are novices, especially children and youth, interpreting or conceptualizing the sociolinguistic conditions of their ancestral languages?” (Meek 2007: 25). In addition, while these links enhance the linguistic prestige of local *tsëgul*, ideological linkages between pure Zapotec and the abstract category of ‘the past’ place ordinary elder speakers in something of a temporal bind. They embody a “discourse of nostalgia,” (Hill 1998: 72) which casts them alternately as glorified bastions of traditional knowledge, or as anachronistic vestiges of a bygone era. I will elaborate further on these themes below.

In addition to the impact of Spanish on indigenous languages, Mexican Spanish has been deeply influenced by contact with indigenous languages. One prominent example is the highly elaborated system of diminutives and augmentatives, which likely resulted from contact with Nahuatl, a.k.a. Mexicano, the language spoken by the ancient Aztecs and their contemporary descendents in the Valley of Mexico (see Hill & Hill 1986).¹⁶ Zapotec has also had an impact on the Spanish spoken by older Guelavians,

¹⁶ An example of a diminutive used to mark affect is ‘*mi hijita*,’ meaning ‘my little daughter; an example of a common augmentative is ‘*grandote*,’ meaning ‘bigger than big.’

particularly among speakers who grew up speaking Zapotec and learned Spanish later in life. The most prominent features of the Spanish of such speakers represented in my corpus are: 1) a lack of gender distinction, which is not obligatory in Zapotec, and 2) the literal translation of Zapotec idioms into Spanish, a practice I discuss at greater length below. These types of grammatical and idiomatic ‘errors’ made by speakers are often criticized, both by speakers themselves and by others, as a mark of ignorance and a lack of education. When I spoke with *Jaime, a community member who volunteers teaching local Guelavian children Zapotec, he told me:

Example 3.2, recorded 12/6/2008, SJG

<p>J: <i>Y: y el problema es que no dominamos el español. Entonces allí es el problema. Ni vamos hablar un español correcto, y lo perdiendo el idioma ya no estamos (...) ((laughing)) nuestro platica, aha, pienso yo.</i></p>	<p>A: and the problem is that we don't command Spanish And so there is the problem We neither speak a correct Spanish, and are losing [Zapotec] no longer are we (...) ((laughing)) our talk, yeah, I think</p>
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Like Jaime, many locals are prescriptive in their assessments of their own and others’ linguistic capacities in Spanish, Zapotec, or for those who know it, English. The above excerpts (Example 3.1 & 3.2) demonstrate that linguistic differentiation can be practiced on one’s own speech as well as on the speech of others; individuals measure their own speech practices against imagined ‘perfect’ speakers, finding themselves wanting by comparison. Many people, regardless of their level of linguistic proficiency harbor insecurities about their speaking abilities, a phenomenon which is common to indigenous communities throughout Mexico. These pervasive insecurities are the legacies of more than five centuries of linguistic and cultural discrimination initiated by the arrival of the Spanish in the late 15th century (see Hill & Hill 1986, Heath 1972).

IV. Zapotec Indigeneity

In present day Mexico the term *Zapoteco* is used to denote both an ethnic and a linguistic category which encompass diverse groups of Mexicans living throughout the state of Oaxaca who trace their roots back to the Pre-Hispanic Zapotec Empire. Archeologists of the region have worked to combine techniques of glottochronology (a controversial and imprecise method), radiocarbon dating and dendrochronology (tree ring dating) to establish a very rough time frame for the divergence of languages within the Zapotec language family, which they then mapped onto divergences within pre-colonial Zapotec populations. Initial divergences within Zapotec likely began between 500-1000 A.D. following the dissolution of Monte Alban, the major Zapotec power base in that era, and now the most visited archeological site in the region (Marcus & Flannery 2003: 7, Sicoli 2007).

Flannery and Marcus refer to this period as the “Post-Classic Balkanization of Oaxaca” to call attention to the division of the Oaxacan region into several small states that were hostile towards each other (Marcus & Flannery 2003: 217). Regarding this period of conflict they point out that there was no single dominant center, fortifications were widespread, and codices describe frequent military conflicts, evidence which is supported by ethno-historic documents. It is important, however, to keep in mind the problems associated with speculating about how people experienced their identities during this period:

These tales and ‘histories,’ consisting more of interpolations and extrapolations than of accounts based on records, have now been fed back into the streams of local oral tradition. They are affecting the self-images of modern Oaxacans... Probably they function as self-fulfilling prophecies (Paddock 2003: 352).

In spite of the dangers of tautology, however, it remains reasonable to assume that Pre-Columbian Zapotec populations lived in a world characterized by flux, cohabited by

numerous other ethnic groups, in which relations of domination and subordination were constantly shifting.

This history of atomization and conflict was cemented during the Spanish conquest through forced relocation into numerous highly isolated political and geographic entities. Today in Oaxaca there are “570 municipal seats, almost half of all that exist in Mexico, resulting in further political fragmentation” (Stephen 1996: 20). Guardino argues that “the provision for *repúblicas*¹⁷ was the first of a long series of concessions that Oaxacan lawmakers made to indigenous traditions of government,” and “a concession to social geography” (Guardino 2005: 231-32). Other scholars point out that laws prohibiting movement between these communities may have increased the regional tendency towards localism (Brice-Heath 1972: 42). Today, Oaxaca has the largest and most heterogeneous indigenous population in Mexico, with sixteen indigenous ethnic groups officially recognized and as many linguistic groups (Bartolome and Barabas 1986, Stephen 2005, Nader 1990, Dennis 1986). Within the category of ‘Zapotec,’ there is a remarkable diversity of linguistic and cultural practices in populations spread out all over the state, from the mountainous regions of the interior to the semi-tropical Isthmus of Tehuantepec on the coast. The increasing mobility of Guelavians, and members of other Valley Zapotec communities, between Oaxaca, California and other locales (e.g. Mexico City, Ensenada, Las Vegas, San Jose) over the last forty to fifty years has meant a shift in patterns of communication, and a diversification of the social environments and interactive contexts in which language is deployed by people in their daily lives.

¹⁷ These were the smallest of the legally recognized municipalities, containing less than a thousand residents, whose autonomy was provisioned for the 1820 constitution (See Guardino 2005: 231).

V. The distribution of linguistic knowledge in Guelavía

The population I worked with in San Juan Guelavía, Oaxaca is multilingual; many Guelavians speak Spanish, one or more varieties of Zapotec¹⁸, and English, all with varying degrees of fluency. According to the most recent comprehensive Mexican national census conducted in 2005 (*Conteo de Población y Vivienda*), out of the total of 2867 residents in San Juan Guelavía, 2027 spoke an indigenous language, 1978 were bilingual, and 84 were Zapotec monolinguals¹⁹. This roughly corresponds to my own observations of and interactions with a smaller subset of the Guelavian population. I did not encounter any individuals who were totally monolingual in Zapotec, but I did observe a small percentage of older Guelavians, mostly women, who spoke mostly in Zapotec and had extremely limited proficiency in Spanish. Most people in this category had never attended school where Spanish use was required. The majority of adults in the community between the ages of 30 and 90 are bilingual in Zapotec and Spanish, and, as illustrated above, codeswitching is an extremely pervasive, if devalued, practice. It was very common for adults that I knew over the age of forty years to have command over several of the many local varieties of Zapotec, particularly those spoken in the closest neighboring communities. Many children and adolescents are bilingual, though there is a growing number of Spanish monolinguals in these age groups. Attitudes about the uses and values of linguistic varieties were incredibly varied across geographic and social contexts, and even within families.

¹⁹ These numbers are publicly available on the website of INEGI (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Geografía Informática)
<http://www.inegi.gob.mx/est/contenidos/espanol/sistemas/conteo2005/localidad/iter/default.asp>

There is some degree of concern throughout the community, which I believe to be warranted, that a shift away from Zapotec is taking place, a theme I will take up in more detail in later chapters.²⁰ However, the actual Zapotec knowledge of children and young people is difficult to assess, as they comprise the categories of speakers most likely to understate or degrade their Zapotec fluency (see Chapter 5). In addition, regardless of whether or not they use Zapotec in their everyday interactions, most young people get significant exposure to spoken Zapotec as over-hearers of talk between adults. For example, one mother, *Araceli, told me how she discovered that her six-year-old daughter, *Eva, understood Zapotec. She and her husband were having what they believed to be a confidential conversation in Zapotec, about the possibility of returning to Los Angeles, where they had lived as a family for several years. The next day when Araceli went to pick up Eva from her parents' house she was met by her tearful mother, *Luz, who was devastated that they were leaving Oaxaca and had not told her. Eva had heard every word of their talk and had proudly reported to her grandmother that the family was moving to the United States.

In addition to the range of Spanish and Zapotec repertoires, there are also many people in Guelavía who speak English, ranging from children who were born in the US and learned English as a native language, to adults who became fluent in English while living and working in the U.S. (and the occasional individual who has mastered one or two stock phrases to shout at the *gringa* ethnographer they see walking down the

²⁰ According to a summary of statistical data from the thirty-year period between 1970 and 2000 produced by the Municipal Government of San Juan Guelavía the percentages of monolinguals in Zapotec and Spanish have flipped. Whereas in 1970 20% of the population was monolingual in Zapotec, and no one in Spanish, now 20% are Spanish monolinguals and Zapotec monolingualism has decreased to less than 5%.

street)²¹. During my time in Guelavía I met one young woman, visiting from L.A., who corrected my Spanish pronunciation of her name ‘Mer-ce-des,’ when we were introduced, repeating it with English phonology (‘Mʊə-ser -diz’).²² At the urging and requests of community members, I taught an English class with some American colleagues of mine during the last two months of my fieldwork period in Guelavía. However, it was difficult to sustain interest among the students because, in spite of the abstract desirability of English, it was difficult for them to find relevant applications for practicing and using English in daily life in Guelavía. Among Guelavians living in Los Angeles, concern with English proficiency was ubiquitous, as I describe in greater detail in the following chapter.

VI. Social geography of The Tlacolula Valley

San Juan Guelavía, Oaxaca, is located in the Tlacolula branch of the Valley of Oaxaca, an area steeped in archeological and cultural riches. There are hundreds of towns dotting the valleys and mountainsides of the area, and there are many similarities, and shared practices common to all of them. Apart from a handful of urban centers, most of the communities in the valley are rural and poor, and they are dependent on a combination of agricultural and mercantile activities for subsistence. The sociolinguistic composition of each community is distinct, however, and depends upon local histories of contact in the colonial era, as well as more contemporary practices of domestic and international migration. In addition many communities actively cultivate and maintain idiosyncratic

²¹ This observation is a bit tongue in cheek, because such interactions usually took the annoying form of catcalls, wherein men doing construction work on the roof of a local home would shout down at me “Hey baby I love you!” or some variation on this theme. I found it interesting on another level, though because of the circumstances and my own discomfort with approaching such men, I didn’t follow up to find out whether their English competence extended beyond such declarations.

²² I later saw her in Los Angeles and she spoke to me exclusively in English while her mother and I spoke Spanish, and responded in English to any Spanish utterance directed at her.

traditions and practices. In part, this is a method of attracting the steady stream of tourists who pass through the valley every year to explore ancient Zapotec archeological sites, and to meet and observe indigenous craftspeople at work in their natal communities. Across the highway from Guelavía is Teotitlan del Valle, a town famous for weavers who produce beautiful and vibrantly colored *tapetes* (rugs) for a largely European and American clientele (see Stephen 2007, 2005, 1991, see also Cohen 2004). Teotitecos are known among locals in the Valley for their candles, towering and ornately carved wax sculptures that are purchased to adorn churches and processions for religious rituals, weddings and assorted celebrations. Other towns are known for their churches, museums, or pottery traditions (green-glazed comes from one town, *barro negro*, or black burnished pots from another), and still others for their *alebrijes*, (carved, painted wooden figurines). Eco-tourism is also on the rise in many mountain communities that sit at higher elevations, where tour guides lead hikers across ridgelines, passing through several small towns where fair trade coffee, cacao and other crops are grown and harvested.

There is currently no tourist trade in Guelavía, although historically there was a strong tradition of basket weaving with reeds, which gradually fell out of practice following the sharp increase in migration in the 1990's (see Cohen & Browning 2007). Neither does Guelavía have any state sponsored attractions that would draw in travelers; the current Municipal President, Eleazar García Ortega, is in the process of developing a community museum, and Zapotec cultural center, in order to strengthen the local

economy and reduce the need for migration²³. However, Guelavians are embedded in trade relationships with members of neighboring communities, and fill a particular local economic niche within a larger aggregate structure that is analogous to that of the tourist market described above. Guelavía has a large and well-stocked daily market, so women from neighboring towns lacking markets come there to buy and sell produce and other goods. Women from Magdalena Teitipac, a town less than five kilometers away, often come to sell *tlayudas*, the large tortillas they are known for, and women from neighboring San Marcos Tlapazola bring *tejate*, a beverage made from corn and cacao. In turn Guelavians and other locals often travel by foot, or taxi the six kilometers to San Marcos, in order to buy pottery, most commonly *ollas* (large ceramic jars used to heat water, soup, hot chocolate and other liquids), and *comales* (large flat ceramic disks used for making tortillas), used for cooking over an open fire.

VII. Practicing diversity

Guelavians and members of neighboring communities engaged in the practice of diversity, through which they marked their distinctions and affiliations to one another, drawing on multiple semiotic modalities (see Goodwin 2000). The production of artisan products for trade described above formed part of this practice, as did bodily comportment, and sartorial style. For example the color and design of a woman's *reboso*, or shawl, and the fabric and color of her dress, can in many cases tell you what town she is from, though this is complicated by changing trends in dress styles and the influx of inexpensive clothing sent back to Mexico by migrants living in the US. Inter-community

²³ Presidente Eleazar's future plan for the community is outlined in great detail on his blog, <http://diagnosticomunitarioguelavia.blogspot.com/>, parts of which he discussed with me directly during my tenure working in the community; some of these plans will be described in Chapters 5 and 6.

differences were also marked linguistically through the ways that people spoke to and about one another. However, the language used by locals to mark salient differences did not correspond clearly to the categories or terminologies established by government officials, politicians and social scientists. Rather, the use of place names in conjunction with ethnic, regional and national terms of identification formed part of an elaborate hierarchy of difference that enabled Guelavians to rank others according to their perceived social distance or affiliation.

To begin with, the term *Zapoteco* was rarely used by anyone as a term of self-identification, and was only used occasionally to refer to the language spoken locally, usually if I introduced the term into conversation first. In fact the term *Zapoteco* itself comes from a Nahuatl word *tsapotecah*, roughly meaning the place of the *sapote*, a local tree that produces edible fruit. The term was later borrowed by the Spanish, working closely with Nahuatl-speaking guides (a.k.a. Aztecs), as they were trying to categorize and label the wide variety of indigenous populations they encountered during the conquest and establishment of New Spain (Campbell 1994:xx; Brice-Heath 1972). The word for “Zapotec people” in general across most varieties of Zapotec is (something resembling) the term *běnyza*, meaning “people of the clouds,” which is tied to a body of mythology about the celestial origins of the people. The use of this term is often pointed to as evidence for the common ancestry of Zapotec and Mixtec populations, many of which use the same self-name (Marcus & Flannery 2003). In general, most people referred to their community of origin when describing themselves, or their heritage.

When talking in Spanish about the local variety of Zapotec, Guelavians generally used the terms *idioma* (language), or *dialecto* (dialect), and occasionally *mi idioma* (my

language), to indicate that it was their mother tongue. Based on his historical research on Southern Peruvian Quechua, Mannheim has concluded that ideologies of naming languages in the Pre-colonial Americas were likely very different from those of Europeans:

To give a proper name to a language requires a certain kind of consciousness of language, an assumption that languages can be standardized entities and that they can have names. There is no evidence that such a consciousness existed...The native expressions for the language in colonial sources designated speech varieties in one of three ways: by social contrast, by ecological contrast, or by place name (1991: 7).

In fact, when describing the languages spoken by members of other local communities, Guelavian Zapotec social and geographical differences figured prominently. When speaking in Zapotec about the local variety of Zapotec, people used the term didx za,²⁴ which means literally “words of the clouds,” in contrast with didx xtily which means “words of the Spanish” (derived from the older form Castillia/Castellano). To talk about local people, Guelavians use the Zapotec term bëny guidx, which translates roughly to “townspeople.”

While ethnic terms were not used for self-identification, people did use Spanish ethnic terms for other non-Zapotecan populations; for example, when talking about a Mixe woman and a Mayan woman, both of whom had married into the community, people usually referred to them as *Mixe* and *Maya* respectively. Similarly, when people talked to me or about me they generally called me *gringa*, *gringu*, (the Zapotec borrowing of the Spanish term for foreigner), *güera* (white female), or occasionally, *Americana*. Campbell argues that referring to all populations who speak a Zapotecan

²⁴ The reference to clouds has to do with the ancient Zapotec self-name, which translates to ‘people of the clouds,’ that figures prominently in many of the artifacts that have been left behind by Prehispanic Zapotec populations and recently discovered by archaeologists.

language by the same ethnic term “may imply a Pan-Oaxacan Zapotec unity that does not exist” (1994: xix). My data suggest, rather, that these terms are of little utility within the highly elaborated system of differentiation practiced in Guelavía and other Valley communities. Within this system those referred to by place names rather than ethnic identifiers are perceived as more like to Guelavians, occupying an intermediary category of affiliation beyond the level of community, but below the level of an ethnic or linguistic type.

The differences between Guelavians and members of neighboring communities were often described in specific terms, extrapolations based on concrete experiences rather than the abstract categorizations people used to talk about unknown, and unfamiliar “others”. In fact, the origin story that many locals told me about how San Juan Guelavía was formed is in itself a story about intercommunity competition and differentiation.²⁵ The story tells of how the locals brought a figure of St. John the Baptist to this small rural settlement, but that the neighboring community of Macuilxoitl decided that the Saint should be housed in their church. The statue was moved, but in the middle of the night the Saint returned to the small rural community, astonishing everyone who discovered what had come to pass. As in many such stories, this happened three times, before it was decided that the statue would stay and a church would be built to mark the foundation of the community of Guelavía; the name itself is a combination of Zapotec morphemes that can be glossed as “midnight return,” (guel = midnight, via = return) referring back to the midnight flight of the saintly statue.²⁶

²⁵ This story was published by Ted Jones in a booklet of traditional Zapotec stories. I will discuss this story and the booklet in which it was published further in Chapter 6.

²⁶ Interestingly, government and census bureau records for Guelavía portray the etymology of the name quite differently, based on a different possible valence, suggested by historian José María Bradomín, for the

This meta-narrative about Guelavía's distinctiveness in relation to neighboring communities was reflected in more mundane anecdotes and conversations. For example, I was often told about local practices and traditions unique to Guelavía in the context of how they differed from the way things were done elsewhere. One day, while discussing local marriage customs with an elderly man, *Romeo, he told me how close he had come to accidentally giving his youngest daughter away in marriage to a man from San Marcos. He was sitting around with a group of men, one of whom was, unbeknownst to him, eyeing his youngest daughter admiringly. This man offered Romeo a cigarette, whereupon one of his companions shouted at him not to light it and took it out of his mouth. He was taken aback and annoyed, until the companion explained to him that the cigarette was a proposal, and that if he lit it he was agreeing to let this man marry his daughter. Putting aside the question of whether this story accurately reflects marriage practices in San Marcos, the moral of the story was that life outside Guelavía was unknown and dangerous, and more specifically that San Marcos was a bastion of strange and backward customs. In Guelavía, by contrast, marriage proposals and the attainment of parental consent are part of a formal process (at least ideally)²⁷, involving meetings and discussions between the bride's and groom's respective families, and *padrinos*, or godparents, who are the honored *compadres* of the bride's and groom's parents (see Chapters 2 & 7). Similarly when people told me that the prevalence of bare-footedness in Magdalena was evidence of their extreme poverty, and their fear of outsiders a result of

same two morphemes glossed into Spanish as “*milpa de aire*” or “cornfield of air” (*guel* = cornfield, *vi* = air). One website acknowledges the two stories (http://www.elocal.gob.mx/wb2/ELOCAL/EMM_oaxaca).²⁷ In reality, many Guelavian brides are *robados*, or ‘robbed,’ meaning their boyfriends bring them home and marry them, circumventing proper protocol, particularly if there are parental objections or financial limitations.

their extreme isolation, I understood that this was in contrast to the well-shod, cosmopolitan Guelavians.²⁸

The differences between Guelavians and their neighbors were not always at issue, and in fact many people had close friends and trading partners in neighboring communities that they visited regularly. One man I knew, who worked as a construction worker and was frequently hired to build homes in San Marcos, and several local women had become friendly with two San Marcan women who came to town daily selling *tejate*. The economic interdependence of these communities necessitates regular interaction, and lasting bonds are often formed between members of different villages and towns through friendship and intermarriage. However, I found comments about the moral and economic failings, and general ‘otherness’ of neighboring communities, to be fairly common. Frequently these types of comments were made as part of an explanation of why I was so fortunate to have chosen Guelavía as my research site, rather than either San Marcos or Magdalena, the two closest neighboring communities described above.

In spite of the apparent similarities between the three communities (all are ethnically Zapotec, use similar varieties of Valley Zapotec, are rural, agriculturally dependent communities with high rates of migration), many Guelavians described themselves as exceedingly open and amiable to outsiders in comparison with their closed off, xenophobic neighbors. Several women I spoke with claimed that if I were to try to approach those people, as I approached Guelavians, walking up to them in the street or knocking on the doors of houses, that people would ignore me, turn away or close their

²⁸ There is some truth to this stereotype, which has to do with the poorer quality of the soil in Magdalena, and the relative difficulty of producing high yield crops there. Guelavía is lower-lying and thus the lands collect more rainwater and have more fertile soils. Additionally while there is a great deal of individual variety, there are class differences between the two communities, and Guelavians are more likely to afford technologies like wells and tractors to till and water their fields.

doors in my face. I was told that people in these communities had not had the same degree of contact with outsiders, and were, justifiably, cautious about their motivations and agendas.²⁹ The history of Spanish colonialism, Mestizo discrimination towards indigenous populations, and Protestant evangelism throughout rural Mexico (see Chapters 5 and 7) has contributed to a highly fraught relationship between familiar ‘insiders’ and predatory ‘outsiders.’³⁰ The flip side of this talk about the isolated and backward character of other communities was that they were often described as more authentically Zapotec. This was both because a higher percentage of community members were thought to know and speak Zapotec, and because their relative isolation was believed (at least by the Guelavians I spoke with) to have protected them from some of the ‘contaminating’ influences of contemporary social and economic life, and the Spanish language. I elaborate on this below in my discussion of intra-community differentiation in Guelavía.

VIII. Degrees of difference in local language ideologies

As described above, the Oaxacan Valley surrounding San Juan Guelavía is characterized by remarkable sociolinguistic diversity, and it is common for neighboring communities that share a common Zapotec ethnic heritage to speak mutually unintelligible varieties of Zapotec. Just as Guelavians often explicitly described the economic and cultural differences between themselves and members of other valley communities, they frequently contrasted their own and others’ linguistic practices. During my research I was frequently commended for having chosen to study Guelavian Zapotec, which,

²⁹ In spite of these cautionary tales I was invited into people’s homes in both communities during my fieldwork.

³⁰ I will discuss the local history of Protestant missionization in Guelavía in Chapter 5.

according to locals, was by far the clearest, most understandable and learnable of the varieties of Zapotec spoken in the area. Other varieties, in contrast, were ubiquitously referred to as *muy enredado* (convoluted, complex, knotted), a descriptor that was also used by adult Zapotec speakers when critiquing the Zapotec of younger, novice speakers. Friedrich described similar practices of differentiation among the group of Tarascan communities that he worked with in Mexico where:

The individual speaker, in fact, often takes pride in the phonetic features and supposed superiority of his village dialect. And clearly, the growing Tarascan must learn, not only to code his own dialect, but to decode and, in many cases, to identify and even imitate nearby dialects. In this specific sense, a differential participation in the various gradients of simplification, in sensitivity to ‘shibboleths,’ and in the matrices of cross- dialectal variation are all part of the subconscious ability of any one speaker (Friedrich 1971: 166).

In my experience many Guelavians were extremely attuned to these ‘shibboleths’ in others’ speech, and could reliably identify other Zapotec speakers’ communities of origin just from hearing them speak a few words. In keeping with the pattern of referential terminology detailed above, linguistic differences were inscribed along a continuum of differentiation, which was very often mapped onto social difference.

The practice of equating linguistic and social difference is a relatively common phenomena across the ethnographic record. For example, in her analysis of minority language politics on the island of Corsica, Jaffe has described:

the role that language differences play in Corsican discourse about social and geographical space. In this discourse linguistic difference is made congruent with judgments of social distance: those who are distant in social terms are labeled ‘unintelligible’ (1996: 826).

In a sense Jaffe describes the inverse of the situation I observed in Guelavía, where the perception of social distance was shaped by the degree of linguistic intelligibility. In addition, the degree of intelligibility was often marked explicitly in the structure and

content of speakers’ talk about other linguistic communities. As Friedrich described among Tarascan communities, Guelavians were incredibly sensitive to linguistic differences, and many commanded a rich repertoire of linguistic imitations that they regularly deployed in representing others’ speech. In the context of these imitations, more precise characterizations and imitations of others’ speech corresponded with a perception of closer social or cultural affinity, whereas more abstract renderings were reserved for more distant linguistic others. Below I analyze excerpts from narratives and conversations that contain talk about others’ speech, focusing on the specific strategies of differentiation deployed. These excerpts illustrate the ways that language ideologies and practices of linguistic differentiation can work to “reflexively (re) shape linguistic and social structures” (Gal & Woolard 2001: 3).

Guelavía is located across the Pan-American highway from a dense web of communities that dot the distance mountain slopes and ridge-lines of the region referred to as the *Sierra Norte*, where Benito Juarez was born. In the following excerpt two brothers, *Salomon and *Isidrio, discuss their difficulties with the Zapotec spoken in these mountainous communities³¹:

Example 3.3, recorded 6/4/2008, SJG

S: <u>Xte de landaani la <i>difícil</i> par iseed bēny na biantec niuna gan niuquia de didx xte xte de ninaa bzan to *Leon</u>	Those of the hills are difficult to learn from those people I never could know the words of of those that were left by the deceased *Leon
I: <i>Ah eso</i>	Yes that
S: <u>Ēē tant masru <i>enredad</i> naigy</u>	Yes because it’s more complicated
I: <u>Nagany ba</u>	Complicated yeah
S: <u>Ēē te <i>todavía</i> de didx nezlaad xtenē</u>	Yes because still the words of our sides
I: <u>Cayuet nacēla bzubnia to *Fonz chiy <i>rcualeziegy</i> loguitz guquiy güelliala <i>cuaderne</i> nibcuaigy looni <i>per</i> or ni bgüenellina raquēbeeca xiigy <i>per</i></u>	Yes I sat down with the deceased *Alfonzo and I wrote it on the paper that day I went to find my notebook where I had written them down, but that

³¹ Though I don’t have any recorded examples, many Guelavians spoke similarly about Teotitlan Zapotec, which is surprising from a linguistic perspective; Teotitlan Zapotec is considered part of the Valley Zapotec family, as is Guelavía Zapotec, whereas Sierra Norte Zapotec constitutes a separate branch in the language family tree.

<u>an ruc ba nicrsona xiigy</u>	time when he talked with me I did understand that day, but now I don't even know what it is
S: <u>ĒĒ rian lazac mniety deigy</u>	Yes one forgets about the people those

Firstly, Salomon mentions “those of the hills,” in reference to the Sierra Norte, following the pattern of reference I described above that is frequently used by Guelavians to talk about other Zapotec communities in the region. He describes the place geographically, and refers to a specific man, Leon, with whom he interacted in the past, rather than an abstract ethnic term. This excerpt illustrates the intermediary category of affiliation described above, beyond the level of community but beneath the level of abstract ethnic categories. Salomon has had direct experience with individuals from this place, and attempted to communicate with the family members of an acquaintance of his, Leon, who had passed away. However he struggled to understand their speech and says that he was unable to learn it.

In addition to marking the variety of Zapotec spoken in the Sierra Norte as territorially separate from their own, both men in Example 3.3 refer to the variety as “complicated” (*enredad*) and “difficult” (*nagany*) contrasted with the “words of our sides” (*nezlaad xtennë*). There is a measure of “iconization” involved in these descriptions in which the distant territory of “those of the hills” maps on to their “complicated” speech in some essential way (Irvine & Gal 2000). However, their characterizations suggest that some degree of understanding was achieved in spite of the apparent differences, sufficient for a comparison between the codes in question to be made. Isidrio responded to Salomon with his own anecdote, describing how he sat down with his late acquaintance, Alfonzo, to write down some of his words, meaning his variety of Zapotec. Though he understood them at the time, when they were talking

together, looking back over his writing, done with an improvised orthography, he couldn't piece the words together anymore.³² At this point Salomon returns to his original stance, telling Isidrio that this is to be expected when dealing with the unfamiliar words of a distant community, saying, "one forgets about those people".

I recorded another conversation between myself, Isidrio, his daughter *Carmela, and her husband *Francisco, excerpted from a longer recording of a Zapotec lesson, which took place around the table during the late afternoon meal. After modeling the pronunciation of a phrase for me, Francisco began to talk about the differences between the varieties of Zapotec spoken in Guelavia and San Marcos, which are similar to one another. These varieties are mutually intelligible, and as described above, speakers from each community interact regularly in daily life.

Example 3.4, recorded 3/6/2008, SJG

1. F:	<i>En (otros) pueblos cambia eh? Por ejemplo allí en San Marcos cambia (esos) o</i>	In (other) towns it changes eh? For example over there in San Marcos (those) change or
2. I:	<i>(O) dialecto</i>	(Or) dialect
3. F:	<i>O es otro dialecto pues</i>	Or it's another dialect well
4. EF:	<i>¿Sí?</i>	Really?
5. C:	<i>Sí</i>	Yes
6. F:	<i>Sí cambia mucho</i>	It changes a lot
7. EF:	<i>Pero sí se pueden comunicar?</i>	But you can communicate?
8. C:	<i>Sí</i>	Yes
9. F:	<i>Nosotros sí</i>	Us yes
10. C:	<i>Entre nosotros sí le entendemos, y ellos sí nos entienden</i>	Between us yes we understand them, and they yes they understand us
11. F:	<i>No mas para escribir [ya no (...)]</i>	Only that to write it down [then no
12. C:	<i>[Pero tienen otro tono]</i>	[But they have another tone
13. F:	<i>Aha</i>	Yeah

Isidrio suggested that the speech of the San Marcans is a different dialect, which Francisco agreed to, and went on to say that it "changes a lot". Carmela added in that

³² Isidrio is able to write in his own variety of Zapotec to a certain degree, which is not common in Guelavía. Because there is no standard orthography to draw on locals like him often invent combinations of Spanish letters to represent distinct Zapotec sounds.

tienen otro tono (“they have a different tone”), with which Francisco agreed. The term *dialecto* (dialect) was used by Isidrio similarly to how it is employed by linguists and anthropologists to talk about different varieties of the same language. However, Carmela’s use of the word *tono* (tone) did *not* correspond to how it is used by linguists, to describe shifts in prosody or pitch that convey grammatically meaningful distinctions. She was not commenting on the respective tonal systems of the two varieties, but rather was commenting on pronunciation differences. As argued by Sicoli (2007) “numerous speakers, of Zapotec and Spanish both, used *tono* to describe tone, intonation, tone of voice, and more general habits of language pronunciation” often using the term to describe the differences between languages more broadly (Sicoli 2007: 4).

Francisco and Carmela explained that while San Marcos Zapotec is different from their own variety they can understand one another, and she provided the following examples upon my request:

Example 3.5, recorded 3/6/2008, SJG

EF:	<i>Da me un ejemplo</i>	Give me an example
C:	<i>A los niñitos nosotros decimos ‘a quin mniin’</i>	To the children we say ‘a quin mniin’
C:	<i>...Y ellos dicen allí ‘llich’</i>	...And they say over there ‘llich’
I:	<i>Si es hombrecito le dicen ‘da,’ ‘da’ si es hombrecito...</i>	If it’s a little man they say ‘da,’ ‘da’ if it’s a little man...
F:	<i>...((laughing)) eh sí cambia no?</i>	...((laughing)) eh yes it changes right?
C:	<i>Uhuh sí...</i>	Uhuh yes...

The talk about linguistic differences in this excerpt is grounded in specific comparisons of lexemes, the respective terms for children in each variety, which index the speakers’ familiarity with and competence in both varieties. The “surface level segmentability” of these terms may make them the most available to speakers for comparison or analysis (Silverstein 1981). Carmela uses reported speech, specifically direct quotation, to

illustrate the differences between her own words and those of the San Marcans.

“Reported speech” is defined here as the copying or quoting by one speaker of the speech of another speaker, who may or may not be present to hear the imitation; it is both “speech within speech...and speech about speech” (Volosinov 1986: 115). Scholars across the social sciences and humanities have found reported speech to be a rich site for study across spoken and literary contexts because the performative rendering of another’s words involves an implicit or sometimes explicit evaluation of that other’s speech (Hill 1995, Bakhtin 1981, Sicoli 2007, Besnier 1992, Rumsey 1990, Hill & Irvine 1992). For linguistic anthropologists, speakers’ quotations and renderings of others’ words are a fruitful site for the examination of language ideologies, the cultural logics by which people connect language use to other spheres of social life.

Carmela’s use of reported speech reveals one way in which Guelavians identify linguistic differences, and in comparison with Excerpt 3.3, provides a window into how such differences are projected onto social distinctions. As I mentioned above, there is a strong preference among Guelavians for fidelity in the representation of others’ speech, meaning they often quote others’ speech in the language in which it was spoken. The San Marcans referenced in Example 3.5. are amenable to quotation; they are recognizable interlocutors whose linguistic and cultural practices are familiar enough to Guelavians for them to be referenced through reported speech with a precision that was markedly absent in Excerpt 3.3. Carmela produces specific examples of San Marcos Zapotec, whereas Salomon and Isidrio cannot or do not quote the speech of “those of the hills.” I argued above that “those of the hills” occupied a kind of intermediary position between communities of speakers identified geographically, and those speakers like the San

Marcans, whose speech was described with greater specificity. Below I consider an example of a more abstract characterization that emerged later on in my conversation with Carmela.

Carmela was playfully modeling and translating the question, “When do you plan to get married?” in Zapotec; when I responded by laughing she teased me further, repeating the question several more times. This struck me as particularly funny; two years earlier, I had heard the same question so often while learning Isthmus Zapotec in Juchitan, Oaxaca that I had mastered the phrase:

Example 3.6, recorded 3/6/2008, SJG

C:	<u>Gu cuchē no?</u> <i>Cuando cuando te cases?</i>	When will you marry? When when will you marry?
EF:	((laughing))	((laughing))
C:	<u>Gu cuchē no?</u> ((laughing)) <i>a ella no le gu-!</i> ((laughing))	When will you marry? ((laughing)) she doesn't li-! ((laughing))
EF:	((laughing))	((laughing))
C:	Ah <u>gu cuchē no?</u>	Um when will you marry?
EF:	<i>Eso siempre me dijeron en Juchitan pero es 'Ma bichaganalu la?' siempre me preguntaban así</i>	They always said that to me in Juchitan, but it's 'Are you married?' they always asked me that
7. I:	<i>Eso</i>	That's it
8. C:	<i>Así dicen en Juchitan? Esta chistoso también pues, casi no se le entienden, como los Mixes.</i>	That's how they say it in Juchitan? That's funny too, well, one can't really understand them like the Mixes

Questions of my future plans for marriage aside, Carmela's characterization of the Isthmus Zapotec phrase I spoke was abstract, containing no specific comparison to her own speech. Rather she characterized the overall sound of it as *chistoso* (funny), and commented on her inability to understand it. She then compared it to the language of an entirely different ethnic group, the Mixes, emphasizing its strangeness. This strategy differs from the comparisons made by Isidrio and Salomon, in Example 3.3, between the varieties of Zapotec spoken in Guelavía and the Sierra Norte, which were based on a degree of familiarity and mutual understanding.

In the examples shown above, speakers evinced a combination of linguistic, pragmatic, metalinguistic and metapragmatic strategies for linguistically encoding and describing difference. Through reported speech Guelavians voiced and enacted their familiarity with speakers of other closely related Zapotecan varieties, and through metapragmatics, and metalanguage they “made the implicit explicit” (Phillips 1998: 22), describing their relationships to other speakers and communities. Metalinguistic commentary about inter-community differences was affectively and morally laden; perceived differences were often mapped onto ideologies about the qualities and characteristics of the speakers who employed them. In the case of the excerpts considered above, speakers wrestled with the different degrees of strangeness, or ‘otherness,’ represented by different linguistic varieties, motivated by both practical and ideological concerns (e.g. Can I understand this variety?, What kind of person speaks this variety?). There was a strong relationship between the degree of otherness perceived across linguistic varieties and people’s attitudes towards the possibility of mutual understanding, though the directionality of the relationship remains unclear.

In a few cases Guelavians I worked with constructed ties between linguistic differences and the moral differences between groups even more explicitly. In the following excerpt taken from a longer interview, *Mariana began by describing the dangers inherent in venturing into unknown communities in the area. At the time we were discussing my experiences in Guelavía thus far:

Example 3.7, recorded 4/3/2008, SJG

M:	<i>Y sí le gusta aca este pueblo?</i>	And do you like it here this town?
EF:	<i>S:í muchísimo sí, la gente especialmente son muy amables</i>	Ye:s a lot yes, the people especially, they are very nice
M:	<i>Sí porque veras que otras otros pueblos otras partes ((switches to whisper)) son</i>	Yes because truly other other towns other parts ((switches to whisper)) are very bad

	<i>muy malos</i>	
EF:	<i>Malos? Como?</i>	Bad? How?
M:	<i>Pues, no admiten la gente, matan a la gente</i>	Well, they don't let in the people, they kill the people
EF:	<i>Matan?</i>	They kill?
M:	<i>Aha aquí donde dicen – por aquí en Santa Cruz – no conoce Santa Cruz?</i>	Aha here where they say – over here in Santa Cruz – do you know Santa Cruz?
EF:	<i>No</i>	No
M:	<i>Y allí junto de Santa Cruz estaba (...) se llama San Juan Teitipac, y se llama Santa Cecilia, San Sebastian allí no puede uno ir porque luego matan a la gente, por eso [no</i>	And over there next to Santa Cruz there was (...) it's called San Juan Teitipac, and its called Santa Cecilia, San Sebastian over there one cannot go because later they kill the people, for that reason don't
EF:	<i>los que no vienen del pueblo?</i> [A	Those that don't come from the town?
M:	<i>A los que aunque somos de aquí mire, pero (...) por eso nunca vamos por allí. A donde vamos aquí en (I) San Marcos, Magdalena, Santa Cruz, Abasolo, Tlacolula, (...) todo esta aquí</i>	To those that even though we are from here look but (...) for that reason we never go there. We go here to San Marcos, Magdalena, Santa Cruz, Abasolo, Tlacolula, (...) everything is here.

The towns that Mariana condemned are not all geographically more distant from Guelavía than the ones that and her husband consider safe to visit, but familiarity and closeness were central to her assessment of the moral compass of a particular town or community. A few minutes later on in the interview she elaborated on this further, when I asked her if people from the towns she had mentioned all spoke the same variety of Zapotec:

Example 3.8, recorded 4/3/2008, SJG

EF:	<i>Y este hablan la el mismo variedad del Zapoteco que [ustedes</i>	And um they speak the the same variety of Zapotec as you all?
M:	<i>[De aquí de de Magdalena es el mismo, de San Marcos es el mismo, de San Bartolo es el mismo, de San Lucas el lo mismo</i>	From here from from Magdalena it is the same, from San Marcos it is the same, from San Bartolo it is the same, from San Lucas it's the same.
EF:	<i>Hay diferencias o todo igual?</i>	Are there differences or [is] everything the same?
M:	<i>Poquito nada mas pero poquito pero poquitito se cambia-se cambia la diferencia. Allí en Mitla como se-alli si se cambia la diferencia... Porque yo tengo un hierno (...) que habla idioma pero mamacita no se que tan (...) no entiendo que habla no entiendo no entiendo (...) un poco muy feo idioma que (...) porque le digo que lo de aca de San Marcos, Santa</i>	A little bit no more but a little bit but a little bit it chang-it changes the difference. Over there in Mitla how it – over there it really does change the difference...Because I have a son-in-law (...) who speaks [Zapotec] but little-mother I don't know what that so (...) I don't understand what he says I don't understand I don't understand (...) a little bit very ugly language that (...) because I tell you that from here from San Marcos, Santa Cruz from um

<i>Cruz de este Abasolo de Tlacoahuaya es el mismo</i>	Abasolo from Tlacoahuaya it is the same
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Mariana repeated this list of town names several times throughout this discussion, and the names she mentioned above as safe communities to visit coincided exactly with the places where people spoke what she categorized as the same variety of Zapotec spoken in Guelavía. Linguistic intelligibility colored the perception of proximity (and possibly vice-versa), both geographic and social. In emphasizing the linguistic continuity across these communities Mariana was engaged in a process that has been termed ‘adequation,’ (Cole 2010) the affiliative extreme of the spectrum of differentiation described throughout this chapter. When I asked for clarification, however, she did say that other local varieties sounded *raro* (strange), and that the *idioma de aquí es muy claro claro claro este idioma* (“[the] language of here is very clear clear clear this language”).

In much of the talk about linguistic difference across the above excerpts the terms *claro* (clear) and *enredado* (complicated/knotted) were opposed as the positively and negatively valued ends of a continuum of linguistic transparency and opacity. Within this framework San Juan Guelavía Zapotec was held up as the clearest of all local varieties, spoken by locals who lived in, accordingly, the most open and welcoming community. Conversely, the difficult-to-understand varieties spoken in other places were often negatively valued. Following this pattern Mariana characterized Mitla Zapotec, spoken by her son-in-law, which she was unable to understand, as “very ugly.” She pronounced this evaluation with extreme distaste, almost as if the language itself were deliberately eluding her grasp. In projecting inter-community linguistic differences onto social differences Guelavians tell a first story, or one version of a story about themselves. More specifically, they define membership in the Guelavian community around the use of San

Juan Guelavía Zapotec, and an ethos of social transparency and openness. The perceived clarity of the Guelavian Zapotec relative to other local languages is linked to this positively valued ethos of openness, mutually reinforcing an idealized vision of what it means to be Guelavian.

IX. Temporality and intra-community differentiation

In all of the examples of talk about inter-community distinctions above, there is a largely unspoken background assumption of intra-community solidarity and homogeneity, namely that Guelavians speak and act in a shared way that can be contrasted with the various other communities being described. Through the use of phrases like nezlaad xtennë (“the words of our side,”) or [el] *idioma de aquí es muy claro claro* (“the language of here is very clear”), speakers constructed this sense of sharedness. However, when talk turned to Guelavians themselves a very different picture emerged, belying the processes of erasure upon which ideals of community homogeneity are constructed. Stephen describes a similar set of identificational ideologies based on her work in the neighboring community of Teotitlan del Valle, where it was common for people to have:

an ethnic identity for outside consumption, which emphasizes community solidarity and a common claim to being the originators of treadle loom weaving in the Oaxaca Valley, and an internal version of ethnic identity, which although it emphasizes common language, participation in local social and cultural institutions, and weaving production, also allows the contradiction of class differentiation, age and gender to slip through in subtle ways (2005: 20).

In my own work, I found that in addition to distinctions based on class, age or gender, language itself was a site of enormous diversity, particularly in the context of speakers’ evaluations of their own and others’ speech practices. Talk about intra-community

differences in the linguistic repertoires of Guelavians was often imbued with heightened moral significance relative to talk about the linguistic differences between communities. In such talk linguistic differences were projected onto social categories of class, age, and often gender, in complicated and often contradictory ways. By analyzing talk about the internal stratification of the Guelavian community I reveal a second story, or a second way of defining community membership that both draws on and reframes the narrative that Guelavians project for “outside consumption.”

