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MEDIATING INDIGENOUS IDENTITY: VIDEO, ADVOCACY, AND KNOWLEDGE IN OAXACA, MEXICO

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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VIDEO, ADVOCACY, AND KNOWLEDGE IN OAXACA, MEXICO

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION
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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By
Laurel Catherine Smith

Lexington, Kentucky

Co-Directors: Dr. John Paul Jones III, Professor of Geography
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Lexington, Kentucky

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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In the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca, many indigenous communities further their struggles for greater political and cultural autonomy by working with transnational non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Communication technology (what I call comtech) is increasingly vital to these intersecting socio-spatial relations of activism and advocacy. In this dissertation, I examine how comtech offer indigenous individuals and organizations with the means for visualizing their political-cultural agendas. Approaching the access and use of comtech, especially video technologies, as a partial and situated technoscience, I inquire into how and why these activities reconfigure the production and evaluation of authoritative knowledge about indigenous peoples, places, and practices.

More specifically, I undertook an organizational ethnography of a small intermediary NGO comprised of individuals who self-identify as indigenous and others who do not, *Ojo de Agua Comunicación Indígena*, which endeavors to place communication technologies (especially video equipment) at the disposal of indigenous communities. Through participation-observation and interviews, I explored this group's everyday strategies of networking in the name of assisting indigenous actors' access and appropriation of visual technologies. I also pursued interpretive analyses of video-mediated articulations of indigenous knowledge and identity that were enabled by Ojo de Agua.

My research indicates that Ojo de Agua has selectively built upon the ambitions and the socio-spatial connections of a government program that emerged from the initiatives of academic advocates, who sought to open new spaces of participation for indigenous peoples. Members of Ojo de Agua have, however, found their goal of service somewhat stymied by a situation that positions them within a flexible labor force of knowledge workers. Their livelihoods as media makers did not allow them (the time or money) to pursue as much altruism and advocacy as they would have liked. Nonetheless, Ojo de Agua's corpus of videos established the group as an alternative and yet authoritative source of visual knowledge of indigenous peoples, places, and practices. This relocation of advocacy is symptomatic of the creative destruction fueled by the neo-liberal economic policies that, for

the last thirty years, have been reconfiguring spaces of cooperation and conflict in Latin America.

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DISSERTATION

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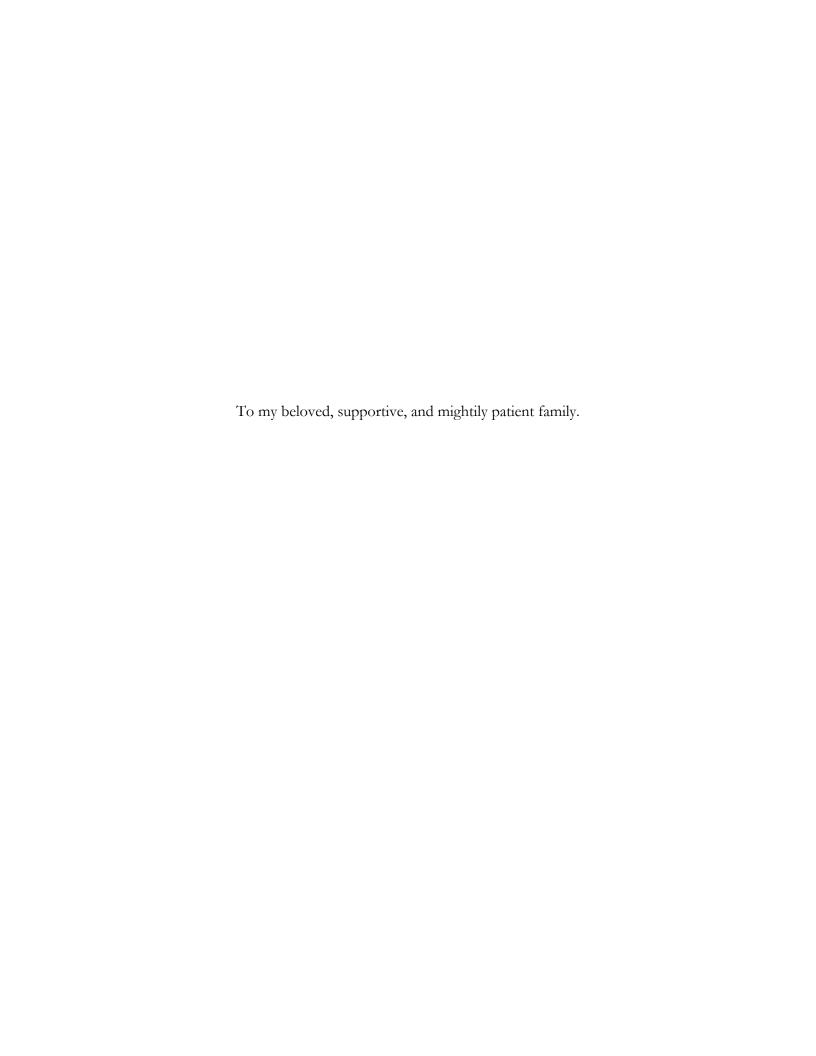at the University of Kentucky

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To my beloved, supportive, and mightily patient family.

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CHAPTER ONE
Visualizing Indigenous Video

> Since the 1970s, a small but influential cohort of indigenous cultural activists
> in many different locales around the world have recognized that media
> technologies offer a form that not only 'fits' comfortably with oral and
> performative traditions (Molnar, 1995, 171); they also recognized that "small
> media" provide a field of cultural production that can enhance struggles for
> indigenous rights. These range from preservation and revival of languages,
> ceremonies, and histories to interventions in representations of indigenous
> people as they are told and made by media institutions of the encompassing
> state societies and to the invention of cultural possibilities that suggest
> alternatives to a reified traditional past, a marginalized present, or an
> assimilated future (Ginsburg 1997, 119).

THE ENTANGLED GEOGRAPHY OF INDIGENOUS VIDEO

This dissertation grows out of my interest in the contributions of video technologies[1]

to projects undertaken by socio-cultural collectivities that have traditionally been positioned

(almost exclusively) by mass media as objects of state discipline and scholarly scrutiny. With

its mobile blend of visual and audio output, video is a medium particularly suitable for

communicating with people who may not read (much or at all), but most likely engage with

television broadcasts—enough to know they rarely see onscreen people who look and live as

they do. Perhaps this is why video is one of the small media that have proven useful for

popular social movements struggling to rework hegemonic state-sanctioned constructions of

cultural identity (Srenbery-Mohammadi and Mohammadi 1997),[2] and for facilitating some of

the cross-cultural knowledge exchanges required for orchestrating participatory development

projects with marginalized target audiences (Protz 1998). In the following pages, I offer a

geography of a particular mode of knowledge production and cultural representation called

(by me and by others) *indigenous video*, an indigenous media[3] practice aiming "to sustain and

transform culture…an activity that is linked to indigenous efforts for rights to self-

representation, governance, and cultural autonomy of centuries of colonial assmilationist policies by surrounding states" (Ginsburg 1997, 119).

The oppositional cultural politics of video-mediated visualization of socio-political identities do not, however, emerge from or exist within isolated realms of resistance. Rather, out of the necessity of negotiation, the cultural politics of resistance are hybrid; they are situated by multiple topographies of socio-spatial relations and thus unavoidably address dominant, hegemonic discourses (i.e., images, ideas, and impacts) of, and about, difference (Rose 1994). Analyzing cultural resistance to oppressive representational politics in terms of hybridity focuses attention on intersecting socio-spatial relations, and because these intersections unpredictably transgress traditional and usually tightly bounded categories of analysis, this analytical lens conceptually moves us beyond "hermetically sealed sites of autonomy to related spaces of connection and articulation" (Moore 1998, 347). Such a theoretical relocation centers the "mutual imbrication" of resistance and power (ibid 353) and encourages us to ask about representational politics (who represents who and what, how so and where, and why?), which, in turn, focuses attention on the geo-politics of authoritative knowledge production (see also: Radcliffe 1999b and 1999e, L. Smith 2002b). Fay Ginsburg's emphasis on hybridity, for example, reveals (1993a, 559) how indigenous media are often "a product of relations with the governments responsible for the dire political circumstances that motivated the mastery of new communication forms as a means of resistance and assertion of rights." And it point outs how students or scholars of media making who do not identify themselves as indigenous (people called "media missionaries" by indigenous cultural activist Loretta Todd (cited in Ginsburg 2000, 42-43), but to whom I'll refer as advocates[4]) often served, and continue to serve, as key catalysts of indigenous video

production (see also: Turner 2002b; Michaels 1984; Prins 2002; Ginsburg 1997 and 2002; Wortham 2002).

In this dissertation, I bring this kind of analytical inquiry into the geographical intersections of hybridity, cultural activism, and advocacy to bear upon the part of the world commonly called 'Latin America.'[5] My regionalization is heavily informed by Sarah Radcliffe, whose examinations of the geography of civil society movements rallied around the politics of cultural difference in Latin America also highlight patterns of socio-spatial entanglements of power and cultural resistance (Radcliffe 1996, 1997a, 1999a, 1999d, 2000 and 2001a). She notes, for example, that although their struggles arise in response to broken state promises of development and citizenship, rarely do contemporary social movements aim to overthrow states; instead they seek "the incorporation and then satisfaction of their interests and needs through institutional channels" (1999c, 205). To sketch the entangled political geography that she finds symptomatic of these social movements and their oppositional cultural politics, Radcliffe distinguishes three characteristic spatial strategies (217-221). The first is the mobilization of region- or place-centered identities as a resource for confronting and carrying out "struggles for the decentralization of power, and power's beneficial impacts at the local level" (218). The second strategy entails the "transgression of the spatial rules organizing Latin American geographies…[in order to] reconfigure the geographies of power," by relocating previously more isolated issues and images into larger arenas, often using new technologies to tap into "transnational flows of ideas and strategies" (218). And the third consists of the contestation and rewriting of social boundaries in order "to generate alternative languages through which to speak about social differences, development and modernity" (219).

In this chapter, I use the three spatial strategies with which Radcliffe demarcates collective efforts to reconfigure power relations in Latin America to trace my framework for understanding the cultural politics and organizational practices of indigenous video. First, I look at the place-centered politics, material ambitions and cultural aesthetics of indigenous video making, seeing it as indelibly framed by debates about the knowledge production practices of development and conservation. Next I use the notion of networking to explain how technology-mediated indigenous cultural activism works, and in the process, reconstitutes socio-spatial relationships in a myriad of ways. Afterwards, I explore how the cultural politics of indigenous movements reconfigure categories of analysis, and I consider how indigenous visual activism relocates academic authority. My overview of the entangled geography of video-mediated indigenous activism is followed by an introduction to the institutional encounters that gave rise to indigenous video in the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca. This introductory chapter concludes by outlining how my story about mediating indigenous identity politics and knowledge production with video and advocacy unfolds.

Indigenous Cultural Activism: Grounded in Place

> At a time when the fashions of contemporary discourse, and the world itself, seems to point towards the globalization of space and human experience, Native American and other indigenous activists are advocating the importance of specific cultural enclaves, of choosing to remain together despite all the pressures—historical and contemporary—to give that up.

> We provide the opposite of the way the human condition is moving, floating and migrating around the globe. Instead, we are strategizing to reconfirm a continuous relationship with a very particular part of the world. That's what we need to get to— but we need to clarify that it is about decolonizing, and sustaining our relationship to a particular space (commentary by Tuscarora artist, photographer and professor of Native American art Jolene Rickard in 1997, quoted in Ginsburg 2000, 34-5).

Place is a lived experience of socio-spatial relations that is represented (i.e., seen and understood) in a multitude of ways that vary according to the identity and mobility of the subject positions occupied by those who are living-researching these experiences (Duncan and Ley 1993; Cresswell 1997). By delimiting socio-spatial and cultural differences, a representation of place—whether working as theorization, legislation, entertainment, or reconfirmation (see second paragraph of Rickard's quote above)—momentarily sketches the power relations shaping a particular location (Zonn 1990; Cresswell and Dixon 2002; Natter and Jones 1993). Although widely represented as paradigmatic examples of a localized cultural existence that is deeply rooted in place, indigenous peoples historically have been marginalized from the production of authoritative knowledge and related influential or best-selling representations about their locale-linked identities (L. Smith 2002a). In her commentary (quoted above), indigenous cultural activist Jolene Rickard recognizes this contradictory exclusion by linking the aim to confront centripetal global forces collectively with efforts to decolonize the production of authoritative knowledge about socio-spatial relationships "to a particular space" or place. Her focus on place and reference to decolonization converse both with indigenous movements' demands to justify, establish and strengthen the authority and autonomy of indigenous communities to identify, image and utilize their own place-focused means, methodologies and measures for defining and exploring madly abstract and yet deadly material matters such as ownership, need, and well being; and with scholarly efforts to reject colonialist geo-politics of knowledge that identify and position indigenous peoples as unsuitable subjects for undertaking analysis (Willems-Braun 1997; Barnett 1998).

With place-centered identity politics, indigenous organizations, federations, and activists seek *to locate, position, and represent favorably* territorially-specific and culturally

differentiated collectivities within often drastically uneven engagements with states, communities, globalized labor markets, transnational organizations, and regional political economies (Li 2000). In Latin America, indigenous movements generally confront developmentalist governments, as well as international labor markets,[6] by rallying collective action around the socio-political category of ethnicity, using it to articulate territory-based identities that are always culturally and often class differentiated (Kearney and Varese 1995). By centering attention on cultural differences (such as language, religion, health and healing, and community governance) and identifying them with particular social locations (usually distinguished by severe political economic marginalization), ethnicity shines light on the violence of state interventions in indigenous communities that sought the programmatic eradication of exactly these cultural differences. Furthermore, focusing on the systematic cultural and political violence of ethnocide helps establish a moral prerogative for state acquiescence to indigenous demands. With ethnopolitics, many indigenous organizations, federations, and activists claim territorial, political and cultural autonomy from the state *and at the same time* struggle to expand exclusionary state structures and practices of citizenship, especially in relation to community participation in economic development programs (Bebbington 1996, 2000; Perreault 2003a-c).

Arturo Escobar (2001) refers to the cultural politics and geographical practices of such place-centered representational strategies as "subaltern strategies of localization." He proposes that "the defense of place by social movements might be constituted as a rallying point for both theory construction and political action" (139) because such a theoretical-political perspective offers "the possibility of linking space, place, and identity in ways that are not accounted for either in conventional models of identity that conflate place and identity nor in the newer ones that relate identity to mobility and diaspora" (148). But

accepting this offer of alternative imaginations, says Escobar, requires centering local knowledge, "a mode of place-based consciousness, a place-specific (even if not place-bound or place-determined) way of endowing the world with meaning" (153). Indeed, as Rickard's quote suggests, "the defense of place" works in tandem with the demand for decolonization, i.e, relocating the practices of authoritative knowledge production so as to open new spaces of engagement with indigenous self-representations. Emerging from indigenous struggles for decolonization are two key, interwoven calls for action: the first is the revalorization of place-centered practices of knowledge production (Varese 1995), and the second is for the inclusion of these practices and their practioners in the geographically-specific orchestration, coordination and evaluation of the numerous conservation and development initiatives[7] shaping the livelihood opportunities of indigenous peoples (Warren and Jackson 2002).

Faye Ginsburg's examinations of Aboriginal video making in the welfare state of Australia explore the place-centeredness of video-mediated indigenous cultural politics. The arrival of large satellite systems that made television broadcasting available in regions of Australia where previously there was none gave rise to concerns about the assault of televised mass media on Aboriginal communities,[8] which in turn led to the establishment and public funding of Aboriginal media projects (Ginsburg 1993a-b, 2002). Instead of being a "Faustian bargain" that exchanges 'modern' and thus ostensibly 'out of place' media technologies for 'traditional' and thus 'place bound' cultural practices, Ginsburg argues that (when accessed) televisual recording and broadcasting technologies are used by indigenous collectivities and individuals "to mediate, literally, historically produced social ruptures and to help construct identities that link past and present in ways appropriate to contemporary conditions" (Ginsburg 1991, 94). Ginsburg is using the idea-image of mediation in two, inter-related ways. First, as she says in the quote opening this chapter, mediation is a process

of cultural production, wherein "hybrid cultural forms [operate] as means of social action" (1997, 123). In other words, indigenous televisual productions provide archives of cultural resources that intervene in stereotypical and degrading images of 'indigenousness' by imagining alternative and (ideally) empowering conceptualizations of indigenous peoples, practices, and places.

Ginsburg's second use of mediation speaks to the creative and conceptual impacts of particular socio-spatial relations. For example, because they are mediated by localized concerns for social wellbeing, each Aboriginal media project brings a different community perspective, and thus differing objectives and standards, to the production of televisual media. To emphasize the place-centered focus of indigenous video, Ginsburg utilizes the concept of *embedded aesthetics* whereby "the quality of work is judged by its capacity to embody, sustain, and even revive or recreate certain social relations, although the social bases for coming to this position may be very different for remote and urban people" (1994a, 368). In short, the cultural and political work of indigenous visual activism is *mediating* and this work is *mediated by* place-specific social conditions and hopes for social action, which are usually formulated in regards to geographically-specific struggles over rights and resources (Ginsburg 1997). And with embedded aesthetics, accountability and responsibility towards a cultural and territorial collective become primary concerns.

Mediating place, articulating politicized identities and rallying social action is neither easy nor innocent; rather it is difficult and risky cultural work. Ginsburg (1993b, 1994a) learns about the challenges of embedded aesthetics through conversations with Frances Peters, a Kamilaroi Aboriginal woman who was raised and educated in Sydney and now works there as a television producer. Peters states that "…with us, with every program that we make, we are ultimately responsible to a larger Aboriginal community. And we can't

remove ourselves from that responsibility" (quoted in Ginsburg 1994a, 375). But, notes Ginsburg, "*community* is not, for her [Peters], some romantic notion of a unified social position. It is, rather, a complex and unstable social construct, implicated in the changing understandings of Aboriginality in Australia today, as bureaucratic structures for the administration of Aboriginal funding and policies have proliferated" (ibid; Ginsburg's emphasis). To illustrate this insight, she quotes (in ibid) Peters asking: "Which community? Our communities have become bureaucratized and class-stratified. Accountability is riddled with fear of being made to feel guilty, or that you aren't Aboriginal enough." As indicated by Peters' comments and queries and Ginsburg's observations, indigenous media makers must live and work within the uneven and uncertain geographies that both condition and comprise their various (e.g., local, institutional and national) communities. And in addition to community-based input and feedback, place-focused indigenous cultural activism is also positioned by dialogue with much larger communities comprised of encompassing societies, government agencies, transnational funding organizations, and individual advocates and their institutional allies.

Networking Indigenous Video

While neither indigenous peoples' resistances to domination and exploitation, nor their struggles for self-representation, have arisen only recently, the geographical reach of their protests and suggested alternatives has been amplified enormously in the last thirty years. Ethnopolitical movements mobilized around indigenous peoples, places and practices have achieved (some limited, but striking) political success in Latin America (Kearney 1996a; Yashar 1999; Van Cott 2000). One key spatial strategy they use to challenge states is tapping into the institutional entanglements known as transnational networks of advocacy, i.e.,

intersected relations among international aid agencies, research institutions, membership grassroots organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of various sizes and shapes.[9] Indigenous organizations, federations and activists unevenly align their place-centered agendas, representational practices and resources with those of other socio-spatial formations concerned with more globalized currents, such as human rights and sustainable development (Brysk 2000; Mato 2000a; Escobar 2001; Perreault 2003a; Bebbington 2001). That is to say they network. And as Daniel Mato (2000b, 489) observes, networking entails "experiences of learning, coproduction, appropriation, adaptation, reelaboration, negotiations, and other dynamic interactions between social agents in heterogeneous scenarios." The slippery complexities of these hybrid practices of knowledge production change our understanding of political impact by drawing analytical attention to the interstitial spaces of negotiation from whence indigenous cultural politics emerge (Hale 1997; Bravo 2000; Mato 1996).

With inquiry into the geo-politics of networking comes greater recognition and contemplation of how indigenous intellectuals (scholars, artists, media professionals, teachers, techno-bureaucrats, etc.) increasingly participate (or not) in the production, evaluation and authoritative administration of institutional knowledge about indigenous communities throughout Latin America. On the one hand, the education required for working in many governmental institutions school students in the representational practices of colonialist epistemologies that picture indigenous communities as backwards or folkloric, and so indigenous intellectuals might undertake their professions with essentialist or derogatory conceptualizations of indigenous peoples, places and practices. And the organizational dynamics structuring their institutional positions can immerse indigenous intellectuals in, and even make them dependent upon, state tactics of coercion and/or

containment. On the other hand, institutional positions can also make some indigenous intellectuals vital leaders in the formulation of astute cultural critiques, calls for political change, and proposals for restructuring and rectifying inequalities.[10] And with their critiques and calls for "transformative action" (Ginsburg 1997, 122), many indigenous cultural activists contest hegemonic ideologies, often by inverting dominant and denigrating sorts of images of, and ideas about, indigenous identity (García de León 1996; C. Smith 1996; Warren and Jackson 2002).

Focusing on the institutional 'situatedness' of indigenous identity politics also draws analytical attention to influential actors that do not necessarily self-identify as indigenous. Nick Blomley (1996), for example, points out how researchers can find themselves translating indigenous peoples' motives and strategies of socio-spatial resistance for larger audiences for whom some the goals of indigenous movements may seem utterly counterintuitive. Analyses-translations of indigenous peoples' representational strategies remind us that scholarly representation is not without consequence, but rather directly contributes to the renegotiation of political agency (Brosius 1999, 180; Friedman 1996). Recognizing the entanglements in which scholarly work is embedded requires that "questions about institutional positionality and academic authority be kept squarely in sight when discussing the problems of representing the struggles and agency of marginalized social groups" (Barnett 1997, 137; see also Prakash 1994; Slater 1998a-b).[11] This argument does not suppose that the problematic patterns of institutional limitations, paternal motivations and romantic idealism with which such academic action has been marked historically have suddenly dissipated. It does propose, however, that these difficulties no longer excuse scholars from not locating our politics of representation in relation to the many differentially positioned actors networking the indigenous identity politics we study.[12]

11

Humans and their organizations and institutions, however, are not the only actors networking the socio-spatial relations of activism and advocacy. Almost all observers note how information and communication technologies (ICTs) facilitate grassroots collectivities' long-distance coordination with the campaigns of transnational allies.[13] Indigenous collectivities also access ICTs; and they usually utilize them for disseminating, discussing, and developing (i.e., networking) their oppositional cultural politics (C. Smith et al. 2000; Radcliffe 1999a; Escobar 1999; Delgado-P and Becker 1998). Furthermore, with ICTs, authoritative data based on local, community-generated knowledges can be rendered and then mobilized in the interest of groups previously marginalized from planning development and resource extraction initiatives (Turnbull 1999; Knapp and Herlihy 2002; Bocco et al. 2001; *Human Organization* 2003). Because such technology-mediated, collaborative productions of knowledge mingle 'ways of seeing,' they force attention on the geo-politics of knowledge. And this focus makes us look at *all* representational practices in a more critical way that centers questions of access, participation and power (Barr and Sillitoe 2001; Lewis et al. 2002). To understand how ICTs work (or not) for indigenous identity politics, they need to be approached as actors producing relations, and not simply machines of (more or less) efficiency (Hoeschele 2000). This angle of analysis allows examination of how ICTs are used in practice during the uneven dialogues of networking that produce influential knowledge.

One of the most visible examples of the political possibilities of video-mediated indigenous networking is the visual activism undertaken by Kayapó communities in Brazil in the late 1980s. Kayapó leaders circulated videotapes to inform communities of the cultural and environmental devastation wrought by a recently built dam in a different part of Brazil, and to rally participation in demonstrations against a similar hydroelectric proposal that

endangered Kayapó land. Heavily covered by national and international news media, which were particularly fascinated by the "attention-getting image" of the strategically positioned Kayapó cameramen recording these "elaborate spectacles" (Conklin and Graham 1995, 701), the subsequent political protests contributed to the Brazilian state's cancellation of the World Bank funded dam project (Turner 1992, 7; Gray 1998; 285). Terence Turner, a scholar-facilitator of Kayapó video making, argues that video technologies provide a powerful medium for community leaders to formulate "their own relative cultural autonomy as a basis for dealing with national and global systems and pressures" (Turner 2002b, 232). Turner's analyses of Kayapó videos dwell on how the videomakers' cultural aesthetics and spatial symbolism shape their visual representations of community practices such as ceremonies, even if Kayapó cameramen record and editors edit with anthropological assistance, and with far-flung audiences in mind. According to Turner (ibid, 238):

> The Kayapó in general feel that it is to their advantage to become better known to the outside world; they feel that this will make outsiders more disposed to support them against the Brazilian state and to provide other forms of aid. They conceive of their videos as potentially serving such an "outreach" function (Turner 1990a, 1992).

The practices of video recording and editing allow Kayapó leaders to strategically amplify their political impact by creating and reaching new audiences. Through the circulation of their videos travel politicized cultural performances that demand governmental accountability and seek to reconfigure national, regional and community geographies of power through the establishment and exercise of Kayapó autonomy.

Many indigenous videos travel far from the places where they emerged to be seen (perhaps) by faraway, but still limited, audiences that attend media festivals showcasing indigenous work.[14] Erica Wortham argues (2002, 322-3) that the transnational circuits of indigenous media exhibition in the Americas not only provide recognition of indigenous cultural activism in the form of selection, screening and maybe awards, but also provide

public venues, often in museum or other scholarly sorts of spaces, for further cultural performances—especially when indigenous media makers have the opportunity to present their productions and further explain their hopes for transformation. According to Wortham (324), "the growing numbers of indigenous media festivals, and their funders as well as foundations who support indigenous media production affirm the value of indigenous media not just because they might be authentic but because they imagine social change." In addition to cohering audiences for indigenous oppositional cultural politics, circuits of exhibition allow (some) indigenous media makers to meet and establish linkages with other indigenous cultural activists, funding sources, scholar-advocates, and other interested parties who might attend the conferences and screenings offered by such festivals. In short, these socio-spatial opportunities for dialogue and exchange can initiate, solidify or, as explained below, even extinguish channels of the moral and financial support that is so vital for indigenous video making and networking (ibid, 337).

Drawing upon her participation in, and orchestration of, indigenous media festivals, Wortham relates how, despite the benefits they offer and the oppositional political goals held in common by most organizers and participants, the structured encounters of media festivals are free from neither the presence nor erasure of conflict and contestation. Her discussion centers on the *VI Festival de Cine y Video de los Pueblos Indígenas* that took place in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala in August of 1999. This indigenous video festival arose and operated under the aegis of the *Consejo Latinoamericano de Cine y Video de Pueblos Indígenas* (CLACPI), an umbrella organization with representatives from several Latin American countries that was established in 1985 by anthropologists and filmmakers concerned with ethnographic films about indigenous peoples (326-7). In 1999, explains Wortham (326), a split among Guatemalan leftist political parties a few weeks before the festival manifest in

the disintegration of the "tentative coalition of Mayan and ladino cultural and communications organizations" that was organizing it, and the festival almost did not unfold. A non-indigenous communications member organization, *Luciérnaga* (Firefly), was left to its own devices, but fortunately was able to rely on the efforts of participants who had traveled to the festival in Guatemala from Mexico.[15] The festival consisted of five days with morning discussion sessions that Wortham characterizes as "a successful CLACPI annual meeting with fairly rich and in-depth exchanges of ideas and experiences," and evening screenings of an exciting plethora of video work from all over Latin America that Wortham calls "outreach disasters" (334). In a city with a population reported to be about 85 percent Mayan, "the audience rarely exceeded the international guests invited specifically for the event at any time during the festival," partly because of "an effective boycott from indigenous organizations who pulled out of the festival organizing committee claiming their ladino partners were merely 'using them' without sharing any of the decision-making" (334-5). The dissolution of the local organization committee highlights the socio-political contingencies of networking indigenous cultural activism, just as the festival's achievement (albeit limited) of exchange and encouragement demonstrates the vital roles of non-indigenous individual and collective actors in the mediation of the oppositional politics of indigenous media.

Furthermore, notes Wortham, such transnational circuits of exhibition function as powerful filters that influence how indigenous media is represented, received, and even enabled. For example, she came away from the CLACPI festival troubled by the way in which indigenous video productions were classified and assessed as national products largely distinguished by aesthetic differences only. The result of such a tidy assessment is that "the kinds of dilemmas of making culture visible that have to do with community representivity,

accountability and transparency, while not resolved, cease to be a concern as indigenous media are played according to nation" (Wortham 2002, 336). And all too easily community, regional, institutional, and gendered dynamics of difference are swept under the rug in an effort to present a united front that aid agencies will find appealing (337). The omnipresent risk of reduction while networking indigenous video partly stems from the need to engage with the clumsy categories of top-down institutional structuring that do not always align with local conditions of categorization. For example, Ginsburg (1997, 127) laments how aid institutions and their media funding tend to focus exclusively on piecemeal production or training opportunities for individual artists, when actually the production of indigenous visual media is a collective practice that requires sustained investment in training and equipment update and maintenance. And even this fragile financial infrastructure, adds Ginsburg (2000), is now gravely impacted by the current reductions of state funding for independent media making. Although less dependence on state patronage through privatization is not always a losing proposition.

Wortham and Ginsburg chose to not merely wring their hands and worry; instead, they work and write in opposition to the depoliticization of indigenous media. Ginsburg resolves (2000, 39) to continue using her institutional position (as a scholar, teacher and curator of media collections) to open 'a discursive space' (Ginsburg 1994a) for the dissemination and discussion of indigenous media "in and out of the academy" whereby engaged scholarship contributes to social transformation. Wortham (2002, 51-55) also links her research to the various institutional positions she has held wherein she advocated indigenous activists' endeavors. For instance, after learning of various indigenous media makers' interest in engaging with cultural activists living in other countries, in 1998 she networked with both Mexican and U.S. bureaucracies to invent and enable a tour of Native

American videos and video makers to various parts of Mexico (341-342). Not all of Wortham's efforts to inform and reform institutions have panned out. She writes (312) about her frustrated efforts to explain the local complexities of indigenous video productions from a community with which she was very familiar to a video festival selection committee: "…but despite my attempt to contextualize the tape for the rest of the committee as a community expression of indigenous autonomy, the other selectors 'didn't see' the connection and found the program hard to follow." The empowered actors, audiences and understandings sought through academic advocacy do not always congeal, but if and when they do, their configurations can not be predicted or dictated.

For example, academic advocacy has played a central role in the arrival of video technologies in the Brazilian Amazon. Kayapó communities first accessed camcorders in the mid-1980s—not through state sponsorship, in contrast to indigenous media projects in Australia, Canada, and Mexico, but through the efforts of three Brazilian researcher-media specialists who introduced and then donated video recording and viewing equipment (Turner 1990, 9 and 2002a, 79). Later, while working as an anthropological consultant for episodes of a TV Granada (UK) documentary series, "Disappearing World" focused on the Kayapó, Terence Turner facilitated Kayapó acquisition of two more video camcorders, batteries, and tapes (Turner 1990, 9). Then in 1990, he acquired a grant from the Spencer Foundation to establish the Kayapó Video Project, housed in the Sao Paulo office of the NGO, *Centro de Trabalho Indigenista* (which already housed another media advocacy project[16]) where Kayapó could travel to access editing technologies and the skills to use them (Turner 1992, 7 and 2002a, 79). Through his advocacy experience, Turner has learned how facilitating community use of video is hardly a neutral practice, but rather a very touchy one because technology acquisition and use alters socio-spatial relations. He explains:

> …becoming a video cameraperson, and even more important, a video editor, has
> meant combining a prestigious role within the community with a culturally and
> politically important form of mediation of relations with Western society, two of the
> prerequisites for political leadership in contemporary Kayapo[17] community. Several
> younger chiefs acted as video camerapersons during their rise to chieftainship, and a
> number of the more ambitious younger men have taken up video at least in part of
> the hope of following in their footsteps (Turner 2002a, 78-79).

As evidenced here by the unruly impacts of introducing video technologies to the Kayapó,
networking indigenous video has all kinds of repercussions, what Turner calls "social
effects" (ibid, 77-79). And both he and Wortham (2002, 337) suggest that, currently, these
transformations are rarely discussed during the exhibition of indigenous media at festivals.
Despite its promise of expansion and vitalization through alliance, networking also entails
the risks of conflation and erasure.

Reconfiguring Categories with Indigenous Video

In addition to ever-shifting, wide-ranging, and technology-mediated linkages with
potential allies, the networking strategies of indigenous movements give rise to unevenly
shared representational practices (Mato 1997). Again, there is nothing new about indigenous
peoples' creative appropriation of rhetoric and other discursive strategies, especially in Latin
America where communities have been working with the imported and imposed languages
and institutions of colonial and state regimes for centuries. For the last three decades,
however, indigenous movements have increasingly framed their political strategies with the
borrowed concept of culture, an artifact of both the scholarly need to catalogue and
categorize and states' need to know and control subjects (Said 1979; Tagg 1995). Jean
Jackson argues (1995, 18) that indigenous actors' pragmatic adoption of the lens of culture
(from the various local, regional, national and more global agents with whom they network)

for representing and politicizing contemporary socio-spatial relations reconfigures "conventional notions of culture," which are "based on a quasibiological analogy in which a group of people are seen as 'having' or 'possessing' a culture somewhat in the way an animal species has fur or claws." Given the manner in which indigenous organizations and activists formulate oppositional cultural politics, Jackson observes that instead of conceiving of culture as an inheritance that can be lost or defiled, culture is best approached as "something more dynamic, something that people use to adapt to changing social conditions—and as something that is adapted in turn" (ibid). Jackson's suggested theoretical relocation traces a shift from structural fascination with place-bound cultures, to a post-structural fascination with the socio-spatial processes of identifying political positions with cultural practices (see also Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Field 1994; L. Smith 2002a and b).

Susan Wright describes (1998) this theoretical shift as a change from 'old' approaches to culture that entail a check-list of criteria designed to evaluate the functionality or integrity of a culture system, to 'new' approaches focused on the geographies of identity and knowledge that shape the "political process of contestation over the power to define key concepts, including that of 'culture' itself" (Wright 1998, 14). This framework of new/old, however, is not meant to imply that one is gone and the other thriving; rather they coexist and shape one another. To solidify her demarcation of difference between new and old approaches, *and to illustrate their entanglements*, Wright points to Kayapó video making wherein:

> Kayapo politicians…exploited the way the old idea of 'culture' masks power differentials within groups and they borrowed western filmic tropes of realism and authenticity which deflect attention from questions like how is author-ity constructed, who controls the technology, who holds the camera, who is depicted as active and who as passive and marginal…and presented themselves as a homogenous and bounded group, the 'Kayapo'… (14).

As they use video technologies to politically mobilize representations of an idealized cultural and collective coherence, Kayapó leaders

...defined 'culture' for themselves and used it to set the terms of their relations with the 'outside world.' In a history spanning forty years, missionaries, government officials, the Kayapo, anthropologists, international agencies and non government agencies had all competed for the power to define a key concept, 'culture.' Missionaries and government agencies initially had used the concept to define an entity that could be acted upon, producing disempowerment and dependency among the Kayapo. The Kayapo strategy to wrest control of this concept from missionaries and government officials and turn it against them was part of a struggle not just for identity but for physical, economic and political survival (ibid).

Wright's examination of Kayapó video making demonstrates how Kayapó activist-leaders appropriated and utilized 'old' conceptualizations of culture that previously served as instruments of administration and analysis to construct unified solidarity. And it suggests how 'new' theorizations of processural and institutional cultural politics are needed to situate the Kayapó leaders' representational practices.

As Quetzil Castañeda (1996, 16) wryly observes in his study of Mayan cultural politics: "...those people the world over who have not been attuned to these rarefied [theoretical] debates assume the reality of the concept [of culture] and its referent: culture in general and their or another's specific culture is manifested everywhere in objectified gestures, styles, habits, and so on." And just like the people for whom culture is a meaningful concept and perhaps a political tool, institutions talk and write extensively about preserving, fostering, or weaving 'it' into their interventions (J. Jackson 1995, 15-17). Indeed, indigenous collectivities' cultural politics draw upon and address (sometimes in opposition, other times in cooperation, but usually pragmatically) the cultural language of diverse socio-spatial arenas of power: for example, state discourses of progress and modernity (Perreault 2003a and b; Radcliffe 1999a), campesino unions (Hahn 1996; Edelman 1998; Hale 1994), academic research (L. Smith 2003; Castañeda 1996; Graham 2002), human rights (Ramos 2002; Stavenhagen 1989), religious institutions (Stephen and Dow 1990; Hernández Díaz 2001, 121-71; Hernández Castillo 2001), women's rights movements (Hernández Castillo and

Stephen 1999; Stephen 1997), and global tourism (Castañeda 1996; Hale 2002; Tilley 2002). All too often, however, maintains Jackson (15) "the culture to be preserved is being simplified and folklorized to make it easier for outsiders to understand." Although such knowledge production facilitates the garnering of political, emotional, and financial support, the overlapping representational practices (such as the categorical characteristics comprising an entity called culture) that result from these socio-spatial entanglements offer indigenous peoples risk as well as opportunity.

For example, Beth Conklin and Laura Graham (1995) examine the new "shifting middle ground"—"a political space, an arena of intercultural communication, exchange, and joint political action" (696) produced when the identity politics of Amazonian Indians intersect with the eco-politics of global environmental movements. According to Conklin and Graham (ibid),

> The new politics of the eco-Indian middle ground is primarily a symbolic politics; ideas and images, not common identity or economic interests, mobilize political actions across wide gulfs of distance, language, and culture…The middle ground of Amazonian eco-politics was founded on the assertion that native peoples' view of nature and ways of using natural resources are consistent with Western conservationist principles. Many environmentalists, and certain Amazonian Indian activists, came to frame their political discourses in terms of this assumption in order to establish common ideological ground and mutual interests in opposing destruction of the rain forest and keeping land in native hands.

Indigenous peoples enter and engage with this new political arena imbued with considerable symbolic value because they are marked by cultural difference largely distinguished by its potential to foster environmental conservation. This situation intensified with the recent shift from strictly preservation to sustainable development models of technoscientific conservation. At this point, observe Conklin and Graham, "Environmentalists discovered the value of indigenous knowledge, and environmental organizations discovered the strategic value of allying with indigenous causes" (697), and with these discoveries, "The scientifically

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legitimized goal of preserving biodiversity became attached to the idea of preserving indigenous knowledge and, by extension, preserving indigenous peoples" (698). Conklin and Graham argue that by contributing to ecological critiques of hegemonic practices of environmental inquiry and management, alliances comprised of environmental organizations and Amazonian Indians not only rewrite operating definitions of science, but also legitimate foreign interest in domestic environmental policy.

Indeed, by the late 1980s, the cultural politics of the eco-Indian was so publicly appealing it became the most prominent means of pro-Indian advocacy aimed at the Amazon, which greatly broadened a base of support previously limited to largely human rights and cultural preservation. Conklin and Graham (ibid) explain this categorical shift in advocacy: "In strategic terms, both human rights groups that decided to 'go green' and environmental NGOs that decided to 'go native' benefited from the scientific and moral arguments, as well as the organizational resources." And in turn, "The language of environmentalism offered Indian activists a way to communicate and legitimate native claims to land and resources in terms that outsiders could comprehend" (699). Representing human-biosphere relations as environmental and cultural matters grievously threatened by state supported resource extraction allows both indigenous activists and environmental advocates to network their hopes for transformation among much larger audiences.

The language of environmentalism and the advocacy category of the eco-Indian, however, tend to position indigenous peoples so that they communicate "qualities of purity, simplicity, and harmony with nature" and evoke "a kind of superlegitimacy—associated with ancient roots, time-tested life-ways, and primordial mystical powers" (Conklin and Graham 1995, 702). Given such associations, indigenous peoples (especially those deemed particularly 'traditional' and thus closer to nature) quickly became positive marketing

symbols, particularly for businesses that self-identify as socially conscious. While the publicity generated by marketing and advocacy have furthered indigenous causes in South America, this categorical spotlight is problematic. Conklin and Graham (702-3) suggest:

> The problem is that Indianness and signs of Indianness have a symbolic value that is not intrinsic, but bestowed from the outside. Amazonian Indians are appealing to Western audiences and are useful to environmental groups and 'green' corporations only to the extent that they conform to Westerners' images of them.

Furthermore, despite an alliance founded upon the idea that both environmentalists and Indians wish to preserve the rain forest, these two parties are not equally committed to this agenda. The Indians' goals of self-determination and control over resources and their inescapable need to participate in market economies often encourage them to prioritize short-term profits over long-term environmental conservation, which many environmentalist allies, advertisers, and consumers think are 'natural' to Amazonian indigenous cultures (703). And "When Indians actions collide with outsiders' assumptions about them, they run the risk that their images will become tainted, diluting the symbolic meanings on which their international support is based" (704).

Another problem with the Amazonian eco-Indian alliance is that currently only a limited number of individuals are linguistically and culturally equipped to network on behalf of their often isolated indigenous communities. The new prominence of bicultural communicators who can mediate the socio-spatial relations of transnational aid and commerce has transformed leadership dynamics in Amazonian communities (see also M. Brown 1993). The acquisition of the skills and technologies that allow them to act as mediators, not to mention the ever present temptation to use their positions of power for personal gain, can alienate leaders from communities they represent. Additionally, note Conklin and Graham (704), "In outsiders' eyes, these individuals often serve as metonyms— symbols that stand for entire indigenous groups. Leaders come to be seen not as individual

personalities but as representatives of an amorphous, homogeneous, authentic community."
And should a culture mediator's image be tarnished by scandal, the entire group faces
accusations of corruption and hypocrisy. Conklin and Graham maintain (704-5) that
"Although all political actors are vulnerable to damage to their public images, Indians are
arguably more vulnerable than most. This is because in media-oriented politics, their power
is based on a politics of symbols and ideas. Symbols and ideas are intrinsically vulnerable to
contamination, and the power of their meaning shifts over time."