Age was of special significance in talk about the distribution of linguistic knowledge in the context of the ongoing shift away from the use of Zapotec among younger Guelavians. For example, knowledge of Zapotec was construed by some as an indication of virtue, intelligence, and in some cases respect for traditional cultural practices and perspectives. The following example, in which two brothers, Isidrio and Salomon, discuss the linguistic practices of Salomon’s grandson *Aurelio, illustrates this view:

Example 3.9, recorded 4/6/2008, SJG

S:	<u>Na nia ziiy zuguania de mniny lliin</u> <u>*Bert de mniny lliin Bert</u>	I say that is how I am with the children sons of *Roberto, the children sons of Roberto
I:	<u>Ēĕ</u>	Yes
S:	<u>Nadelli</u> “ <i>orale pap</i> ” <u>nall</u> “ <i>quiero</i> <i>aprender porque mi papa no quiere</i> <i>enseñarme</i> ” <u>nall rtiulolexĕ</u> <u>güenex de</u> <u>lliinllĕ ditza</u>	They said “ok grandpa” he said “I want to learn because my father doesn’t want to teach me” he said he is embarrassed to speak with his sons in Zapotec
I:	<u>[Vay lax</u>	Well he
S:	<u>Ni rapiax</u> “ <i>xizani quity rueniudex</i> <i>ditza?</i> ” “ <i>ni quĕty nadenquĕ</i> ” <u>nalexĕ</u>	For that reason I said to him “why don’t you speak with them in Zapotec?” “They don’t even want to” he said
I:	Mmm	Mmm
S:	<u>Cheen ni rapixĕ</u> <u>Relqui naigy</u> <u>nimasa mir</u>	The boy they call Aurelio is very clever
I:	<u>Eso</u>	That’s it
S:	<u>Ēĕ</u>	Yes

The moralizing power of this excerpt was twofold; firstly Salomon criticized his son Roberto’s unwillingness to teach his children Zapotec by contrasting the reported speech of Roberto and Roberto’s son Aurelio. Salomon drew on a male specific speech style that is commonly used within the context of reported speech, by marking his quotatives with the terms nall (he said) nadelli (they said), using the male specific pronoun lax (he), and the corresponding nominal and verbal suffixes containing the morphemes x, or xë (see boldfaced text above). This gendered register is another linguistic tool available to Zapotec speakers that can be deployed to more authentically render the words of other speakers, and is even used by women if they are quoting the words of men. It is also a mark of solidarity among men who only use these terms with one another.

Salomon also used direct quotation to represent his son’s and grandson’s words, spoken in Zapotec and Spanish respectively, shifting from past into present tense when speaking the quoted speech. These strategies serve as a rhetorical boon to his argument about Roberto’s failure to pass on knowledge of Zapotec to Aurelio, making this past event relevant within the unfolding interaction (see Perrino 2010). Salomon’s codeswitching into Spanish highlighted the fact that he and Aurelio don’t share the same languages in common, and in fact I observed a similar practice in conversations between Zapotec speakers (in which I was not a participant) who were quoting my speech.³³ The gap in linguistic knowledge between myself, a foreign anthropologist, and older Guelavians was similar to that between them and their own grandchildren. The

³³ The example below was recorded early on in my fieldwork. In this excerpt a man I worked with was telling his brother about the difficulties I had reported in understanding what was being discussed at a recent rally organized by local women, at which many people were shouting all at once in Zapotec:

F: <i>Chiy naiby “quëty racdia entenderi” naiby chiy sloo rbëxtiadeb (biaba) “muchas cosas dijeron pero no le entendía yo”</i>	Then she said “I don’t understand” she said then they started to yell (then it quieted) “they said many things but I didn’t understand”
--	---

divergences between their linguistic repertoires means that the convention of marking affiliation through reported speech, illustrated in Salomon's quotation of Roberto above, is unavailable to them. While they share a familial bond, Salomon appeared to be dissatisfied with this linguistic distance between himself and Aurelio. Salomon's narrative above contains a reported confrontation between himself and his son Roberto about his linguistic shortcomings, within which Roberto claimed a lack of interest on the part of the children as the real reason that he hadn't taught them Zapotec. At the same time Salomon quotes his grandson, pleading with him to teach him Zapotec because Roberto refuses. Salomon interjects here what his grandson believes is the real reason, namely that Roberto is embarrassed by speaking Zapotec. Roberto is thus doubly maligned for lying about his own linguistic shame and refusing to share his native language with the next generation of speakers.

Roberto and his family live in Mexico City (D.F.), where, according to many Guelavians I know who have lived there, linguistic avoidance based on the fear of being shamed for the public use of Zapotec is a well established pattern. In fact, up through the 1970s and 1980s it was uncommon even within Guelavía for individuals to admit to outsiders that they spoke or understood Zapotec (Ted Jones, personal communication, 10/20/2010). One man I spoke with, who had traveled to see relatives in D.F., told me that he was frustrated by their categorical refusal to answer him in Zapotec when he spoke to them. In the case of Guelavians who migrated to Mexico City (D.F.), the imperative to speak Spanish was two-fold, as many people traveled there to live and work, in restaurants or as domestic servants, specifically to help them learn and master Spanish. Those who left Guelavía and spent many years in urban centers like D.F. often

mentioned feeling like outsiders when they did return to Guelavía, as they were unfamiliar with many aspects of rural life, including the nuances of local cultural practices.

Salomon, on the other hand, is an older man in his late seventies, who has lived in Guelavía all his life. While he is fluent in Spanish, he favors Zapotec in most of his daily interactions. Roberto's purported embarrassment around speaking Zapotec accurately reflects the double bind of his age group, those between forty and sixty years old. In opting to speak Spanish with their children, a choice often motivated by a desire to further their education and professional progress,³⁴ middle-aged Guelavians become subject to scrutiny for causing the next generation to lose touch with their Zapotec linguistic and cultural heritage, embodied in the above example by Salomon. While Salomon maligned Roberto for his shame and cowardice, he commended his grandson Aurelio for his virtue and intelligence, indexed by his interest in learning Zapotec from his grandfather. As a young Guelavian interested in learning Zapotec Aurelio is exceptional, defying the larger community wide trend among younger generations to favor Spanish over Zapotec. In expressing this interest Aurelio valorizes the linguistic knowledge of Salomon, his elder.

Salomon's advanced age placed him in the category of Guelavians described above who were widely perceived to command a more highly valued variety of Zapotec that is "untainted" by mixing with Spanish. As described above, the code-mixing that characterizes many middle-aged Guelavians' speech is negatively valued as illegitimate.

³⁴ Spanish is often chosen by Guelavians as the language of primary socialization for a variety of reasons bound up with the local history of schooling and out migration in the community. This theme is the subject of the next chapter, "The ghosts of language planning, past, present, and future".

Preoccupations with purity and stasis are common across language ideologies, regarding which Irvine argues:

Languages, in these ideologized visions, easily serve as convenient stand-ins for their speakers, whose relations, origins, and susceptibility to improvement or corruption are at issue...language’s variability must seem to signal a potentially perilous mutability...The question around which conflicting ideologies of language are circling: “Is change progress, or is it corruption and loss? Would it be better if language did not change at all?” (2004: 99-101).

The speech practices of middle-aged Guelavians embody this “perilous mutability” on two levels simultaneously: 1) their use of Spanish with their children is driving language shift, 2) their imperfect Zapotec is viewed as a mark of linguistic degeneracy in contrast with the “pure” speech of the past. On the other hand, while middle-aged Guelavians like Roberto occupied a sort of liminal category, bridging the gap between past and present, Salomon and his peers were more likely to be cast as part of that past: old fashioned and stubbornly resistant to the changing dynamics of contemporary life.

This view can be imbued with both positive and negative valences, as many people spoke fondly of the past as a simpler, healthier time when people were more pious, hardworking and respectful. During an interview in Guelavía with a middle-aged woman, Mariana (see Examples 2.7 & 2.8), I asked a question about the local practice of salt extraction which had disappeared several decades earlier. Her response demonstrated this nostalgic glorification of the good old days:

Example 3.10, recorded 4/3/2008, SJG

M:	<i>Pero esa sal es original</i>	But that salt is original
EF:	<i>Mhm</i>	Mhm
M:	<i>Porque esta sal que venden en la tienda no (...)</i>	Because this salt that they sell in the store no (...)
EF:	<i>No es igual – no sabe igual?</i>	It’s not the same – it doesn’t taste the same?
M:	<i>Y esta sal que hacían antes bie:n buena [pero ahora</i>	And this salt that they made before so:o good [but now
EF:	<i>[muy rico</i>	[very tasty

M:	<i>Pero ya la gente de antes que sacaba sal ya no hay ahorita</i>	But now the people from before who extracted salt they are no longer now
----	--	---

Mariana went on to talk about how the old process of making tortillas (where harvested and dried corn is first cooked over night in limestone, then taken to the mill to be ground into dough, and finally cooked on a ceramic dish over an open fire) was falling out of practice as well, replaced by machine-made tortillas sold in stores. There was an implicit criticism in Mariana’s words of contemporary Guelavians as lazy, oriented towards instant gratification, and uninterested in the maintenance of those traditional practices that require time and effort. Incidentally many women, both in Guelavía and in surrounding communities, still make their own tortillas this way, and I was fortunate enough to be offered the delicious results of this laborious technique many times.

Mariana’s talk about old fashioned techniques for making tortillas and extracting salt matches very closely the talk in Example 3.1 about *legitimo Zapoteco*, the perfect untainted variety of Zapotec spoken in the past, in contrast with the *Zapoteco revuelto*, the scrambled Zapotec spoken by most people today. Her use of the term *original* (see bolded text above) echoed this reverence for discursive and cultural traditions, and the idea that things were purer and more authentic *antes* (before) (see bold text above). Guelavians frequently talked about the past this way, citing examples of what life in the community was like before electricity and clocks were widely available, when everyone kept time by the ringing of the church bell. In those ‘good old days,’ people greeted each other respectfully in the street with the appropriately respectful gesture of hand kissing, and stopped in their tracks to pray each day as the sun went down and darkness fell. In this golden era people made everything they used by hand: every dish, every food item, and every item of clothing. Because they could not afford to buy many items, their diet

was healthier; they used mostly plants that they grew, only eating meat on special occasions deemed important enough to sacrifice an animal for. Diabetes, in the past, a problem which now plagues many Guelavians and is, in fact, the biggest health problem in Mexico, was unknown; no one drank soda, ate bread or other sugary foods, only honey harvested from underground bee hives. There was no litter, no pollution in the air or in the water, the rivers flowed with clean water and plentiful fish, and it rained predictably so that everyone's crops flourished.

This “discourse of nostalgia” is in many ways very similar to that discussed by Hill among Mexicano speakers:

The discourse of nostalgia involves ‘multiplex signs’ (Briggs 1989): elements that not only refer to but call up indexically an entire social order associated with *in achto* [the past]. (Hill 1998: 71).

The specific ways such discourses are constructed among Guelavians is quite different from what Hill describes, though they function in an analogous way. According to Hill, the purist bent of Mexicano discourses of nostalgia “make demands on Mexicano speech that cannot be satisfied,” and are bound up with local political ideologies. These discourses ironically empower the category of speakers, elite men, whose heavily mixed Mexicano speech least resembles the purist ideal for correct usage, simultaneously devaluing the “most Mexicano” community members, monolingual women, whose lack of Spanish knowledge relegates them to a subordinate economic and social position (Hill 1998: 83). In the Guelavian context discourses of nostalgia relegate those practices conceived of as traditional, such as salt gathering, to the past, a past which was simpler and purer, but also backward and deeply intertwined with poverty.

The simultaneous valorization and stigmatization of indigenous cultural and linguistic practices, expressed through discourses of nostalgia, were particularly evident in community members' (young and old alike) perceptions and evaluations of elder community members, particularly those who are Zapotec monolinguals. Older Guelavians were described in much the same way as the communities of Magdalena and San Marcos were described by Guelavians; as both more backward and more authentically Zapotec. As mentioned above, such individuals were often highly praised for their knowledge of authentic and "original" Zapotec, untainted by mixing with Spanish, but also mocked as stubbornly attached to archaic practices (such as the use of pit toilets, bucket showers, wood-fire cooking) and helpless beyond the boundaries of the community. Thus practices of intra-community differentiation function in part through "fractal recursivity" (Irvine & Gal 2000), the projection of inter-community distinctions within the Guelavian community.

The particular practices targeted as emblems of backwardness are not random – they are the same practices that have been scrutinized by government poverty alleviation agencies in the name of improving the quality of life in rural communities. For example, local medical clinics now offer workshops to educate people about the long-term eye damage associated with open-fire cooking. By characterizing these cultural and linguistic practices either as authentically traditional, or backward and archaic, these discourses create a chronological just-so story in which Zapotec use is placed in the past, and Spanish and other practices deemed 'contemporary' are placed in the present. The effect is to naturalize language shift and cultural transformation, making it appear an inevitable

aspect of “a temporal transition from one state of affairs to another” (Ochs & Capps 1996: 23).

Based on my observations neither of these competing characterizations is particularly accurate. The Zapotec of older individuals contains many Spanish loanwords that are old enough in origin that they have been assimilated into the Valley Zapotec phonology, and often more contemporary borrowings as well. Additionally many of the so-called old-fashioned behaviors characteristic of older residents were in use before electricity and running water became widely available, and in the present day are a mark of poverty, which cuts across age categories. At the same time, some traditional practices that Guelavians like Mariana claimed had been lost are still practiced (though not ubiquitously), as evidenced by the large number of young women in Guelavía who earn money making so-called ‘old fashioned’ tortillas.³⁵

As mentioned above, the Spanish of Guelavians was often heavily scrutinized as full of errors, or incorrect, and this was especially true of the Spanish spoken by older people. Those individuals who had never attended school, and had learned Spanish piecemeal over the years did in fact struggle to speak and understand Spanish. Because I had a car during part of my fieldwork and am fluent in Spanish I often accompanied older Zapotec speakers who struggled with Spanish to government offices to assist them in communicating with Spanish monolingual officials. Such interactions, in which the

³⁵ There are gradations in the difficulty and skill level associated with making different types of tortillas, however, and there are very few Guelavian women who make *tlayudas*, the very thin, large, crispy tortillas served on special occasions. When these are needed Guelavians go to Magdalena, the neighboring community where several women sell *tlayudas* in large volume. Magdalena is conceptualized by Guelavians as respectively much poorer and more old-fashioned, i.e. women of all ages still wear traditional dress, and make the fussiest, most labor-intensive type of tortillas. These stereotypes represent the collapsing of the positive and negative valences of local discourses of nostalgia exemplified by a contemporary community whose impoverishment has contributed to the maintenance of practices associated with the distant past.

power of Spanish-speaking *mestizos* over rural indigenous populations was reenacted, reinforced the stereotype of older Guelavians as backward and defenseless in the modern world (see Stephen 2006: 210). In my experience these larger power relations mapped onto intra-community class distinctions in Guelavía in which conspicuous lack of fluency in Spanish was associated with poverty, ignorance, old age and backwardness. This pattern was explained to me by my transcription consultant, *Dora, one day while we were transcribing a story narrated by an older man in his late seventies. In the course of telling the story, in which he alternated frequently between Zapotec and Spanish, he used the Spanish phrase *dolor de baño*, prompting a laugh from Miriam. She explained how crass this sounds in Spanish, though it was common and appropriate phrase to use the equivalent phrase in Zapotec, *racna xquixnis* to describe the urge to urinate (similar in valence to the English phrase “I have to pee”). She further explained that only someone who was not a fluent speaker of Spanish would use that phrase. Linguistic errors often provoked teasing, even (or perhaps especially) among loved ones. One man I knew mercilessly mocked his wife’s imperfect Spanish, particularly her scrambling of pronouns and gender³⁶, often calling her a *burra* (female donkey), meaning slow-witted or unable to learn (in spite of the fact that he frequently made similar blunders).

Younger and/or wealthier Guelavians were frequently described by community members as the inverse of this stereotype; they were cast as *presumidos*, (snobs) who had lost touch with their roots because they spoke Spanish, rejected Zapotec and lived in expensive western-style homes. This category comprised people with post-primary school education, who were fluent in Spanish, owned houses with indoor bathrooms,

³⁶ She would use the term “*el*” (he) to reference women, and used the first person pronoun “*yo*” (I) for second and third person references.

showers and gas ovens, and favored store-bought over homemade foods. There are salient class distinctions in the Guelavian community, as a walk around the main streets of town, where old adobe structures sit next to two-story homes with elaborately painted facades, will demonstrate (see Chapter 2). Some Guelavians (but not many) have disposable incomes with which to travel, and like myself frequently move in and out of the community, returning with pictures and stories of other places.

However, the majority of people, families and households fall between the ends of this economic continuum, and in the face of the exigencies of daily life idealized notions of the ‘traditional’ and the modern *presumido* break down. Young and/or wealthy individuals have ties to community members and family of all ages, classes and linguistic capabilities, and every Guelavian must move across social contexts in which particular practices and traditions are differentially valued. A wealthy young couple returning from Los Angeles, California or Ensenada, Mexico to marry in the locally proper way must engage the services of a *huehuete/tsëgul*, one of the ritual speech makers described above, to perform the requisite blessings in the highly valued register of Zapotec that is associated with ancient history (for more detailed description see Chapter 7). While open fire cooking may be stigmatized in certain contexts, it is also valorized as the most culturally authentic of cooking techniques, yielding the most delicious tasting food, and all young women must master it before they get married. During the period of service that all newlywed women perform, they are expected to make handmade tortillas for their husbands and in-laws daily. Likewise those older Guelavians who speak little Spanish, and hold on to routines and practices marked as old-fashioned, by necessity must leave the community regularly and in so doing come in contact with many different contexts

and populations of people. Certain goods can only be purchased in the bigger towns and cities where one is less likely to find fellow Valley Zapotec speakers, religious pilgrimages are often made during an individual's lifetime to sanctuaries all over Mexico and into Central America, and one's children and grandchildren are often scattered all over the map.

In addition, many of the very individuals who are stereotyped as resistant to practices and technologies associated with progress and modernity in fact highly value aspects of the so-called modern world, particularly those devices that make daily life easier and safer (e.g. running water, electricity, gas stoves, blenders, radios, planes, cars and telephones). The following example is taken from a conversation with a woman in her early eighties, *Ermelinda, who described a contrast in life before and after electricity was installed in the community:

Example 3.11, recorded 6/2/2008, SJG

E:	<i>Hay una coyote también aquí hasta aquí pero coyote dice hasta así una coyote ... Pero a vec cuando el tiempo no hay luz de aquí del pueblo vaya, viene esta un:a po:llo, un marana chiqui:ta, a traer <u>begu</u></i>	There is a coyote also here until here but coyote he says until like that a coyote...But sometimes when the time when there is no electricity here for the town well, this one comes a chicken, a little piglet, to take coyote
EF:	<i>A:ah a comer</i>	O:h to eat
E:	<i>Aha pero cuando no hay luz con el tiempo vaya per 'hora si gracias a Dios ya esta luz (to:da) así ya no hay [ya no hay mal vaya</i>	Yes but when there is no electricity with the time well but now yes thank God now there is electricity (all) like that now there is no now there is no bad well
EF:	<i>[ya no viene</i>	Now it doesn't come
E:	<i>Ya no hay, ya esta ya esta bueno con luz</i>	Now there is no, now it is now it is good with electricity
EF:	Mhmm	Mhmm
E:	<i>Ya no hay ni raton ni también (te) cuando el tiempo (voy a) raton chiquito como aquí:i aquí:i per mucha se enoja pues porque esta cochina pues no no (...) pura comprar venena para</i>	Now there is no not even a rat nor also (you) when the time (I will) a small rat like he:re he:re but one gets so mad well because it's dirty well no no (...) always buying venom for

Ermelinda is as close to an archetype of the Zapotec elder (as portrayed in described in discourses of nostalgia) as I encountered during my research in Guelavía. She never attended school, never learned to read or write, and struggled greatly with Spanish, favoring the use of Zapotec in all of her interactions. While she communicated effectively in Spanish, her speech was peppered with jumbled pronouns and inversions of nominal gender, and she often used Zapotec assimilated Spanish lexemes, such as *per*, (from *pero*), *hor* (from *hora*), *vec* (from *vecas*) in which the final syllable is dropped. Finally she held to many ‘old-fashioned’ practices, such as cooking over an open fire, making tortillas by hand, using a pit toilet, and bathing with buckets of water.

In spite of this, Ermelinda highly valued technology, and expressed envy of those who have facility with those things she lacks, who can speak Spanish and English fluently, drive a car, or use a telephone without assistance. She enthusiastically embraced those technologies that she had mastered: the use of a blender, a gas stove, public water, and telephones (while she was unable to make calls she happily answered them), and as is clear in the above example, electricity. Before the town was wired with electric lights, coyotes pillaged local families’ livestock at night, carrying off piglets, young turkeys and chickens undetected; for a poor struggling family, the loss of domestic animals was a severe blow. Lastly, Ermelinda, nearly eighty years old, was trying to learn to write, attending a weekly class funded by the government, with a group of older women in the community, none of whom had gone to school for more than a few years. Their efforts to acquire literacy in Spanish, a skill deeply entwined with economic mobility, challenge discourses of nostalgia that relegate them to the past, thus excluding them in the present.

X. Conclusion

In the course of this chapter I have described local practices of linguistic differentiation, which are used variously by Guelavians to mark their distance from or affiliation with relevant social others. I began with a discussion of inter-community differentiation, analyzing Guelavians' cultural, linguistic and moral evaluations of other communities in the valley. These evaluations comprised a continuum of affiliation and distinction, wherein those whose speech was intelligible, and in turn quotable, were described as more essentially like Guelavians themselves than those who were unintelligible, and thus 'other'. I then went on to explore linguistic variation within the Guelavian community, highlighting the competing and often contradictory ideological frameworks that inform linguistic practice. These practices tell a second story about community membership that builds from, but also challenges narratives of community solidarity by enacting local heterogeneity and diversity. I have shown how 'discourses of nostalgia,' which simultaneously stigmatize and valorize Zapotec cultural and linguistic practices, construct a temporal dichotomy between Zapotec, as emblematic of the past, and Spanish, as the language of economic mobility and progress. These ideological oppositions strip individuals and local histories of their essential sociolinguistic dynamism. In Chapter 5 "The Ghosts of Language Planning Past, Present and Future," I trace the connections of this ideological separation to local histories of language planning, and to the larger community-wide pattern of language shift away from the use of Zapotec among younger generations of Guelavians.

Practices of inter and intra-community differentiation operate through analogous processes of iconization and erasure, projecting salient oppositions back and forth onto

one another through processes of fractal recursivity (see Irvine & Gal 2000). They constitute first and second stories about community belonging that are interactively negotiated across speakers and contexts in the “working and reworking [of] boundaries” (DeGenova 2005: 1). These diverse, and often competing stories about Guelavian community membership illustrate that, like all communities, narrated communities are dynamic social constructions shaped by many voices. In the next chapter, “The Question of Portability,” I describe the sociolinguistic landscape of Los Angeles, considering whether and how the Oaxacan-based ideological complexes described above retain their salience across the border. I continue to investigate how the shift away from Zapotec among Guelavian youth in both locations may disrupt the linguistic encoding of affiliation and difference explored throughout this chapter. The linguistic and cultural practices of Guelavian migrants and their families are a rich site for examining the dynamic, emergent qualities of language ideologies, as well as their groundedness in particular socio-historical contexts. I continue to examine speakers’ claims about their own speech alongside the linguistic forms (e.g. reported speech) they use to voice and evaluate the words of others. Through the prism of second stories, I emphasize the capacity of such practices to both reproduce and transform the interactional ground on which they were built.

Chapter 4

The Question of Portability

I. Introduction

In the previous chapter I discussed the linguistic practices utilized by Guelavians in Oaxaca to mark their affiliation with, or difference from other relevant social others, both within and outside the community. These practices shape and are shaped by intersecting and often contradictory ideologies about the relative value of linguistic varieties and those who speak them. Here I explore these intersections and contradictions in a distinct set of geographic and socio-cultural contexts, investigating how “language ideologies can be both multi-sited and site-specific, and therefore partial rather than whole in their diverse manifestations” (Phillips 2000: 255). This chapter is organized around the following related questions: 1) To what extent do the linguistic and cultural practices of Guelavian migrants and their families living in Los Angeles overlap with, or diverge from those of Guelavians living in Oaxaca, and 2) To what degree do language ideologies anchored in Oaxacan inter and intra community distinctions carry over to the United States context among groups of Guelavians living in Los Angeles? As in the previous chapter I examine speakers’ claims about their own speech alongside the linguistic forms (e.g. reported speech) they use to voice and evaluate the words of others. Through these analyses I explore how the particular experiences, social positions, cultural and linguistic

competencies of Guelavians living in Los Angeles shape the kinds of stories, and second stories they tell.

Indigenous migrants from Mexico comprise an increasing proportion of the total population of migrants in the United States, in particular in the Southwest. In fact, the 2000 census showed a dramatic increase in the Native American population following changes in the census categories that allow for combined racial and ethnic identification, particularly in the category of “Hispanic American Indians,” which grew by 146 percent over 1990 totals (Murillo & Cerda 2004: 279). According to recent studies these increases have been mirrored in the growth of the indigenous Oaxacan population in Southern California:

The parallel process of long-term settlement and geographic concentration has led to the creation of a ‘critical mass’ of indigenous Oaxacans, especially in California. This has permitted the emergence of distinctive forms of social organization and cultural expression, especially among Mixtecs and Zapotecs (Fox & Rivera-Salgado 2004: 11).

I elaborate on this description by emphasizing that while it is the case that “distinctive forms” of cultural expression and social organization have most certainly emerged in Los Angeles-based indigenous Oaxacan communities, these forms are often different from those that characterize life in origin communities in Oaxaca. The Guelavian community in Los Angeles is both akin to, and distinct from the community of San Juan Guelavía. For example, many Guelavians I worked with in Los Angeles embraced particular aspects of life in the United States: speaking English, listening to American pop music, and buying large quantities of cheap clothing. Many of these same people, however, engaged in traditional Guelavian cultural practices, such as receiving *limpias* from

*curanderas*³⁷ when they were ill or experiencing emotional troubles, cooking elaborate Oaxacan meals, attending community celebrations and religious rituals, and participating in transborder networks of reciprocal exchange (see Chapter 2 and Chapter 7 for details).

In this chapter I explore differences and similarities in the practices, communicative patterns, and linguistic ideologies of Guelavians living in Los Angeles and those of their counterparts in Oaxaca. The presence of a “critical mass” of indigenous Oaxacans in the Los Angeles vicinity, many of whom hail from the Tlacolula Valley, is of crucial importance in this endeavor. If and when local Oaxacan linguistic ideologies and practices are put to use in this new context, there are sufficient numbers of others for whom these practices may retain some significance, meaning there are those who possess the linguistic and cultural competence to read and understand these practices. However, as I have already discussed, linguistic and cultural knowledge is unevenly distributed throughout the Guelavian community, and so such readings may be partial, conflicting, or disrupted altogether.

II. Shifting ground: Guelavian life in Los Angeles

There are likely as many Guelavians currently living in and around Los Angeles as there are in Oaxaca, but the broader sociolinguistic landscape in West Los Angeles is quite different from the Oaxacan Valley (see Chapter 2 for overview). Perhaps the biggest difference I encountered was the centrality of work in daily life; as I mentioned earlier among Guelavians in Los Angeles the struggle to balance workplace and familial

³⁷ Curanderas are traditional healers, who many Guelavians visit in conjunction with Western medical doctors when experiencing illness, injury, stress, trauma and other problems. These healers are trained in performing *limpias*, or cleansing rituals, which can rid the body of unwanted ailments, evil airs and emotional preoccupations, promoting healing and general wellness.

obligations is constant, as is the imperative to earn and save money. Women commonly found work in the domestic sphere, cleaning houses, or caring for young children; some worked in hair salons, in restaurants or selling catalog products. In my experience, this work was similar to the kinds of jobs that women worked in Oaxaca. Most men worked in restaurants, or other kinds of food service in wealthy neighborhoods around Los Angeles, while others found work in construction. Food service was a significant departure from the kind of work that these same men did, or would have done, when/if they had stayed in Guelavía or migrated domestically within Mexico.

Many men working in the restaurant industry in LA do jobs that involve so-called ‘women’s work,’ such as cooking, washing dishes, serving food and cleaning. Several Guelavian men I met expressed great respect for the difficulty of this type of labor and an appreciation for all that women do in daily life to keep their families fed and their homes clean. I recall watching a video of a *posada* festival, which I had filmed in Oaxaca in December of 2008, then brought back to Los Angeles to show the family members of the *posada* hosts. A *posada* is a Catholic religious festival that recreates the pilgrimage of Mary and Joseph as they sought shelter so that Mary could give birth to Jesus; it is followed by a large meal, speeches and music (see Ch. 7 for more details on ritual celebration and transborder circulation). Much of the footage I taped was devoted to the preparations of food and decorations, accomplished by an army of close to fifty women *invitados* (specially invited guests), who spent two full days cooking sit-down meals for the over two hundred invited guests. In addition they prepared *tamales* (steamed corn cakes), *atole* (a hot rice porridge), and large barrels of candy for several hundred community members, who, at the end of the night, came to the outer gate of the house to

receive their share. Meanwhile male invitees sat at tables talking, drinking beer and rounds of *mezcal*, and playing cards. One of the men in the living room in Santa Monica where we watched the video suddenly exclaimed, *Que chignon son los hombres así sentados mientras las mujeres trabajan!* (“How shameless the men are sitting there while the women work!”).³⁸

This kind of “peripheral vision,” or the practice of referencing the social protocol and customs of more than one place simultaneously, has been documented by researchers of other migrant populations in Mexico as well (Castañeda & Zavella 2003, Zavella 2000). In evaluating the behavior of the Guelavian men in the video, the men mentioned above implicitly lauded their own progressive attitudes. In so doing they indexed the transformation of gendered divisions of labor among migrants, and the power of shifting labor roles to realign marital partnerships (see Guendelman & Perez-Itriago 1987: 250), the ways that “gender and immigration are reflexively intertwined” (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994: 2, see also Hirsch 2003). In fact, on several occasions I encountered individuals who chose to migrate, and/or to remain in Los Angeles because they felt that it allowed them to move beyond the constraints of traditional gender roles. For example, soon after arriving in Los Angeles I met an openly gay Guelavian man, *Ophelio, who had a domestic partnership with another Guelavian man; he frequently complained about his partner’s laziness and refusal to do any domestic chores. Ophelio had become a Thai chef, and also worked as a clothing designer and tailor. His clothes were so sought after among Guelavians that he often received commissions from women in SJG to make dresses for weddings and other festivals. While I met other homosexual individuals in

³⁸ To be fair, immediate male relatives do a considerable amount of work in and around these types of celebrations, it is just the main body of male guests that are permitted to be more idle and relaxed.

Oaxaca, I didn't encounter any examples of openly gay relationships, or same sex domestic partnerships in Guelavía.

Another example of the reflexive intertwining of migration and gender is the increasing migration of older Guelavian women, who most often travel to L.A. in order to live with their children and care for their grandchildren (see Ch. 2 for details). Some of the older migrant women I encountered were widows, but most had left their husbands and other adult children behind in Oaxaca. In a few cases women's choices to migrate were driven by more dire circumstances, such as marital troubles or experiences with domestic violence. The conversation excerpted below revolved around one such instance; *Violeta had recently left Guelavía seeking respite from her marital problems, and was talking on the phone to her uncle, *Isidrio, living in Guelavía, who was anxious to know how she was adjusting to her new surrounds:

Excerpt 4.0, recorded 5/19/2009, LA

V: <u>Guenquë zalla run Diosquëza guenquë</u>	I am well thank God I am well
I: <u>Ta ri aczacu</u>	Are you getting used to [living there]?
V: ((laughing)) <u>Ëë oh ana babia</u> ((laughing)) <u>niila cuntis acansa de nezquë</u>	((laughing)) yes oh I have gotten used to it ((laughing)) for that reason because now I go around here
I: <u>A nu niu de mniny nezqui más rullaza tranquil nuu</u>	And you are with your sons over there you will be calmer
V: <u>Ëë, ziiy la nriazacana lla guenru na guillquë vay ax guenquë... Siempre dobleenza lla... eso ziiy la naza de mniny lla cuntis la chiy bsloob absloob stuby te aldilez bsaneenbëy per anre guc tsaan gubidx nuub ziiy ëë</u>	Yes, because of that I say well that it is good-better here well yes I am well... Always I suffer though... that is like what the boys said well that then he started already he started [to drink] again because he had left it but now that it has been fifteen days since he is like that yes
I: <u>(Na rnila gati pur guelracënalazti gati turcuati) sino que rnia xtiosten zacëna liu cuntis masa trabaju eh cuntis azuguanu de mninyquë nezqui... guenquëzalla nan paquiy na lo primer nan paquiy</u>	(I say not for envy nor because I don't love) but because I say thanks to you that even though you struggled uhm with that now you are with your sons over there... it is good the mother is the first the first the mother first

Over the course of this excerpt it becomes clear that Violeta left Guelavía because her husband was battling with chronic alcoholism. Regarding her experiences Violeta

reflected, *Siempre dobleenza lla* (“I always suffer though”), and Isidrio responded, *cuntis masa trabaju eh cuntis azuguanu de mninyquë* (“even though you struggled uhm with that now you are with your sons”). Together their talk of her suffering and struggles suggest that Violeta had faced some form of emotional or physical abuse during her husbands’ bouts with alcohol.

Violeta’s life prior to her departure from Guelavía constitutes a first story, around which she and Isidrio collaboratively organized a second story about her new life in Los Angeles. Throughout their talk they continually equated her shift in geography and circumstance with betterment, juxtaposing spatial deictics and positively charged adjectives, saying *nezqui más rullaza tranquil nuu* (“over there you will be calmer”), and *rniazacana lla guenru na guillquë* (“I say well that it is good-better here”). Isidrio further related this shift to her newfound proximity to her children. In his last utterance Isidrio describes Violeta as a mother, saying, *guenquëzalla nan paquiy na lo primer nan paquiy* (“it is good the mother is the first the first the mother first”), highlighting the primacy of the mother-child bond still further. By bringing to the fore her status as a mother, in the context of talk about her troubled marriage and alcoholic spouse, Isidrio both pointed to her shift in circumstance and reframed her experience.

The co-construction of this second story about Violeta’s new life in Los Angeles exemplifies the way that practices of discursive alignment can produce transformations among interlocutors interacting across shifting geographic and social contexts. In this excerpt the transformation is bound up with a shift in participant structure, and more specifically a shift in the relationship between the teller and the character in the story. Whereas in the first story Violeta is the long suffering wife of an alcoholic, in the second

she is recast as a mother, living a calm and happy life with her doting sons. The temporal and contextual openness of second stories enables Viola and Isidrio to bridge the gap in time, space and experience that divide Violeta's former and present selves. The distinct organization of Guelavian social life in Oaxaca and Los Angeles respectively, and the myriad differences between the two places lead to a heightened state of reflexivity among transborder community members. Interactions between community members were frequently characterized by a kind of peripheral vision that invoked these differences, enabling reframings and transformations of lived experiences as they are viewed through different lenses.

III. The sociolinguistic context of West Los Angeles

The differences between everyday life in Los Angeles and San Juan Guelavía were reflected in the linguistic repertoires and practices of the Guelavians that I worked with in Los Angeles. To begin with, every Guelavian I encountered in Los Angeles spoke fluent Spanish, which is widely spoken throughout California by close to thirty-five percent of the population. According to the most recent census there were 4.7 people of Hispanic origin living in LA County in 2009³⁹, and among the city's diverse Latino population Spanish serves as a lingua franca. I didn't encounter any Zapotec monolinguals in LA, or any individuals who struggled with Spanish. I most often heard Zapotec spoken between middle-aged and older individuals conversing in their homes, at parties with other Guelavians, and in phone conversations with relatives in Oaxaca (see Example 4.0). In addition, some people described the use of Zapotec as an insider language among

³⁹ <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/hhmcensus1.html>, summary of U.S. Census Bureau data

Guelavians and other Valley Zapotec speakers because it was used in the work place as a language of solidarity, as well as during conversations they wished to keep private (see López & Runsten 2004, Stephen 2006). I never heard any children, or individuals younger than twenty using Zapotec in their interactions with others; this indicates that there is an independent pattern of shift away from Zapotec towards an alternation between Spanish and English among younger generations of Guelavians living in the United States. Due to the intense work demands of most adults, Guelavian youth do not spend as much time in proximity with Zapotec speakers in L.A. as their counterparts in Oaxaca, who are often exposed to Zapotec as over-hearers. In Guelavía school programs and municipal workshops were promoting the teaching of Zapotec to young people, whereas in L.A. there was no such initiative among Guelavians migrants. The only Valley Zapotec class I found in Los Angeles was the one I enrolled in at UCLA, which was geared towards American undergraduate students.⁴⁰

One of the most obvious and significant shifts in communicative practice among Guelavians in Los Angeles is the increase in the number of Guelavians who speak English, both those who learned as adults while living and working in the U.S., and those who were born there and learned English as one of their native tongues. In my encounters, nearly every child older than four years had a strong command of English, a process reinforced among children who enter English-dominant L.A. public schools and form peer relationships with other English-speaking children. The English fluency of adults varied widely. Within multilingual Guelavian families living in Los Angeles, it

⁴⁰ My instructor at UCLA was from the Oaxacan Valley and was a native speaker of San Lucas Quiavini Zapotec. He had migrated to the US many years earlier and married a non-Oaxacan woman. His children did not speak Zapotec, and according to him, and despite his profession, were uninterested in learning. Other courses in Valley Zapotec are now being offered at SDSU, also for undergraduates.

was normal for the children to speak English to one another, and a mix of English and Spanish to their parents. Parents, in turn, often used Spanish with their children and Zapotec with one another and with other adults. Each generation, then, had their insider language and their lingua franca was Spanish. Adult men, generally speaking, understood and used more English than women, probably because they spent more time outside the home and interacted with a greater range of people in daily life. Women worked jobs that kept them relatively isolated, cleaning houses or caring for young children, and outside of work they interacted almost exclusively with friends and family in Zapotec and Spanish. The exceptions were those women who worked in beauty salons and restaurants, where they came into more frequent contact with English speakers. In contrast with the small group of English students that trickled in and out of my classes in Guelavía, nearly everyone I worked with in Los Angeles was struggling to learn or improve their English, and many people were enrolled in local classes. As I will discuss at greater length below, English acquisition was seen as crucial for expanding professional opportunities, and for defending one's self in professional and public spheres (e.g. schools, public transit).

Over the course of my fieldwork in Los Angeles, I interacted with, observed, and spoke primarily to migrants that hailed from Guelavía, but in the course of attending festivals, birthday parties, and other special occasions I was able to observe Guelavians interacting with and around other groups of Latinos. The majority of these gatherings, to which an average of fifty people would be invited, were held at local public parks, the most readily available, pleasant and free option for hosting large gatherings. In such contexts I paid particular attention to the languages used by those present. During these

public gatherings it was most common for adults to speak Spanish, and for children and young adults (up to age 20) to speak Spanish to their parents and English to each other. Adults occasionally greeted one another in Zapotec, but aside from those instances Zapotec was rarely used.

For a number of reasons, it difficult to accurately assess when and to what extent adult Guelavians in Los Angeles used Zapotec in daily life with one another for a number of reasons. Firstly, in more intimate gatherings in people's homes, the ethos of linguistic accommodation was very strong and people often used Spanish around me (because they knew I spoke Spanish with greater fluency than I spoke Zapotec), unless I specifically requested that everyone speak Zapotec, in which case it was neither 'ordinary,' nor 'naturally occurring.' Secondly, in public spaces like parks I repeatedly got the impression that people did not like to be overheard speaking Zapotec, perhaps because they wanted to blend in with the larger Latino community that co-habited these social spaces, many of whom were not of indigenous heritage and used only Spanish and English. On several occasions other groups that were celebrating or recreating in the park were invited to join in for party games and meals, and so Spanish was the default language used.

In contrast, I found that the majority of phone conversations that I recorded or overheard in individuals' homes between relatives over the age of forty took place in Zapotec, suggesting that when non-Zapotec-speaking participants are not involved, Zapotec is the default language spoken by many people in this age group. In example 4.0, Violeta, who is in her sixties, and Isidrio, who recently turned eighty, spoke entirely in Zapotec with one another. Interestingly, however, before their conversation got started

Isidrio had been speaking with his granddaughter, *Casilda, a young woman in her thirties who lives in Los Angeles with her husband and infant son. They speak almost exclusively in Spanish with one another, as Casilda is not a fluent Zapotec speaker, and her conversation with Isidrio took place entirely in Spanish. The following example shows the transition between Isidrio’s talk with Casilda and Violeta; when Casilda’s mother, Julieta (Isidrio’s daughter), took the phone to pass it to Violeta the code of the conversation switched:

Example 4.1, recorded 5/19/2009, LA

C: <i>Ay se cuida mucho y saluda todos por allí aquí le voy a pasar a mi mama</i>	Well take good care of yourself and say hello to everyone over there here I am going to pass you to my mother
I: <i>Bueno</i>	Ok
J: <i>Bueno pues Do</i>	Ok well Do
I: <i>Ēē</i>	Yes
J: <i>Ta quētyquē guunbiu saludar maly Violetē abzugua rure</i>	That don’t you want to greet the co-mother Violeta here she is
I: <i>Ah bueno btetla zacēbē axt xidxiqui gunaa lob</i>	Oh ok pass her to me since that day it is that I have seen her
J: <i>Ah eso</i>	Ah eso
All: ((laughing))	((laughing))
V: <i>Cunbiu Tiu Sid</i>	How are you Uncle Sid? ⁴¹
I: <i>Taliung Violetē</i>	Is it you Violeta?
V: <i>Ēē oh narenang bzēnia nezquē</i>	Yes well it’s me I arrived over here

In the first line, Casilda is addressing Isidrio in Spanish. She spent most of her teenage and adult years in Los Angeles and spent much of her youth in Mexico City, where the default language of the household and classroom was Spanish. Her parents, Julia and *Hernan, are from different Valley communities, where two distinct varieties of Zapotec are spoken. Rather than teach both Zapotec varieties to their children, they opted to use

⁴¹ The Zapotec phrase “Cunu Sid” literally means “Where are you Isidrio” but idiomatically means something more like “How are you” a formulaic and rhetorical greeting question that is not meant to be answered.

Spanish as a lingua franca in the home (see Chapter 3). However both parents spoke Zapotec with other relatives and peers from their respective communities.

When Casilda passed the phone to Julieta the transition between Spanish and Zapotec began with her phrase combining the Spanish discourse markers *bueno* (good) and *pues* (well) with Isidrio's Zapotec family nickname, *Do*, used exclusively by speaking members of his immediate family. He responded in Zapotec *ëë* (yes) and by her next utterance Julieta had switched entirely into Zapotec. She then passed the phone to Violeta, her cousin, and the conversation continued in Zapotec, both of them using the Zapotec-assimilated version of each others' names, *Violetë* and *Tiu Sid*. At the very end of their talk, fifteen or twenty minutes later, Isidrio asked to speak to me, and Violeta passed me the phone, saying *Buen le va a hablar mi tío dice* ("Well my uncle says he is going to talk to you"). As I am an age mate of Casilda's whom he knew to be more proficient in Spanish, Isidrio opted to switch back into Spanish to converse with me.

In contrast to these private conversations in the home, in public contexts, such as the work place, public buses (which many Guelavians use to get to and from work), supermarkets and the like, most adult Guelavians used Spanish, or English when appropriate and if they could. In these spaces (as in the public parks described above), the larger dichotomy between Spanish and English speakers often predominated, trumping local level affiliations marked by the use of indigenous languages, and evoking the use of Spanish among Latinos. As mentioned above, Los Angeles has the highest rate of migration from Latin America of any county in the United States, as well as the largest Spanish-speaking population. In places like the American Southwest, where tensions over migrants and migration have been running high for decades, preoccupations with

language can take the place of more overtly racial or political talk (see Woolard 1998:

19). For example the use of English, and Standard English in particular can be:

indexically associated with those to whom its use has made accessible highly valued characteristics... [and] becomes a gradiently possessible commodity...lack of which can be seen in this symbolic paradigm as a deficit, much like vitamin deficiency...(Silverstein 1996: 295)

English and Spanish use then map onto class distinctions and power relationships, which are anchored in the highly politicized distinction between citizens and non-citizens. As Urciuoli argues:

English becomes functionally American when it is used in contexts and relationships that bar the use of Spanish...[or] when any use or index of Spanish (such as an accent) puts the speaker at risk (1996: 51).

These interactive contexts inscribe a socio-political hierarchy with English-speaking citizens on top, and Spanish-speaking non-citizens on the bottom.