The indigenous actors who network along the lines of hegemonic, and often ill-
informed and thus idealistic, representations of the 'nature' of indigenous places and cultural
practices find themselves in the precarious position of embodying symbols of virtue largely
scripted by the needs and imaginations of other actors (advocates or otherwise). Should their
oppositional politics cross the boundaries of dominant and essentialist cultural categories in
ways inconvenient to those they oppose or with whom they coordinate resistance, their
knowledge and actions can be declared 'out of place' and/or 'inauthentic' (cf. Blomley 1996;
Silvern 1995; Deur 2000; Peters 1997 and 1998). Given these constraints, indigenous cultural
activism may be understood as comprising both a political and an epistemological struggle to
challenge what Jolene Rickard describes (in Ginsburg 2000, 28) as "a longstanding
relationship of framing the 'space' accorded this work [of cultural activism] based on the
reflection or needs of the dominant west." The epistemological challenge of engaging with
indigenous activists' calls for decolonizing the production of authoritative knowledge is
indeed modifying the boundaries of scholarly research. As Mato argues (1996, 66):

> Consciously and consistently applied, the very epistemological principles and
> methodological tools that lead many anthropologists [and other researchers] to study
> the social practices and representations of—what I would now call—subordinated
> peoples or segments of populations should also lead to the study of the practices and
> representations of dominant social subjects and scholars.

'New' analytical frameworks and methods of inquiry refract upon researchers because the hopeful claims of certainty, unshakeable complexities, and contingent 'situatedness' commonly found symptomatic of indigenous cultural politics make it hard to avoid noticing how scholarship shares these same attributes (see also Hale 1997; Pratt 1998).

Indigenous video making, for example, caught many non-indigenous ethnographic film makers by surprise—forcing them to ask themselves new questions about their authority to speak for, with, and alongside the subjects they represent (Ruby 1992). Indigenous media, says Faye Ginsburg (1991, 93) "challenges the conventions and very categories of both 'traditional cultural' and 'ethnographic film.'" Clearly working with a 'new' approach to culture, Ginsburg observes (105) that indigenous self-representations "are not based on some retrieval of an idealized past, but create and assert a position for the present that attempts to accommodate the inconsistencies and contradictions of contemporary life." Indigenous media, she continues (106):

> …is a cultural process and product. It is exemplary of the construction of contemporary identity of Fourth World people in the late 20th century, in which historical and cultural ruptures are addressed, and reflections of 'us' and 'them' to each other are increasingly juxtaposed. In that sense, indigenous media is a hybrid, and (to extend the metaphor), perhaps more vigorous and able to flower and reproduce in the altered environment that Aborigines live in today.

Technology-mediated representations do transformative work by providing "sites for the re-visioning of social relations with the encompassing society" (Ginsburg 1994a, 372). A primary transformation of indigenous constructions of indigenous identity (video-mediated or not) is the reconfiguration of academic author-ity (cf. Wright quote on p. 19 of this text), largely by forcing greater recognition of positionality. The fact that indigenous activists assert their rightful ability to represent themselves and their communities does not necessarily make representations produced by non-indigenous actors unethical or invalid products of an illegitimate gaze. According to Ginsburg, however, what the emergence and circulation of

technology-mediated indigenous self-representations *do* do is underscore how: "Filming others and filming one's own group are related but distinct parts of a larger project of reflecting upon the particulars of the human condition, and therefore each approach raises its own sets of issues regarding ethics, social and power relations" (Ginsburg 1991, 103). In other words, no matter who holds the camera (pen, computer mouse, etc.) or what their cultural politics might be, this observer participant occupies multiple positions in the uneven socio-spatial relations that she or he chooses to represent.

HONING IN: INDIGENOUS VIDEO IN OAXACA, MEXICO

In the above, I represent the geographical entanglements comprising the cultural politics and organizational practices of indigenous video making as embodiments of Sarah Radcliffe's three spatial strategies of identity-based social movements in Latin America. First, I argue that the political ambitions and aesthetic aims of indigenous video-mediated cultural activism articulate place-based identity politics. And I identify indigenous actors' appropriation of video technologies in order to open new spaces for alternative, place-centered representations, with calls for the decolonization of authoritative knowledge production. Then I suggest how indigenous video making has arisen in relation to the (relatively) new practices of socio-spatial networking that create linkages based on common interests among the place-based cultural politics of indigenous activists and more widely flung alliances of advocacy. My examination of these intersections dwells upon the prominent role played by academic advocates who network to facilitate indigenous actors' acquisition and use of video technologies, and to foster and fortify channels for the dissemination and exhibition of indigenous video productions. Finally, I explore the ways in

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which the networked socio-spatial relations of such cultural advocacy shape, and re-shape, the representational practices of indigenous oppositional politics. My exploration concludes with a brief contemplation of how video-mediated cultural reconfigurations contribute to the politicization of scholarly inquiry. Now I want to hone in further to introduce how these theoretical matters and modes of representation have manifested in the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca.

Erica Wortham's doctoral dissertation (2002) suggests the representational practices of indigenous video making in Oaxaca are hybrid—in that they have been co-produced by both the place-centered politics that have been articulated by influential indigenous activists (and their academic allies), and by an intellectual aesthetic arising from documentary film traditions that emerged and operated within the National Indigenous Institute (INI), the federal agency in charge of researching indigenous communities and orchestrating and overseeing outreach programs aimed toward these communities. In the late 1980s professional media makers and scholars employed by INI's Ethnographic Audiovisual Archives invented the collective, creative, and institutional practices of producing video-mediated articulations of indigenous identity (Wortham 2002, 137-142). Seeking to provide the means for indigenous self-representation and self-study, they taught this documentary-style aesthetic in workshops given from 1989 through 1994, largely in Oaxaca. Through a program called *Transferencia de los Medios Audiovisuales a Organizaciones y Comunidades Indígenas* (TMA), devised and deployed by these same INI employees, a total of 37 indigenous organizations from throughout Mexico had members trained in the workshops and were equipped with basic video technologies (e.g., video camcorder, two VCRs, tripod, and monitor). In May of 1994, INI's *Centro de Video Indígena Nacional* (CVI) was inaugurated in the capital city of Oaxaca, Oaxaca de Juárez. The CVI offered indigenous activists post-

production editing (of audio and image) equipment, technical assistance, further workshops, and a place to stay and make phone calls while in the city.

Wortham's research demonstrates how the institutional and advocacy initiative—from whence emerged the TMA program and the CVI—provided an opening for the production of technology-mediated visualizations of place-based indigenous politics centered upon conceptualizations of, and proposals for, community-centered autonomy.[18] With this particular ethnopolitical platform, indigenous activists call for the revitalization and legal recognition of the cooperative social relations, collective territorial governance, and environmental spirituality that proponents argue have long shaped indigenous communities in this ethnically diverse state. Not only do these calls assert the right of (economic, political and cultural) self-determination, they also establish indigenous communities as the rightful stewards of territorial resources. "The challenge of this proposal [of community-centered autonomy]," writes Wortham (94), "is to make those schemes of embedded, lived autonomy visible and self-conscious so that autonomy can be overtly defended." And she argues that: "Video indígena has been an instrument in meeting that challenge" (ibid). Zapotec videomaker Francisco Luna (quoted in Wortham 2002, 95) portrays this cultural project as "getting people to realize this, to revalorize more than anything else that they have their own resources to work the land without having to depend on someone." And he describes the task of indigenous videomakers as being "about giving them a little help, to orient them and revalorize what they have and the work they have been doing all along, to know that the knowledge the grandparents have is not lost, on the contrary, that it needs to be recovered and applied" (ibid, 96). Luna and most other Oaxacan indigenous *videoastas* envision their cultural activism in terms of re-presenting place-centered practices and knowledges so that

the people living in these places will recognize them as resources for ascertaining and maintaining the self-sufficiency deemed necessary for self-determination.

A key figure in the orchestration and administration of INI's training and TMA programs was Guillermo Monteforte, an Italian-Canadian media professional who had been working with INI's Ethnographic Audiovisual Archives since the mid-1980s. Monteforte relocated to Oaxaca de Juárez in order to found and outfit the CVI in 1994, and due in great part to his efforts as director, the CVI proved a dynamic site of creative and collective activity. By the end of 1996, dozens of video productions had emerged from the CVI; international exchanges between the CVI and the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian had been forged (largely through the efforts of Erica Wortham); transnational funding from media fellowships co-financed by the MacArthur and Rockefeller Foundations had been solicited and secured by four indigenous videoastas from Oaxaca; and these four individuals along with maybe another five people connected to the CVI had attended several inter-American indigenous film and video festivals, often serving as instructors for related video production workshops. Shortly after the establishment of the CVI, Monteforte had begun lobbying for the center's transference to indigenous leadership. In May 1997, he was finally able to step down as the director of the CVI and his suggested successor, Juan José García, took his place.

After leaving the CVI, Monteforte stayed on in Oaxaca where he continued to undertake video productions under the aegis of a small NGO that he founded with García and other CVI personnel (employees and volunteers), which were then edited on CVI equipment. Starting with the name, *Objetivo Común*, which then became *Comunicación Alternativa*, this group of eight individuals (half of whom had received their audiovisual training through the CVI) sought to facilitate the access and informed use of video

technologies by indigenous actors, as well as foster the distribution (among communities, regionally, nationally, and beyond) of indigenous video productions. In 1998 the media collective became legalized as a *sociedad civil* (still an NGO, but with profit making aspirations) under the title of *Comunicación Indígena* (COMIN). Meanwhile, Monteforte was also contributing to the formulation and funding of another similar advocacy endeavor designed for media outreach in Zapatista communities, the Chiapas Media Project (see chapter three, pp. 94-6 and chapter five, pp. 205-7). As 1999 began, however, Monteforte understandably felt over-committed and faced the decision of either relocating to Chiapas or exclusively focusing on projects in Oaxaca. Buoyed by both a Rockefeller and McArthur media making fellowship and, not long thereafter, an Ashoka Association social entrepreneur award given in recognition of his advocacy of indigenous video production, he chose the latter, devoting all of his attention, and a good chunk of his award, to COMIN.

During Wortham's research (February 1999 through April 2000), COMIN existed in a symbiotic relationship with the CVI, wherein membership and employment overlapped, and COMIN provided the human resources and production know-how and the CVI (with García still as its director) housed the vast majority of the production equipment. Due to a sharp decline in INI support for indigenous media making since the peak years in the first half of the 1990s (for a variety of reasons, which will be more fully explored in a later chapter), the turn of the century found the CVI struggling to carry on its initiatives of training and assistance and fighting off INI's efforts to bring this semi-independent entity more tightly under its wing. As Wortham points out (2002, 237), however, this interwoven relationship between the CVI and COMIN has allowed the NGO to develop and maintain the respect and support of a diverse range of organizations—ranging from community and regional indigenous collectivities, state and federal institutions, and transnational funding

agencies—while permitting the gradual relocation of indigenous video production beyond an overwhelming reliance on governmental sponsorship.

SKETCHING THIS DISSERTATION

Given its memberships' central role in the emergence and engagements of indigenous video production, I chose to study COMIN. Shortly before my entry into 'the field' in January of 2001, this NGO had decided upon the operating name of *Ojo de Agua Comunicación Indígena*, although Comunicación Indígena remains its legal title. In addition to being more inclusive in that it does not exclusively address indigenous communities and organizations, in Spanish, an 'ojo de agua' (literally eye of water) refers to a spring-fed water hole, thereby speaking to the importance of water as a source of life and to the organization's wishes to represent itself as a source of alternative communication strategies and skills, particularly in relation to video technologies. Precisely because of this collectivity's objectives and self-presentation, I selected Ojo de Agua as the subject of an organizational ethnography. For two years (January 2001 through January 2003) I undertook intensive observation and participation within its office space, the nearby CVI, and during some of its travels to research and record material for video production projects. And for the next year and a half, I remained in 'the field,' staying abreast of Ojo de Agua's networking, but observing and participating further from the locus of activity.

This dissertation contains the fruits of my scholarly labor to understand what practices and politics indigenous video production entails and what sort of socio-spatial relationships enable such procedures and processes. My second year of fieldwork in 2002 was greatly enhanced by the timely procurement of an NSF dissertation research grant that,

among other things, permitted me to purchase a digital video camera. Not only did the acquisition of my own video technology allow me to pursue a different level of investigation, but it also allowed me to feel as though I was contributing to Ojo de Agua's activities in a more gratifying capacity. Indeed, throughout my research project, in addition to more traditional academic interests, I was motivated by a desire to serve as a helpful advocate, although I suspect that this ambition was never as fulfilled as I would have liked due to a tangle of logistical challenges. Perhaps the textual version of my observations and analyses will prove more useful.

This introductory chapter is followed by a chapter that spells out my theory/method, as I do not see how the selection of an analytical angle and matters of methodology can possibly be separated. There I articulate indigenous video as a technoscientific practice of authoritative knowledge production. I also explain why and how I envision the technoscience of indigenous video with a particularly post-colonial feminist lens of analysis that looks much like the theoretical praxis Donna Haraway calls cyborg vision. The third chapter of this dissertation provides an overview of the ethnopolitics that have arisen and continue to operate in Oaxaca, Mexico. My necessarily selective (as this topic deserves and demands a book or two of its own!) examination starts with a look at the critical intellectual currents that introduced theoretical concept of ethnicity to Latin America, putting it into action as the means to decry and dismantle colonialist practices of knowledge production, especially in the service of states (although critics often remained located in state supported institutions). This geography of knowledge suggests how such academic advocacy has fueled the oppositional cultural politics of Mexican indigenous movements. I offer this portrait of academic advocacy because I believe it provides a vital context for grasping how and why indigenous video making in Oaxaca has unfolded in the way it has.

I continue to contemplate the cultural politics of such intellectual intersections in the fourth chapter with a review of some Oaxacan situations that gave rise to technology-mediated ethnopolitics. After this prelude to its emergence, I situate the actors and activities that congealed into the entity Ojo de Agua in the dissertation's fifth chapter. This chapter is drawn from interviews and conversations with members of this NGO, as well as individuals (often representatives from other NGOs or institutions) with whom its membership worked from the late 1980s onwards. I combine fieldwork inquiry with these relevant actors with close examination and interpretation of a selection of video productions. Drawing upon the same sort of 'evidence,' I present and ponder data gathered during my observation of and participation in Ojo de Agua's networking in chapter six. I structure my research results according to two themes: service, the goal that informs Ojo de Agua's objectives; and struggle, which references the type of media making this group sought to pursue and promote, as well as the daily challenge to make ends meet faced by the advocates and activists who comprise this NGO. Finally, in the seventh chapter, I revisit the definition of indigenous video, review my research findings, and then detail my conclusions.

ENDNOTES

[1] I am referring to camcorders, cassettes, tripods, carrying cases, microphones, cables, the various equipment comprising editing suites (monitors, sound boards, editing machines, speakers, more cables, etc.), and computers with their specialized cables and online editing programs. With this list, however, I don't wish to suggest all items are automatically present. Rather, I argue that video technologies—and their participation in the manipulation of image and sound: from the very first decisions of where to record and what to fit into the camera lens, to later removal of footage and insertion of titles, dates or credits, and montage edits with rhythmic image transitions—have very uneven geographies and inquiring into these geographies provide insight into the cultural politics of socio-spatial relations.

[2] Faye Ginsburg's use of 'small media' in the quote opening this chapter distinguishes more accessible and more easily disseminated media technologies (such as photocopiers, fax machines, audio and video cassettes, computers) from the less accessible media technologies with broad range broadcast capabilities (such as satellite television and radio). Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ali Mohammadi (1997) develop the concept of 'revolutionary small media' or "non-mass media" (221) to describe an oppositional public sphere that works to reconfigure symbolic values through cultural communications operating largely outside of a repressive state's purveyance. As will soon be clear, however, while indigenous video-mediated activism certainly can reconfigure cultural politics with calls for decolonization, it rarely emerges without entangling somehow with state formations. And so, while they operate as smaller-sized, non-mass media that contribute to oppositional cultural politics, indigenous videos are not really revolutionary in the sense that Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi use in their examination of how small media contributed to the popular foment that eventually overthrew the Shah in Iran.

[3] As is quickly evident, my visualization of the practices, products and socio-spatial relations comprising indigenous video draws heavily upon studies written by a handful of anthropologists. Particularly evident is the work of Faye Ginsburg, who is the director of the Program in Culture and Media at New York University, and of her student Erica Wortham, who undertook her dissertation research with many of the same people, often in the same places, as I did in the dissertation research project presented here in these pages, but about two years beforehand.

Given this geography of knowledge, it is unsurprising then, that I (like Wortham (2002, 35)) draw my definition of the complexities to which the term indigenous media refers directly from Ginsburg:

> The term *indigenous media* comprehends the complex nature of the phenomena it signifies. The first word–"indigenous"–respects the understandings of those Aboriginal producers who identify themselves as "First Nations" or "Fourth World People." These categories index the political circumstances shared by indigenous people around the globe. Whatever their cultural differences, such groups all struggle against a legacy of disenfranchisement of the lands, societies and cultures by colonizing European societies, such as Australia, the United States, Canada, and most of Latin America. The second word–"media"–whether referring to satellites or VCRs, evokes the huge institutional structures of the television and film industries that tend to overwhelm the local cultural specificities of small-scale societies while

privileging commercial interests that demand large audiences as a measure of success. While the institutional dimensions of media–especially television–shadow their intersection with the lives of indigenous people, they do not determine the outcomes. Thus, the term indigenous media reminds us that this work is part of broader movements for cultural autonomy and self-determination that exist in complex tension with the structures of national governments, international politics, and the global circulation of communications technology (Ginsburg 1993a, 558).

[4] Although I find this a mighty handy comparison to make for telling this dissertation's story, I also recognize how it's awfully tricky to uphold such a tidy differentiation in many circumstances. In a nutshell, I define activists as those who lobby for self-identity and I define advocates as those who lobby on the behalf of the identity and livelihood of others.

[5] As Daniel Mato (1999, 53) argues, "The word *Latin* in this name recalls a long-term process of social construction of identities and differences and still serves as a subtle legitimating device in the present system of exclusion of large groups in this geopolitical region." Here I place this region's widely recognized name in quotation marks to recognize Mato's argument about its loaded nature. But since I am not in a position to once more geo-graph the region, and excessive scare quotes do not appeal to me (unlike parenthesis which I quite obviously enjoy), I only employ this visual intervention once.

[6] While migration in the face of labor market pressures clearly shapes ethnopolitics, it is not my main focus here, although it will emerge later, when I examine ethnopolitics in Oaxaca, Mexico. If you are unable to wait for that later discussion, you can find insightful examinations of how ethnopolitics have appealed to indigenous labor migrants in Nagengast and Kearney (1990); Kearney (2000); Rivera-Salgado (2002).

[7] In addition to the ecological, agricultural and job-training initiatives more traditionally collected beneath the rubrics of development and conservation, I'm also referring to a wider range of institutional programs (and the research and reasoning with which they are designed and deployed) directed towards indigenous peoples. Such as those concerned, for example, with social welfare, cultural survival, economic betterment, health and illness, legal justice, education and arts/crafts.

[8] Globalized mass media can certainly have a devastating impact on rural communities. A study of the political economy of television in a Mayan community in the Yucatan region of Mexico, for example, illustrates how televised media brings new social issues and cultural pressures to indigenous communities by contributing to the urban orientation of youth, and forcing a renegotiation of sense of self and community (Miller 1998).

[9] Some helpful resources providing overviews of transnational networks of advocacy and their aims are the following: Keck and Sikkink (1998, 1999); Uvin et al. (2000); and Townsend (1999). For a sense of the range of roles played by transnational networks of advocacy in Latin American ethnopolitical action, see Brysk (2000). And see Edelman (1998) and Hale (1994) for important reminders that the transnational dimensions of indigenous

movements also intersect (sometimes in coordination, other times in opposition) with other transnationalized popular political movements.

[10] These observations are drawn from the following sources: De la Cruz (1998); Caballero (1998b); Campbell (1996a); Hernández-Díaz and Lizama Quijano (1996); Warren (1998); Conklin and Graham (1995); Gutiérrez (1999); Lomintz (1992, 234-241).

[11] For the record, it seems to me that it is also wise to keep these questions in mind when discussing the privileges and power of dominant social groups.

[12] Such ethical arguments are found in Brosius (1999); Field (1998); Dove (1999); J. Jackson (1999); Mato (2000a); and Slater (1999).

[13] More specifically, organizations contact funding agencies and sell products via websites (James 2000; Jeans 1998), and information transmitted through the Internet can (maybe) enhance dialogue between marginalized communities and NGOs involved in grassroots activity (Madon 1999; Meyer 1997; Everett 1998; Gómez 1998).

[14] Erica Wortham (2002, 325, n79) offers this handy summary of indigenous media festivals in the Western Hemisphere:

> The oldest international indigenous media festivals are here in the United States. Founded in 1975 and 1979 respectively the American Indian Film and Video Exhibition in San Francisco and the Native American Film and Video Festival of the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, in New York City primarily show work by US and Canadian Native media makers, but since the early 1990s they have included an increasing number of Latin American work. Other US festivals include the American Indian Film and Video Competition (in association with the Red Earth Festival) in Oklahoma City, the Two Rivers Native Film and Video Festival in Minneapolis (also founded in 1991) and the 1992 Imaging Indians Festival, which was a galvanizing node of anti-quincentenary activity in 1992. More commercial, independent festivals that regularly feature indigenous produced work are the Sundance Film Festival in Park City Utah and Taos Talking Pictures Festival in New Mexico. In Canada, the Dreamspeakers: The First Peoples World Film Celebration in Edmonton Alberta (launched in 1991) has gained prominence as a festival and the more recent Terres en Vue (Land InSights) of Montréal, Québec is becoming a vital forum as well. There are a number of festivals in Europe that program indigenous work as well. Finally, in Latin American the most important indigenous festival other than CLACPI's is CONAIE's (Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas de Ecuador) Abya-Yala Festival, which takes place [in] the capital city of Quito. (Visit the National Museum of American Indian's Native Networks site for more information about indigenous media festivals: www.nativenetworks.si.edu).

Like me, however, Wortham does not seem to know much about indigenous media exhibition in the Pacific and Asian worlds. And although she's surely more informed with such efforts, Ginsburg never provides such a list.

[15] Wortham argues (335) that this Festival was not an utter failure largely due to the efforts of Guillermo Monteforte, the director of the NGO *Ojo de Agua Comunicación Indígena*, and other members of *Ojo de Agua,* which is the particular organization that lay at the heart of this dissertation study.

After reading a draft of this chapter, Guillermo sent an email to me taking issue with Erica's perspective on the 1999 festival in Guatemala. While he agreed that *Luciérnaga* made many mistakes, he called for a wider perspective on the near-failure of the festival. Guillermo pointed out the difficult situation that *Luciérnaga* faced in a country that was just beginning to grapple with the social damage caused by recent decades-long bloody war and the more recent influx of international aid, which greatly complicated things by exacerbating conflict and corruption. Guillermo also suggested that Ivan Sanjínes, then the director of CLACPI (see chapter six, pp. 274-85) would sharply disagree with Erica's angle. According to Guillermo, Sanjínes blamed the festival's shortcomings on the failure of CLACPI's Mexican contingent (i.e., Ojo de Agua)—the most geographically proximate contingent—to more closely supervise the preparations. Guillermo himself blamed the festival's near-failure on the decision to hold it in a country where CLACPI has neither affiliates nor local knowledge.

[16] This NGO is called "Video in the Villages," which was founded by Vincent Carelli who continues to work in Brazil while also operating the Latin American Video Archive in Chicago http://www.lavavideo.org. Two overviews of this NGO and its work are: Auferheide (1995) and Caixeta de Queiroz's essay at http://www.videonasaldeias.org.br/texts_ok/politics_aestetics_and_ehtics_ok.htm.

[17] There does not seem to be a regularized spelling of the name of these indigenous people who recently demarcated and successfully claimed a territory as large as Scotland (although they are not yet able to maintain it freely). Usually Turner spells it as Kayapó, but in this particular quote he does not and nor does Ginsburg include the accent mark on the final letter. I chose to always include the accent mark, except for quotes where it is spelled otherwise. Not a terribly important matter, but consistency is soothing in many ways.

[18] Community-centered definitions of and demands for autonomy that are so prevalent in Oaxaca, Mexico differ from the concept of autonomous ethnic regions that shapes definitions of autonomy in other parts of the world. Wortham (2002, 87-92) offers a comparison between these two conceptualizations of autonomy. The distinctive nature of ethnopolitics in Oaxaca is revisited and expanded upon in chapter three of this dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO
Articulating Indigenous Video
As (a Particularly Post-Colonial) Technoscience

> The purpose of this excursion is to write theory, i.e., to produce a patterned vision of how to move and what to fear in the topography of an impossible but all-too-real present, in order to find an absent, but perhaps possible, other present (Haraway 1992, 295-337).

> Stories are not "fictions" in the sense of being "made up." Rather, narratives are devices to produce certain kinds of meaning. I try to use stories to tell what I think is the truth—a located, embodied, contingent, and therefore real truth (Haraway 1997, 230).

METHODOLOGY MATTERS

This chapter introduces the methodology—i.e., the means (theory and practice) of knowledge production—that shapes this dissertation. Like any theoretical praxis, mine arises from basic premises, aesthetic preferences, and moral convictions. For starters, I have chosen to approach identity as the expression and experience of socially and spatially demarcating cultural difference so as to foster and/or foil efforts to construct cohesive collectivities. Although when seen in this way, identity is geographical and embodied, I believe identity is not a thing to be precisely delimited or deconstructed or psychoanalyzed. Rather it is an unpredictable and relational (and thus political) process that researchers and other interested parties try to witness and understand. Identity politics[1] capture my attention because identity-based unity can facilitate the collective acquisition and mobilization of all kinds of resources, and (in the process) ideologically inform the socio-spatial inclusion and exclusion of groups and individuals. I am particularly interested in the socio-spatial practices of knowing-naming indigenous identity, largely because I can't *not* worry that indigenous peoples' social locations are too often identified, and hierarchically held in place with

colonialist narratives about 'universal categories' about the 'nature' of human cultural difference.

In an effort, which is not always successful, to sidestep the categorical thinking of colonialist epistemologies while framing (i.e., studying and writing about) geographies of knowledges concerned with indigenous identity politics, I rely on the idea-image of articulation. I find foundational to this task Stuart Hall's (1985, 113-4, n2) conceptualization of articulation as:

> …a connection or link which is not necessarily given in all cases, as a law or a fact of life, but which requires particular conditions of existence to appear at all, which has to be positively sustained by specific processes, which is not 'eternal' but has constantly to be renewed, which can under some circumstances disappear or be overthrown, leading to the old linkages being dissolved and new connections—re-articulations—being forged. It is also important that an articulation between different practices does not mean that they become identical or that the one is dissolved into the other. Each retains its distinct determinations and conditions of existence. However, once an articulation is made, the two practices can function together, not as an 'immediate identity' (in the language of Marx's '1857 Introduction') but as 'distinctions within a unity.'

Understood in this way, articulation refers to a never-ending, highly contingent, and unstable process of linking differences so they might work in concert (e.g., to make an argument or to establish a collectivity), without the multiple actors necessarily becoming identical, *even though* this process is central to the performance of identities. For example, Tania Murray Li (2000, 151) draws on Hall's anti-essentialist framework to articulate indigenous identity as "a *positioning* which draws upon historically sedimented practices, landscapes, and repertoires of meaning, and emerges from particular patterns of engagement and struggle" (her emphasis). Visualizing indigenous identity like this allows Li to explore the range of archival and territorial sources-stimulators currently motivating and moving articulations of indigenous identity in Indonesia. Li's exploration helps us see how indigenous identity politics (and the

positioning practices that produce them) are not exclusively undertaken by people who self-identify and/or are identified as indigenous.

In this dissertation, I examine video-mediated images of social location and cultural difference to identify people, places and practices as indigenous, and I articulate the making and mobilization of these images as the cultural work of technoscience. Pivotal to my application of these two theoretical and empirical concepts (i.e., articulation and technoscience) to the organizational relations and cultural politics of indigenous video is Donna Haraway's suggestion (1992, 311) that with our semiotic material practices (e.g., research, writing, and teaching) we "narrate a possible politics of articulation." According to Haraway, recounting stories about technoscience that dwell on the connections of articulation, but do not automatically or exclusively align agents with venerable (but essentialist, and thus questionable and sometimes outright damaging) categories, provides the means "for another way of seeing actors and actants—and consequently another way of working to position scientists and science in important struggles in the world" (313; and see quotes cited at start of chapter). Haraway's suggested way of seeing is commonly referred to as cyborg vision, and in this dissertation chapter I argue that it is just the ticket for moving social inquiry into indigenous geographies beyond unfortunate but persistent notions about the isolation of authoritative knowledge production, which has been so aptly depicted with the binary of metropolitan authority vs. indigenous authenticity (Field 1996). This chapter explores the post-colonial analytical practices and aesthetic awareness that I see as central to my (and, I suspect, Haraway's) investigation and analysis of identity politics. After sketching the post-structural analytical tools of post-colonial theory in first section of the chapter, I turn to Haraway's feminist studies of technoscience. I focus on her efforts to avoid both white writing, and the potentially debilitating double vision of deconstruction, and then I

outline her strategies for visualizing coalition. In the final section of the chapter, I spell out how this dissertation *operationalizes* these methodological and geographical matters.

The Potential of Post-Colonial Theory

Post-colonial[2] theory emerges from textual analyses of the categories of knowledge shaping colonial, national and Marxist histories, and the ways in which these categories negated marginalized, or subaltern, social groups by scripting their political agency as irrational and culturally inferior (Guha 1982 and 1983; Sen 1987). Such critiques point out assumptions about the means (history and theory) and molds (e.g., nation-states and citizenship) for marching human progress forward inevitably arising in the part of the world known as "Europe" (e.g., Chakrabarty 1992). A key text in the emergence of post-colonial cultural criticism, Edward Said's book *Orientalism* (1979), brings post-structural deconstruction to bear upon European discourses of cultural difference and reveals the representational practices that ratified and endorsed imperialism and nationhood. This book, and the scholarship it has inspired, suggest that racialized categories established along the lines of binary oppositions (such as nature/culture or black/white) underwrite the 'European' or 'Western' geographical imagination of a culturally inferior, depraved and thus needy "Other," with which oppression is formulated, territorial invasion justified, and both colonizer and colonized self-images shaped.[3]

Indeed, most authoritative (as in best selling and/or politically well connected) colonialist images of Othered human subjects were created by men (and a few women)[4] with scientific aspirations who positioned themselves at the cultural climax of an evolutionary ascent (from nature) of/to man [sic]. From this pinnacle point of view, these authors surveyed and studied the social and physical worlds they encountered—sometimes in the

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name of benevolent betterment of one's equal and lesser, and almost always with concern for profit. Evident in these representational practices is the socio-spatial epistemology of whiteness. Owen Dwyer and John Paul Jones (2000, 210) name two epistemological aspects of whiteness:

> The first of these, the social construction of whiteness, relies upon an essentialist and non-relational understanding of identity. Whiteness offers subjects who can claim it an opportunity to ignore the constitutive processes by which all identities are constructed. In effacing their construction, 'white' people can paradoxically hover over social diversity just as they become the yardstick for its measurement. This first moment is then linked to a second framing, a segmented spatialization that parallels the non-relational epistemology of white identities. This spatial epistemology relies upon discrete categorizations of space—nation, public/private and neighborhood—which provide significant discursive resources for the cohesion and maintenance of white identities. It also relies upon the ability to survey and navigate social space from a position of authority.

With these tactics, "whiteness refuses the trace, both socially and spatially" (213). That is to say that the epistemological practices that produce the identity politics of whiteness demarcate a non-relational vantage point from whence socio-economic and political privilege is very carefully *not* related to the diminished agency of the ethnic-colored Others who populate the margins. This kind of vision, a racist way of seeing, naturalizes socio-spatial inequalities as the lamentable, but neatly naturalized and thus unavoidable, result of Others' biologically-based cultural differences that keep them, all too often, mired in squalor.

The role of the scholarly discipline of geography in the production and circulation of such a white, colonialist point of view is nicely fleshed out with Clive Barnett's post-colonial examination the Royal Geographical Society's (RGS) nineteenth-century publications about Africa (Barnett 1998). His inquiry reveals racialized representational practices that he calls "white writing" and suggests how these practices authenticated geographical knowledge through appropriation and erasure. Echoing Dwyer and Jones, Barnett asserts that

"racialization works by constructing certain subject-positions as the unmarked norm, by reference to which representations of difference are constructed," and then demonstrates how RGS authors position themselves as "unmarked, disembodied and, therefore, able to abstract from their particularity" while illustrating the particularities of Africa (243). Barnett's story about the competitive textual exchange among authors of the "narrations of possession" published by the RGS shows how the production of authoritative geographical knowledge diminished and discredited the knowledges of Others. Despite "routine *practical* dependence on local knowledge and information [this resource] is not accorded any independent *epistemological* value…[rather] local knowledge is refashioned as a hindrance, as a barrier to the arrival at the truth" (245, emphasis in original). Barnett argues that producing geographical knowledge with this epistemology automatically identifies/categorizes Africans as less-developed cultural Others possessing faulty and self-limiting reasoning. And this assumption invalidates and dismisses Others' geographical knowledge as unreliable, despite its crucial value for the geo-graphing mission at hand.

Barnett's analysis of the "disciplinization" of nineteenth-century geographical knowledges centers the epistemological violence through which the representational practices of white writing strip the intellectual agency of (some) participants in the production of knowledge. Barnett is, however, reluctant to see these efforts at discursive regulation of subjectivities as coherently imposed hegemonic projects. Instead, striving to highlight the negotiated nature of knowledge making, he reads white writing with an eye to its failures to thoroughly dominate/silence, and thus keep discursively-erected disciplinary boundaries in place. By centering "the hybrid and syncretic qualities of discourses previously assumed to be the unique expressions of enclosed historical spaces" (240), Barnett seeks to underscore "the interruptions and disappointments suffered by teleological imperial designs"

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(241) and to emphasize "the confrontation between different knowledge systems as the constitutive event in the production of colonial representations" (242). His analysis shows how "Nineteenth-century geographical knowledge did not constitute itself against other forms of knowledge through a simple act of exclusion" from the disciplinary boundaries mapped by the authors published by the RGS (248). Offering a more nuanced reading, Barnett "suggests that it is the *representation* of exclusion and expulsion that constitutes and reconstitutes boundaries, but which in turn also renders all boundaries liable to deformation" (ibid.). Geographical knowledge is hotly contested, he concludes, and "the contest is about the right to articulate meanings, and consequently some of the contestants are never heard from, since they are systematically denied the state of agents capable of meaningful speech-acts" (ibid.).

Attentive to the ways that tidily dichotomized cultural difference and its usefulness (albeit imperfect and ambiguous) for materializing drastically unequal and spatially polarized images of order, post-colonial theory works to disrupt the power and prevalence of white socio-spatial epistemologies, usually by invoking hybridity (Slater 1998, 668). Hybrid subjectivities are viewed in terms of multiple identities—classed, aged, racialized, sexualized and gendered—each of which is positioned differently within a variety of imbricated socio-spatial nexuses shaped by diverse power relations, and none of which is universal or necessarily inherent. Given this anti-essentialist and category-shy vision, a post-colonial analytical lens focuses on the hybridity of the entangled socio-spatial relations that shape mutually formulated identities (e.g., colonizer and colonized (Rattansi 1997)). As Stuart Hall (1996) points out, however, no matter how earnest the aim to dismantle colonialist paradigms may be, post-colonial theory's "deconstructive logic" (255) can be unsettling for those who don't share its proclivity for uncertainty and anti-essentialist reluctance to predict.

Most critics of post-colonial theory lament a lack of universal categories such as class, bounded objects such as nations or clearly identifiable (dis)empowered subjects such as peasants around which to rally progressive politics. And some critics are also highly suspicious of the intellectual current's institutional purchase in some quarters of the United States.[5] Attributing much of this criticism to nostalgia for clearly defined "goodies and baddies" (244), Hall (1996) rejects as utterly unhelpful the accusation that post-colonial theory's penchant for ambiguity automatically implies that it inevitably serves as the cultural handmaiden to global capitalism (258-9). But he welcomes how these critiques have convincingly illuminated "a serious lacuna in the post-colonial episteme." The dismantling of economic determinism has indeed led to "a massive, gigantic and eloquent *disavowal*" of economic relations and their effects (258, emphasis in original; see also McClintock 1992). This lack of purchase on the material and spatial repercussions of representational practices is precisely what has led some critics to caution (wisely) against the uncritical importation of literary theory and methods of textual analysis into social science (e.g., N. Smith 1994, Sparke 1994). While theorizations of hybridity help relocate exclusionary colonialist and nationalist epistemologies (e.g., Bhabha 1994), the unsettling of hybridity should not be seen as inherently progressive or equally liberating (L. Smith 2002b). For example, "Post-colonial theory's celebration of hybridity risks anti-essentialist condescension toward those communities obliged by circumstances to assert, for their very survival, a lost and irretrievable past" (Shohat 1992, 110). Furthermore, the flexibility of hybridity can actually be quite useful for the needs of global capital (Mitchell 1997b), and its post-colonial formulations are not immune to discriminatory racializations (Jackson and Jacobs 1996).

Certainly excessive celebration can be cause for regret. I would venture, however, that condescension is an inherent risk of theorizing. Post-colonial theory uses the stickiness

of hybridity to keep this risk from sliding from the parameter of *any* observation or analysis.

Learning from the morals of stories like Barnett's about the RGS, post-colonial inquiry seeks

to position potential silences and erasures front and center while openly acknowledging the

dangers of speaking in the name of those whose identities and livelihoods we believe

emanate from places we call margins or exemplify modes we call multiplicity.[6] Additionally,

critics of post-colonial theory who claim it is recklessly apolitical are overlooking how post-

colonial theory's anti-essentialism works in tandem with an insistence on entanglements to

encourage new ways of thinking about 'politics' whereby hegemony and resistance are not

treated as autonomous realms.[7] Barnett (1997, 151) describes a key impact of this theoretical

shift of intellectual gears.

> One of the most likely effects of any such rethinking would be the disruption of the
> idealist inside-outside binaries which so often frame the rhetoric of radical academic
> commitment. The recognition of the construction of identities across a range of
> contradictory subject positions requires the rethinking of the stable, flat, two-
> dimensional topologies through which radical academic discourse routinely
> represents power, politics, and responsibility.

With a post-colonial political commitment to rejecting and challenging the racist

epistemologies of colonialist representational practices comes an emphasis on the

complexities of scholarly communication across boundaries marked by cultural differences

and shaped by murky power relations. In short, the unpredictable displacements of post-

colonial theory realign "the way we think about relations across space" by asking us "to

focus more on the mutually constitutive nature of west-non-west interactions [for

example]…[and thus] generate a wider context of issues and linkages…in terms of the object

of analysis as well as the agents of knowledge" (Slater 1998, 669). And it is precisely the

dilemmas of dialogue with perspectives traditionally marginalized from the production of

authoritative knowledge, and often identified as subaltern, that make for "an irresolvable and fertile tension that can continue to inspire and energize our work" (Mallon 1994, 1506).

To be honest, I prefer to witness with post-colonial theory's widened vision. I am more comfortable with its predilection for problematizing authorial authority than I am with the "centrifugal logics" of other theory-praxis relations wherein theorizing is assumed to be undertaken by a solitary and neutral intellectual in the center who sheds (en)light(enment) on the margins by "proselytising, or, more neutrally, merely transmitting unproblematic information (which is the untheorised assumption behind the possibility of clarity)" (Wright 2002, 78). Following Colin Wright's critique (2002, 72-3; his emphasis), such 'centricist' analytical assumptions and ambitions, especially when anchored with a teleological epistemology, operate with a "restricted and restricting notion of 'place'" related to "a certain *pedagogical* model, in which the rational insights of vanguard intellectuals can teach the masses what utopia might look like." Such ways of seeing (Wright's example is Marxist) tend to replicate a "'There' versus 'Here' topology, which bares a distinct family resemblance to the 'Them' versus 'Us' mentality" (74), and looks a lot like the socio-spatial epistemology of white writing. Given how geography remains an overwhelmingly white discipline (Pulido 2000) distinguished by segmented and exclusionary practices of knowledge production, which are largely driven by dreams of objective neutrality framed by notions of invisibility and unproblematic isolation or assimilation, these critical methodologies matter.

As an alternative to centrifugal logic, Wright suggests post-colonial cultural criticism's performative insistence that "the action of the margin [is] always already at work within the centre, [and] the uninhabited spatial trace necessarily and subversively present within 'place'" allows us to see, as an "*ethical* necessity[:]…the inseparability of place and space" (Wright 2002, 77-8).[8] When we theorize, we locate the particular in relation to a

general; when we make an argument, we often set up and compare two distinct differences (e.g., how Wright and I distinguish centrifugal logic and post-colonial epistemology). Therefore, argues Wright, the generalization inherent in theorizing, no matter how radically relational, ought to be recognized as the practice of *placing*—i.e., the act of positioning (however briefly, tentatively) specificity as it reverberates unpredictably through many spaces. Recognizing the tricky, ephemeral and sometimes downright presumptuous nature of placing (or articulating) as inherent to knowledge production practices leads post-colonial theorists to acknowledge that "the division between style and content becomes untenable: style *is* content, and vice versa" (78). And because the stakes of theoretical scrutiny are high, concludes Wright, theorizing "must always honour with ethical discretion the particularity of place, even as it seeks the spaces of possible dis-placement within it" (82). But how do we concurrently undertake the seemingly contradictory practices of honoring place-centered politics *and* recognize the constant slippage inherent in the practice of placing without becoming incapacitated (with dizziness?) by the double vision of post-structural deconstruction—even when done with what we think are the best (i.e., the most honorable for all concerned, which of course begs the question of who is concerned) political intentions? Furthermore, is it possible to engage post-colonial politics without disavowing economic relations and their effects? The next section of this chapter addresses these questions by turning to Donna Haraway's feminist studies of technoscience.

Cyborg Visions of Coalition

> Struggles over what will count as rational accounts of the world are struggles over *how* to see (Haraway 1991, 194)

> Technoscience's work is cultural production (Haraway 1997, 154).

Social studies of science, along with scholarly examinations of the social construction of technology, have worked together to open a new realm of inquiry, technoscience.[9] Under the influence of Donna Haraway's book *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan©_Meets_OncoMouse™:Feminism and Technoscience*, I not only see technoscience as an expensive and powerful mode of collective (but oh-so-uneven) knowledge production, but also as a hotly contested technology-mediated cultural practice. Eager to center the "struggle over who gets to count as a rational actor, as well as an author of knowledge, in the dramas and courts of technoscience," Haraway inquires into how theories, technologies, institutions and industries differentially inscribe bodies and their 'natures' with authoritative meaning (Haraway 1997, 89). To trace the unstable sticky webs of connection through which technoscience moves us (emotionally, spatially, and otherwise), she examines particular technoscientific objects of inquiry (for example the gene, the fetus and race) as cultural productions that are just as much informed by aesthetics as by political and economic interests.

Haraway's work resides within a growing literature that Charles Hale (1997, 570) contends is not merely "a middle ground, a synthesis of the materialist thesis and the discursive antithesis," but rather "a more radical departure [that] is under way." Discussing this scholarship's contribution to theorizations of the cultural politics of identity, Hale writes (ibid; my emphasis) that:

> The most promising work not only offers new theories of politics but sets out to explore and implement *a new politics of theory* (Hall 1992): skeptical of both positivist theory-building and trendy, wheel-spinning theoretical self-referentiality; methodologically rigorous, yet fully aware that all claims to objectivity are ultimately situated knowledges (Haraway 1988); and most important, oriented towards reflexive political engagement, whether focused on 'subalterns' who speak, read, and write for themselves, or on powerful institutions and actors who too often in the past have avoided anthropological scrutiny.

As is most likely obvious to readers of the previous pages, I too am fond of this sort of politicized analytical engagement; and here I highlight Haraway's contributions to it. I start with what she hopes to accomplish with her scholarly scrutiny, and then I flesh out the particular feminist identity politics (of positionality) with which Haraway colors her examinations, analyses, and hopes for establishing coalitions. I conclude this chapter section with Haraway's cyborg vision, especially its look at indigenous video.

According to Haraway (1997, 3), there are two very important and inevitably entangled patterns about technoscience that everyone should learn to identify. She summarizes the first pattern by noting that:

> …anti-Semitism and misogyny intensified in the Renaissance and Scientific Revolution of early modern Europe, that racism and colonialism flourished in the traveling habits of the cosmopolitan Enlightenment, and that the intensified misery of billions of men and women seems organically rooted in the freedoms of transnational capitalism and technoscience.

Haraway then describes the second pattern with the observation that "inextricable from this contaminated triple historical heritage" of technoscience are "the dreams and achievements of contingent freedoms, *situated knowledges*, and relief of suffering" (ibid; my emphasis). Well-educated on the identity politics shaping the former pattern, and highly motivated to practice the latter pattern, Haraway seeks to rework "the material-semiotic practices of technoscience in the interests of a deeper, broader, and more open scientific literacy" (11). She does so because she believes that no one—least of all poor women, indigenous peoples and other categorically imagined and concretely marginalized entities—can afford to pass on the practices and powers of technoscience. It *already interpolates* their lives as they themselves—as well as the institutions, societies, markets and nations through which they live—perform,

prescribe or proscribe what they believe to be (un)natural. As a self-proclaimed socialist, Haraway dwells on how technoscience in the New World Order[10] operates through (economic, political, social, cultural) alienation, and she strives to make the (economic, political, social, cultural) operations of technoscience more visible and accessible.[11]

Haraway argues (1997, 32) that making more inclusive formulations and enforcements of ethical overrides to technoscience's profitable accumulations requires re-visioning the white masculinist modest witness[12] who has traditionally embodied the key protagonist in the technoscientific narratives of objectivity wherein "To be the object of vision, rather than the 'modest,' self-invisible source of vision, is to be evacuated of agency." "I think," writes Haraway (1992, 295-6), "sight can be remade for the activists and advocates engaged in fitting political filters to see the world in the hues of red, green, and ultraviolet, i.e., from the perspectives of a still possible socialism, feminist and anti-racist environmentalism, and science for the people." To undertake this task of re-imag(in)ing technoscience, Haraway draws from various strands of feminist theory and practice that are concerned with the identity politics of positioning. According to Linda Alcoff (1988, 420), feminist politics of positionality arise from post-structural and post-humanist (and I would add post-colonial) critiques of "the idea(l) of an universalizable, apolitical methodology and set of transhistorical basic truths unfettered by associations with particular genders, races, classes, or cultures." This theoretical perspective proposes that gendered identity does not neatly reference a biologically bound subjectivity based on a male/female binary. Instead, gendered identity is conceptualized in terms of constructions-performances that, under scrutiny, provide the methodological means to place (momentarily) a subject. This subject is both identified, and thus positioned (by other social actors), *and* the not necessarily singular subject is also positioning-identifying themselves in relation to cultural practices and socio-

economic locations (particularly those concerned with sexuality). Alcoff (1988, 434) argues that the analytical-political lessons of positionality feature two main points. The first is "that the concept of woman is a relational term identifiable only within a (constantly moving) context." And second is "that the position that women find themselves in can be actively utilized (rather than transcended) as a location for the construction of meaning, a place from where meaning is constructed, rather than simply the place where a meaning can be *discovered* (the meaning of femaleness)" (Alcoff's emphasis). This means that in lieu of a biological or cultural or precisely mappable given, "woman is a position from which a feminist politics can emerge" (435).

Haraway declares (1991, 193) that:

Positioning implies responsibility for our enabling practices. It follows that politics and ethics ground struggles for the contests over what may count as rational knowledge. That is, admitted or not, politics and ethics ground struggles over knowledge projects in the exact, natural, social, and human sciences.

But she remains leery of the exclusionary and essentialist knowledge production modes of white writing (see previous section of chapter) that continue to mold many a feminist's understanding of who and what woman is. She laments the "unreflective participation in the logics, languages, and practices of white humanism," which she believes leads too many feminists to search "for a single ground of domination to secure our revolutionary voice" (Haraway 1991, 160). Rather than a *one and unitary* individual with a transparent biological heritage as the site/sight/cite of a hypothesized-metaphorical political position (in this case 'woman,' another case might be 'indigenous'), Haraway hankers after fleshy-technical collectivities of alliance established through, and maintained with, an ethics of affinity and accountability—what she calls political (as opposed to some sort of blood-based) kinship.

Haraway (1997, 275 n2) directly credits her longing along these lines to lessons learned with scholarship produced-performed by an intellectual current she calls U.S. Third

World women of color. For example, she explains her theoretical-political ambitions (ibid, 191-2) with bell hook's theorization of yearning as "an affective and political sensibility allowing cross-category ties that 'would promote the recognition of common commitments and serve as a base for solidarity and coalition' (hooks 1990:27)."[13] Chela Sandoval argues (1994, 80-1 and n9) that a key lesson Haraway learns from U.S. feminists of color is the political possibility-performance of:

> an alliance named 'indigenous mestizaje,' a term that insists upon the kinship between peoples of color similarly subjugated by race in U.S. colonial history (including but not limited to Native peoples, colonized Chicanos/as, Blacks, and Asians), and viewing them, in spite of their differences, as 'one people.'

"[I]n order to both ensure survival and to remake the world", this image-action of "affinity-through-difference" embodies a new subject position, that of people of color (Sandoval 1994, 83). Not only does such positioning create common political and ethical grounds for a coalition comprised of diverse actors, but it is also useful for critiquing exclusions and subordination.[14]

"'Subjugated' standpoints are preferred," writes Haraway (1991, 191), "because they seem to promise more adequate, sustained, objective, transforming accounts of the world." But, she adds (ibid.; her emphasis), "*how* to see from below is a problem requiring at least as much skill with bodies and language, with the mediations of vision, as the 'highest' techno-scientific visualization." Here she more clearly states the problem:

> So, I think my problem, and 'our' problem is how to have *simultaneously* an account of radical historical contingency for all knowledge claims and knowing subjects, a critical practice for recognizing our own 'semiotic technologies' for making meanings, *and* a no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a 'real' world, one that can be partially shared and friendly to earth-wide projects of finite freedom, adequate material abundance, modest meaning in suffering, and limited happiness (187; Haraway's emphasis).

Given this political-cultural challenge, Haraway admires (1997, 188) researchers who make "clear that their own analysis turns the volume up or down on some actors more than others; their own representations are part of the struggle…" According to Haraway, such methodological choices recognize 1) the partial and situated nature of our technology-mediated viewing and representational practices, and 2) the ways these epistemological practices frame our studies. There is no innocent (as in uninterested and without impact) vantage point of investigative viewing; rather:

> Vision is *always* a question of the power to see – and perhaps of the violence implicit in our visualizing practices. […] Vision requires instruments of vision; an optics is a politics of positioning. Instruments of vision mediate standpoints; there is no immediate vision from the standpoints of the subjugated. (Haraway 1991, 192-3; her emphasis).

To pursue her feminist hopes of coalition, without losing sight of struggles over how to see, Haraway locates visual technology as a key actor in the assembly of knowledge about what is natural, real and moral (1997, 180-187). She embodies this analytical angle with her image-idea of the cyborg. The cyborg is:

> …a cybernetic organism, a fusion of the organic and the technical forged in particular, historical, cultural practices. Cyborgs are not about the Machine and the Humans, as if such Things and Subjects universally existed. Instead, cyborgs are about specific historical machines and people in interaction that often turns out to be painfully counterintuitive for the analyst of technoscience (Haraway 1997, 51).

A cyborg's subject position suggests collective social entities that are parts human and parts unhuman. Designed to shake the tenacious hold that biological and cultural essentialisms have on political imaginations, Haraway's cyborg metaphor embodies "a hybrid concept of community which disrupts the purification of culture and nature into distinct ontological zones, onto which the binary of 'human' – 'nonhuman' is then mapped" (Whatmore 1997, 46). The unusual hybridity of her cyborg's analytical lens allows Haraway to:

…insist on the embodied natures of all vision, and so reclaim the sensory system that has been used to signify a leap of the marked body and into a conquering gaze from no where. This is the gaze that mythically inscribes all the marked bodies, that makes the unmarked category claim the power to see and not be seen, *to represent while escaping representation* (1991, 188; my emphasis).

Cyborg vision provides a vehicle for Haraway to argue "for situated and embodied knowledges and against various forms of unlocatable, and so irresponsible, knowledge claims" (191), and "for politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims" (195). Refusing white, Christian mythologies of heroic (distinguished by manly and solo shouts of 'Eureka!') technoscience, Haraway's feminist cyborg

> …loves another science: the sciences and politics of interpretation, translation, stuttering, and the partly understood…the sciences of the multiple subject with (at least) *double vision*…a critical vision consequent upon a critical positioning in in-homogeneous gendered social space. *Translation is always interpretive, critical, and partial.* Here is a ground for conversation, rationality, and objectivity—which is power-sensitive, not pluralist, 'conversation' (ibid.; my emphases).

Instead of claiming the all-surveying (but removed and without impact) skills of sight that are so symptomatic to white, masculinist socio-spatial epistemologies/representational practices (see Rose 1993), cyborg vision is *partial*—in two senses of the word. Cyborg vision is partial in that it is geographically and culturally specific and thus limited (and not somehow universal or 'from no where'), which means it is inevitably sculpted (which is not necessarily the same as predetermined) by particular institutional, political and socio-economic contingencies. And second, given a cyborg's various, unpredictable positionings, its way of seeing is partial in the sense of favoring particular aesthetics, ethics, and politics.

Witnessing the socio-spatial processes and cultural practices of technoscience from the particularly partial analytical perspective of a cyborg's (multiple) subject position "results from and leads to interruption, diffraction, reinvention" (Haraway 1992, 333 n18). According to Haraway (ibid, 309; my emphasis):

> Diffraction does not produce "the same" displaced, as reflection and refraction do. Diffraction is a mapping of the interference, not of replication, reflection, or reproduction. A diffraction pattern does not map where differences appear, but rather maps where the effects of difference appear…the first invites the illusion of essential, fixed position, while the second trains us to *more subtle visions.*

To show us a "diffracted narrative," Haraway (1992, 309-15) tells a "simple…story based on little differences." She structures her story with two ways of seeing a Kayapo man videotaping Kayapo communities' protest of a massive dam project in Brazil (cf. chapter one, 12-3 and 17-20). Her first look operates with the epistemological assumption that:

> The represented must be disengaged from surrounding and constituting discursive and non-discursive nexuses and relocated in the authorial domain of the representative…[and]…the represented is reduced to the permanent status of the recipient of action, never to be a co-author in an articulated practice among unlike, but joined, social actors…The authorship resets with the representor, even as he claims independent object status for the represented (312-3).

Haraway calls this optics of theory the "political semiotics of representation" and she operationalizes it thus:

> The National Geographic Society, Discover magazine, and Gulf Oil—and much philosophy and social science—would have us see his [the Kayapó man's] practice as a double boundary crossing between the primitive and the modern. His representational practice, signified by his latest technology, places him in the realm of the modern. His is, then engaged in an entertaining contradiction—the preservation of an unmodern way of life with the aid of incongruous modern technology (314).

Such an image of a human and his (seemingly) surprising use of a video camcorder portrays an interesting, exotic juxtaposition that fascinates and sells with its transgression of categories of cultural difference based on teleological ideas (and their related geographical gulfs) about the technological progress of humans. To illustrate how this category-grounded story denies both the Kayapo man and his visualizations agency, Haraway moves on to her second narration.

With her second narration, Haraway seeks to sidestep the slippery slope of representation by approaching both the Kayapo man and his camera as actants, i.e.,

"collective entities doing things in a structured and structuring field of action" (313). "From [this] perspective of a political semiotics of articulation," observes Haraway (314):

> …the man might well be forging a recent collective of humans and unhumans, in this case made up of the Kayapo, videocams, land, plants, animals, near and distant audiences, and other constituents.

Looking for, and working with, such linkages (as would the good cyborg witness Haraway hopes to be) makes things appear different—mostly because we (viewers, analysts, readers, etc.) are involved. Haraway explains:

> …meanings have to be approached differently, in terms of the kinds of collective action taking place and the claims they make on others—such as ourselves, people who do not live in the Amazon. We are all in chiasmatic borderlands, liminal areas where new shapes, new kinds of action and responsibility, are gestating in the world. The man using the camera is forging a practical claim on us, morally and epistemologically, as well as on the other forest people to whom he will show the tape to consolidate defense of the forest. His practice invites further articulation—on terms shaped by the forest people. They will no longer be represented as Objects, not because they cross a line to represent themselves in "modern" terms as subjects, but because they powerfully form articulated collectives (ibid.).

Instead of seeing a spectacle of crossed boundaries, Haraway's second look at this man and his camera seeks to initiate and foster accountability and action formulated "on terms shaped by the forest people."[15] Like Haraway, I think this is an important shift in investigative focus because it re-orients analytical attention from identity categories in favor of political kinship.

Don't be fooled, however; Haraway's theoretical tale aims for much more than a mere good viewpoint/bad viewpoint comparison. Because it is told from (pictured with) a cyborg's 'double vision,' the moral of this diffracted story emerges not only through contemplation of the differences between the two narratives, but also through their entanglements. The first look suggests *why* "[i]ndigenous people are resisting a long history of forced 'tutelage'" (Haraway 1992, 310) wherein indigenous geographies have been represented by institutions and individuals with headquarters and homes generally located far beyond the communities providing the 'data' or 'resources' or 'problems' for 'authoritative'

inquiries into, and analyses of, matters of life and death. Indeed the material and discursive impacts of such epistemological practices have been, and remain, daily (and often devastating) influences on the lives of people who identify-position themselves and/or are identified-positioned by other actors as indigenous. No doubt Haraway knows that no matter how convincing her second, far more hopeful, visualization of *how* people are resisting white colonialist representational practices and *what* that particular Kayapo man was doing and wants to do (or not) with the video camcorder and the imagery that results from their interactions, not everyone nor even every reader will see eye-to-eye with her perspective. But that's the whole point. Rather than painting a complete picture (without coloring outside distinct borders), this story offers a more 'subtle vision' where the two narratives work in tandem. Finally, I'll bet Haraway would agree that the two short stories she related simply are not enough. There remain many other angles for narrating what happens when indigenous peoples take up video technologies in order to open a new space for cultural-political and social-economic collective action.

OPERATIONALIZATION

> …to study technoscience requires an immersion in worldly material-semiotic practices, where the analysts, as well as the humans and nonhumans studied, are all at risk—morally, politically, technically, and epistemologically. Science studies that do not take on that kind of situated knowledge practice stand a good chance of floating off screen into an empyrean and academic never-never land. "Ethnography" in this extended sense, is not so much a specific procedure in anthropology as it is a method of being at risk in the face of the practices and discourses into which one inquires. To be at risk is not the same thing as identifying with the subjects of study; quite the contrary. And self-identity is as much at risk as the temptation to identification. One is at risk in the face of serious nonidentity that challenges previous stabilities, convictions, or ways of being of many kinds. An "ethnographic attitude" can be adopted within any kind of inquiry, including textual analysis. Not linked to a specific discipline, an ethnographic attitude is a mode of practical and theoretical attention, a way of remaining mindful and accountable. Such a method is not about "taking sides" in a predetermined way. But it is about risks, purposed, and hopes—one's own and others'—embedded in knowledge projects (Haraway 1997, 190-1).

Visualizing indigenous identity politics as technoscience is not a theoretical whimsy. Certainly not for communities in Oaxaca, Mexico now learning of maize transgene flow into their fields, food and families, nor for the local, regional, national and transnational organizations, institutions, agencies and industries now responding to the discovery with dismay, debate, delight and/or denial (McAffe forthcoming; Dyer and Yúnez-Naude 2003). This is not to say, however, that market-driven technoscientific interventions are recent arrivals in indigenous communities. For example, Roberto González's examination (2001) of agricultural and dietary knowledges and practices of Zapotec communities in a mountainous 'micro-region' called el Rincón de la Sierra Norte of Oaxaca demonstrates how extensively they have been and continue to be intersected with regional, global and national currents (from colonialism and the Mexican Revolution to NAFTA). According to González (2001, 259; my emphasis):

> Rincón Zapotec farmers and their families earn their livelihood by tilling the earth, sowing seed, and harvesting, preserving, and preparing crops. They also experiment with new crops, methods, and technologies, use trial-and-error experimentation, and communicate their findings among colleagues and to younger generations. *In these respects they very much resemble contemporary cosmopolitan scientists, though institutional differences are obvious.*

With his thick ethnographic documentation of these resemblances and their institutional differences, González unhinges the time-honored binary modern/traditional (as well as more recent renditions such as science/local knowledge) with which Zapotec farming and food ways have been analyzed previously. He argues (261-2):

> …that the boundaries of knowledge have overlapped and blurred to such a degree that the links between knowledge systems simply cannot be ignored or minimized…[and therefore] the divisions between local and cosmopolitan sciences, or an imagined "West" and "the rest," are inadequate for thinking about agriculture today…The science of the Zapotec, upon closer analysis, becomes inseparable from cosmopolitan science, and cosmopolitan science inseparable from that of the Zapotec.

Further evidence of such entanglements comes from a growing body of research analyzing indigenous identity politics indicates that much negotiation over who and what comprise indigenous peoples, places and practices unfolds within the often-transnational geographies and markets of technoscientific interventions. These days, the nature of indigenousness is predominantly contested and concretized in relation to both the presence and absence of the development and conservation projects currently influencing rural livelihoods.[16] Surely this comes as no surprise, given how indigenous movements' historical emergence and current goals (sometimes) share common ground with the transnational geographies of organized *campesino* resistance to being shut out of planning strategies.[17]

Overlapping representational practices are not, however, necessarily helpful, evenly accessible or potentially desirable for all involved parties. Romantic ideals of what indigenous daily lives should (not) include can wreck havoc on the daily lives of the people that advocacy agencies purport to assist (Ramos 1994). Essentialized notions of "authentic" dwellers operationalized by NGOs involved in the technoscientific interventions designed to ease environmental endangerment can depoliticize dialogue and further exclude other marginalized social groups by deeming them invalid residents (Sundberg 1998a and b). Likewise, international aid agency programming aimed at indigenous minorities can import and overlay grid-like criteria for, and models of, appropriate action, which due to their poor fit can actually exacerbate already uncomfortable regional conditions for small indigenous populations and their pursuit of justice (Tilley 2002). Additionally, as Sarah Radcliffe argues (2001a), exclusively local-global linkages are exceedingly rare in Latin America. Most far-flung connections among diverse actors, especially those concerned with the resources and practices collected beneath the rubric of development, inevitably intersect with state agencies seeking to engage with similar subjects and sources. And the resultant similarities in

representational practices are not always beneficial to indigenous peoples; indeed, Radcliffe observes (2001b), they often confine their political agency. For instance, neo-liberal states' institutional discourses of multiculturalism structurally foster (through legislation and distribution of revenues, etc.) articulations of indigenous identity tailored to globalizing political-economic forces (Hilbert 1997), especially those catering to hopes for stimulating lucrative tourist consumption (Hale 2002). Likewise, given structural constraints, government institutional reforms addressing ethnopolitical pressures easily congeal into time-worn grooves of cultural essentialism, which in turn limits the imagination and implementation of policy (Paulson and Calla 2000).

Informed by the above scholarship on the identity risks and institutional settings of cultural-political representation of indigenousness, I choose to articulate the indigenous media makers who undertake video-mediate communication, their allies, and all of their videos as actors participating (unevenly) in the very same technoscientific (and academic) dialogues about indigenous identity politics that shape my own semiotic material technologies. Consider, for instance, how a very recent issue of *American Anthropologist* features a collection of two essays and two interviews centered on Bolivian and Mexican indigenous video production, with special attention paid to their screening in the U.S. through two recent traveling exhibitions made possible through the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian. The journal's Visual Anthropology Editor, Jeff Himpele, takes a look at the indigenous video organizations that emerged in Bolivia during the 1990s and speaks with two key actors involved with the organizations' orchestration and operation.[18] According to Himpele (2004b, 357), the Bolivian video makers refuse to claim solo authorship or the title of producer, preferring instead to focus attention on the collective nature of their visual work as 'social communicators' who engage in cultural

communication. Himpele observes (ibid, 358) how they describe their work as an *integral* process: in the sense that it "involves the collective input of the community in which the communicator is working," and in the sense that it requires "the coordinated work of media makers and organizations that are involved in the process of making a video." Drawing on these media makers' arguments and analyses, Himpele finds indigenous video a "project of cultural defense and self-determination," a particularly political project that aims to make visible indigenous identity politics, e.g., by illuminating broken neoliberal promises of more participatory citizenship through institutional decentralization (356). Himpele approaches the cultural-political project of indigenous video production as "a complex process of assembling a multiplex of technologies, resources, social organizations, and cultural principles and imagery into a representational form that extends beyond the completed video tape" (357). With a review of the credits on the labels and credits on a video's box, he illustrates how indigenous video is "necessarily heterogeneous" and "an inherently hybrid object." Given the various socio-spatial-technical intersections comprising it, Himpele suggests "we conceive of the combined practice of production and labeling video as a form of *packaging*, which includes both the coordinated assembly of the elements into a media form and the self-representation that indexes that process" (357; my emphasis).

In other words (mine), indigenous video embodies a collaborative technoscientific practice that is dedicated to the 'coordinated assembly' and circulation of visual knowledge about indigenousness in the name of politicized action. Emerging from (some) indigenous activists' (and their allies') demands for decolonizing the production of authoritative knowledge about indigenous people, places and practices—not to mention the production of authoritative knowledge about governance and technoscientific programming—this is a particularly post-colonial technoscience. To examine and analyze the cultural politics and

organizational practices of this post-colonial technoscience, I (like Himpele above) identify and work with two key objects of study: 1) the socio-spatial relations through which videos are assembled and shared, and 2) the visualizations themselves.

To visually interpret indigenous videos, I utilize the methods established in research "concerned with the geography of film, wherein people, spaces, and places are embodied in the cinematic vision" (Aitken and Zonn 1994, 4). Geographic analyses of cinematic representations reveal celluloid reflections (the *reel* or text) of current social and political structures or forces (the *real* or context). That is to say geographers interrogate images in order to *contextualize* them by relating the immediate stories of films to broader narratives and mechanisms of power. These interrogations render careful readings—pursued through visual content and form analyses that are historically attentive to hegemonic discursive regimes—of locations and social hierarchies that are (in)visible in intertextual landscapes, with *intertextual* meaning that when read as texts, landscapes can be seen to reference other texts and to emerge from and engage multiple contexts. Based on their readings, these scholars then suggest how films reify (or perhaps subvert) distinctly gendered and/or national identities, and naturalize (or maybe destabilize) dominant ideologies such as capitalism.[19] As you will see, in this dissertation I often engage this scholarship's deconstructive methods of discourse analysis (albeit with the post-colonial feminist flavor described above).[20] Generally, I do this when the time comes for me to describe and discuss (contextualize) a particular production. I don't, however, work with the notion of landscape found in so many geographical examinations of film, largely because I find the metaphor of landscape hopelessly imbued with assumptions about visual transparency and *an* analyst's authority, not to mention a propensity for fixity. In lieu of analyzing landscapes, I strive to see how video imagery arises from and makes reference to daily practices. Like Tim

Cresswell (2003), I find this allows more insight into the visibility, mobility and agency (to differentiate and value meanings) of differentially located organizations and individuals.

My visual analyses tend toward the "radically different epistemological understanding of representations" that Cresswell and Deborah Dixon (2002, 3) call antiessentialism, which is in many ways very similar to the post-colonial feminist theoretical praxis I have sketched above. Cresswell and Dixon suggest that antiessentialist scholarship makes two key epistemological relocations to geographic inquiry into film. They should be familiar by now to readers of the previous pages. The first is that:

> Researchers working within this antiessentialist rubric have drawn explicit attention to the context within which they themselves are working, noting the complications, but also the insights, that ensue from a consideration of their own positioning as observers and reporters (ibid.).

And the second is that:

> Films are no longer considered mere images or unmediated expressions of the mind, but rather the temporary embodiment of social processes that continually construct and deconstruct the world as we know it (3-4).

To suggest avenues for inquiry while still acknowledging and addressing this lack of fixity, this "dissolution of reality/representation," Cresswell and Dixon highlight three interwoven facets of filmic representation: mobility, identity, and pedagogy. In a nutshell, they argue (4), conceptualizing mobility as an unpredictable and embodied cultural-political process permits the investigation of films' geographies (as well as those of films' makers and viewers) without necessarily calling upon essentialist, place-bound identity politics, and it obliges us to contemplate how we (those of us who teach or aim to teach) might share these lessons. I think that Donna Haraway (1997, 298 n24) neatly sums up this obligation and its urgency:

> What a picture is *doing* is not what is *resembles*. If this concept is no surprise, it nonetheless bears repeating in a U.S. scientist culture that continues to forget that referential meanings of pictures, maps, and diagrams are always context dependent and sustained by the labor of communities. The visual is no more self-evident than any other mode of relating in the world.

I agree with Haraway; we can only hope to situate visual images in relation to our inevitably partial knowledge about the images' social emergence and multiple spatialities and cultural impacts (see Smith L. 2002b). And we can and should learn to share our post-structural antiessentialist insights with other, differentially located actors (see L. Smith 2003a).

To *geographically situate* the technoscientific practices of indigenous video making in terms of institutional and organizational dynamics and *culturally situate* it in terms of political and aesthetic initiatives, I chose to study how the advocacy-activist organization Ojo de Agua Comunicación Indígena (see chapter one, 29-31) embodied them. When Himpele briefly mentions Ojo de Agua as an active video center similar to the Bolivian one he discusses, he remarks (2004a, 353):

> These centers represent nodes in widely dispersed and mobile networks of collaboration that extend beyond their home countries to media organizations in Brazil and Ecuador, for example, and are affiliated through the Latin American Council of Indigenous Peoples' Film and Video (CLACPI), created in 1985 in Mexico, and now housed in Bolivia.

Intermediary NGOs like Ojo de Agua mediate local-global processes and practices (Caroll 1992), and eager to see how such transnational mediation of indigenous identity politics happens, I undertook an organizational ethnography (Del Casino et al. 2000). When I began my investigation in January 2001, I set out to trace the histories and geographies of video projects so I might chart "the interactions among different agencies, the values and meanings prioitised and struggled for by groups within each agency" (Lewis et al. 2002, 18-9). My aim was to witness, through participation and observation, the 'nesting-levels' of connections that inform Ojo de Agua's 'project trajectories' (Markowitz 2001).

This goal required steady (or at least as regular as possible) attendance in both Ojo de Agua's office work space and the INI's CVI where a good part of Ojo de Agua's engagements took place, at least while the CVI remained open—it closed down at the end of

April 2002. Not only did this allow me to observe and (sometimes) participate in everyday activities (e.g., brainstorming about and composing new video projects, video editing, financial accounting, strategy meetings, etc.) or the lack thereof (perhaps due to collaborators' no-shows or lack of funding), but it also allowed me to familiarize myself with the broad range of visualizations that were housed in the video archives of both the INI's CVI and Ojo de Agua. I interviewed members of Ojo de Agua several times (both formally and informally, recorded and not). I also sought out and interviewed (when possible) key figures in current and past Ojo de Agua video projects. In addition, whenever possible, I attended public screenings and other forums (almost always clustered around indigenous cultural activism) where Ojo de Agua members attended and/or assisted. And I did my best to accompany them when they traveled to record outside of the capital city of Oaxaca, although that wasn't always feasible (for further details about my fieldwork experience, see Appendix, pp. ??). Furthermore, I read and asked about every Ojo de Agua document (e.g., proposals, budgets, bills and receipts) I encountered or heard discussed. At all times, I was looking for and asking after actors' motivations for and means of video making and related support and distribution activities. The trickiest part of all of this was trying not to prefigure a categorical sense of what comprised indigenous people, places and/or video projects (not to mention establish grid-like geographies of power for indigenous identity politics) while inquiring after how other actors conceived and/or practiced indigenous video (and related identity politics). Indeed, this was so tricky a task that I often failed; but these failures provided some of the most interesting analytical insights.

From the start, I found my organizational ethnography framed with particular identity politics that felt positively predetermined by my geographic, social and institutional locations. Early on, the constant translation into and out of Spanish exhausted me, and made

everyone painfully aware that I was clearly a foreigner. I found this easier to bear by doing my best to treat this awkward position as a source of comic relief. In particular, I appropriated the moniker of *gring@*—sometimes to refer to the United States in a general (and often highly critical) manner, but even more often I evoked the term in a self-ridiculing way: for example, when I would invite friends-informants to my house for *una comida gringa* where upon I introduced them to a traditional American lunch, largely comprised of leftovers served cold. I never, however, grew comfortable with the different, but related, term of *güer@*, which in Oaxaca is commonly used to identify someone with lighter colored skin. I could never reconcile what most Mexicans insisted was harmless color differentiation with the obvious (to me) ways in which the term was often used to imply some sort of socio-economic superiority inherent to lighter skin color, e.g., when a vendor sought to cajole a buyer in the market by calling her *güerita*, or when marketing firms sought to convince consumers of a beauty product's efficacy (see Winders et al. 2004). Nor do I have much tolerance for the word when hollered, hissed or panted in the streets by men (of all ages) with an extreme sexual innuendo that insinuated (to me) that as a *güera* I was sure to be an ideal and, of course, easy source of debauchery. Despite my dislike of this term, I was summoned or addressed (in a variety of tones and tempers) with it almost daily, sometimes several times a day. Although, for the record, I don't remember anyone of Ojo de Agua ever doing it—perhaps one of my efforts to explain my discomfort with this term was taken seriously by them. This wasn't the first time in my life, but it was certainly the most extended time period, wherein I experienced just how easily, indeed automatically, folks identified me (sometimes with delight and desire, and other times with derision) with highly inappropriate and distinctly ill-fitting (to me) connotations of privilege and pleasure, largely because of the color of my skin. I suspect my intolerance for this name calling (this semiotic material

technology) stems from the fact that I simply couldn't lose sight/site/cite of the supposedly glamorous *güeras'* implied other—poor indigenous women. It is not my intention to share this in the hopes of stimulating sympathy (awww, poor researcher doesn't feel comfy in 'the field'), but rather to suggest that this experience-based awareness fostered a greater sense of empathy for oppositional cultural politics, in particular indigenous identity politics, because I became more aware of what it feels like to be pigeon-holed into the rigid borders and blind assumptions of someone else's identity category.

Identity categories, no matter how much damage I believe they can do, remain at the heart of this story. Recognizing the risks of investigating indigenous identity politics has led to my choosing to situate video-mediated technoscientific knowledge about indigenous geographies in terms of positionalities, mine as well as those of the actors I researched. Exploring someone's or something's positionality entails noticing and assessing this agent's power to produce knowledge. I like to think, however, that when examining these geographies of power I don't see them as transparent, i.e., visible and entirely knowable through reflection and theorization. This way of seeing—what Gillian Rose (1997) calls the 'goddess trick' of claiming 'transparent reflexivity'—conflates difference between the researcher and the researched to a distance that boils down to "the effect of the material and/or analytic power of the researcher" (312). Establishing and measuring distance in this geographical sense makes it far too easy to identify people, places, things and processes as either same or different, and that's just not messy (or relational) enough for me (and many other feminists). In this dissertation, I seek to provide a more connective knowledge, whereby:

> The feminist task becomes less one of mapping difference—assuming a visible landscape of power with relations between positions ones of distance between distinctly separate agents—and more one of asking how difference is constituted, of

tracing its destabilizing emergence during the research process itself (Rose 1997, 313).

With this methodology, "the identity to be situated does not exist in isolation but only through mutually constitutive social relations" (314). This angle of analysis, Rose argues (315), makes for "a view of power as punctured by gaps precariously bridged. The authority of academic knowledge is put into question not by self-conscious positioning but by gaps that give space to, and are affected by other knowledges."

As many feminists (e.g., Rose 1997, 316) suggest, there's no way around the realization that knowledge production is saturated with power relations. Indeed, despite an affection and respect for, and a dedication to, a post-colonial feminist optics of theory, it is mighty difficult to avoid the centrifugal logics of white writing (assuming the position of an unmarked marker), especially when it's a key method of visual analysis (for instance, see Rose's (2001, 184-5) critique of one of Haraway's visualizations). I guess the best way to deal with this is to conceive of research and analysis as the constitutive (and inherently cultural) process of translation (Rose 1997, 315). To conclude this chapter's contemplation of my means of translation, I offer this short summary of the methodology embodied by this dissertation. Because of my fascination with visual data and intersecting knowledge production practices, I research the production, evaluation and circulation of political-cultural visualizations of indigenousness that is called, categorized and exhibited as indigenous video as technoscience. To witness these practices and processes, for three years I ethnographically investigated an advocacy-activist organization. Driven by a yearning for political kinship, my investigation and analyses seek to articulate involved actors' positions-identities in ways that link knowledges, while leaving room for recognizing and (ideally) negotiating (structural, cultural, etc.) gaps among the knowledges I hope to connect. Finally, I am on a pedagogical mission to change the production of authoritative knowledge about

indigenous geographies through the amplification of agents who are recognized and heeded. In particular I want to situate indigenous video as an important and relevant actor in scholarly analysis and related educational endeavors that are concerned with a myriad of inquiries (e.g., environmental, social, cultural). To do this, I seek to illustrate the valuable political and analytical insights to be gained through study of visualization, while at the same time approaching such a task as never completed. It is to this task I now turn.

ENDNOTES

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[1] To stabilize key vocabulary for thinking, talking, and writing about the geographies of confrontation and coalition that underwrite identities, I rely on Charles Hale's review of the cultural politics of identity in Latin America. Hale defines 'identity politics' as "collective sensibilities and actions that come from a particular location within society, *in direct defiance of universal categories that tend to subsume, erase, or suppress this particularity*" (Hale 1997, 568; my added emphasis on the role of categories). And he describes social location as "a distinctive social memory, consciousness, and practice, as well as a place within the social structure" (ibid.).

[2] Largely for its visual impact, I chose to include the hyphen in post-colonial. I think that rather than demarcating tidy historical epochs or heralding the end of colonialism, post-colonial implies a desire to "post," in the sense of leaving behind, Eurocentric practices of knowledge production (cf. Hall 1996, 254; Shohat 1992, 108). And since post-colonial theory centers "the complex ways that the past inheres in the present" (Jackson and Jacobs 1996, 3), the hyphen helps highlight how—despite our best efforts to enable this movement 'beyond'—the neo-colonial keeps on coming (cf. Hall 1996, 249 and 254).

[3] In addition to Said (1978), see Jacobs (1996, 13-35); Rattansi (1997); Said (1993).

[4] For studies of the gendered nature of colonialism, see McClintock (1995); M.L. Pratt (1992); and Mills (1996).

[5] For an especially rabid attack along both of these lines, see Eagleton (1999). See also Wright's (2002) eloquent reading of Eagleton's agitation.

[6] Radcliffe reminds us (1997b) to not assume that all marginalized voices, even if located in the same periphery, are equally positioned.

[7] Radcliffe (1999b, 238) provides an overview of how "in discursive, practical and ideological work done by power, the spatialities of power are spatialities of resistance, each operating simultaneously at a number of different sites, and constituting subjects in the interstices of cross-cutting orders: 'domination' and 'resistance' are relational." Radcliffe also goes on to note, however, that "the rejection of the binary of domination/resistance leaves in place the more difficult analytical and methodological aspect of identifying and explaining the different geographies and dynamics of co-existing (and at times contradictory) powers. This will require detailed and substantial ethnographic analysis, in which the nature of the will to order can be examined at the same time as the diverse types of disruption ('resistance') to that will to order are elucidated" (ibid.). See D. Moore (1998) for just such an ethnographically rich illustration of the impossibility of isolated, autonomous realms of resistance.

[8] The emphasis on ethical is Wright's and he formulates it with the help of Marcus Doel (1999), particularly what Wright calls Doel's "rather unlovely neologism," 'splace,' or 'splacing.' See also Stuart Hall (1996, 246) who says that "one of the principal values of the term 'post-colonial' has been to direct our attention to the many way in which colonisation

was never simply external to the societies of the imperial metropolis. It was always inscribed deeply within them—as it became indelibly inscribed in the cultures of the colonised." Hall goes on to note (247) that post-colonial theory's denial of binary-based understandings of colonialism and anti-colonial struggles is "destined to trouble the here/there cultural binaries for ever."

[9] Donna Haraway credits Bruno Latour's work (1987, chapter 4) with the wide adoption of the word technoscience. For an overview of debates over these apertures, see Pickering (1992).

[10] Haraway uses the phrase New World Order as a shorthand evocation of current capitalist configurations and the military industrial machinations of its historically and epistemologically dominant Christian leadership.

[11] Particularly worried about "a conspicuous absence of serious citizen agency shaping science and technology policy" in the U.S., Haraway lobbies for the critical science politics of a technoscientific democracy. She spells out (1997, 95) what she means by this:

> Technoscientific democracy does not necessarily mean an antimarket politics, and certainly not an antiscience politics. But such democracy does require a *critical* science politics at the national, as well as may other kinds of local, level. 'Critical' means evaluative, public multiactor, mutliagenda, oriented to equality and heterogeneous well-being.

[12] Modest witness is a phrase that gained currency with Shapin and Shaffer's 1985 book *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life*, which explores the lingering influence of seventeenth-century discourses about the valid assessment of experimental science, which establish the white man of means as the least interested and most removed from social conflict viewer, and thus the most credible witness of technology-mediated production of knowledge. Building on the work of Shapin and Shaffer, Haraway declares the following:

> One of my goals in this book is to trouble what counts as insiders and outsiders in setting standards of credibility and objectivity. "Disinterested" cannot be allowed to mean "dislocated"; i.e., unaccountable for, or unconscious of, complex layers of one's personal collective historical situatedness in the apparatuses for the production of knowledge. Nor can "politically committed" be allowed to mean "biased." It is a delicate distinction, but one fundamental to hopes for democratic and credible science. (1997, 277 n3)

For an example of "the kind of modest witness that is coming into existence at the end of the Second Christian Millennium," Haraway points to *La Mestiza Cosmica* who is painted by Haraway's collaborator Lynn Randolf (see Haraway 1997, 18-20). Here (20) Haraway situates, as a woman of color (see n14 below) *La Mestiza Cosmica*:

> Randolf's mestiza straddles the borders that are being redrawn in both the free-trade agreements of the New World Order, Inc., and the fierce anti-immigrant politics of the rich nations against the poor and nonwhite. Technoscience is fundamental to the dense flows across these borders of capital, people, know-how, machines, genes, and much more. *La Mestiza Cosmica* is historically specific, located in a particular time,

place, and body: She is therefore a figure for the kind of global consciousness my mutated modest witness should cultivate.