Spanish use is bound up with “the stigmatization of undocumented Mexicans – as a people reducible to the disposability of their labor for a price – has become central to the racialization of all Mexicans, Chicanos and other Latinos” regardless of their immigration or citizenship status (DeGenova 2002, see also Hill 2001, Coutin 1998, Hagan 1994). The growth of English-only movements, and prohibitions on the public use of Spanish⁴² are part of a growing anxiety over the “brown tide rising” (Santa-Ana 2002) of Latin American immigrants amongst Anglo-American legislators and their constituents as manifested in talk about immigration reform (see also Hill 2001). Among

⁴² One glaring example of this appeared in the headlines of a 2005 Washington Post article entitled, “Spanish At School Translates to Suspension,” which describes the circumstances surrounding the suspension of student for speaking Spanish in the hallway between classes to another Spanish speaker (Reid, T.R.. (2005) © 2005 The Washington Post Company). A more recent example was the firing of Arizona school teachers perceived to speak with accents last September, which is currently the subject of a federal-level investigation (see http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/39066381/ns/us_news-life/t/feds-probe-bias-claims-behind-ariz-teacher-firings/).

undocumented migrants living in close proximity to the U.S.-Mexico border these xenophobic anxieties constitute a very real threat, a reminder of their vulnerability to deportation by the authorities, which could result in the separation of undocumented parents from their US born citizen children and other similar scenarios (see Heyman & Smart 1999). For many people I worked with, stories about clandestine border crossings were often a source of common ground, exchanged by those who had undertaken such voyages (see Chapter 2 for details), and these narratives tended to replicate the stark dichotomy between Spanish-speaking, undocumented migrants, and English-speaking citizens. In such instances the use of Spanish can function as a marker of in-group belonging, as “the other side of exclusion is the mutual solidarity that can be felt among the excluded” (Urciuoli 1996: 129).

Thus, in certain contexts a tenuous level of solidarity can be constructed among diverse groups of Latinos who share certain aspects of their identities and experiences in common, a solidarity that is indexed through the use of Spanish. In other contexts, however, the myriad divergences within the larger category ‘Latino’ are apparent, and local level distinctions often bubble to the surface. This is especially true of migrants who hail from the Oaxacan Valley, many of whom identify most strongly with their communities of origin. The prevalence of soccer and basketball teams organized around communities of origin, and which culminate in inter-village tournaments, are examples of contexts in which such inter-community distinctions emerge, and are in fact celebrated (see Stephen 2006, Fox & Rivera-Salgado 2004). Like many other indigenous migrants Guelavians in Los Angeles attend the same church in Santa Monica. Annual patron saint festival and prayer sessions honoring *San Juan Bautista* are organized in and around the

church grounds, as well as baptisms and first communions (see Chapters 2 and 7). In the professional sphere it is quite frequent for people to find employment in places where others from their own community, as well as other Oaxacan Valley communities are also working.

IV. Migrant Ideologies

As mentioned above, it was in Guelavians' accounts of workplace interaction that explicit talk about languages ideologies emerged most frequently, in talk about workplace conflicts, or descriptions of interactions between Oaxacan employees and non-Oaxacan customers. One such example emerged while I was interviewing a middle-aged woman, *Aurelia, in Spanish about her own patterns of language use. As is the case in many large Guelavian families, Aurelia and the older siblings in her family primarily used Zapotec in their interactions with family and community members, whereas her much younger siblings favored Spanish and English. I observed her speaking Zapotec in all of her conversations with her mother-in-law, recently arrived from Guelavia, as well as with her husband and her sisters-in-law. She mentioned that she preferred to use Zapotec when talking on the phone so as to avoid being overheard by other Spanish-speakers, particularly when talking about financial and other private matters.

Over the course of the interview Aurelia drew on the “discourse of nostalgia” described in Chapter 3, discussing the foods she and her siblings were raised with in the good old days when everyone in the community worked their farmlands, and when life was both simpler and healthier. She explicitly linked her own preference for Zapotec with pride in her Guelavian heritage, comparing herself to others who avoided the use of

Zapotec in public places like her husband and his brothers. When I asked Aurelia why she thought this was, she answered with the following explanation:

Example 4.2, recorded 6/03/2009, LA

EF:	<i>Y porque piensa usted que muchas personas no quieren hablar</i>	And why do you think that many people don't want to speak [Zapotec]
A:	<i>A veces por vergüenza</i>	Sometimes for embarrassment
EF:	<i>Pero como?</i>	But how?
A:	<i>Pues piensan que uno al estar platicando eso van a decir "Ay no ellos vienen de un pueblo son de no se que" pues</i>	Well they think that one to be speaking [Zapotec] people will say "Oh no they come from a small town they are from who knows where" then
EF:	Mhmm	Mhmm
A:	<i>Yo pienso que es por eso por ejemplo la muchacha con la que trabajo siempre dice "oh de allí de Mexico" y cuando yo digo "oh allí en Oaxaca"</i>	I think that it's because of that for example the girl with the one that I work with always says "oh from there in Mexico" and when I speak "oh there in Oaxaca"
EF:	Aha	Aha
A:	<i>Y ella siempre se va a Mexico no se va a Oaxaca y le digo "oh allí en tu pueblo" y dice "si allí en Mexico pues" y yo casi no menciono Mexico mas menciono Oaxaca... y no se pero hay muchas personas que no, dicen "no te oyes muy Oaxaquita a hablar Zapotec" que te ves muy tan si quiera dejar a tus raices de un lado</i>	And she always goes to Mexico she doesn't go to Oaxaca And I say "oh there in your village" and she says "yes well there in Mexico" and I barely mention Mexico I mention Oaxaca...and I don't know but there are many people that no, they say "no you sound very Oaxaquita when you speak Zapotec" that one looks like as if one wants to put one's roots to one side

Aurelia's critique of her co-worker's reticence to admit to her rural Oaxacan origins was expressed through reported speech that contrasted her statements with Aurelia's own. Her co-worker emphasized her Mexican origins while Aurelia emphasized her regional Oaxacan heritage, and whereas her coworker denied her *pueblo* (rural village) heritage, Aurelia proudly embraced her ties to Guelavía. She described others denigrating her public use of Zapotec, saying *no te oyes muy Oaxaquita* ("no, you sound very like a little Oaxacan"). In contrast to the markedness of Zapotec, Spanish is depicted as generic, and innocuous, analogous to the purposefully general referent *México* used by Aurelia's co-worker to avoid specifying her rural Oaxacan origins. Aurelia's rendering of their interaction exemplifies the dilemma of self-presentation faced by indigenous migrants in

the US, many of whom bring with them the ideological orientations that reflect the history of language-based discrimination targeting indigenous communities in Mexico.

Due to the high percentage of indigenous populations in Oaxaca, relative to other states in Mexico, being Oaxacan and being indigenous (or the more derogatory term '*indio*,') are indexically linked, and highly stigmatized in relation to the Mestizo majority. Furthermore, these categories are linked with phenotypic traits, the most salient of which is diminutive stature, captured by the term *chaparrito* (little short one) often used to describe indigenous persons. The diminutive suffix '*ito*' on both *Oaxaquito* and *chaparrito* points to this sense of physical smallness, and the patronizing discourses that belittle indigenous populations, casting them as childlike (see Stephen 2006). Similarly, the public use of Zapotec is marked; its incomprehensibility to Spanish speakers is an icon of indigenous alterity. As Blommaert & Verschueren argue "the feature clustering that underlies group identification is such a powerful cognitive mechanism that knowledge about one feature is assumed to be enough," enough, that is, to make assumptions about other traits (1998: 193). However, in the LA context, where the majority of neighborhoods are multi-ethnic, multilingual and multinational, which 'other' these traits index is more difficult to pinpoint.

According to Aurelia, both speaking Zapotec and claiming Oaxacan origin were believed to be, or feared to be (by some) equally powerful indices of indigeneity in Los Angeles. There is substantial evidence that practices of discrimination targeting indigenous Mexicans persist in U.S. contexts, and other scholars have described the denial of ties to Oaxaca in particular as a way of rejecting one's indian-ness (see López & Runsten 2004: 266). Stephen suggests that among the ethnically diverse Mexican

population living in the United States the category *Oaxaquitos* is “the only one which makes a physical, racial reference,” and further that within the Latino community “Oaxacans are racially marked in this system of difference in ways that groups from other states are not” (2006: 214). The majority of the instances of discrimination described across the ethnographic record took place in the workplace⁴³, or among youth in schools. Stephen’s account of discrimination targeting Mixtec farmworkers and their families living in Oregon includes a quote from a thirteen-year old boy who announced (in perfect American English) “We don’t want to be called Oaxaquitos. We speak English and Spanish,” regarding which Stephen concludes that, “speaking Mixtec at school is a sure way of continuing to be called a Oaxaquito” (2006: 216). All of these examples highlight the ways in which “metalanguage ... intersects pointedly with race and class” (Urciuoli 1996: 115).

The interaction reported by Aurelia in Example 4.2 points to the continuing relevance of Mexican social, political and historical frameworks within the LA Latino community and speaks back to the initial question of portability with which I opened this chapter. Due to the “critical mass” of people from Oaxaca, and Mexico more broadly, living in the Los Angeles area, many of the structures of stratification particular to Oaxacan/Mexican socio-historical contexts inhere in the United States. Perhaps more accurately, many people I worked with acted in ways that indicated knowledge of and concern for these relationships and hierarchical structures. However, the way such

⁴³ It is important to point out here that these claims are all based on the reported recollections of indigenous migrants describing their experiences with discrimination in the United States. None of the scholarly work on the topic of discrimination targeting indigenous Mexican migrants in diaspora includes interactive data that shows this kind of discrimination in quotidian conversation. Part of the reason for this disproportionate use of metalinguistic and metapragmatic data is that, like myself, researchers working with indigenous migrant communities avoid conducting research in the workplaces of their informants due to the thorny issues surrounding documentation.

ideological orientations impacted communicative interactions and narrative structures varied widely across speakers and contexts.

For example, Aurelia was unequivocally positive and enthusiastic about her use of Zapotec in daily life both in the workplace and in her home. Her expression of linguistic and cultural pride evokes the notion of “cultural citizenship,” which refers to “the right to be different (in terms of race, ethnicity, or native language) with respect to the norms of the dominant national community, without compromising one’s right to belong” (Rosaldo 1994: 57). I got a strikingly different take from *Gael, a young Guelavian man in his late twenties, when I interviewed him about his experiences living and working in LA. Gael is married to my primary Zapotec language consultant and transcription assistant, but he does not speak Zapotec in daily life. He was born and raised in Guelavía, and is one of the youngest children in a large family. According to both Gael and his sister, their parents made a shift before he was born from using Zapotec to using Spanish as the primary home language with their children. As a result his older siblings all use Zapotec, but he and his younger siblings claim not to speak it well, although they understand it perfectly.⁴⁴ I had the opportunity to interact with Gael and his wife, both in San Juan Guelavía, around the time of their wedding, and in Los Angeles, where they moved several months after they were married. In both places I observed Gael’s wife Dora speaking Zapotec with friends and relatives in daily life, but I never heard Gael, or his

⁴⁴ As I explained in the previous chapter, actual proficiency is difficult to determine short of elicitation exercises that I did not incorporate into my research, but will hopefully have the opportunity to carry out in future trips back to the field.

younger siblings, using Zapotec, apart from formulaic responses in ritual contexts where the use of Zapotec was mandatory⁴⁵ (see Chapter 7 for details).

At the time of our interview Gael was working in a restaurant on a major commercial strip in Santa Monica, which served tacos and burritos to a largely English-speaking clientele comprised primarily of local residents, surfers, and tourists. In the excerpt shown below Gael poked fun at his co-workers, a group of young men who hailed from San Lucas Quiavini, for their insistence on speaking only Zapotec to each other and for refusing to switch into English when speaking to clients. San Lucas Quiavini is a village located in the mountains above San Juan Guelavía, close enough in proximity that San Lucans and Guelavians come into regular contact with one another. In contrast with his San Lucan co-workers, Gael preferred to use his time at work to practice his English, and seemed critical, or at the very least annoyed, by their constant talk in Zapotec, repeating that they do it *todo todo el tiempo* (“all all the time”):

Example 4.3, recorded 6/12/2009, LA

G:	<i>Sí pues más que nada también ayuda mucho eso sí es lo que le digo en el trabajo ya como, hay unas personas allá de que son de un pueblo un poquito más par arriba y, son de San Lucas</i>	Yes well more than anything it also helps a lot that yes that is what I say at work now like, there are some people there from that are from a town a little further up and, they are from San Lucas
EF:	<i>O:h sí</i>	O:h yes
G:	<i>Aha y ellos estan allí con su Zapote:eco todo todo el tiempo</i>	Aha and they are there with their Zapote:ec all all of the time
EF:	Aha	Aha
G:	<i>Y cuando les pregunta algo los clientes? Nada mas se quedan viendo ‘sí’ le digo ‘contesta en el Zapoteco a ver sí’ ((laughing))</i>	And when they are asked something by the customers? They just stay there looking “yes” I say “answer them in Zapotec to see if” ((laughing))
EF:	((laughing))	((laughing))
G:	<i>“No” dicen pues “para que dices si no me sirve” dice “yo no mas vengo un rato” “bueno” le digo “(...) pensar usted” sí es lo</i>	“No” they say well “for what do you say that if it doesn’t serve me” he says “I only come for a little while” “fine” I say “(...) you think” yes it is what

⁴⁵ During the benedictions and prayers that follow wedding ceremonies led by *tsëgul*, ritual speech makers (see Ch. 3), there are call-and-response portions, during which the participants are expected to reply with stock phrases in the ritual register. At the wedding of Gael and Dora they repeated phrases like *Yoo* (yes) and *Zaquëna didx* (the word is good) throughout these benedictions at the appropriate times.

Gael uses reported speech to represent the San Lucan men's perspective, who reject English as irrelevant, saying *no me sirve* (it doesn't serve me), since they only plan to be in Los Angeles for a short time. Like Aurelia in Example 4.2, Gael uses the juxtaposition of their speech with his own to critically evaluate their use of Zapotec in the workplace, as well as their logic for doing so.

Gael's reported reaction contains an inversion of the type of talk about inter-community linguistic differences among Guelavians living in Oaxaca described in the previous chapter. In the excerpts presented in Chapter 3, San Juan Guelavía Zapotec was variously described as "our Zapotec," or "the words of our sides," which points to the community of speakers among whom this language is shared and to whom it is the most familiar. Similarly, speakers of closely related varieties of Zapotec from neighboring communities, like San Lucas, and San Marcos, were described as familiar and closely affiliated with Guelavians themselves. By contrast, in Example 4.3 Gael describes San Lucas Zapotec as foreign, strange and out of place, distancing himself both from their talk and their attitudes about language use in the workplace.

Gael's narrative suggests the kinds of obstacles that can, and do, prevent the transfer of ideological frameworks across geographic, social and linguistic contexts. As an employee in a restaurant in Santa Monica where English has unquestioned dominance he cast Zapotec as laughably 'other,' in much the same way as Mixe and Isthmus Zapotec were described by Guelavians in Oaxaca (see Chapter 3). Gael said jokingly to his co-worker, "answer them in Zapotec to see what [happens]" playing off of the assumed bewilderment of an English speaking client hearing such an unfamiliar language in such a

familiar place. It is difficult to determine why Gael's perspective on the appropriate spheres of usage for English and Zapotec was so different from that expressed by Aurelia above, or indeed from that of his San Lucan co-workers who clearly preferred Zapotec over either English or Spanish. His age and pattern of language use within his family might explain why he was disposed to conceptualize the value and appropriate protocol of Zapotec use so differently. The dynamics of the workplace are also extremely relevant, and shed light on the particular parameters that shape interactions across contexts. Movement across contexts "involve[s] a multiplicity of difference-producing encounters and struggles that transpire, furthermore, around space itself" (DeGenova 2005: 137). When I asked him about work, Gael had previously complained to me when I asked him about work that he was being bullied by these same men from San Lucas, into taking all of the worst shifts, and was making half of the tip money brought in by his co-workers. The strained relations between them eventually led him to leave the job; because of this he may have been particularly disposed to criticize these men and their linguistic habits.

Apart from contextual factors, age and, more specifically, generational affiliations are influential in shaping language ideologies and communicative practices, but not in uniform or easily predictable ways. During my extended interview and conversation with Aurelia (see Example 4.2), she talked at length about her own two children, and their attitudes towards the different languages they had been exposed to as children growing up in Los Angeles: Spanish, English and Zapotec. Aurelia's daughter had shown great interest in Zapotec, and while she still struggled to produce utterances easily, her comprehension was very good according to both Aurelia and her mother-in-law, *Maria

del Carmen, who was a participant and audience member during the interview. Aurelia characterized her younger son very differently:

Example 4.4, recorded 6/03/2009, LA

A:	<i>Sí, cuando vivía mi otra concuña aquí, pues solamente eso nos pasabamos diciendo y les hablabamos a los niños</i>	Yes, when my other co-sister-in-law lived here, well only [Zapotec] we were saying and we spoke it to the children
EF:	Mhmm	Mhmm
A:	<i>A los mayores, porque los chiquitos no, mi hijo dijo “No mami tu hablas mucho chino a mi no me gusta” ... o cuando nos oye a platicar en español me dice “No mami no a mi no me gusta el español” y le dije a mi hijo “Pero ese fue tu primer idioma, tu no naciste hablando inglés”</i>	To the older ones, because the young ones no my son said, “No mom you speak very Chinese and I don’t like it”... or when he hears us speaking Spanish he says “No mom no I don’t like Spanish” and I say to my son “But that was your first language you weren’t born speaking English”
EF:	((laughing))	((laughing))
A:	<i>Dice “Sí pero a mi casi no me gusta el español”</i>	He says “Yes but I don’t really like Spanish”

Once again, Aurelia utilized reported speech to present her son’s views about Zapotec and Spanish respectively, alongside her own remarks. She described the older children in the extended family as accepting of the use of Zapotec in the home by herself and her sister-in-law with whom she shared an apartment. In contrast her younger son rejected it, and according to Aurelia characterizes the sound of spoken Zapotec as *muy chino* (very Chinese) a stereotypical label that evokes foreignness. Her narrative illustrates the ways that indigenous migrants “negotiat[e] their own racialization” (DeGenova 2005: 8), and “come to be embroiled in the social production of racialized difference[s]” (ibid: 137). Aurelia represents her son as not only denying his indigeneity, but actively participating in the denigration of Zapotec by equating it with the abstract ethnic category *Chino*, casting it unintelligible and distant from his own experience. Aurelia’s narrative demonstrates how indigenous migrants in the U.S., and their children become:

embedded in a deep grammar of racialized distinctions and profilings that recuperate and replay the historical anxieties of who is really “us,” who gets to be “white,” and who is just “passing” (Stoler 2006: 21).

Her son's denigration of Zapotec as "Chinese" evinces just this anxiety about belonging in the highly racialized context of the United States, in which Anglo-English speakers comprise an unmarked "us." In fact, many Guelavians explicitly distanced themselves from other minority groups in the Los Angeles, and African-Americans in particular, thus playing a role in the "recuperating and replaying" of the sharply delineated black-white dichotomy that defines American society (see DeGenova 2005, Ong 2003).⁴⁶

In addition to rejecting Zapotec, Aurelia's son was also disdainful of the use of Spanish, the primary language used in their home between parents and younger children, which he claimed that he didn't like. Despite Aurelia's protests that it was his native language, and that he wasn't "born speaking English," he repeated *casi no me gusta el español* ("I don't really like Spanish"). Her reports of her son's attitude are analogous to the disdain expressed by Gael towards his San Lucan co-workers. However, Aurelia's son occupied a dramatically different social position than Gael; he is a U.S.-born school-age boy in an English dominant school environment, presumably preoccupied with the task of assimilating to American linguistic norms.⁴⁷ When considering the views and practices of this younger generation of U.S.-born Guelavians, the question of portability breaks down to a certain extent. There is often little overlap between their orientations and experiences and those of their parents, or even their Oaxacan born siblings, as

⁴⁶ There is a long history of conflict between Black and Latino populations in Los Angeles, which has been exacerbated by decades of racialized gang violence. Many Guelavians I worked with measured their degree of economic progress by their ability to move out of neighborhoods with majority African American populations.

⁴⁷ Incidentally, I was later told that he had his cell phone taken away because he was texting excessively and had run up an enormous bill, indicating that his assimilative efforts extended to the mastery of local communicative technologies. While cell phones and texting are prevalent in Oaxaca, they are by no means as ubiquitous as they are in West Los Angeles, particularly among school age children.

children are more oriented towards the attitudes and experiences of their peers. This gap between children and adults illustrates that the process of transmitting cultural and linguistic practices to children is not portable (or is at least much more difficult to transport) across geographic and social contexts.

Whereas Aurelia and Gael were both raised in Guelavía and traveled to LA later in life, their children, who were either born in LA or brought there in early childhood have little or no experience with life in Guelavía, and some have never crossed the border into Mexico. In those families in which the parents are undocumented and the children are U.S. citizens, the fear of deportation and forced abandonment looms large in the minds of parents; therefore, most avoid any risky border crossings that might jeopardize their children's ability to take advantage of the opportunity for education. Thus children in these families often have very little direct exposure to their indigenous Guelavian heritage, and consequently do not identify themselves in the same way as their parents, or even in the same ways as other young Guelavians living in Oaxaca. When they reach adolescence, however, many children who were born in Los Angeles are sent back to Guelavía during their summer vacations to experience life in Oaxaca. By the age of twelve or thirteen, children are often deemed old enough to travel on their own to Oaxaca, and even to supervise their younger siblings en route. These visits are usually planned to overlap with the June celebration of the Fiesta de San Juan, the patron saint of the Guelavian community. While mirror festivals are also celebrated in Los Angeles, they are severely restricted by the urban landscape and don't include many of the characteristic attributes of Oaxacan celebrations, such as the characteristic fireworks displays, and *convites* (parades) led by live marching bands (see Chapter 7 for details).

Visits back to Guelavía are thought to provide U.S.-born children the opportunity to experience “authentic” Guelavian life, and to better understand their heritage, and additionally serve to socialize them into the pattern of ritual return migration (see Chapter 7). In addition such visits enable young Guelavians to directly experience the cultural and linguistic traditions associated with their ancestral village, allowing them greater access to the shared orientations that shape the Guelavians community – in much the same way as Dora’s trip down 11th street in Santa Monica gave her greater access to the experiences of Guelavian migrants in LA (see Chapter 2). Since I did not collect data directly from children under 18 years of age, it is difficult to say what, if any, impact these return visits have on the attitudes of young children, but it merits further investigation.

Returning to the question of the portability of cultural and linguistic practices and ideological orientations, I propose that norms they orient towards within a given interactive context depend upon the speakers’ life histories and lived experiences. The proclivity to adopt one orientation over another is shaped by one’s biographical experiences and social position relative to the group of relevant others with whom one regularly interacts. While children’s language use was deeply affected by the hegemonic status of English, adults’ linguistic practices seemed to be most affected by fears of discrimination based on their perceived indigeneity among other Mexicans and Latinos. Older Guelavians were more likely than their younger counterparts to carry ideological predispositions with them that are grounded in Mexican and Oaxacan social contexts, as evidenced by their own practices and their evaluations of the speech practices of others. As I stated above, there is a structural dimension to this as well; the presence of large

numbers of migrants coming from the same or similar places of origin, in Los Angeles in particular, imbues these transported ideologies with meaning and relevance.

On an interactional level, however, I think that it is helpful to think about these individuals, both those doing the reporting and those they are reporting on, as engaged in “face work” in different ways (Goffman 1955). The concept of ‘face’ refers to “an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes” and provides an analytic basis for the consideration of interactions and events which either contribute to the maintenance of that self-image, or which contradict or threaten the integrity of that image. Accordingly a given individual can either be “in face” or “out of face” in the eyes of their interlocutors and audience (Goffman 1955: 6-8). I find this framework particularly useful for considering the differences among the attitudes described and expressed in the above examples, in terms of who the relevant other(s) are to whom one is projecting a given self image. In Examples 3.2 and 3.4 Aurelia represented interactions between herself, her coworker, and her son, to me, an anthropologist whom she knew to be very interested in the Zapotec language and Guelavian cultural practices. In the context of the larger conversation we were having, about shifting patterns of Zapotec use among Guelavians, she established and exemplified her own Zapotec fluency and indigenous authenticity, in contrast with her coworker and son’s rejection of their cultural and linguistic heritage. Thus Aurelia was able to maintain a line that corresponded with those attributes that I had made clear were of great value to me as a researcher and scholar.

Similarly, Gael presented an interaction in our interview which highlighted his own efforts to learn and use English in his professional life in Los Angeles, which

corresponded with my own inquiries about the linguistic challenges of life in the US. The shortcomings of his San Lucan coworkers, who steadfastly refused to use English within the workplace, served to highlight his own virtuous efforts to assimilate to the mainstream norms and protocol of the commercial district in Los Angeles where he was working. As both Gael and Aurelia took up a self line that seemed well-attuned to the particulars of the unfolding conversational context, it is difficult to extrapolate beyond that context about their underlying linguistic ideologies. While events have traditionally been seen as antecedent to narration, in many cases that precedence is reversed as “structures of signification in narrative...give coherence to events in our understanding...The narrated event is emergent in the narrative performance” (Crapanzano 1996: 111; See also Bauman 1986: 5). Similarly, while cultural identities have real effects, they are always “constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth,” (Hall 1994: 4-5) which allows for the establishment of solidarity and mutual identification across social and geographic contexts.

Their respective representations of past interactions, or speech events, seem heavily influenced by the goal of positive self-image projection, the definition of which is contextually specific. In some contexts proclaiming one’s indigeneity loudly and proudly might constitute a positive self-image, whereas in others the use of Spanish, or English and the denial of one’s ethnic origins might serve better. The reported speech in Aurelia and Gael’s respective narratives functioned as embedded first stories, around which the narratives themselves were organized. These first stories were comprised of the distilled evaluations of linguistic varieties and practices, which were subsequently reinterpreted

through the narrator's voice and shown to be inconsistent with the narrator's positively valued perspective, the second story.

It is important to keep in mind that the claimed ideological orientations of speakers offer only one small window into the complex processes involved in code choice and the evaluation of the relative value of linguistic varieties. However, across all of the examples considered here, the subordinate status of Zapotec relative to English and Spanish among Guelavians living in Los Angeles was affirmed. The only times when I heard conversations in Zapotec were in conversations among adults, or during phone conversations between adults and their relatives living in Guelavía. The fact that young people weren't using Zapotec was not the subject of much discussion. It was largely assumed among the Guelavians I worked with that migration to the U.S. was causally linked to a shift away from Zapotec, and further that shift was the inevitable consequence of migration. In fact, in a proposal for linguistic and cultural revitalization, written by the then Municipal President of San Juan Guelavía, he listed the factors he believed were responsible for the shift away from the use of Zapotec in the community. The first item on the list was:

Proceso de emigración, que han ocasionado un quiebre poblacional entre 1970-2007.

(Processes of out-migration, that have occasioned a rupture in the population between 1970-2007.)

As I will discuss in subsequent chapters, in spite of, or perhaps because of the perceived inevitability of the language shift among migrants, none of the ongoing revitalization efforts targeted Guelavian youth in the United States, or indeed elsewhere in Mexico. In the majority of contexts, particularly those involving multiple generations, Spanish was the unquestioned default language.

The only exception to this that I encountered in a public context, outside of Guelavians' homes, was during the ninth night of a nine-day prayer session that preceded the Los Angeles celebration of the June *Fiesta de San Juan*. The session, called a *novenario* (ninth rosary), was held at a church in Santa Monica where all collective Guelavian religious ritual events took place. At the end of the session the *mayordomos* (festival hosts and sponsors) thanked everyone for joining them, and then invited their compadre up to the microphone, whereupon he made the following announcement:

Example 4.5, recorded 6/23/2009, LA

<p><i>Buenas noches una vez mas, tengo un anuncio de parte de los mayordomos, no más que ellos este lo pidieron que se hable en Zapoteco pues, bueno pues este lo voy hacer verdad, lo vamos a hacer todos y este <u>laadebëy canideb deq cuez tiby mill nez lizdeb llitmingü las doc llitmingü ni zeedquë ziigy na ni caguiختهdeb lo iraitë tegun laibtë compañ re te ana nibtë logare bxoz na quesentiend ocupad lugarquë niguiy güenru ziigy bandeb xgab laadeb güenru ziigy guld ga hor bandeb laadeb xgab ziigy na ni rguixteedeb laadeb quixte laaibtë lode mniety loguëdx deq ziigygcac llitmingü las doc cuez mill nez lizdeb re ax xtiosten laabtë lla te bacanun laibtë chiy muchas gracias para los demas (y que) nos acompañen y que tengan muy buenas noches todos ustedes (...) para que aprendamos Zapoteco todos ((laughing))</u></i></p>	<p>Good night one more time, I have an announcement on the part of the mayordomos, just that they uhm they asked that one speak in Zapotec well, ok well uhm I will do it truly, we are going to do it all of us and uhm they are saying that there is going to be a mass at their house on Sunday at twelve Sunday that come like that it is that they are letting all of you know so that you can keep them company well because you already know that in this place the priest is very busy in this place for that better that's what they thought better like that at the very hour they thought it's like that that they are announcing they announce to the people of the village that like that there will be this Sunday at twelve there will be a mass at their house well thanks to all of you well because now we are waiting for you later many thanks for the others (and that) you keep us company and that you have a very good night all of you (...) so that we learn Zapotec all of us</p>
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From one perspective this speech indexes Guelavian community membership, through the use of Zapotec terms and phrases like iraibtë (“all of us”) and mniety loguëdx (“people of our village”), which reaffirm a sense of shared belonging through narrative form. At the same time, the Zapotec portion of the announcement is not intelligible to everyone, a fact that is acknowledged by the announcer at the end of his speech when he says, *para que aprendamos Zapoteco todos* (“so that we all learn Zapotec”). The announcement was, however, comprehensible to a portion of the audience, to whom the

content of the announcement was directed, namely that there was going to be a funeral service for a recently deceased relative of theirs at their home that Sunday. All who could understand this message were invited to attend the mass. For the rest of those present, the shift into Zapotec was emblematic of the indigenous heritage of the group, but had no referential function, as the message was not translated.

The announcer told a metalinguistic second story, by recognizing the bifurcating effects of language shift within the Guelavian community in Los Angeles, and replicating that bifurcation in the structure of his narrative. The use of Zapotec in the above announcement differed strikingly from the way Zapotec was deployed during the celebration of ritual events in San Juan Guelavía, characterized by ritual speech making in the reverential register of Zapotec (see Chapters 3 and 7 for details). The announcement itself is a clear example of the obstacles to portability across sociolinguistic and geographic contexts. Due to the intricacies of the linguistic division of labor within the Guelavian transborder community not all practices can be reproduced in all places. These limitations are particularly apparent in the context of ritual event celebration, much of which revolves around events, material exchanges, and ritual speech making that are geographically anchored to San Juan Guelavía itself. Along with the bullriding competition, and the fireworks, the role of tsëgul (professional speech makers) is crucial to the felicitous enactment of all major ritual events, and, much like bulls and fireworks, there are no tsëgul in Los Angeles (see Chapter 7 for details).

V. Working with English

As shown in the above examples, many Guelavians living in Los Angeles are preoccupied with learning English, and demonstrating their proficiency in English in particular kinds of social contexts (the workplace, schools, etc.). I taught English classes upon request to Guelavians both in Oaxaca and in Los Angeles, and had very different experiences, something that I attribute to the differential relevance of English in each place. The majority of those who attended my class in Guelavía were young people, whose parents sent them to the class because they thought that it might enhance their future opportunities, or simply because it got them out of the house for a few hours on a weekend afternoon. The other students were mostly young people and adults who had lived for long periods of time in the US and wanted either to practice their English or to demonstrate their proficiency to others present. In contrast, in Los Angeles I taught a group of women, and occasionally their husbands, who were responding to specific communicative challenges they had encountered in their workplace or daily routines. Many of these women worked in service jobs, such as providing day care, cleaning houses or in hair salons, and needed to communicate with monolingual English speakers all the time in their daily lives. They often came to class with specific phrases written out in Spanish that they wanted to translate, or specific role-play scenarios that they wanted help navigating.

In the Oaxacan context English knowledge is something of a luxury or a linguistic perk, that can serve to enhance one's prestige within the local Guelavian context, or enable one to tackle the logistics of migration to the US with greater ease. In Los Angeles, by contrast, English proficiency or the lack of it is bound up with an entire social class hierarchy and the distribution of social power. This is evidenced by the

inversion of knowledge and power between parents and children when children gain greater English fluency than their parents. Many scholars have pointed to these dynamics in other migrant communities in the U.S., focusing on how children become the cultural and linguistic brokers for their parents in many institutional contexts where the successful navigation of bureaucracies depends upon fluency and literacy in the dominant language (Schieffelin & Cochran 1984; Sanchez & Orellana 2006).

English competence was often conceptualized by Guelavians I worked with as a form of self-defense within a social context in which being an indigenous Mexican migrant was an economic liability and a source of social stigmatization. In the following excerpt this notion of English as self-defense is clearly articulated:

Example 4.6 recorded 12/14/2008, SJG

<p>R: <i>Bueno pero 'Bueno ya llegaste' 'Si ya' 'Ah bueno' 'Vamos a ver este' pues otra vez igual pues 'Metate en la escuela...para que aprendas un poco de de inglés y te defiendes en lo que a ver que trabajo'</i></p>	<p>Good but 'Good you have arrived at last' 'Yes at last' 'We'll see well' well another time the same well 'Get yourself in school...so that you learn a little English and you can defend yourself in that we'll see what job'</p>
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The speaker in the above excerpt, *Rufino, was describing a past interaction with his younger brother, who had decided that he wanted to come and join Rufino in Los Angeles. Despite Rufino's protests, his brother arrived in Los Angeles on his doorstep, whereupon Rufino commanded him *Metate en la escuela...para que aprendas un poco de de ingles y te defiendes* ("Get yourself in school...so that you learn a little English and you can defend yourself"). Rufino was speaking from experience; as the oldest sibling and the first brother to migrate he had already experienced the inherent vulnerabilities and challenges of the process, and saw English acquisition as one of the primary ways he had empowered himself and increased his professional options. The relationship between migratory wage labor and dominant language acquisition has a long history, both in the

context of the Guelavian community and throughout many regions of the post-colonial world. The concept of *defenderse* (“to defend oneself”) was used broadly to reference the myriad ways that access to particular linguistic resources can allow one to defend themselves against all manner of external threats (e.g. exploitation or institutional discrimination). In the context of life in Los Angeles, English competence was seen as the best defense against such threats.

The linguistic vulnerability of migrants was made viscerally clear to me when two of the Guelavian women I worked with in LA asked me to call their employer to negotiate their work schedules and salaries. They both worked on different days cleaning the house of the same woman. When I called to speak with her she began the conversation by saying, “I’m not one of these people who expect them to come in and work with no breaks, I offer them coffee and food when they arrive.” She then proceeded to explain that one of the two women that worked for her was becoming very troublesome and demanding regarding her compensation and hours, but that the other was sweet and accommodating. The purportedly troublesome woman was much more fluent in English than her co-worker, and initiated more interactions with her employer on her own behalf. In the course of this and other conversations it became clear to me that it was precisely their linguistic powerlessness, or their inability to speak for themselves, that made them desirable as employees. When the expected norms of submissiveness and accommodation were transgressed, their vulnerability became clear, as when the outspoken sister was let go, but her more complacent sibling was retained. Many Guelavians I worked with recognized the power of English within the context of life in Los Angeles, and often strove to harness that power by improving their English

competency. However, English acquisition was not a guarantee of social mobility. The linguistic vulnerability of migrants is part of an entrenched division of linguistic labor that in turn maps onto hierarchical class relations. Linguistic empowerment is often incompatible with the kind of jobs that migrants routinely do, in which subservience, obedience and social invisibility are highly valued.

VI. Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have explored whether and how Guelavians' definitions of cultural practices, linguistic varieties, and communities of speakers carry over to the context of migrant life in Los Angeles. Guelavians face diverse forms of cultural and linguistic marginalization as they move across geographic and socio-political contexts. Through the analysis of speakers' practices, and their evaluations of their own and others' speech, I have highlighted the unique demands and consequences associated with membership in an indigenous transborder community, whose members have been historically marginalized in Mexico, and comprise a minority within a minority in the United States. I have shown how the particular experiences, social positions, cultural and linguistic competencies of Guelavians living in Los Angeles shape the kinds of stories, and second stories they tell.

Language-based discrimination looms large across many of the narratives examined here, as does the tenuous place of Zapotec in the linguistic repertoires of younger Guelavians. Many of the Guelavians I worked with both in Oaxaca and in Los Angeles have encountered linguistic discrimination throughout their lives. As rural, indigenous Oaxacans, many aspects of Guelavians' linguistic and cultural heritage were

and are marked with respect to the urban-dwelling, Spanish-speaking Mestizos, who occupy nearly all positions of political and economic power throughout Mexico. These hierarchical structures were established and solidified over the course of four hundred years of colonial occupation, and have remained salient features of post-revolutionary Mexican society. Just as non-English speaking migrants are disadvantaged in the context of Los Angeles, the linguistic subordination of Mexico's indigenous communities relegated them to historically subservient positions with respect to Spanish-speaking elites. In the following chapter I turn to a detailed discussion of how post-revolutionary language planning policy and implementation in Mexico have shaped, and continue to shape, the sociolinguistic landscape of Oaxacan communities.

Chapter 5

The Ghosts of Language Planning Past, Present, and Future

Metalinguage – self-conscious attention to the contours of the code – carries the process of reproduction of the linguistic code into the consciousness of speakers, where, for better or for worse, it becomes subject to ideological tampering (Silverstein 1979), to the ‘gentle violence’ (nonetheless very real!) of prescriptive traditions and authoritarian control of the categorical systems we live by (cf. Bourdieu 1982)... The history of metalinguage in the West has been bound up with language standardization movements, attempts by the state to control what was – until the beginning of European expansion – vernacular knowledge.

- Bruce Mannheim 1986 (pp. 53-54)

I. Introduction

In the previous two chapters I analyzed the metalinguistic narratives of Guelavians in Oaxaca and Los Angeles, narratives in which speakers evaluated their own and others’ speech practices, and the relative value of linguistic varieties. I explored how the particular experiences, social positions, cultural and linguistic competencies of Guelavians living in each place shaped the ideologies of language use that they articulated across discursive contexts. Throughout this chapter I continue this exploration from an historical angle; here I consider how Guelavians’ linguistic and metalinguistic practices have been shaped by the “gentle violence” of language planning enacted through rural community schools. I trace two competing stories about language planning in: 1) bureaucratic statements about language planning policy, which promoted the ideal

of incorporation through education, and 2) Guelavians' narratives of abuse, oppression, and linguistic discrimination in schools. Both of these stories are reflected and reframed in a nascent language revitalization program in Guelavía, through which locals aim to appropriate language planning to facilitate the revalorization of indigenous cultural and linguistic practices. By drawing on these secondary and tertiary sites of language ideological production (Phillips 2000), I demonstrate the impact of reconstructions of past interactions and events on present day practices and future orientations.

Among other things, the arrival of the Spanish on American shores brought speakers of diverse groups of languages into contact with one another, catalyzing more than four centuries of language planning, defined here as deliberate efforts to shape the acquisition, use, and purview of particular languages (Jaffe 1996, Leap 1981, Schieffelin 1992, Gal 1989, Hinton 2010). As in many former colonies worldwide, there is a long and fraught history of language planning in Mexico. Throughout much of the last four centuries, indigenous populations have been subject to relentless discrimination with a temporal bent; official representations cast them as primitive, and child-like, while educators and missionaries described their cultural and linguistic practices as archaic, or backward. The cumulative impact of centuries of prejudice is evident in a pervasive ideological dichotomy in which indigenous cultural and linguistic practices are categorically opposed to notions of modernity, progress and economic mobility. Examples of the specific manifestations of this perspective are described in Chapter 3, in the analysis of Guelavians' characterizations of various languages, and the groups of people who speak them. Within this framework Spanish fluency, education, and

economic mobility are cast as fundamentally incompatible with the maintenance of traditional Zapotec cultural practices, and Zapotec linguistic proficiency.

Guelavians are still contending with the lingering ghosts of language planning's past, in the dual patterns of language shift occurring on both sides of the border, and the simultaneous glorification and stigmatization of indigenous traditions. In this chapter I discuss the relationship between federal language planning initiatives in Mexico and processes of language shift in the Guelavian community. I begin by considering shifting patterns of language use between parents and children in the community, away from the use of Zapotec as the primary language of socialization. I explore the narratives of middle-aged Guelavians, which causally link their own experiences in local primary schools with present day patterns of language shift in the community. In the second part of the chapter I examine excerpts from the published work of Post-Revolutionary language policy makers who espoused the incorporation of indigenous communities across Mexico through the development of rural community schools. I consider how these policy discourses are reframed, and/or directly contradicted by Guelavians' own narratives about their experiences in local schools. Finally I discuss local language planning efforts in the Guelavian community, comparing the work of SIL linguists to promote literacy in San Juan Guelavía Zapotec with a nascent language revitalization program that aims to rejuvenate and expand the use of Zapotec among local youth. Conflicting perspectives between linguists and community members over orthographic strategies used to write Zapotec belie the complex temporal and ideological entanglements that haunt revitalization efforts.

II. Language shift, an overview

Zapotecan populations in the Valley of Oaxaca have had contact with Spanish speaking missionaries, government officials, educators and politicians for over four hundred years. Most communities in the Tlacolula Valley have had contact with Spanish speakers since the mid-1500s. This prolonged period of linguistic contact has impacted all of the varieties of Zapotec spoken in the region to varying degrees, and as discussed in Chapter 3, Guelavian Zapotec contains many Spanish borrowings and loanwords, and codeswitching is common. While Spanish has long been part of the linguistic repertoires of Guelavians, Spanish dominance and Spanish monolingualism are only widespread among Guelvians ages twenty-five years and younger, meaning a shift away from the use of Zapotec among Guelavians began to occur within the last two to three decades. Among those living in the US and among return migrants, this tendency towards shift is often accelerated due to contact with English speakers, and the corresponding economic and social pressure to learn and use English (see Chapter 4). For those living in Oaxaca, shift is connected with, but not exclusively the result of, transborder migration. Another simultaneous pattern of shift has been occurring concurrently with the massive increase in international migration, a shift towards the use of Spanish by parents in interactions with their children.

Many Oaxacan communities have long since become monolingual Spanish-speaking, while others have retained a high percentage of indigenous language speakers. At first glance, it appears that urban communities have proportionally higher percentages of Spanish speakers, and rural communities have higher concentrations of indigenous language speakers. This general distribution is connected with the concentration of economic and political power in urban centers, within which Spanish has unquestioned

dominance. Similarly, those more remote rural areas that have historically been both politically and economically marginalized, often overlapped with regions with high concentrations of indigenous populations, where indigenous language used has been maintained. However, the reality is vastly more complicated; in the Valley of Tlacolula the distribution of linguistic knowledge is unpredictable – neighboring communities often have entirely different proportions of Spanish and indigenous language speakers.

Language contact in Mexico, as elsewhere in the world, has produced an array of complex, and sometimes surprising outcomes from the perspective of those who study such phenomena. For example, Kilpatrick concluded that in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec urban dwellers in the city of Juchitan, who were in more frequent contact with Spanish speakers, maintained Zapotec at a much higher rate than their rural, mountain-dwelling counterparts, among whom concern over poverty and economic opportunity had led parents to shift towards the use of Spanish with their children. Juchitecos identified as linguistically, culturally, and politically autonomous and generally rejected the use and utility of Spanish (*personal communication* 11/24/06). Attesting to the remarkable dynamism of linguistic practices, by the time I was in Juchitan in 2006 the situation had changed dramatically, and bilingualism and Spanish monolingualism were on the rise. This is reminiscent of the Arizona Tewa, among whom language shift has recently become a local concern, despite their status among language endangerment scholars as “paragons of persistence” (Kroskrity 2009: 41 & 1998).

Because contact-induced change often proceeds at an uneven pace, there can be radical differences in the accounts and predictions of scholars working in the same places whose work is separated by two or three decades. Diebold’s concept of “incipient

bilingualism” is useful for reconciling some of the methodological and theoretical contradictions associated with work in linguistically diverse communities. After working with a Huave speaking community in coastal Oaxaca, Diebold found evidence of “incipient...bilingual learning” leading him to conclude that the traditional categories of monolingualism (cf Haugen 1956) concealed “some very real measure of bilingualism”:

The total linguistic impact of Spanish on Huave, which is very great, is not unaccompanied by fairly widespread bilingual skills in the speech-community...If incipient bilingualism is excluded from the investigation, we further conceal the initial learning stages; **yet it is here that many of the interlingual identifications are set up which profoundly affect the shape of subsequent interference** (1961: 111, *emphasis mine*).

The last sentence, in boldface above, is an important insight into the subtle mechanisms of language contact and shift. Diebold suggests that even those individuals without fluency in the second language have enough knowledge, or “interlingual identifications” to shape future patterns of language use, termed here “subsequent interference.” In the case of Oaxaca, this also goes some way towards explaining how contact related changes can unfold so differently, and at such different rates, in neighboring communities. It is possible that in places where there is a long history of contact, knowledge of other languages can be gradually accumulated, laying the groundwork for the possibility of future shifts in usage.