[13] This body of scholarly work is also referred to as standpoint theory, but I don't often rally that word to name this scholarship, largely because I'm not keen on the sensation of singularity evoked by the word standpoint. This doesn't mean, however, that I don't draw from their lessons, indeed I continue to draw upon my exposure to scholars such as Patricia Hill Collins (1991) who I encountered during Mary Anglin's seminar on feminist theorizations of health and illness in 1999.

[14] Even more specific is the idea of 'women of color.' This broad category highlights "the interconnected processes of racism and sexism…[and] politicizes identity by assuming that hierarchies of gender and race are such significant markers of identity and power that there is a shared experience among Latinas, Africanas, and Asian women" (Mattingly 1999, 34).

[15] Sorry, I don't have time to delve how Haraway (1992, 309-10) builds the foundation of her argument with a thoughtful reivew of Susanna Hecht and Alexander Cockburn's book *The Fate of the Forest* (1989), wherein she more fully expounds on the loaded phrase 'the forest people.'

[16] Some of my favorite examples of this growing literature are: the collection of works by Bebbington and his student Perrault; Sundenberg (1998a and 1998b); Offen (2003); Hernández Castillo and Nigh (1998); Li (2000); Keese (1998); Coomes and Barham (1997); Hernández Castillo (2001a); and Brosius (1999). For a look at how these socio-spatial dynamics are shaping rural livelihoods in Oaxcaca, Mexico, I turn to the extensive publications of Jonathon Fox. Furthermore, I recognize this rural focus selectively ignores current urban programs seeking to promote cultural revitalization; I try not to be so accepting of urban/rural distinctions later on in the dissertation.

And, as I said in chapter one (p. 35, n7): In addition to the ecological, agricultural and job-training initiatives more traditionally collected beneath the rubrics of development and conservation, I'm also referring to a wider range of institutional programs (and the research and reasoning with which they are designed and deployed) directed towards indigenous peoples. Such as those concerned, for example, with social welfare, cultural survival, economic betterment, health and illness, legal justice, education and arts/crafts/marketing.

[17] For studies highlighting these intersections, see Hale (1994); Zamozc (1994); Edelman (1998); Ströbele-Gregor (1996).

[18] Himpele interviewed Ivan Sanjinés, the founder (in 1989) and coordinator of *Centro de Estudio, Formación y Realización Cinematográfica* (CEFREC—Cinematography Education and Production Center) and current director of CLACPI (see chapter one, pp. 14-5), and Jesús Tapia, an Aymara video maker who is President of the *Coordinadora Audiovisual Indígena Originaria de Bolivia* (CAIB—Bolivian Indigenous Peoples' Audiovisual Council), which—along with a national plan for indigenous media—emerged in 1996 with the help of CEFREC (see chapter six, pp. 274-85). The interview took place towards the tail-end of the *Ojo del Condor* month-long tour sponsored the National Museum of the American Indian (in

which Marcelina Cárdenas, a Quechua video maker who is a member of CAIB, a journalist and a linguistics graduate student, also participated), during the 2002 Taos Talking Pictures Film Festival, where CEFREC received the Taos Mountain Achievement Award (given to Ojo de Agua in 2003, after a similarly sponsored tour called Video Indígena México).

[19] I am clumping together a collection of research that is more diverse than this brief overview indicates. Key texts within this kind of geographic inquiry are (in no particular order): Rose (1994); Aitken and Zonn (1994); Burgess and Gold (1985); Harvey (1989); Natter and Jones (1993); Zonn (1990); Jameson (1995).

[20] Furthermore, most geographic research on filmic images has focused on mass media made and mobilized representations. Such a limited archive of visual data, notes Gillian Rose (1994), leaves the entangled geographies of oppositional visualizations of places, power and political possibilities less studied. In many ways, I seek to rectify this with this dissertation project.

CHAPTER THREE
Locating Indigenous Identity Politics:
In Oaxaca, Mexico

La falta de una formación profesional adecuada con un *curriculum* basado en la realidad del mundo de quienes proceden de los grupos indígenas, propicia que éstos [los estudiantes indígenas que se hacen profesionales indios], al egresar de las instituciones educativas que los formó, adopten una actitud contraria a la de sus pueblos, es decir, en sus actitudes y sus discursos reflejan una mentalidad blanca y occidentalizada al rechazar los suyo. No contribuyen en nada para el fomento de la cultura de sus grupos, muy por el contrario, adoptan una actitud totalmente ajena a su realidad. Lo riesgoso de esta crisis de identidad es que con ello se prolifera la desindianzación de los demás (Caballero 1998b, 103).[1]

INTRODUCING THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF IDENTITY IN OAXACA

On the second morning of a transnationally configured conference exploring *mestizaje y racismo* in Mexico, people gathered at the Francisco Burgoa library, located in the spectacular Santa Domingo cultural and church complex in the capital city of Oaxaca. We listened to Claudio Lomintz's plenary presentation during which, among other things, he discussed the necessity of making more visible the interpolations among social science, national projects and *cultura consumista* (consumer culture). This would, he argued, help further unpack (what many assumed to be) the well-known history of mestizaje y racismo. At one point in his presentation, Lomintz lifted his hand and waved about the beautifully restored (thanks to its UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site designation) surroundings, chock-full of archival treasures. He noted how neatly the surroundings symbolized scholarly pursuit's hallowed grounds. During time allotted for questions and comments after the following session that featured papers delivered by six academics[2] (one from a University in Spain, two from U.S. universities and three from Oaxacan research institutions—two of whom identify themselves as indigenous), a young man stood. He cleared his throat and then

declared that to join the panelists up front, he'd have to bathe (*echarme un baño*), he'd have to whiten himself (*blanquearme*) (Field notes: July 5, 2003).[3]

The socio-spatial setting for this young man's declaration encapsulates how authoritative knowledges about mestizaje and Oaxaca's cultural politics have been produced and consumed, as well as controlled and challenged. His comments underscore the seemingly inherent whiteness of the production of authoritative knowledge about the cultural politics of indigenous identity. At the same time, however, the fact that he addressed a panel that included two indigenous intellectuals—one of whom, Juan Julián Caballero, writes about the ways that pedagogical institutions aim to "desindianizar" indigenous professionals by encouraging them to reject their cultural background and adopt "una mentalidad blanca y occidentalizada" (see quote above)—suggests the futility of approaching oppositional identity politics of cultural resistance in tidy 'either/or' terms.

In this chapter I explore the representational and institutional practices that have established mestizaje as the hegemonic bio-cultural framework for defining the national identities promoted and propagated by most Latin America states. I also illustrate how these practices have been both embraced and dismantled by the oppositional ethnopolitics and organizational relations of indigenous cultural activists and their diverse allies. I start the chapter with a section that briefly introduces the complexities of Latin American ethnopolitics. Then I provide a snapshot of the cultural politics and institutional geography of indigenous identity in Mexico, which frames the portrait of ethnopolitics in Oaxaca that follows. Throughout the chapter, I focus on academic advocates' efforts to rework the production of scientifically rendered social knowledge about indigenous peoples—not only with critical theorizing, but also by opening new institutional spaces for indigenous actors. With its concern for the interactions and inter-imaginations of advocates and indigenous

activists, this chapter serves as a prelude to the next two chapters and their examinations of community-centered cultural activism and the emergence and early entanglements of *Ojo de Agua Comunicación Indígena, S. C.*

Generally Speaking: Ethnopolitics in Latin America

In the Americas, indigenous identity arose from violent invasion, Christian evangelization, and European economic investment and exploitation (Bonfil 1992a) during which colonialist regimes, with very particular images of order (Orlove 1993), sought to legislate into being and legitimate spatialized social hierarchies that suited their commercial and cultural reasoning. Colonialist visual economies (Poole 1997) racialized indigenous peoples by portraying them as biologically less developed (morally and mentally) than those who were in a position to picture. Later, further fortified by transnational currents of scientific racism, colonialist categories of analysis and administration sculpted around evolutionary articulations of indigenousness served state authorities' efforts to script national identities and orchestrate development strategies (Urban and Sherzer 1991; Knight 1990b; Fitzell 1994). In other words, indigenous geographies have been shaped (through both invasion *and* evasion) by the socio-spatial relations imagined and imposed with colonialist epistemologies and representational practices. As argued in the previous chapter, central to colonialist and masculinist ways of seeing and believing are analytical categories that are structured and held in (non-relational) place with binary-based boundaries. Particularly potent for colonialist evocations of indigenous identity (whether evoked by actors that self-identify as indigenous, or by those that do not) are dichotomies aligned along culture/nature and modern/traditional axes. Such modes of analysis underwrite the conceptualizations of environmental harmony and spiritual wholeness that can configure the 'noble savage' and

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uphold racist explanations of socio-economic and political marginalization as the 'natural' result of cultural inadequacy or underdevelopment (Deur 2000; Bassett and Zueli 2000; Brosius 1997; Willems-Braun 1997; Silvern 1995).

Embedded within colonialist (and masculinist) representational practices are socio-spatial epistemologies that are steeped in assumptions of isolated ideas. With this way of thinking-seeing, for example, one need never connect the privileges of whiteness with the limited agency of subjects who are categorized as 'Others' because they are seen to embody what whiteness is not. Such isolation allows non-locatable whiteness to serve as *the* model of many ideals, from logic and mobility to citizenship and progress. As becomes evident in the young man's declaration about the need to whiten oneself in order to occupy the position of a scholar presenting researched knowledge in Santo Domingo, such representational practices remain sanctioned and funded frameworks for the production of knowledge concerned with Latin American (see also Sundberg 2003 and 2004). The categorical maneuver of white writing legitimates a seemingly uninvolved, unmarked observer and discredits the actions and ideas of the 'Othered'—yet pivotal—participants (other observers, informants, laborers) in this all-seeing observer's production of authoritative knowledge of indigenous geographies. These are the cultural politics and representational practices with which many indigenous peoples were (and in many ways continue to be) colonized, by which I mean to suggest they were (and are) transformed into bureaucratically knowable and often territorially dispossessed subjects of the state, which in turn makes them some of the most uninformed-uninvolved populations, and thus more easily exploited by transnational resource extraction schemes that are usually favored by the state.[4]

At the same time, however, popular social movements in Latin America, as well as the scholars who identify and analyze them, have reconfigured the colonialist category of

indigenous by strategically articulating ethnicity with territorial claims, revalorization of cultural heritage, and critiques of collective socio-economic locations (Diskin 1991; Kearney and Varese 1995; Varese 1996; Bartolomé 2002). Because ethnicity focuses attention on the violent change wrought by centuries of genocide, economic exploitation and forced acculturation that the unruly processes of globalization[5] intensify, ethnopolitics identify a political position for challenging states' policy and practice on the basis of historical and moral injustices. Not only do these politics of representation gain international attention and support (Brysk 2000; Van Cott 2000; Van de Fliert 1994), but they also assist indigenous activists, organizations and federations in demanding greater inclusion in the formulation of state programs, particularly those directed toward economic development (Perreault 2003a, b and c; Valdivia 2004; Bebbington 1996, 1997 and 1999). Currently indigenous peoples in Latin America confront the persistent legacy of colonialist thought and action in the uneven relations comprising neo-colonialism, generally found operating under the mien of neo-liberal economic policies. In the name of their survival, dignity and rights, indigenous organizations, federations and activists fight for their informed participation in citizenship and policy at all levels of decision making, especially in regard to resource (environmental and human) stewardship. As suggested in the first chapter of this dissertation, they labor to decolonize the production and evaluation of 'authoritative' knowledge about indigenous peoples, places and practices. Greater inclusion of indigenous knowledge is indeed evident in proposals for participatory development emerging from Latin American indigenous movements (Varese 1995). As in other parts of the world, sometimes these suggestions do indeed modify the way development happens (Sillitoe 1998; Batterbury et al. 1997), but more commonly indigenous knowledges are engaged in very limited ways dictated by the precepts

and practices of 'Western' white technoscience (Briggs and Sharp 2004), not to mention its capitalist engines and social exclusions (Fernando 2003).

Despite challenges such as this kind of limited engagement, the ethnopolitics of indigenous movements refashion state institutions, expand the spaces of democratic participation, and reimagine national identities (Radcliffe 1999a; Selverston 1997; Yashar 1999; García-Aguilar 1999; Berger 2001). Place-based indigenous identity politics in Latin America should not, however, be essentialized as inherently inclusive or purely isolated from other political currents (Calderón et al. 1992; Hahn 1996; Ströbele-Gregor 1996). Similar to national identity, the globalized politics of local identity rely upon shared images of custom, community, and ethnicity—be they composed by indigenous collectivities, scholars, or governing authorities and their bureaucracies. And even though these may be marshaled in defense of territorial integrity and collective control of cultural-environmental resources, they may also be reactionary, and deeply gendered, classed, and racialized (Radcliffe and Westwood 1996; Paulson and Calla 2000; Watts 1999). Charles Hales suggests that because indigenous identity politics in Latin America are *both* essentialist and innovative, they alter scholarly concepts of "the political" and criteria for assessing "impact" (Hale 1997, 578-9). For example, "subversion" no longer means "conspiring against the system," but rather "the art of working at the interstices, finding the inevitable cracks and contradictions in the oppressor's identity, discourse, or institutional practice, and using them to the subaltern's advantage" (580-1). Sarah Radcliffe corroborates Hale's argument with the observation that in Ecuador "indigenous groups further their struggles for place and identity with remarkable overlaps of content with official (state) representations" (Radcliffe 1996, 36). Similarly, Daniel Mato's research on indigenous organizations and the global actors with which they combine forces in Latin America reveals similarities between both their socio-political

agendas and the language used to express them (Mato 1997 and 2000a). Rather than direct manipulation or mirroring of representational practices, Mato underscores how indigenous leaders critically appropriate ways of speaking and bargaining in order to understand and address threats to territorial and cultural autonomy. He also argues that dauntingly differentiated access to information and degrees of knowledge about networking mechanisms, as well as other means and modes of operation, characterize these relations between activists and advocates (Mato 2000a). While the production of authoritative knowledge about indigenous peoples, places and practices is increasingly a polyvocal process of networking (see chapter one, pp. 9-18), in no way can it be understood as a level playing field for the differentially situated actors that are involved.

Case in Point: Cultural Control in Mexico

After the Mexican Revolution in the first decades of the twentieth-century, indigenous identity demarcated an anthropologically defined category of cultural difference that functioned as a key component in the scripting of Mexican nationalisms (Hernández-Díaz 1993; Lomnitz-Adler 1992). Based on evolutionary assumptions about an inevitable and pre-ordained pathway to progress, state policies sought to assimilate indigenous peoples into the dominant *mestizo* national "imagined community" (Anderson 1983; Parra Mora 1993). The basic premise of *mestizaje* was the merging of two distinct human 'races' (the indigenous and the (predominantly Iberian) European) to produce the mestizo, a third heartier 'race' native to Mexico.[6] At no time, however, were these two mingling human elements considered equally desirable. Indeed it was assumed that the ethnic element was to be eradicated through acculturation, i.e., adaptation to hegemonic and state-sanction cultural norms such as language. To create a nation-state, all inhabitants needed to be on the 'same

page' about the collective past, present and future of the country. While some Mexican intellectuals and academics during the first half of the twentieth-century evoked idealized images of "*lo indio*" as models for revolutionary politics or modern citizenship, these constructions also identified indigenous peoples that failed to fit the prescribed models as backwards, irrational and in need of paternalist uplifting (Maldonado 2000; Dawson 1998). Most representations disseminated by the cultural industries—such as literature, theater, public murals, radio and television—valorized, exoticized and/or ridiculed indigenous identity as national patrimony (Doremus 2001; Pérez Montfort 1994; Hayes 2000).

Armed with structural functionalism, social scientists were key figures in the formulation and application of the principles of mestizaje in Mexico, largely through their contributions to the state programs aimed at cultural integration, the attitude and actions of which are referenced with the term *indigenismo* (López 1996; Favre 1999). Although scientifically translated ruins were taken as evidence of a glorious Mesoamerican past, contemporary racist and classed social hierarchies clearly positioned contemporary indigenous peoples as the 'lesser half' of the two elements mingled by mestizaje, which was in dire need of uplifting through their acculturation to mestizo civilization (Knight 1990b). The establishment of the *Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* (INAH) in 1939 and the *Instituto Nacional Indigenista* (INI) in 1948 provided researchers with institutional bases for their and the state's goal of social engineering away the cultural differences that were viewed as Mexico's 'Indian problem' (González 2004, 141-3). While the cultural difference of ethnicity was recognized by the policy makers and practioners of indigenismo, it was only seen as an element to be stamped out through cultural conversion and the awakening of class consciousness. Much state development programming devised with indigenismo formally recognized indigenous peoples as *campesinos*, a production-based rural identity that

emphasized their role in feeding the industrializing cities seen as the engines of national progress. The imposition of a nationalist peasant identity further denigrated indigenous cultural practices and values as evolutionary relics that were viewed alternately as charming folklore and disgusting habits. This way of seeing naturalized the social location of indigenous peoples at the bottom of Mexico's political-economic hierarchies (Kearney 1996b). Furthermore, echoing colonialist policies, indigenismo exposed and continues to expose communally-held land and other resources to market forces under the assumption that assimilation as hired help was inevitable—not to mention ideal for the maintenance of a cheap and docile labor supply (Tresierra 1994; Joseph and Nugent 1994; Mallon 1995).

Starting in the 1970s a group of researchers began to critique the social sciences' contributions to, and complicity with, state projects of forced acculturation. Intersecting with similar critical currents in American and British anthropology, these critical anthropologists argued against the national projects of homogenization bundled into scholarly-state indigenismo (e.g., Bonfil 1970; see also González 2004, 144). Drawing from dependency theory, some scholars offered a reformed class analysis of contemporary inter-ethnic relations that conceptualized the socio-economic and political marginalization and cultural negation of indigenous peoples as internal colonialism (e.g., Stavenhagen 1965; *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales* 1981). These researchers proclaimed the 'national project' of indigenismo, with its epistemological assumption that acculturation *is* development, tantamount to ethnocide. As an alternative, they worked to enable decolonization through *etnodesarrollo* (Rodríguez 1980b; Rojas Arevena 1982). The term etnodesarrollo captures the hopeful (indeed, it was often described in utopian terms) promotion of 'ethnic projects' of self-determination that involved development initiatives orchestrated and undertaken by indigenous communities themselves. Most critical

anthropologists celebrated etnodesarrollo as a key manifestation of *indianismo*, a burgeoning oppositional cultural-political movement that sought to recuperate and revalorize what national narratives of mestizaje and state policies of indigenismo denigrated, dismissed and demolished: indigenous identity (e.g., Varese 1983a and b, Rojas Arevena 1982; Bataillon 1982; Alcina 1990).

Central to this critical current of cultural anthropology[7] is the idea that research must be politicized. The work of Rodolfo Stavenhagen illustrates this kind of academic advocacy.[8] He argued that revealing and revamping contemporary colonialist conditions requires a utilitarian theorization of social change capable of serving as "an instrument of action in the hands of organized social groups" (Stavenhagen 1971, 335). According to Stavenhagen (339), such applied research entails moving beyond participant observation toward 'activist observation,' wherein investigation is undertaken "at the level of political organizer," thus making the researcher a "social agitator" whose scholarly practices contribute to change by modifying drastic inequalities in the accumulation of knowledge, which should (hopefully) eventually lead to the redistribution of capital. While Stavenhagen's 1971 platform for the decolonization of social science continues to inspire with its call for radicalizing academic inquiry, it's hard not to notice how his plan for action pictures all Indians as a 'he' who lives in a homogenous community, and directly equates this Indian man with 'the land.' It's hard (for me) to not read this as positioning this 'him' at a pretty passive receiving end of benevolent (albeit radical) scholarly knowledge production. Nonetheless, despite the *choques* (collisions) between our analytical lens-language, I think Stavenhagen's pursuit of these radical and in certain places-times downright dangerous (to the researcher) goals has most certainly opened important international arenas wherein indigenous people collectively confront and scrimmage with the (often transnational) interests of states.[9] An example of

one of his early efforts to decolonize the production of authoritative knowledge took place in 1976 when he participated in the transformation of the *Dirección del Arte Populare* within the *Subsecretaría de Cultura* of the *Secretaría de Educación Publica* (SEP) into forming the *Dirección General de Culturas Populares* (DGCP), of which Stavenhagen was director general from 1977 to 1979. The DGCP was a bureaucracy established to recognize and revalorize the cultural and ethnic diversity of Mexico and to foster intercultural dialogue among scholars, artisans and cultural activists (Reuter 1983).

To see how the DGCP went on to develop, consider the knowledge work of Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, whose writing also exemplifies the cultural politics of critical anthropology. During the 1970s, Bonfil served as director of INAH and then of its offshoot, *Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social* (CIESAS). Drawing from his institutional experiences as much as his research, Bonfil argued that indigenismo sets out to extinguish the everyday practices that had made it possible for colonized peoples to conserve mesoamerican civilization and thus survive the last 500 years as culturally distinct peoples who refused to melt into national norms, i.e., as ethnic groups. Instead of treating ethnicity as 'merely' cultural difference that can be evaluated in terms of efficiency, Bonfil theorized cultural difference as ethnic resistance to colonization and acculturation that must be understood as a power-fraught matter of cultural control. Cultural control refers to a collectivity's capacity to make decisions about the composition of cultural practices and the socio-spatial-material artifacts they organize and produce.[10]

Elements subject to cultural control can be *propios* (inherent) or *ajenos* (foreign). *Inherent* cultural attributes are those that are inherited from previous generations of a social group, which continues to maintain and reproduce these characteristics. Arising from interethnic contact, *foreign* cultural elements also comprise part of a group's cultural tradition,

but the group neither produces nor reproduces them. Bonfil differentiates these two divisions according to the degree to which they are controlled by the social unit. *Autonomous* cultural elements are those over which a group has complete symbolic and intellectual control. Bonfil's examples are traditional healing and agricultural practices and knowledges. *Appropriated* cultural elements have been acquired from elsewhere and utilized by the social group in ways that symbolically and emotionally incorporate (and thus somewhat control) them, although the social group lacks the means to produce or reproduce. As examples, Bonfil points to recording technologies, firearms and motors as examples. *Imposed* cultural elements are those that have been foisted upon groups without their consultation or participation. Bonfil offers the examples of the calendar, language, and training introduced through schooling and missionary work. The fourth kind of cultural element in Bonfil's theory of cultural control is *alienated* culture, elements over which a social group has totally lost control over its symbolic value and reproduction. In this category, Bonfil includes the reconfiguration of labor through emigration and salaried work, and the exploitation of material resources of a communal group through processes such as deforestation and folklorization.

In 1982, Bonfil put his theory of cultural control to work when he helped establish *Museo Nacional de Culturas Populares*, the DGCP's new showcase for both rural and urban popular art-craft work in Mexico City. After directing this museum for several years, Bonfil assumed the position of Director General of the DGCP in 1989, shortly after the DGCP was relocated from the jurisdiction of the SEP to that of a new federal bureau called *Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes* (CONACULTA), a relocation that reflected the decentralization policies of the Mexican government (discussed further below). This position allowed Bonfil to work towards amplifying the arenas of knowledge production concerned

with cultural politics. Among his many other achievements was Bonfil's founding of CONACULTA's *Seminario de Estudios*, which was meant to open a space for the study and analysis of culture. The books included in the publication series *Pensar la Cultura*, which arose from this space, demonstrate how Bonfil's idea-image of cultural control became a touchstone of the ethnopolitics of academic advocates working in Mexico (e.g., Bonfil 1993; Rosales 1994). Finally, Bonfil's book *México Profundo: Una Civilización Negada* (1987) and its English translation by Philip Dennis, *México Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization* (1996), have been enormously popular among Mexican indigenous cultural activists, their advocates, and students from all over who seek an informed and eloquent introduction to the cultural politics of indigenous identity in Mexico.[11] In this book Bonfil elaborates on the idea that two different civilizations co-exist (usually in conflict) in Mexico. With the phrase *México profundo* he refers to mesoamerican civilization, which is shared by indigenous communities as well as many rural and urban communities that no longer see themselves as indigenous. Bonfil juxtaposes *México profundo* with *México imaginario*, which is an imaginary (because it doesn't exist) civilization based on the imported (to the western hemisphere from the west of Europe) ideas-images of individualism, private property, and democratic governance. Bonfil's book offers a game plan for reworking an overly centralized state and its dreams of national homogeneity into a pluralist state that would give "the people of *México profundo* the right to command levels of political organization broader and more complex than the local community" because such reorganization "would allow them to qualitatively increase their capacity for reconstruction and for cultural development" (1996, 173).

Another example of academic advocacy (and the risk taking it entails) is the story of Salomón Nahmad. He worked within INI for decades, dedicating himself to the challenge of reshaping the Mexican government's relations with indigenous communities in ways that

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would recognize and revitalize their cultural differences (for an autobiographical snapshot, see Nahmad 1996). Nahmad participated in an intellectual collective that championed etnodesarrollo and, with the support of UNESCO, set out to rework the institutional practices of indigenismo with alternative plans for bilingual and intercultural education (Nahmad 1982/1983).[12] After working a short spell as the Director of Indigenous Education within the SEP, Nahmad was named INI's general director in 1982. About a year later, he was jailed on what most observers consider trumped up charges of corruption.[13] Nahmad attributes his wrongful imprisonment to three interrelated causes (Dalton 2002). The first was his naive involvement in the intense infighting and jockeying for position characteristic of PRI power struggles. This was exacerbated by Nahmad's support for the movement to have the American evangelical Summer Institute of Linguists (SIL) excised from the indigenous communities whose leaders (and advocates) saw the members of this politically privileged—by both U.S. and Mexican authorities—institution as meddling missionaries whose activities fostered divisiveness and exponentially decreased communities' cultural control (see Rodríguez 1980a). According to Nahmad, the main reason he was jailed was because he was attempting institutional reforms within INI that were aimed at enabling indigenous representation (and thus articulating ethnopolitics). After five months of jail time, international and national pressure from friends, colleagues and indigenous communities led to Nahmad's release, as well as his subsequent relocation (for reasons of safety) to the U.S. for almost three years under the aegis of a Fulbright fellowship.[14]

Considering how the value of Mexico's peso plummeted during Nahmad's exile, this was a good time to earn an income in the U.S. By the mid-1980s, severe economic crisis and extensive pressure from outside multilateral loan agencies forced the Mexican state to foster a new climate of decentralization (Cockcroft 1998; V. Rodríguez 1998; Shefner 1998). These

neoliberal economic policies intensified the need for foreign investment, which encouraged the Mexican state to modify its policy of outright repression of non-state sponsored popular movements (Hilbert 1997). This *somewhat* allowed for increased collective action outside deeply entrenched patterns of state corporatism-clientelism (Hellman 1994; Arellano 1999; Miraftab 1997; Fox 1994a, b, c). In particular, the restructuring of the Mexican state permitted many indigenous organizations to extend their geographical reach (Sarmiento Silva 2001), commonly by forging organizationally new transnational linkages with religious institutions (Hernández-Díaz 2001, 121-68) and/or ecological and/or commercial NGOs (Carruthers 1996 and 2001). With the drastic reduction and then erasure of agricultural subsidies, the reconfigurations of neoliberal economic policies also more deeply involved indigenous collectivities—and their identity politics—in the vicissitudes of global markets (Hernández Castillo and Nigh 1998), often to the profit of ruling elites (Petras 1999; Gledhill 1999). Although these shifts in state-society relations has opened apertures for ethnopolitical mobilization with unprecedented independence from state control, it is important to remember that extensive programming directed toward the rescue and revitalization of both indigenous identity and indigenous communities' traditional structures of coordination and governance continues to emerge and operate beneath the aegis of state apparatuses, most particularly through INI (see Hernández Castillo 2001a; Fox 1994b; Foweraker 1989; Collier 1987).[15]

Nonetheless, working in tandem, the complex and highly contingent expansion of indigenous collective action in the mid-to-late 1980s (and the academic advocacy of the 1980s that inspired and often buoyed it) impacted state policy in the 1990s by making indigenous rights a national political issue. In 1990, for example, Mexico was the first Latin American country to ratify the International Labor Organization's Indigenous Rights

Convention 169, which outlined protocol for establishing the rights of indigenous peoples. Shortly thereafter, and shortly before the 500-year anniversary of the arrival of Europeans, Article 16 of the Mexican constitution was modified to recognize the country's multi-cultural composition and give lip service to the need to respect indigenous systems of organization. Then in 1994, the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas garnered wide popular support[16] and resulted in the signing of the San Andrés Accords in 1996. Afterwards, legislators on the Commission for Concordance and Pacification (COCOPA) and members of the National Commission of Intermediation (CONAI) presided over by Bishop Samuel Ruiz Garcia transformed the Accords into an Indigenous Rights bill that was presented to then President Zedillo, who refused to put it to vote before the Mexican Congress. When President Fox entered office in 2000, he rashly stated that he would solve the conflict in Chiapas "in fifteen minutes." He did indeed send the Indigenous Rights bill to Congress early that December, but once in committee, it was drastically watered down when the proposed seven constitutional articles were amended to five. Significantly, the changes excised any sense of territoriality from indigenous identity by refusing to recognize either common property or collective legal subjectivities. Additionally, the modifications deferred the issue of autonomous regions to state congresses. Despite near unanimous rejection of the changes by indigenous bodies and their allies (including INI and President Fox's newly established Secretary of Indigenous Development), the Indigenous Reform bill was ratified by the President on August 15, 2001 and later approved by the *camara de diputados* in late March 2002. Although the new law was immediately challenged on various levels, the Mexican Supreme Court ruled it constitutional in September 2002.[17]

By bringing the Mexican state to the bargaining table, the Zapatistas have catalyzed national and international attention and action centered on achieving cultural and political

autonomy for the 10 million or so indigenous peoples who comprise 10-15 percent of Mexico's population.[18] Vital to the Zapatista movement is the moral encouragement and financial aid of the international agencies, NGOs and committed individuals that constitute the civil societies that Zapatista spokesperson Subcomadante Marcos refers to as the Zapatista's "third shoulder" and Gustavo Esteva (1987) visualizes as the flexible support system of a hammock (see also Esteva 1999). Crucial to this alliance making and maintenance is the *zapatismo* (González 2004) of concerned researchers who work in a myriad of countries, scholarly institutions and NGOs and aid agencies of various shapes and sizes (Leyva Solano 1998 and 1999). On the one hand, as the work of Stavenhagen, Bonfil and Nahmad illustrates, academic advocacy within the arena of action surrounding development directed towards indigenous well-being and cultural control is hardly new to Mexico. On the other hand, there are evident differences between the critical social scientists discussed above, and more recent manifestations of scholarly *zapatismo*. One difference is the new strategic importance of communication technologies to the activist-advocate alliances currently fortifying the Zapatista movement (Froehling 1997 and 1999; Schultz 1998). Another recent innovation in advocacy efforts is an intensified intersection among indigenous movements and women's movements (Hernández Castillo and Stephen 1999).

The transnational and technology-mediated socio-spatial relations of an NGO called The Chiapas Media Project (CMP) provide an excellent example of the political potential of contemporary cultural advocacy. The CMP grew out of Alexandra (a.k.a. Alex) Halkin's experience producing a documentary about a joint U.S.-Mexico humanitarian aid caravan to a heavily militarized Zapatista region of Chiapas in 1995. Through conversations with people living in Zapatista communities, she learned about their disappointment in never seeing the footage recorded by journalists and researchers and their interest in accessing and using

communication technologies so they might mediate their own messages.[19] Upon return to the U.S., Alex began to investigate how she might facilitate Zapatista communities' access to video technologies (while also co-producing the documentary *Skin Deep*, an examination of the contraceptive Norplant and its distribution to and use by low-income women). She began working with Tom Hansen, Guillermo Monteforte (then the director of INI's CVI in Oaxaca) and by the end of 1997, they scored funding from the U.S.-Mexico Fund for Culture[20] for a project that brought together Chicago youth, trained them in media making, and then in 1998 took them to share their new skills and knowledge in Chiapas. Although the CMP no longer features a youth group component, it has continues to seek the funding and donations for its mission of equipping Zapatista communities with the technology and know-how that will allow them to produce videos.

From the beginning, Alex sought to establish and maintain a joint venture that brought together an international team of advocates with indigenous cultural activists, which would work towards eventually handing-off the entire project to the Zapatistas.[21] Formulated with the Zapatistas, the main goal of the CMP has been to establish media centers with both communication technologies and trained community members in each of the five autonomous Zapatista regions. As of the end of 2004, three of these centers are up and running (with satellite internet access to boot) and a fourth is forthcoming. In addition to Alex's fund-raising efforts and extensive touring,[22] a key source of income has been the sale of Zapatista video productions, mostly through the web site she developed and maintains. According to Alex, most of the time the Zapatists record and edit video in the interest of sharing information among Zapatista communities; but in the interest of sustainability, from the start she has insisted on pursuing an international marketing and sales component of CMP. The CMP's website[23] reveals the diverse catalogue of videos that have been produced

by the Zapatistas and are available with both English and Spanish subtitles. Topics range from the recent restructuring of the Zapatista system of governance and women's cooperatives, to the intersections among local autonomy, international aid and community water projects, and explorations of traditional textiles, healing and music. Such video-mediated cultural control-work refracts the recent expansion of indigenous identity politics, and it provides the means (as limited as they may be) for making more inclusive the production of authoritative knowledge about indigenous peoples, places and practices in Mexico.

Looking Closer: Oaxaca

Because its large and continuous indigenous population negated evolutionary narratives of nationhood, the southern state of Oaxaca has historically been represented as an opposite to modernization, an obstacle to progress, and a site devoid of agency (Chassen-López 2001). Recent census data indicates that seven percent of the Mexican population over the age of five speaks an indigenous language, Oaxaca is home to half of Mexico's speakers of an indigenous language and they comprise 37 percent of the state's population over the age of five.[24] Most researchers classify these peoples into fourteen to sixteen different ethno-linguistic groups.[25] There has been extensive debate over how the character trait of speaking an indigenous language informs (or not) ethnic and campesino identities in Oaxaca (e.g., Campbell 1996b; Cook and Joo 1995; Kearney 1996a and b). Often, speakers of an indigenous language do not identify themselves as members of an ethnic group, but rather as campesinos and/or people from particular communities or regions. Spanish-speaking communities with cultural and political practices usually considered and claimed as

indigenous further complicate language-based categories. Furthermore, the wide range of economic strategies prevents conflation of language and class.

Ethnicity is difficult to isolate and identify in Oaxaca because it is not an essential category entered at birth. Rather ethnicity is a socially constructed-performed identity that is culturally and politically formulated and reformulated within relations of power and difference, which in Oaxaca are characterized by grave socio-economic inequalities and ongoing racist denigration of indigenous cultural practices (Hernández-Díaz 1990, 1992 and 1998; Stephen 1996; Barabas and Bartolomé 1990). While I don't make this observation about the constructed-performed nature of ethnicity in order to proclaim the death of a far more easily quantified, language-bound, and not necessarily politicized categorical conception of ethnicity (e.g., Clarke 2000)—which is indeed handy for representing the ways that speakers of an indigenous language more often occupy economically, politically and culturally marginalized social locations in Oaxaca—I *do*, however, wish to stress the diverse ways in which the idea-image of ethnicity is *articulated,* i.e., evoked, enabled and engendered.

Currently, ethnicity informs the ways in which many indigenous communities, organizations and households engage with global markets (Stephen 1991; Wood 2000 and 2001; Chipnik 2002; Broulette 2003), federal and state bureaus (Fox 1994a and b), and international aid agencies and NGOs (Hernández-Díaz 1998b and 2000), particularly those concerned with environmental issues (Bermúdez 2001; Gijsbers 2001). Ethnicity also shines a spotlight on who lives in the rural areas of Oaxaca where agricultural livelihoods have been devastated by neo-liberal economic policies and thus led to disproportionate indigenous emigration (Bustamante 1999; *Coloquio sobre derechos indígenas* 1996, 622-671; Rivera-Salgado 2002; Fox and Rivera-Salgado 2004). The transnational political organization of indigenous migrants from Oaxaca has contributed to "the appearance of ethnicity as a self-conscious

sense of peoplehood" (Kearney 2000, 177) as dismal working conditions and racist repression of indigenous migrants both in the U.S. and Mexico "nurture a more collective and conscious conception of what it is to be *indígena*" (ibid, 185) and illustrate the utility of human rights political discourse (Nagengast et al. 1992; Nagengast and Kearney 1990). Perhaps due to the high visibility of its ethnically identified population, the ethnopolitics of indigenous collectivities and related civil societies, and/or substantial revenues related to folklore-oriented tourism (Brulotte 2003), the state of Oaxaca has been the most responsive to indigenous movements' demands for self-determination and autonomy. Its constitution was reformed in 1995 with an article acknowledging the state's extensive cultural diversity. Later that same year, community elections based on *usos y cutombres* (a catch-all phrase for local traditions of governance and administration) were legalized (Nahmad 2001a; Recondo 2001).

Fundamental to the last thirty years of ethnopolitics that helped catalyze these changes is the cultural work of an indigenous intelligentsia (Bartolomé 2002) that fused the demands of campesino movements (such as fair access to land reform, credit and public services) with the distinctly historical assertions of the cultural politics of ethnicity (Hernández-Díaz 2001). Early indigenous political-institutional actors[26] were the individuals who were able to take advantage of the pedagogical programs for the training of bilingual school teachers that the state began to offer in the late 1960s as the means to pursue its policy of acculturation. Trained as cultural brokers, these individuals were expected to return to their communities and not only instill the Spanish language and other cultural attributes deemed essential for assimilating indigenous people into a national (mestizo) identity, but also spearhead development projects engineered in the name of modernization. These study programs equipped bilingual teachers with the skills and (human and financial) resources to

emerge as a new middle class that, more often than not, directly contributed to the state's goal of ethnocide (Caballero 1989 and 1998b; Hernández-Díaz 1996).

Miguel Bartolomé (2003, 28-9) compares the integrationist pedagogy of the Mexican state's institutions to the British colonial policy of indirect rule. He observes how institutional inertia and inadequacies, in tandem with curricula steeped in Marxist teleology wherein the 'false consciousness' of ethnic identity was approached as something that must be left behind—either in the interest of a *mestizo* nationalism or class identification and mobilization,[27] positioned many professionalized indigenous intellectuals into ineffectual bureaucrats who were co-opted into and thus contained by state projects. Nonetheless, many bilingual teachers used their new social location in their communities to assume political roles previously monopolized by members of the dominant mestizo society, and some established beneficial (to them and sometimes their communities) linkages with regional and national coordinating bodies[28] (Hernández-Díaz 1996; Hernández-Díaz and Lizama Quijano 1996, cf. Lomnitz-Adler 1992, 234-241). Subsequent educational programs in the early 1980s, such as the ethnolinguistic undergraduate program in coordinated by CIESAS and INI with Bonfil and Nahmad at the respective helms, were staffed by academics who were far more sympathetic to *indianismo*. Bartolomé (2002, 29) argues that these later programs led to the formation of indigenous scholars who were (and are) more committed to revalorizing the cultural differences that make their Oaxacan communities ethnically distinctive, and reworking the public school system along these lines (cf. Dalton 1990, see also chapter six, pp. 266-8).

In the early 1980s, for example, the DGCP opened a bureau in Oaxaca with Stefano Varese, an Italian-Peruvian anthropologist who shared the critical anthropologists' desire to reform state policies of cultural assimilation, as its first director. Like his colleagues in

Mexico City (e.g., Bonfil, Stavenhagen, and Nahmad), Varese emphasized the violent disruption of indigenous life through the intrusion of colonialism and the continued assault of state neo-colonialism, and in the name of cultural plurality, advocated the rescue and revitalization of ethnic difference. More specifically, Varese defined rural indigenous ethnicity as the social management of rival economic and cultural systems and argued that in contemporary indigenous communities, the reproduction of inherent, historically accumulated, cultural traits (such as language, the prominence of collective will over the individual, and pre-capitalist or small mercantile capitalist modes of production, distribution, marketing and consumption) coexists with imposed political economic systems and their related cultural ideologies.[29] Given these conditions, Varese noted (1985, 204), indigenous ethnicity is an identity marked by "permanent tension" and "dialectical interplay." In other words, for better or worse, indigenous identity is as hybrid as it is under siege by the state.

Not satisfied with merely demarcating difference and describing cultural hybridity, Varese aimed to use his theory of ethnicity to arm indigenous peoples with a theoretical tool they could use to analyze their socio-economic locations.[30] He did this, "Because if the group understands (their location) correctly it can make wise decisions" (Varese 1985, 204). He sought to educate a "militant ethnic nucleus" about the historical processes of the "'ghettoization' of Indian culture and language…because this nucleus will provide the intellectuals and leaders who will develop an active consciousness of the different self, a militant ethnic consciousness" (207-208). Furthermore, Varese suggested that people who had left their communities and experienced dominant society (and perhaps nostalgia), would make ideal activists capable of "appropriating the foreign culture and adapting their own" (208). In addition to echoing key components of Antonio Gramsci's theories about and

hopes for the cultural politics of 'organic intellectuals,'[31] Varese's sentiments and ambitions

resonate with Bonfil's later (1987) assertion that decolonization

> …requires more than simply "taking into account" the opinion of the communities. It requires accepting and respecting their decisions. In the process, it must not be forgotten that the communities of the *México profundo* have been subject for centuries to colonial oppression, with all the internal consequences that oppression produces and that have been discussed throughout this book. If in fact one wants to promote a national pluralism project, the process requires resolutely intensifying actions to recover local cultures and bring them into the present. One of the key points will be broad and intensive training of new community figures capable of making use of the opportunities created by the recovery of cultural control. However, this training must not uproot promoters or lead them to reject their culture. The new figures, cultural promoters in the broadest sense of the term, should be trained to value their culture and from that perspective to promote the critical appropriation of foreign cultural elements…Here the effort would be to see the West from the viewpoint of the community and stop seeing the community from the perspective of the West….The goal is not just to recover a village level civilization, but to reconstruct the necessary cultural space to develop a modern civilization, valid today and into the future. (Bonfil 1996, 172-3).