In addition to the complexities of contact, the assessment of a given speaker’s knowledge of a linguistic variety can be fraught with difficulties, as the gulf between what speakers produce in ordinary spoken interactions and what they know can be vast. As discussed in Chapter 3, I encountered a tendency among young Guelavians in Oaxaca to underestimate and criticize their own competency and/or fluency in Zapotec. This

practice is evident in following example, excerpted from a conversation I had with *Berta, her daughter *Graciela, and her sister *Dominga about Graciela’s knowledge of Zapotec:

Example 5.0, recorded 4/29/2008, SJG

B:	<i>Ella le habla en Zapoteco pero ella contesta en español</i>	She I talk to her in Zapotec but she responds in Spanish
EF:	<i>A:ah</i>	A:ah
B:	<i>Pero si entienden pues, entienden si entienden</i>	But they do understand well, the understand, yes they understand
D:	<i>Pero para hablar</i>	But to talk
EF:	<i>Pero si sabe verdad?</i>	But you do know right?
B:	[<i>Si</i>	Yes
G:	[<i>Mmmm no pero no puedo pronunciar como ellas</i>	Mmmm no but I can’t pronounce like them
EF:	<i>Ay pero ya me estaba enseñando apenas</i>	Oh but you were just teaching me
G:	<i>Unas palabras porque ahora que dijo ‘tortuga’ yo ni siquiera sabía como (...) decía ‘tortuga’ en Zapoteco</i>	Some words because now that she said ‘turtle’ I didn’t even know how (...) said ‘turtle’ in Zapotec
B:	<u>Beu</u> <i>aha</i>	Turtle aha
G:	<u>Beu</u>	Turtle
EF:	<u>Beu</u>	Turtle
G:	<i>O sea hay palabras, como ahora ya lo revuelvo mucho con español</i>	Or it’s that there are words, like now I mix it up a lot with Spanish

In the first line Berta described their pattern of interaction; Berta speaks in Zapotec to Graciela, who understands but responds in Spanish. Dominga then cut in to suggest that Graciela was unable to speak, at which point I asked for clarification, as Graciela had been teaching me Zapotec phrases just moments before. Graciela then proceeded to systematically critique her own Zapotec proficiency (see bold text above), saying that she had poor pronunciation, a limited vocabulary, and that she mixed Zapotec with Spanish when speaking, a locally devalued practice. Her self-degradation aligned with criticisms that adult Guelavians often made about the Zapotec speech of local youth, which they called *enredado*, meaning knotted, or difficult to understand (see Chapter 3).

Similar dynamics have been described across the ethnographic record in communities undergoing language shift. For example, Kulick recently returned to the village of Gapun in Papua New Guinea, where he had conducted research in the 1990s on language shift away from the use of the vernacular language Taiap, among village youth. The shift was progressing much more slowly than he had predicted, and he was amazed to discover that while the majority of twenty-something Gapuners *never* used Taiap in any context, if asked to produce it they had impressive knowledge and a high degree of fluency. As he explained, “they can narrate perfectly grammatical and even rather morphologically complicated tales” though he has found evidence of grammatical simplification in some utterances (*personal communications* 2/08/2010, 7/25/2010, see also Meek 2007).

III. Language planning and language shift:

Whether or not language shift occurs in the wake of language contact depends upon the political, economic and social context in which speakers are deploying their linguistic repertoires. Small differences can lead to big differences, creating densely interconnected, yet heterogeneous networks of communities, like those found in the Valley of Oaxaca. The linguist Paul Friedrich worked in several Tarascan communities over the course of his career, and found a similar degree of variability in the effects of language contact on the linguistic practices of Tarasco people:

In at least a third of the towns the children are primarily Tarascan in speech, but also know a great deal of Spanish, whether as active mastery or passive competence. In such cases, the added cumulative effect of radios, loudspeakers, and conversations with mestizos, may be considerable-**particularly when the parents speak Spanish to their children and encourage them to speak Spanish**...At a behavioral level, the Tarascan community is under pressure to

change to Spanish because of the influence of the economically and politically dominant mestizo world, **and because of the policies and practices of the local primary school teachers**. At the cultural level, the speakers in these differentially bilingual communities are governed by conflicting and complexly ordered values and attitudes (Friedrich 1971: 168, *emphasis mine*).

I include this excerpt here by way of transitioning to the primary focus of this chapter, which is the relationship between the history of language planning in Mexico, and the shifting patterns of language use in the Guelavian community. Friedrich's findings reinforce the importance of two aspects of the sociolinguistic context that I believe are tightly linked in my own research context, highlighted above in bold text: 1) the language parents choose to use with their children, and 2) the policies and practices of local schools and teachers.

As I have noted elsewhere in this dissertation there is a growing tendency among Guelavian parents, grandparents and elders to favor the use of Spanish over Zapotec with their children. In many families I worked with older siblings recalled being spoken to entirely in Zapotec, while their younger siblings were addressed in Spanish⁴⁸, suggesting that this shift is relatively recent. In the context of multiparty interactions where speakers of different ages were present it I often observed adults speaking Zapotec with their siblings, age-mates and elders, and switching into Spanish to address youth and children. The following excerpt demonstrates this pervasive practice. Prior to this sequence *Carmela and *Esperanza, two middle-aged sisters, were talking in Zapotec with Carmela's husband, *Francisco, and Esperanza's daughter, *Katarina, about financial matters. In the first line Carmela's utterance is interrupted by a fight between Katarina's daughter, *Carmona, and her cousin, *Manuel (ages 3 and 4 years old):

⁴⁸ In fact, according to Graciela (see Example 5.0) and her brother Gael their mother used mostly Spanish with them when they were children, though she had spoken Zapotec to their older siblings.

Example 5.1, 6/5/2008, SJG

C: ... <u>quēchē r nabdeb guits su lari quēchē r nabdeb</u>	...tienen razon no piden papel del terreno no piden nada
K: <i>Que paso?!</i>	What happened?!
E: <i>Ay Carmona! Ven te mi hijo ven te!</i>	Oh Carmona! Come here my son, come here!
F: <i>Le dio con la barilla ((laughing))</i>	She gave it to him with the iron bar ((laughing))
C: <u>Ax pacsa gubi guebi quiebi Jesus</u>	Well like that it made a sound she hit him in the head Jesus
E: <u>Ax dxaza bldang quia llinia mal lai lalmē loong...</u>	Well, she has broken the head of my son bad she how bad she is...
K: <i>Si pues pero no tienes porque pegarle</i>	Yes well but you don't have a reason to hit him
E: <i>Mañana le va a decir tu abuelo Monita hombre</i>	Tomorrow she's going to tell your grandfather Monita man

As soon as the two children entered the interactive frame Katarina switched into Spanish, expressing her shock to Carmona who had just hit Manuel in the head with a piece of metal. Esperanza followed suit, switching to Spanish to scold Carmona, and to comfort Manuel. Following Francisco's laughing explanation of what had occurred, Carmela and Esperanza exchanged comments about the severity of the blow to one another in Zapotec, gubi guebi quiebi ("it made a sound she hit him in the head"), and bldang quia llinia ("she has broken the head of my son"). Katarina then interjected to censure her daughter, telling her "*no tienes porque pegarle*" (you don't have a reason to hit him), whereupon Esperanza switched back into Spanish to threaten her, *mañana le va a decir a tu abuelo Monita* ("tomorrow she's going to tell your grandfather Monita"). This age-graded distribution of language in multiparty interactions shapes "children's experiences and emergent conceptualizations of their own sociolinguistic environments" (Meek 2007: 24) as reflected in local youths' devaluations of their Zapotec abilities (see Example 5.0).

In many indigenous communities throughout Mexico, exposure to Spanish has and continues to occur through myriad forms, but certain factors may influence individuals' linguistic choices more than others, or alternatively, certain factors may

resonate more with individuals' understandings of their choices. A pervasive theme in many adult Guelavians' narratives about their decision to use Spanish with their children was the experience of language-based discrimination, particularly in local schools. Many individuals who don't speak fluent Spanish have also experienced linguistic prejudice in contexts outside of the community, like city markets, government offices, schools, and in the urban centers Guelavians have historically migrated to for work and to acquire Spanish proficiency.

Several adults I knew told me that they made the decision to focus on teaching their children Spanish, so that they could learn to defend themselves in the Spanish-speaking world outside the community, and so that their children would progress more easily through the public school system. This concept of linguistic defense also figured largely in the narratives of those who had migrated to the United States, when they described the importance of English competence for navigating schools and the workplace (see Chapter 4). When I asked *Gilberto if his US-born grandchildren living in Los Angeles spoke Zapotec, he responded by describing his own language choices with his children:

Example 5.2, recorded 3/14/2008, SJG

EF:	<i>Ellos siguen hablando Zapoteco también o?</i>	Do they continue speaking Zapotec as well or?
N:	<i>Pues, n:o creo, bueno los que, mis hijos sí lo saben</i>	Well, n:o I don't think so, well those that, my children yes they know it
EF:	<i>¿Sí?</i>	Really?
N:	<i>Porque yo les hablaba aquí Zapoteco, luego Español, bueno principio Zapoteco y después que fueron a la escuela ya empecé a darle, a hablarles puro español pa' que pronto entiendan lo que van a estudiar pues</i>	Because I spoke to them here in Zapotec, then Spanish, so at first in Zapotec and later when they went to school then I began to give, to speak to them only Spanish so that they so that quickly they understood what they were going to study
EF:	<i>A:a sí</i>	Ok, yes
N:	<i>Aha sí, como yo también fui a la escuela y claro que les dí, ya se como es estudiar pues</i>	Ok yes, as I also went to school and clearly I gave them, I now know how it is to study then.

EF:	<i>Sí, sí</i>	Yes, yes
N:	<i>Es lo que vale, y les enseñe a hacer sus tareas a veces cuando ya tengo tiempo si</i>	It is what is worthwhile, and I taught them to do their homework sometimes when I have time yes
EF:	Mhmm	Mhmm
N:	<i>Pa' que pronto salieron de la escuela también</i>	So that they quickly finished school as well
EF:	<i>Sí, sí, sí</i>	Yes, yes, yes
N:	<i>Y sí saben hablar Zapotec pero ya de que allí ya sus hijos, y:a no</i>	And they do know Zapotec but now over there, now with their children, not anymore
EF:	<i>A:y pues</i>	Ah well
N:	<i>Sí, ya no, ya perdieron eso, porque allí hablan puro español, ahora hasta inglés ya hablan porque van a la escuela</i>	Yes, not anymore, they have already lost that, because over there they speak only Spanish, up to English they now speak because they go to school

In recollecting his parenting practices Gilberto pointed back to his own experience in school, *ya se como es estudiar* (“I know what it’s like to study), to explain the rationale behind his switch from Zapotec to Spanish when his own children reached school age. Within this narrative he equated Spanish proficiency and education, suggesting that without one you can’t get the other. He then went on to extol the virtues of education, saying *es lo que vale* (“it is what is worthwhile”), and his own preoccupation with ensuring that his children were sufficiently fluent in Spanish, *Pa' que pronto salieron de la escuela* (“So that they quickly finished school”). In turn his grandchildren, living in Los Angeles, were undergoing a more complete break with Zapotec, a language with which they have only an indirect relationship. Regarding their knowledge of Zapotec Gilberto said above, *ya perdieron eso* (“they have already lost that”). Just as he oriented his own children towards Spanish to further their progress through school, his grandchildren are oriented towards English. However, the vitality of Spanish as a language is not threatened, whereas San Juan Guelavía Zapotec is doubly imperiled within the transborder Guelavian community, by its perceived practical irrelevance.

The presupposed background behind this linguistic domino effect is that Gilberto did *not* have the advantage of Spanish fluency when he went through school, and that this

slowed him down. Gilberto's account of his decision to change the language in which he interacted with his children was bound up with his reflections on his own experiences in school, illustrating the link – however circuitous or indirect – between language planning at the official level and individual language use. These school experiences laid the groundwork, or “interlingual identifications,” which shaped the linguistic choices his children made when they became parents. In other conversations Gilberto explained that children of his generation who entered into school without any knowledge of Spanish were beaten for using Zapotec in the classroom, a claim which many other adults his age corroborated.

Narratives like Gilberto's, about abuse and linguistic oppression in schools were quite widespread among adults I worked with in Guelavia, such that schools and schooling were an “implicit metadiscourse” (Webster 2010: 39) about local language shift. This is analogous to the place of talk about boarding school experiences among Native Americans whose communities were impacted by the process of forced socialization and education in English):

...just as the boarding school itself was a complex site for the ideological struggle about language, the image of the boarding school, as an implicit metadiscourse, also continues to haunt contemporary discourse concerning the place of the Navajo language among contemporary Navajos (ibid, see also McCarty 1998, Watahomigie & McCarty 1998, Greymorning 2001).

Webster argues that the resonance of these metadiscourses increases, rather than decreases over time, and that “such resonance is compounded as fewer Navajos learn Navajo” (2010: 57). For those adult Guelavians who suffered discrimination and abuse for using Zapotec in local schools, narrative reconstructions of their past experiences served to explicate local patterns of shift, while at the same time reiterated the pain that

shift is bound up with. These stories about the past “do not merely represent the realities of social life, they amplify and transform them into more memorable, figuratively rendered forms” (Agha 2003: 55).

Memories of exclusion, oppression, and humiliation in schools were the lens through which many adult Guelavians viewed the place of Zapotec both within and outside of the community. In his analysis of the history of language planning in colonial and post-colonial Peru, Mannheim defines Southern Peruvian Quechua as:

...an oppressed language...because, since the conquest, policy decisions which vitally affect its social existence have been made – as they presently are – by institutions and individuals who are foreign to its linguistic community (1984: 292).

According to these terms San Juan Guelavía Zapotec is an oppressed language, the vitality of which has been deeply compromised by colonialism, and the enduring structural inequities that are the legacy of the conquest. Gilberto’s narrative demonstrates the long-term impact of individual’s experiences in schools and other institutional environments in which language use is proscribed and/or restricted. The structure of these institutions was in turn shaped by the historical, political and social contexts in which they were created. In the following section I discuss the official narratives of post-revolutionary policy makers who aimed to realize the revolutionary goal of incorporating Mexico’s indigenous populations into the new republic through education.

IV. Incorporation and rural schooling

Castilianization, the spread of the Spanish language (aka. *Castellano* or Castilian), was closely associated with the Conquest in the New World. However, throughout the colonial era “the Crown alternated between proclaiming Spanish as the language of

empire and promoting the indigenous tongues as the instrument of conversion” (Brice-Heath 1972: 35-36). Debates between those who advocated political unification through the spread of Spanish, and those who support indigenous linguistic (if not cultural or religious) autonomy have and continue to define post-revolutionary language planning policy in Mexico. Despite ideological and political oscillations over time, however, the theory and practice of language policy in many of the former Spanish colonies “have in their essentials persisted for over four centuries” (Mannheim 1984: 293). For example, planners and educators advocated a variety of classroom methodologies, ranging from the “direct method” (Brice-Heath 1972), which forced indigenous children to use Spanish only in the classroom, to bilingual education efforts that grew out of long term ethnographic and linguistic research in rural communities. Regardless of their pedagogical leanings, however, researchers, educators and government officials all placed rural community schools at the center of their efforts to incorporate indigenous communities into Mexican society.

During the presidential administration of Lázaro Cárdenas in the 1930’s, the Mexican government began to implement programming designed by practicing social scientists, such as Manuel Gamio who was closely associated with the growth of *indigenismo*. Loosely defined, *indigenismo* was a sort of pro-Indianist philosophy aimed at improving the quality of life of the nation’s indigenous poor communities. Following the Mexican Revolution, ostensibly fought by and on behalf of landless, largely indigenous poor, this general philosophy was amenable to appropriation by a wide variety of groups with strikingly different ideological and practical agendas. Gamio himself was trained in archaeology and cultural anthropology by Franz Boas at Columbia

University, and eventually worked in several ministries and governmental departments over the course of his career, including the Ministries of Agriculture, Education, Rural Development and Demography. His understanding of racial groups bore the clear imprint of his Boasian training, in his view that racial groups were fundamentally equal, and that, “The Indian has the same aptitude for progress as the white; he is neither inferior nor superior” (2010 [1916]: 39), stating further that this aptitude could be realized if their basic conditions of life improved. In a treatise on the promotion of Mexican nationalism and the imperative to unify the fragmented populace he proclaimed:

Poor and pained race! You were oppressed for centuries by a doubly tyrannical yoke. First there was the pagan fanaticism with which you deified your ancient king-priests. Second, the brutal egoism of the conquerors that always drowned the aspirations of the inferior class. You will not awaken spontaneously, however healthy and elevated you may be. It will be essential that friendly hearts work for your redemption. This great task should begin by erasing the eternal timidity that governs the Indian. We must make him understand, in a simple and objective fashion, that there is no longer any reason for him to fear us...Once the Indian...feels himself to be a man, once he has confidence, he will begin to attend school. A rudimentary initiative will suffice to make him look to broader horizons...the imposition of European culture has failed because we do not know the reason for the Indian’s resistance. We do not know how the Indian thinks, and we ignore his true aspirations...We must forge for ourselves – even if temporarily – an Indian soul. Then we may work for the advancement of the indigenous class...It is first and foremost the task of the anthropologist, and particularly of the ethnologist (Gamio 2010 [1916]: 37-39).

Gamio’s narrative exemplifies the perspective that the betterment “the Indian” was dependent upon the efforts of “friendly hearts,” or knowing outsiders, whose kindly interventions would guide this “poor pained race” to redemption through education. Indigenous populations would open their minds to schooling and the acquisition of “European culture” only if anthropologists and ethnologists like himself could do the work of cultural translation, by temporarily “forging Indian souls” for themselves.

Within the context of this incorporationist approach to policy making, the study of the particular linguistic and cultural traditions of indigenous communities was seen as a means to an end. The forging of an Indian soul was seen as a temporary enterprise, undertaken to gain the trust of indigenous community members, and to awaken in them the desire for progress. Gamio and his followers viewed cultural study and linguistic documentation as part of the eventual/inevitable eradication of native tongues and practices and the promotion of Castilianization. In this way, Gamio's approach was akin to that of José Vazconcelos, who has been credited with inspiring a spirit of common belief in the need for national education with his "special genius" (Tannenbaum 1933: 267). Collectively these scholars and policy makers comprised "the post-revolutionary incorporation movement, [that] while professing to include the Indian, resolved to do away with the Indian identity" (Brice-Heath 1972: 90).

There were, however, other proponents of *indigenismo* who espoused the retention of indigenous languages and practices in conjunction with Spanish education and criticized the infantilization of indigenous populations that they believed to be at the basis of incorporationist ideologies:

If it is true that the Indian is as good and worthy as the members of other races in Mexico, then his cultural practices, which have persisted for centuries, are equally good. These too must be preserved. Education must not destroy and substitute, it must cultivate and develop the existing values...a dealing with the adult and not merely with the child (Tannenbaum 1933: 268).⁴⁹

Proponents of this approach to rural education believed that Spanish instruction should complement native language education and maintenance (see Hewitt de Alcantara 1984:

⁴⁹ Frank Tannenbaum, quoted above, was a U.S. based Latin American historian at Columbia University, better known for his radical activism on behalf of the IWW (*International Workers of the World*), and who served as an advisor to Lazaro Cardenas. The Mexican Revolution was a socialist uprising, and many of the primary organizers and power holders were devout Marxists.

18). These scholars, teachers and government officials professed their conviction in the transformative potential of bilingual education to resolve the class tensions that pulled at the seams of Mexican society. Moises Saenz, an official with the Department of Indian Affairs, and a former rural schoolteacher, was a devout proponent of this approach:

We have a common language: Spanish. It would be more exact to say, perhaps, that we have a common language aspiration. There is ignorance of Spanish in some dark corners of Mexico; there is nowhere resistance to Spanish or lack of desire to acquire it, quite the contrary... Education helps integration by making people like-minded. In Mexico we are consciously striving to bring about national unity by means of the school (59-60).

As a former rural schoolteacher who had witnessed the failure of direct methods to bring about bilingualism in indigenous communities, he was convinced that the modification of schools and the training of teachers was the solution:

I should like you to present to your mind's eye the picture of a typical rural school... The children read and write wonderfully well, and they all sing – how they love to sing! Indian blood is everywhere apparent. Spanish is the language used. Perhaps the children speak brokenly and maybe if their parents came they would address them only in their native dialect, but the official language is Spanish, and the children love it, and the parents are delighted to see them learn it... Did you ever hear of the school being the center of the community and the teacher being a real social worker? Did you ever hear of a socialized school? (68-71).

In the vision of scholars and officials like Saenz, Tannenbaum and others schools were the site of positive social change, one which could alter indigenous communities' relationship with the Spanish language, and through Spanish the Mexican nation.

The collaborative efforts of linguists, educators, and policy makers beginning in the 1930's yielded some impressive achievements, most notably "The Tarascan Project" spearheaded by the linguist Morris Swadesh, in which building on the successes of bilingual Maya educators provided "undeniable proof that the Indians could learn to read

more rapidly in their own tongue than in Spanish” (Brice-Heath 118). While Gamio, Saenz and others expressed divergent views about how best to structure rural schools, in practice these varied approaches yielded similar results as policy agendas often shifted at a rapid rate, making implementation uneven, or partial. There were innumerable political and financial obstacles to widespread implementation, and during the 1940’s bilingual education efforts were severely de-funded, under a right-leaning administration that was “determined to purge education of the leftist influence and to reconcile the Church and the school...by ridding the education structure of those who had talked of maintaining cultural diversity” (ibid 123-4). Despite a subsequent swing back toward *indigenismo* and its assorted goals “during the 1950’s and early 1960’s, the rural school continued to use the direct method of teaching and to operate largely outside the spirit of the indigenist movement” due to teachers’ reluctance and/or inability to implement the bilingual approach as it had been in its previous incarnation (138).

V. Schooling in Guelavía

The narratives of many Guelavians about their experiences in local schools were vastly different from the idealized visions of government bureaucrats presented above. Prior to the construction of highways between urban centers and rural communities, rural community schools were a primary point of contact between indigenous and Mestizo communities. Regarding teachers in rural schools in the mountainous communities of Asunción and Lachixío in southern Oaxaca, Sicoli states:

The teachers reproduced dominant state ideologies of monolingualism, in which one-to-one relationships between language and nation and language and individual were the desired norm. Whether or not a town’s people shifted to Spanish after [the Revolutionary] period was partly determined by whether or not

the people bought into or contested the ideologies of monolingualism (Sicoli 2007: 45).

Residents of rural communities became the laboratories, in a sense, of policy makers experimenting with how to apply their respective visions for a more prosperous, just and unified Mexican nation. However, it seems that often no one came back to check on the experiments or to collect the data generated. In rural contexts teachers had little to no supervision, and thus were accountable to no one for their teaching and disciplinary methods. At the same time rural teachers were extremely isolated, had no support, and were often unable to communicate with local residents (Tannebaum 1933) all of which laid the groundwork for frustration and the abuse of power within the classroom.

In narratives about their experiences in local primary schools in the 1950's and 1960's, many adult Guelavians described teacher-student relationships defined by entrenched inequities. I talked about this time period with *Jaime, a middle-aged Guelavian man who has worked closely for many years with a linguist from the Summer Institute for Linguistics (SIL), Ted Jones. I will return to a discussion of Jones' work with SIL in the Guleavian community below. Through his collaborations with SIL, Jaime came into contact with a wide range of officials and scholars working in rural education, and had formed very strong opinions about the negative effects of particular policy initiatives. In the context of an interview about the apparent shift away from Zapotec among younger Guelavians he told me the following:

Example 5.3, recorded 12/06/2008, SJG

J: <i>Pues yo diría que si porque ya – ya los papas ya no ya no le hablan en Zapoteco...siempre en español...pero ahora si tienen su porque, antes nosotros nosotros que fuimos a la escuela, era muy</i>	Well I would say that yes because now – now the parents no longer no longer speak to them in Zapotec...always in Spanish...but now they do have their reasons, in the past those of us those of us that went to school, it was very difficult for us to
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	<i>difícil para nosotros entender lo, a los maestros</i>	understand him, the teachers.
EF:	<i>Mhmm</i>	Mhm
J:	<i>Entonces por eso-creo que por esa razón los papas piensan que ‘mejor ya no le hablo en Zapoteco’ porque les va a hacer daño para ir a la escuela</i>	So for that – I think that for that reason the parents think that ‘better I no longer talk to them in Zapotec’ because it will do them harm for going to school
EF:	<i>Aha con razón</i>	Aha, with reason
J:	<i>Aha, eso es uno, otro, antes, los maestros prohibían que uno hablar el Zapoteco en la escuela...porque como no lo entienden ellos entonces piensan que quizás uno esta hablando groserías o esta hablando uno en contra de ellos no?...Por eso pienso yo, no se cual es, creo que antes el prob-lo que querían es que vinieron los maestros y los maestros son los que nos van a enseñar todo, como ellos supieron todo.</i>	Aha, that’s one, the other, in the past, the teachers prohibited that one speak Zapotec in school...because as they didn’t understand it so they thought that maybe one is saying vulgarities or is speaking out against them right?...For that I think, I don’t know which it is, I think that in the past the prob-what they wanted was that the teachers came and the teachers were the ones who were going to teach us everything, as though they knew everything
EF:	<i>A era la idea que los de acá eran ignorantes y tenían que escuchar cada palabra</i>	Oh it was the idea that those from here were ignorant and they had to hear every word
J:	<i>Si, cada palabra y los maestros son los instructores no? Y dicen que un tal professor, maestro Rafael Ramirez...es el que, no se que era en la Secretaria de Educación, pero cuando el tuvo un cargo allí fue que decía los maestros ‘ustedes son los que van para instruir, lo que van a hacer es lo que vale,’ entonces la gente no tenía derecho a nada</i>	Yes, every word and the teachers are the instructors right? And they say that one such professor, teacher Rafael Ramirez...he is the one, I don’t know that was in the Secretary of Education, but when he had a position over there it was that he said to the teachers ‘you all are the ones who go to instruct, what you are going to do is what has value,’ so the people didn’t have any rights

The beginning of Jaime’s narrative aligned very closely with that of Gilberto presented in Example 5.2. He described the fears of many adults in the community that the use of Zapotec in the home would set their children up for later difficulties in school. In the classroom the use of Zapotec was prohibited, and student’s linguistic and cultural knowledge was degraded relative to that of their instructors. Accordingly, some Guelavian adults began to associate speaking to their children in Zapotec with doing them harm.

Jaime went on to point to a specific individual, Rafael Ramirez, who he believed was responsible for disseminating an approach to pedagogy in which teachers were encouraged to value their own cultural and linguistic knowledge above that of their

students. Ramirez was in fact the director of Rural Education for the Secretariat of Public Education in the 1930s, and worked alongside Moises Saenz, described above. He was associated with the new wave of *indigenismo*, which was ideally supposed to drive the development of culturally sensitive educational programming. Jaime's pointed criticism of his program design is an example of the disjuncture between official ideology and the practice of rural education. The narratives of Guelavians about their school experience constitute a second story of rural schooling that reinterprets and challenges the vision statements of post-revolutionary policy makers and educational practitioners. For example, Jaime attributed the blame for local teachers' abuses of power to their supervisor, Ramirez; to others involved with federal education policy, however, Ramirez was a Revolutionary hero.

Frank Tannenbaum, mentioned above, wrote of the "special genius" of leaders like Saenz and Ramirez who recognized and harnessed "the community spirit," in the development of rural schools in which "the nature of the community itself, determined the character of the school." He went on to argue that while the educational programs carried out by schools were valuable:

What was more significant was the opening through the schools of channels for the kind of social cooperation which is the special genius and tradition of the small Mexican rural community; and the more unified in race, the greater the strength and power of common endeavor that these communities display (1931: 280).

Apart from his apparent fondness for the turn of phrase "special genius," Tannenbaum described a completely contradictory view of rural schooling to that expressed by the majority of Guelavians that I worked with. The divergent accounts of Ramirez's career are illustrative of these contradictions, but it is likely that he had little to do with the

practice of education on the ground. Of particular significance is the disjuncture between official descriptions of rural schools as the center of community life, enrichment and a holistic program for improving local quality of life, and how such schools were experienced. No one that I talked to spoke of collaborative projects, or the fostering of “community spirit.” By the time Jaime and others were attending schools in the late 1940’s and early 1950s Ramirez had been replaced as Secretary of Education by Manuel Gual Vidal, and:

While little of Oaxaca had benefited from the previous national experiments with bilingual education, the new policies favored monolingual Spanish language education in even the most rural reaches of the nation (Sicoli 2011: 10).

For Guelavian students during this period there was no distinction between these eras of policy making in practice; their perspectives, opinions, and linguistic practices were subordinated to that of their teachers, and *la gente no tenía derecho a nada* (“the people didn’t have any rights”).

Several adults I spoke with over the course of my fieldwork told me that they were beaten in the classroom, for using Zapotec, or for other forms of disobedience. The following example, excerpted from a larger conversation with *Leticia, a middle-aged Guelavian woman, demonstrates the pervasiveness of violence in the classroom during the 1940s and 1950s:

Example 5.4, recorded 11/11/2008, SJG

L: <i>Ya e- como ya era tarde un día, como salíamos a la una o las dos de la tarde... entonces yo me fui a asomar al salón de Lorena... como el grupo era muy pequeño, eran como de cinco o seis niños, entonces yo no escuchaba ruido, y me fui a asomar al salón para ver si estaba Lorena o ya se había ido</i>	It wa- as it was already late one day, as we usually left at one or at two in the afternoon... so I went to stick my head into the classroom of Lorena... as the group was very small, they were like five or six children, so I didn’t hear any noise, and I went to stick my head into the classroom to see if Lorena was there or if she had already left
EF: <i>Mhmm</i>	Mhmm
L: <i>Pero la maestra se molestó mucho que me</i>	But the teacher was very bothered that I had gone to

	<i>haya ido a asomar... y me aventó el borrador de pizarrón...me dio en la ceja</i>	peek inside...and she threw a chalkboard eraser at me...it hit me in the eyebrow
EF:	<i>Ay</i>	<i>Ay</i>
L:	<i>En la ceja y pues yo creo luego me salió sangre o algo así y ya me fui y</i>	In the eyebrow and well I think that then I was bleeding or something like that and I left and
EF:	<i>Corriendo corriendo</i>	Running, running
L:	<i>Si y creo que se salió Lorena y ya nos fuimos, pero mi mamá se enojó muchísimo</i>	Yes and I think that Lorena left and then we went, but my mother got very angry
EF:	<i>Aha, con razón</i>	Yes, with reason
L:	<i>Entonces fue y le fue a reclamar este, a la maestra...Porque mi mamá, si sabía, sabía un poquito más el español que *Tía Hermelinda, o sea si [se entendía</i>	So she went and she went to protest this, to the teacher...Because my mother, she did know, she knew a little bit more Spanish than Aunt Hermelinda, or I mean [she understood
EF:	<i>[si podría comunicar</i>	<i>[She could communicate</i>
L:	<i>Si, ella estudió poquito...Fue a la escuela poquito porque sus papas pues ya no la dejaron seguir estudiando tenía que trabajar a la casa ayudarles...Llegó con la maestra a reclamarle y ya no supe que pasó pero hasta allí quedó...Porque anteriormente, pues no era como ahora...De que nos podíamos quejar en algún lado no? Pero en esa época no, así quedó, el golpe, y este, y y seguíamos yendo a la escuela</i>	Yes, she studied a little bit...She went to school a little bit because her parents well then they didn't let her continue studying she had to work in the house to help them...She arrived with the teacher to complain and I didn't know what happened but that's how it stayed...Because in the past, well it wasn't like it is now...That we could complain to someone right? But in that era no, that's how it stayed, the hit, and uhm, and and we kept going to school

Leticia's story suggests that corporal punishment was likely pervasive, but at the same time suggests that there was some degree of resistance in the community to abuses of authority in the classroom. Her mother's confrontation with the teacher over Leticia's injury indicates that parents contested teachers' authority over their children, but even more so demonstrates that Spanish language knowledge was one of the primary means through which such contestations could be enacted.

This was and is part of the paradox of negotiating life as an indigenous person in a state dominated by Spanish-speaking non-indigenous persons; individuals need to acquire the knowledge of the dominant language in order to successfully for themselves, including protesting the forced imposition of a dominant language in their community. The arbiters of such knowledge, in the case of Guelavians, were often the same individuals perpetrating abuses of authority, and degradations of local cultural practices

that they wished to protest, namely rural teachers. This linguistic Catch-22, faced by many indigenous Mexicans, is tied to the way that many older Guelavians characterized the acquisition of dominant languages such as Spanish and English as a mode of self-defense (see Chapters 3 and 4).

Encounters with discrimination and abuse figure largely in the narratives of rural Oaxacans about their classroom experiences, and have been linked by researchers in other communities with deliberative practices of language shift. During research in Asunción Mixtepec, Sicoli was told by a community elder:

We spoke Zapotec and Spanish, and in school we got beaten and teased for speaking Zapotec, so it was easy to choose to speak the language that did not bring pain (Sicoli 2007: 51).

In the case of Leticia's mother, her ability to confront the teacher referenced above was tied to her somewhat exceptional knowledge of Spanish, exceptional for a woman of her age during that period of time as compared with other women of her cohort, many of whom did not receive any formal schooling (like Ermelinda, who is described in detail at the end of Chapter 3). Leticia's mother had received a small amount of schooling before her parents decided they needed her help at home, and thus understood and could communicate in Spanish fairly well. She was not able to transform the classroom environment for the better, and as Leticia mentions, "that's how it stayed, the hit...and we kept going to school." However, Leticia's confrontation and ensuing dialogue with the teacher would have been unthinkable without her knowledge of Spanish. In such circumstances it is understandable that many parents prioritized teaching their children Spanish, the language "that did not bring pain," one of the few options available that might yield improvements in their children's experience in local schools.

As I described above, the shift towards the use of Spanish in parent-child interactions appears to be directly linked to a pattern of shift away from Zapotec use among younger Guelavians. This shift in patterns of usage is ongoing, despite the fact that the perspectives of local educators on the use of Zapotec have been transformed in recent years. Young parents who never experienced the negative classroom interactions described above tend to use Spanish with their children, even if they were spoken to in Zapotec by their own parents. Dramatic shifts in patterns of Zapotec use have sparked fears among local educators and some Guelavians that language shift might become language death:

Excerpt 5.5, recorded 12/06/2008, SJG

<p>J: <i>Pero ahora como que ya va cambiando la idea entonces, primero está el idioma...y despues, porque como le digo va si se pierde la los idiomas...se pierde la la identidad de de cada pueblo</i></p>	<p>But now as that now the idea is changing so, first is the language...and after, because as I say go if one loses the the languages...one loses the the identity of of each town</p>
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For many adults Jaime’s age, Guelavian Zapotec is one of the primary identifying attributes of Guelavian community membership, and one of the practices that sets Guelavians apart from other Zapotec-speaking communities in the valley.⁵⁰ Some community members are extremely concerned about the potential loss of Guelavian Zapotec, and are strategizing about how such an outcome might be averted through revitalization programming. These efforts recall the efforts of indigenistas to promote the bilingual education and literacy development, and in many cases draw on linguistic materials that were produced under the directorship of people like Moises Saenz.

⁵⁰ See Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of the relationship between linguistic varieties and community membership/identification.

VI. The history of SIL presence in San Juan Guelavía

One major outgrowth of Saenz's efforts was the founding of what is now known globally as the Summer Institute for Linguistics (SIL), which began when he encountered William Townsend. Townsend was a missionary turned linguist who was living and working in Guatemala at the time, translating the New Testament into Cakchiquel (see French 2003). Seeing the grammars and translated bibles he had produced, Saenz decided that Townsend should bring his skill set to Mexico so that he could establish a program of language documentation and literacy promotion throughout the nations' myriad indigenous communities. Thus Camp Wycliffe was born in 1934⁵¹, in Sulphur Springs Arkansas, eventually growing into two separate organizations: 1) the Summer Institute for Linguistics, which is dedicated to the documentation of the world's languages, and 2) Wycliffe Bible Translators, the branch exclusively focused on missionary efforts. After traveling around Mexico and surveying its incredible linguistic diversity, Townsend decided that he needed to start a school to train field linguists who could be sent into the Mexican countryside to spearhead bilingual education efforts. Thus the SIL was created.

SIL linguists, in collaboration with local language consultants, produced many of the indigenous language dictionaries, grammars, and religious materials that are currently in circulation.⁵² In fact, SIL linguists are prolific worldwide, and nearly anyone who studies non-Indo European languages will encounter the fruits of their labors. Of SIL's work in Mexico, Townsend wrote:

At the time we were in Mexico where, under the patronage of General Lázaro Cárdenas and his successors in the presidency, the work of our Summer Institute

⁵¹ See the organization's website - <http://www.wycliffe.org/about/ourhistory.aspx> - for more information on their founding and current operating philosophy.

⁵² During my preliminary research and language training in Juchitan, Oaxaca, the Isthmus Zapotec course I completed was designed around the use of grammatical descriptions produced by Velma Pickett, another SIL linguist who was incredibly prolific and produced articles throughout her career until just before her death in 2008.

of Linguistics had grown to include the study of over one hundred Mexican Indian languages (1972: 5).

According to Townsend, he and his wife (the ‘we’ referenced above) believed that the promotion of bilingual education, literacy and the use of common languages throughout the world was the best hope for achieving social equality (alongside the global spread of Christianity).

As illustrated by Townsend’s remarks above, by the middle of the twentieth century SIL linguists had ventured into hundreds of communities all over Mexico, representing a wide swath of indigenous language families, and varieties. In 1973 one of these linguists, by the name of Ted Jones, arrived in the small town of San Juan Guelavía, establishing residence with his wife and remaining for seven years, after which he continued to return annually for another fifteen years.⁵³ During his time in the community Jones learned San Juan Guelavía Zapotec (SJGZ), and with the help of his language consultant and collaborator, Jaime, produced several academic articles and a complete translation of the New Testament into SJGZ. They have published assorted other materials over the years as well, including a picture dictionary, and a transition primer to help Zapotec speakers learn the conventions for writing and reading Zapotec that Jones and his assistant have established, as well as a wide range of children’s stories which are sold in some local shops, and at the church frequented by Guelavians in Los Angeles. They are currently working on translating the Old Testament of the bible, together with the help of at least one other community member.

⁵³ I have established a correspondence with Ted Jones who has been extremely helpful to me in the process of trying to improve my understanding of Guelavian Zapotec and has shared many of his experiences in the community over the last four decades.

Missionary linguists have had a mixed reception in post-revolutionary Mexico, and have been mistrusted both by Marxist leaning government officials who saw their presence as a threat to burgeoning nationalist ideologies, and by Catholic communities fearing the contaminating influence of Protestant individualism. In the 1930's, however, when Moises Saenz met William Townsend, with the goal of national unification foremost in the minds of so many, "socialist, Protestant missionary, and impartial scholar were to work side by side, cooperating as scientists" (Brice-Heath 1972: 111-12). In keeping with this identity as scientists, SIL linguists generally tried to maintain a clear distinction between their academic and spiritual pursuits, as evidenced by the organizational split between the Summer Institute for Linguistics and Wycliffe Bible Translators.

Ted Jones, locally known to Guelavians as *Teodoro*, achieved this separation with varying degrees of success throughout his tenure in the community. Most people spoke of him fondly, and proudly displayed the bilingual Zapotec/Spanish calendars that he and his colleagues distribute annually, each featuring a different Bible passage. During his first years in the community Jones owned one of the only cars in town, which he often put to the service of locals' needs, a kindness that is still remembered by many. However, some people, particularly those who have served in positions of leadership within the municipal government, and those who are involved in the operations of the local cargo system⁵⁴ were extremely suspicious and critical of Jones and his work, including the Municipal President who was elected a month before I began my research in Guelavía. This was made apparent on the occasion of my first meeting with the

⁵⁴ This system of community service and reciprocal obligation is connected to the Catholic church and the religious kin networks of *compadrazgo*. See Chapters 2 and 7 for a more detailed description of how this operates.

President when I formally requested permission to conduct research in the community. When I informed him that I wanted to learn the local variety of Zapotec and study local patterns of language use, he immediately became suspicious of my true intentions, which were allayed only when I told him that I had no religious leanings or motivations of my own. Later on during my fieldwork when I was starting up an English class, at the behest of him and other community members, the President asked me again about my religious affiliation. I told him again that I had mixed religious heritage and held no particular religious beliefs or convictions, whereupon he proclaimed, "*Gracias a Dios que eres átea*" ("Thank God that you are an atheist").

I pieced together some of the tensions surrounding Jones' tenure in the community from what the President told me during our first meeting and corroborated over the next two years of fieldwork. Some Guelavians suspected that Jones' Protestant leanings led, indirectly or directly to the conversion of several community members to various forms of Protestant evangelism, the most common being Jehovah's Witnesses, which have established several churches of their own in the Valley. There is no real way to prove or to dispute the truth of this claim, but as the history of Protestant missionary presence in Mexico dates back to before the Revolution, it is difficult to assign responsibility for local conversions solely to Jones. In addition, many migrants have come into contact with Protestant groups in the United States, have converted and returned to Guelavía, bringing their transformed religious views with them. A major factor in the controversy over these conversions is that some Guelavians who have converted eschew their financial and service obligations to the cargo system, all forms of saint worship associated with Catholicism, alcohol consumption, and dancing. Only the

first of these is a legal requirement of residence in the community, the refusal of which is punishable by fines and incarceration, but each of these practices and beliefs are culturally significant to the quotidian and ritual life of the Guelavian community.

I have been told that some families are drawn to this form of Protestantism for two practical reasons: 1) among those who have suffered with alcoholic relatives or spouses the prohibition against drinking is extremely attractive, and 2) those who feel unable to meet the financial burden exacted by cargo service and community wide *cooperación* can avoid them by leaving the Catholic church. However, among town leaders, the successful accomplishment of a wide array of religious and civic rituals and projects is seen as dependent upon the continuing financial and participatory commitment of locals to this Cargo system that has already been compromised by migration. In Chapter 7: “Transborder circulation and ritual life,” I discuss the role that ritual speech-making plays in creating and maintaining a sense of community identity among Guelavians tied to an ethos of Catholic devotion and communal reciprocity.

VII. Local language revitalization efforts:

As evidenced by the efforts of new wave indigenistas like Saenz, described above, there has historically been, and continues to be, widespread resistance to the denigration of indigenous cultural and linguistic practices at both the national and local level. This resistance has taken various forms over time, with varying degrees of success. Most recently this pro-indigenous approach found expression in the creation of the *Instituto Nacional de Lenguas Indígenas* (the National Institute of Indigenous Languages) in 2003 and the corresponding legislation that was passed promoting and protecting indigenous

language rights. The larger goal of the Institute is to revitalize the role of indigenous languages in Mexican social life both by encouraging their use and by expanding the contexts in which they are habitually used:

The institutional program of the National Institute of Indigenous Languages (PINALI) will consider strategies for inserting into national society a focus on multilingualism, that centers around the use of indigenous languages in all areas of national life, not only through their original uses, but through the joining of strategic agents and key sectors of the Mexican population. With this we aspire to contribute to the construction of a more just and equitable Mexican society in the framework of standing legislation on the subject of culture, languages and indigenous communities.

(Programa de Revitalización, Fortalecimiento y Desarrollo de las Lenguas Indígenas 2008-2012 PINALI; <http://www.inali.gob.mx/>, translated from Spanish)

There is now a legal requirement to translate the constitution, to provide bilingual legal council to non-Spanish speakers in courts, and assorted other protections that are enforced to varying degrees. About fifteen kilometers away from Guelavía in the Oaxacan Valley, there is a branch of a federal network of colleges designed to train teachers in bilingual teaching methods to teach the nation's indigenous children in their heritage languages. While these initiatives signal an important change in state policy-making, and a recognition of the need for federal resources to bolster revitalization efforts, the effectiveness of these policies and programs thus far is debatable.⁵⁵

Language revitalization is a complex process fraught with many ideological and practical obstacles. As many other scholars working in endangered language communities have noted, within communities striving towards language revitalization, or the reversal of language shift there is a “daunting history of failure” (Meek & Messing

⁵⁵ Bureaucracies being what they are, I have been told that the teachers trained in a particular indigenous language do not always end up in the community where that language is spoken, and heard of a Guelavian woman who was trained in Zapotec-Spanish bilingual education then promptly sent to a Mixe-speaking region of Oaxaca.