To counteract the 'indirect rule' tactics of state institutions, particularly those in which they

worked, scholars like Varese and Bonfil set out to teach individuals to see their communities'

cultural differences in a positive light. This consciousness raising, they argued, would

catalyze dynamic leaders capable of articulating local practices, problems and potential with a

bigger (i.e, beyond a specific locality) picture.

Another example of institutional reconfiguration designed to foster the formulation

of ethnopolitics in Oaxaca is the efforts undertaken by Nahmad who, not long after his

return from exile in 1987, was appointed director of the newly established CIESAS branch in

Oaxaca.[32] Nahmad sought to extend CIESAS's recently formulated policy of decentralization

through the implementation of participatory investigations that stimulated and included

indigenous participation (see *América Indígena* 1990, especially the essays by Nahmad).

Between 1989 and 1994, CIESAS enabled the establishment of eleven *Centros de Investigación*

Étnica (CIE) across the state.[33] Most of the CIE were created as independent, non-profit

NGOs (*asociaciones civiles*) that were loosely linked to CIESAS. Their objective was to bring together unpaid volunteers that were keen on exchanging research and ideas with one another, as well as with other institutions (mainly educational and research ones). The size of the CIE varied between 2 or 3 members in the smallest to upwards of 25 in the larger, and most members of the CIE were bilingual instructors who worked in public schools and whose skills and ambitions varied widely. Embarked upon during the members' 'free time,' CIE activities included training, research (particularly oral history and linguistic compilation), text composition and publication (e.g., poetry, monographs of local legends, community history, theatrical), and cultural promotion (Hernández-Díaz 2001, 114; Barco 1993).

In addition to jump-starting the CIE in the late 1980s, the academic administrators in charge of CIESAS-Istmo hired several indigenous intellectuals (none of whom were women) as full-time research staff.[34] As a means of situating the institutional practices surrounding the knowledge work of these indigenous scholars, here I briefly introduce the three with whose work I am most familiar. Victor de la Cruz is an outspoken Zapotec poet, author and editor from the Isthmus region of Oaxaca who began his activist career working closely with a collection of other cultural activists connected to the ethnopolitical movement based in the city of Juchitán that was the first oppositional party to dislodge the dominant political party (the PRI) from municipal office in 1980, and that continues to influence regional politics to this day.[35] Before joining CIESAS, de la Cruz had published an anthology of Zapotec literature, a book on the history of the Isthmus region, and several articles and, some of which appeared in the eclectic international journal he edited *Guchachi' Reza (Iguana Rajada)*.[36] Once he joined CIESAS, de la Cruz began to link his politicized literary work with linguistics, in both published work and in public forums, while continuing to write about the history that, he noted (1993a), indigenous peoples weren't expected to have, unless they were

incorporated into other peoples' narratives.[37] De la Cruz locates his knowledge work and cultural activism in opposition to the researchers who travel to Oaxaca, gather information, then return to whence they came and mold their observations to fit their analytical frameworks, a practice he equates with looting (de la Cruz 1993b, 144, see also de la Cruz 1992). The participation of indigenous intellectuals-researchers such as de la Cruz reconfigures the scholarly forums wherein authoritative knowledge about indigenous peoples and regions is produced.

Juan Julián Caballero is a Mixteco scholar who became affiliated with CIESAS around the same time as de la Cruz. Caballero (1998a) writes eloquently and authoritatively about indigenous governance and recent efforts to forge new state-society relations that make room for community autonomy. Like de la Cruz, he also inquires into the intersections between the literary and ethno-linguistic realms (Caballero 1999). Additionally, Caballero addresses environmental practices of indigenous communities in the Mixteca region (1992a and b). Manuel Ríos Morales is another Zapotec hired around the same time as de la Cruz, but he hails from a different region, the Sierra Norte. As does Caballero, Ríos writes about indigenous autonomy and community governance (Ríos 1998 and 2001). His scholarship, like de la Cruz's, contributes to the construction of a regional Zapotec identity. Indeed Ríos is currently listed as a Ph.D. candidate at the Graduate School of Archeology at the University of Leiden, with the title of his study being *Persistencia de una identidad: Los zapotecos de la sierra norte de Oaxaca*.[38] In 1994 Ríos brought together essays by an international collection of authors in the volume *Los Zapotecos de la Sierra Norte de Oaxaca: Antología Etnográfica*. This book's emergence gives further definition to this changing geography of authoritative knowledge in Oaxaca and the people and institutions involved in expanding it. The anthology was published (first in 1994 with a second edition issued in 1998) as part of

the *Dishá* book series put out in the 1990s by the *Instituto Oaxaqueño de las Culturas (IOC)*, a state agency concerned with supporting and promoting cultural activities.

The *Dishá* series was the progeny of earlier attempts to open such scholarly spaces as the issue of *Primeras Jornadas sobre Estudios Antropológicos Mixtecos y Mixes*, which arose out of a 1989 CIESAS initiative to present together both indigenous and non-indigenous scholarship (e.g., Caballero 1989 and Nahmad 1989). Similarly the journal *Etnias*—filled with short articles by several of the scholars cited here, as well as cultural promoters who worked with *Culturas Populares* and CIE—was printed in the second half of the 1980s by a state-level agency that a few years later became the IOC. When the IOC began to publish the Dishá series, it was under the direction of CIESAS scholar Margarita Dalton. Dalton was also the appointed (by the state governor, Herladio Ramírez López, who self-identified as a Mixteco) director of the *Consejo Estatal de Población de Oaxaca*, where she oversaw the publication of the magazine *Oaxaca: Población y Futuro,* which didn't feature as many texts by indigenous scholars, but did have short summary articles that introduced both indigenous and environmental movements to popular audiences (e.g., Varese 1991; Consejo 1991; Stavenhagen 1992; Toledo Flores 1992). Subdivided into four collections, *Testimonios, Historia, Antropología* and *Etnografía,* the IOC's Dishá series was established in the intention of making available a diverse range of historical, anthropological and ethnopolitical reflections relating to contemporary Oaxaca.[39] To make this possible, the IOC often teamed up with other research institutions (such as the *Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez* (UABJO) and CIESAS) and government bureaus (such as the *Fondo Estatal para la Cultura y las Artes*). Through this series, relevant books written in English were made available in Spanish (e.g., Chance 1998, Higgins 1997), the proceedings of large transnational gatherings that took place in Oaxaca were published (e.g., Nieto Montesinos 1994; *Coloquio sobre derechos indígenas*

1996), and the knowledge work of indigenous scholars was printed alongside that produced by non-indigenous scholars.[40]

I don't wish, however, to create the impression that indigenous intellectuals were only able to produce scholarship within government institutions. Several members of the indigenous intelligentsia cited in the bibliography featured in Bartolomé (2003)[41] produced important texts while establishing, and then providing important leadership in, community-based organizations. It is often suggested that Oaxaca's first widely recognized, and largely independent from the state, indigenous organizations arose in the mountainous Sierra Norte region during Mixe and Zapotec communities' struggles to reclaim from exploitive and corrupt business-government interests and regulate the extraction of forest resources (Maldonado 2003, 16-7; Guadarrama 1997; Beltrán and López Arzola 2002).[42] From this resistance movement (and its intersections with supportive academic advocates) surfaced indigenous intellectuals who formulated the ethnopolitical concept of *comunalidad*, which refers to the reciprocity and collectivity that organizes and binds together indigenous communities. Comunalidad is generally distilled into four primary elements: territory envisioned as common property, obligatory unpaid labor (*tequio*) in community projects, local governance based on cyclical participation on hierarchical service committees (*cargo*), and communal rituals and celebrations (Maldonado 2002a; Rendón and Ballesteros 2003; Barabas 2001).

Floriberto Díaz (1951-1995), an anthropologist from the Mixe pueblo Tlahuitoltepec, is one of the most widely cited authors of definitions of communalidad whose explorations-explications are particularly notable for the ways in which territorial possession-occupation is a cultural-spiritual component of place-based indigenous identities.[43] For example:

Cuando los seres humanos entramos en relación con la Tierra, lo hacemos de dos formas: a través del trabajo en cuanto territorio, y a través de los ritos y ceremonias comunitarias, en tanto Madre. Esta relación no se establece de una manera separada en sus formas; se da normalmente en un solo momento y espacio. Sin la Tierra en su doble sentido de Madre y territorio, ¿de qué derechos podemos gozar y hablar los indígenas? De ahí la reivindicación territorial, no la simple demanda agrarista con que no han querido contestar los Estados-gobierno (Díaz 2001, 4; quoted in Maldonado 2003, 25-6n8).[44]

Díaz (2003 [1988], 109) attributes his formulation of comunalidad to listening to and learning from collective reflections on community dynamics and goals during decades of organizational activities in the Mixe region. Díaz was pivotal to the establishment in 1979 of the regional organization, *Comité de Defensa de los Recursos Naturales y Humanos Mixes* (CODREMI), which in 1984 morphed into the *Asamblea de Autoridades Mixes* (Asam). And then in 1988, out of ASAM's *Comisión de Apoyo y Relaciones* came *Servicios del Pueblo Mixe, Asociación Civil* (SER, A.C.), which Díaz founded in order to facilitate funding from international aid agencies that were reluctant to directly support government agencies (Cremoux 1997, 114-19; Hernández-Díaz 2001, 175-81 and 192). As Díaz observes, the ethnopolitics of comunalidad and *indianismo* are not matters for only indigenous peoples to consider. And so, I conclude this section and this chapter with a look at cultural work of two other key actors in the production of authoritative knowledge about ethnopolitics in Oaxaca.

Alicia Barabas and Miguel Bartolomé are two Argentinean researchers who have been based at INAH's Oaxaca division for almost 20 years.[45] Together they promote (see Bartolomé 1984 and 1999), and practice highly politicized ethnography and profoundly historical inquiry. Their research aims to inform readers about the failures of institutional and legal reforms and the regional development schemes that they underwrite (e.g., Barabas and Bartolomé 1973 and 1990; Bartolomé and Barabas 1990). Dedicated to facilitating the recuperation and revitalization of indigenous cultural identity during the 1980s, these two

scholars compiled and published a series of oral histories of the smallest ethnic groups in Oaxaca that are most threatened with cultural extinction and social disenfranchisement,[46] one of which was later reissued as part of the *Dishá Colección Etnografía* (Bartolomé and Barabas 1996). Drawing on their access to institutional and human resources in INI as well as INAH, Barabas and Bartolomé strive to call attention to the historical violence of *indigenismo*, as well as the way in which it continues to permeate institutional manifestations of *etnodesarrollo* initiatives' promises of indigenous participation (e.g. Barabas and Bartolomé 1990). They have also coordinated the presentation and publication of a wealth of academic inquiry and analysis of indigenous movements' demands for cultural, political and territorial autonomy (Barabas and Bartolomé 1999a; Bartolomé and Barabas 1998).

In a recent essay, Bartolomé takes a look at the anthropological knowledge produced by Oaxaca's indigenous intelligencia (Bartolomé 2003). In addition to reviewing the institutional contexts whereby indigenous intellectuals accessed higher education, and the constraints thereof, Bartolomé discusses the challenges faced by indigenous scholars, whose sometimes-romanticized cultural politics he identifies as postcolonial. First, they are they obliged to work with the 'alien' (i.e., western, metropolitan) epistemologies with which authoritative anthropological knowledge is produced. And second, indigenous intellectuals in Oaxaca struggle to create "una literatura realmente intercultural…que sea legible tanto para unos como para otros,"[47] i.e., accessible to 'both worlds' (Bartolomé 2003, 27). A challenge, notes Bartolomé, that many a postcolonial writer fails to surmount (and here Bartolomé's 'straw man' is Homi Bhabha (1994)). While these are insightful observations (especially about the inaccessibility to many of Bhabha's writing), I am struck by the way Bartolomé lays the onus of adaptation and challenge exclusively upon the shoulders of the indigenous scholars. For instance—beyond an enormous (and enormously helpful) bibliography listing publications

by indigenous scholars arranged by the author's region of origin—his essay is practically devoid of engagement (beyond mention of topics covered) with the scholarship found in the publications of indigenous intellectuals. In lieu of situating his means of knowledge production, and considering why it is not structurally and/or technologically attainable for others, the knowledge work of the indigenous scholars remains an appendage to, and not an integral component of, Bartolomé's own scholarship, which remains the standard by which all scholarship is evaluated. Of course this critique of mine emerges from the post-colonial feminist politics that frame my own analytical lens, and shape my intense interest in how the production of authoritative knowledge happens, and how it might happen more inclusively. The chapter that follows continues that effort by examining the geography of knowledge production that shapes the cultural politics of indigenous identity in Oaxaca. But it focuses in further still to dwell upon the ways in which these idea-images inform indigenous collectivities' efforts to access, appropriate and utilize communication technologies as a means to participate in the production of authoritative knowledge about indigenous peoples, places and practices.

ENDNOTES

[1] The lack of a suitable professional formation with a curriculum based in the reality of the world of those who originate in indigenous groups, encourages these [the indigenous students that become 'professional Indians'], upon graduating from the educational institutions that shaped them, to adopt an attitude very different from their communities.' That is to say in their attitudes and discourses reflect a white westernized mentality while rejecting their own. In no way to they contribute to the fostering of their groups' cultures, far from it. They adopt an attitude that is totally alien to the reality [of their cultures]. The risks of this identity crisis is that is intensifies the de-indianization of the rest (Caballero 1998, 103).

[2] This session included: Deborah Poole (Johns Hopkins University), Geraldo Reñque (City College, City University of New York), Juan Julían Caballero (CIESAS-Istmo), Manuel Ríos Morales (CIESAS-Istmo), Nemcy Arrellanes (Universidad de Salamanca), and Michael Higgins (CIESAS-Istmo), who presented a paper he co-authored with John Paul Jones and Jamie Winders (University of Kentucky).

[3] To be honest, my first thought was that since there were no women presenting at the conference who self-identified themselves as indigenous, at least this young man had his gender going for him.

[4] For examinations of the colonialist representational practices of geography's disciplinization, see Barnett (1998) and (Orlove 1993). Working nicely in tandem, Biolsi (1995) and Hannah (1993) provide an excellent overview of state strategies for socio-spatial engineering and control of individuals among the Lakota peoples (and see also Ripmeester (1995) for a similar study based in a region further north). Brealey (1995) and Sparke (1995) effectively demonstrate how cartographic artifacts work to inscribe and transmit territorial (re)appropriations. And Willems-Braun (1997) and Sparke (1998) indicate how colonialist epistemologies and cartographic artifacts remain enforced and hotly contested.

[5] Globalization is a handy, but awfully hazy, term. Here I use it in reference to ongoing and wide-spread processes of economic and cultural change that destabilize socio-political borders, rework scales of human agency and governance, and reshape the cohesiveness of places and regions. My formulation of globalization relies heavily on the following: Held et al. (1999); Kearney (1995); Massey (1994); Ó Tualthail et al. (1998); Pred and Watts (1992).

[6] In the case of Mexico, González (2004, 141) attributes this desire to shake the sense of being a European derivative by not looking outside of Mexico's borders for notions of nation, to the country's loss of substantial territory to the U.S. in 1848, the French occupation in 1860, and 35 years of Porfirio Diaz's dictatorship wherein foreign investors were extensively courted. In short, anti-imperialism was a driving force in the formulation of nationalist discourses of mestizaje in Latin America. See Stutzman (1981) for a look at the exclusionary cultural politics of official and popular discourses of mestizaje in Ecuador.

[7] Well, actually they usually referred to their praxis as social anthropology, which (if I may be so bold as to generalize) rather resembles the differences and similarities that cultural geography in the U.S. shares with social geography in the U.K.

[8] For the record, Stavenhagen earned his BA in 1951 from the University of Chicago, his MA in Social Anthropology from the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia in Mexico City in 1958, and his Ph.D. in Sociology from the Universidad de Paris, Francia in 1965.

[9] In addition to his long-time position as a sociologist at El Colegio de México, Stavenhagen has contributed his dynamic presence to the composition of the Convention 169 by the UN's International Labour Organization's (see Stavenhagen 1986), as well as projects funded by UNICEF and UNESCO as well as various international Human Rights initiatives (e.g., Nagenast, Stavenhagen and Kearney 1992). During the 1990s, he was on the staff of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and continued to publish (see Stavenhagen 1998 for just one example). And in 2001, he was named to a new position with the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples.

[10] The following is drawn from the most refined version of Bonfil's famous theoretical-methodological essay "Lo propio y lo ajeno: Una aproximación al problema del control cultural" (Bonfil 1981/1983), which was published posthumously as "La teoría del control cultural en el estudio de procesos étnicos" (Bonfil 1992b). Particularly influential to my rendition of it here is the diagram of these differentiated cultural elements that is exactly reproduced in every one of these publications. For the record: *lo propio* is something owned or innate, and *lo ajeno* is something alien in the sense of being foreign.

[11] Indeed it was my introduction to the cultural politics of indigenous identity during the University of Kentucky's first Field Study Course in the summer of 1999.

[12] Etnodesarrollo remains significant to Nahmad's scholarship, now undertaken at CIESAS-Istmo (see Nahamad 2001b).

[13] I first learned of this story from Martha Rees, who shared her experience of bringing Nahmad meals in jail. My summary here of events is mostly drawn from Margarita Dalton's (2002) interview with Nahmad.

[14] While in the U.S., Nahmad spent time at Texas Tech University and the University of Arizona. During this time he was invited to collaborate with other scholars on the LASA Task Force on Human Rights and Academic Freedom in researching and compiling a report on indigenous peoples' struggles for autonomy on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua (see Diskin et al. 1985).

[15] This general pattern continues although INI was officially 'no longer' as of the spring of 2003. INI was reconfigured into the *Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas*,

which is usually signified in text by the acronym CDI and orally identified as 'CONDEPI.' You'll find it online at: http://www.cdi.gob.mx.

To briefly summarize the impact of this institutional relocation, I turn to Ramón Vera Herrera, who is a well-informed socio-political critic, advocate of indigenous peoples, and co-editor of *Ojarasca*, a monthly magazine circulated by *La Jornada* (Mexico's most widely read left of center daily newspaper). In the April 2003 issue of *Ojarasca* (available at: http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2003/abr03/030414/oja-portada.html), Vera describes the institutional change. CDI has been established as the vehicle for implementing the Indigenous Law put into action by President Fox and Mexico's legislative bodies in March 2002 (see the following section on the Zapatistas for a timeline), against the strong objections of most every indigenous collective in the country. On the basis of an analysis of the vague language in section B of the second article of this law, Vera argues that this 'new' institution is all about assistance, without indigenous participation. Indigenous actors remain relegated to a consultation-only status. Furthermore, the shift from INI to CDI is also symptomatic of the central government's efforts to decentralize authority (specifically control over negotiations with indigenous actors) to individual states. For example, resources and resolutions are increasingly directed through the state-level *Secretaría de Asunto Indígenas* (Secretary of Indigenous Affairs), which a position appointed by the state governor.

[16] For important reminders that not all indigenous communities approach the Zapatistas the same way, nor do they all embrace the Zapatista movement, see Stephen (1997) and Hernández Castillo (2001b).

[17] Particularly helpful for getting a fix on this timeline of events relating to the Zapatista uprising was the BBC's online archive of news articles on the Americas, which can be found at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/default.stm.

[18] An overview of Mexico's indigenous population that features numerous national and state maps that are handy for teaching is the World Bank funded and CIESAS and INI created *Perfiles Indígenas:* www.ciesasistmo.edu.mx/ciesasweb/perfilnacional.html.

[19] This story benefits greatly from conversations with Alex over the last year, as well as a short biography she recently shared with me. It is also informed by a CMP presentation Alex gave at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee on November 11, 2004 and by conversations about, and (mostly technology-mediated) observations of, Alex's efforts undertaking during the four years I was researching in Oaxaca.

Also, as you may have noticed, I don't refer to Alex by her last name as I do the more scholarly authors or actors thus far discussed in my dissertation. In this dissertation, I tend to use first names for the people with whom I have spoken in person, mostly because it seems unnatural to do otherwise. Nonetheless, I am struck by the realization that I am obliged by academic conventions to continue to refer to researchers by their last names (even if they are acquaintances or friends) in my own scholarship. This naming procedure clearly points to hierarchies of power in the production of knowledge, but at this time I am unsure of how to dismantle them.

[20] Created in 1991, the US-Mexico Fund for Culture brought together financial support from the Rockefeller Foundation, Mexico's National Fund for Culture and the Arts and the

Bancomer Cultural Foundation (Bancomer is a large Mexican bank). When CMP garnered funding in 1997, 65 cultural and binational projects were funded (http://www.rockfound.org/display.asp?context=1&Collection=4&DocID=64&Preview=0&ARCurrent=1). For a glimpse of today's US-Mexico Fund for Culture, see http://www.fidemexusa.org.mx/

[21] More specifically, Alex travels extensively and works from her apartment in Chicago; Carlos Efraín Rojas (with whom Alexandra has co-produced some award-winning videos) mans the CMP's most recently opened office in Guerrero; and Francisco (Paco) Vásquez runs the office in San Cristobal, Chiapas.

[22] Most of Alex's talks and video presentations have taken place in universities in the English-speaking world (U.S., the U.K. and Australia), although she has also spoken with church groups and at community centers. For the record, Alex has recently been awarded a Guggenheim fellowship with which she is compiling interviews with indigenous and other community-centered media makers in Latin America (and possibly) India that she will edit into a documentary.

[23] The CMP/Promedios website is located at: www.promedios.org.

[24] The 2000 Mexican Census cited in this paper can be found at http://www.inegi.gob.mx. Chassen-López notes (2001, n19) that government statistics have historically been questionable. Linguists working in Oaxaca continue to be highly critical of the validity of Census data concerning the indigenous population, especially since it does not include Mexicans under the age of five (see Pardo 1991; Pardo and Acevedo 1993). According to Jonathon Fox (1994, 188), the Mexican indigenous population has been estimated at up to 15 percent (as opposed to the seven percent cited in this text). And for comparative purposes, Jorge Hernñandez-Díaz (1998, 107) notes that the 1990 census recorded a 5,282,347 speakers of indigenous language in Mexico, with 19.2 percent of them residing in Oaxaca, and that speakers of indigenous languages comprised 39.1 percent of Oaxaca's population over the age of five.

[25] When ethnicity is not considered a purely linguistic category, but rather a politicized social category marked by cultural difference, the coastal peoples of African descent constitute a seventeenth ethnic group (Barabas and Bartolomé 1999b). For the record, most counts indicate that there are 58 ethno-linguistic groups in Mexico.

[26] Here I am distinguishing the long history of armed indigenous rebellion and resistance (see Barabas 1990; de la Cruz 1983a, 1990a, and 1993) from more recent institutional reconfigurations.

[27] For a look at how Latin Americanist geographers subscribed to a very similar mindset, see Stea and Wisner (1984).

[28] For example, the *Coalición de Maestros y Promotores Indígenas de Oaxaca* (CMPIO) emerged and operated within the powerful national teachers union, Section 22 (see Jorge Hernández-Díaz 2001, 99-112).

[29] Although Varese continues to assert that a "contradictory coexistence of two rationalities within the Indian ethnic community, one ruled by use value and the other by exchange value production, has generated a constant cultural tension that deepens as the dominant capitalist economy penetrates indigenous society" (Varese 1996, 62), I use the past tense here to maintain my story's continuity.

[30] Varese's efforts resemble the radical pedagogy of the Latin American scholar-advocates, Paulo Freire and Orlando Fals-Borda (see Mato 2000b, 491-497). Varese put his radical pedagogy into practice during his tenure as the director of *Culturas Populares* in Oaxaca. He published a Spanish translation of the *Handbook of Middle American Indians* section on Chinanteco, Mixe and Zapotec peoples (Wauchope 1964), encouraged the publication of indigenous research and literature, and authored numerous short essays about ethnicity in popular magazines (e.g., Varese 1984). For an examples of *Culturas Populares* publications issued under Varese's leadership, see Villaseñor (1983) and Baruch Maldonado (1986). To learn more about how essays written by scholars and intellectuals is a long tradition in Latin America that has been marginalized by social science, see Mignolo (1999).

[31] Gramsci spells out his conceptualization of 'organic intellectuals' in his *Prison Notebooks* (1971). An excellent resource for reviewing Gramsci's scholarship and/or teaching about his theorizations, see http://www.infed.org/thinkers/et-gram.htm. See Varese (1978 and 1980) for two texts drawing heavily upon Gramsci.

[32] Initially named CIESAS-Oaxaca, this site's name was eventually changed to CIESAS-Istmo. Currently there is the CIESAS headquarters in Mexico City and four regional units: Istmo (Oaxaca de Juárez), Golfo (Jalapa, Veracruz), Occidente (Guadalajara, Jalisco), and Sureste (San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas). Check them out at: http://www.ciesas.edu.mx/

[33] Hernández-Díaz (2001, 113) provides a handy listing of these CIESAS-related centers. Founded in 1989 were the Centro de Investigación Ayuuk, A.C. del Grupo Etnolingüístico Mixe; the Centro de Investigación Chinanteco, A.C. and the Centro de Investigación Mazateco, A.C. Established in 1990 were the Centro de Investigación y Difusión Ñuu Savi, A.C. (Mixteco); the Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo Binnizá, A.C., (Zapoteco in the Isthmus); and the Centro Cultural Zoque; and the Centro de Investigación y Difusión Gente Chatina. The Centro de Investigación y Cultura Amuzgo, A.C. emerged in 1991; and the Centro de Investigación y Difusión Zapoteca de la Sierra Juárez, A.C. (in Guelatao) in 1992. And finally, 1994 saw the emergence of the Centro de Investigación Chochoteco and a Centro de Investigación Triqui.

[34] I know for sure of the three indigenous researchers briefly introduced here (Victor de la Cruz, Manuel Ríos, and Juan Julián Caballero). Today these three men are included of a rooster of eleven other researchers, two of whom are identified in the description of

CIESAS-Istmo as two indigenous *tecnicos*—who I believe are also men (http://www.ciesasistmo.edu.mx/ciesasweb/ciesas.html). For the record, there are four women found in total list of fourteen researchers, none of whom self-identify as indigenous. I don't pretend to know the inner workings of CIESAS hiring procedures, but these numbers would suggest the gendered nature of uneven access to educational and research institutions.

[35] In Juchitan, much ethnopolitical energy has emerged from and remains centered up the *Coalición Obrera Campesina Estudantil del Istmo* (COCEI). For examinations of collective action connected to COCEI see the following sources: Campbell et al. (1993); Campbell (1994 and 1996a); Stephen (1996); de la Cruz (1990b).

[36] In addition to the sources cited in notes 26 and 35 above, see de la Cruz (1990b, 1994).

[37] For example, de la Cruz is one of the many authors of the textbook, *Historia y Geografía de Oaxaca* (Carteles Editores, 2000), that is approved by the SEP for third grade history and geography classes (see http://www.sep.gob.mx/wb2/sep/sep_2674_tercer_grado).

[38] According to the University of Leiden's website (http://www.archeologie.leidenuniv.nl/index.php3?m=48&c=157), Ríos is studying with Dr. Adelaar Jansen, who was awarded the order of the Aztec Eagle by the Mexican Government in 1994 (see http://www.archeologie.leidenuniv.nl/index.php3?m=48&c=52#jansen.

[39] According to the title pages of some of earlier publications of this series, "*Dishá* significa palabra en zapoteco, es poesía, es noticia, es historia, es cuento, es verdad sobre todo." [*Dishá* means word in Zapotec. Word in the sense of poetry, news, history, story, and it is above all truth.] This quote is attributed to Andrés Henestrosa. A Oaxaqueño, Henestrosa was the librarian at the *Academia Mexicana de la Lengua*. To learn more about him, see http://www.academia.org.mx/Academicos/AcaCurriculos/Henestrosa.htm.

[40] For instance, Jorge Hernández-Díaz coordinated the publication of my favorite examination of indigenous identity politics in Oaxaca, *Las Imágenes del Indio en Oaxaca* (1998). Part of the *Dishá Colección Antropología*, this book is comprised of six essays: two by Hernández-Díaz (who earned a Ph.D. in Anthropology at the University of Connecticut with his dissertation *Ethnic and Class Relations in Oaxaca, Mexico* and is now based at UABJO); and contributions by Olga Montes García (UABJO), Jesús Lizama Quijano (INAH), and de la Cruz and Juan Julián Caballero (both of CIESAS). I mention Caballero's essay at the very start of this chapter, as he and Manuel Ríos were the two indigenous scholars who had presented just before the young man commented on the whiteness of authoritative knowledge production. Beginning with its dedication to the memory of Bonfil, "impulsor incansable de la formación de intelectuales indígenas," [tireless advocate of the formation of indigenous intellectuals], Caballero's contribution to *Las Imágenes del Indio en Oaxaca* explores "la cuestión de la identidad" in relation to indigenous professionals who no longer identify with 'lo colectivo' (see quote from this essay at the start of this chapter).

[41] Benjamin Madonado compiled the extensive (although not exhaustive) bibliography of scholarship produced by indigenous intellectuals that accompanies Bartolomé (2003).

[42] Perhaps this is not very surprising given the high density of indigenous communities in this region. Drawing from the 1990 Mexican Census, Hernández-Díaz notes (1998c, 114) that with 79 percent of its population speaking an indigenous language, the Sierra Norte is second (out of the eight regions in which the state of Oaxaca is politically and administratively divided) only to the Cañada region, which features 81 percent.

[43] In his introduction to an overview of *comunalidad* (Rendón and Ballesteros 2003), Benjamin Maldonado quotes Juan José Rendón's reflections about Díaz's insistence on the centrality of territory to the concept and practice of comunalidad (Maldonado 2003, 25-6n8). Díaz's formulation was and is disseminated widely. For example, according to an endnote following the Díaz's essay "Principios comunitarios y derechos indios," printed as an annex in Rendón (2003, 109-20): Díaz traveled to Amsterdam in July of 1988 to participate in the 46th *Congreso Internacional de Americanistas*, where he gave two presentations that introduced the concept of comunalidad: "La visión india" and "Tierra, cultura, lengua y derechos humanos." Shortly afterwards, Díaz put his cultural knowledge to work as a member of the revising commission that was involved in Mexico's ratification of the ILO's convention 169 (Cremoux 1997, 117). Futhermore, since his untimely death in an accident that occurred when he was fulfilling a tequio requirement in his community of 'Tlahui,' Díaz's essays have been published in the weekly magazine insert *La Semanal* of one of Mexico's most widely circulated newspapers, *La Jornada* (e.g., Díaz 2001). In turn, the fundamentals of comunalidad, as outlined in an English translation of an essay by Díaz "More than Things, with People: The Communal Geometry" that was published in the monthly magazine insert *Ojarasca* of *La Jornada* (1997), is summarized and cited (in exactly the same way) by no fewer than four websites concerned with Mexico's indigenous peoples (just plug the title into a google search), one of which is CIESAS's Perfiles (see note 18 above):
http://www.ciesasistmo.edu.mx/ciesasweb/perfilnacional/ingles/conte02ing.html.

[44] When we human beings begin our relation with the Earth, we do it in two ways: through work centered on territory, and through communal rituals and celebrations devoted to Mother [Earth]. This relationship is not established in a manner that is separate from its forms; it is normally given in one singular time and space. Without the Earth in its double sense of Mother and territory, with rights can we claim and speak about as indigenous peoples? It is this more complex territorial reclamation, and not just the simple agrarian demand with which States' governments have been challenged.

[45] In no way to I mean to suggest that Barabas and Barolomé are only INAH scholars concerned with ethnopolitics. Indeed many of their colleagues at INAH are dedicated to this endeavor. Manuel Esparza, for instance, mixes his scholarship with journalism, helping to translate indigenous movements' demands and to critique state policies and programs (Esparza 2001). María de los Angeles Romero Frizzi is an ethnohistorian who is dedicated to producing research with implication for contemporary ethnic memories (e.g., Romero Frizzi 1996 and 2002). And Benjamin Maldonado works to see the cultural activism of indigenous intellectuals incorporated into public education through the training of bilingual educators (e.g. Maldonado 2002a and b).

[46] In 1990, INAH and the *Casa de Cultura de Oaxaca* published the following books compiled by Barabas and Bartolomé: *Historia Chinanteca*, *Historia Ixcateca,* and *Historia Chatina.* In 1991, INAH and CIESAS published Barabas's *Historia Cocholteca.* Although Bartolomé and Barabas acknowledge and appreciate the other researchers (both indigenous and not) who helped gather and analyze the data found in their books, they always present themselves as full authors.

[47] And second, indigenous intellectuals in Oaxaca struggle to create "a truly intercultural literature…in that is it is legible for one and all," i.e., accessible to 'both worlds' (Bartolomé 2003, 27).

CHAPTER FOUR
Making it Cultural, Making it Regional:
Comtech and Community Struggle in Oaxaca

> I believe it less epistemologically, politically, and emotionally powerful to see that
> there are startling hybrids of the human and nonhuman in technoscience—although
> I admit to no small amount of fascination—than to ask for whom and how these
> hybrids work (Haraway 1997, 280 n1).

COMTECH AND INDIGENOUS IDENTITY POLITICS

On the one hand, research concerned with communication technologies (hereafter

referred to as comtech)[1] and the globalization of mass media markets raises questions about

the death of local "sense of place" (Meyorwitz 1985), usually by way of cultural imperialism

(Schiller 1991), and demonstrates how "cultural industries" disseminate images infused with

nationalism and 'free market' consumerism (Morley and Robins 1995; McAnany and

Wilkinson 1996). Other studies, however, center the ways that global flows of images, ideas

and technologies are culturally localized through pragmatic appropriation and re-imagination

(Apaduri 1996; Bird et al. 1992; Cvetkovich and Kellner 1997). Whatever the angle of

analysis, almost all inquiries into globalized mass media note its devastating cultural impact

on rural communities. A study of the political economy of television in a Maya community

in the Yucatan region of Mexico, for example, illustrates how televised media brings new

social tensions and cultural pressures to indigenous communities by contributing to the

urban orientation of youth and forcing a renegotiation of sense of self and community

(Miller 1998). When looking at how indigenous collectivities appropriate comtech for their

own uses,[2] it has been difficult for some observers (e.g. Faris 1992; Weiner 1997) to see

beyond such either/or analytical choices.

Responding to worries "that non-Western cultures are so radically incommensurate

with Western culture—and, in particular, Western forms of representation—that contact

between them can produce only the destruction and replacement of the non-Western culture by the Western," Terence Turner, a scholar-facilitator of indigenous video production in Kayapó communities in Brazil, offers an analysis of a video filmed and edited by an experienced Kayapó video-maker (Turner 2002b, 230). His study makes evident the hybrid practices of indigenous video and indicates how they amplify and fortify Kayapó struggles to maintain "their own relative cultural autonomy as a basis for dealing with national and global systems and pressures" (ibid). He argues (ibid, 232) that:

> …the indigenous cultural perspectives and categories that inform the camerawork and editing decisions of the video-makers are highlighted by juxtaposition with novel, nonindigenous contexts; the ways that indigenous video-makers employ them to order the new material and impose their own meanings upon it can reveal more about the resilience and adaptability of indigenous cultures in interaction and coexistence with national and global social and cultural systems than can any number of faithful representations of traditional ceremonies or techniques.

Instead of focusing on a technology-mediated battle for cultural dominance, Turner underlines the political agency and analytical possibilities of the video he is discussing. Here I aim to do something similar within the context of Mexican indigenous video production, as seen through the framework of such endeavors in Oaxaca.

To tell this story about the appropriation and use of comtech by indigenous collectivities, I do my best to leave behind the biological and binary-bound conceptions of hybridity that have been institutionalized by academic advocates seeking to overturn the cultural violence of *mestizaje* and *indigenismo*, and operationalized by indigenous cultural activists in Mexico.[3] More specifically, I intend to identify, analyze, and articulate indigenous video production without recourse to Guillermo Bonfil's influential theorization of *lo propio-México Profundo* and *lo ajeno-México Imaginario*—except, of course, when it is evoked by the protagonists whose actions-ideas I am discussing. Basically, this dichotomy remains too reliant on the biologically-bound configurations of *lo indio* and *la nación mestiza*, which recent

scholarship demonstrates doggedly lingers, embedded within racist and elitist representational practices (Hale 1996; Gros 2002; Nelson 1999; Radcliffe 1999a and d). It seems to me that no matter how useful this analytical framework—and despite the intentions of many analysts who use it—too often one element (*lo propio-México Profundo*) gets idealized as authentic and thus pictured as pure, which makes it awfully easy to bury conflict beneath tradition. It also naturalizes the absence of control over comtech-mediated production of authoritative knowledge. Furthermore, the other element (*lo ajeno-México Imaginario*) generally gets portrayed as homogeneous and technologically determined, which makes it appear far too monolithic for my taste.[4] Since I can't shake these categories all together—they remain far too important—I aim to shake them up as much as I'm able by making sure to see both comtech and my own aesthetic-political preference as actors in my story about indigenous identity politics. As Donna Haraway's quote above suggests, looking for the agency and action enabled by hybrid technoscience can be much more helpful than expecting the cancellations and cross-checks so inherent in binary-bound frameworks for studying oppositional difference.

As explained in chapter two, I see video-mediated indigenous cultural work as a technoscientific practice that is similar to my own task of dissertating as an authority on indigenous identity politics. Furthermore, I study the technoscience of indigenous video production with a postcolonial feminist lens of analysis—i.e., one that aims to leave white writing behind (see chapter two)—because I think this angle of analysis allows me to look beyond the woefully white epistemologies and representational practices that, as Juanita Sundberg argues (2003 and 2004), continue to carry significant clout in contemporary Latin Americanist geography. Instead of questions about, and verifications of, authenticity (or strategic essentialism) which are so fundamental to notions of mestizaje, I ask about the

representational politics of strategic *marginality* (Mato 1996; Mallon 1996). Who is represented as marginalized? Why and from what are they marginalized? And who is representing? Serving as a prelude to the emergence of Ojo de Agua, the chapter offers four stories. Each story examines the intersections of indigenous cultural activism and academic advocacy that informed past efforts to appropriate communication technologies as a means for enabling indigenous organizations seeking to empower indigenous communities in Oaxaca during the last twenty years.

Story One: Yalálag, Juan José Rendón, and Migration

In 1981, the Zapotec community of Villa Hidalgo Yalálag in the Sierra Norte region of Oaxaca saw "la recuperación" of its municipal governance when community residents wrested control from influential regional powerbrokers (*caciques*).[5] Upon entering office, the new authorities announced a Ten Year Plan that, in addition to laying out several community construction projects, expressed their intention to recuperate the traditional legal practices such as governance through general assemblies, leadership earned through *cargo* systems, and public works done through *tequio* obligations. In other words, they aimed to revitalize the practices legally summarized with the phrase *usos y costumbres* and academically defined as *comunalidad*. Recognizing the obstacles strewn in the path of their plan of action, the new municipal authorities also established a 'Programa de Comunicación,' the purpose of which was to "informar, sensibilizar a la gente sobre la importancia de la revaloración de sus tradiciones y costumbres, propiciar la participación en las diferentes actividades que se desarrollan en la comunidad y dejar testimonio de los trabajos que comenzaron a realizarse" (Estrada 2001, 37).

Entrusted with this task of convincing-communication was the recently established *Grupo Cultural Yalalteco* (GCY). The efforts of the GCY often overlapped with, and drew upon, those of Juan José Rendón, a linguistic anthropologist from the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (UNAM), who had begun working in Yalálag in 1980. With a recently acquired silkscreen machine and Rendón's guidance, the GCY began to print posters celebrating and/or exploring topics such as maize production, tequios, assemblies, and community stores (Joel Aquino quoted in Estrada 2001, 39; see also Gómez Martínez et al. 2003)[6]. According to Francisco Limeta, a member of the GCY, the goal was not only to inform people about, but also involve them in tequio, fiestas, and other sociocultural activities (Limeta quoted in Estrada 2001). In addition to making and hanging posters, members of the GCY also starting taking photos, creating a visual archive in the municipal building that documented the type of projects the authorities embarked upon, as well as their progress (ibid, 40). Through these projects, community cultural politics in Yalálag were intimately interwoven with development initiatives and linked with academic advocacy.

Starting in 1983 with the assistance of students and professors of the UNAM, the *Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana* (UAM), the *Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia* (ENAH), and a collectivity comprised of Yalaltecos living in Mexico City, the GCY began to orchestrate and host workshops and publications that were dedicated to the preservation and practice of the regional variation of Zapotec language spoken in Yalálag, and group dances traditionally performed there (Estrada 2001, 40; Gómez et al. 2003).[7] The connections established through these cultural projects facilitated the forging of relations—i.e., networking—with regional indigenous organizations. Soon the activities of the GCY began to intersect with those of the *Comité Organizador y de Consulta para la Unión de los Pueblos de la Sierra Norte de Oaxaca* (CODECO). According to Joel Aquino, who was active in encounters

where the GCY and the CODECO collaborated, in 1981 a member of CODECO decided to begin using a video camera to gather testimonials about the organization's political activities (Aquino quoted in Estrada 2001, 34-5). Alicia Estrada's informants told her that, with the video equipment of CODECO, the first video recording in Yalálag happened in 1981. Footage was shot with the express aim of augmenting the photographs and letters that were being sent to migrant associations comprised of Yalaltecos living in Mexico City, Oaxaca de Juárez and Los Angeles. The visual material was to complement the letters and bulletins that solicited financial support from migrant associations (which would hold dances and concerts to raise the money) and illustrated the results of projects undertaken with the assistance of the migrant associations. In 1987, one of these migrant associations, *Comunidad Yalalteca en Los Ángeles, California*, donated to the community authorities of Yalálag a VHS video camcorder, a VCR, and a tape rewinder. The GCY was given responsibility for this equipment and its member Francisco Limeta was named principal cameraperson (ibid, 41).