2007: 99). Thus the revitalization strategies of older speakers may be confounded by younger speakers' "allegiance to a new reference group from whose perspective they refer to formulate and evaluate their actions" (Kroskrity 1993: 104). For example, some scholars argue that shift in language use follows from the efforts of younger generations to showcase their own changing identities in everyday interactions (Gal 1979, Kulick 1992). The patterns can be exacerbated by older speakers' efforts to bridge the divide between generations by accommodating their practices to those of younger speakers, as I will discuss at much greater length in Chapter 6. Ideological obstacles may also be compounded by problems with revitalization curricula, which often encourage students to use their knowledge of the dominant language as a "matrix," which can "represent the second, minority language as semantically 'less full'" and "can be an icon...[of] subordination in the larger world, especially in the domain of education" (Meek & Messing 2007: 101). Many of these ideological and practical concerns are of relevance to burgeoning local revitalization efforts that I observed in Guelavía.

The vast majority of Guelavian adults with whom I worked grew up speaking San Juan Guelavía Zapotec as their native language, and were exposed to Spanish largely in local schools, or in their forays outside of the community. The use of Spanish in the home between adults and children is the principal practice that has changed in recent years, and thus is the target of various revitalization strategies. Reflecting recent state and federal efforts to encourage and expand indigenous language use, local primary school teachers now extol the virtues of Zapotec knowledge. Though I did not work in local schools I was shown examples of the bilingual homework exercises sent home with primary school students, and was told by several young mothers (widely conceptualized

as the socializing centers of the households across government funded programming) that their children's teachers ask them to speak Zapotec in the home. In addition, Jaime, mentioned in the above excerpts, is now offering Zapotec language classes to children in the community, which I will discuss in greater detail below.

In addition to these classroom-based interventions, the municipal president of Guelavía, Eleazar García, has designed a language revitalization strategy that engages much more explicitly with the ideological components of language shift described above. In a document outlining the sociolinguistic state of the community he itemizes some of the primary causal factors involved in local language shift:

Excerpt 5.6, from program document

- 1) *Proceso de escolarización en masa, escuela que es adversa al uso de las lenguas naturales y su signo de progreso es la muerte de los pueblos y culturas originarios*
- 2) *Modelo de desarrollo global que plantea una sola vía de progreso, dejando de ser indio*
- 3) *Alta valoración social de los que hablan español, el español y el inglés como lenguas de prestigio*

- 1) The process of mass education, school which is averse to the use of natural languages and whose mark of progress is the death of the original communities and cultures
- 2) Global models of development, which pose a single path to progress, ceasing to be Indian
- 3) The heightened social status of those who speak Spanish, Spanish and English as languages of prestige

The narrative arc of the President's program, which begins by outlining the sources of shift, and the ideological obstacles faced in the community, matches up with many of the sentiments and recollections expressed by Guelavians in the excerpts above.

Revitalization forms part of a David-and-Goliath story; in the President's program narrative collective experiences of oppression perpetrated by the Mexican educational system and global models of development have driven local language shift. In response he drafted a plan for a program entitled "Da'a bkuu, rut kaa rëni ditzaa do'o," (The niche

where the Zapotec language grows), a name steeped in metaphors that recall endangered species, ecological degradation, and the needs for habitat restoration.

Garcia is an anthropologist by training, and through this program he aims to promote a Zapotec cultural and linguistic renaissance drawing on a combination of Levi-Strauss' work on the structure of myth,⁵⁶ and counter-hegemonic activism reminiscent of Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed. As outlined in Example 5.6, the assumed background of this project is the ubiquity of experiences with discrimination in the Guelavian community that have threatened the vitality of Zapotec linguistic and cultural practices, and the corresponding need to create positive spaces and contexts at the local level for these practices to flourish. Garcia conceptualizes this as a political process of reclaiming local indigenous heritage and traditional bodies of knowledge that have long been suppressed:

Excerpt 5.7, from program literature

Reconocerse en si mismo eso implica un proceso de descolonización, desaprender siglos de sometimiento, ignominia, opresión y explotación, pero también es mirarse en otros para establecer puentes de comprensión que permitan nuevos procesos identitarios a partir de los que somos y lo que tenemos.

Recognizing oneself implies a process of decolonization, the unlearning of centuries of submission, ignominy, oppression and exploitation, but also it is looking at others to establish bridges of comprehension that permit new identificational processes based on what we are and what we have

The President's primary strategy for reclaiming indigenous heritage, and shedding the ideological yoke of centuries of cultural and linguistic imperialism, is the translation and performance of traditional Zapotec myths and stories. Such stories have been passed on by generations of Guelavian elders, though in recent years have more often been told in

⁵⁶ I discuss the President's use of Levi-Strauss' scholarship at much greater length in the next chapter.

Spanish, and they are considered by Garcia to be dense repositories of cultural knowledge. In Chapter 6, “Code Choice and Temporality in Zapotec Storytelling,” I engage in a detailed analysis of several such stories as well as the Levi-Straussian approach to mythological deconstruction that forms the basis of the program. In the remainder of this chapter I discuss the linguistic building blocks upon which this proposed strategy is built, and I outline local controversies over writing Zapotec that have implications for its successful realization.

Garcia envisions videoing the performance of traditional myths in Zapotec, with Zapotec subtitles added, and using them as a tool for instruction and socialization in the Zapotec language. The translation of these stories and myths, which are rich in metaphor and other poetic devices, requires a high level of linguistic competence, and presumes Zapotec literacy skills, which few Guelavians have. Thus in order to implement this program the President requires the assistance of a trained Zapotec teacher and linguist to run a Zapotec language school that will teach young Guelavians to speak, read and write Zapotec, and prepare them to participate in these mythological performances. He wants such children to learn the phonological, morphological, and syntactic structure of Zapotec as well as how to write it, in order to facilitate story translation and performance. However, as of yet, there is no firmly established written tradition in the Guelavian community, and no agreed upon orthography.

VIII. Protestant orthographies and Catholic politics

The lack of a standard orthography for San Juan Guelavía Zapotec was frequently cited by Guelavians as a marker of its subordination and inferiority relative to Spanish and

other written languages. Accordingly, the promotion of Zapotec literacy and writing could prove to be a powerful tool, both practically and ideologically, in the service of local revitalization efforts. As I mentioned above, the SIL linguist Theodore Jones lived and worked in San Juan Guelavía for close to twenty years in the 1970s and 1980s, during which time he produced an orthography, several literacy manuals for native Zapotec speakers, and a plethora of Zapotec language books, stories, pamphlets, bibles and assorted religious materials. During this time Jones collaborated closely with his local language consultant, Jaime, who in turn became a linguist and has continued to work with Jones on translation and publication of Zapotec language materials, the most recent being the Old Testament of the Bible. Both Jones and Jaime have extensive experience writing SJGZ, possess nuanced understandings of the grammar, and have the capacity to design a curriculum for teaching Zapotec locally. In addition, Jaime is a native Guelavian, embedded in local relationships, with a personal understanding of the histories and ideological perspectives that are bound up with patterns of local language shift.

While a partnership between these men and the municipal president to further linguistic and cultural revitalization efforts would seem natural, Jones' controversial status within the community has complicated potential collaboration. In the eyes of some Guelavians, including the President, Jones is connected to the growth of religious discord in the community, and thus his linguistic scholarship is somewhat suspect. The general basis of this mistrust was presented above, but it merits some elaboration. Within Guelavía there is effectively no separation between Church and State; Catholicism is complexly intertwined with local cultural traditions through the system of *compadrazgo*,

the community cargo system, and the structure of local government. The Guelavian context exemplifies both “localization” and “inculturation,” concepts that have been used to theorize the combined impacts of histories of colonialism and Christian missionization in and across cultural contexts. Localization refers to processes by which members of a given community transform and take ownership of external influences in the form of foreign belief systems. Inculturation refers to the means by which Christian religious ideology can reshape local cultural practices and moral orientations (Keane 2007: 91, see also Robbins 2004: 326). In Guelavía, and throughout the Oaxacan Valley, these two processes have been operating side by side for more than four centuries, and the syncretic form of Catholicism practiced there is part of the fabric of everyday life. These twin processes are productively viewed as first and second stories about the role of Christian religious belief in the community. Guelavians have appropriated Catholic beliefs as a marker of belonging, in so doing reshaping them to fit a larger narrative about the miraculous origins of the community, and to bolster the authority of local forms of religious and civil governance (see Chapter 3 for details on this origin story).

Within this context the influence of Protestant evangelism poses a threat, not just to the sanctity of Guelavian spiritual life, but to the integrity of the community. This conflict is essentially a clash of moral frameworks, between the reproductive morality of local Catholicism, which emphasizes continuity, and the Protestant, which emphasizes agency, choice and potential transformation (Robbins 2007: 293, see also Handman 2010). While not explicitly articulated as such, the character of Protestantism directly challenges practices, most notably saint worship, which are fundamental to Guelavian

life.⁵⁷ This type of religious tension has the capacity to “propel [spiritual] demands and worries into the smallest capillaries of everyday life and commonplace habits,” (Keane 2007: 83) in this case into contestations over orthographic renderings of San Juan Guelavía Zapotec. From the perspective of the President, everything associated with Jones’ work must be approached with caution, which has even made it difficult for Jaime, a devoted Catholic community member, and a prolific native linguist, to become involved in revitalization efforts. In distancing himself from Jones’ spiritual and professional pursuits, Garcia has also elected to use his own orthography in place of the alphabet collaboratively produced by Jaime and Jones.

Orthographic variation is neither uncommon, nor surprising, but is a factor of the non-correspondence of written versus spoken language, and the inherently selective nature of all writing systems. Oral language, which is made meaningful by multiple semiotic modalities including word choice, prosody, gesture, and social context, is far too complex to be rendered completely in writing. Thus orthographies are partial representations of spoken language, which incorporate some features while erasing or ignoring others. Nascent writing systems for traditionally oral languages are particularly fraught in this regard, and are often perceived and understood in relation to whatever written standard local populations have experience with (Jaffe 2000: 505). In the case of Guelavians that written standard is Spanish, the language in which most local people acquired literacy skills, and both of the orthographies I observed depended upon knowledge of the Spanish alphabet. Jaime and Jones’ orthography uses Spanish spelling conventions to render those sounds that are common to both languages, and combinations

⁵⁷ As described in Chapter 2, the origin story of the founding of Guelavía is based on the miraculous midnight return of a statue of *San Juan Bautista*, a.k.a. Saint John the Baptist to the fledgling community chapel.

of Spanish letters to render sounds that don't occur in Spanish. The two exceptions are their uses of the letter 'z' to represent the alveolar fricative sound /z/ that occurs in English (i.e. 'zebra,' 'zoo') but does not occur in Spanish (where the letter 'z' corresponds to the sound /s/), and the phonological symbol /ɨ/ for a close-central vowel sound that also does not occur in Spanish, which cannot be produced on a common keyboard. President Garcia told me that he views this last convention as elitist and inaccessible to the layperson, favoring the use of /ë/, which can be typed easily and closely approximates the sound of the vowel. He also prefers the use of the letter 'k' to represent the velar plosive sound /k/ that in Spanish is more often rendered with the combination 'qu' or the letter 'c,' (for a complete table of these variations see Figure 5-1).

The meanings projected onto the variations between these orthographies are based on indexical associations. Much scholarship on the development of new writing systems suggests that orthographies are never neutral, but are strategic representations laden with social, political, and in this case religious significance:

Orthographic choices and their interpretations are read as meta-linguistic, socially conditioned phenomena which shed light on people's attitudes towards both specific language varieties and social identities and on the relationship between linguistic form and the social world in general" (Jaffe 2000: 499, see also Schieffelin & Doucet 1998).

Thus the President viewed the use of the phonological symbol /ɨ/ as elitist, because knowledge of that symbol is linked with professional training in linguistics, to which few have had access. This accusation is particularly potent within the context of local religious tension, because the training received by both Jones and Jaime was provided by the SIL, whose Protestant evangelical underpinnings are described in detail above. In

contrast the President viewed his own strategies as populist and accessible, embodying the very resistance to cultural and linguistic imperialism described in his revitalization agenda.

Leap argues that one of the crucial problems faced by Native American tribes in the negotiation of language maintenance strategies is “the management of linguistic information” which includes decisions regarding if and how indigenous languages should be written, by whom, and to what ends. The micro-controversy over orthographic representation in Guelavía is precisely about the management of Zapotec. I call this a micro-controversy, because as far as I know the only people involved are the President, Jones and Jaime, and as far as I know they have never spoken directly with one other about their differing perspectives. The ‘public’ or the ‘social world’ within which these contestations have meaning is limited, even within the Guelavian community, to those with the educational background, political orientation and historical memory to understand the source of controversy. I became attuned to these differences because of my own effort to establish a set of conventions I would use to render Zapotec in my writing. By the time Garcia offered me a copy of his revitalization program outline, in which his Zapotec orthography figures prominently, I had already learned and begun using Jones’ orthography with the help of my transcription assistant who had been trained by Jaime to assist in translation projects. This document, my interview with Jaime, and various conversations with both men are the evidential basis for this analysis. In the larger community, with revitalization efforts in the nascent stages, and indigenous literacy rates as low as they are, the two orthographies are coexisting peacefully.

There was some controversy about Jaime’s recent appointment as the teacher of a Zapotec class for Guelavian children at the *Casa de Cultura* (House of Culture). He is well qualified for the job and has extensive linguistic training, but the President, who commissioned the class as part of his revitalization strategy, was reluctant to involve him. They reached an agreement through the mediating efforts of the director of the *Casa de Cultura*, *Juan-Eduardo, where the classes were to be held, and to all appearances the tension has been resolved. In fact, the President recently reached out to Jones, requesting his assistance in the form of photographic and other contributions to a community museum project that he is beginning to organize locally, so perhaps there will be more collaboration between them in the future (Jones, pc 10/20/2010). In the classes I observed, Jaime taught children to read and write SJGZ with the same alphabet used by Jones, and offered for sale many of the Zapotec-language children’s stories they had published after each class. In an interview about how he came to be involved with Jones’ project he described how learning to write his native language had given him a great sense of pride:

Excerpt 5.8, recorded 12/06/2008, SJG

J:	<i>Pues de esa manera ya empecé a escribir mi idioma</i>	Well in this way then I began to write my language
EF:	<i>Aha</i>	Aha
J:	<i>Primero pues más o menos la gramática, que el verbo, que el sustantivo todo eso</i>	First well more or less the grammar, that the verb, that the noun all of that
EF:	<i>Aha</i>	Aha
J:	<i>Y pues me di cuenta que pues en Zapoteco es igual como el español, tiene todo no de, para escribir lo porque... porque sin la escritura uno piensa pues no vale, no sirve porque porque nada más es nuestra area y fuera de allí no sirve o etcetera, pero ahora con el tiempo, como que es como un orgullo saber otro idioma no?</i>	And well I realized that well in Zapotec it is the same as Spanish, it has everything not of, to write it because... because without writing one thinks well that it has no value, that it’s worthless because because it’s only our area and outside of here it’s worthless or etcetera, but now with the time, it’s as if it’s like a source of pride to know another language right?
EF:	<i>Mhmm</i>	Mhmm
J:	<i>Porque saber un solo idioma pues (...) poco, saber dos idiomas, como dice el-ese</i>	Because to know only one language well (...) little, to know two languages, as they say he-the saying as

<i>dicho como dice este 'el que sabe dos idiomas vale por dos'</i>	they say uhm 'he who knows two languages counts as two'
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Months later, while reading over the primary goals in the President's revitalization strategy I reflected on this interview, and how clearly Jaime's narrative about learning to read and write Zapotec aligned with the President's description of his aspirations for the Guelavian community. Jaime explained that the act of writing powerfully inverted his assumption that Zapotec was grammatically deficient or subordinate to standardized languages like Spanish and English, because "without writing one thinks that [the language] has no value." The heightened prestige value of standard written languages, which the President directly linked to the shift away from Zapotec (See Example 5.6), is tied to their perceived usefulness, and their efficacy in educational and professional spheres outside of the community. From this perspective Zapotec orthography and literacy is a step towards decolonization, and a step towards the building of bridges between spheres of social life previously deemed incompatible.

It is difficult to reconcile Jaime's views on Zapotec literacy with the President's accusations of orthographic elitism, but Jaime's affiliation with SIL, by whom he is currently employed, appears to be the primary issue. When I asked Jaime about the origins of the orthography that he and Jones developed, he told me that they solicited feedback from local speakers in the process of choosing from the available pool of phonetic and Roman lettering to determine which would be most easily understood and reproduced by native speakers:

Example 5.9, recorded 12/06/2008, SJG

EF:	<i>Entonces era usted que inventó esta manera de escribir su propio dialecto?</i>	So was it you that invented this way of writing your dialect?
J:	<i>No el Insitituto Lingüístico nos dió varios</i>	No the Linguistic Institute gave us various options

	<i>opciones que</i>	that
EF:	<i>Ah</i>	Ah
J:	<i>Que se puede escribir así, así, así, así, y pues ling-en una forma fonética o como se dice en la forma como lo aprenden los lingüistas</i>	That one can write this way, this way, this way, this way, and well ling-in a phonetic form or how do you say in the form that linguists learn
EF:	<i>Eso</i>	Yes
J:	<i>No? Pero de allí pues uno tiene que buscar como para que la gente le sea más fácil leer, entonces nosotros lo hicimos varios este, como se puede decir varias entrevistas para que la gente tratara de leer lo que tenemos y cual de las formas que lo tenemos escritos es más fácil</i>	Right? But from there well one has to look like so that the people it is easier to read, so we made various uhm, how can you say various interviews so that the people would try to read what we have and which of the forms that we have written is the easiest
EF:	<i>A:ah</i>	A:ah
J:	<i>Y dice 'No este es más fácil, este como lo vamos a leer' o por ejemplo la 'w'? No? Que en muchas idiomas se ocupa</i>	And they say 'No this one is easier, this how are we going to read' or for example the 'w'? Right? That is used in many languages
EF:	<i>Mhmm</i>	Mhmm
J:	<i>Nosotros no lo ocupamos porque dicen 'no es u:na letra muy extraña'</i>	We don't use it because they say 'no it is a very strange letter'
EF:	<i>Mhmm</i>	Mhmm
J:	<i>O la 'k' también, la letra 'k' que se usa nada mas en prestamos como 'kilo' 'kilometro'</i>	Or the 'k' as well, the letter 'k' that they use only in loanwords like 'kilo' 'kilometro'
EF:	<i>A con razon</i>	Ah I get it
J:	<i>Entonces dice 'no</i>	So
EF:	<i>Prefieren usar la 'q'</i>	They prefer to use the 'q'
J:	<i>La 'q' y la 'c' no?...O sea ya ya hay maestros que (ya) enseñan en Zapoteco y en otros idiomas pero dicen que cuando el niño va a la escuela de español, cuando escribe 'casa' lo escribe con 'k'</i>	The 'q' and the 'c' right?...Or well there are now now teachers that (now) teach in Zapotec and in other languages but they say that when the child goes to Spanish school, when they write 'house' they write it with 'k'
EF:	<i>A:ah</i>	A:ah
J:	<i>Entonces se atrase un poquito ((laughing))</i>	So they fall behind a bit ((laughing))
EF:	<i>((laughing))</i>	<i>((laughing))</i>
J:	<i>Entonces dicen que pues tiene su ventaja y su desventaja</i>	So they say that well they have their advantage and their disadvantage
EF:	<i>Eso</i>	Yes
J:	<i>Pero por lo general los Zapotecos no usan la 'k'</i>	But in general the Zapotecs don't use the 'k'
EF:	<i>Aha</i>	Aha
J:	<i>Los que lo usan mas son los Mixtecos</i>	Those who use it more are the Mixtecs
EF:	<i>Ah con [razon</i>	Ah I get [it
J:	<i>[Entonces dicen que talvez así se puede decir es 'k' es Mixteco, no tiene 'k' es Zapoteco ((laughing))</i>	<i>[So they say that maybe that way one can say it's 'k' it's Mixteco, it doesn't have 'k' it's Zapotec ((laughing))</i>
EF:	<i>Ah ((laughing))</i>	Ah ((laughing))
J:	<i>Si de esa manera puede puede ser una diferencia</i>	Yes in this way there can be a difference
EF:	<i>Aha</i>	Aha
J:	<i>Si por tantos idiomas que indígenas que hay en Oaxaca</i>	Yes for all of the language that indigenous that there are in Oaxaca

The orthographic conventions Jaime and Jones put into practice were an effort to synthesize the phonetic alphabet, the Roman alphabet and the perceptions of Zapotec-speaking interviewees. The involvement of professional linguists in the process of creating an indigenous popular orthography exacerbates the tension characteristic of all alphabetic systems, which work to balance phonological accuracy with accessibility, for “as any linguist knows, native speakers do not need the plethora of diacritics to understand their own language” (Powers 1990: 497). The prime example of this is the use of the symbol /i/, which only makes sense as a tool for a reading audience who is unfamiliar with the vowel sounds that occur in San Juan Guelavía Zapotec, and familiar with the phonetic alphabet: namely foreign scholars.

At the same time Jaime explained that some letters were off limits because they were perceived as too foreign to native speakers, whereas others were excluded because of typological conventions that are known among professional linguists. For example, the use of the letter ‘k’ marks a language as non-Zapotec, likely Mixtec or Mixe, a way of visually distinguishing the region’s linguistic heterogeneity. Jaime further suggested that certain conventions might hinder a bilingual student’s progress in acquiring Spanish literacy alongside literacy in their native language, again pointing to the use of /k/ which leads students to use it in their Spanish writing inappropriately. However, the visual differentiation from Spanish is likely part of the appeal of the use of /k/ for Garcia, an act of esthetic decolonization that sets Zapotec apart, marking its linguistic autonomy. Such a strategy differentiates without the danger of hindering intelligibility tied to the use of phonetic symbols, which explains the widespread use of /k/ across other minority language orthographies (Jaffe 2000: 510).

The differing motivations of non-native linguists, anthropologists and indigenous language speakers are conducive to different types of orthographic representation. These issues seem to be ubiquitous across the Oaxacan region where the variety of alphabets and orthographic conventions approximates the area's linguistic diversity, but where there is little or no agreement as to how these alphabets should be put to use. When visiting local archaeological sites I was often reminded of this when I saw the standard tri-lingual information placards next to important edifices; the languages represented were nearly always Spanish, English and Isthmus Zapotec, a language spoken on the other side of the state that few from the Valley know or understand. When I began conducting research in Los Angeles, I encountered yet another set of Zapotec orthographic renderings after I enrolled in a beginning Zapotec class at the University of California, Los Angeles taught by Felipe Lopez, from San Lucas Quiavini, Oaxaca. Lopez has been working together with the linguist Pamela Munro to produce a dictionary of that variety, as well as a four-quarter curriculum for teaching Zapotec at the undergraduate level.

Both Lopez and Munro have a collegial relationship with Jones and admire his work, but have chosen a distinct set of orthographic conventions to represent the sounds which co-occur in San Lucas Quiaviani Zapotec and Guelavian Zapotec, which share many phonological and grammatical features. The works produced by Lopez and Munro are very much in progress, and the orthography used in the textbooks is quite different from the original phonetic approach they used in their dictionary, in an attempt to incorporate tonal patterns. They determined, as many do, that the plethora of diacritics was more of a hindrance than a help, so they simplified their strategy considerably for the

textbook series. The primary audience for whom these texts were designed is neither professional linguists nor native Zapotec speakers, but English-speaking college students. Thus far I have not observed any organized efforts among Guelavian or other Zapotec-speaking communities in Los Angeles to revitalize the role of Zapotec among youth, either through formal education, or parent-child interaction.

After having been exposed to all of these strategies, I struggled with how to present Zapotec in my own work. In addition, as in any community there is substantial allophonic variation amongst speakers, which is not captured by any orthographic strategy fully. I have adopted a more minimalist perspective, however, based both on my own analytic goals, which are generally limited to the semantic level (meaning I do not engage in phonological or phonemic analysis) and based on the ease with which others, including native speakers, may read the Zapotec text. The table below compares each of the orthographic strategies I have encountered in the course of my fieldwork and language study.

<i>VOWELS</i>	<i>CONSONANTS</i>
ë versus ɨ (for /ɨ/ close to close-mid central vowel)	zh versus ll (for sound /ʒ/ like French 'j' in <i>jeune</i>)
i versus y (sound /i/ like English 'ee' in <i>bee</i>)	dx versus dzh (for sound /dʒ/ like English 'j' in "jack")
	qu/ c versus k (for sound /k/ like English 'k' like 'kite')

Figure 5-1, Orthographic Diversity in SJGZ

I have chosen to combine elements from the strategies outlined above for my own ease of use, for readability, and for the sake of my transcription assistants who find many of these conventions easier to work with.

IX. Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the historical context of discourses that cast indigenous language use as a relic of the past, and a marker of backwardness and poverty, to be remedied by the unifying language of the modern Mexican nation, Spanish. I demonstrated the enduring effects of these discourses in the context of talk that links the experience of linguistic oppression in rural community schools with local language shift. I compared Guelavians' stories about their school experiences with the political and bureaucratic statements of language planners, highlighting the gulf between policy visions, and the lived reality of rural community schooling. Members of the Guelavian community engaged in the project of revitalizing local indigenous linguistic and cultural practices are struggling against an enduring legacy of linguistic discrimination, long perpetuated by political policy and educational practice. Expanding the purview of Zapotec in these circumstances is fraught with challenges, and is inextricably bound up with the orthographic controversies outlined above. These efforts are steeped in regional histories in of language planning, in which religious, political and educational agendas have become intertwined, and are driven by the goal of reshaping local's relationship to literacy and text.

In the following chapter I will explore traditional Zapotec storytelling, a discursive genre that is highly valued precisely because of its ties to indigenous cultural and linguistic traditions/heritage. Ideologies that link storytelling to the local Zapotec language clash with the redistribution of linguistic knowledge brought about by local patterns of language shift among Guelavian youth. I will discuss the municipal president's efforts to rejuvenate San Juan Guelavía Zapotec through the translation and

performance of traditional stories from Spanish into Zapotec. He envisions this process as an act of decolonization that will change local's relationship to their indigenous heritage.

Chapter 6

Code Choice and Temporality in Zapotec Storytelling

I. Introduction: Stories, Codes and Genre

In this chapter I explore the practice of storytelling among Guelavians, focusing in particular on the performance and social circulation of stories across tellers and contexts. I compare salient ideologies of storytelling with the actual discursive practices of storytellers. Specifically, during my research many Guelavians saw storytelling as a genre tightly linked to the local indigenous language San Juan Guelavía Zapotec (SJGZ), yet in actual practice genre and code were frequently disassociated. Building on the discussion of local processes of language shift, I consider the implications of the redistribution of linguistic knowledge across generations of Guelavians for the genre of Zapotec storytelling. In the context of shift, the creative deployment of code was one of several strategies used by tellers to balance traditional storytelling protocol with the context-specific exigencies of performance. Throughout this chapter I consider competing and overlapping stories about Zapotec storytelling, what it means, who does it, and how it is defined which reflect the dynamics and exigencies of life amid language shift.

The first part of this chapter examines practices of “generic regimentation” (Bauman 2004; Briggs 1993, 1988), and in particular contestations over code choice

during storytelling performances, which reflected the conflicting priorities of tellers, co-tellers, audience members and other participants respectively. I then go on to explore the divergent temporal orientations that underlie these contestations between those who sought to “speak the past” (Kroskrity 2009) and those who strove to accommodate to the discursive present and future of the community, “carrying it hither” (ibid). These orientations were, in turn, linked to individuals’ social position and status; female story-framers and audience members evinced a commitment to discursive tradition, marked by a strong preference for Zapotec, whereas elder male tellers prioritized audience uptake over fidelity to code. These ideologies were not mutually exclusive, however, and individuals often displayed conflicting or overlapping orientations. Tellers who favored the use of Spanish deployed other strategies to index their discursive authority independently of code, such as metapragmatic framing devices and the incorporation of third party evaluations, which enhanced their status as traditional storytellers. In the final section of the chapter I return to the discussion from the previous chapter of a nascent language revitalization program in Guelavía. This program explicitly aims to realign the practice of storytelling with San Juan Guelavía Zapotec, while simultaneously encouraging young people to engage with and use their heritage language.

The concept of “generic regimentation” (Bauman 2004, see also Briggs 1993) is part of a broader effort among scholars of verbal art to analyze the dialectical relationship between a given speech event and the broader generic category with which it is associated, e.g. storytelling. As particular stories are told and retold over time and by different tellers they accumulate new layers of cultural, social and linguistic significance, while retaining their resemblance to previous iterations (see Bauman & Briggs 1990;

Bauman & Briggs 1992; Silverstein & Urban 1996; Irvine 1996; Bauman 1996; Mannheim & Van Fleet 1998). “Generic regimentation” refers to how participants in speech events, in this case storytelling, negotiate, or strive to regulate the shape of an unfolding story, to align a particular story performance with salient ideologies of what authentic stories are and how they should be told. Practices of regimentation often serve to minimize innovation and change:

Prescriptive insistence on strict generic regimentation works conservatively in the service of established authority and order, while the impulse toward the widening of intertextual gaps and generic innovation is more conducive to the exercise of creativity, resistance to hegemonic order, and openness to change (Bauman 2004: 8).

For example, in his work with the Arizona Tewa Kroskity discusses the implications of the regimentation of storytelling among the Arizona Tewa, which is motivated by conservative aesthetic ideals of “speaking the past” (1993, 2009). He argues that resistance to innovation can inhibit the maintenance of traditional speech genres like storytelling in communities undergoing language shift by excluding less proficient speakers (2009). In the case of the Tewa, practices of generic regimentation increasingly conflict with demands of tellers to “carry it hither” (1993, 2009), or to creatively tailor their performances to the interactive dynamics of young audiences that are less and less competent in Tewa.

I build on this scholarship here by discussing a context in which language shift has already brought about the loosening of generic boundaries in storytelling performances, in this case through the incorporation of Spanish, an atypical language for the genre. Guelavian storytellers and story participants are thus faced with a different set of challenges in their efforts to synthesize the competing demands of traditional generic

protocol and audience. I analyze several examples of story performances, focusing in particular on: 1) how story performances are tailored to the interactive context, and 2) how tellers construct their tales as authentic examples of a local storytelling tradition, despite their increasing use of Spanish. The achievement of these two distinct goals within the telling of a story requires the bringing together of the discursive past, and present of a story, or alternatively a story's origins with its present instantiation. In so doing, tellers construct their relationship, both to the source of the story and to the audience or public (Gal & Woolard 2001) to whom the story is directed, defining the framework within which the story is to be interpreted. Throughout this discussion I consider instances in which the goals and practices of tellers conflict with the expressed goals or orientations of other story participants (e.g. story framers, audience members, sanctioned/non-sanctioned over-hearers) resulting in competing strategies of regimentation. I conclude by connecting these competing ideological frameworks with a nascent revitalization program which aims to delimit linguistic variation in storytelling while expanding tellership to include local youth. This program represents still another strategy for synthesizing discursive past and present, by encouraging young people, the embodiment of the present, to gain mastery over a Zapotec speech genre that is emblematic of the community's past.

II. Regimentation in Practice

Storytelling is a highly-valued speech genre in Guelavía and like other valued genres, including ritual speech and prayer, is closely associated with elder males who are seen as particularly skillful speakers of Zapotec, with a deep knowledge of local traditions (see

Chapters 3 and 7). While women frequently tell stories in the course of ordinary conversations that contain many of the same elements as formalized storytelling performances (e.g. references to supernatural events, interaction with animals and other non-human entities), these tales are rarely, if ever, framed as bounded speech events, but rather, impromptu tales specific to the speaker and immediate context. In contrast, the storytelling performances I participated in and observed were introduced through metalinguistic and metapragmatic framing devices, they had a defined beginning and ending, they were often referred to with titles (e.g. *Grigorillo*, *Un Bien se Paga Mal*), and they recurred across tellers, contexts, and over time. Additionally, whereas men were frequently recognized as storytellers, women were not described, by themselves or by others, as storytellers.

Throughout my research many people (including my transcription assistants) were critical of my penchant for recording ordinary conversations on mundane topics, which they perceived to be unworthy of scholarly attention. I was often encouraged to attend events where I would be exposed to more valued genres, or to seek out skilled speakers. This corresponded with a general devaluation of the conversational Zapotec of many Guelavians, which was frequently characterized as *'revuelto'* (mixed), in contrast with *'legitimo Zapoteco'* epitomized by the reverential register of Zapotec used by ritual speech makers and respected elder males in particular (See Chapter 3). As in other communities undergoing language shift “linguistic differences that are seen in terms of ethnic identity,” (e.g. the use of SJGZ as a marker of community belonging), are often “more specifically delineated in terms of chronological age or maturity” (see Meek 2010: 159). Among Guelavians the speech of elders, and elder men in particular, is viewed as

the standard by which all others' speech is judged. On two occasions I was invited to visit the homes of elder males to hear and record traditional stories told in '*idioma*,' the local Spanish term for SJGZ. However, in contrast with other events (e.g. weddings, patron saint festivals) I attended in which Zapotec was the dominant code⁵⁸, these story performances were shaped by a negotiation between the tellers themselves, both of whom favored the use of Spanish, and the story event framers, their relatives, who encouraged them to use Zapotec. The examples presented below were taken from storytelling performances that I recorded, in which negotiations over code choice shaped the structure of the unfolding performance.

My first experience hearing stories was at the home of *Carmela, who had invited me to come and hear her father *Isidrio's stories. Isidrio, a widower in his late seventies, was the patriarch of his family, comprised of his seven children, twenty-one grandchildren and growing crop of great-grandchildren. He was widely respected among Guelavians for his service to the community as a member of the municipal council, and for his knowledge of local history and customs. Within his family he was recognized for his skillful use of Zapotec and storytelling prowess, and all of his children remembered growing up hearing his stories. In addition he was frequently called upon to deliver words of benediction on celebratory occasions, which required the use of the reverential register of Zapotec (see Chapter 3 for details). As Isidrio began his first story, excerpted below, he and I (EF) were seated on the patio while Carmela bustled about preparing a meal for us.

Example 6.0, recorded 4/19/2008, SJG

⁵⁸ Within San Juan Guelavía Zapotec was the primary code for most ritual speech practices that took place outside the confines of the local Catholic church. In the church, presided over by a priest contracted from a neighboring community, only Spanish or Latin were permitted.

I: <i>Los los niños ese niet-los nietecitos que tengo allá en Veracruz le conte un dice le conté un cuento que se llama</i>	The the boys the grand-the grandsons that I have there in Veracruz I told him a he says I told him a story that is called
C: <i>En español o en idioma? Como lo quiere usted?</i>	In Spanish or in Zapotec? How do you want it?
EF: <i>Pues como usted quiere contar</i>	Well how you want to tell it
I: <i>Bueno principio le le estoy explicando en español pues</i>	Fine first I am explaining to you you in Spanish well

Isidrio began to preface his story in Spanish, by referring to a previous story performance from another context, at some point in the past among his grandsons who live in Veracruz, Mexico⁵⁹. I have highlighted in bold face text the moment when Carmelita interrupted to ask me: *En español o en idioma, como lo quiere usted?* (“In Spanish or in Zapotec, how do you want it?”). In asking me she recalled our previous conversation when she invited me to hear her father tell stories in *idioma* (Zapotec), and pointed to my role as a researcher interested in learning the local Zapotec language. She also confirmed that I was the principal audience member to whom the story was directed. Carmelita did not position herself as part of the audience for the story, but was walking within earshot of Isidrio on her way to the kitchen when she interjected. I responded that he should tell the story in whatever way he chose, and so he returned to his story preamble, which he spoke in Spanish, *Bueno principio le estoy explicando en español pues* (“Fine first I am explaining to you in Spanish well”).

About two months after meeting with Isidrio and Carmela, I was invited by another local woman, *Dominga, to hear some of her father-in-law *Rodrigo’s stories told in *idioma*. She had been present at the home of another local woman when I was there visiting and recording Zapotec conversations, after which we spoke about my research interests, and she invited me to come to her home and record Rodrigo the

⁵⁹ Veracruz is located northeast of Oaxaca, on the Gulf Coast.

following week. Once again, this invitation seemed to be prompted in part by a desire on Dominga’s part for me to hear and record *legítimo Zapoteco* (legitimate Zapotec) rather than mundane conversation. Rodrigo was in his late seventies when we met, and, as I later learned, was a well-known storyteller within his family and several generations had been reared on his tales. After I arrived I talked with Dominga and Rodrigo for a bit, got out my recorder, and Rodrigo began a story immediately, entitled “*Un Bien se Paga Mal*” (A Good You Pay With a Bad), about an encounter between a man and a snake who had been trapped by a fallen branch:

Example 6.1, recorded 6/08/2010, SJG

R: <i>Entonces en eso iba pues iba cuando fue a encontrar una culebra estaba montonado y y sobre digamos vaya dice estaba un [palo encima de la culebra</i>	So for this he went well he went when he went he met a snake it was mounted and and on top we say well it is said there was a [log on top of the snake
D: ditza e guenebiuiby [(laughing) <i>este:e per</i>	[(laughs) U:hm but Zapotec you will speak to her
R: Ah	Ah
D: <i>En idioma verdad</i>	In Zapotec right?
EF: <i>Sí, [cual, sí sí</i>	Yes, [what, yes yes
D: [<i>ditza e?</i>	[Zapotec ey?
R: <i>Ah, idioma?</i>	Zapotec?
EF: <i>Aha</i>	Yeah
R: <i>Ah buen. Chiyguld dxa as na güedxialbē beeldqui llat ya detzmē chiyguld ti ax na beeldqui “xmigua”</i>	Oh, ok. Later then he met the snake the piece of wood was on top of its back so the snake said “friend”

I have highlighted in bold Dominga’s first interjection, which was preceded by her nervous laughter. She cut in with an utterance that was part interrogative – part imperative, “Uhm but Zapotec you will speak to her,” though it took a second repetition in the form of a question directed at me “In Zapotec right?” and a third repetition to him “Zapotec eh” before Rodrigo registered his uptake and responded “Oh Zapotec?” After this exchange Rodrigo continued narrating in Zapotec for a little while, but as he progressed through the story, he shifted back and forth frequently between Zapotec and

Spanish, and towards the end had resumed telling the story completely in Spanish. After a brief pause and some chatting, he began to tell another story, requested by his wife

*Maruja, detailing the adventures of a princess and her suitor:

Example 6.2, recorded 6/08/2010, SJG

R: <i>Habia habia una señora</i>	There was there was a woman
D: Idioma!	Zapotec!
R: <i>Tenia un chamaco</i>	She had a boy
D: <u>Ditza rindiagbiu ditza rczby güebiu</u>	Zapotec listen you-formal she wants you to speak Zapotec
R: <i>No pero mejor a o <u>ditz</u>-mejor en idioma?</i>	No but better or Zap-better in Zapotec?
D: <i>Lo quieres en español o en idioma?</i>	Do you want it in Spanish or in Zapotec?
EF: <i>Sí mejor en idioma para que luego lo puedo escuchar y aprender mas</i>	Yes better in Zapotec so that later I can listen and learn more
M: <u>A guldi laaby lla</u>	Yes she has good reason then
R: <u>Nidote ni na tiby tiby mniny tiby cheen tiby nguiueen ba gud xmambi laaby xmambi pero chiy laaby</u>	First there was a a child a little boy a little man well they gave him to his grandmother to him his grandmother but later he

Once again, Dominga interrupted his tale, this time shouting *Idioma!* (“Zapotec!”), which Rodrigo ignored, and then again Ditza rindiagbiu ditza rczby güebiu! (“Zapotec - listen you - she wants you to speak Zapotec!”). This time he resisted Dominga’s urgent command until she asked me for confirmation, whereupon I told him that listening to the recording again later would help me in my efforts to learn Zapotec. His wife Maruja jumped in at this point, confirming the legitimacy of my request by saying A guldi laaby lla (“She has good reason then”).

Following this multi-party ratification process Rodrigo switched into Zapotec, though he continued to switch frequently into Spanish throughout his tale. Similarly, Isidrio switched back into Spanish almost immediately after we had agreed he would tell his story in Zapotec, particularly when introducing principal characters and themes:

Example 6.3, recorded 4/19/2008, SJG

I: <i>En Zapoteco esta bien, ya esta listo la grabadora bueno? <u>Guu tiby guu tiby</u></i>	In Zapotec that’s fine, is that that recorder ready ok, there was a there was a person who had uhm a son
---	--

<u>bniety guupë este tiby llingambë bueno</u> <u>lliin tiby varón chiy tiby lliindxaap rey.</u> <i>le decían princesa</i>	well child a man, and then a daughter of a king, they called her princess
---	--

Initially I thought that this preoccupation with code choice was the result of a tension between a strong ethos of linguistic accommodation on the part of the tellers, who knew I was a Zapotec language-learner, and the framers, who tried to regiment the story performances in an effort to align them with the prestigious discursive practice they had described to me. Given what I had been explicitly told about stories by Guelavians, it seemed that Zapotec was the default language for storytelling. Similarly, in communications with the linguist Ted Jones regarding a book of stories he published in the early 1980s based on the performances of a Guelavian elder entitled, *Anecdotas de Don Pedro*, Jones assured me that Don Pedro had favored the use of Zapotec in all of his story performances. Two of the stories that appear in Jones' collection under the Spanish titles, *Un Bien se Paga Mal*, and *La Fundación de San Juan*⁶⁰, coincide with stories I was told by Rodrigo and Isidrio respectively. All of these accounts confirm that Zapotec was a, if not *the* primary code for storytelling in the Guelavian community in the not-too-distant past. As the primary audience for their stories I tried to encourage both Isidrio and Rodrigo to tell their stories in Zapotec, believing that they would have done so with an audience of family or friends. Prior to the start of their stories they were both conversing with family members in Zapotec, which further confirmed my sense that their use of Spanish with me was exceptional.

⁶⁰ Regardless of the language in which a story is/was told I observed a general tendency for the titles of stories to be in Spanish, including the collection of stories published by Jones and mentioned above. This use of dominant language as a frame for the expression or presentation of indigenous language material is common across endangered language communities (see Meek and Messing 2007).

However, as seen in the excerpts shown above, in my experiences the tellers displayed discomfort with the use of Zapotec throughout their story performances, often switching back into Spanish, or repeating stories a second time in Spanish. In the process of transcribing these stories with a young Guelavian woman, *Dora (also a distant family member of Rodrigo's), Dora informed me that Rodrigo's constant switching into Spanish was not an effort to accommodate me, but rather was the result of his effort to translate stories that he ordinarily told in Spanish to young relatives and children (including Dora herself) into Zapotec for my benefit. Her view conflicted with what I had been told about storytelling, but aligned with what I observed, namely that Spanish was now a primary code for what had been proffered by other community members as a prestigious form of Zapotec narration. In stories directed towards me, a researcher interested in local cultural/linguistic traditions, the gap between ideals of authentic storytelling and storytelling practices were brought into sharp relief.

III. "Carrying it Hither" in Story Performances

Storytelling among Guelavians is characterized by a generation and gender-based distribution of linguistic labor, in which older adult men tell stories to younger listeners, and thus reflects the shift away from San Juan Guelavía Zapotec (SJGZ) towards the use of Spanish in parent-child and adult-novice interactions throughout the community (see Chapter 5). This pattern of shift is bound up with local histories of language-based discrimination, and has been compounded by transborder migration over the last three decades (see Chapter 4). The use of Spanish is one among a constellation of strategies of "carrying it hither" (Kroskrity 2009, 1993) that tellers draw on to bring their stories more

viscerally into the lives of their audiences, the most prominent of which is audience/protagonist parallelism. In so doing tellers construct their relationship, both to the source of the story and to the audience or public to whom the story is directed, and define the framework within which the story is to be interpreted.

Both Rodrigo and Isidrio told me stories that featured young princesses, whose age and circumstances (young, female, unmarried, far from home and family) closely matched my own at the time. Isidrio chose to tell me the same story he reported telling his great-granddaughter, entitled “*Una Princesa y Un Cazador*” (A Princess and a Hunter) featuring a female protagonist. In contrast, the story he reported telling to one of his grandsons, and which I observed him telling a different grandson, entitled “*Grigorillo*,” detailed the adventures of three brothers. According to Isidrio these other stories were also performed in Spanish, as neither of the grandchildren were sufficiently competent in Zapotec. Similarly, Rodrigo explicitly compared me with the central character in his story, saying, *una princesa, como usted* (“a princess like you”). The story he told revolved around the attempts of a princess to escape her parents and to run off with a young boy that she had fallen in love with. Towards the end of the story Rodrigo returned to this connection between the character in the story-world he had described and myself:

Example 6.4, recorded 6/08/2008, SJG

R: <i>A pues allí mismo se fue</i>	Ah well right there she went
M: <i>Le dirían “a donde fuiste hija? A donde?”</i>	They would say “Where did you go daughter? Where?”
All: ((laughing))	((laughing))
M: <i>El no sabe que</i>	He doesn’t know what
R: <i>Tal como viene usted acaba ya si tiene usted papa mama por allí “mi hija porque hasta ahora?”</i>	It’s just like you come here already if you have Dad and Mom over there “my daughter why until now?”
EF: ((laughing)) <i>si</i>	((laughing))
R: <i>“Es que yo me (safé) de un coyote” le</i>	“It’s that I (escaped) from a coyote” you say to them

<i>dice usted</i>	
All: ((laughing))	((laughing))

He compared the disappearance of the princess in the story to my own presence in Guleavía far away from my parents, and depicted them as pleading *mija porque hasta ahora?* (“my little-daughter why only now?”), a phrase that was used ubiquitously by Guelavians to censure others (particularly their absent migrant children) for not calling or visiting home as frequently as they should. He then provided my imagined response, suggesting that I would excuse my long absence by claiming to have been abducted by and then escaped from a *coyote*, otherwise known as a human trafficker, who specializes in carrying people across nation-state borders. Ordinarily this occurs in the reverse direction, with coyotes smuggling migrants north into the United States, another likely reason why Rodrigo’s statement was met with laughter.