Limeta began to record community events such as elections, assemblies, conflict resolution, fiestas, wakes, and messages from the municipal authorities to the migrants living elsewhere (ibid, 43).[8] According to Estrada, Limeta's video taping was done to keep migrants informed and involved, conserve a visual archive (housed in the municipal building) for posterity, and foster cultural revalorization initiatives. A few years later, after 1990, video recording became even more prevalent in the community as migrants sent or brought home video cameras for family members. Soon, in addition to keeping migrants abreast of community projects, videos were used for family-centered matters, such as demonstrating to migrants' advances in home construction for which they were paying, and keeping tabs on wedding attendance and related labor exchanges within the community (*gozona)*. The first wedding in Yalálag was recorded in 1989 and by 1991, weddings (one of the major events

wherein *gozona* is prominently involved) were the most commonly recorded event and wakes the second (ibid, 55), with several people in the community offering their recording services. By 1997, the community's video library featured 203 two-hour VHS tapes and an informal survey of the community counted 40 video cameras (in VHS, hi-8 and 8mm formats), 90 percent of which came from Los Angeles. Increasingly, videos of fiestas and dances (traditional and more commercial events) began to be circulated and sold among Yalaltecos living abroad (ibid, 43-6 and 54). As Estrada observes (2001, 47), "El video funcionó como un canal a través del cual fluyó la información de Yalálag a Los Ángeles y viceversa."[9] In July 2002, during a conversation with Limeta, who is fondly called 'Pancho Video' by members of Ojo de Agua, I learned that video recorded in Yalálag (like the pork, cheese, tylayudas and other commodities imported sold as fresh from Yalálag) were hot items in Los Angeles, with migrants paying up to $25 for their copy of the community's annual fiesta.[10] According to Limeta, viewers of these videos are sorely disappointed by edited videos; much preferring the unabridged editions, which perhaps this explains Limeta's own general dismissal of editing and post-production as unnecessary.

In November 2002, I attended the inauguration of the *Centro de Cultura Zapoteca Uken ke Uken* in Yalálag. This large and well made two-story structure had been financed primarily through the support of Yalaltecos living outside of Yalálag, the Banamex Foundation, as well as a collection of missionary and other non-profit organizations active in the area. In addition to its library (its shelves partially filled, mostly with donations from academic advocates) and its computer lab (created with hand-me-down machines channeled through the Banamex Foundation), the building included a room dedicated to audio recording and broadcast equipment (some of it gifted by the Montreal-based INGO World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters), which, visitors were told, would be up and running shortly.

While there were many video cameras recording the speeches and cultural performances (song—some in Zapotec, music and dance), no one spoke with certainty about the center's proposed television production and broadcast component. Limeta's home was next door to the new center, directly connected by a back passage way. There he hosted the members of Ojo de Agua who had come to record and enjoy the inauguration, and showed us his ample video library. While there doesn't seem to be anyone currently pursuing video production, beyond the lucrative commercial recordings of weddings and other fiestas, the *Centro de la Cultura Zapoteca Uken ke Uken* provides an ideal setting for fostering interest in, and even facilitating broadcast of, locally produced television programming.

Story Two: K-Xhon, AZACHI, and Appropriation

Erica Wortham writes (2002, 202-17) of another early indigenous collectivity concerned with communications that came out of the *Asemblea de Autoridades Zapotecas y Chinantecas de la Sierra* (AZACHIS). This regional assembly of representatives from municipal governments was founded in the early 1980s as the means to orchestrate regional solidarity in negotiations with the government, and at the same time foster the revalorization of communal cohesion as an alternative to state dependency. Confronted with the enormous challenge of gathering people living in a region (the Sierra Norte, especially a micro-region that is called *Los Cojonos*, not far from Yalálag*)* distinguished by its daunting terrain and dismal transportation infrastructure, AZACHIS established an Exterior Relations Committee (ERC) dedicated to the task of circulating information. At the start, this group was comprised of three individuals, one woman and two men. They had grown up in communities in the region, but had relocated to either Mexico City or Oaxaca de Juárez to further their formal education, later returning to the region as adults to live and/or work.

Each of these three told Wortham (205-8) they became involved in AZACHI after re-educating themselves to value the community practices that they had been taught to denigrate and dismiss as backwards. This communications collective quickly earned respect for the newsletter they produced, *El Topil*.[11] Recognizing the limited range their Spanish texts afforded in the region (occupied by both Zapotec and Chinantec speakers, and characterized by a low rate of literacy), they began to utilize visual media. The members of the ERC said they first produced photomurals that were carried to various communities for display, and then began to produce audiovisual presentations that mixed projected slides with taped music and narration (Wortham 2002, 210). Soon they turned to video.

To celebrate AZACHIS's first year anniversary in 1981, the ERC's first video production was made with Betamax video equipment they borrowed from a friend (ibid, 211). Not long afterwards, migrants living in California gave this group VHS video equipment to work with (213). After a couple years of recording community fiestas and then immediately screening the footage as part of the festivities, the video component of AZACHI's media division crystallized with the addition of a university educated musician-painter who grew up in Oaxaca de Juárez as a second generation Yalalteco. After arranging a screening of the ERC's videos for the Yalalteco migrant community in the city, he was asked to join them. With the addition of the ERC's fourth member in 1984, *K-Xhon Video Cine Zapoteco* was born (ibid, 212-3). According to Wortham (213-5), K-Xhon's video productions were directed towards the communities where they recorded footage, put together without interviews or narration and featuring "less than deliberate" camera work. Wortham notes that technical prowess was never the intent for this media collectivity. Rather they enjoyed experimenting as they captured images with what they argued was their own special aesthetic, which, in the case of their 1987 production *Danza Azteca*, won an international

award (215). Fiercely independent during its collective existence, this group refused any institutional affiliation or funding; they viewed it as inherently paternalistic. They underscored their refusal of any sort of aid as they rebuffed the EZLN's invitation in 1996 to attend a *Foro Nacional* and serve as advisors to a roundtable focused on the "Access to Communications Media" (204). The lack of the sort of support such affiliation affords, in tandem with the need to make a living and support families, proved the demise of K-Xhon, which had basically stopped pursuing video projects by 1992. Furthermore, notes Wortham (215n52), there remain very few copies of their videos available, even to the group's members, because the master copies are on an outdated format (Betamax) and many have been lost over time and travel.

Members of K-Xhon told Wortham (215-7) that despite their determination to remain independent, they were not able to avoid the appropriation of their practices and ideas by the "government machine." They trace their co-optation to the 1987 International Congress of Applied Anthropology in Mexico City when they were invited to share their video project and productions during an informal meeting attended by prominent Mexican anthropologists Arturo Warman, Salomón Nahmad, and Gerardo Gárfias (among others). Warman, they said, was extremely complimentary and interested in their work—so much so that when he was appointed director of INI shortly thereafter, he initiated the bureaucratic inquiry that eventually lead to a program geared toward the transference of audiovisual technologies to indigenous communities (see the next chapter). The group made it clear to Wortham that they felt their ideas and methods had been ripped-off. Another government program K-Xhon claims to have "inspired" is the *Casa del Pueblo* initiative that anthropologist Gárfias implemented in Oaxaca in the early 1990s, which (modestly) supported the establishment and operation of community cultural centers where cultural projects could

take place. The members of K-Xhon told Wortham that Gárfias's decision to augment this program by expanding it to include some video equipment was the direct result of his learning about its media making during the anthropology conference. Wortham acknowledges that she was never able to confirm K-Xhon's assertions of inadvertent inspiration of government programming. She argues (217) that what is important about the story (and stories) of K-Xhon is its illustration of how:

> …government sponsorship of indigenous media must be positioned within indigenous struggles to build regional solidarity and find solutions to regional issues, such as road building and the uncontrolled exploitations of natural resources, which reinforce community values and indigenous agency.

In addition to the intimacy between indigenous cultural activism and matters of regional development and conservation, the story of K-Xhon hints at how and from whom scholarly bureaucrats and academic advocates learned, and continue to learn.

Story Three: Guelatao, Jaime Luna, and Comunalidad

As another example of such efforts to make community struggles cultural (and regional), Wortham points to the technology-mediated collective action carried out by organizations based in the small, but symbolically important, pueblo Guelatao de Juárez, which is also located in the Sierra Norte region, which these actors refer to as the Sierra Juárez.[12] Vital to the cultural activism emerging from Guelatao is the intellectual and organizational work of the community's native son, Jaime Martínez Luna,[13] who earned his anthropology degree in the 1970s from the UAM in Mexico City (Wortham 2002, 190-1). In 1997 Luna published an essay (which indicated that he was then affiliated with the *Instituto de Investigaciones sobre Recursos Bióticos, A.C.* in Jalapa, Veracruz[14]) that tells the story of a pueblo in the Sierra Juárez from the perspective of a fictionalized resident born in 1920 who witnesses the cultural and political changes—for example, the rise of bilingual school teachers who, as

cultural mediators, became influential entrepreneurs and powerful political figures—that contributed to his community's loss of control over its forestry resources. This essay suggests Luna's connection to the emerging struggle to reclaim communities' forests in the region. And his mode of story-telling embodies his commitment to the scholarly strategy of composing accessible texts that could educate oppressed peoples about the historical forces that led to their oppression while also highlighting as valuable political resources the historical strengths of their communities that have allowed their persistence. Luna later links this creative and collective practice to the dialogic pedagogy of Paolo Freire (Comunalidad 1996).

In 1980, along with several other university-educated persons working in the Sierra Juárez region who favored "líneas teóricas orientadas por el marxismo" (Luna 1995, no pages), Luna brought his praxis to bear upon the emergence of the *Organización en Defensa de los Recursos Naturales y Desarrollo Social de la Sierra de Juárez, A.C.* (Odrenasji). This regional organization united about 25 communities in the fight to force the Mexican government to change the legal and entrepreneurial frameworks whereby lumber businesses (brutally) exploited forest resources without even hiring people living in affected communities (Luna 1982, 66; Guadarama 1997, 318). In a 1982 volume published by the newly established *Museo Nacional de las Culturas Populares* and edited by Guillermo Bonfil Batalla (see pp. 85-7 in previous chapter), Luna explains the emergence of Odrenasji as an organized and creative manifestation of *cultura popular*. He argues (Luna 1982, 65) that "las culturales populares se fomentan, se crean, y se desarrollan en la lucha por la sobrevivencia misma de cada grupo social."[15] While his arguments echo the tenets of the scholarship produced by Nahmad, Stefano Varese and Bonfil (discussed in the previous chapter), i.e., place-centered cultural difference is a valuable political resource, if and when it is recognized as such, Luna never (to

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my knowledge) couches his observations or theorizations in terms of ethnicity—maybe he found it too entrenched in the institutionalized depoliticizations of cultural differences as a mestizo nation's inherited patrimony, which are all too easily (and too often) declared old fashioned and out of step with the national goals of progress. Perhaps because only a handful of speakers of Zapotec remain in Guelatao, Luna also rejects the boiling down of community resistance and cultural difference into an essence of indigenous language, stating that "tambien en español estamos resistiendo" [we're also resisting in Spanish] (ibid, 77; see also Maldonado 2003, 24n3). Luna and his colleagues, both within Odrenasji and *Museo Nacional de las Culturas Populares*, politicized place-based cultural practices while refusing to 'naturalize' them as necessarily biological. According to Luna (78), a collective identity centered on community-centered cultural cohesion stems from sharing "la lucha cotidiana, en la organización y la participación integral de todos los miembros de la comunidad."[16]

Before the end of 1984, important legal judgments were made in favor of the forestry-focused communities of the Sierra Juárez (Guadarama 1997, 318). That same year, says Luna (1995, 6), the regional collective known as Odrenasji "decide morir" [decides to die]. Perhaps its immediate objectives had been (for the most part) met. About a year later, in December 1985, another cultural collectivity—this time a musical endeavor called *Trova Serrana*—was willed into being by Luna and other musicians living in Guelatao or nearby communities (Sánchez 1997, 13).[17] According to Oscar Sánchez's study of Trova Serrana (14-5), not long into its existence, and even before it had earned a name for itself in Oaxaca, the group toured other parts of Mexico at the invitation of the *Secretaría de Educación Publica*, which at this time was also the administrative home of the *Dirección General de Culturas Populares* (see previous chapter, pp. 84-5). By 1990, Trova Serrana had its own music recording studio where its members jammed with a small but international set of musicians

(e.g., Lila Downs and her husband) who were drawn to the cultural politics of comunalidad as much as they enjoyed the chance to experiment and record music.[18] Through an international cultural exchange, the group spent two months touring Venezuela in 1991. The next year, in the same building housing their studio, the collectivity opened a *Galería Artesanal* to exhibit and sell textiles and pottery made in the region. This initiative is most likely related to the 1992 establishment in Guelatao of the *Centro de Investigación y Difusión Zapoteca de la Sierra Juárez, A.C.,* one of the *Centros de Investigación Étnica* that grew out of a CIESAS program (see pp. 98-9 in previous chapter). Then in 1993, Trova Serrana started the magazine *Guzio* with the aim of circulating community-centered research and reflection undertaken in the region. That same year Trova Serrana was reconfigured into an NGO called *Fundación Comunalidad, A.C.*, and not long thereafter received a $10,000 grant from the Inter-American Foundation for pursuing their cultural projects, which by then were interwoven with those of the AM radio station broadcasting right up the street from the group's recording studio and the recently established regional organization based in Guelatao, the *Unión de Organizaciones de la Sierra Juárez* (UNOSJO).

Jaime Luna told Erica Wortham (2002, 192) that he first came to realize the need for regional and community-focused communications—as opposed to mass media which he (and others) felt promoted out migration—in the late 1970s, when he spent time teaching ethnographic methods to public school teachers. This initiative crystallized during an Odrenasji meeting when Luna met communications students from the UAM, and invited them to live for free (courtesy of the Odrenasji and the community) so they might research and develop a proposal for a radio station located in Guelatao. Once prepared, the reports and supporting petitions were sent to the *Insituto Nacional Indígenista* (INI). Although at this time INI had established five small AM radio stations at regional INI offices elsewhere in

Mexico, with a sixth established in 1987 in Chiapas,[19] the institution paid no heed to the Guelatao-generated appeals until 1988, when a friend of Trova Serrana employed in President Salinas's administration helped the appeal reach the right ears, and the project was finally approved (ibid, 193). In March of 1990, XEGLO "*La Voz de la Sierra,*" a 5,000 watt AM station with about 80 km coverage, began broadcasting from the municipio of Guelatao. By November 1990, the radio station was located in a newly built building a few doors down from the building housing Comunalidad's recording studio, artisan gallery, and office. Luna was an on-air personality whose programs mixed what we might call music and talk formats. The director of XEGLO was Aldo González, who had returned to Guelatao after earning an engineering degree in Mexico City (interview with Gonzalez October 2001). Around this same time, both Luna and González were involved in the dangerous creation[20] and subsequent administration of a new regional body, the *Unión de Organizaciones de la Sierra Juárez* (UNOSJO) that Roberto González says (2001, 230) "was to become the most important regional grassroots alliance in the area." UNOSJO was initially founded in 1990 to draw and distribute to seven different organizations from the Sierra Juárez resources garnered from the *Fondos Regionales* component of President Salinas's Solidarity social development programming that was channeled through INI. Two years later, the bureaucratic absurdities of this programming (referred to by many as *indigenismo de participación*) led UNOSJO's leadership to legally reconfigure the collectivity into a *sociedad civil* (an NGO that hopes to eventually earn profits) that is eligible to receive financial aid from federal institutions, international agencies, and foundations, e.g., $119,500 from the Kellogg Foundation in 1993 (Hernández-Díaz 2001, 200-206).[21]

Erica Wortham (2002, 13-4) argues that from the start XEGLO successfully created and operationalized a community-focused communication project. Although the bulk of its

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programming was in Spanish, the station also offered programs in the other languages spoken in the region (Zapotec, Mixe and Chinantec). Employees of XEGLO initiated outreach programs, community advisory councils, and community-based Radio Production Centers; all of which were later institutionalized by INI and implemented at its other regional radio stations. Furthermore, between 1991 and 1993, members of Trova Serrana-Comunalidad, most of whom were also involved with XEGLO, developed and delivered children's workshops focused on c*reación colectiva* [collective creation]. Participants were encouraged to compose songs concerned with everyday pueblo life in the Sierra Juárez. Recordings of children performing these songs were recorded and distributed to schools, municipios and families of the performers (Comunalidad 1996). As requested in the original proposal sent to INI, XEGLO was equipped with ¾ inch VHS video recording and editing equipment. In 1992 instructors involved in INI's video training program, *Tranferencía de los Medios Audiovisuales a las Organizaciones y Comunidades Indígenas* (the TMA; see the following chapter), gave a video production workshop at the Guelatao radio station (Wortham 2002, 195). Around this same time, Cree cultural activists visiting the region at the invitation of the de-professionalized intellectual, Gustavo Esteva, helped Comunalidad connect with the Montreal-based INGO World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, which facilitated funding that allowed the collectivity to use XEGLO's equipment to produce four short video programs about natural resource use in the Sierra Juárez that were screened at the 1992 international sustainable development forum (a.k.a., the UN's Earth Summit) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (ibid).

After the Zapatista uprising in 1994, however, the symbiotic relationship among INI's XEGLO, Fundación Comunalidad, and UNOSJO changed. The determination of XEGLO's director, Aldo González (also founding member and current leader of UNOSJO),

to keep the region abreast of the EZLN's ideas and actions led to his forced resignation. INI also installed a system that allowed the institution's administration to shut down its dozen radio stations from its headquarters in Mexico City. Right around the same time, anthropologist Fernando Guadarama lost his job as director of INI's regional office based in Guelatao. Most observers attribute this institutional shift to Guadarama's close working relationship with González and other members of UNOSJO and the fact that UNOSJO's success as a regional organization began to make regional and institutional power brokers feel threatened with displacement. The politicized efforts of the leaders and advisors working within and with XEGLO and UNOSJO clearly failed to obey INI's general rule of thumb that indigenous identity be formulated as a purely cultural matter (cf. Vargas 1995; McSherry 1999; Wortham 2002, 100-36).[22]

Although Jaime Luna left XEGLO when Aldo González did, in no way was Comunalidad deterred from its pursuit of comtech-mediated cultural activism. Rather, it was further inspired; for example, the collective promptly accepted the invitation to produce a television program to be broadcast on the state of Oaxaca's public TV channel 9. This series, *Revista de la Sierra* [Sierra Magazine], was comprised of short community-focused segments that Comunalidad members and affiliates recorded in communities throughout the Sierra Juárez, and edited at INI's newly opened *Centro de Video Indígena* in the capital city (see following chapter). Given the hectic hustle and nearly unpaid task of putting together weekly programs, as well as the fact that Channel 9's broadcasts didn't even reach most of the communities in the Sierra Juárez, this Herculean effort was only steadily sustained for about six months (Wortham 2002, 197; interview with Luna in November 2000), and then only sporadically undertaken over the next few years. With part of the Inter-American Foundation grant it was awarded right around this same time, Comunalidad invested in a 20

watt transmitter with which they began to broadcast *Canal 12 Nuestra Visión* to eight communities close to Guelatao. Just a year later, however, the media conglomerate TVAzteca began broadcasting with 20,000 watts in the region. This effectively ended the emissions of *Canal 12 Nuestra Visión*. Once again, members of Comunalidad shifted gears and focused their energies elsewhere. Benefiting from the presence of communication students who came to work with the organization, as well as a substantial grant awarded to Comunalidad by the Ottawa-based INGO International Development Research Council for the pursuit of comtech-mediated cultural projects designed "to integrate local and scientific knowledge and techniques,"[23] Comunalidad's video production peaked in 1996.[24] In 1997 one of Comunalidad's members, Alberto Cruz Luna, attended a video production workshop given by Andén A.C. that was sponsored by the Ford Foundation. One result of Alberto's participation in this workshop was the 22 minute video *Una Historia, Una Vida* about the interrelated histories of mining and migration in La Natividad, a pueblo not far from Guelatao.

In November 2000, Luna told me that Fundación Comunalidad had recently benefited from a $10,000 grant from the United Nations Development Programme, with which they purchased a 50 watt transmitter.[25] This time, with a range of about 15 km and reaching 21 communities in the Sierra Juárez, Comunalidad was back on the air—broadcasting (from a small building on a hilltop outside of Guelatao) both FM radio (*Estereo Comunal* in the morning) and TV signals (*Canal 6* in the evening). Their radio programming was all in Spanish. In addition to Luna's thought-provoking talk shows,[26] *Estero Comunal* offered a whimsical format (rock in Spanish, *Brasileña*, etc.) that reflected the favorite music of the several young men who helped run the station. Luna explained to me that in addition to providing an outlet for the videos produced by members of Comunalidad (some of these

productions are explored in the following chapter), with the help of the primary school's satellite TV access, *Canal 6* re-broadcast programming from both of the public TV channels in Mexico City (Channels 11 and 22), as well as items from the Discovery and Discovery Kids Channels.

Despite their new transmitter, Comunalidad's pursuit of video production had slowed considerably ever since one of its key media making members was named director of INI's *Centro de Video Indígena* (CVI; see chapter one pp. 27-30 and the following chapter) and moved to Oaxaca in 1997. By November 2000, when I first visited with members of Comunalidad in Guelatao, they were down to one sporadically functioning Hi-8 video camera (from having access to at least three) due to the lack of funds for maintaining or replacing equipment. And their substantial collection of videos was haphazardly kept in mildewing cardboard boxes piled in a small storage room. This is not to say that Comunalidad had come to a complete standstill; indeed, as I sat in the office chatting with Jaime Luna, Alberto Cruz Luna (another member of Comunalidad) came for the video camera to record the annual hike-review of the community's boundaries. And although the transmitter was just then in Mexico City for repairs, the recording studio was in use and the artesian gallery was opened (upon my request). Although *Estereo Comunal* continued to be broadcast when I was last in Guelatao (August 2004), Comunalidad wasn't doing much else. I spoke with Alberto Cruz Luna and he confirmed that Comunalidad had not pursued video projects for years, largely due to the lack of functioning video technology and of resources to purchase cassettes. He also mentioned his hopes to digitalize Comunalidad's video archive. Although Alberto now lives and works in another pueblo in the Sierra Juárez and only returns to Guelatao on weekends and holidays, he said that he had recently begun teaching classes in video production at the *Bachillerato Integral Comunitario* (BIC), a high school

designed to offer a community-focused education, which recently opened in Guelatao. Perhaps comtech-meditated visual cultural activism concerned with the Sierra Juárez region will re-emerge sometime in the near future with students who are encouraged by their instructors at the BIC.

Story Four: Chicahuaxtla, the Sandoval Family and the Centro Cultural Driki'

My fourth and final example of comtech-tech mediated and community-centered cultural production in Oaxaca is the work that has emerged from San Andrés Chicahuaxtla, a Triqui pueblo located outside the small city of Tlaxiaco in the mountainous central east part of the state, generally referred to as the Mixteca region of Oaxaca. Much like my story about Jaime Luna and Comunalidad, out of necessity my narrative about the media collective that calls Chicahuaxtla home revolves around the intellectual and cultural work of one person and his organizational relations. Here I focus Marcos Sandoval Cruz who is currently the first indigenous director of the *Museo Nacional de las Culturas Populares e Indígenas* in Mexico City (see chapter three, pp. 85-7). A good part of this tale is based on a list of Marcos's achievements that I recently stumbled upon via the internet.[27] Frankly, I was delighted to find this information because it helped flesh out another textual encounter that came in the form of the following statements about Marcos and his family in a regional geography of the Triqui by Carlos Durand Alcántara.[28]

> En la zona de Chicahuaxtla existe el control de la producción artesanal de Marcos Sandoval y su familia quienes han venido fungiendo como jefes del Consejo Supremo triqui monopolizando la venta de las artesanías a través del Instituto Nacional Indigenista, de la Confederación Nacional Campesina y de la Coordinadora Nacional de Pueblos Indígenas. (Durand Alcántara 1989, 51)

> Para 1979 la organización campesina de los triquis de Chicahuaxtla se ligaba a la Coordinadora Nacional de Pueblos Indígenas organización que a través del cacique Marcos Sandoval y su familia controlan en buena parte la vida económica y social de los comuneros. Sin ningún consenso, la familia Sandoval dice dirigir a los triquis de la

región alta. En la década de los años sesenta los Sandoval introdujeron al Partido Auténtico de la Revolución Mexicana, el cual es un filial del partido en el poder y cuyo fin únicamente ha sido electorero sin pretender vincularse a las necesidades de la región (Durand 1988: 76). (ibid, 54)[29]

When I first read these statements my first reaction was pure puzzlement. How could an internationally respected—indeed, if the essays by students who learned to see the world differently during a visit to Oaxaca wherein they met with Marcos and/or his family members (some of which are available online, although the version I composed after the UK Geography Department's Field Study course in 1999 is not) are any indication, we might also say *revered*—cultural activists who are dedicated to explaining, enabling and empowering community resistance to cultural homogenization possibly be seen as caciques?

I reproduce Durand Alcántara's statements here, not because I wish to defame Marcos with someone else's (rather strident) accusations, but because I don't recall either Marcos, or anyone with whom I have spoken about Marcos's activities, ever mentioning the institutional positions he occupied before he started working as a cultural promoter in a regional division of *Culturas Populares* in the mid-1980s. Nor do any of the other various blurbs and brief biographies (in Spanish, English, German and French) of Marcos on the internet mention these positions. Frankly, I was surprised to realize just how ignorant I was of Marcos's earlier career. Not because I think Marcos or anyone else was purposefully dishonest, but because my ignorance reveals two important lessons. The first is for me the researcher, and it entails a painful (as in 'ouch!') lesson about what topics I failed to pursue in either the formal interviews or the many informal and wide-ranging conversations I enjoyed with Marcos during my four years in Oaxaca. The second, more interesting, lesson is that it would appear that neither Marcos nor his colleagues in Oaxaca seem to think that Marcos's early institutional and organizational endeavors are relevant factors in his emergence as a well-known indigenous activist who is deeply concerned with community-fueled cultural

resistance. I see things very differently. Marcos's institutional career isn't incidental to his chosen path and the socio-spatial relations of which it's comprised; it is *central*.

An online curriculum vitae (see note 27) suggests that Marcos Sandoval Cruz's career began in 1972 when (at the age of 18) he started working—I don't know where—as a bilingual *promotore agrario* (a sort of agricultural extension agent) of the *Secretaría de la Reforma Agraria* (SRA). It must have been not long afterward when Marcos's father—Marcos Emiliano Sandoval Santiago (to whom I will refer as Marcos Sr.), one of the very few men from the Triqui zone in the Mixteca who became schoolteachers in the 1950s—was appointed a representative on the Triqui *Consejo Supremo*. This national conglomeration of indigenous peoples, comprised of representatives from each ethnic group living in Mexico, was orchestrated 'from above' by federal authorities in 1973, and it was closely linked to the *Confederación Nacional Campesina* (CNC), the agricultural arm of the PRI (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*; the dominant political party), and thus also connected to the SRA.[30] In 1974 the Consejo Supremo was convened (by the SRA, INI and the CNC) at the *Premier Congreso Nacional de Pueblos Indígenas* in Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, presided over by then President Echeverría Alvarez. A year later, another national body, the *Consejo Nacional de Pueblos Indígenas* (CNPI), emerged as a consequence of the Congreso. Initially the CNPI lobbied for the respect of indigenous communities' cultural identities and denounced local and regional caciques. As the 1970s came to a close, however, it began to demand greater independence from the Mexican government. The increasingly radical position of the CNPI leadership led to it being dissolved and then replaced in 1982 by President López Portillo just before he left office (Hernández-Díaz 2001, 28-9). Many of the dissident leaders who were removed from the CNPI went on to establish the *Coordinadora Nacional de Pueblos Indios*, to which Marcos (it

is not clear whether it is Marcos Sr. or his son) was also connected by Duran Alcántara (1989, 51).[31]

From 1976 to 1980 Marcos (not Marcos Sr.) was a bilingual promoter with the *Banco Nacional de Crédito Rural,* into which three other rural banking systems had been merged by Presidential decree in 1975.[32] Afterward, from 1980 to 1986, he worked within the cluster of rural assistance programs known as the *Programa Conasupo-Complar,* first as a promoter and then as a regional supervisor.[33] For ten months during 1986, Marcos was also in charge of a Commercialization program at the INI regional office located in San Juan Copala.[34] While perusing the *memoria* of a three day forum in 1993 that brought together 30 indigenous women from sixteen different ethnic groups, from nine different states (not to mention the feminist scholars who coordinated the event and this document), I came across the brief intervention of Marcos's sister, Esther Sandoval Cruz, during which she relates her experience in a Triqui women's cooperative (E. Sandoval 1993).[35] It was right around 1975 or 1976 (perhaps when Marcos entered his position with the Banco Nacional de Crédito Rural), she said, when "siguiendo la enseñanza de mis papás," [following what I learned from my parents] she and other women formed and legally registered a cooperative as a means to sell their handicrafts. According to Señora Sandoval, after an undetermined (but clearly frustrating) time the cooperative fell apart, mostly because the only sales outlets the women were able to access were through the bureaucracies of FONART and ARIPO.[36] Perhaps these institutional relations were the basis by which Duran Alcántara judged the political economic clout of Marcos Sandoval, his father, and their family. Clearly they held positions from where they could help out their close associates, and perhaps they did. What is most relevant for the story I am relating here, however, is that by the mid-1980s, Marcos

had substantial bureaucratic and administrative experience working in realms designed to foster the socio-economic development of indigenous communities in Oaxaca.

Starting in the early 1980s, in addition to his salaried institutional work, Marcos began to devote his time and attention to enabling the revitalization of community-centered cultural practices. Marcos told me that when INI established XETLA "La Voz de la Mixteca" in Tlaxiaco in 1982,[37] he was disappointed that the radio station "que iba a ayudar para fortalecer la cultura de los pueblos indígenas" sounded more "como una radio popular que puede funcionar bien en una ciudad con una cultura diferente a la cultura de los pueblos indígenas" (interview in October 2001).[38] Seeing themselves as "inconformes," [in opposition] Marcos, two of his brothers, Zacarias (a medical professional) and Fausto (a bilingual schoolteacher), and Domingo Guzman Sanchez (another bilingual schoolteacher from Chicahuaxtla) went to Tlaxiaco to confront the radio station personnel. As Marcos explained:

> Les dijimos: oigan ustedes tienen la radio aquí con el objetivo que ustedes dicen que es para fortalecer la cultura de los pueblos pero ustedes no están haciendo nada para eso. Ustedes están haciendo una radio que trae información sobre ciertas cuestiones ideológicas por cosas…no sé, que puedan funcionar con la gente de cultura campesina pero no para gente de cultura indígena, no están recogiendo valores nuestros, no están pensando en como darle fuerza que la gente se sienta en confianza con ellos…[39]

Discussing the matter upon their return to Chicahuaxtla, Marcos and the others decided that perhaps confrontation was not the best approach; maybe the people in charge of the radio simply didn't know how to produce programming that would contribute to community-centered cultural identity. They returned to Tlaxiaco and convinced the radio director to give them an on-air time slot and loan them recording equipment to produce their own radio show. Called *El Camino Andado* (The Tread Path), their radio program focused on the music traditionally played in Triqui pueblos and featured interviews with the (often elderly)

musicians.[40] According to Marcos, not only did the program stimulate debate and discussion about the music, its meaning and its performance within communities, but it also convinced him and his partners in programming of comtech's "*poder termendo*" [tremendous power].

Marcos told Michelle Petrotta[41] that television first arrived in Chicahuaxtla in 1985. To counteract its destructive impact, Marcos prepared a proposal for the establishment of a *Centro Cultural Driki'*. Titled *La Casa que Recoge Nuestro Camino* (The House that Re-takes our Path)*,* the proposal places television and other mass media as particularly powerful vehicles for cultural destruction in a long line of both peaceful and violent influences that begins with the arrival of the Spanish and includes public education and highways (Petrotta 2001, 3). In the proposal, Marcos writes (cited in ibid, 4) that due to these outside influences:

> Ahora lo hacemos nosotros mismos, en nuestro afán de ser iguales que los blancos y mestizos despreciamos y nos avergonzamos de nuestra cultura…La actitud de automenosprecio que practicamos, se debe, consideramos, a dos causas fundamentales: la primera es que el blanco desde su llegada nos ha oprimido, explotado, nos quitó nuestras tierras y sigue siendo racista, la segunda se debe a que el discurso humanista y político en sus diferentes tendencias, desde los primeros curas que llegaron hasta las formas de pensamiento actuales, también constantemente nos repiten que vivimos en la ignorancia, en la marginación y el atraso…(2-3).[42]

The *Centro Cultural Driki'* was to combat these destructive tendencies by working towards "la revaloración y el fortalecimiento de nuestra cultura, mediante actividades de recopilación, de investigación, sistematización, y difusión de la información que se obtenga, información que abarcará todos los aspectos, todas las manifestaciones de nuestra cultura" (ibid, 5).[43] Providing yet another example of the exchange of ideas and articulations among indigenous activists and the academic advocates explored in the previous chapter, Marcos suggests (ibid) that "Así puedan tomar lo bueno que tenemos, así también, de una manera reflexiva, tomarán lo necessario que nos llega de fuera, que nos pueda servir sin perjudicarnos."[44] Given that 1986 was also when Marcos brought his experience and abilities to the

institutional mission of the *Dirección General de Culturas Populares* (see chapter three, pp. 85-7) through his employment (1986-2000) by its *Unidad Regional Huajuapan* in Huajuapan de León, a town further north in the Mixteca, such overlap is hardly surprising.

Through the *Instituto Oaxaqueño de la Cultura's Casa del Pueblo* program (see pp. 123-4 above and chapter three, p. 100), the *Centro Cultural Driki'* was established in Chicahuaxtla in 1987. A year later it had its first video camera, again through the *Casa del Pueblo* program.[45] According to Marcos (interview November 2001), the first video recording in Chicahuaxtla happened during a gathering of musicians from various pueblos. When one of these musicians died a few years later, his widow came to inquire after the recordings. Marcos described the elderly widow's and her family's joy at being able to once again see their lost loved one as confirmation of the value of video technologies for those involved in the *Centro Cultural Driki'*. The first video produced by the *Centro Cultural Driki'* was "Chicahuaxtla: una experiencia en el uso del video en una comunidad triqui." This video features images of Chicahuaxtla and the community's traditional music, interspersed with monologues wherein Fausto speaks (in Spanish) about the community's history and its traditional institutions such as those revolving around its Catholic Church. Because there was no readily accessible editing equipment in Oaxaca at this time (as you'll recall, the CVI didn't appear until 1994), Fausto traveled to the University of Vanderbilt to edit the video.[46] Through this video, says Petrotta (10-11), "Fausto is able to both give a survey of life in Chicahuaxtla to the outsider, as well as remind community members of the importance of their cultural practices." She also quotes (ibid) Fausto's comments in the video when he considers the role video technology might play in the pueblo: "Es aquí, donde la tecnología juega un papel importante…un buen manejo de ella…nosotros podemos contribuir mejor en la lucha que mantiene nuestros pueblos por seguir su propio camino."[47]

In 1994, three young men from Chicahuaxtla traveled to INI's installations in Tlacolula for the final three month workshop given as part of the *Transferencia de los Medios Audiovisuales a las Organizaciones y Comunidades Indígenas* (see next chapter). One of these three—Hector García Sandoval, the son of Esther, Marcos and Fausto's sister (the same sister mentioned above)[48]—had been involved in video taping events in Chicahuaxtla since the first the camcorder was given to the *Centro Cultural Driki'* in 1988; indeed, he had been behind the camera recording Fausto's reflections in the 1992 video. In addition to further exposure to the basics of video recording and an introduction to editing, Hector and the others (who appear to have not continued to pursue video making) returned to Chicahuaxtla with a collection of equipment, including another VHS video camcorder, two monitors, and a tripod (interview with Hector García Sandoval July 2004). Not long after, Fausto wrote a successful proposal that earned the *Centro Cultural Driki'* a $25,000 grant from the MacArthur Foundation. This award was given as the means to create and produce a series of Triqui-language videos concerned with public health issues such as those faced at the end of the twentieth-century by communities like Chicahuaxtla. The first video by the *Centro Cultural Driki'* is titled *Akoo* (1995)*, which in Triqui means garbage. In addition to the MacArthur Foundation, the *Dirección General de Educación Indígena* (a subdivision of the SEP), the *Unidad Regional de Huajuapan*, *Instituto Nacional para la Educación de Adultos Delegación Oaxaca,* and the *Casa del Pueblo* program are all credited with supporting the project. Using the camera they had received in 1988, Hector recorded under the direction of Marcos and Fausto and then he edited and post-produced it with the help of those working at the *Centro de Video Indígena.*

Three other videos were made before the end of 1997, in much the same way: i.e., with Hector handling the technical side and the project plans and aims articulated by Marcos and Fausto (and other individuals involved with the *Centro Cultural Driki'*). *Ña ri'i' (*or *Donde*

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Hacemos el Baño) encourages people to utilize ecological 'dry' toilets and instructs viewers how to construct them. *Diarrea* is an informational video about how to avoid the deadly affects of dysentery, which, for the record, has not yet been post-produced (interview with García Sandoval July 2004). Finally, *YI'I (AIDS)* examines the disease and its prevention, encouraging greater awareness in communities hit hard by migration (in a variety of ways, one of which is the return of HIV-infected people). Additionally, according to Perotta (2001, 9-10), around this time, the *Centro Cultural Driki'* also produced a video examining Triqui participation in a Zapatista march through Oaxaca.

My first encounter with a Chicahuaxtla video, specifically the 1992 production wherein Fausto reviews what I (and others) have taken to calling *comunalidad*, took place in the *Centro Cultural Driki'* (at that time a building that had once housed the community's health clinic) when in 1999, along with a group of students,[49] I was visiting Chicahuaxtla as a guest of Marcos. Much later, when discussing the 1992 video with Hector (interview July 2004), he pointed out that it was made expressly for the purpose of introducing visitors and potential funders to Chicahuaxtla, and to the *Centro Cultural Driki'*. Later I received as a gift from two other nephews of Marcos and Fausto copies of the three post-produced videos made with the support of the MacArthur Foundation.[50] Not too long ago, the VHS camcorder given to the *Centro Cultural Driki'* in 1994 was stolen from Fausto when he was in Oaxaca de Juárez. The video camera they were given earlier had stopped working a good while back. Hector has since been given another older video camera, but it isn't working properly and, with hopes of getting it up and running, he has left it with Ojo de Agua affiliates in the city. While in New York City for a touring exhibition of indigenous videos in April 2003, members of Ojo de Agua purchased an excellent mini-DV camcorder for Marcos with the money that had accumulated over two years in which Ojo de Agua had

been renting the Centro Cultural Driki's Macintosh G4 computer. But this appears to be his own personal equipment that he keeps with him,[51] and Marcos has not been located in Chicahuaxtla for a while now. In the year 2000, Marcos became the director of the Oaxaca bureau of *Culturas Populares* and was obliged to relocate to the capital city; although he continued to be appointed to *cargo* positions, which required four hour drives to Chicahuaxtla every weekend and holiday that he was able. More recently, in the spring of 2003 (as I mentioned when I began this story about Chicahuaxtla video making), Marcos was appointed director of the *Museo Nacional de las Culturas Populares* in Mexico City. Once again, he's living far away from his beloved home in the mountains of the Mixteca.

I conclude with these matters of audience and travel as a vehicle to underscore the transnational socio-spatial relations of community-centered indigenous video production. In Chicahuaxtla (as in Yalálag, Guelatao, and with *K-Xhon Video Cine Zapoteco*) video making is considered and utilized as a means of community resistance to cultural homogenization by way of racist denigration (whether through nationalist norms of *mestizaje* and related policies of *indigenismo* or through other forms of evangelization). Generally such video projects arise through the initiatives of key individuals who engage (often institutionally) with academic advocates and their initiatives, although (as in the case of *K-Xhon Video Cine Zapoteco*), these exchanges are hardly unidirectional. In addition to overlapping ideas and images, financial help and/or related technology transfers from migrant populations and/or a government institution and/or non-governmental funding agency also play a vital role in these processes. The four examples of community-focused and video-mediated cultural politics I review here also illustrate the tendency for these kinds of projects to come to a standstill after 'outside' support dissipates and/or life's financial demands force individuals to abandon the pursuit of an alternative comtech-mediated sphere of collection action. In the next chapter, I move

on to the story of Ojo de Agua, situating it as a collectivity that arises from and further expands the geographies I have sketched out here.

ENDNOTES

[1] I have decided to use this abbreviation, comtech, in lieu of other options such as ICTs (information and communication technologies) or NICTs (new information and communication technologies). I don't use the former because I don't believe in 'pure' information that can be technologically transmitted without communication. And after decades of digitized communication, I'm not sure that identifying technology-mediated communication as 'new' is terribly helpful. Plus, comtech is much more fun to say.

[2] I don't intend to diminish or even doubt the cultural damage done by globalized mass media, but this dissertation focuses on the geographical processes whereby comtech is accessed, appropriated and utilized by indigenous collectivities; and so, I only touch upon commercial mass media or its impacts when considering what the protagonists I am discussing have to say about it. For the record, however, I think that even 'exposure' to mass media isn't something devoid of agency and action; indeed, I think we should all simply turn it off. To purchase a gadget that allows you to do just that the next time you find yourself cornered in a bar or airport where you're subjected to television, visit www.tvbgone.com.