Through the use of Spanish and the alignment of story protagonists with primary audience members both Isidrio and Rodrigo carried their stories hither into the interactive contexts in which they were situated. As Briggs has described:

Skillful use of stylized language prompts the hearer to look beyond appearances to grasp the meaning with which the creator has imbued this world. **Such artists also have the ability to ‘read’ the ‘real’ world in which their audiences live and thus to find the sorts of imaginary scenes and existential problems that will fit the experiences of their interlocutors.** The interpretive task that confronts the artist is thus twofold – interpreting both the imaginary sphere and the perceiver’s own world. But oral performance has a third component as well. The gifted artist uses stylistic devices in such a way that the form and content of the performance reflect the artist’s view of the way these two worlds, imaginary and real, are connected (1988: 2, emphasis mine).

Rodrigo’s joking in Example 6.4 exemplifies this bridging of imagined and real spheres, accomplished through the humorous invocation of my own circumstances, and by honing in on the “existential problem” of greatest salience to me as a researcher far from home

and family. In their story performances both Isidrio and Rodrigo drew on code, story plot development, and metapragmatic commentary about their unfolding stories to highlight the relevance of their stories to their audience. These strategies provide tellers with ways to create continuity between spheres that might appear, at least superficially, to be radically different. In the case of code, telling stories that have long been in circulation in Zapotec within the Guelavian community to young people in Spanish tellers can blur boundaries; boundaries between fiction and reality, and between the traditional past with which such stories are intimately bound up, and the present circumstances in which story performances are located. Much like Basso's description of "stalking with stories" (1984) these tellers actively engage their audience in a story world that they can relate to, and within which they are more receptive to the messages tellers want to communicate. Their dexterous use of code resonates with the assertion that "in certain multilingual situations, the choice of language or languages can be seen as an affective display" (Webster 2010: 44, see also Irvine 1990).

IV. The Construction of Discursive Authority

Equally important to the story performances described above was the construction and maintenance of a tie to a given story's rootedness, its history of circulation. While both Rodrigo and Isidrio demonstrated a concern for audience engagement and contextual relevance, they also worked to mark their stories as authentic examples of a valued discursive tradition. Richard Bauman has suggested that:

Perhaps the most basic persistent problem confronted by students of oral literature is gauging the effect of the interplay of tradition and innovation, persistence and change, as manifested in the oral text (Bauman 1986: 78).

I had originally conceived of the use of the local Zapotec language as crucial for both indexing and strengthening the legitimacy of a story as traditional. However, Rodrigo and Isidrio used a range of other techniques for achieving traditional authenticity that functioned independently of code, including third party story evaluations, and embedded commentary about the form and origins of their unfolding stories. As mentioned above, storytelling within the Guelavian community was seen as the province of elder men. As men in their late seventies, both Isidrio and Rodrigo had privileged grounding as tellers, which both men indexed in the course of story performances by explicitly referencing, or implicitly invoking other tellings.

For example, during the telling of his first tale, Rodrigo switched from his role as narrator into an external evaluative voice and commented on the form of the story itself. In this story, entitled *Un Bien se Paga Mal* (A Good is Paid with a Bad), an unnamed *campesino*, or rural farmer, attempts to escape his seemingly inevitable death at the hands of a snake, whom he has just freed from underneath a fallen log. Just as the snake is opening his mouth to kill and eat the man, the man stops him, saying that he will ask three friends to assess the moral correctness of the snake's actions, and if indeed good deeds are to be repaid with bad ones. The story revolves around the man's attempts to persuade each animal (a bull, a horse and a coyote) to take his side and persuade the snake not to kill and eat him, as he has just saved him from being trapped. The excerpt comes immediately before their first encounter, with a bull:

Excerpt 6.5, recorded 4/19/2008

R: <u>zullal tiruigy agoilab chiyru raipë beeldqui</u> “ <u>guleeziq a tiby <i>amigü</i> zugua rure teininia dunnë</u> <u>bel laab⁶¹ nab” <i>ziivquë naigy ax teete mod ti per</i></u> <u><i>ya lo chon amigü</i></u>	opening his mouth to eat him when he said to the snake “wait, there is a friend to speak to let’s see what he will say” that’s the way it is well no matter what but it is three friends
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In stepping out of his role as narrator and commenting on the unfolding plot of his story, to say, *teete mod ti per ya lo chon amigü* (“no matter what but it is three friends”), Rodrigo calls up an entire framework and discursive history within which his tale is situated. He casts his story as a token of a type, the type being stories that involve triplicate plot patterns, a characteristic generic stricture which one cannot flout, “no matter what.” Thus he invokes a generic precedent, which he then follows in the telling of his own story, illustrating his alignment with discursive traditions.

As mentioned above, this story also appeared in the volume *Anecdotas Narrados Por El Señor Pedro Hernandez*, published by Ted Jones, under the similar title *De Pagar Un Mal Por Un Bien* (To Pay a Bad for a Good). Jones’ collection points to the perception of storytelling as a canonical form of indigenous verbal art among non-indigenous outsiders, an idea I return to later on. Returning to Don Pedro’s story, his tale varies in several ways from Rodrigo’s telling, one notable example of which is that Don Pedro delivered the entire story (as recorded by Jones) in Zapotec, including the title, *Cun tuby bien rallni cun tuby mal*.⁶² In contrast, Rodrigo spoke the title of his story in Spanish, *Un bien se paga mal*, and switched between Zapotec and Spanish throughout his performance. This text provides additional support to the claim of many community members, and Jones himself, that Zapotec was the established language of storytelling in

⁶¹ It merits further investigation why Rodrigo uses the third person pronoun form ‘laab’ that is used for people here, instead of ‘lam,’ the animal-specific pronoun that is ordinarily used to reference non-human entities.

⁶² He does, however, use Spanish borrowings, e.g. *cun* (from *con*, meaning ‘with’), *bien* (good), and *mal* (bad)

the recent past. There are other small differences between their stories,⁶³ but both versions progress in the same way; both center around encounters with the same three characters, the horse, the bull and the coyote, who are asked to judge the merits of the snake/young boy's traitorous intentions. Don Pedro's version was performed and recorded by Ted Jones in 1984, thirty-four years before my own recording of Rodrigo's tale, confirming that the triplicate plot pattern was in fact an established generic precedent.⁶⁴ By commenting on this pattern within his performance, Rodrigo grounded his tale in a salient discursive tradition that he faithfully adhered to in his own tale.

Isidrio accomplished this traditional grounding differently, for example through explicit mention of his stories' origins, in the opening formula. At the beginning of one tale about the history of the foundation of San Juan Guelavía he said to me, *Yo no lo ví, pero así me platicaban pues* ("I didn't see it, but this is how they told me well"). This evidential phrase served to locate the source of Isidrio's knowledge, in the experiences of elder others who preceded him, and linked his story to theirs. Another more elaborated strategy he used to establish the traditional authenticity of his tales was by referring back to how his tales had been evaluated by others. For example, during the performances I recorded, Isidrio began with a narrative about his grandson, *Eduardo, who lives on the other side of Mexico in the state of Veracruz. Eduardo was very grateful to Isidrio for having told him the story, *Grigorillo*, because it helped him to win a prize in school. The plot of the story centers on the theme of sibling rivalry between Grigorillo, the

⁶³ Don Pedro's story features a church choirmaster, instead of a farmer, who rescues a young boy, instead of a snake, who is trapped under a tree, who then turns out to be evil, and says he's going to take the man away.

⁶⁴ It is also conceivable that Don Pedro offered meta-narratives like Rodrigo's but that these were not included in the published versions of the stories.

industrious and righteous younger brother (who is his father’s favorite), and his two older brothers who are plagued by jealousy and sloth.

In the following excerpt Isidrio reports Eduardo’s account of the interactions leading up to this triumph. Eduardo’s embedded narrative begins with a description of the school assignment, which was to collect a story from “the ancestors.” He explained that nearly all of the students searched through storybooks to select their tales, storybooks of the variety that parents often read to their children at night, containing tales about rabbits, ducks and the like. When the teacher told the students to line up and hand in their stories, Eduardo hung back at the end of the line, afraid to hand in his story. The teacher, however, was impressed by the uniqueness of the story, commenting that he had never seen it in any book. Eduardo explained that it was not from a book, but was told to him by his grandfather, whereupon the teacher announced to the class that Eduardo had been awarded first prize for his submission:

Example 6.6, recorded 4/19/2008, SJG

<p><i>I: Y entonces este y un día dice cuando fui otra vez no? dice me dijo “Mire abuelito” dice “Sirvió mu:cho la este la leyenda que usted” el el me dice que es leyenda vaya pero yo aquí le digo que es un cuento... “El maestro de nosotros...pidió...que escribieramos cuento un un una historia o un cuento si de los anteriores, entonces to:do mis compañeros” dice este “lo hicieron pero copiando en el libro” porque ya ve usted que hay libros que traía cuentitos de esos de los patitos de con-del conejito de todo eso pero es escrito pues...así dice que vengan los que vengan lo:s las historias las leyendas (...) y que van corriendo “estuvimos en fila” dice “y no quería yo este introducirme de mis compañeros, me quede casi, casi penultimo de los compañeros cuando aceptó el maestro todo todo “A donde sacaron ese cuento?” “Pues en tal ((pointing with hand)) libro” y otro dice que “mi papa me contó esto que viene de tal libro” “Ah bueno” “Y cuando me tocó” dice... entonces dice el maestro dice “Ahora</i></p>	<p>And so uhm and one day he says when I went another time right? He says he said to me “Look grandpa” he says “The legend was ve:ry helpful that you” he says to me that it is a legend well but I here say that it is a story... “Our teacher...asked... that we write a story a a history or a story yes of the ancestors, so a:ll of my classmates” he says uhm “did it but copying from a book” because you have seen that there are books that had little stories of those of the little ducks of with of the little rabbit of all of that but it’s written well...that’s how he says that come those that come the: the stories the legends (...) and they go running “we were in line” he says “and I didn’t want to uhm show myself from my classmates, I stayed almost, almost second to last of the classmates when the teacher accepted all all “Where did you get this story” “Well in such-and-such ((pointing with hand)) book” and another said that “my father told me this that comes from such-and-such book” “Oh good” “And when it</p>
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<p>*Eduardo" dice "A donde sacastes ese cuento? Este si que nunca le he visto en ningún libro" "No maestro" dice "Yo lo no lo copie en el libro, eso lo contó mi abuelito...Vive este en Oaxaca, pero de vez en cuando viene a visitarnos y cuenta y nos nos hace cuenta las leyendas que el sabía" "Y sabe más?" "Si" dice "Miren hermanos" dice "miren alumnos, este Eduardo sacó el primer lugar, de su cuento de su leyenda el va a quedar en primer lugar" y ganó una beca</p>	<p>was my turn" he says...and so the teacher says he says "Now Eduardo" he says "Where did you get this story? This one I have never seen in any book," "No teacher" he says "I did not copy it in the book, this my grandpa told me...He lives uhm in Oaxaca, but sometimes he comes to visit us and he tells and he makes tells us us legends that he knew" "And does he know more?" "Yes" he says "Look brothers" he says "look students, this Eduardo won first place, for his story for his legend he will be in first place" and he won a scholarship</p>
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There are several points of interest in this narrative segment, or perhaps more accurately, this meta-story, which is both about the importance of traditional storytelling, and about Isidrio as a storyteller. Isidrio used this meta-story as a preamble to establish his discursive authority in several ways. Firstly he called attention to his own status as master teller, with privileged knowledge about stories that his novice grandson lacks, by highlighting Eduardo's use of the term *leyenda*, or "legend" in contrast with his own use of the locally appropriate term *cuento*, meaning "story." He also invoked an ideal model of master-novice interaction, by framing the entire reported narrative as Eduardo's expression of gratitude for the gift of story that Isidrio had bestowed upon him. Listening to this story one gets the distinct impression that Eduardo acted rightly, that this is the proper way to honor the knowledge and wisdom of one's elders.

Isidrio skillfully crafted the action sequence leading up to the granting of the award so as to heighten suspense. In his report Eduardo describes waiting in line to hand in his story, worried as he watched his classmates hand in assignments that they copied out of books. The detailed description of this process also allowed Isidrio to characterize the stories of the other children as inferior to his own, which he accomplished by repeating that the children found their stories in *tal libro* (such-and-such book),

emphasizing their ordinary and generic qualities. When the teacher finally accepted Eduardo's story and called attention to the fact that he had never seen it in any book, Eduardo nervously responded, *Yo lo no lo copie en el libro, eso lo contó mi abuelito* ("I didn't copy it in the book, this one my grandpa told"). When the teacher responded by awarding Eduardo a prize, the logic of the sequence was laid bare: the traditional oral origin of Isidrio's story was honored in contrast with the ordinariness of the storybook tales that all of the other children handed in. In addition, Isidrio's status as a venerated grandfather hailing from Oaxaca, widely known in Mexico to be a bastion of indigenous cultural and linguistic traditions, bolstered the authenticity of the story still further. In Isidrio's prize story Oaxaca becomes a chronotope, a point "where time and space intersect and fuse," (Bakhtin 1981: 7), and he and his story are cast as belonging to an era prior to the moment in the classroom.

In describing the discursive circulation of the story from oral narrative passed down to his grandson, to a prize-winning submission in a student essay-contest, Isidrio enhanced his own status as teller, along with the authenticity of his stories. He mentioned later on in his narrative that Eduardo's teacher was eager to know his name, to meet him in person and to hear more of his wonderful stories. Isidrio's use of reported narrative above exemplifies "spoken mediation" defined as "the relaying of spoken messages through an intermediary" (Bauman 2004: 129). He used Eduardo's report of the events surrounding the awarding of the story-prize to voice praise spoken on his own behalf, praise that he wished to share, but could not say outright about himself without appearing arrogant or narcissistic. The form of spoken mediation evident in his narrative is particularly illuminating for the present discussion of generic regimentation in the

context of language shift. Isidrio, the master teller, drew on the evaluation of a high-status Spanish speaker, in this case a schoolteacher, to authenticate his story as exemplary of indigenous storytelling traditions. In so doing he re-inscribed the relations of domination and subordination between Spanish mestizos and speakers of indigenous languages that have motivated the shift away from the local Zapotec language, both in the context of storytelling and more generally (see Chapter 5).

V. Transborder Stories

It became apparent over time, however, that Isidrio viewed this story not solely as a source of validation of his capacities as a storyteller, but as a model for how he, as an elder male possessing deep knowledge of tradition and respectful protocol, should be regarded by his family and community. Many months after I recorded his stories, on the evening of his 78th birthday, at a small party thrown by his daughter Carmela, Isidrio began to tell the tale of *Grigorillo* again, to another grandson, *Wilber. At the time I had just returned to Guelavía from Los Angeles, where I had begun to do fieldwork among Guelavians living there, in order to attend a wedding and to observe and participate in the celebration of the festival honoring *San Juan Bautista* (St. John the Baptist) the Patron Saint of Guelavía. My return trip coincided with Isidrio's birthday, and I was invited both to participate in the celebration and to videotape it so that I could bring the video back to Los Angeles to share with his family there (see Chapter 7 for discussion of transborder circulation).

Just as he had begun to tell his story to Wilber, and others within earshot, the phone rang, and it was Wilber's mother and father, *Julia and *Hernan, who were living

in Los Angeles at the time, calling to wish Isidrio *Feliz Cumpleaños* (Happy Birthday).

He responded as follows:

Example 6.7, recorded 1/18/2009, SJG

<p>I: <i>Aquí estamos conviviendo, me me están felicitando ((laugh)) (1) pero bonito no crees, aquí les estoy contando un cuento, pe:ro encantado están así de del este Grigorillo, porque le estoy contando...contando que el hijo de Paco, se llama Eduardo, quien sabe si lo conoces, Eduardo, entonces le conte el cuento cuando yo iba por allá y cuando ma-cuando su maestro de (todos) los muchachos que saben un cuento que (te) cuentan al maestro (...) pero que sea (...) todos los que contaron pero eran de libros, era lo que aprendieron de libro, y luego...</i></p>	<p>Here we are spending time together, they they are congratulating me ((laugh)) (1) but beautifully do you believe it, here I am telling them a story, h:ow fascinated they are that one of of uhm Grigorillo because I am telling it...telling that the son of Paco, his name is Eduardo, who knows if you know him, Eduardo, so I told him the story when I went over there and when te-when his teacher of (all) the boys who know a story that (you) tell the teacher (...) but that it be (...) all of them that they told but they were from books, they were what they had learned from books, and later...</p>
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In his report of the evening's festivities Isidrio used the phrase, *Aquí estamos conviviendo* ("Here we are spending time together") to describe the gathering of family members on his behalf. The term *convivir* (live together) was used frequently within the Guelavian community on celebratory and ritual occasions that brought people together, both to describe this shared togetherness and to comment on its importance for maintaining social ties at the familial and community level.⁶⁵ Isidrio's explicit attention to the family gathering in process, and his own role as the *festejado* (celebrated one) keyed a particular framework for interpreting subsequent interactions (see Goffman 1974).

Following his mention of the story of *Grigorillo* that he had begun to tell again, Isidrio launched into the very same meta-story shown in Example 6.5, focusing in particular on the inferior submissions of Eduardo's classmates, which came out of storybooks. He seemed on the verge of turning to the merits of his own *cuentos*, when

⁶⁵ As I will discuss futher in the next chapter, ritual speechmakers often drew explicit attention to the importance of '*convivencia*,' and repeated the term frequently at celebrations following weddings, patron saint festivals and other events both to describe ideal models of *conviviendo* and to honor the *convivencia* in progress as a crucial source of community connectivity.

the topic abruptly shifted on the other end of the line. In retelling this meta-story in a new context, Isidrio confirmed its importance to the overarching narrative he wanted to tell about himself as both a storyteller and an elder within the family. In this sense his story-prize anecdote constituted a “narrative set-piece” (Bauman 2004: 84) that he drew on regularly, which functioned as a cohering tie between his stories, first person narrations, and other communicative practices. Among other things this meta-story paints a laudatory picture of Isidrio, and accords with the “Looking Good Principle” (see Ochs, Smith & Taylor 1989; Bauman 2004) that has been described by other scholars as a major goal of first person narration.

However, on his birthday, Isidrio had a larger goal beyond mere self-aggrandizement in mind, which became clear a few minutes later on in this same telephone conversation. He began to lecture his daughter Julia and her husband on the importance of this type of gathering, and the sharing of knowledge, for the maintenance of family ties, and the honoring of tradition:

Example 6.8, recorded 1/18/2009, SJG

<p>I: <i>Entonces le digo pues Julita, les digo pues con el mire, si se puede? Julita? Aquí les digo pues este ahorita estamos aquí reunidos, Dios me dió esta vida, y sigo si Dios me permite, pero ustedes sig-pero ustedes también siguen comportando como ahorita, tu también te digo a ti y a tu hermana Odi este que siguen conviviendo y que siguen con este respeto, si si yo me despido de este mundo, pero ((voice quavers)) no vayan a tener problemas nunca nunca ustedes</i></p>	<p>And so I say well Julita, I say to you all well with him look, yes can you? Julita? Here I say to you all well uhm right now we are here together, God gave me this life, and I continue if God permits me, but you all cont-but you all also continue behaving like you do now, you also I say to you and to your sister Odi uhm that you continue spending time together and that you continue with this respect, if if I bid farewell to this world, but ((voice quavers)) you will not have problems, never never you all</p>
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Through the invocation of the story-prize anecdote in Example 6.6, in tandem with the description of his rapt audience members hanging on his every word, Isidrio laid the groundwork for this speech. His grandson Wilber bolstered his authoritative clout, by

delivering a speech thanking him for all he had done as *la cabeza de ésta familia* (“the head of the family”), which he meant literally, further describing Isidrio as the family’s source of knowledge and understanding about the world. Thus Isidrio was well positioned to deliver the above sermon on the value of *conviviendo* and *respeto* within the family. In fact, this was the second iteration of this speech delivered during the course of the party, the first having been addressed to the party attendants, and this second one repeated for the sake of his absent progeny living in Los Angeles.

Much like the meta-story described above, this speech is an instance of spoken mediation, but in this case one that Isidrio explicitly intended to circulate beyond the utterance, to be repeated in other places, contexts and times. He made this clear by saying at the end of his speech to Julia, *Te digo a ti y a tu hermana *Odi* (“I say to you and to your sister Odi”), as Odi was not on the phone, and he wanted to ensure she got the message. In fact later on he mentioned that the very video that I was filming should be viewed as an archive of his words, that the family could return to in the future to remind themselves of this crucially important message. Thus his speech, and the re-invocation of the story-prize meta-story, became embroiled in Isidrio’s efforts to encourage connection, co-living, and a respect for the bonds of family. In the context of his phone conversation to Julia these messages were doubly potent, serving additionally as a reminder of the special forms of communication, and the concerted efforts to maintain familial bonds across temporal and geographic distances, that are necessitated by transborder community membership.

The above discussion has demonstrated how story performances are implicated in and tied to the larger communicative economies in which they are circulated. Through

these processes of circulation stories accrue layers of meaning as they are taken up and put to various uses by tellers, addressees, ratified and non-ratified over-hearers, and as in the example above, at times even by absentee parties. Explicit attention to these processes of circulation allows tellers to construct the traditional rootedness of stories that they perform in somewhat non-traditional ways. In some cases these meta-stories become testimonies, the circulation of which enhances the prestige, authority and perceived wisdom of the tellers themselves. Thus, despite their increasing use of Spanish, a non-traditional code within this genre, used to relate their stories to younger, Spanish-dominant Guelavians, Rodrigo and Isidrio were both able to index their discursive authority by invoking their own elevated social status, previous performances, and favorable audience evaluations.

VI. Revitalizing Narratives

The increasing disassociation of code and genre in storytelling is the focal target of a nascent language revitalization program in Guelavía spearheaded by the current Municipal President. This plan, entitled Da'a bkuu, rut kaa rēni ditzaa do'o ("The niche where the Zapotec language can grow") is based around the translation and performance of traditional stories in San Juan Guelavía Zapotec by local youth (see also Chapter 5). The revitalization plan is doubly steeped in storytelling; on the one hand the plan tells a particular "just so" story about why language shift is occurring, and on the other hand the plan revolves around the telling of stories as a way to reclaim indigenous linguistic traditions, shed the shackles of Spanish imperialism, and reverse language shift. The program is organized around a two-tiered process of generic regimentation that aims to

restrict linguistic variation in storytelling while expanding tellership to include local youth as story performers.

Some aspects of the President's strategy contrast with conventional approaches to revitalization, which are rooted in top-down models of expert and novice, where older speakers teach youth, through storytelling and other means. For example, the participant structure of storytelling in Kaska communities, in which elders tell stories in Kaska to children, translating them line by line into English, socializes children to associate Kaska expertise with elders (Meek 2007: 27-29). These participant roles and communicative patterns keep youth socially and linguistically distant from the Kaska language. Similarly, among Guelavians storytelling is considered the domain of older community members. In keeping with the broader pattern of language shift in the Guelavian community toward the use of Spanish in parent-child interaction, storytelling quite frequently occurs in Spanish, even in the telling of traditional Zapotec tales. Thus for youth to be given the opportunity, not only to perform these stories, but to translate them into and perform them in Zapotec is an inversion of the dynamics typical to many storytelling events. In this case practices of regimentation associated with aesthetic conservatism (e.g. the realignment of storytelling with SJGZ) are bound up with an innovative agenda, the goal of which is to transform youth's relationship to and understanding of the local Zapotec language. In charging youth with the task of "speaking the past," rather than venerated elders, the program offers a new strategy for "carrying it hither" (Kroskirty 2009, 1993). At the same time, however, the program literature characterizes SJGZ as an "historical archive" (Meek 2010) analogous to an

unearthed artifact that must be studied and reconstructed to reveal its truths, rather than a living, breathing, changing language that is deeply intertwined in local life.

At the basis of this approach to revitalization is the President's expressed conviction that these stories constitute dense repositories of traditional knowledge, world-views, and cosmological orientations. In this view he has been heavily influenced by the work of Levi-Strauss, who claimed that the analysis of mythology could provide a window into the underlying cognitive formations at the basis of many Native American cultures and belief systems. The President's revitalization curriculum is designed around the mythological analysis outlined in Levi-Strauss' chapter "The Story of Asdiwal" (see *The Structural Study of Myth and Totemism*, (ed) Leach, 1967: 1-48). Based on Levi-Strauss' discussion of the simultaneous levels of meaning that comprise the structure of myths, the President outlined a multi-step process of mythic translation and performance designed to reacquaint Guelavians with their cultural heritage:

Example 6.9, excerpted from Da'a bkuu, rut kaa rëni ditzaa do'o (my translation of Spanish text):

The strategy consists of recopying, organizing, itemizing and systematizing a collection of our own myths of, we the Zapotecs, the myths that are still, even in Spanish, powerful and significant repositories containing ethical expressions that are contextualized in the natural-cultural framework. These myths are found inscribed in the frame called literature, in the form of stories, legends, fables, anecdotes which sublimate their meaning, through a process of collective-communal de-codification.

Citing Claude Levi-Strauss:

The preceding analysis begins to establish a distinction between two aspects of the construction of myths, the sequences and the schemata. Sequences form the apparent content of myth; the chronological order in which things happen ...meetings ...intervention from the supernatural protector, birth ... childhood ... conflicts, etc. But these sequences are organized on planes at different levels (of abstraction) ...[Its own line which is] horizontal and second by the contrapuntal schemata, which are vertical. Let us draw up an inventory for the present myth.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Geographic schemata | 4. Sociological Schemata |
| 2. Cosmological schemata | 5. Techno-economic schemata |
| 3. Integration | 6. Global integration |

The President has tailored this analytic program to fit the particulars of the Guelavian context, as is evident in the way he frames the citation from Levi-Strauss by mentioning “our own myths,” “we the Zapotecs,” and myths that “even in Spanish” are “powerful and significant repositories.” He characterizes the process of recovering these myths as an almost archaeological process of excavating down through layers of sublimation, in this case the false exterior of literature, fables, and stories that have concealed these myths’ true power and significance, making them appear trivial or quaint.

While Levi-Strauss’ use of structuralism in the analysis of indigenous American myth is well established as part of the anthropological canon, the use of his analytic approach by an indigenous American as a way to understand and rejuvenate his own cultural and cosmological orientations is an unusual flip of the script. Levi-Strauss focused on the potential for the schematic level of mythic structure to reveal to the analyst the underlying tenets of a cultural group, whereas the President views these same myths as archives of dormant bodies of knowledge with the potential to reinvigorate indigenous cultural traditions. In the President’s view these myths are essentially bound up with language; the real wisdom, and the true character of Zapotec indigeneity is best represented, and simultaneously found, in the local Zapotec language.⁶⁶ While the wisdom of these stories and myths was effectively preserved through telling in Spanish, their essence can only be fully expressed and understood in Zapotec. At the end of Example 6.8 he posits that the acquisition of Zapotec will occur almost beneath the level

⁶⁶ The use of Levi-Strauss in the context of an indigenous language revitalization program is especially ironic as Levi-Strauss insisted that in contrast to poetry, which cannot be translated, “the mythical value of the myth remains preserved, even through the worst translation. Whatever our ignorance of the language and the culture of the people where it originated, a myth is still felt as a myth by any reader throughout the world. Its substance does not lie in its style, its original music, or its syntax, but in the story which it tells. It is language, functioning on an especially high level where meaning succeeds practically at ‘taking off’ from the linguistic ground on which it keeps rolling” (Levi-Strauss 1955: 430-431)

of consciousness, but “with a feeling and a signification,” that comes from understanding how language fits together with the whole cultural and cosmological picture that will be pieced together from the wisdom contained in these myths.

The types of stories selected for use within the program reinforce the assertion that there are benefits to be gained by the community from the revelation of hidden realms of indigenous knowledge. The examples listed in the program outline include: the foundation of Guelavía, several episodes from the eternal conflict between *el coyote y el tlacuache* (the coyote and the opossum), and several other cosmologically themed tales about the origins of the universe and various natural elements. Some of these stories are explanatory in nature, and describe the history or significance of particular cultural practices, such as the celebration of *Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead), or traditional methods of salt extraction.⁶⁷ However, most of these stories are structured like fables with morals, and the morals reinforce the heroic stoicism of the *campesino* (rural farmer/peasant) to whom, it is implied, members of the Guelavian community relate on a fundamental level. The most prominent are the allegorical episodes that comprise the epic conflict between the opossum and the coyote. These stories reaffirm the value of certain aspects of *campesino* life that have grown up out of the necessity of poverty, and the wisdom to be gleaned from archetypal conflict between the *campesino* and the urbanite (read *Mestizo*), represented by the humble opossum and the wily coyote respectively. Below is an excerpt from the end of one these translated tales, which describes an encounter between the coyote and the opossum, in which once again, the

⁶⁷ In spite of the emphasis on translation into Zapotec several of the Zapotec translations of stories in the President’s collection were titled in Spanish, following the pattern used in the titles of the stories told to me shown above. This conforms to a widespread pattern in indigenous literacy materials which inscribe indigenous languages as secondary to dominant, or “matrix” languages (see Meek & Messing 2007).

coyote has been threatening to eat the opossum. To evade capture the opossum offers the coyote some of the juiciest *tuna* (prickly pear) fruits he has been harvesting from off of a spiny cactus, but tells him he must close his eyes and he will put them in the coyote's mouth. This excerpt comes after he has fed the coyote several ripe fruits, lulling him into a state of complacency:

Example 6.10, excerpted from program literature

<p><u>Chiy btiuum choon bzē ni nágaa, mi mazru nu gēci, chiy raaipmē: “Beu, an...te kēti gaching laani bzloó, chiy garó bllal ru’u”...bkuaam iyunte bzēki, chi biaabēy laan gēni beu, per rbēllitia beu kēti xneez</u></p>	<p>And so the opossum prepared three prickly pears for the coyote, the biggest, greenest and spiniest, and then he said to him: “Coyote, now...close your eyes and open your mouth”...[and] he threw the three prickly pears right at the coyote's throat, and the coyote did not follow him.</p>
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The opossum picks the bitterest, spiniest *tunas* and throws them directly at the coyote's throat, running away as he writhes in agony. At the end of the Spanish version from which this was translated the moral of the story is explicitly stated:

Example 6.11

<p><i>El tlacuachito una vez mas ha salvado su infamia existencia, mediante el uso adecuado de ‘lo que tenía a mano,’ demostrando lo que hace el ingenio ante la fuerza y el poder</i></p>	<p>Thus the little possum saved his infamous existence once again through the effective use of ‘what he had at hand’ demonstrating what ingenuity can accomplish in the face of force and power.</p>
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This story can be read, and is I think intended to be read, as a metonym for Zapotec language and culture. “Ingenuity in the face of power” can be interpreted as the motto of an indigenous community that has persisted in the face of centuries of oppression and cultural imperialism. In some ways the escape of the opossum from the coyote's clutches is parallel to the role and aspiration of the President's program itself, which he envisions as a way to rescue his language and culture from death at the hands of the Spanish-speaking majority. When read together, the collection of stories about the opossum and

the coyote become a grand historical epic, which repeats itself over and over again across time and space. In the following excerpt, taken from the coda at the end of another episode this sense of repetition and infinitude is apparent:

Example 6.12, excerpted from revitalization program literature

<i>El coyote tenía la ligera sospecha de que el tlacuachito otra vez lo había engañado</i>	The coyote had the sneaking suspicion that the possum had tricked him once again
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Thus these stories acquire a much larger, cosmological significance, the discovery of which, the President proposes, will occur through detailed mythic analysis. Youth reading and translating these myths are led through a series of Zapotec vocabulary exercises based on the myths that teach them about the mundane and sacred meanings within the stories. They learn the words for various parts of the body, in the case of the story excerpted in Example 6.9, the Zapotec words for ‘mouth’ (ru’u) and ‘eye’ (bsloo), the words for ‘coyote’ (beu) and ‘opossum’ (nguul beez). They then move on to the more complex ethical and cosmological dimensions of the story, which are gleaned from the traits and actions of the principal characters within the stories and what the president calls the “*descubrimiento del mensaje escondido*” (discovery of the hidden message).

Stories and storytelling play an important role in many communities as a tool of socialization, and are often seen as possessing potent (re)productive power. Basso (1988) depicts Western Apache views of storytelling as a form of “stalking,” used to pursue errant community members with messages of moral righteousness and culturally appropriate conduct, with the goal of catalyzing personal transformation. Similarly, Kroskrity (1993, 2009) describes the crucial role that stories play in perpetuating productive agricultural cycles and community maintenance among the Arizona Tewa. In the case of the revitalization program described above, the Zapotec language is construed

as a secret code that has the power to reveal hidden truths contained in stories, which in turn have the potential to transform locals' understanding of themselves and their heritage. According to the President's program outline, it is by proactively regimenting the genre of storytelling through the laborious process of translation, the parsing of mythic structures, and the crafting of story performances that Guelavians will unlock the hidden wisdom of their ancestral origins. This process is envisioned as a one of collective awakening from a slumber induced by centuries of oppression and cultural imperialism, by a return to the community's linguistic past.

VII. Conclusion

This chapter has explored a context in which language shift has brought about the loosening of generic boundaries in storytelling performances, and a divergence between ideological conceptions of storytelling and storytelling practices. The various uses of generic innovation and generic regimentation by storytellers, framers, audience, and revitalization planners are bound up with their conflicting temporal orientations: fidelity to the discursive past, versus accommodation to future. The in-the-moment exigencies of storytelling performances often lead tellers to embrace the use of Spanish, an atypical language for storytelling among Guelavians. This in turn creates an imperative for tellers to find other ways to ground their stories in discursive tradition, such as the use of metalinguistic and metapragmatic framing devices. Conversely, in the context of the President's revitalization agenda, the realignment of San Juan Guelavía Zapotec with the practice of storytelling is foregrounded as a strategy for rejuvenating imperiled linguistic and cultural traditions. In this context Spanish is conceived of as a vessel that has held and preserved this body of myths and stories over time, but cannot express their true

significance, or hidden meanings. Those can only be unveiled through the use of SJGZ, the language in which they were conceived, and to which they are essentially bound.

In as sense, all of the Guelavians described in this chapter told different kinds of stories about storytelling, and its significance within the community. The divergences and overlaps between their various perspectives echo debates that have pervaded indigenous communities throughout the Americas between, on the one hand, those that distinguish sharply between non-indigenous and indigenous realms (of thought, behavior, language, and culture) and, on the other hand, those who favor discourses of hybridity, which conceptualize so-called indigenous and non-indigenous realms as overlapping and mutually constitutive. Among those who espouse conventional dichotomies, there is a widespread proclivity to exclude the possibility that Spanish, English or other colonial languages could ever be considered Indian languages. The effects of such dichotomizing discourses can culminate in “cris[e]s of authenticity” like that described by Stephen (1989: 266) during her work on a Zapotec language and history project, following the death of an elder deemed the foremost expert in linguistic and cultural tradition. These views ignore the complex hybrid character of many contemporary indigenous communities in which indigenous and European languages coexist within the same, or overlapping speech communities and are drawn on strategically by speakers across contexts (see Webster 2006, Field 1998).

In comparing and contrasting storytelling practices alongside speakers’ divergent ideologies about the relationship between storytelling and language, I have offered a new perspective on the challenges faced by communities undergoing language shift in maintaining traditional speech genres. These challenges have inspired the creation of

new ways to “speak the past” into a present rife with the tensions, contradictions, and transformations that define life in an indigenous transborder community. In the following chapter I explore the role of transborder circulation in the ritual life of the Guelavian community, building directly from the discussion of storytelling in this chapter. Ritual events provide a forum for the formal public enactment of community values and traditions, through highly conventionalized speech and interactions. Through the analysis of ritual speech across events and geographic contexts, I investigate the relationship between tradition and transformation in the linguistic life of the Guelavian transborder community from a different angle.

Chapter 7

Transborder Circulation and Ritual Life

I: Introduction

Example 7.0, recorded 6/11/2009, LA

<p>J: ...cuando *Wilber se recibió fue cuando se fueron ellos y ya ella se quería quedar aquí porque ya tenía de novio a *Angel ... y se quería quedar y dice su papá "No vamonos" dice porque y este "ya si después regresamos pero tu tienes que ir conmigo" "Bueno" dice y ya se fue y allí estábamos ((yawning)) cuando Angel ya llegó con sus papas también y ya la fueron a pedir, porque Angel la extrañaba... y se fue para el pueblo ni siquiera, y ni le avisó a ella...fue sorpresa...y nosotros no ves que no se si das cuenta allí en el-en la casa, pues pusimos ladrillo así un-una como a una tira nada más así de llegar hasta la calle, hasta la puerta así...y mero estábamos acomodando los ladrillos y luego dice, dice ella, "Ay!" dice "Que tal si que viniera Angel" dice "y voy en este caminito" dice "a encontrarlo" dice ... "Que se viniera" y le digo y cual a los dos tres días que lo que ella dice eso ((gasps)) que van tocando la puerta y luego no se lo creía pues y todo y ella casi se desmayaba cuando dice ((gasps)) "Es Angel!" dice... "No puede ser!" dice "que sea Angel!" dice...ni ella se lo creía pues porque el así ya le-se habla por teléfono pero no este nunca le dijo que se iba a venir...y que se iba a ir para allá pues...y ya fue como mando, le aviso mi hermana y no se que cosa mando mi hermana y con el pretexto de que eso lo fue a dejar yo ni lo conocía ((yawning)) yo no lo conocía antes y me dijo ella "Es Angel es el es mi novio" dice y no estaba su papá para esa vez y...ya después ya dice ella cuando dice el "Cuando va a estar el?" dice "que quiero venir a hablarles" dice y ... después se cuando ya vino y ya dice que "venía a pedir la mano de Casilda"</p>	<p>...When Wilber received [his degree] that was when they went and then she wanted to stay here because she already had Angel as a boyfriend ...and she wanted to stay and her father says "No were going" he says because and uhm "then if after we go back but you have to go with me" "Fine" she says and then she left and there we were ((yawning)) when Angel then arrived with his parents also and then they went to ask her, because Angel missed her...and he went to the village without even, he didn't even let her know...it was a surprise...and we you know how I don't know if you realize there in the – in the house, well we put brick down like that a-a like just a little strip like that to get up to the street, up to the door like that...and we were just laying the bricks and later she says, she says "Oh!" she says "How would it be if Angel were to come" she says "and I go along this little path" she says "to meet him" she says ... "That he would come" and I tell you and what two or three days after that what that she said that ((gasps)) that they go knocking on the door and later she didn't believe it well and everything and she almost fainted when she says ((gasps)) "Es Angel!" she says..."It can't be!" she says "that it is Angel!" she says...she didn't even believe it well because he like that he had – he called by telephone but he didn't uhm he never said that he was going to come...and that he was going to go over there well...and that was how she sent, my sister advised him and I don't know what thing she sent my sister and with the pretext that that was what he went to drop off I didn't even know him ((yawning)) I didn't know him before that and she told me "It's Angel he is is my boyfriend" she says and he father wasn't there that time and...then afterwards then she says when-he says "When will he be here?" he says "that I would like to come and</p>
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	“speak to you [both]” he says and ... afterwards when he had come and then he says that “I came to ask for Casilda’s hand [in marriage]”
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The extended narrative shown above evokes the principal theme that I will explore in this chapter, the role of transborder circulation in the ritual life of the Guelavian transborder community. *Julieta, the narrator, was describing to me her family’s complicated migration history, when she reached the period of time leading up to her daughter *Casilda’s wedding. Casilda had recently returned to Guelavía with her father, after living in Los Angeles for several years. While there she had begun dating *Angel, and had reluctantly left him behind to return with her father for her brother *Wilber’s graduation from law school. Casilda was spending her days with her family pining for Angel when he surprised them all by appearing one day without warning to propose to Casilda, who nearly fainted from the shock. Like the migration narratives discussed in Chapter 2, Julieta’s story foregrounds the conflicting emotional demands of transborder life, in which geographically disparate kin continually strive to maintain connections with one another. At the same time, her narrative illustrates how the structure of ritual event participation in the Guelavian transborder community both motivates and shapes the movement of people, goods, and resources across borders. Her story is replete with explicit and implicit examples of these types of movements and circulations; Casilda and her father return to Guelavía from Los Angeles to celebrate Wilber’s graduation, the family works together to lay a brick walkway paid for with money brought back from the United States, Angel returns with his parents to propose marriage in the locally appropriate manner, and Julieta’s sister takes advantage of his return to send back something to her family.

Amid the increasing fragmentation of the Guelavian community, driven by migration, geographical separation, language shift, and cultural transformation, the connective ties between community members are tenuous. For Guelavians living in Oaxaca, Los Angeles and elsewhere, the celebration of rituals is a primary way for them to reaffirm their sense of belonging to a shared community with a shared orientation to a common set of values and traditions. In this chapter I trace the circulatory life of ritual events throughout the Guelavian community, by which I mean both the exchange of resources among community members needed to enact an event, the ritual events themselves (which often involve the circulation of people), and, following the events, the circulation of visual media, such as photographs and video recordings of the events, across borders between distant kin. I focus on four dimensions of transborder ritual life in particular: 1) ritual kinship and ritual exchange networks, 2) ritual (re)production in Los Angeles, 3) circulation and secondary ritual participation, and 4) ritual return migration.

The term ‘ritual’ evokes a sense of fixity and tradition replicated anew with each passing year or generation, and has been used by many scholars to describe those social processes which “enable the individual to pass from one defined position to another which is equally well defined” according to protocol that should be “at least analogous if not identical in detail” in each instantiation (Van Gennep 1960: 3). I build on this understanding of ritual by focusing here on the dynamic qualities of rituals that enable their mobility across social and geographic contexts. Like the genre of storytelling discussed in the previous chapter, ritual event celebrations are a site of reflexive cultural reproduction, characterized by a preoccupation with cultural continuity amid change.

Among the disparate nodes of the Guelavian community, it is precisely the deeply ingrained social significance of ritual events and the discursive forms which characterize them that make them worthy, firstly of recording (in picture and video form) for posterity, and secondly of circulation across contexts and speakers. Released from their temporal and geographic binds, rituals can be re-consumed anew by absent kin, friends, and community members, in the process of which they continue to accrue new layers of meaning. The traditionality of ritual events motivates their dynamism via processes of discursive and social circulation, and these circulations in turn enable the maintenance of ritual traditions by offering a source of coherence and unification to the far-flung members of the Guelavian diaspora. Throughout this chapter I explore the strategies employed by Guelavians to maintain ritual practices and the, often unintended, transformations that result.

I use the terms ‘ritual’ and ‘ritual events’ to describe ceremonies, celebrations and other gatherings organized to mark social milestones, rites of passage, and occasions of religious significance in the Guelavian community (see Haviland 1996, Hanks 1984, Keane 1991; 2004, Stephen 1989; Turner 1969; Van Gennep 1960, Fredman 1981, Douglas 1970, Durkheim 1969). These events are generally characterized by a high degree of conventionality, as well as the use of ritual language (e.g. respect registers, poetic devices, grammatical forms, ritual kin terms, prayers etcetera). Participation in ritual events creates dense webs of mutual obligation between family members and community members both near and far through reciprocal exchange of money, food, trinkets, clothes and other goods. It is now part of ritual protocol to photograph and video-record events and to circulate DVDs and photo CDs to allow for the secondary

participation of distant kin. While not a substitute for physical co-presence, this mediated form of participation is a crucial form of connectivity used by people on both sides of border, that (re)incorporates distant kin into practices of reciprocal exchange.

Throughout the Oaxacan Valley migration has brought about a rejuvenation of ritual life, as for migrants among the most “important venues for public participation in the community are the support of fiestas and participation in the community's political and religious hierarchy or cargo system” (Cohen 2001: 962).

The literature on transnational migration includes a wide range of perspectives on the role of migrant remittances in the economic life of sending and receiving communities. For example scholars question whether remittances foster economic development and growth or dependency, and some have pointed to the role of ritual celebration in perpetuating cycles of debt (see Van Wey et al 2005, Cohen 2001, Massey 1994, Stephen 1993). These debates echo those documented in ethnographic accounts of communities with active religious cargo systems⁶⁸, which have arisen in recent years due to the growth of Protestant evangelism throughout Latin America. Protestant converts often view festivals as “socially and economically harmful” as they “promote drinking, excessive spending or ‘burning money’” and “hence cause poverty,” and Protestant evangelism in Guelavía has prompted conflicts over the abdication of ritual responsibilities in the community, as I will discuss below (Gross 2003: 486). However, for the Catholic majority, remittances are embedded within ritual relationships and

⁶⁸ Cargo systems, in Oaxaca also referred to as “*Usos y Costumbres*,” are a combination of religious and secular forms of obligatory community service, sometimes requested in the form of *tequio* which means a mandatory fee or contribution of labor (e.g. building new roads), other times in the form of *servicio*, an official position (e.g. school committee member), religious ritual hosting, known as *mayordomía*, which I will discuss further below, all of which are assigned by municipal authorities through a process of *nombramiento*, naming.

networks of exchange, and thus are bound up in a local ethos of mutual assistance, reciprocity, and respect, values seen to foster community sustainability. I trace the intricate processes of circulation that accompany such events, including ritual exchange relationships, the community system of guelaguetza (see Chapter 2), the transborder flow of money and other goods, and the secondary consumption of recorded events by distant kin, all of which facilitate “interactionally doing togetherness in difference” (Goebel 2010: 235).

Throughout this chapter I combine “thick description” of ritual events, processes of exchange, and circulation with the analysis of talk about ritual across social contexts, spaces and speakers. The close examination of ritual communication and practices reveals that these events comprise a story that Guelavians tell and re-tell to themselves about themselves, a story that is both dynamic and highly codified, reflective of the preoccupation with the roles of tradition and transformation in the Guelavian community. In a sense the enactment of rituals constitutes a kind of “first story,” a narrative constructed by the various participants, and dominated by those vested with the authority to pronounce (e.g. priests, elders, tsëgul, *padrinos*). As the records of these events (photos, videos, first hand accounts) circulate across new contexts, they accrue new levels of meaning; a wedding becomes a photographic montage of a distant migrant’s family and home community, the viewing of which provides a basis for discursive and social alignment between distant interlocutors through the telling of second stories. These second stories can in turn shift the ground for future first stories; for example the ubiquity of DVD recordings of ritual events can alter the ways in which ritual participants

present themselves, as they strive to accommodate the expectations of an imagined future audience.

II. Theorizing ritual practices

The specialized practices and communicative forms that accompany ritual events have long been a focus of anthropological study. Boas, for example, considered rituals and other “esoteric” phenomena to be of a secondary order relative to ordinary social activity, generated to make sense of “the heterogeneous mass of beliefs and practices” found in a given community or cultural group (1902: 313). Victor Turner argued that the interpretation of the symbols associated with rites and rituals constituted a “standardized hermeneutics” (1969: 9) of a given cultural tradition, additionally emphasizing how such practices provide an opportunity to break with and subsequently reaffirm the ordinary social order, in so doing strengthening community commitment to shared values through “the dialectic linkage between fragmentation and harmony” (Stewart 196).

Some have described rituals as a powerful mode of social control, constraining the possibilities for action and individual agency, for example through the increased structuring of talk within the ritual frame (see Bloch 1975). Others have looked at the partial nature of such social constraints, and the overlapping and/or ambiguous character of many practices associated with ritual events or other circumscribed social domains, which open up possibilities for creativity and transformation (see Irvine 1979). As cultural practices defined by tradition and continuity, rituals are an archetypal site for investigating the “dichotomy between structure and situated use” (Hanks 1984: 132). In the investigation of ritual life in a transborder community these issues become more

complex, as “situated use” is a complex multi-sited process. Language use in and around ritual events is a rich site for exploring how the relationship between a given instantiation of a ritual and the structure of rituals more broadly, is conceptualized by the members of a given community.

Scholars of language have demonstrated that ritual speech events constitute “baptismal” moments, which offer opportunities for the “invocation of essentializations [in] micro-contexts of occurrence,” (Silverstein 1996: 274) allowing social groups to “coordinate cultural representations” (Mannheim 1986: 51). Across the literature there is a strong emphasis on how ritual practices, texts, and forms of speech gain efficacy from their decontextualization from particular instantiations in time and space. Due to their highly conventional or formulaic character such practices “transcend” ordinary, context-bound interaction and can:

be interpreted as referring to general rather than particular contexts...the denial of referential specificity enables rituals to concentrate on reference to eternal or universal truths” (Parmentier 1994: 131).

However, for the far-flung members of the Guelavian community rituals are an enduringly important source of community identification and membership precisely because of their contextual boundedness; the majority of Guelavian ritual events can only be carried out properly in San Juan Guelavía, Oaxaca itself, in and among the homes of one’s progenitors. Any Guelavian living anywhere, no matter how much or how little they know about local linguistic, cultural and ritual practices, can return to the village, participate in a patron saint festival, or hold a wedding ceremony, and in so doing reaffirm their belonging in the Guelavian community through an identificational “baptism” of sorts. Those who cannot be physically present for the enactment of rituals

can look at photos, or watch videos of these events and be reassured of the continuity of their community, and the cultural practices that give it substance. These videos and photos do not constitute a “denial of specificity,” but rather an echo, or alternatively an icon of the events and images they archive.

III. An overview of Guelavian ritual life

Within the Guelavian community many occasions are celebrated; there are large-scale events like weddings, funerals, patron saint festivals, *posadas*, and *Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead), as well as smaller events like baptisms, birthdays, roof-raising, graduations, and anniversaries. In general the larger the event, and the greater the number of invited guests and attendees (and accordingly the amount of labor, resource aggregation and time involved) the greater the significance of, as well as the prestige of hosting, a given event. Due to the frequency and length of ritual celebrations and the elaborate preparations involved, attendance and participation in ritual events is very much a part of the fabric of everyday life for most Guelavians. There are weddings and/or baptisms nearly every weekend in the local church, on top of the myriad other events that crop up on a weekly, monthly, and annual basis, and owing to the density of ritual and familial kin networks in the community a large portion of the community is often invited. Due to their ubiquity and participatory character, ritual events constitute a continual forum for the enactment of community solidarity, and through processes of transborder circulation they incorporate distant kin. Here I provide brief descriptions of the various kinds of ritual events that I observed and participated in during my fieldwork.

Birthdays: These are among the most mundane events celebrated by Guelavians, and usually only include the family members of the *festejado* (celebrated one). Usually a

family member hosts and prepares a special dinner of the festejado's favorite food, a cake, and some informal words are spoken in their honor. Exceptions to this include: 1) The 3rd birthday of any child, which celebrates the child's survival past the first three uncertain years of life, and 2) Eightieth, ninetieth and other decade marking birthdays of elder individuals, in this case to celebrate their remarkable longevity. Both of these can be quite elaborate affairs involving at least a hundred guests, significant preparations, live music played by a local brass band, and formal speech making by relatives, and often the *festejados* themselves. Graduation and anniversary parties are very similar in size and organization.

Baptisms: As in most Catholic communities, the baptism of a child among Guelavians signifies their formal entrance into the Catholic faith, and cleanses their soul of any sin, readying them for entrance into heaven. As in other Catholic traditions the baptism is also the time of a baby's life in which their parents choose godparents for them. In Guelavía (and throughout much of the Catholic world) a child's baptism also initiates the selection of the *madrina y padrino de bautizo* (godmother and godfather of the baptism), who are vested with specific responsibilities throughout the child's life, and most especially when they marry.⁶⁹ These individuals then become the *compadre* (co-father) and *comadre* (co-mother) of the child's parents. This bond is of particular significance, as it marks the initiation of life-long reciprocal exchange obligations, which I will elaborate on below.

As with all events that invoke and honor ritual kin relationships, baptisms are often quite large affairs involving weeks or months of preparation and lasting two days.

⁶⁹ Other godparents are chosen for a child's first communion and confirmation.

On the first day *invitados* (formally invited guests) come to the home of the child to be baptized for a breakfast of *chocolate* (hot chocolate) and sweet breads, after which everyone proceeds to the church for the ceremony. Then everyone returns to the family's home for a large dinner, liberal consumption of both beer and *mezcal*, a *piñata* breaking, a cake, music, and dancing until early the following morning. On the second day, *invitados* return for an early lunch and an extended period of socializing and cleaning. I only attended one *Primera Comunion* (first communion) during my research, which was similar in all respects to the baptisms I attended.

Colados: (roof raisings): These are ceremonies held when the roof of a new house is raised, to honor the workers who built it and to formally bless the house for its future residents. *Colados* are quite common in the community due to the frequency with which new homes are built in San Juan Guelavía, most often for absent migrants who send money back for construction costs, in which case they are planned and carried out for the home owners by local family members. They involve the preparation of a large meal for all of the workers and (all present) family members of the homeowners, as well as a gathering in the new house itself with candles, incense, and an image of *La Virgen de Guadalupe*⁷⁰, or *Juquilita*⁷¹, where a respected elder male family member will offer formal words of blessing.

Día de Los Muertos: The Day of the Dead is celebrated throughout Mexico, but the Oaxaca region is known throughout the country for the elaborateness of the celebrations. Within the Guelavian community on *Todos Santos* (All Saint's Day), the

⁷⁰ *La Virgen de Guadalupe* is the patron virgin of all Mexico; pilgrimages in her honor are made to the Cathedral in Mexico City by many Mexicans each year, and images of her adorn nearly all home altars.

⁷¹ *Juquilita* is the patron virgin of the village of Juquila, in the mountains of southwestern Oaxaca; throughout their lives many Oaxacan make pilgrimages on foot or by car. Those who go always bring back images of *la Juquilita* to decorate their altars, their cars, their businesses etcetera.

day before all godchildren visit the homes of their godparents in the community, bringing offerings of bread, chocolate, apples and oranges, and staying to share a cup of hot chocolate before going to the next house. Community members elaborately adorn their home altars with fruits, flowers, and special shaped breads for the occasion. On the Day of the Dead locals prepare the favorite foods of their deceased loved ones and then proceed to the cemetery where they eat together atop the graves of their family. This is to welcome the visiting souls of the dead. Nine days later, during *Los Responsos*, they return to the cemetery to share another meal, to have the graves of their family members blessed by a priest and to say goodbye as the souls once again depart.

Las Posadas: *Posadas* are a Catholic ritual held from the 16th to the 24th of December that honor the trials of Joseph and Mary as they sought shelter for nine days prior to the birth of Jesus. In Guelavía nine families are appointed by the municipal authority to host one of each of the nine nights, and the church committee appoints an additional nine families to do *posadas chicas* (small-scale *posadas*). Those who host the *posadas grandes* begin preparations months in advance and formally invite a large number of guests. The cooking begins a day prior to the *posada* itself and involves a veritable army of women. On the actual day of the *posada* the family hosts a midday meal and then in the evening proceeds to the church.

Following a session of prayer in the church family and guests gather, forming a procession led by three wind musicians who play mournful processional music as the group moves forward through the streets of town. At the front of the line are individuals bearing the standards and statues of the church. They stop at each street corner, growing in number until finally reaching the home of the night's host. At this point the family and

musicians enter the altar and proceed with a series of songs and prayers. Meanwhile those community members that joined the procession, often numbering in the hundreds and up to a thousand, gather outside the host's gate to receive *dulces* (candies), *tamales* (steamed corn bread), and cups of hot *atole* (rice porridge). The invited guests are then seated for a dinner served by the host's family. The next day the invited guests return for a midday meal and music. The smaller *posadas* involve fewer guests and much less elaborate preparations.

Fiesta de San Juan Bautista: The patron saint of San Juan Guelavía, St. John the Baptist (see Chapter 3 for Guelavía's origin myth), is honored twice annually in Oaxaca, during the last week of June and January respectively. Mirror festivals are held in Los Angeles during these same dates. These festivals are the largest, most elaborate of the year, lasting eight days each, and involving six to eight months of preparation. Each year these festivals are hosted by the *mayordomos*, a married couple that is appointed each year by the municipal authorities; this position is considered to be a great honor. The financial burden associated with *mayordomía* is heavy, as the appointees are expected to fulfill a number of associated duties throughout their year of service in addition to those associated with the festivals themselves, including furnishing the church with fresh flowers continuously. *Mayordomía* is the most prestigious of the religious cargo offices; the honor of being selected is proportional to the incredible expense incurred on *mayordomos*, and the need to mobilize networks of *compadrazgo* and *guelaguetza* in order to successfully complete the dizzying array of preparations and arrangements.

During the festivals *mayordomos* host a large gathering of invited guests (up to two hundred), for several days in a row, and they bear many of the expenses associated

with organizing the *Convite* (the parade that initiates the *Fiesta*) including a marching band, *los monos* (two very large papier-mâché doll costumes of a man and a woman, animated by a person inside), and the services of a *huehuete/tsëgul* (ritual speech maker). Other community women contribute baskets holding fireworks or flowers, which they place on their heads as they parade through the village. On the evening following the *Convite*, invited guests return to the *mayordomos*' house for music, dancing, and drinking that often lasts well into the following morning. On the third night of celebrations the community gathers in the main municipal square where there is a large array of fireworks provided by the *mayordomos*, including those shaped like bull heads which young men grab and place on their heads after they are lit, as well as *el Castillo* (the castle), a large tower of fireworks that is lit at the very end of the night. Additionally, they donate several of their best bulls to the *Jaripeo*, a rodeo that is held each evening of the fiesta, during which local men compete in bull riding. Each night of the festival locals gather in the church for the novena, nine nights of prayers honoring *San Juan Baustista*.

Weddings: Weddings are by far the most common and among the most significant events in the Guelavian community. Nearly all couples, including those who reside outside of Oaxaca in the U.S. and elsewhere, choose to marry in Guelavía in the local Catholic Church and celebrate in the homes of their parents. Weddings are (usually) preceded by an elaborate process of proposal involving the groom's entire family and ritual kin network, in addition to the conscription of a *tsëgul* who serves as a go-between for the groom's parents, making the formal request for the prospective bride's hand in marriage, and carrying her response back to the groom's family. Alternatively, some grooms rob brides from their homes without asking permission, an

option that can be chosen for a number of reasons, including financial hardship or parental disapproval.

If a formal proposal is offered and accepted, the groom begins a period of service leading up to the wedding during which time he is expected to sweep his future-in-laws patio daily, while his parents furnish their daughter-in-law to be with beauty supplies. The relationship between the bride and groom's parents, *los consuegros* (meaning co-in-laws), commences at this time, and much like relations of *compadrazgo*, this tie is defined by mutual respect and reciprocal obligation. The day prior to the wedding itself invited guests come to the home of the bride and groom respectively to help with cooking and general preparations, and are served two meals. The wedding day itself involves an elaborate process of ritualized exchange. First gifts are brought to the bride's home, including the large gifts presented by her godparents, such as a wardrobe, as well as ovens, refrigerators, and the many smaller gifts for the bride brought by other guests. At least two dozen live turkeys, and assorted other livestock, such as sheep and goats, are brought along with *canastos*, large baskets filled with sweet bread and *chocolate*. Following the wedding ceremony at the church, all of these items are carried to the groom's house (where the bride will now live) and delivered with great ceremony. All of these processes are marked by the ritual speeches of the tsëgul. Ritually significant items are delivered to the homes of the *padrinos* with similar ceremony, and at each juncture there is music, food, and dancing organized by the tsëgul. The evening ends with a return to the groom's home where there are hours of music and dancing, including several

formal wedding waltzes, and *la Vibora*,⁷² lasting until the wee hours of the morning. The day after the wedding all invited guests return to the home of the groom for another shared meal, dancing, drinking, cleaning and socializing.

IV. Ritual kinship, reciprocal obligation and ritual exchange

The above overview was an effort to illustrate the pervasiveness and elaborate character of Guelavian ritual life and to contextualize the dense networks of exchange and reciprocal obligation that underlie social life in the community. Nearly all Guelavians are connected to one another as in-laws, *compadres* (co-fathers), *comadres* (co-mothers), *padrinos* (godparents), *ahijados/as* (godsons/daughters), or through blood kinship, and these ties are drawn on continually in the fulfilling of ritual obligations throughout an individual's life cycle. In keeping with the central importance of these ties, most ritual events incorporate the repeated recognition and honoring of one's ritual, affinal and consanguineal kin, and the use of respect pronouns and kin terms in both Spanish and Zapotec.

Figure 7-1, Respect kin terms

<i>Consuegros; guix</i>	Co-parents-in-law
<i>Padrino, madrina; datmbaly, nambaly</i>	Godfather, godmother
<i>Compadre, comadre</i>	Co-father, co-mother
<i>Ahijado, ahijada; llinbaldeny</i>	Godson, goddaughter; godchild

In addition to these affinal and ritual kin networks, most Guelavians also call on fellow community members for support in the fulfillment of ritual obligations through what is known locally as *guelaguetza*.

⁷² *La Vibora* (the viper) is a winding circular dance done first with all of the single women at the wedding, then all of the young men; the bride and groom stand on chairs, each one holding the end of a handkerchief, while the guests try to knock them off of their chairs.

Guelaguetza is a community-wide system of mutual assistance, which community members utilize with regularity for all types of occasions, and which augments the ritual kin networks referenced above. Through this system any community member can request goods from another for use in a ritual festival or event of some kind, for instance turkeys, chickens, bushels of sugar, corn, beans, chilies, rice or cacao, the quantity, and quality of which are carefully tabulated by both parties. In the future, when they are in similar need, the givers can request the return of the same good in equal quantity and of equal quality. Guelaguetza exchanges are tabulated carefully in notebooks, and people know exactly how much of every good or animal they have either lent out, or received, and the quality of the product, though the fairness of these exchanges is a frequent source of argument, complaint, and occasionally open conflict. In the interaction between *Pompella and *Roberto excerpted below, the general expectations and protocol associated with these exchanges is elucidated.

Example 7.1, recorded 12/2008, SJG

((co-in-laws, sitting together at table sifting through and cleaning a bushel of chiles))	((co-in-laws, sitting together at table sifting through and cleaning a bushel of chiles))
P: <u>ĒĒ beru nuunq guillziy pacsē zananq</u>	Yes some are like paper that's how they are
R: <u>ĒĒ o teete mod ti zec tiza rguill deb</u>	Yes nothing to be done just like that they pay
((later on))	((later on))
R: <u>Na bdilla tib bult lluib lo *Manuel Coje chibichinax guropiiz o la guyoniz</u>	I paid a bushel of corn to Manuel Cojito when he was married two or three years ago
P: <u>ĒĒ</u>	Yes
R: <u>Chiy ax bdetex cun bzanchē *Amelia tuiy la gunaaqui Amelia de Lupe</u>	And so they came with his sister Amelia or what's her name the woman Amelia de Lupe
P: <u>ĒĒ</u>	Yes
R: <u>Chiy nabi "Banbiu dispensar" nabi "talla talla zeene las laabiu nuu tiby guelguezee" "ĒĒ" rapiebi a diegi na punt ta nap quē biuiy" "ĒĒ" rapiebi "a diegy na punt ay napa ochenta y cinco kil nagui ēē" na Manuel "Guldiqbiu ax cadebi listenqui?" "ĒĒ" nabi "tazuunbiu favor" "Quēty xiyy cuedad" ti rapiebi "ati nazad bien" rapiebi a nax "xtiosten laat zeed ti xte laat an chiy fech" rapiebi ax naby "Tsan gubidx" nabi "ĒĒ" rapiebi ax na debi "Laabiu lla" nabi "per dunnē ax ruu diandeinqui?" "ĒĒ" rapiebi "ruu diandeinqui" per</u>	And he said "Pardon me" he said "do you remember do you remember, do you remember there is a <u>guelaguetza</u> " "Yes" I said "There it is written do you have it?" "Yes" I said "There it is written there it is eighty-five kilos there are yes" said Manuel "That's true and do you have the list?" "Yes" he said "do [us] the favor" "Don't worry" and I said to him "Yes I owe you good" and I said to him "Now thanks to you all that came to give notice now when is the date?" I said and he said "In fifteen days" he said "Yes" I said and he said "You well" he said

<u>an nax per an xtiosten xtiosten Dios bguatni per zacalaz debi</u>	“but we there in the door of the store?” “Yes” I said “There in the door of the store” but now well but now thanks thanks to God the harvest gave they were contented they
P: <u>Ēě</u>	Yes

The above interaction begins with Pompella’s observation that the bushel of *guajillo* chilies they are working with is sub par, in this case because the chiles are too thin and papery, which likely means they have been in storage for too long. These were to be used to make the sauce for the main entrée served at a posada dinner, hosted by Roberto’s daughter, and they had been provided to her via guelaguetza by another community member. Roberto responded to Pompella’s criticism by saying, teete mod ti zec tiza rguill deb (“no way around it just like that they pay”) meaning that there was nothing to be done about their poor quality, some people just repay with inferior goods. He went on to describe an instance some years before when he had reciprocated a quantity of corn that he had been given for the wedding of an acquaintance, an obligation that he generously fulfilled.

I have highlighted in bold faced text Roberto’s report of the formal request made to him, which began with the phrase Banbiu dispensar (“you-formal pardon [me]”), various iterations of which appear frequently in the ritual speech of *huehuetes*. The term dispensar is a Spanish borrowing, meaning “excuse,” “pardon,” or “absolve,” but is likely an archaic term that only persists in Zapotec, as the term *disculpar* (unblame) occurs most commonly in local Spanish. By invoking a term that is tied to the respect register used in ritual speechmaking, Roberto’s interlocutor marked his own respect for their relationship and the process of exchange in which they were engaged. Citing the bountiful harvest that season Roberto explained that he was able to give them what they

requested and they were contented. Both his conduct, and the conduct of his exchange partner, modeled virtuous Guelaguetza exchange in comparison to the inadequate reciprocation represented by the papery chilies they were sifting through.

As suggested by the exchange in Example 7.1, Guelavians are embedded in debt/credit relationships with many community members by virtue of their ritual obligations, in addition to those with whom they are connected by ties of kinship. These must be honored regardless of personal feeling, and their negation is viewed as a grave transgression, as Roberto clarified later on in his conversation with Pompella while describing a memorable failure of reciprocation on his part some years earlier. He began his long, detailed narrative saying, Tiby gueld ziiy pac banë faiy (“One time only we failed”), eventually explaining that he offered a sub par turkey to a family in reciprocation for one they had given to him in the past. They had given him a male bird that weighed six and a half pounds and so Roberto went to the market and purchased a bird of the same weight and quality, or so he thought. He later discovered that he had been deceived by the poultry merchant’s faulty scale, for when he brought the bird to the family it weighed in at only five pounds. In the excerpt shown below he recounts the family patriarch’s reaction to the perceived offense of his inferior offering:

Example 7.2, recorded 12/2008, SJG

R: <u>Rëyiy bënyqui maestrë Jesu Crist chiy rapi togul laab “tëquëtza isubnë xte stib kil iruld re lle”</u>	Those people were so mad Jesus Christ [our] teacher and I said to the deceased man to him “couldn’t we put of another kilo and a half here well
P: <u>Ax za at nuu xnezi</u>	Yes well [they] say [they] have their reason
R: <u>Ax nab “quëchë guquëne tiangliu par izubu mëly o par iguchëng bel cuch”</u>	Well he said “I didn’t give it to you [like that] why would you put money, why would you mix it with pork meat”
P: ((laughing))	((laughing))
R: <u>“Bëdy guquënia laat” nab “belza an quëty gul guzuut teete mod ti quëty guntia recibirëng quëty zarcaztia bel chu quiang”</u>	“Chicken I gave you all” he said “if now you all can’t pay it there’s nothing to be done I am not going to receive it I don’t even want [pork] meat to complete it”

P: <u>Ēē</u>	Yes
R: <u>“Nicsa mēly” nab “xox gay mēly” nab “tiuby ti za chuu a bay” rapiab ban “disculp” rapiab “Ēē rbe” nab “guenru gunenq xipar xipar nall icaa bēdyllall nena bēdyngul bnulla”</u>	“Nor money” he said “how is one going to eat money” he said “all at once it must come” “Oh well” I said to him “pardon” I said to him “Yes man” he said “better that you take it why why” he said “would I take a female turkey when male turkey I gave”

Roberto began this excerpt calling on *maestrë Jesu Crist* (Jesus Christ [our] teacher), as if to beg for divine teachings of understanding and patience, while he recalled the unpleasantness that followed his offering. His narrative effectively illustrates both what one should and should not do within the parameters of *guelaguetza*: one should strive to fulfill one’s obligations to the utmost, but the receiver needs to have a degree of humility, flexibility and understanding in order to maintain the goodwill of his or her exchange partner.

Instead the patriarch, Osvaldo, derided his offering and rejected all attempts to appease him for the perceived slight, saying that he can’t eat money, and that he doesn’t want pork meat when he gave turkey. The interaction recalled is marked by the lack of respect forms, and the confrontational character of the exchange, which contrasts sharply with the excerpt shown in Example 7.1. Later on Roberto in the conversation criticized the furious Osvaldo more explicitly, saying:

Example 7.3, recorded 12/2008, SJG

F: <u>Bay dunnē ba zacti tiop deb cuntis inēlldeb stib kil bel ēē rllapinē güiti na dichill per bēnqui lle quesentiend riguiaguivy togul Baldqui</u>	Well we well as two with we gave another kilo of meat if we said why talk more why fight but those people well he gets too angry the deceased Osvaldo
--	---

In fact Osvaldo was so insistent that they remedy their failing that the matter was not settled until Roberto traveled into Oaxaca City and purchased a new bird that met their specifications, and his disproportionate anger created lasting resentment that Roberto

remembered years later. While guelaguetza exchange partners are not bound by ties of kinship, there are underlying moral guidelines governing the practice, which are brought into sharp relief when breeched, the primary tenets of which are fairness and respect. These basic principles are highly elaborated within the context of the affect-laden system of *compadrazgo*.

Within the broader category of kinship, ritual kinship encompasses the set of relationships between godparents, godchildren and between godparents and the children's parents through ties of *compadrazgo* (see Nutini & Bell 1980, Hill & Hill 1986, Sicoli 2007). At three points in their children's lives parents ask married couples to serve as the child's godparents: at their baptisms, first communions, and confirmations. Once the prospective *padrinos* (godparents) have accepted their role, the parents of the *ahijado/a* (godson/daughter) call on them and initiate what will become a lifelong process of exchange, offering large baskets of bread, chocolate, fruit, and small domestic animals. Thus the *padrino* and the *madrina* of a child become the *compadres* of the child's parents, and they are then bound to each other through reciprocal obligation, church and family (see Farr 2006: 101).

Ritualized exchange between *compadres*, and guelaguetza between community members are fundamentally different processes. As outlined above, guelaguetza functions like a credit system where you pay back precisely what you borrow. In contrast, *compadres*, who are bound to assist one another for life, give specific categories of gifts to one another, usually sweet bread, chocolate, mezcal, and livestock, goods that are meant to be consumed during the course of an event, the exchange of which constitutes a renewal of relationships and cultural traditions:

As gifts, ephemeral objects confound time not through permanence, but through renewal and are thus central to the production of memory in culture and society (Kuchler 1988: 634)

One of the most prominent features of life throughout the Oaxacan region is the prevalence of festivals and ritual celebrations, and nearly every ethnographic account of Oaxacan life contains a reference to *fiestas*, *velas*, *mayordomía*, *jaripeos* and the like. While living there I was more often than not awakened by the sound of noisemaking firecrackers, which are used to announce such events to all in the vicinity, and usually precede the start of a *convite*, a parade-like procession around the neighborhood. The prevalence of festival celebration and the crucial importance of ritual kin networks are two facets of a deeply ingrained system of interdependence. In her accounts of the celebration of *Velas* in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, on the coast of Oaxaca, Royce argues that celebratory dancing and music “are inextricable conceptually from the broader notion of a community of kinship...they help to define it and are, in turn defined by it” (1991: 51). Her work builds on that of Lopez Chiñas, a Zapotec poet from Juchitan in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, who claims:

En las fiestas de Juchitan, donde todo fiesta es expresion de trabajo...nadie que conozca las costumbres zapotecas, aun las de hoy, ignora que el trabajo trascendental lo realizan en común. El vecino que se mueve a levantar una casa, consumir un matrimonio, celebrar una vela, dispone de los esfuerzos de todos los vecinos...el parentesco...

In the festivals of Juchitan, where all festival is an expression of work...no one who knows the Zapotec customs...ignores that transcendental work is realized communally. The neighbor who moves to raise a house, to consummate a marriage, to celebrate a festival, depends on the strengths of all the neighbors...the kinship...(Lopez Chiñas 1960: 19-20).

Based on his etymological analysis Chiñas has suggested that the Isthmus Zapotec term for ritual festivity guenda lisaa can be glossed as “making kinship/relatedness” (1960:

20). Chiñas explains that Zapotec communities recognize that nothing significant in life can be accomplished without the contributions of one's community members, who through their supportive actions become kin. This perspective is useful for understanding the centrality of ritual celebration within the Guelavian community, and the associated ethos of *conviviendo* (co-living). Participation and the observance of proper protocol in ritual gatherings of all sizes and degrees of importance is considered a duty of community membership by Guelavians, as well as a mark of their devotion to the Catholic faith. The success of an event is often measured in the number of attendees and the length of their stay at a given event, and the greater its significance the more people are expected and the longer they are expected to stay⁷³.

It is also important to emphasize that guests at a major event are expected to work quite hard for many hours at a time, particularly female guests who together produce all of the food that is served at a given event, often for several hundred guests. Chiñas' notion of the communal accomplishment of "transcendental work" aptly describes the experience of planning, coordinating and carrying out ritual events in the Guelavian community, and the vast amounts of labor involved.

Figure 7-2, Products of ritual labor



⁷³ I struggled to fulfill my obligations as a guest at nearly every event I attended – always tiring by 1 or 2 a.m. after seventeen or eighteen hours of eating, drinking, and dancing. Elder Guelavian women were exemplary in this regard and often outlasted all other guests, usually in addition to helping with the cooking, serving and cleaning.

In the case of weddings, baptisms, and patron saint festivals, huge quantities of chocolate are made from hand roasted cacao beans, along with *marquezote*, a special egg bread that is served with hot chocolate each morning of an event. The start of the celebration is usually marked by the slaughter of a large pig, which is butchered on the premises, after which crispy *chicharrón* is made from the fat to be served with beans and tortillas, while the meat is laid aside to eat another day. Enormous quantities of beans are prepared by the women present; in addition *tlayudas*, large tortillas which are made fresh over clay griddles, are prepared in equally vast numbers, enough so that each guest may have several. On the day of a wedding between 30 and 40 turkeys and as many chickens may be slaughtered by a group of male guests, and then passed into an assembly line of women to be plucked, gutted and hung so that they can be cooked into a vat of *mole negro* (a savory chocolate-based sauce) the following day.

Thus each event is comprised of a frenzy of resource aggregation, collective labor, and celebration. In this sense ritual participation is a duty, the fulfilling of which enables the continuation of community life more broadly, by honoring and enacting the ties of reciprocal obligation that bind people together. Within the frame of ritual speech there is a pattern of minimization used to talk about the elaborate processes of exchange, preparation and ritual speech making that comprise these events, e.g. tiby bchaa (one candle), tiby ldaa guia (one piece of flower), tiby humilde orasiony (one humble oration). The modesty of these descriptions are in inverse proportion to the elaborateness of the object, or ritual process described; the candles referenced are often six feet tall and elaborately carved by local artisans, massive displays of flowers cover the home altars,

and the speeches themselves are the most widely revered linguistic register used in the community.

Because the bonds of ritual kinship are life-long it is not uncommon for them to be refused, either because of financial hardships, or because they don't feel sufficient affection for the family to commit to them for life. In addition to their obligations as *compadres*, each set of godparents has specific obligations to their godchildren as they grow up and when they marry, and many people have several godchildren. During an interview with *Jaquelina, a middle-aged Guelavian woman, she explained to me why she and her husband no longer accept godparent requests:

Example 7.4, recorded 4/2/2008, SJG

J:	<i>Aha para que sean padrinos, pero por ejemplo nosotros, pues yo le digo pues yo yo ya no acepto, porque es compromiso le digo y es que lo que pasa, si uno se muere, entonces le dice el su mmm nuestros hijos son los que van a cumplir...y le digo pues no no le vamos a dejar compromisos a los hijos</i>	Aha to become godparents, but for example we, well I say well I I no longer accept, because it's a commitment I say and it's that, the thing is, if one dies, then they say the their mmm our children are the ones that are going to fulfill...and I say well we are not not going to leave obligations for the children
EF:	Aha	Aha
J:	<i>Porque no todos pues tienen ese les gustan eso pues, hay algunos, como ahora ya piensan diferente, dicen pues "no porque voy a comprar porque voy a gastar si no siento cariño o ni se si me quiere o no nada más voy a estar cumpliendo no"... Aha, y por eso nosotros ya no y digo pues si tienen razón, como vamos a hacer compromiso y dejarse lo a ellos, pues mejor no</i>	Because not everyone well they have this they like that well, there are some, as now they now think differently, they say well "no why will I buy why will I spend if I don't feel affection or I don't even know if they love me or not I will just be complying no"...Aha and for that we no longer I say well they do have a point, how are we going to make a commitment and leave it to them, well better not to

Jaquelina's principal reason for refusing requests at that stage of her life was the fear that her children would inherit the obligations taken on by her and her husband if they passed away before they could be fulfilled. She also cited the purported objections of other Guelavians through reported speech, namely that they do not want to spend money on

those whom they do not care for, or whose intentions and motives they do not trust. She associated this with changing perspectives in the community, prefacing it by saying, *ya piensan diferente* (“they now think differently”) suggesting that these types of refusals may not have been acceptable in the past. Her explanation highlighted the role of emotional connectivity, affection and love among *compadres*, *padrinos*, *madrinas* and their *ahijado/as*/, and that social obligation is often insufficient motivation to take on the role.

As described above, the obligations associated with *compadrazgo* are lifelong, and are expected to be honored regardless of one’s circumstances (including being deceased). While a Guelavian migrant living outside Oaxaca is not eligible for mandated community service obligation, they are expected to fulfill their ritual kin obligations. Because so many Guelavians move so frequently throughout their lives, it is quite common for godparents to be absent on an occasion of great significance to their godchildren. If one or both of a given set of godparents is unable to attend an obligatory event they are expected to appoint a substitute from their own lineage, usually either a parent or a child, to stand in their stead, and widows are expected to find a family member of the opposite sex to fill in for the role of their deceased spouses.

While *compadrazgo* networks are found all over Latin America, a defining feature of ritual kinship in Guelavía is its intensity and seriousness relative to non-indigenous Mestizo communities in particular. To fail to fulfill one’s ritual kinship role is seen as an egregious offense. This is clear in the following excerpt taken from a conversation I had with *Leticia. She had spent a long period outside of Guelavía and was married to a non-Guelavian man. On the occasion of her nephew and godson’s wedding she strove to

impress upon him the significance of their presence and participation, particularly as godparents of baptism, who were expected to escort him throughout the wedding ceremony.

Excerpt 7.5, recorded 11/18/2008, SJG

L: <i>Ahora va a venir (.) [a fuerzas porque (.)</i>	Now he is going to come (.) [he has to come because (.)
EF: [Oh sí?	[Oh really?
L: <i>E:eh</i>	E:eh
EF: <i>Para la boda de Tomás? =</i>	For Thomas' wedding? =
L: <i>= Yo soy la madrina de Tomás (.) de bautizo</i>	= I am Thomas' godmother
EF: <i>Entonces sí va a venir a la boda</i>	So he is going to come to the wedding
L: <i>...como yo fui su madrina cuando yo estaba soltera...no tendría tanto problemas si no viniera...pero ya le dije y dice que sí, primero me puse operas y le dije "Sabes que, quiero que me digas si vas a venir, si realmente vas a venir si me vas a acompañar como padrino... porque aquí acostumbran otra cosa, por allí" le digo "no importa si le faltas no pasa nada pero aquí"...le digo "sí es otra cosa aquí respetan mucho..."</i>	...as I was his godmother when I was single...there wouldn't be as many problems if he didn't come...but I have already told him and he says that yes, firstly I was put (off) and I said to him "You know what, I want you to tell me if you are going to come, if you are really going to come if you are going to accompany me as godfather...because here they are accustomed to something else, over there" I say "it doesn't matter if you are absent nothing happens but here"...I say "yes it is something else here they [have] a lot of respect"

Her husband's lack of familiarity with Guelavian *compadrazgo* protocol was the primary source of Leticia's anxiety leading up to the wedding, as she feared he didn't grasp the severity of the social consequences associated with failing to follow through on his promise. This was particularly stressful for Leticia whose own familiarity with Guelavian ritual life was somewhat spotty, due to the long periods of time she had spend in Mexico City and elsewhere, and she was deeply preoccupied with showing the proper respect for traditions and protocol. The concerns expressed by Leticia are even more poignant for those migrants who are unable to return, and strive to reproduce aspects of Guelavian ritual life in radically different socio-cultural contexts.

V. Ritual (re)production in Los Angeles

Guelavians in Los Angeles strive to replicate many aspects of ritual life with varying degrees of success. Baptisms, first communions, and confirmation ceremonies are routinely held at a Catholic Church in West Los Angeles, which serves as a spiritual anchor to most Guelavians living in the area. There is a Spanish-speaking priest who performs all of these ceremonies, and who allows community prayer sessions to be held on the premises. Mirror *Fiestas de San Juan* are held each year in Los Angeles at the same time that they are celebrated in the village, though these are much smaller and more modest affairs, their full expression restricted by the physical and legal constraints of life in Los Angeles. These efforts are compromised by the absence of livestock exchange, animal slaughter, bull-riding competitions, fireworks, parades and the making of fresh tortillas: in short most of the definitive elements of the festival. The religious portions are held in the Catholic Church, and the celebrations are most often held in *salones* (party halls), which can accommodate the large gatherings that are not possible in the tiny apartments in which most people live.

Of particular significance is the absence of any trained *huehuetes/tsëgul*, the ritual speech-makers who preside over the most significant ritual events, acting as go-betweens and performing benedictions in the reverential register of Zapotec. Zapotec is very rarely deployed in any ritual contexts in Los Angeles, and when it is used, it is deployed largely as a badge of ethnic identity to mark an occasion as genuinely Guelavian (see Chapter 4). Weddings very rarely occur in Los Angeles because of these limitations, in addition to which most components critical to the enactment of wedding ceremonies and celebrations are inextricably bound to the natal homes of the bride, the groom and their respective *padrinos*. *Posadas* are impractical because of their sheer size, and *colados* are irrelevant,

as few Guelavians living in the U.S. own any property⁷⁴, and even fewer (if any) construct new homes. The restricted and downsized celebration of rituals among Guelavians in diaspora contrasts sharply with ritual life described in other diasporic communities, such as Hindus in Mauritius, characterized by the “nostalgic use of ancestral languages” and the reconstitution of “sacred geographies” (Eisenlohr 2004: 81-82). Whereas these Hindus have replicated the sacred spaces of their Indian homeland in diaspora, Guelavians are keenly aware that Los Angeles is not a sacred space, and that diasporic celebrations are not authentic reenactments, but rather serve as a collective recognition of the authentic celebrations being held back in Oaxaca.

The elements of ritual life that have been most successfully transposed to Los Angeles are those most closely associated with the Catholic Church, including relations of *compadrazgo*. The difficulties associated with choosing *padrinos* and *compadres* from outside the Guelavian community are many, and so most people choose fellow villagers. Even those who spend their entire lives in Los Angeles or elsewhere seek out other Guelavians living in their area. These ritual kin networks in diaspora are supported by the continual flow of ritual-specific materials goods north across the border. In the following excerpt, Jaquelina begins to explain a bit about the ritual celebrations of Guelavians living in Los Angeles:

Example 7.6, excerpted from interview 4/2/2008

<p>J: <i>Aha sí aha como allá pues este consiguen madrina de de acá mismo del pueblo...pues ya se invita para para padrinos y ya de y lo mismo le hacen hacen la fiestecita pues...como la costumbre de acá aha y allí le y luego mandan mandan canastos, mandan</i></p>	<p>Aha yes aha like over there uhm they find godmothers from from right here from the village...well now they invite for for godparents and now of the same they do do the little party well...like the custom of here and there la- and later they send they send large baskets, they send small baskets, they send from here to there so that</p>
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⁷⁴ I have encountered some Guelavian business owners in Los Angeles, specifically restaurants that specialize in Oaxacan cuisine, but I didn’t meet anyone there who owned residential property.

	<i>tenates, mandan de acá par allá para</i>	
EF:	<i>Ah para que puede ser lo mismo</i>	Ah so that it can be the same
J:	<i>Aha sí...y luego no se en que parte de allá es que dicen que hacen también igual el pan, hacen el marquezote, pero la misma gente de acá...ya lo hacen lo preparan allí sí...sí aha y pues ya el chocolate ya lo mandan de acá para allá como este no se echa a perder</i>	Aha yes...and later I don't know where over there it's that they say that they make also the same the bread, they make the [egg-bread], but the same people from here ...now they prepare over there yes...yes aha and well now the chocolate now they send it from here to there as uhm it doesn't go bad

Jaquelina's explanation illustrated much of what goes into ritual celebration in diaspora; in addition to finding appropriate *padrinos/compadres* to share the burden of ritual obligations, there is a complex process of circulation involved in procuring the appropriate goods to make sure that these ritual kin relations can be properly honored. She mentioned the *canastos* (large baskets), *tenates* (small woven baskets), and *chocolate* (chocolate) that are sent "from here to there," all of which are integral to reciprocal gift exchanges between ritual kin. Guelavians in Los Angeles and elsewhere also produce those goods that are impractical to import, like *marquezote*, a special egg-based bread, which would become stale in transit. Gift giving between *compadres* involves the reciprocal exchange of these specific items, large baskets of bread, and small baskets of chocolate, which honors the collective labor that went into their production.

Jaquelina's narrative tells a doubly poignant second story about ritual life in diaspora, and the patterns of resource circulation that sustain it. These complex processes reflect a pervasive effort to align with the model of ritual life as it is celebrated in the village (the first story), as authentically as possible. These efforts have yielded myriad transformations, many quite subtle, in the socio-cultural landscape on both sides of the border. Examples of these changes include the proliferation of couriers who carry and sell goods across the border, the increasing elaborateness of ritual festivity, which many argue is a result of families' desire to show off the remittance wealth earned by their

migrant relatives. At the same time, the form of Jaquelina's narrative tells a linguistic second story through her repetitive use of the deictics *aca* (here), and *alli/alla* (there).

Regarding the use of these transpositions in narrative Haviland suggests:

Narrative in general canonically triggers transpositions. As a narrator sketches the actions of his protagonists, the ground upon which they act is a necessary backdrop to the narration. As in all transposition, however, there remains a tension between the narrated space and the narrating space: between the spot where a protagonist was and the spot where the narrator is (304).

However, in Jaquelina's narrative the shifting ground upon which she sketches the actions of her protagonists is not mere background, it is the central focus of her narrative, and the tension between the narrating space and the narrated speech is primary rather than residual. Her extreme use of spatial deictics demonstrates a widespread preoccupation with mobility that reconfigures the very ways that Guelavians talk about themselves and their community members.

Processes of exchange drive the Guelavian ritual world; just as baskets and chocolate are sent out of Guelavía, migrants are continually sending back money, cheap clothing and Chinese-made trinkets, which are co-opted into ritual celebration back in Oaxaca. Feeding this circuit of goods and money are Guelavian migrants themselves, whose movements back and forth across the border form the basis of these ritual cycles. In addition to these processes of ritualized exchange, the Guelavians I worked with were also embedded in processes of circulation. Most notably, this included the circulation of audio and video recordings of ritual events between family and community members on both sides of the border, to which I know turn.

VI. Circulation and secondary ritual participation

I was first introduced to recordings of ritual events, and the practice of secondary ritual participation a few days after my initial arrival in Guelavía. After sharing a meal with an older man and his middle-aged daughter, I was invited to watch a video filmed fifteen years earlier, of the 1993 *Fiesta de San Juan* and *jaripeo* (bull riding competition) which they had hosted as *mayordomos* (festival sponsors/hosts). This viewing prompted them to recollect how things had changed over the ensuing decade, such as the replacement of elaborate paper flower arrangements with real flowers in the large baskets that are carried on the heads of local women during the *Convite* parades that initiate *the Fiesta de San Juan*, Guelavía's Patron Saint Festival. Whether due to laziness, as some suggested, or a desire to show off wealth, women now purchase live flowers for their baskets, which is both considerably more expensive and much heavier. On other afternoons I was shown other videos: the baptism of a nephew that had taken place in Los Angeles, or the wedding of a niece who had returned to Guelavía from Los Angeles for the wedding. Some of these videos had been recorded in Guelavía, but family members in Los Angeles during the last ten to fifteen years had sent most of the videos.