[3] Juan Julián Caballero (1998b, 98-99) provides an excellent example of what such appropriation looks like:

> En ocasiones, algunos de estos intelectuales no indios suelen identificarse con las causas indígenas; es más, algunos llegan a sentirse comprometidos con estos pueblos. Es aquí donde se refleja una seria contradicción respecto a los indios, biológicamente hablando, pues muchos de ellos ocultan su identidad por considerar que para llegar a "civilizarse" deben abandonar lo que han sido para aspirar a ser el "otro". A quienes no son de origen indígenas, pero están comprometidos con las causas indígenas, nuestro reconocimiento y admiración. Sin embargo, no basta con tener voluntad y decisión de participar en estos compromisos, se necesita conocer y hablar la lengua del grupo para conocer su pensamiento; se necesita pasar por un proceso de conversión, de mestizo a indio. [At this point there is a note that reads: Algunos antropólogos, lingüistas, sociólogos e historiadores suelen comprometerse con las causas indígenas. Sin embargo, con frecuencia el mismo gobierno los vigila y los reprime cuando así lo considera.]
>
> On occasions, some of these non-indigenous intellectuals are wont to identify with indigenous causes; indeed, some reach the point of feeling committed to these peoples. At this point a serious contradiction, biologically speaking, becomes apparent in regard to these Indians. Many of them hide their identity so that they might be considered as "civilizing themselves" because they've abandoned who they are while aspiring to be the "other." To those who are not of indigenous descent, but are down with indigenous causes, our recognition and admiration. However, it's not enough to have the desire and the decision to participate in these commitments, it is necessary to know and speak the tongue of the group in order to know its thought; it is necessary to pass through a process of conversion, from mestizo to Indian. [At this point there is a note that reads: Some anthropologists, linguists, sociologists and historians are wont to identify with indigenous causes. However, the government

frequently puts them under surveillance and reprimands them when it considers it necessary.]

While I most certainly agree with Caballero's insistence on intelligibility, my point here is that knowing and speaking an indigenous language is not some sort of 'biological' guarantee that an indigenous person will be able to see and understand the perspective of other speakers of the same language.

[4] I'm not sure whether this can be reduced to a matter of aesthetic taste, although that's clearly part of it. Ever since I read (the English translation of) Bonfil's book *Mexico Profundo* during UK's first Field Study course in 1999 and wasn't able to reconcile Bonfil's binary (and its assumptions of gender neutrality) with what I witnessed, I have simply not been comfortable with this framework of opposition and intelligibility Despite encountering incredibly relevant and effective uses for the dichotomy (Froehling et al. 2001), my discomfort continues. I am *not* arguing that intelligibility doesn't it happen—it does, daily! Rather, as explored in chapter two, I approach intelligibility as a matter of diffraction.

[5] Two key sources inform my understanding of the cultural initiatives undertaken in Yalálag. The first is Alicia Estrada Ramos's undergraduate thesis (2001), which examines how video technologies have been put to work in this community by and for community authorities, migrants, and related organizations. The second is a video documentary called *Uken ke Uken y la Gotzona Educativa* that explores Yalálag's *Centro Cultural Zapoteca: Uken ke Uken*, which is further discussed in the next note.

[6] To see and hear Juan José Rendón and members of a recently established Zapotec cultural center talking about the activities I'm summarizing here, view the video 2003 video *Uken Ke Uken y la Gotzona Educativa* (Gómez Martínez 2003), which is available at http://cdi.gob.mx/index.php?id_seccion=111. To learn more about this video's production, see chapter six, pp. 255-6.

[7] For a glimpse of the current efforts of emigrants from Yalálag who live in Mexico City and continue to do the same, see the website of the *Grupo Tradición y Cultural Shennií* http://www.geocities.com/navine22/shennii.html.

[8] For more information about Oaxacan migrant associations in Los Angeles and their relations with their hometowns, see López et al. (2001). And for further evidence of the growing importance of comtech to immigrant communities, see Mountz and Wright (1996) and R. Smith (1998).

[9] Video functioned like a canal through which information about Yalálag flowed to Los Angeles and vice versa [information about Yalaltecos living in Los Angeles reached Yalálag].

[10] Pancho is a nickname for Francisco, and Ojo de Agua folks say Pancho Video in tone that suggests tribute to the famous hero of the Mexican Revolution, Pancho Villa. During this July 2002 conversation with Limeta, which took place in Ojo de Agua's office space where he had come for assistance in making multiple copies of a video, he shrugged off my questions about the challenges of importing livestock and dairy products into the U.S., and I

still don't know how these items reach Los Angeles. While videos can be sent via courier service, most food products can't.

[11] *Topil* is one of the 'beginner' cargo positions. Those assigned this position (usually young men) serve as peace-keepers in their community. Generally, one night a week, armed with clubs, they wander about keeping an eye out for any disturbance of the peace (i.e., unruly drunkards). Offenders are arrested by the *topiles* and then usually detained over night in the jail cells that are found in most municipal halls throughout Oaxaca.

[12] For an alluring and selectively thorough introduction to Guelatao, see this url: http://www.e-local.gob.mx/work/templates/enciclo/oaxaca/municipios/20035a.htm. Interestingly enough, the "Medios de Comunicación" section of this website (created in 2002 as part of the *Enciclopedia de los Municipios de México,* which is credited to the *Instituto Nacional para el Federalismo y el Desarrollo Municipal* and *Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca*) fails to mention any of the comtech-centered endeavors discussed here. It does, however, point out that of INEGI's 2000 calculation of the 'economically active' population in Guelatao (190 people, presumably out of the 754 counted in the general census found at www.inegi.gob.mx), 71 percent worked in the tertiary sector, which is comprised of commercial endeavors, tourism and other service industries.

This small community bears extensive symbolic status because it is the birth place of Benito Juárez (1806-72), who was not only the first Mexican President openly recognized as indigenous (Zapotec), but also remains a revered figure of reform who helped draft the 1857 Constitution. For a look at the complicated relationship many indigenous intellectuals have with the idea-image of Juárez, see Gutiérrez (1999, 161-81). Perhaps this helps explain why Guelatao is a (tiny) muncipio unto itself and was chosen the site of INI's and SAGAR's (the Secretariat of Agriculture) regional headquarters and the location of the substation of the Federal electrical system? It certainly makes it easier to understand why the intellectuals and organizations based in Guelatao, as well as the many others with whom they work, prefer to call this region (comprised of three districts of Oaxaca: Ixtán, Villa Alta and Mixes) the Sierra Juárez.

[13] In the following I refer to Jamie Martínez Luna as Jaime Luna, or rather just Luna. I do this because I have never heard him referred to as Jaime Martínez or even Jaime Martínez Luna. As a sidenote, his daughter (who is not yet 20) goes by the name of Luna. This Luna is an extraordinarily accomplished photographer (see a bit of her work at http://www.acfm.net/acfm/photo/marianaR/guelatao/guel4.htm) and more recently video maker, who was recently the recipient of one of the fellowships given by the NGO in Oaxaca de Juárez, *La Casa de la Mujer*, to young women who come from low-income families, usually in indigenous communities, but against these unfavorably odds wish to continue their scholarly studies.

[14] Jalapa is also commonly spelled Xalapa. It is unclear to me whether or not the *asociación civil Instituto de Investigaciones sobre Recursos Bióticos* that is listed as Martínez Luna's affiliation in 1977 is related to the *Insituto Nacional de Investigaciones sobre Recursos Bióticos*, which was established in Jalapa in 1975 by the *Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología*, which at the time was seeking to decentralize scientific research from Mexico City (see the 2003 article, "Actividades Profesionales del Biologo en el Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones sobre Recursos

Bioticos, en sus Sedes de Jalapa y el Distrito Federal" by Luz María López de la Rosa, at: http://www.anuies.mx/principal/servicios/publicaciones/revsup/res054/txt4.htm.

[15] Popular cultures are encouraged, created, and developed in each social group's struggle for survival.

[16] Cultural cohesion stems from sharing "a daily struggle in the organization and integral participation of all members of the community."

[17] Vital to my rendering of the cultural production and organizational relations of *Trova Serrana* and its later configuration as the NGO *Fundación Comunalidad, A.C.*, is the undergraduate thesis, *Catálogo de la Producción Televisiva en la Sierra Norte (Canal 12) Nuestra Visión*, by Oscar Sánchez Jerónimo (1997).

[18] Not only did Lila Downs record with *Trova Serrana*, but she researched her undergraduate thesis in social anthropology on the symbolism of Triqui women's weaving, staying as guest in the home of Marcos Sandoval Cruz, whose cultural activism is the fourth story discussed in this chapter. To see Lila Downs's official biography, check out her official website at http://www.liladowns.com/. And you can read an interview with Jaime Luna (July 2002) wherein he talks about Lila Downs and more generally about *Trova Serrana* and its impact, just use this url: http://www.tequio.net/CODES/JAIME%20LUNA.htm.

[19] A map and a chart tracing the development of INI's Sistema Radiodifursoras Culturales Indigenistas can be found at http://cdi.gob.mx/index.php?id_seccion=228. See also Vargas (1995) and McSherry (1999).

[20] González points out (2001, 231) the personal risk the coordinators of UNOSJO faced. In May 1991, an engineer affiliated with the burgeoning organization was "mysteriously hit by an unidentified truck outisde the village of Otatitlán," narrowly survived, and then moved out of state. That same year the leader of *Pueblos Unidos*, a regional organization closely affiliated with UNOSJO was murdered (I look more closely at Pueblos Unidos in the following chapter). Tensions between UNOSJO and those regional power brokers displaced by its increasing regional presence were surely exacerbated when three people associated with the administration of UNOSJO were invited to serve as advisors to the EZLN not too long after the Zapatista uprising. In 1997 UNOSJO leaders received death threats and were defamed through accusations of affiliation with the EPR, an armed movement largely based in the mountains of Guerrero. Hernández-Díaz (2001, 208-9) notes that individuals subjected to torture by military personnel made the key accusations. While I was visiting and researching in Guelatao in 2002, Aldo, who continued in his leadership role with UNOSJO, was once again receiving death threats. I can't imagine his recent outspoken and well-informed denunciations against transgenetic corn, which has infiltrated the Sierra Juárez while supposedly an illegal import, has softened the animosity of his enemies.

[21] According to Jorge Hernández-Díaz (2001, 200), one such bureaucratic absurdity was the fact that *facturas* (official receipts from legally registered businesses) were required for mule purchases, which forced UNOSJO members to buy unsuitable (to the terrain) mules from an outfit in Chihuahua, Mexico. Since a key concern for the organizations agglomerated in

UNOSJO was road construction and 70 percent of its initial funding was spent on machinery (e.g., dump trucks and bull dozers), UNSOJO employees earned great experience in road construction and went on to win contracts for regional transportation projects (ibid, 201-2). In 1996 members of the administrative council of the Kellog Foundation visited the Sierra Juárez and observed an irrigation project UNOSJO affiliates had undertaken and subsequently, in 1997, UNOSJO awarded another $50,000 (ibid, 206). UNOSJO refused, however, participate in programs they found unsuitable. For example, because members felt it was inappropriate, and thus not helpful, for communities in the Sierra Juárez, UNOSJO dragged its collective feet and then eventually rejected a housing project forcefully promoted by government agencies in 1995 (ibid, 202). By 1996, UNOSJO included 23 organizations representing 60 communities (R. González 2001, 230) and it was undertaking projects concerned with road construction, forestry, staple foods production, and organic coffee production in 30 municipios in the Sierra Juárez region (Hernández-Díaz 2001, 200). UNSOJO is a prominent actor in Oaxacan ethnopolitics. For example, not only does UNOSJO participate in the collectivity called the *Foro Estatal Indígena Permanente Oaxaqueño*, but it participates in the "comisión de seguimiento" that orchestrates it (ibid, 205). UNSOJO also fosters scholarly and student exchanges with prominent academic institutions.

[22]For the record, INI's attempts to re-establish control through the dismissal of Guadarama and González did not extinguish the organizational and intellectual fervor of Guelatao-based collectivities; it only reshuffled things. Guadarama was promptly hired on as *asesor* of UNOSJO's organic coffee program. And UNOSJO lobbied for and was awarded the right to name Guadarama's successor at the regional INI office in Guelatao (Hernández-Díaz 2001, 204-5).

[23] This quote is taken from the summary of the project that is posted at http://www.idrc.org.sg/en/ev-40601-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html. According to the accounting available at http://web.idrc.ca/idrc_adm_info.php?project_number=3136&funding=show&lang=_en, the funds ($100,000 Canadian dollars a year, for two years, 1996-1998) from the IDRC were channeled to Comunalidad through various government agencies, such as Fondo Nacional de Empresas de Solidaridad (FONAES), INI, and the *Instituto Oaxaqueño de las Culturas* (see previous chapter, p. 100). Also, during this same period (1996-1998), two representatives of the Japanese international aid agency, JICA, lived in Guelatao as they supported Comunalidad's projects related to artesian production (interview with Luna November 2000).

[24] For example, Alicia Estrada, the author of the study of the judicial use of video in Yalálag was involved in the production of several videos during this time period. Examples of Comunalidad's videos, and the related participation of other students-advocates, will be further explored in the following chapter.

[25] From the same man who helped them access and maintain the first transmitter in 1994. Here this man shall remain nameless given the fact that Comunalidad's latest transmitter is 50 watts larger than the 20 watt limit for legally broadcasting unlicensed radio stations. More details concerning the camaraderie that made Comunalidad's broadcasts possible can be found in Wortham (2002, 197-201).

[26] Over the next couple of years, I had occasion to hear Luna's programs playing on radios in nearby pueblos. More recently, however, his broadcasts have become more sporadic as he is increasingly indisposed by illness. Although he was temporarily 'on the wagon,' when I first spoke with him in late 2000, Luna has returned to his incredibly hard-drinking life, from which he is now suffering the ailments of acute alcoholism. Back in the summer of 1999, I passed on my first opportunity to travel to Guelatao (choosing instead to continue puzzling over Bonfil's *Mexico Profundo*), but a fellow UK geography student who did make the trip and witnessed Luna's presentation (a mixture of talk and song, with the omnipresent soda bottle filled with mezcal next to his chair) aptly summarized his dynamic appeal and self-destructive behavior by describing him as 'a Mexican Mick Jagger.'

[27] I am referring to the website at this url: http://www.contraelsilencio.org/Encuentros/encuentro%20III/jurado.htm, which features brief biographies of the people selected to serve as jurors for the annual *Contra el Silencio* film and video festival this year (2004). I first came across this webpage on December 21, 2004.

[28] Carlos Durand Alcántara is a rural sociologist and professor of agrarian law at the *Universidad Autónoma Chapingo* (in Veracruz) as well as professor of *Ciencias Sociales* at the UNAM. When this article (1989) was published in the *Revista Geografica Venezolana*, a publication of the *Instituto de Geografía y Conservación de Recursos Naturales de la Facultad de Ciencias Forestales* at the *Universidad de los Andes* in Mérida, Venezuela, Durand Alcántara held a post-doc position there that was funded by the Ford Foundation. Since then he has gone on to publish several books, such as: *La Lucha Campesina En Oaxaca y Guerrero, 1978-1987* (1989); *Derechos Indios En Mexico--Derechos Pendientes* (1994); *Derecho Nacional, Derechos Indios y Derecho Consuetudinario Indigena: Los Triquis de Oaxaca, Un Estudio de Caso* (1998); *Hacia Una Fundamentacion Teorica De La Costumbre Juridica India* (2000; with Miguel Samano and Gerardo Gomez Gonzalez); and *Educacion Agricola, Pueblos Indios y Nueva Ruralidad en Los Umbrales del Siglo XXI* (2001; with Miguel Samano). I sure would like to see his 1998 book as I am very curious to know whether he expands upon the Sandoval family's political economic role in the region.

[29] In the Chicahuaxtla zone artisan production is controlled by Marcos Sandoval, who has been serving as leader of the Triqui Supreme Council, and his family. They have been monopolizing the sale of crafts through the National Indigenous Institute, the National Campesino Confederation, and the National Council of Indigenous Peoples (Durand Alcántara 1989, 51).

In 1979 the campesino organization of Triquis in Chicahuaxtla was connected to the National Council of Indigenous Peoples, an organization through which the cacique (local political boss) Marcos Sandoval and his family control a good part of the economic and social life of community residents. Without consensus, the Sandoval family says that it leads the Triquis of the high region. In the 1970s, the Sandovals introduced the Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution, which is subsidiary of the party in power and whose only end has been electioneering without intending to be linked to the region's necessities (Durand 1988: 76). (ibid, 45)

[30] To read the official history of the *Secretaría de la Reforma Agraria*, see http://www.sra.gob.mx/pag/informacion_general/historia/default.htm. This sketch of the Consejo Supremo, its institutional relations, and reconfigurations is drawn from Deitz (1995) and Hernández-Díaz (2001, 27-35).

[31] In March 2005, I was finally able to confirm these details with Marcos Sandoval. His father (who passed away in 2003) was indeed the President of the *Consejo Supremo Triqui*, and the online resume correctly summarizes his career.

[32] For the official history of the *Banco Nacional de Crédito Rural,* see its website: http://www.banrural.gob.mx/frameset_banco.html.

[33] Conasupo stands for *Compañía Nacional de Subsistemas Populares* and generally refers to the state funded stores established (in lieu of the agricultural subsidies that were being drastically reduced) in communities to sell basic commodities at cost. Complar refers to the programs collected beneath the moniker of *Coordinadora General del Plan Nacional de Zonas Marginadas y Grupos Deprimidos*, and as the name suggests, most of this programming was directed towards indigenous communities. Because the Conasupo-Complar programs offered assistance through only nominally changed corporatist channels, albeit with increased discursive recognition of greater local participation, it is often considered a later stage of *indigenismo*, more specifically *el indigenismo de participación* (Hernández-Díaz 2001, 33-4; Fox 1992).

[34] San Juan Copala is another Triqui community, which at this time was the site of violent confrontations between organizations affiliated with the PRI and oppositional organizations such as the *Movimiento Unificado de Lucha Triqui* (MULT) (Hernández-Díaz 2001, 85-97). I am unaware what role the *Partido Auténtico de la Revolución*, with which Duran Alcántara links Marcos and his family, played in these conflicts between local and regional organizations, but as I will explain below Marcos did not stay long in San Juan Copala. I do know, however, that the *Partido Auténtico de la Revolución Mexicana* (PARM) was formed in 1954 by dissident members of the PRI and until the late 1970s was one of only three authorized political parties in opposition to the PRI. Although Durand Alcántara's comment about PARM, cited in note 29 above, suggests that this opposition was purely cosmetic. When Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (the son of President Cárdenas and himself a former governor of Michoacán) united a broad coalition for his Presidential bid in 1988, PARM was one of the parties that joined the coalition.

[35] Titled *La Mujer y los Derechos Fundamentales de los Pueblos Indígenas* this "*seminario latinoamericano*" took place in Oaxaca de Juárez on July 2-4, 1993. It was made possible through the cooperative efforts of employees of INI's *Programa de Trabajo con Mujeres Indígenas, y la Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos como patrocinadora de la Federación de Mujeres Universitarias,* and the *Centro de Estudios de la Mujer y la Familia*, which is housed within the Oaxaca bureau of DIF (the *Sistema Nacional para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia*).

  During the summer of 1999, I was wandering about the Mezcal Fair in el Llano in Oaxaca de Juárez with two of Marcos's nephews (see note 50 below), when we came across a Triqui group that was giving a cultural performance (dance and music) on a stage set up within the Fair. I was then introduced to two women who were with the group, and while I

failed to catch their names, I do recall one woman being an aunt and the other a cousin who was studying law. According to Marcos's nephews, both their aunt and cousin were active in the struggle for indigenous women's rights and had traveled to Brussels to participate in an international conference organized around this theme. I suspect, although I'm not certain, that this aunt was Esther Sandoval.

[36] FONART is the *Fondo Nacional para el Fomento de las Artesanías* (housed with SEDESOL, the *Secretaría de Desarrollo Social*) and ARIPO (which I *think* stands for *Artesanías y Industrias Populares del Estado de Oaxaca*) is a state government bureau dedicated to supporting the sales of art and craftwork produced in Oaxaca. Señora Cruz Sandoval also talks about the frustration of learning that the skills the Triqui women inherited from their grandmothers were not valued. And when the women learned to leave behind their own standards of quality and dedicate themselves to the mass production of lesser quality goods (such as the production of 5,000 of exactly the same napkin), they found that the joys of weaving, and family life, were greatly diminished. While she doesn't pretend to have any solutions, or clear ideas about what it is that Triqui women really need, she does declare that: "Por mi parte, estoy tratando de ver hacia atrás, por el camino de mis abuelas, para ver si así camino segura para adelante" (E. Cruz Sandoval 1993, 84). [For my part, I'm working to see towards the past, looking for the path of my grandmothers, in order to see a sure path forward.]

[37] In 1979, INI established its first radio station, a 5,000 watt AM channel called XEZV "La Voz de la Montaña" in Tlapa de Comonfort, Guerrero. Then a batch of four others in 1982, of which XETLA "La Voz de la Mixteca" was one.

[38] Marcos told me that when INI established XETLA "The Voice of the Mixteca" in Tlaxiaco in 1982, he was disappointed that the radio station "that was going to help fortify the culture of indigenous peoples" sounded more "like a popular radio that would function well in a city that is culturally very different from indigenous communities (interview in October 2001).

[39] We told them: listen, you're saying the goal of the radio you have here is to fortify the culture of communities, but you aren't doing anything in regards to this. You are making a radio that brings information about certain ideological questions about things…I don't know, that might function for people with campesino culture, but not for people with indigenous culture. You're not reinforcing our values, you're not thinking about how to encourage people to feel confident about themselves…

[40] In his essay "La Radiodifusión Indigenista: Participación y Transferencia," Eduardo Valenzuela briefly mentions, as an example of a successful but transitory transference of comtech to indigenous communities, the radio program "Camino Andado" that was designed and produced by Triquis from Chicahuaxtla (Valenzuela 1990, 59). His brief review of the program's content doesn't say anything about music programming. Instead it suggests that 30 programs about weaving techniques, weavers' troubles with commercialization and accessing materials, the symbolic meaning of the woven symbols, and the importance of weaving to the entire community were produced. He also notes that "Después de un tiempo la serie se dejó de producir debido a ciertos problemas con el equipo responsable de hacer la serie y apoyar y capacitar a la población. Ahora, las mujeres que intervinieron en la

producción plantean reiniciarla con nuevas temáticas y con un programa de capacitación." ["After a time, the series was no longer produced because of certain problems with the team that was responsible for making it, as well as supporting and training the population. Now the women that were involved in the production are leaving it behind with new techniques and a training program."]

I have no idea how thorough is Valenzuela's look at "Camino Andado," but its portrait of the program—and its termination—is clearly (and rather drastically) different from the one Marcos imparted to me, which didn't even mention the program's demise (underscoring yet another belated lesson learned about the politics and practice of research).

[41] Michelle Petrotta came to Oaxaca during the fall semester 2001 to study with the Center for Intercultural Encounters and Dialogue. Through this transnationally-funded NGO (which orbits around the ideas and socio-spatial relations of Gustavo Esteva), Michelle met Marcos Sandoval and stayed for a spell in Chicahuaxtla as a guest of members of Marcos's family. This paragraph draws heavily on the paper Michelle wrote that December, "Audiovisual Activism for the Revaloration of Culture in San Andrés Chicahuaxtla." I procured a copy of the paper courtesy of Marcos, who gave me a copy of the paper (several months after Michelle had written it) because he thought it might interest me. He was most certainly correct. After locating her through her parents' address in New York, I emailed Michelle to tell her how much I appreciated her insightful essay and we corresponded briefly. I look forward to sharing my own writing with her.

[42] Now we do it ourselves, in our efforts to be equal with whites and mestizos, we devalue ourselves and become embarrassed by our culture…The belittling attitude that we practice, is, we think, is due to two fundamental causes: the first is that since his arrival, the white man has oppressed and exploited us, stole our lands and continues to be racist. The second is due to the different manifestations of humanist discourse and politics, from the first priests that arrived to current forms of thinking; they too constantly repeat to us that we live in ignorance, in marginalization and backwardness…(2-3)

[43] The *Centro Cultural Driki'* was to combat these destructive tendencies by working towards "the revalorization and fortification of our culture through recompilation, research, and systematization activities, and the dissemination of the information that results, information that deals with all aspects, all manifestation of our culture" (ibid, 5).

[44] Providing yet another example of the exchange of ideas and articulations among indigenous activists and the academic advocates explored in the previous chapter, Marcos suggests (ibid) that "This is how we might take the good that we have, as well as, in a reflexive manner, we might appropriate from what comes to us from the outside that which might prove useful, without damaging us."

[45] The source of this first camera was confirmed in an interview with Hector García Sandoval (July 2004). Just below I turn to Hector's role in videos produced in Chicahuaxtla.

[46] This interesting bit of information emerged during an interview with Hector García Sandoval, the nephew of Marcos and Fausto, in July 2004. Sadly, I didn't have time to further investigate the matter with Marcos, much less Fausto (who I have never been able to

corner for an interview). And so, I will just have to let the information stand rather awkwardly there all by itself.

[47] She also quotes (ibid) Fausto's comments in the video when he considers the role video technology might play in the pueblo: "It's here, where technology plays an important role…a good use of it…we can better contribute to the struggle to keep it so our communities continue on their own paths.

[48] Hector, along with his mother and siblings, are featured on a popular post card sold in Oaxaca. Labeled "Esther Sandoval y Familia: San Andrés Chicahuaxtla," this postcard consists of a photograph taken by Ruth D. Lechuga, an Austrian-born Mexican citizen who is renowned for her Folk Art collection, so much so that her Mexico City home is now a museum (see for example, http://www.mexicofile.com/ruthdlechugamuseummexicoslittleknowngem.htm). According to both Hector and Marcos, Lechuga came to Chicahuaxtla for a visit (perhaps drawn there by the amazing textiles produced by the women living there) and befriended Señora Sandoval (who, as you'll recall, was central to the establishment of a women's cooperative producing textiles). While the family in the photo (you can see it at: http://www.uv.mx/popularte/esp/mfoto.php?phid=92) doesn't appear (to my eyes anyway) to look uncomfortable having its photo taken, and according to Hector (interview July 2004), Lechuga did ask for permission to take the photo, these days family members angrily recount how Lechuga never asked for permission to circulate the photo as a postcard, much less offered to share the profits earned from the family's image. Hector says his mother never pursued the matter because Lechuga had been most helpful to his mother around the time the photo was taken. The resentment surrounding this incident (and its reminders every time a family member passes a rack of postcards being sold in the city) is echoed in another story told about the Sandoval family. It is said that another brother of Marcos and Fausto who lives in Mexico City was approached by a photographer who asked to take a series of portraits, which were then used (again without his being consulted as to whether or not he was willing) to create the image featured on Mexican 100 peso bills. Regardless of the precision of these two stories, they both help further suggest why members of the Sandoval family would be so determined to control the production and circulation of images made in their likeness.

[49] Like Michelle Petrotta two years later, we (a small group largely comprised of University of Kentucky students) were involved in a course of study at the Center for Intercultural Encounters and Dialogue.

[50] The nephews are Nezahualcoyotl and Ulices García Sandoval. And although I am hardly a youth, I had the pleasure of meeting these two young men during that famous summer of '99 at an *Encuentro Intercultural de la Juventud* organized by Gustavo Esteva and associates at the Center for Intercultural Encounters and Dialogue. This 'youth encounter' was held in Reyes Mantecón, a pueblo just outside of Oaxaca de Juárez and it brought together a diverse group of more than 60 young(ish) people that in addition to featuring a handful of UK students, ranged (wildly) from a dozen privileged teen-aged girls from Rosario Santa Fe, Argentina to a half dozen teen-agers from Brooklyn.

[51] According to Marcos, he is very keen on recording interviews with his mother as a means of compiling an oral history about life in Chicahuaxtla, especially the traditional roles and duties undertaken by women.

CHAPTER FIVE
Situating the Collective Now Called
Ojo de Agua Comunicación Indígena S. C.

La gente manda.[1]

Tequio: organized and unsalaried collective labor undertaken in the name of
community well-being

INTRODUCING THE SITUATION[2]

Although Mexico has a long history of social movements – tied to political reform,
labor organizations, and the Church (Knight 1990a; Special Issue of *Iztapalapa*, 1982) – the
post-1982 period of economic crisis and of subsequent neo-liberal reforms (Aitken et al.
1996; Fox 2000; Vellinga 1998) witnessed significant growth in the number and diversity of
civil organizations (Cortes Ruiz 1994; Sánchez Quintanar et al. 2000). Dissatisfaction with
the historically dominant political party, the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI), coupled
with the intensification of the economic crisis in 1994-95 (which saw a marked devaluation
of the peso; see Cameron and Aggarwal 1996), provided both rationale and necessity for an
expansion of NGO activity (Aguayo Quezada 1995; González de la Rocha and Escobar
Latapí 1991). What we might call the social, human and cultural 'capital' to establish NGOs
was, in turn, provided by an increasingly under-employed but well educated professional
class (Fisher 1993; Béjar 1998; Fox 1996). Participating in the rescue and reconstruction
projects undertaken in conjuction with the 1985 earthquake in Mexico City further
strengthened NGOs in Mexico. According to many observers, after this disaster and the
economic struggles that followed it, many INGOs (international NGOs) sought to directly
fund NGOs, thereby bypassing a corrupt and inefficient government (Connolly 1989; Azuela
de la Cueva 1989). A later expansion of environmental NGOs is partly attributed to NAFTA
(Hogenboom 1996). As a result of all of these factors, Mexican NGOs now address a wide

range of concerns, including, but not limited to: rural development (Alatorre F. and Aguilar 1994; Martinez Abundiz 1994; Fox 1992), human rights (Amnesty International 1986; Ayala 1999; Nagengast et al. 1992), and NAFTA (Robey 1999), women's issues (Townsend et al. 2000; Zapata Martelo 1998; Bernal Santa-Olaya et al. 1999) and environmental problems (Reilly 1992; Silva 1994).

Encouraged by favorable modification of federal laws regulating their activity in Mexico during the early 1990s, the participation of INGOs and NGOs in state-society relations intensified (Casares Elcoro 1993). Despite sometimes being seen as the means for greater democratization (Kleinberg 2000), NGOs in Mexico find it difficult to operate outside the aegis of client-patron relationships that seventy years of PRI political dominance have solidified as the *modus operandi* for the distribution of state resources (Fox and Hernández 1992; Gledhill 1999; Hellman 1994). Research suggests that the historical presence of local leaders fortified by federal funds tends to structure NGO activities (Fox and Hernández 1989), and so the organizational culture of clientelism is often replicated within Mexican NGOs (Miraftab 1997; Fox 1994a; Arellano Gault 1999). In short, although NGOs are generally celebrated (and sometimes rightly so) as instrumental in the construction and maintenance of what are commonly identified as 'transnational networks of advocacy' that support grassroots initiatives in Mexico (e.g., Esteva and Suri Prakash 1998), negotiations pertaining to NGO projects rarely remain untouched by a long history of cultural and class conflict in rural Mexico (Corbett 1979; Bailón 1990; Dennis 1987; Gijsbers 1996; Parra Mora 1993; Schryer 1990). Furthermore, neither are Mexican NGOs severed from governmental programs. The transnational relations shaping structural adjustment programs and related institutional decentralization have dramatically revamped state development programs in rural Mexico (Sánchez Quintanar et al. 2000). Jonathon Fox

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argues that since the early 1980s, related changes in bargaining relations between rural development agencies and indigenous organizations have, to varying degrees, empowered local social actors and led to the thickening of civil society in Oaxaca. While authoritarian clientelism ("the threat of the stick") continues to discourage trans-local linkages in some places, in others it is increasingly replaced by semi-clientelism ("the threat of the withdrawal of carrots") that fosters independent organization and greater local control of resource allocation. These changing state-society relations contribute to greater social capital and regional linkages that empower community development initiatives (Fox 1994a-c and 1996). Although diminished funding and political shifts in the last few years have reduced state support, community-based organizations utilize the negotiating and self-management skills they learned through their participation in state programs to engage with the growing numbers of development NGOs operating in Mexico (Miraftab 1997, 369).

The sharp increase of NGO-mediated networking in Mexico mirrors global patterns of NGO activity (Edwards and Hulme 1992; Dichter 1999). Throughout the south, states have responded to neo-liberal structural adjustment programs and persistent economic crises by reducing investments in social programs and reworking development policies (Gwynne and Kay 2000; Slater 1999). Often identified as a symptom of these alterations in state-society relations, NGOs participate in the thousands of transnational networks of advocacy that support causes relating to the environment, grassroots development, human rights and women's issues ((UIA) 2000; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Bryer and Magrath 1999; Van Tuijl 1999). Recent research on INGOs, for example, explores their influence on the development and conservation discourses that NGOs mobilize to formulate and execute their local projects (Torres 1997; Sundberg 1998a and b; Meyer 1996; Silva 1998; Price 1994). On the one hand, this cultural exchange of ideas and practices is said to provide NGOs with

resources that allow them to "scale-up" their ambitions by connecting local initiatives with global environmental, political and social concerns (Uvin and Miller 1996; Uvin et al., 2000; Uvin 1995; Ebdon 1995). On the other hand, INGOs are viewed as powerful agents that foster neo-liberal economic policies (Gideon 1998; Petras 1999). Within this scalar vision of advocacy and antagonism, grassroots support organizations (GRSOs) work with INGOs, government organizations (GOs), and community-based organizations as they redistribute money or equipment, host training workshops, and/or oversee local projects relating to global initiatives (Uphoff 1993; Manzo 2000; Desai and Preston 2000; Bebbington et al. 1993). Serving as nodes in flows of resources due to their affiliations with INGOs and transnational foundations, GRSOs are often classified as 'intermediary NGOs' (Stremlau 1987; Carroll 1992; Markowitz 2001). Because of their multi-scaled operations, intermediary NGOs and GRSOs are viewed as pivotal for integrating grassroots participation into national development projects (Alam 1998; Fisher 1993; Parajuli and Kothari 1998). Intermediary NGOs and GRSOs are also seen as bridges between state and civil society that lead towards greater democratization (Gray 1999; Hamilton 2000; Mercer 1999), and as vehicles for grassroots negotiation of global markets (Henderson 2000; Meyer 1995; Robinson 1994).

This dissertation provides a 'case study' of the sort of collective action (in this case among institutions, organizations, individuals and videos) and the socio-spatial relations that enable them, which are commonly identified as *transnational networks of advocacy*. In addition to positioning the collectivity now called Ojo de Agua Comunicación Indígena S.C. (*sociedad civil*, which is Mexico basically means an NGO with profit-making aspirations driven by hopes of organizational sustainability) within the ethnopolitical, organizational and comtech-mediated contexts of academic advocacy and cultural activism introduced in the two

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previous chapters, this chapter situates an intermediary NGO within changing state-society relations in Mexico. My story, however, is not told with the scalar vision so prominent in NGO analysis. Given my predilection for what I've come to call a post-colonial feminist analytical lens (see chapter two), I seek to sidestep a traditional geographical obsession with vertical exchange and tidy tracings of nodes and linear, usually unidirectional linkages. In lieu, I offer a horizontal examination of coalitions and collaborations that is mindful of gaps in my knowledge and honest about my preferred mode of storytelling. Because I am effectively writing the biography of a collective, I review (and perhaps bore you) with what may be considered excessive detail. I do this because the details provide evidence for how the far-flung relationships that are often called 'transnational networks of advocacy' are forged through very personal geographies that are not visible on the radar screen of scalar analysis. My story about the emergence of *Ojo de Agua Comunicación Indígena* unfolds in four parts: 1) Initial Entanglements, 2) Taking Shape in the City, 3) Expansion, and 4) Establishing Authority.

INITIAL ENTANGLEMENTS

Teófila Palafox, Luis Lupone and INI

In the mid-1980s, Teófila Palafox Herranz was a key figure in a weavers' cooperative based in San Mateo del Mar, an Ikoods (a.k.a., Huave) community on the coast of a large lagoon along the Pacific coast in the Isthmus of Oaxaca, not far from the city of Salina Cruz. According to Hernández-Díaz et al. (2001, 167-8), this organization[3] was established in the early 1980s in order to bring young women from San Mateo together to rescue, replicate and revitalize rapidly disappearing traditional weaving techniques, color combinations, and textile

designs. For the first 10 years of its existence, the cooperative's training and commercialization efforts were supported by the *Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* (INAH), which purchased their products for resale in the gift shop of INAH's *Museo Nacional de Antropología* in Mexico City. While under Palafox's leadership, the weaving collective also benefited from the support of various (unnamed) universities, the Russian Embassy, *Culturas Populares*, and the *Sistema Nacional de Desarrollo Integral de la Familia* (a.k.a., DIF), which provided credit that facilitated the group's purchase of thread (ibid, 167). In the early 1990s, the Smithsonian Institution invited Palafox to New York City to assist the curators selecting materials for the newly established National Museum of the American Indian. In the Smithsonian-published book featuring the reflections of those who were chosen for this task, the brief introduction to Palafox's comments on weaving, women's work and traditional medicine notes her travels to Russia and Chile at the invitation of those interested in her weaving work (Palafox and Olivares 1994, 176).

In addition to these contacts, Palafox's organization probably also established relations with the INI regional coordinating office located in San Mateo del Mar.[4] I make this assumption because in July 1985, Palafox represented the collective at a gathering in the state capital that brought together 20 weavers groups to sell their textiles and participate in activities such as visiting the *Museo Rufino Tamayo*. Shortly thereafter Palafox and members of the collective were then the sole participants in an INI cinema workshop that brought film maker Luis Lupone Fasano[5] to San Mateo del Mar for two months (November and December 1985). I glean these particular details about Palafox's organization, her visit to the capital city and the film making in San Mateo through a 1987 documentary film (shot with 8mm and transferred to 16mm) that Luis Lupone made for INI's *Archivo Audiovisual Etnográfico*. Lupone's documentary, *Tejiendo Mar y Viento: Crónica de una Experiencia ikoods*,

contains within it the film Palafox made during the workshop, *La Vida de una Familia ikoods*.

Tejiendo Mar y Viento begins with footage shot by the film crew that accompanied Russian cinematic innovator Sergei Eisenstein during a film making expedition in early 1930s Mexico.[6] We see images of a topless young woman combing her hair juxtaposed with those of a large water bird preening its feathers. This young woman then climbs into a hammock where she is joined by a young man intent on an erotic encounter. While a Spanish translation of Eisenstein's camera man's account of their travels and recordings in the 'primitive' community of San Mateo del Mar is read, a montage of the camera man's footage unfolds: oxen pulling a cart down a lane and a group of *danzantes* performing beneath palm trees. Soon the group of dancers with feathered headdresses blends into a more recent recording of an elderly man of San Mateo who is dancing the same steps he danced in the 1930s.

After this visual introduction to San Mateo, Lupone offers a close-up of Teófila's sister Elvira Palafox as she weaves and explains her work, which is a sampler announcing:

Taller de Cine Nov-Dic 1985
Organización de Artesanas San Mateo del Mar, Oaxaca
Presenta

Lupone then returns to the visual strategy of interweaving excerpts from black and white films with recordings from 1985. Scenes of people poised as comprising indigenous communities from the classic Mexican films *La Zandunga* (1937) and *La Perla* (1948) mingle with footage of Teófila and her colleagues discussing womanhood and the exhibits in the *Museo Rufino Tamayo*. The way that these images intersect with the women's commentaries suggests how Lupone incorporated classic cinema into his workshop materials for both cinematic inspiration and critical reflection. During various interviews in the film, Teófila speaks about her recent trip to the capital, shares her impressions of the instructional films

(they are, she says, pure imitation and nothing like the people and places she knows), and reflects upon the challenges of recording in her own community where many people were reluctant to be filmed. As we witness Teófila and another woman working with the camera and sound equipment, Teófila notes that people assumed that film makers automatically make lots of money and/or operate as puppets of 'outsiders.'

In between these insights, Lupone juxtaposes beautiful images of (among other things) San Mateo del Mar with footage from Teófila's trip to the nearby city of Salina Cruz. And he visually compares fishermen in their wooden canoes with the huge tankers and PEMEX refinery in the port of Salina Cruz. After a cinema of sorts is established in the pueblo, Teófila and the women screen their own film, *La Vida de una Familia ikoods*. At this point, the film turns into Teófila's portrait of the day in a fishing family in San Mateo. We see a man and his son return home from a morning of fishing. A woman prepares shrimp for the family's breakfast and then she takes the surplus to the market where she sells it to an intermediary. Upon returning home, the woman doles out the money they have saved to buy the oldest son his own fishing net. This young man and his father then visit the home of a man who makes the nets. And as an elderly woman weaves with her back-strap loom, the men negotiate the purchase. After the family returns home, the film ends and its credits run. These credits are then followed by those of Lupone's documentary, which list Alberto Becerril as project coordinator and Juan Francisco Urrusti as executive producer.

Guillermo Monteforte and INI's TMA Program

Shortly after World War II, Guillermo Monteforte's family relocated from Italy to Guatemala where his father found work as an engineer. They then moved to Canada

(Toronto, Ontario) when Guillermo was eleven—young enough, he says, so that learning English (on top of Spanish and Italian) wasn't too challenging. In 1979 Guillermo graduated from the Ryerson Polytechnical Institute (now Ryerson University) in Toronto with a Bachelor's degree in the Applied Arts of Radio and Television. Afterward he began working as a free lance film and video editor in Canada. In the mid-1980s Guillermo went to Mexico on holiday and loved it. By 1987, he had found work that allowed him to live and work in Mexico City. From 1988 to 1989, Guillermo helped filmmaker Juan Francisco Urrusti (see last line in story above) to shoot the 16mm film footage that would eventually become the full-length documentary *El Pueblo Mexicano que Camina*, which examines the economic, historical and cultural roles played by the *Virgen de Guadalupe* in Mexican life. Because this film was produced by INI (with financial support from *Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes* (FONCA)), Guillermo began editing it in INI's *Archivo Audiovisual Etnográfico*. Shortly thereafter, he accepted a job coordinating production in INI's *Archivo*, largely so that he might be more certain that the footage was edited into the documentary he and Urrusti envisioned (Wortham 2002, 145).[7] It was an auspicious time to enter this particular institutional arena.