Given when portable video technology became widely available, and the age of some of the videos I watched, it is likely that the circulation of video media has been a crucial dimension of domestic and transborder migration for at least twenty years. These visual media provide an archive of a given family's ritual history, a tangible form of evidence that they have successfully and generously fulfilled their duties to community and kin, and enable secondary ritual participation when they are viewed by absent kin and friends. They are a primary way for separated Guelavian community members to see one another, as there is as of yet only very limited availability of internet in the Guelavian

community, skype and other video chatting programs are only used by those who live in urban areas. When I participated in such viewings with Guelavians both in Los Angeles and in Oaxaca, I observed the importance of the act of naming familiar people and places as they appeared on television screens or in photographs.⁷⁵ Such naming is an enactment of recognition, which needs to be maintained, or reestablished after long periods of separation, and the changes or transformations that may have occurred in one's long absence.

My primary gesture of reciprocity to individuals and families that I worked with throughout my fieldwork in Oaxaca and Los Angeles was to film and photograph significant events and to produce DVDs and pictures that they could then distribute to family members across the border, and that I could use for my research. People I worked with began requesting that I film events for them almost as soon as they met me and realized that I had the necessary equipment, and their requests were made in tandem with invitations to the events they wanted me to record. There are several professional videographers and at least one photographer in Guelavia who make their living producing and selling higher quality recordings and photos, who were commissioned to work at many of the same events that I documented. There are also at least four or five people who specialize in transporting goods back and forth across the border between family members, all people with both Mexican and U.S. citizenship with the freedom to travel frequently. The presence of these groups of professionals in the community speaks to the

⁷⁵ I lament the fact that I do not have any recordings of these secondary viewings in my corpus. I was often shown videos in the company of Guelavians who I was meeting for the first time; in many cases I was the one bringing the video to them when introducing myself, as I will explain below. I hope in future research to film several of these secondary viewings that I could use for a more detailed analysis.

centrality of these audiovisual media, and the role of circulation more broadly in the Guelavian community.

As I progressed through my fieldwork and traveled several times back and forth between Los Angeles and Oaxaca, I began transporting things between family members myself, bringing, for example, a freshly made package of *tlayudas* and a dozen rounds of chocolate to a daughter, and returning with some clothing, a video or some photographs for her parents, and a toy for her baby niece. Through participating in these processes of circulation and exchange I learned a great deal about how they are coordinated and kept track of. Most often the first step in sending something across the border was a phone call⁷⁶ to the intended recipient informing them exactly what they should expect, down to the number of dollars and packages of tortillas. On the occasions where I erred in my distribution I was usually corrected by the recipients and told who I was supposed to deliver the errant item to. In addition to phone calls, Guelavians kept meticulous records of the items they gave out and or received from family members, using separate books for each category of exchange; guelaguetza records went in one notebook, monetary remittances from migrant relatives went in another; money sent back for home construction projects in another, and so on. Each trip I made bringing goods, and audiovisual materials, was a small part of the complex calculus of transborder circulation and exchange that is fundamental to the maintenance of the Guelavians community.

The circulation of audio-visual materials was a primary means of familiarizing Guelavians with the distant places and contexts inhabited by their loved ones, and served

⁷⁶ Phone calls in general are a crucial medium for communication and the maintenance of connections between distant kin, and most families have elaborate calling systems in place to minimize costs and maximize air time. These usually involve a calls made from U.S. land line to Oaxacan land line using U.S. purchased phone cards, organized by brief cell phone calls or texts.

as a kind of visual orientation for prospective migrants to the new places they planned to travel to themselves. On one occasion I delivered a video of a *colado* (roof raising ceremony) to a family in Los Angeles who had sent money back to Guelavía to relatives to fund the home's construction. They did not have plans to return in the near future, but as they watched their two sons, who had never visited Guelavía, bickered over who would get which bedroom, and discussed what colors they wanted to paint the walls. About a year later the children were sent to Guelavía to spend the summer with their aunts and uncles, and they slept in the very rooms they had chosen while sitting in their living room in Los Angeles watching the video.

During my stay in Oaxaca I befriended *Dora, a young Guelavian woman who I met in Guelavía, and who later moved to Los Angeles at about the same time that I did. During an interview with her about her migration experience, I asked if she felt life was very different for her in this new context, to which she, somewhat surprisingly, responded no, that she felt just the same as she had when living in Guelavía:

Example 7.7, Recorded 3/31/09, LA

<p>D: <i>Como así como ellos ya ya platicaban pues, y luego como así como le digo a el mi hermano mandó unos videos cuando salían así ahora si a pasear y graba:aba. Y más o menos le digo yo sentí que es igual como Oaxaca que igual (a llegar). Igual le digo yo sentí cuando ví (a) yo aquí? Sentí que era igual como Oaxaca le digo yo no se ahora si no este no – bueno yo así lo vi pues no mas para salir es que si le digo por los, por el bas pues, ya ve que (...) es lo mismo, aha. Pero casi igual...Ahora si, por ejemplo de sus hermanos de el, pues es lo mismo vamos a un cumpleaños, salimos, por eso yo lo siento igual, porque así salimos nosotros y luego nos vemos con los del pueblo, pues yo lo siento igual ...</i></p>	<p>Like that as they already already talked about it well, and later as like as I say to [my husband] my brother sent some videos when they went out like that now yes to sight-see and he video-taped and more or less I say I feel that it is the same like Oaxaca that the same (when one arrives) the same I say I felt when I saw it here? I felt that it was the same as Oaxaca I say I don't know now if no uhm no – well that's how I saw it well just that to go out it's that yes I say by the, by the bus well, you see that (...) it's the same, aha but almost the same...Now yes, for example of [my husband's] brothers well it's the same we go to a birthday, we leave and later we see with others from the village, well I feel the same</p>
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Dora's emphasis on the sameness of life in Los Angeles was striking, because of how it elided the obvious changes that were involved, including among other things the difficult voyage to get there, the new urban surroundings, and the dominance of English. At the time Dora was happily ensconced in a new apartment, which she and her husband shared with four other young Guelavians, and was attending English class daily with her sister-in-law who had also recently arrived in LA. In contrast, in Guelavía she had lived with her family in a rural community, surrounded by her entire family, until she married and moved in briefly with her in-laws for the expected period of bridal service.

However, this shift in circumstances, which to me seemed so dramatic, was heavily mediated for Dora by the migration experiences of her own brothers and her husband, and the many videos and pictures she had seen of Los Angeles prior to going. In addition, she emphasized how similar her social life was in LA, *salimos nosotros y luego nos vemos con los del pueblo* ("we go out and later we see those from the village"). Dora explained that they went to birthday parties, first communions, dances and patron saint festivals, just as they had in Guelavía, and they mostly saw other Guelavians, often many of the same people that they had grown up with and known since childhood, even if they hadn't seen them for the last decade. She and her husband fell into a pattern of ritual participation that felt socially familiar, despite the modifications that were necessary in the urban context of Los Angeles. These examples of circulation and secondary ritual participation point to the myriad ways that life in both places intersects, interpenetrates, and leaves traces on the other, transforming life in both places.

The concept of circulation has gained increasing salience in linguistic anthropological scholarship in recent years, in conjunction with descriptions of the

processes of “entextualization,” and “(re)contextualization,” or the “natural histories of discourse” (Silverstein & Urban 1996, see also Bauman & Briggs 1990) by which pieces of talk become texts that can be reinserted into new contexts of use. These ideas have been richly elaborated in the work of Spitulnik who has argued that the social circulation of discourse, in the case of her work through radio broadcasting, “functions as a common reservoir and reference point...from the fleeting to the perduring” (1997: 181). She further argues certain aspects of radio discourse, including metapragmatic framing devices, and greetings, characterized by “transparency of form” and “frequency of repetition...create a ‘prepared for detachability’” that enables more felicitous circulation and “the production of shared linguistic knowledge” which mediates large-scale urban communities (1997: 181):

In comparison to the better-known speech genres (e.g., narrative, oratory, ritual speech, and reported speech) that feature in such studies many of the media fragments considered here exhibit (1) a much greater mobility through various social contexts, and (2) a peculiar built-in detachability and reproducibility, as stated above. As they thread through different contexts of use, giving people their own voices and aesthetic pleasures, such public words hearken to speakers and contexts, which are in some ways larger than life (Spitulnik 1997: 181).

The features she describes, mobility, detachability and reproducibility across contexts, are not, however, restricted to media discourse, but are also discernible in the “better-known speech genres” like ritual speech and narrative.

Spitulnik frames ritual speech as a genre characterized by its contextual fixity relative to the more mobile “media fragments” that she describes, which are more easily circulatable. However, in the Guelavian community it is precisely the deep social importance, the embedded, elaborate, traditional character of ritual celebrations and the discursive forms which characterize it, that make them worthy firstly of recording, and

secondly of reproducing and circulating across contexts and speakers where they can be re-consumed as they “thread through different contexts of use.” Ritual recordings of highly conventionalized ritual events mediate the Guelavian transborder community in much the same way as *Zambian* radio broadcasts. A major difference is that Guelavians direct the process of circulation, choosing who to send these videos and photos to, thus circumscribing the contexts in which they will be re-consumed.

Other scholars have pointed to the contextual universality of highly conventional forms of discourse that retain their efficacy even when they are “freed from the limitations of contextual specification” (Parmentier 1994: 131). However, few have looked at what the circulation of ritual discourse looks like and how it functions in a geographically dispersed community. Ritual events, the recordings made of them, and their secondary consumption in other contexts are productively viewed as an interdiscursively linked chain (see Agha 2007). According to Silverstein interdiscursivity:

in effect draws the two or more discursive occasions together within the same chronotopic frame, across which discourse seems to ‘move’ from originary to secondary occasion, no matter whether ‘backward’ or ‘forward’ in orientation...interdiscursive relations across events of using semiotic media also, in effect, constitute relations of “-eval”; they freeze the chronotope of independently occurrent and experienced social eventhood in a structure of likeness that is based on the nature of texts in relation to their contexts of occurrence (2005: 6 - 8).

Each event and its recorded counterpart constitute instantiations or “tokens” of the category of ritual festivity, but also co-construct the category, or “type” itself, in much the same way that genre, and performance exist in a dialectical relationship (see chapter 6 for detailed discussion). The films are the interdiscursive conduit, both “presupposing the source” of the event itself, and “entailing a target,” (Silverstein 2005: 9) the new

group of interlocutors that will view the recording and incorporate it into a new interactive context.

The “structure of likeness” described above binds primary and secondary ritual participants together in a relation of co-evalness, which provides the foundation for an experience of belonging in a shared community of practice, despite geographical and temporal separations. The relationship between the source, or event and the target, or distant kin is a dynamic one, however, and each can exert a shaping force on the other. Event participants’ actions and presentations of selves (e.g. dress style, food choices, music and decoration) can become part of a display for distant kin, who may be perceived as more cosmopolitan than rural dwelling participants. Similarly, for those migrants consuming these recordings in diaspora, their vision of “traditional” local rituals may be deeply shaped by the actions and filtered representations of ritual participants.

Ritual events themselves constitute both the celebration of a given occasion or milestone, and a social process of calculated circulation, planned photography and videography, commissioned transporters, and return migrations; in short, the conscious production of community connectivity. It is the social work inherent to this process that endows it with such potency as a medium of unification, for as Irvine argues:

the attempt to lasso some discursive event or type as interdiscursively linked to a given bit of discourse—to point to an interdiscursive structure—is precisely the interpretive move that lends significance and consequence to a discursive act (Irvine 2005: 73).

The recordings of ritual events provide tangible, archival evidence for and contribute to the work of making kinship and relatedness discussed above. At the same time they link primary and secondary ritual participants across space and time. Irvine suggests that

generic categories of events can, by virtue of their structural equivalence work counter to calendrical time:

by virtue of their achronicity, structures of interdiscursive likeness can also make it possible for their structural equivalence to be played off *against* calendrical time... Rituals such as weddings, for instance, play the uniqueness of the moment—its special significance for the particular individuals involved—against the event’s coeval equivalence with other wedding events experienced by other participants in the wider society. (Irvine 2005: 73).

My data indicate that the recording and circulation of a specific event can create a similar structure of likeness across temporal and geographic contexts. For migrants and non-migrants in the Guelavian transborder community, the passage of time and the separation of geography threaten to disrupt the experience of interdiscursive continuity. The primary and secondary processes of ritual event participation, recording, and secondary consumption create a sense of continuity that “plays off of calendrical time” defying the clock and creating a sense of togetherness through “likeness” that can be experienced out of time.

The Guelavians I worked with expressed very specific preferences about the way events should be recorded. When telling me how they wanted me to film an event, many people instructed me to film short pieces of the church service, highlighting the actual pronouncement of marriage, or the pouring of water over an infant’s head, and to focus more time on the proceeding events that followed, such as dancing, piñata cracking, cake cutting, and musical processions. In general, Guelavians evaluated those videos that captured more hours of an event more positively than edited montages that compiled short clips; the more DVD disks the better. Recently I spoke with *Mona, a middle-aged Guelavian woman living in Los Angeles who I hadn’t seen for more than a year. We began talking about the 2009 *Fiesta de San Juan* we had attended in Guelavía; she began

to talk about this year's festival which was large and elaborate. When I asked her if she had returned to Guelavía for the *Fiesta* she said no but that she had watched DVDs of nearly all of the major events that took place that week – totaling ten disks. The popularity of these multi-disk volumes suggests that people are striving for greater and greater authenticity in their secondary consumption, something more like vicarious participation through more and more hours of footage.

Regardless of how lengthy or detailed these recordings are, however, they are reduced and decontextualized versions of the events they represent. They are “second stories” of ritual celebration in all three senses: 1) they are organized to align with the original rituals themselves, 2) they are unbound by the same temporal and geographic anchors, and are thus free to circulate across places, times and audiences, and 3) they facilitate reframings, and reinterpretations of the original event as they are viewed by different audiences, from different perspectives, and in different contexts. In their capacity as second stories, these videos enable the creation of interdiscursive connections between migrants and non-migrants, and separated kin across space and time.

VII. Ritual return migration

Crucially, however, in order to belong to the broader category of ritual community membership one must engage in the production of a token, the individual instantiation of an event, grounded in a particular moment in time and a location in space. Whether it be a wedding, taking on *mayordomía* hosting obligations, or bringing one's child back to the community to be baptized, all Guelavians are expected to be physically present and participate at certain times in their lives. The celebration of ritual events necessitates the

movement of people at particular moments throughout their life cycles, and/or times on the Catholic religious calendar, and it is these migrations that animate and lend social potency to the processes of material circulation described above. For Guelavians living in San Juan Guelavía whose loved ones resided elsewhere in Mexico, or who had migrated to the United States, a heightened state of expectation surrounded the celebration of each passing ritual event, grounded in the hope that that year their absent kin might return to the village to celebrate it with them.

These expectations were most frequently expressed in the months and weeks leading up to the *Fiesta de San Juan Bautista*, the patron saint festival celebrated bi-annually each January and June. Due to the inherent constraints of replicating these large *fiestas* in Los Angeles and other urban environments, most Guelavians long to return to the village for the *Fiestas*, and many do, especially in January when the bigger of the two festivals is held, featuring the *jaripeo* (bull riding competition). I myself returned to Guelavía in January 2009, from Los Angeles where I was then living, to experience this event and I was stunned by the number of people who had returned. I had never seen the town bustling with so much activity, and the crowds that attended the *convite* and fireworks display at the start of the festival were many times larger than those I had seen at the summer *Fiesta* the previous June. The *jaripeo* is a magnetic draw, and crowds pack into the bleachers every night to watch men (and often young boys as well), some fresh off the airplane from Los Angeles, mount and ride bucking bulls, clinging onto the bull's back for as many seconds as possible before they are pitched to the ground. The appeal is clear; for some young men it is an opportunity to test their mettle, for others it is

scintillating entertainment, and for return migrants and their families it is an exciting glimpse into rural *campesino* life.

Both of the *Fiestas* are very popular times for migrants to return home, so much so that many Guelavians come to expect it of them, and begin prodding them about their plans as the *Fiesta* dates approach. While I was visiting *Ermelinda, an elderly Guelavian woman, in her home in early June she expressed her hope that her youngest daughter would return for the *Fiesta* later that month:

Example 7.8, recorded 6/2/2008

E: ...es Laura el-la ultima pero más grande (...) muy alto muy alto ((sighs deeply)) quien sabe si (...) esta esperando esta platicar cuando esta platicar por teléfono, para saber pues que tiempo, si de verdad o si mentira ((laughing))	...is Laura th-the youngest but the biggest (...) very tall ((sighs deeply)) who knows if (...) am waiting are talk[ing] when are talk[ing] by phone, to know well what time, if truly or if [it's a] lie ((laughing))
EF: ((laughing))	((laughing))
E: Y ojla-ojlajala yo ya viene pues	And I hope-hope to God I now she comes well

Ermelinda's five children all lived outside of Guelavía and so she spent most days alone, while her husband worked their cornfields. She lived for the phone calls she received from her daughters and sons, and viewed each conversation as an opportunity to complain about their long absences from home (see Chapter 2, Example 2.14) and the question of when they next planned to return. The excerpt shown above was from a conversation I had with Ermelinda about her five children, whom she was naming and describing one by one, until she arrived at Laura, the youngest, but tallest of her children. Laura had only recently left Guelavía to live with her then-fiancée in Nevada, and Ermelinda was desperate to see her that June, as evidenced by the deep sigh she let out as she talked. She, like others I spoke with, tried to measure her expectations realistically, saying she looked forward to finding out if her daughter would really come, *Si de verdad or si mentira* ("If truly or if [it's a] lie). On this occasion she "hoped to God" that

Laura’s visit would materialize. Ermelinda’s narrative evoked the themes of suffering and longing that were so pervasive in talk about migration across contexts (see Chapter 2).

On several occasions throughout my research I encountered individuals who described feeling physical pain or sickness as a result of the departure of their loved ones. I once witnessed a *curandera* (healer) in Guelavía perform a *limpia* (cleansing ritual) on a woman to help rid her of her painful longing for her husband who had left for Los Angeles three months earlier. Later on, while I was working in Los Angeles I recorded a telephone conversation between Dora, and her grandmother back in Guelavía, and towards the end of the conversation their talk turned to her father, who had been ill, but had recently recovered:

Example 7.9, recorded 5/13/2009

A: <u>An per rzacalazbë bindiagbë chiy San Juan aziad lasdoob</u>	A: Now he is very happy that he heard in [the festival of] San Juan his heart is going to come
D: ((riendo)) <u>An dunnë lla na Diosa guldibi</u>	D: ((laughing)) Now we’ll see well God grant that it be true
A: <u>Na Dios o</u>	A: God grant it
J: <u>Ēĕ</u>	D: Yes

In the first line of the excerpt, Anastasia, the grandmother, said rzacalazbë (he is very happy), because he had been told that that lasdoob (his heart) would be returning the following month for the June *Fiesta de San Juan*. By “his heart” Anastasia meant his grandson, her great-grandson, a sixteen-year-old who was the light of his grandfather’s life. These two excerpts demonstrate both women’s knowledge of dynamics of ritual return migration, and the pull their kin feel to honor their ritual obligations pointing to a first story about local ritual protocol. At the same time their words, laughter and sighs speak to the way that separation between family members as a result of migration has

shifted the local emotional terrain, leaving people desperately expectant at any sign that their loved ones might return.

Whenever expressing strong desires or hopes for the future, Guelavians I spoke with always closed with *Ojala que* (would that), *Si Dios quiera* (If God wants it), or as in the above excerpt *na Dios* (God grant it), recognizing all happenings to be at the mercy of the will of God, and perhaps in so doing encouraging the fulfillment of their wish through a demonstration of their piety and devotion. When those wishes were granted (for example when Ermelinda's daughter Laura, mentioned in Example 7.8, *did* return to visit that June), she proclaimed her gratitude to God with great frequency, saying, *Gracias a Dios*, or *Xtosten Dios* (thanks to God). This same desire to beg favors of, thank, or honor the divine is a large part of what motivates return migration on the occasion of the patron saint festival, for one's wedding or the baptism of one's children. To follow ritual protocol and to participate in the honoring of the divine powers that protect the community, both in Oaxaca and in diaspora is a critical public demonstration, both of one's religious devotion and one's commitment to the community. Thus ritual return migrations feed into the processes of ritual interdiscursive circulation described above; they both point to and establish the solemn importance of the occasions through their presence and participation. The expectation of participation is sufficiently strong that many who are unable to make the return trip make contributions to the *Fiesta* fund, anywhere between \$5 and \$500 dollars. These contributors are announced one by one throughout the course of the *jaripeo*, which lasts for eight nights, in front of the crowd gathered around the arena.

As I mentioned earlier weddings are among the most common, and the most significant events celebrated in the Guelavian community. Nearly all Guelavians, regardless of where they live, or whom they marry, return to the community to marry in the local church, as do many of their relatives and ritual kin. Migrants living outside of Oaxaca often spend long periods of time away from family and community members, and this separation often increases migrants' social distance from kin living in Oaxaca. Due to the potential for religious conversion, or assimilation to foreign cultural practices, migrant's commitment to community values can be called into question. Elsewhere in this dissertation I have discussed the growth of Protestant evangelism throughout the Oaxacan Valley, and the controversial status of missionary linguists and their colleagues in the Guelavian community, who are seen as linked to the increasing rejection of the community cargo system among converts (see Chapter 5). Due to the centrality of *compadrazgo*, which is grounded in the Catholic Church, to the functioning of community activities this religious fragmentation constitutes a potent threat to many within the Guelavian community. This is particularly true in the context of ritual event celebration, which converts to Protestantism often eschew as part of their rejection of saint worship, which they view as a form of idolatry, and at times to avoid the economic burdens associated with ritual exchange obligations (cf. Gross 2003, Cohen 2001).

In this context of religious fragmentation, ritual participation can offer migrants the opportunity to reestablish their belonging in the Guelavian community even if they only return to the village for a short time. Those who participate in Catholic ritual life are continually honored as exemplary community members through ritual exchange networks and, more explicitly, through the ritual speech forms. Ritual speech provides a forum for

affirmation of the Catholic community, as well as directly linking community membership to Catholicism through the use of first person plural forms in conjunction with references to Catholic prayers and religious symbols.

During my research in Oaxaca I attended several weddings in which a large number of guests had come from out of town and were totally unfamiliar with Guelavian ritual traditions. In these cases rituals become a doubly socializing process, inducting the focal participants into their new phase of life, and instructing Guleavians who have lost touch with their roots in proper ritual protocol. The following example is excerpted from the longer speech of the tsëgul presiding over the marriage of a young Guelavian couple who had returned from where they were living in Ensenada Mexico to celebrate their marriage with their parents, godparents, and extended families:

Example 7.10, recorded 1/18/ 2009, SJG

<p>((the bride and groom kneel before the altar)) E: <u>Buen momentquëy nabez de lliin Diosquë a deb nabez frente al altar zequiy na tiby fe nizoneen iratequënë irate logar irate blda xte cat tubynë nabezneen tiby de santquë per dunnë *zoneen tiby fe tiby xba nibsanee de xpungulnë dunnë ax rllanë adorardenë rllanë respetardenë pues tiby didxdo nirllapënë tiby imagen quesentiend nasaa laani por obra de Dios nabezacdeny ax yuuby guiby Dios rcuez laaden tiby lugar ruut rdxapzacënë respet laadeni momentquëy nabezdeb cayundeb jurar ante *loguib Dios ante presensy xte de nambaly de datmbaly pues los demasa family de ni nabezsa lugarquë pues yuubydeb banbesadeb lonez logueu xte Dios padre yuuby laadebëy bchaa Dios laadeb pues bzëny tiby moment pues ax nabezdeb nez tiby lugar masruza lejan xte dabcu loguëll lallnë pero sin embargu xtiosten xtiosten de bëngul pues laadeni zeneeruzadeni fe</u></p>	<p>((the bride and groom kneel before the altar)) E: Well in this moment are these children of God here they are present in front of the altar as is the faith that we carry all of us all in the place all in our house each one of us we have a saint but we have a faith a respect left to us by our ancestors to us and we make we adore and we respect well a respectful word we have an image too beautiful they for [the] work of God they are and God accommodates to them a place where we go to respect them this moment they are they are swearing in front of holy God in front of the presence of the godmothers and the godfathers well those other family members those that are in this place well they met each other in the street in the arroyo of God father they they God joined them well a moment arrived well they are in a place farther farther from this village of ours but nevertheless thanks thanks to their elders well they carry the faith</p>
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As is characteristic of ritual speech more broadly, the speech of the *huehuete* excerpted here includes the frequent use of ritual kin terms, the mention of religious objects

exchanged and the repeated use of first person plural forms. In addition, this excerpt contains a narrative rendering of the couples' relationship, highlighted above in boldfaced text, which emphasizes their migration biographies.

The tsëgul said that the couple met lonez logueu (in the arroyo) referencing the dry creek bed that divides San Juan Guelavía in two halves that locals refer to as *arriba* (up) and *abajo* (down), thus anchoring them, and the start of their relationship, concretely in the geographical space of the village. He went on to say nabezdeb nez tiby lugar masruza lejan xte dabcu loguëll lallnë (“they are in a place further away from this village of ours”) in spite of which they have maintained their faith, xtiosten de bëngul (“thanks to their elders”). The phrase *pero sin embargo* (“but nevertheless”) which follows the description of the couples' residence far away from the village indicates that their absence constituted a potential threat, which was neutralized by their continuing faith in God, fostered by the guidance of their elders. As discussed above, ritual return migration contributes a crucial source of coherence and solidarity to the Guelavian transborder community, which undergirds and gives meaning to the processes of ritual exchange and transborder circulation described above. It is through ritual speech that one's community membership is explicitly (re)affirmed, and one's participation is honored.

Ritual event celebration is deeply anchored in the geography of San Juan Guelavía itself, the natal homes of ritual participants, and the Catholic Church, which contains *los imagenes*, the images of the village's patron saint protector *San Juan Bautista*. The efficacy of ritual speech forms depends upon their being uttered in the appropriate places and spaces. The entextualized forms of ritual events, contained in video recordings and photographs, which circulate and provide the basis for secondary

ritual participation, are dependent upon the continuing movement of migrants themselves. That there are no practicing *huehuetes/tsëgul* outside of Guelavía itself is a testament to this sharp division of linguistic labor and ritual practice (although I have heard rumors about one man who occasionally provides ritual speech-making services who is self-taught). The language of ritual life for Guelavians in diaspora is Spanish, so much so that the occasional brief uses of Zapotec I observed were bracketed by significant framing and explanation (see Chapter 4). This is likely in part due to the fact that Guelavians attend a church that is frequented by other non-Guelavian Spanish speakers, but even within the Guelavian community church services take place entirely in Spanish. Regardless of the code used in these contexts, the real difference is the absence of ritual speech interaction outside of the confines of the church organized and guided by *tsëgul*, whose speeches constitute instantiations and affirmations of membership in a community bound by webs of reciprocal obligation, kinship and interdependence.⁷⁷

VIII. Conclusion

In this chapter I have described the processes of transborder ritual exchange and circulation involved in the enactment of large-scale ritual events in the Guelavian community, and in turn how participation in ritual events imbues these process of exchange and circulation with social significance. Amid the increasing geographic, religious and linguistic fragmentation of the Guelavian transborder community both primary and secondary ritual participation provide a source of coherence and solidarity

⁷⁷ The SIL linguist, Ted Jones, informed me in a correspondence that he has been invited to attend the LA celebration of the festival for nine years in a row, where he has sold Zapotec translations of the New Testament and assorted other Zapotec publications, and on occasion has been asked by the church's priest to read portions from his Zapotec Bible. This constitutes a small exception to the general non-use of Zapotec in Los Angeles ritual celebration, one that was introduced by a non-Guelavian.

by affirming their collective rootedness in a body of traditional cultural practices and shared ethos of mutual obligation. Ritual speech provides a forum for explicitly defining the Guelavian community and for bestowing rights of membership to individuals. The vocabulary of ritual kinship, and the reverential register deployed by tsëgul, rich with references to local networks of reciprocal obligation, and the physical spaces of San Juan Guelavía itself, serves as a kind of narrative baptism that continually (re)incorporates Guelavians into the community.

The theme of transborder circulation and ritual life explored here demonstrates the nexus of mobility and immobility for this narrated community, as migratory mobility is partially oriented around geographically bound, highly local rituals, which are nevertheless shaped by mobile processes. The structure of ritual participation highlights the heightened state of reflexivity that characterizes indigenous transborder membership, tied to the continual attempts of individuals to reproduce cultural practices, such as rituals, across time and space. As evidenced by my analysis of second stories of ritual, attempts at reproduction are almost inevitably transformed into something unique that alters the foundation on which future first stories will be constructed. Throughout this dissertation I have drawn on the framework of second stories to untangle the relationship between reflexivity, cultural reproduction and transformation, demonstrating that careful discursive analysis can yield new insights into the particular experiences and challenges associated with living across borders.

Chapter 8

Conclusion – Narrated Community

I am suspicious of globalization theory because it smacks of being ‘a stor[y] we tell ourselves about ourselves’ (Geertz 1973:8). The primary ‘we’ who tell the story of globalization are those who live in the global North. And the storyline itself can be roughly translated into ‘everyone wants to be (or is inevitably becoming) more like us.’ Looked at from this perspective, globalization theory sounds remarkably like what Gananath Obeyesekere (1992) refers to as ‘European myth-making.’ Is it true that everyone wants to be like the global North? Is that really where the world is going? Is it inevitable? ...When we look at what happens on the ground we can see that globalization is not a steamroller and people around the world are not passive recipients. Instead of traveling unimpeded into a ‘cultural void,’ the processes of globalization are significantly shaped by a diversity of ‘local’ practices and beliefs (Inhorn 2003). Globalization doesn’t just happen; rather, individuals in diverse settings from all over the world are implicated in accommodating, negotiating, or resisting change.

- Nicole Berry (2009: 3)

Throughout the proceeding chapters I have presented and elaborated on my view that the shared discursive patterns, and in particular the common moral and geographic orientations that I observed in the talk of Guelavians living in Oaxaca and Los Angeles form the foundation of a “narrated community.” By closely examining the talk of migrants, non-migrants, youth, adults and elders across geographic and social contexts I have illustrated the myriad ways in which Guelavians orient towards one another, and towards the shared geographic center of their natal village. Amid the challenges of

geographic dispersal, long-term separation and cultural transformation, the continuing coherence of the Guelavian transborder community counters pervasive assumptions that equate global migration with homogenization and deterritorialization. Not only do Guelavians evince a common identity rooted in a shared geographic center of gravity, but their distinction from mainstream populations in the U.S. and Mexico has been and continues to be reinforced by their linguistic and cultural marginalization. Talk about experiences with marginalization and discrimination constitutes another powerful form of connectivity that binds Guelavians in diaspora to their kin back in Oaxaca.

Recently I was seated at the kitchen table of *Maria and *Faustino, a Guelavian couple I know in the Los Angeles area, enjoying a plate of *higadito* (eggs with meat and vegetable) and black beans when Maria asked me to make a phone call to her employer, a woman whose house she cleaned several times a week. She was worried that she had misunderstood the employers' instructions on how to dust her bedroom furniture. I called this woman, explained the situation, and proceeded through a deeply awkward conversation during which she told me that everything was fine, but that she had allergies to dust and didn't want any on her bed, after which we quickly hung up. As on other occasions when I have made similar calls, I had the distinct feeling that my efforts to foster communication, or to translate concerns were perceived as trespasses into a relationship defined by unspoken power dynamics (see Chapter 4).

As we ate and continued talking they asked me to translate some unfamiliar English phrases they had recently heard, and I asked them for help with some Zapotec terms I had recently come across in my transcript materials that I was struggling with. Maria spent several minutes explaining the use of a particular set of terms to me, after

which I realized yet again how much I still have to learn about Zapotec. I said as much to Maria and Faustino, who laughed, and Faustino replied, *Así somos con el inglés...pero nosotros sin inglés somos jodidos* (“That is how we are with English...but without English we are screwed”). His remark was a gentle reminder of the differences in our respective circumstances; whereas I want to improve my competence in Zapotec to further my understanding of language and culture in human social life, he and Maria were directly impacted, economically, politically, and socially, everyday of their lives by their limited English knowledge. At the same time Faustino’s response expressed his conviction in the superior utility and power of English relative to Zapotec, and my linguistic knowledge relative to his own and that of his wife Maria’s, a conviction that is reinforced by the entrenched inequalities of life in Los Angeles, city dominated by Anglo English speakers.

The phone call with Maria’s employer exemplified the heightened state of vulnerability that characterizes many migrants’ lives, particularly undocumented migrants who are not fluent in English. Faustino’s succinct rendering of these dynamics highlighted for me once again the reflexivity exhibited by so many Guelavians I worked with, born out of the continual struggle to meet the competing linguistic, cultural and social demands of transborder life. Migrants need to maintain a deep and varied repertoire of language varieties and cultural knowledge in order to gain access to and participate in multiple, often radically different socio-cultural arenas (see Farr 2006, Bailey 2000). The complex interplay of structural inequity, cultural and linguistic practices, and social and geographic contexts belies narratives of globalization as a steamroller that forcibly assimilates all in its path.

The global flow of migrants is comprised of highly local encounters (e.g. phone calls, workplace encounters, ritual return migration) through which individuals are constantly engaged “in accommodating, negotiating, or resisting change” (Berry 2009:3). The highly local contexts in which Guelavians encounter and engage with structural inequities, and linguistic and cultural differences reinforce the importance of conceptualizing Guelavians more broadly as a *transborder* community, rather than a *transnational* one. Guelavians cross many kinds of borders in their daily lives, geographic, socioeconomic, linguistic, cultural, racial and the like, in addition to the crossing of national borders. The term transborder emphasizes the particular and local character of such crossings, and accordingly, the perspectives of Guelavians themselves, rather than the top-down perspective of political officials and others who describe migratory movements in more abstract terms.

In the interaction described above, Faustino emphasizes the linguistic challenges faced by Guelavians in Los Angeles adapting to the dominance of English as the primary language of communication. He uses the first person plural form to describe his own linguistically precarious position, *así somos* (that’s how we are), and *somos jodidos* (“we’re screwed”), and to extend his own experience as characteristic of those in his community. In this, and other ways Guelavians created discursive links to one another, evoking one another’s experiences and the larger collectivity to which they all belong, and which is organized around their natal village. Through the circulation of stories, semiotic forms (e.g. La Once), networks of ritual kinship and reciprocal exchange, and through the migratory movements of people themselves, Guelavians created a shared

body of references and common orientations that they drew on continually to collaboratively construct a narrated community.

The organization of the Guelavian transborder community offers some interesting points of contrast with other diasporic communities that have been described by anthropologists. For example (as mentioned briefly in the previous chapter) Eisenlohr has described diasporic Hindu communities living in Mauritius, focusing on the “semiotic processes [that enable] the negotiation of spatiotemporal disjuncture between diasporic Hindus and the world of their ancestors” (2004: 82). Mauritian Hindus draw on the Hindi language, and the “performative and spatial recreation of a sacred geography” that is viewed as “on par in religious significance” with its counterpart in India, to create this sense of continuity with their ancestral community. He argues further that the creation of contiguity between the two communities across time and space involves a complex process of erasure, to remove contradictions and inconsistencies, and to affirm the predominance of North Indian linguistic and cultural traditions in the heterogeneous Mauritian community (2004: 88). In part this is achieved through a blending of messianic and unilinear temporalities, which emphasize Mauritian Hindus’ ties to ancient Hindus as well as their own participation in a Hindu nationalist agenda in the present. In this way Mauritian Hindus create a “temporal order of collective belonging,” a hybrid order that strategically blends past with present (2004: 95).

This contrasts sharply with the preoccupation with difference and disjuncture that characterized many Guelavians’ talk about themselves and other community members, differences that could be mitigated by various processes of communication, circulation, exchange and ritual return migration, but were part of the fabric of transborder life. In

fact the distinction between Los Angeles (and other migrant destinations) and San Juan Guelavía is the primary organizing principle of migratory mobility and processes of circulation. Money moves south to Guelavía, ritual foods and goods move north to Los Angeles. Individuals go north to make money, to seek adventure, repay debts, or to seek educational opportunities unavailable in Oaxaca; they return to south to San Juan Guelavía to celebrate major ritual events and milestones, experience “real” Guelavian life, and to honor their consanguineal and ritual kin.

As I emphasized in the previous chapter ritual life is territorially bound to Guelavía itself; masters of the reverential register of Zapotec reside only in Oaxaca, and the ritual language they employ reinforces the links between individual ritual events and the landscape of the community. Additionally, all religious pilgrimage activity that Guelavians engage in occurs within Mexico, and largely in Oaxaca. No such sacred sites are honored or visited in the United States, making it clear that Los Angeles is not part of the “sacred geography” of Guelavian ritual life. As is evidenced by the materials analyzed in the preceding chapters, the distinctions between L.A. and Oaxaca extend beyond the domain of ritual life; San Juan Guelavía contains all community members agricultural lands, it is the place where corn and other crops are grown, and where the best, most natural foods are cooked, and where people own property and homes that connect them to their ancestors. None of that can be replicated in Los Angeles, a place where most Guelavians struggle to find affordable housing and organize their lives around the threat of deportation. The primary orientation to Guelavía as the organizing center of transborder life permeates the narratives of Guelavians on both sides of the border. The Mauritan and Guelavian communities offer two different models of

“calibrating displacement”; Mauritians strive to minimize separation, while Guelavians continually engage and confront separation such that it becomes a unifying experience for all community members.

Throughout this dissertation I have focused on how members of the Guelavian transborder community use narrative and various forms of storytelling to make sense of their disparate experiences, and to maintain connections with one another across space and time. In the course of investigating how members of the Guelavian community talk to and about one another I have demonstrated the practical, cultural, and communicative challenges faced by dispersed community members in marking their alignment with one another in the absence of shared experiences, or even a shared language. Using the framework of second stories I explored the competing demands of transborder life between mobility and rootedness, cultural tradition and transformation, offering insights into the particular experiences and challenges associated with living across borders.

Specifically, I have found that membership in an indigenous transborder community, whose members have been historically marginalized in Mexico, and comprise a minority within a minority in the United States, involves a heightened state of reflexivity. An awareness of their socio-cultural location, both relative to other Guelavians and to others outside the community, pervaded the way they talked about themselves, and the way they moved through their everyday lives. Whether deciding what language in which to tell a story, opening a cantina in Oaxaca named after the gathering spot of migrant day laborers, or performing a Zapotec benediction at wedding that reaffirmed a couple’s ties to home and community, the Guelavians I worked with evinced a pervasive awareness of themselves in relation to others. The pervasive use of

spatial deictics that characterized many Guelavians' narratives and conversations brought the immediate context of an interaction into relation with other places and spaces to which they felt connected. This self-conscious awareness was shaped in part by the separations inherent to diasporic life, and also by the diverse forms of cultural and linguistic marginalization faced by indigenous migrants as they move across geographic and socio-political contexts.

Amid the shifting terrain of transborder life, attempts to reproduce cultural practices almost inevitably yield transformations. Across the chapters that comprise this dissertation I have explored the implications of simultaneous, mutually reinforcing patterns of language shift among Guelavian youth on both sides of the border across domains of practice. Language shift counters the processes of communicative and material circulation migrants engage in to maintain community and familial cohesion. Through the close analysis of talk I have illustrated the complex entanglements between ideas about economic development, cultural competence, and the relative value of linguistic varieties, with an eye for how these ideologies of language relate to shifting patterns of use.

The issues faced by Guelavians are not unique, and the insights offered by the organization and maintenance of the Guelavian community can be applied to other communities and populations. Indigenous migrants constitute an increasing percentage of the total migrant population in the American southwest (see Fox and Rivera-Salgado 2004). In light of these shifting demographics it is of particular importance to pinpoint the impact of ethnicity and language on the experiences of indigenous migrants whose marginalized status in both Mexico and the U.S. is a "cultural expression of the

structuring of inequality” (Comaroff & Comaroff 1992, see also Mandel 1989, Lemon 2000, Frye 1996). These perspectives are especially relevant following the recent (2003) creation of INALI (The National Institute of Indigenous Languages) in Mexico to develop and promote the use of indigenous languages throughout the country. Given the increasingly indigenous character of migration to the United States it behooves government agencies like INALI to expand their efforts to include indigenous communities in diaspora, and to counter the pervasive assumption that indigenous language loss is the inevitable consequence of migration. At the same time it is crucial to understand the enduring effects of historical discrimination in Mexico on the linguistic and cultural practices of indigenous populations on both sides of the border.

I further suggest that the close study of the communicative practices of transborder community membership sheds new light on themes that are of fundamental significance to the discipline of anthropology, such as the nature of the relationship between human action and social structure. Using the framework of second stories I have illustrated the complex relationship between reflexivity, cultural reproduction and transformation. I have shown how second stories enable the forging of interdiscursive links through talk and other semiotic modalities (e.g. architecture, style of dress), and how the spatial and temporal openness of second stories enables family and community members to discursively produce shared localities despite separations. As second stories are told, or enacted across contexts, and amid shifting social terrain, they have the potential to shift the interactional ground on which they are built, reframing or reinterpreting the first stories that they link back to. These features of second stories

provide insight into the how Guelavians collaboratively produce a sense of narrated community across time and space.

According to Ortner, scholarship on the concept of agency is concerned with the relationship “between historically marked individuals and events on the one hand, and the cumulative reproductions and transformations that are the results of everyday practices on the other” (2001:77). The stories that people tell about themselves and others are deeply marked by historical processes, configurations of political power, and the interactional histories of speakers. Second stories are the articulation of these markings with the emergent dynamics of everyday life, constituting both “the goal [and] the result of a person’s being-in-the-world” (Duranti 2004: 468). Through the analysis of second stories within this indigenous transborder community I have offered new perspectives on the “desires, agendas, and projects that take shape (or that are disabled from doing so) within complex local worlds” (Ortner 2001:83). Among transborder community members these desires, agendas and projects take shape between and across complex local worlds that are distinct and yet inextricably entwined.

As I move forward with my own projects and agendas I remain deeply invested in the Guelavian transborder community. In my future work I plan to further investigate the linguistic encoding of space, location, and directionality in Zapotec, Spanish and English respectively. Of particular interest to me in this investigation are differences between the way trajectories of movement are described in Zapotec and how they are described in English and Spanish, and how these differences relate to the linguistic marking of agency. Given the central importance of the territory of San Juan Guelavía in the narratives of Guelavians on both sides of the border as a shared center of gravity, talk

about movements and spatial orientation is of special significance. Understanding more clearly how migratory movements are described and characterized in different linguistic varieties will augment my research on the relationship between migration and language in this multilingual community.

In addition, I plan to continue tracking the development of linguistic and cultural revitalization programming in Guelavía, created in response to concern over the potential loss of San Juan Guelavía Zapotec. I hope to facilitate the expansion of such efforts to include Guelavian youth living in Los Angeles, as the maintenance of this language is affected by the practices of migrants outside of Mexico. To bolster these efforts I plan to conduct comparative, home-based research on the socialization of pre-school and primary school children on both sides of the border, both in the home and in schools. In studying the acquisition of cultural and linguistic practices among children across sociocultural contexts I hope to gain insights into the development of language ideologies, essentialism, and ethnic identification. Together with the research I have already completed among adults ages eighteen and older, this next project will provide me with a more holistic view of the life cycle of transborder language shift.

More generally, my work highlights the importance of attending to contexts of use in the study of communities undergoing language shift, and more specifically which social and cultural contexts promote the valorization and use of indigenous languages. In the Guelavian community, while Zapotec was used in many ordinary conversational contexts between adults, Zapotec use was most highly valued in the context of ritual events and other traditional speech contexts that only take place in San Juan Guelavía.

Thus the shift away from Zapotec among Guelavian migrants is compounded by the absence of contexts that encourage and valorize its use.

However, this linguistic division of labor along geographic lines creates an impetus for ritual return migration and increased forms of connectivity between migrants and non-migrants. The close relationship between linguistic practice and the organization of migrant mobility in the Guelavian community challenges conventional dichotomies that distinguish between micro and macro domains of analysis by showing that social processes often conceived of as large-scale (e.g. economics, migration, assimilation, globalization, transnationalism) are produced, reproduced, negotiated and transformed continually through interaction. To parse these into mutually exclusive domains obscures both the processual character of social structures and the far-reaching impacts of individual action. Future research on migration and linguistic minority communities would be greatly enriched by methodological and analytic approaches that emphasize the interconnectedness of linguistic, cultural, political and economic domains. Such work has the potential to elucidate the myriad ways in which language and other semiotic modalities can facilitate the (re)creation and maintenance of community in this era of heightened mobility and globalization.

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