In 1989, Arturo Warman was named director of INI, which as Wortham notes (2002, 131) allowed him to pursue the institutional reforms he had outlined as a key voice in Mexico's critical anthropology current (Warman 1970; see chapter three). Upon starting this position, Warman embarked on an institutional directive that emphasized decentralization in the form of transference. Warman's plan aimed to shift "more functions and control over institutional resources and programs to indigenous peoples" (Wortham 2002, 137; and see Warman 1989). And, at the same time Warman set out to reconfigure INI (in ways that got Salamón Nahmad jailed seven years earlier), INI was rather suddenly flush with resources

stemming from Solidarity, President Salinas de Gortari's new social development program. Jonathan Fox observes (quoted in Wortham 2002, 132) that "with Solidarity funding, INI transformed itself from a service provider into an economic development agency" (Fox 1994b, 189). In the name of greater participation and sidestepping municipal and state government agencies, which were (and are) seen as bastions of PRI-sanctioned graft and corruption, Solidarity funds were channeled through INI to indigenous production collectivities called *Fondo Regionales de Solidaridad* (recall the example of UNOSJO in chapter four, p. 128).[8]

It was within this momentarily rich and almost heady atmosphere that Warman, who was keenly interested in visual anthropology, along with Alfonso Muñoz Jimenez, who was the director of INI's Achivo Audiovisual Etnográfico, introduced Warman's pet project: a program called *Transferencia de Medios Audiovisuales a Comunidades y Organizaciones Indígenas* (TMA) (Wortham 2002, 139). In 1989 INI's Achivo and *Departmento de Investigación y Promoción Cultural* organized the seminar "Antropología y Comunicación," which brought together a collection of non-indigenous scholars and filmmakers to discuss how the transference imperative might be applied within the Archivo (Wortham 2002, 142; see also *Hacia un video indio* 1990).[9] Official descriptions of the program that resulted from such discussion stressed the goal of democratizing the drastically asymmetrical and unidirectional access to mass media in Mexico in order to more broadly represent the country's pluricultural composition and to foster the development of an indigenous visual language. Warman gave Muñoz free rein to design and implement the TMA program; and Muñoz turned to three media professionals living and working in Mexico City: Guillermo,[10] Carlos Cruz, and Juan Cristián Gutierrez. According to Wortham (2002, 144), after earning a MA in philosophy Guitierrez had worked for both Mexican television and the BBC of London. Cruz, who like Guillermo

was a graduate of film school and "was poised to solidify his career in more commercial circuits of media production" (i.e., a soap opera and a film series), but signed on to help develop the TMA project because of the excitement of trying and learning something completely new—despite having very little experience with or even knowledge of indigenous peoples (ibid). Cruz told Wortham (ibid, 145) that he and the others of the TMA team decided it was more important to "create the potential for the development of indigenous visions of themselves than to make one more ethnographic film."

Guillermo, who does not see himself as a very institutional sort of person, found himself drawn into the TMA program's development. Guillermo recounted to Wortham the logic with which Cruz convinced him to join the project: "Look Guillermo, mass media are going to reach [indigenous people] anyway, what we can do is make sure it reaches them in a way they can appropriate it, make it theirs so they can become more than passive beings invaded by all of this stuff." This logic of protective defense, notes Wortham (ibid), became an underlying rationale for the TMA program. On the basis of an interview with Muñoz in 1996, however, Wortham adds (ibid, 143) another (but generally unspoken) institutional aim that resonates with INI and other government agencies' reliance on cultural promoters working in indigenous communities (cf. chapter three). Muñoz told Wortham (ibid) that, in the case of the TMA program, the economic-research strategy of placing camera-equipped local fieldworkers within communities would not only permit gathering material from an 'insider perspective,' but also allow longer and less-expensive shooting periods for INI's own film projects. Despite such visions of its potential usefulness, during the TMA program's existence it remained on the fringe of INI's infrastructure and thus largely locked outside the institution's hierarchical power relations. Furthermore, as the recipient of Director Warman's patronage, the program was resented; and, given the high rate of illiteracy among indigenous

peoples, it was also dismissed by some as a ludicrous expenditure (ibid, 139 and 145). By early 1994, both Warman and Muñoz, notes Wortham (140), were forced out of INI; and the TMA program's funding for outright technology transfers and extended workshops ground to a halt. It is probably no coincidence that Salinas's Solidarity programming had been shut down or drastically revamped by incoming President Zedillo's administration shortly before then.

A Portrait of TMA Participation: Crisanto Manzano and Pueblos Unidos

Although designed in the Mexico City offices of INI's Archivo, the outreach strategies of the TMA program unfolded between 1989 and 1994 in the guise of four extended (six to eight week long) workshops held in Tlacolula de Matamoros. Because of the successful lobbying of INI's Oaxaca state delegation (which, given its representation of the largest indigenous population in Mexico, is INI's largest state delegation), the workshops wherein a total of 85 individuals were trained in basic pre-production (the development and organization of a video), production (camera technique), and image editing were held in Tlacolula, a large and busy pueblo in the Central Valley region about 30 minutes from the center of the capital city. According to Wortham (2002, 148), TMA funds allowed the Oaxaca delegation to furnish their new training center in Tlacolula; and of the 37 indigenous organizations that were invited to send representatives to participate in the TMA workshops, fourteen were based in Oaxaca (Cremoux 1997, 75).[11] Furthermore, four of the ten trainee spots at the first workshop in 1990 were reserved for representatives of Oaxacan organizations (Wortham 2002, 148). Crisanto Manzano Avella was chosen as one of these four.

In 1952, Crisanto was born in the Zapotec community of Tanetze de Zaragoza, which is located in a micro-region referred to as the Rincón of the Sierra de Juárez. At the age of six, Crisanto began elementary school, which he finished in 1967 when he was 15. Afterward, he moved to Mexico City hoping to further his education, but this proved impossible because of the demands and poor pay of his employment within "a Spanish household."[12] Crisanto returned to Tanetze in 1970 and dedicated himself to the cultivation of maize, beans, sugar cane, and coffee, while also initiating his participation in the *cargo* system of local governance. After Crisanto worked his way up the ladder of social service, the community named him municipal president in 1986, a position he held until 1989. During his stint as Tanetze's leader, Crisanto became very involved in the regional organization *Pueblos Unidos*, which in the early 1980s brought together about ten communities to solicit state funds and construct a road to serve the Rincón. Pueblos Unidos was eventually transformed into a coffee cooperative, and then later a transportation cooperative (González 2001, 230; see also chapter six, pp. 243-9).

Crisanto attributes his participation in the first TMA workshop in 1990 to the invitation and encouragement of his friend Fernando Guadarama, who was at this time the director of INI's regional center in Guelatao and advisor to UNOSJO, a regional organization also based in Guelatao (see chapter four, p. 128). According to Crisanto (interview July 2003), Guadarama was having trouble convincing anyone to participate in the video training course. Crisanto said that he too resisted because he was unable to imagine why or how he would ever undertake video recording:

> Le digo es que yo no sé hacer video…no he tenido en mis manos ni una cámara fotográfica, ni mucho menos una cámara [de video]. Y…hasta le hice una broma, ¿no? Le dije una broma, le digo: soy viejo, no soy 'video' porque en zapoteco video es niño, le digo si yo para que voy a aprender hacer video si ya sé hacer 'video,' ¿no?[13]

But when his wife encouraged him to take a rest and make new friends before returning to the arduous task of tending his fields, Crisanto agreed to attend the workshop. Enthused by his instructors' emphasis on "porque tienen que rescatar la cultura de los pueblos, la música, la danza, la lengua, la agricultura…pues, todo lo que han venido haciendo, ¿no?" and enchanted with the technical and artistic possibilities of video, Crisanto was smitten.[14] Sadly, however, two weeks before the end of the workshop, Crisanto received word that one of his brothers living in Mexico City had been killed. Obliged to retrieve his brothers' remains and anxious to grieve with his family, Crisanto missed a week of the workshop. Upon his return to Tlacolula, he chose to record Day of the Dead festivities in the Zapotec pueblo Santa Ana del Valle, which was nearby. During the subsequent process of reducing four hours of images to a 15 minute video short, says Crisanto, he discovered what video can do:

> Entonces ahí me di cuenta que si se puede trasmitir tu sentimiento que tienes dentro, aquí el corazón y la mente. Entonces ahí fue como yo empecé a trabajar en este video, ¿no? Y entonces me di cuenta que si pues, se pueden hacer muchas cosas con video, trasmitir mensajes, sentimientos, alegrías, ¿no? Todo, todo lo que quieras por medio del sonido y de la imagen.[15]

The TMA personnel were very pleased with his video about Day of the Dead in Santa Ana del Valle. They invited Crisanto to participate in the second workshop in Tlacolula—this time as an assistant instructor.

After the gratifying experience of the first TMA workshop, Crisanto had returned to Tanetze with the video equipment (a super-VHS video camera, a tripod, two VCRs, two monitors, and a rewinder) that was given to Pueblos Unidos. This was the first video technology to arrive in Tanetze, notes Crisanto, and so folks were very uncomfortable and he really had to make an effort so that they might become accustomed to the camera and to being filmed.[16] Not long after his return to Tanetze, Crisanto got permission of a *mayordomo* responsible for the annual fiesta devoted to the Virgen de la Soledad (December 18) to

record the primarily church-related festivities. The following year, Crisanto undertook a video review of and reflection upon the organizational achievements and failures of Pueblos Unidos, the regional organization he helped establish. Early on, in 1992, Crisanto traveled (at the invitation of INI) to Mexico City, where he stayed (in the homes of his TMA instructors) for a week in order to edit these two videos, the first called *Un Mayordomía en Tanetze* and the second titled *Logros y Desafíos*. Shortly thereafter, he accompanied Carlos Cruz (one of the architects of the TMA project) to a film festival in San Francisco (U.S.) called *Mexican Video Waves* where he presented his two video productions. Also in 1992 Crisanto screened these same two videos at an *Encuentro de Antropología Visual,* which took place at the UNAM (*Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*) in Mexico City. Crisanto then produced three more highly acclaimed videos over the next two years. The first, *Don Chendo,* recounts the life, celebrates the work, and denounces the murder of Rosendo García Miguel (Don Chendo), the leader of Pueblos Unidos, who was killed by a mob of people from his community who were enraged by rumors of his financial dishonesty. *Don Chendo* was screened at the *Congreso Internacional de Ciencias Antropológicas y Etnológicas* and the *Tercera Bienal de Video,* both of which were held in Mexico City. In 1994, *Don Chendo* was shown at the *Primer Encuentro Interamericano de Video Indígena* in Tlaxcala, Mexico.[17] In addition to video explorations of regional and community organizations and their leaders, Crisanto made another video, *La Boda Tradicional en Tanetze (The Traditional Wedding in Tanetze)* comprised of his recordings of various weddings in his community. Along with Crisanto himself, this video traveled to the *Primer Encuentro de Cine y Video de los Pueblos Indios Abya-Yala*, which was held in Quito, Ecuador in 1994. Additionally, with the assistance of personnel at the *Dirección General de Culturas Populares* in Mexico City, *La Boda Tradicional* was reduced from 35 minutes to a seven minute vision of the sequence of events of a wedding in Tanetze. Between 1994 to 1995, this

short version, included in an exhibition called *Travel with the Ancients*, toured several American cities after being housed at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

Juan José García, Clara Morales, and Guelatao's XEGLO and Comunalidad

Born on the first of April in 1970, Juan José García Ortiz grew up in Guelatao de Juárez.[18] When he was 15 years old, Juan José relocated to Santa Lucía del Camino, a community on the edge of the capital city, where he studied internal combustion engines at a technical high school. According to Juan José, he embarked upon this course of study because his father encouraged him to choose a financially lucrative career; but in fact, his interests lay in the musical realm. During his four years of schooling, Juan José volunteered as a 'roadie,' accompanying members (such as Jaime Luna) of the Guelatao-based music collective, *Trova Serrana* (see chapter four, pp. 126-30), as they toured throughout Oaxaca. By 1989, Juan José had given up his formal studies to work part-time in a *papelería* [office supply store] and as a broadcast and recording technician at a semi-commercial radio station/recording studio[19] in the city. This allowed him to pursue classes in percussion, which eventually allowed him to play drums with Trova Serrana. Early in 1990, he gave up both jobs to travel with the group throughout the Yucatan peninsula performing for Mayan communities during National Solidarity Week. Afterward Juan José moved back to Guelatao, determined to contribute his recently-acquired radio and audio know-how to the newly established INI station XEGLO. Living with his mother (just down the lane from the radio station) made it possible for him to begin as a volunteer and then continue with only the small payments he received for projects.[20] Not long after his return, Juan José became romantically involved with Clara Morales Rodríguez.

Clara had relocated from the Tuxtepec area to Guelatao a year or so before to satisfy the final component of her nursing degree, a year of social service. In addition to her nursing education, Clara brought with her the rather exceptional organizational experience of her family. When Clara's mother was six years old, she and her family were geographically and culturally relocated by the rising waters and ethnocide (Bartolome and Barabas 1973 and 1990) created by the Miguel de Oro hydroelectric project and related development initiatives (Melville 1997).[21] Drawing upon his experience in fighting for state concessions in territorial conflicts in the region surrounding the city of Tuxtepec, Clara's father served as radical and innovative actor in the regional administration of the federal CONASUPO programming (see n33 in chapter 4, p. 150). He then helped establish and orchestrate the *Coordinadora Estatal de Productores de Café de Oaxaca* (CEPCO), a state-wide coffee cooperative. To this day, Clara's father remains highly respected; for example, Jaime Luna has invited him to participate in radio programs broadcast on XEGLO. Several of Clara's eight siblings support their families by way of their organizational skills. For example, two brothers work with CAMPO A.C., an influential and important intermediary NGO operating throughout Oaxaca (see p. 191 below); and one sister holds a leadership position within *Sección 22*, the powerful state delegation of the national teachers' union. Before arriving in Guelatao, Clara had previously volunteered as a communications liaison for CEPCO projects in coffee producing communities of the Papaloapan region of Oaxaca. After she settled in Guelatao, she began working with representatives of the Japanese aid agency, JICA, who were supporting artesian projects undertaken by Trova Serrana-Comunalidad.

Throughout the early 1990s, Juan José and Clara (who sang with the group) traveled and performed with Trova Serrana (for instance, during their excursions to Venezuela and Costa Rica). By 1992, Juan José had begun to apply his now rather extensive experience with

radio scriptwriting, audio production, and editing to video making endeavors. Responding to the requests of community authorities, station manager Aldo González (see chapter four, pp. 128-30) would send off Juan José, and perhaps another member of Trova Serrana, with their backpacks, XEGLO's video camera, and a tripod wrapped in a sleeping blanket, to attend and record important public assemblies, annual fiestas, and other important events in the region. According to Juan José, in 1992 he produced his first edited video—an audiovisual summary of the activities surrounding the music workshops given to children in the region by members of Trova Serrana (see chapter four, p. 129). His next video project featured four short video vignettes that encapsulated the regional political economy, cultural practices, and social structures found in the Sierra de Juárez, accompanied by a soundtrack of Trova Serrana's music (including a song sung by Clara). One of the capsules, *Nosotros Los Serranos*, focused on the ecology of community forestry practices. This video traveled with Jaime Luna, in June of 1992, to the UN environment and (sustainable) development forum (a.k.a., the Earth Summit) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. There it helped garner funding for Comunalidad, the *asociación civil* (i.e., a local NGO that is legally recognized as a lawful receptor of transnational support) into which Trova Serrana transformed shortly after Luna's return from Brazil.

On July 5th 1992, Juan José and Clara became parents when their son Pablo was born. Not long afterward, Juan José organized the *Primera Muestra de Video Indígena de Oaxaca*, which took place in the Municipal auditorium in Guelatao with a video project recently acquired by UNOSJO. That year (which must have been very busy on multiple fronts)[22] both Clara and Juan José briefly met Guillermo Monteforte when he came to Guelatao to attend a meeting about mingling the TMA program's efforts with those of Comunalidad's.[23] They didn't, however, really get to know Guillermo until 1993 when he came to use the ¾-inch

video editing equipment housed in XEGLO's recording studios. Guillermo spent several weeks in Guelatao editing *Espíritu del Agua*, a video about a women's collective based in communities of African descent on the Pacific coast of Oaxaca—a project he had undertaken with two anthropologists, Emma Beltrán and Cristina Velasquez. Clara was asked to narrate this video and Juan José spent hours at Guillermo's side, observing and discussing the processes and practices, such as editing, that comprise video production.

Over the next several years, Juan José produced numerous 10-60 minute videos, many of which were for *La Revista de la Sierra*, a program which was broadcast (first weekly and then more sporadically) on Channel 9, Oaxaca's semi-public television station. Although he didn't participate in any of the four extended workshops in Tlacolula, and while he was unable to attend much the workshop given by TMA personnel (primarily Carlos Cruz) in late 1991 at the radio station because Clara was unwell, I think that Juan José's early video work embodies the aesthetic imparted through INI-mediated video endeavors. And as such, it supports Guillermo's observation that shortly after its emergence, the TMA program moved from a focus on dreams of producing visual anthropology to the pedagogy of documentary. It also provides evidence for Erica Wortham's argument (2002, 157) that the program "prefigured *video indígena* as documentary." Following John Tagg (1995, 8-11), I see the discursive practices of documentary as an institutional strategy to keep reform "contained within the limits of monopoly capitalist relations," which arose in response to:

> a moment of crisis not only of social and economic relations and social identities but, crucially, of presentation itself: of the means of making the sense we call social experience….[that] articulated with and extended the sphere of influence of a restructured state apparatus in ways which integrated social regulation in an unprecedented manner (ibid, 8-9).

With the testimonial power of documentary, institutions and individuals operationalize what they believe to be 'neutral' visual technologies to capture and circulate information. And as

Tagg underscores, all too often this mode of representation—even when, as with the TMA program, "closely associated with an imperative to set the historical record straight by revealing long-ignored realities of marginalized people's lives" (Wortham 2002, 157)—can ignore and thus elide linkages (or the lack thereof) between state-sanctioned political-cultural change and institutional infrastructures.

In 1992, for example, Juan José produced a program for the *Revista de la Sierra* series called *Así es mi Tierra*. This 23 minute long video documents some of the healing practices used by the *curanderos* in the Mixe community of San Cristóbal Chichicaxtepec. It does not, however, ever mention programs connected to INI and/or *Culturas Populares* that at this time were supporting community centers concerned with traditional medicine research and related health care services. Nonetheless, scenes showcasing San Cristobal Chichicaxtepec's new clinic, as well as brief (and rather obscure—in that it appears on materials used to line the shelves where tinctures are stored in the clinic) visual reference to Bonfil's work, hint at the relevance of such institutional ideas and organizational relations (cf. chapter three). Furthermore, by coincidence (or destiny), this video allows me to point out the overly optimistic nature of Juan José's insistence that indigenous video serves "como un espejo" [like a mirror] that is primarily directed "hacia adentro" [toward the inside] and only secondarily directed "hacia el exterior de la comunidad" [toward the outside of the community]. One of the three vignettes in this video about traditional healers in action features my husband's cousin who is brought to Chichicaxtepec by his mother (who, interestingly enough, is trained as a nurse) to be diagnosed.[24] According to my husband's aunt, neither she nor her family ever saw the footage recorded that day, much less the edited video. Nonetheless, Guillermo provided the video with English subtitles in 1995. Juan José then presented the video to the largely English speaking audiences attending the

Smithsonian's 1997 Native American Film and Video Festival in New York City, and more recently, the screenings connected to the *Mexico Native Video* tour that the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian sponsored in April of 2003. This video's fractured topography highlights the tensions among the hopeful ambitions of individuals, and the persistent geographical limitations of communication technologies. More specifically, Channel 9's broadcast range doesn't reach far beyond the central valley region of Oaxaca and Juan José says that he didn't have resources for either making multiple copies and/or traveling back to communities to share the results of his recording. And when transnational institutional resources *were* made available for distribution, they were directed toward diffusion of indigenous video far beyond the places where they were recorded.

Another example of earlier video work of Juan José and Clara (Clara is credited with sound) is *Seenau Galvain (Sigue la Vida)*. This project was initiated after Juan José traveled to the isthmus of Oaxaca in 1993 to attend a gathering of Zapotec authorities, activists, and academics.[25] There he met a member of a family-based weaving cooperative called *Sarapes Arte y Tradición* located in Teotitlán del Valle (a pueblo not far from the capital city, out towards Tlacolula). *Seenau Galvain* suggests that this group was keen to make a promotional video convincing consumers of the value of the *tapetes* weavers in the cooperative crafted with the time-consuming, but more environmentally friendly, traditions such as using 'natural' dyes (e.g., indigo and cochineal), as opposed to using synthetic ones. While emulating the purported mirroring properties of documentary, this video doesn't 'reflect reality' as much as it diffracts a particular vision of weaving (see chapter two's discussion of diffraction, pp. 55-6). For example, the community's (and this family's) long history of weaving and unfortunate (for them) reliance on middle-merchants who dictate design and price is highlighted. Also visible are the global markets, embodied by tourists shopping in the

cooperative's store, through which their weaving products circulate (cf. Wood 2000 and 2001; Stephen 1991). Additionally, should you come across the version made with English subtitles it would provide insight into at least one of the video's intended audiences.[26] On the other hand, however, while viewers see the young men of the cooperative listening reverently to an older man, and hear them discussing how they learned weaving skills and techniques from their fathers, not one of the women seen carding wool, spinning yarn, or tending children addresses the camera, nor are they introduced by name—as are the men. This obliviousness to women's labor, which is nonetheless essential to family endeavors, is also visible in Juan José and Clara's family relations. For example, Clara pointed out that when she was working with JICA in 1996, she was offered the chance to travel to Japan for a photography course, but she felt obliged to decline because their son, Pablo, was only four years old. But, Clara told me, when Juan José was presented with many similar opportunities (before, during and afterward), this sort of mobility-limiting obligation didn't even cross his mind.

TAKING SHAPE IN THE CITY

Sergio Julián Caballero and Bruno Varela: Living at the CVI

The idea of a creating an indigenous video center grew out of concern for fostering project continuity, given the many technological and geographical challenges facing those trained in the use of video technologies during the TMA workshops; the design team's recognition that their plans for regular follow-up visits to communities where equipment had been donated through the TMA program simply weren't going to happen; and their desire to facilitate the video projects of indigenous peoples with cameras who didn't participate in the

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TMA workshops. According to Erica Wortham (2002, 173), due to a flood of Solidarity money into the TMA in 1993 (just before Salinas's *sexenio* ended), Guillermo was suddenly assigned the dual task of crafting a proposal for a national indigenous video center and figuring out in two weeks how to spend $200,000 (USD) on its establishment and outfitting. Guillermo told Erica that he began to compose the proposal, but then decided to hold off because "he didn't feel right about spending so much money without taking the time to carefully think things through" (ibid).[27] Fortunately, however, a year later Guillermo was able to submit a more thought out proposal, which was approved by those who controlled INI's purse strings. With the resultant resources, Guillermo refashioned a (two-story, four bedroom, 1½ bath) residence in *La Cascada,* an upper-middle-class neighborhood in the capital city of Oaxaca, into a vibrant place dedicated to creative and video-mediated social endeavors, frequently informed by oppositional cultural politics.[28]

The *Centro de Video Indígena* (CVI) was inaugurated in May of 1994, but due to unfortunate budgetary practices (e.g., the new TMA director who had recently replaced Muñoz spent extravagantly on inauguration promotion and press (Guillermo cited in Wortham 2002, 175)), it opened without an operating budget. To make matters worse, a few months later, Mexico experienced a profound economic recession marked by extreme currency devaluation, which basically left the CVI without the means to pay salaries for the 'official' staff: Guillermo (the director), an administrator-secretary, and a technical assistant. To deal with this crisis, Erica observes (Wortham 2002, 175), "[Guillermo] Monteforte paid the staff from his own pocket during much of the year, dipping into award money he received for one of INI's last major documentaries, *Pidiendo Vida* (1992)."[29] At the CVI, Crisanto Manzano and another indigenous video maker, Emigdio Julián Caballero, who also had emerged from one of the earlier TMA workshops in Tlacolula, shared the position of

technical assistant. They rotated two week stints; living at the CVI and helping Guillermo provide technical assistance to whomever presented themselves with video projects. Emigdio was from a Mixteco pueblo named San Antonio Huitepec located in the mountainous part of the Oaxacan *distrito* of Zaachila, where shortly before the CVI's inauguration he mentioned the possibility of employment at the CVI to the twenty-three year old Sergio Julián Caballero (who is not related, despite the same surname).

The oldest of nine siblings, Sergio had grown up with Emigdio in San Antonio Huitepec.[30] Although both of his parents are fluent speakers of Mixteco, they generally refrained from doing so with their children and so Sergio learned to speak Mixteco from his grandparents who spoke no Spanish. When he was fifteen, Sergio finished the *secundaria* and wanted to continue studying, but that wasn't a financial option for his family. Instead, he spent about five years working in his parents' agricultural fields. Then as so many young Mixtecos whose families struggle to make ends meet in Oaxaca do—Sergio traveled five days by train to the state of Baja California, where he undertook seasonal farm work (as a *jornalero*) and sent home money to his parents. After a stint in Baja California, Sergio returned to Huitepec, spending two years farming with his family and undertaking *cargo* service before he heard about the CVI from Emigdio in April of 1994. Even though his first daughter had just been born and he knew nothing (from lack of exposure) about comtech such as televisions, telephones, computers, or video, Sergio immediately traveled to the city of Oaxaca and sought out the offices of the INI state delegation where Emigdio told him he'd find Guillermo, "un señor grandote y barbón" [an older bearded fellow]. Since Guillermo was not only deeply involved in getting the CVI ready for its inauguration, but also in charge of the last TMA workshop in Tlacolula, Sergio waited three hours until he was able to present himself to Guillermo, who did indeed need someone to immediately take up

residence at the CVI, because all the new equipment was expected to arrive from Mexico City in the next three days, even though the house still lacked electricity.

After quickly returning to Huitepec to inform his family and fetch clothing, Sergio returned to the unfamiliar city and spent the morning searching for the CVI. Once there, he waited most of the afternoon for someone to arrive and unlock the door. Sergio spent close to two weeks alone in the CVI, receiving trade and delivery people. Finally, he had spent all his money on candles and food and was forced to the ask Guillermo about his salary (about $500 MXP every two weeks), which Guillermo initially paid from his own pocket (Wortham 2002, 177). After the CVI's inauguration, Sergio continued living there, doing the cleaning and other domestic chores in the evenings. In the mornings, Guillermo would invite Sergio to sit down next to him as he explained what he was doing with the computer and editing equipment. For the next several years, Sergio attended all the subsequent video workshops, which were more modest than those held in Tlacolula; although sometimes he was obliged to dash out to the market for last-minute shopping, for all the meals were served at the CVI and most of the workshop participants lodged in the dormitory's bunk beds. Sergio reported he also began to pick up and experiment with video cameras, learning to focus and establish a white balance. By all accounts, Sergio made incredible progress. By the middle of 1996, most every video edited in the CVI credits him for post-production.[31] For example, Sergio recounted to me his first solo post-production, which occurred when Guillermo and several others had gone to Bolivia for a video festival and workshop (see p. 187). It entailed an exhausting month sequestered in the CVI with Hector García Sandoval putting together the *Centro Cultural D'riki?*'s video about AIDS.

Another person who came to live and work in the CVI was Bruno Varela Rodríguez, who is from an upper-middle-class family in Mexico City. Inspired by a presentation given

by Carlos Cruz (of the TMA team) about the newly opened CVI in Oaxaca, toward the end of 1994, Bruno traveled to Oaxaca to see for himself what was happening. Bruno, then 22 years old, had been accruing practical experience in video production since the early 1990s. He had also just finished his required coursework for an undergraduate degree in *Ciencias de Comunicación* (which later became *Comunicación Social*) at the *Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Unidad Xochimilco* (UAM-X), where he was a student of UAM-X communications professor Adolfo García Videla—who had given a scriptwriting workshop to members of Comunalidad in Guelatao. Stating (to me during an interview in July 2001), "Soy muy obsesivo en aprender por mi cuenta" [I'm obsessive about learning on my own], Bruno explained how he had increasingly found the university setting frustrating, given its heavy dose of theory and weak emphasis on the practices of media making. He was so enamored of the hands-on learning at the CVI that he stayed there as a volunteer for approximately two more years. Initially, he intended to write his thesis (the final step in earning his degree) on the alternative communications projects undertaken at the CVI. Soon, however, he let this academic chore slide, and instead threw his energy and knowledge into the pedagogy and production activities centered in the CVI. Because of Guillermo's careful distribution of very scarce resources, Bruno basically slept and ate for free at the CVI, occasionally earning some cash as an instructor-assistant at the myriad of short-term workshops that unfolded in the CVI. For example, in 1995 the CVI housed a workshop on directing video projects, followed in 1996 by an advanced workshop on camera and lighting, given by filmmaker Mario Luna of the *Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica* in Mexico City. In the following section, I take a closer look at some of the video projects that emerged from the socio-spatial relations orbiting the CVI during the mid-1990s.

Another Glimpse of the Action Orbiting the 'Semi-Independent' CVI

Although the CVI was tightly linked (especially financially) to INI, Guillermo directed its development along oppositional political lines. These he referred to as *comunicación de lucha*, which required "a non-governmental attitude" (cited in Wortham 2002, 177). Guillermo told Erica (ibid) that "We have tried from the beginning to maintain an informal atmosphere, much less bureaucratized…and people are surprised to learn it [the CVI] is part of INI [because it] looks more like an NGO." Similarly, Juan José asserted (ibid, 178) that the CVI was "totally different, much freer, with all the possibilities of what an institution in public service should do: serve the needs of the community or society, and not the other way around, employing society to be at the service of the institution, which is normally what happens in Mexico." Wortham argues (ibid, 179) that this independent stance was made possible because the CVI lacked "a formal position within the institutional structure," since (until 1997) it bypassed the INI state delegation, reporting directly to the Archivo in Mexico City. In addition to fostering *comunicación de lucha*, and providing technical (and when possible financial) support, another intended aim of the CVI was to foster distribution, referred to by most of the TMA actors as *difusión*, which Erica notes (Wortham 2002, 171-2) meant "getting the word out, about putting video indígena on the map, so to speak, through exhibition. It is not about selling tapes." One facet of this institutional goal of broadening the audience for indigenous video was the program *Video Indígena, Visiones* produced by Guillermo and another relatively new TMA administrator, José Luis Velázquez, and broadcast for a short time in 1995 on Mexico City's *Canal 22,* referred to by Erica as "Mexico's semi-private, 'cultural' channel" (ibid, 323). I have already discussed (chapter one, pp. 13-6) another facet of efforts to 'get the word out' about indigenous video—the

orchestration and promotion of visual media festivals, a theme I return to in the following section.

One example of an indigenous video maker whose work was closely linked to the CVI was Emigdio Julián Caballero. His association began when, as a representative of an organization called *Unión de Pueblos Indígenas del Suroeste de Oaxaca,* he attended an early TMA workshop in Tlacolula. He then produced two videos, which I haven't seen, but whose titles *Día de los Muertos* (1993) and *Boda Mixteca* (1994) suggest their thematic overlap with Crisanto's earliest endeavors.[32] While sharing the position of technical assistant at the CVI with Crisanto, Emigdio finalized a video titled *Viko Ndute (Fiesta del Agua).* Focused on one particular ritual whereby people petition water and plentiful harvests for their community, this video visualizes the ways in which Mixteco spirituality is interwoven with agricultural practices and environmental understanding. According to Sergio Julián Caballero, who had seen Emigdio shoot this video in his home community of San Antonio Huitepec in the early 1990s and later helped translate (from Mixteco to Spanish) and edit the video at the CVI, *Viko Ndute* was made possible through the assistance of Emigdio's distant cousin, Juan Julián Caballero an ethno-linguist at CIESAS (see chapter three, pp. 76 and 100). When this video was recorded, Sergio explained to me (during an interview in June 2004), it was very difficult to record in Huitepec:

> por que hay mucha gente que todavía piensa que cuando tu los grabas o tomas una fotografía, le quitas el alma…por que si yo me veo en la televisión o me van a ver al otro lado ya no voy estar aquí, roban mi espíritu o mi alma, en ese tiempo era así.[33]

And so Juan Julián Caballero was instrumental in arranging for the video recording. Not only did he gain the approval of local authorities by explaining the project, but he also convinced those involved with the ritual that being video taped wouldn't harm them. Juan Julián Caballero also assisted translating the video into Spanish—which, Sergio emphasized, is very

challenging to do without losing context and sentiment—and provided Emigdio with input on the video's structure. *Viko Ndute* exemplifies the institutional contexts and visual practices of *video indígena* that shaped the TMA workshops. It illustrates the linkages among indigenous video makers and other indigenous intellectuals in Oaxaca and suggests the socio-technological hurdles they faced as they pursued their projects.[34]

Another organization that sent two members to participate in the third TMA workshop in Tlacalula in 1992, was a media collective (comprised mostly of young men who were trained as school teachers) that emerged from the *Casa del Pueblo* (see chapter four, pp. 123-4 and 139) established in 1989 with support of the Oaxacan state government in the Mixe pueblo of Tamazulapam de Espíritu Santo (hereafter Tama). While this organization was not production-oriented (i.e., agricultural) as were most of the other organizations invited to send members to the TMA workshops, the recreational, cultural and sporting events organized in Tama by this collective were greatly admired by higher-up authorities. For example, Heladio Ramírez—the governor of Oaxaca, public television camera crews, and Alfonso Muño—the director of INI's *Archivo Etnográfico Audiovisual*, attended the inauguration of Tama's Casa del Pueblo. Such support led to this Casa del Pueblo's selection as a *centro de producción radiofónico* that produced programming in Mixe for broadcast from INI's radio station XEGLO in Guelatao. It also helped offset concern within Oaxaca's INI delegation that inviting members of a group from Tama to the TMA workshops might be perceived as showing favor in the land disputes between Tama and nearby Tlahuitoltepec, (home of Floriberto Díaz, see chapter three, pp. 102-3).

The TMA workshop was not, however, the collective's first video-mediated endeavor. Not long after the establishment of Tama's Casa del Pueblo, a portion of its modest funding was used to purchase a video camera from a member of the community

who bought it while working in the United States. In 1992 two young men from Tama's Casa del Pueblo went to Tlacolula and returned with a more extensive collection of video technologies: a S-VHS camcorder, very basic off-line editing equipment, metal shelving and some lights (Wortham 2002, 268-271). Not long afterward, the group appropriated an abandoned television transmitter[35] that they used to broadcast both live and recorded programs within a 5 km radius. They also began calling their collective TV TAMIX, Radio y Video Tamix, or Video Tamix (I'll just call the group Tamix). After the CVI opened in May of 1994, two of the youngest members of Tamix, Hermenegildo Rojas Ramírez and Carlos Martínez Gabriel, started to spend extended periods living and working there as volunteers. They also polished and post-produced earlier Tamix projects such as the video *Maach* (*Machucado/Mushed*), a fond look at a traditional, symbolic and seasonal dish eaten in Tama, and produced new videos, such *Moojk* (*Maíz*), which explores the importance of maize to their Mixe community. Carlos became particularly adept at post-production and contributed his skills to numerous videos produced at the CVI between 1994 and 1996 (e.g., Emigdio's *Viko Ndute* credits Carlos, along with Sergio, for post-production). Soon thereafter, Carlos accepted a position as professional video editor at the state branch of the *Sistema Nacional para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia* (a.k.a., DIF) in Oaxaca de Juárez (Wortham 2002, 276).

Carlos and Hermenegildo were hardly alone at the CVI. In addition to Crisanto, Emigdio, Bruno, and Sergio who lived and worked there at one time or another, and Guillermo who continued on as director, Teófila Palafox (see pp. 164-7) also traveled to and stayed in the CVI in 1995 while she drew upon its technology and technical support to finalize and post-produce the video she had made during the TMA workshop in Tlacolula to which she had been invited a few years earlier. The resultant video, *Ollas de San Marcos*, offers a study of women who make their living producing and selling clay pottery in their pueblo in

the Central Valley region of Oaxaca. As mentioned previously (chapter four, p. 140), 1995 was also the year Hector García Sandoval traveled to the CVI from Chicahuaxtla to transform his rough cut of *Akoo* (a visual treatise on the problem of trash in Chicahuaxtla) into a post-produced video. Also, after receiving grants from two state bureaus: the *Programa de Apoyo a las Culturas Municipales y Comunitarias* (PACMYC), which channels resources from the federal *Culturas Populares*, and the *Fondo Estatal para la Cultura y las Artes* (FOESCA), Juan José lived at the CVI for stretches of time. In addition to finalizing *Así es mi tierra* (his video discussed above), he was also participating in the production of programs that were broadcast on Channel 9 (Sánchez 1997). Juan José wasn't the only member of Comunalidad who spent time at the CVI. For example, Carlos Martínez Martínez arrived at the CVI to draw upon its human and technological resources in order to edit and post-produce videos, such as *Mixe Espiritualidad*, which examines religious syncretism in the Mixe pueblo of Alotepec. I have offered this list of video-mediated endeavors to provide a glimpse of the activities and socio-spatial relations that took place in the CVI during the mid-1990s. This is inevitably only a partial list. Likewise, the other previous (and by nature patchy) vignettes about the entanglements from whence emerged the TMA program and the CVI, illustrate the intersections among regional and community-based organizations (with interests ranging from textile weaving, recreation, and cultural revitalization, to development and transportation projects), international aid agencies, various government institutions, and individuals who became committed to making and/or enabling video-mediated spaces of representation whereby indigenous peoples, places and practices were described, discussed, and celebrated.

EXPANSION

Increased Transnationalization: OMVIAC, Grants & Festivals, but Migration Nonetheless

Not long after the start of 1994 and the Zapatista uprising, the TMA program had a new director, Cesar Ramírez, and Guillermo (the only one of the original TMA team who remained involved) was joined by Javier Sámano Chong (who later became the director of the second CVI established in 1996 in Morelia, Michoacán). Under the leadership of Ramírez, notes Wortham (ibid, 220), "INI organized the *Encuentro Interamericano de Videoastas Indígenas*, a four-day international event that took place in a sprawling convention center in La Trinidad, Tlaxcala just a few hours from Mexico City." And out of this video festival arose an attempt to coordinate an NGO that would provide an alternative to the TMA program and would be distinguished by indigenous leadership.[36] Drawing from conversations with Guillermo and Juan José, Wortham argues (221-3) that this organization, *Organización Mexicana de Videoastas Indígenas A.C.* (OMVIAC), was designed not only as an organization to which the control of the CVI would (at last) be 'transferred,' but also as a means to present a unified, representative national body for Mexican indigenous video within international funding arenas. Unfortunately, however, OMVIAC failed to achieve its organizers' aims—largely because many actors believe it to be "*teledirigido*" (i.e., micro-managed) by Guillermo, Juan José, and Carlo Martínez (another member of Comunalidad briefly mentioned in the last section above).[37] Although there were other factors (see note 37), most observers agree the main problem was that OMVIAC was a 'top-down' initiative wherein, as Erica summarizes her discussion of the matter by quoting Juan José (ibid, 222): "They [Guillermo, Juan José and Carlos Martínez] imposed ideas rather than facilitate their development from within the group and, in effect, created a 'white elephant' with an unrealistic set of goals, too comfortable with riding on INI's coattails."

Although initial efforts to pursue indigenous video outside the aegis of INI's TMA program and the CVI never took off, *some* indigenous video makers, i.e., *those with close relations with the CVI in Oaxaca*, increasingly began to tap into funding streams originating from transnational foundations. Particularly important are the media making grants paid for (initially) by the Rockefeller and MacArthur Foundations and channeled through the Program for Media Artists, which is run by an NGO called National Video Resources (NVR).[38] Guillermo told me that the first he heard about these media fellowships was in 1994, when Teófila Palofox contacted him because a Mexican woman media maker working in Cuernavaca wished to nominate her for this award. After studying the documents describing the program, Guillermo helped Teófila compose her proposal and its budget. During this process, he contacted Tania Blanich, the NVR's Associate Director and Director of the Program for Media Artists, who wholeheartedly approved (and, as she emphasized when I interviewed her in September 2002, continues to approve) of Guillermo's coaching in these matters.[39] Teófila, who apparently also has extensive experience as a midwife, solicited resources to make a documentary called *La Sanación ikoods*, which would explore the traditional healing methods used in San Mateo del Mar. In the spring of 1995 (exactly one year after Luis Lupone, see pp. 5-8 above, got the same award), she was given about $12,000 (USD) to do so. Also in 1995, three other associates of the CVI—Hermenegildo (on behalf of Tamix because these grants generally aren't given to collectives), Crisanto and Emigdio— were nominated for this award. With Guillermo's assistance, they successfully applied for the same media fellowship, which they received in 1996. Additionally, right around the same time, Tamix (as Juan José did the year before, see p. 191) was awarded an $80,000 (MXP) grant from FOESCA, Oaxaca's state arts and culture agency. Although these grants provided resources that weren't dispersed through the CVI, the CVI's technology, human resources,

and socio-spatial relations remained indispensable for both their solicitation and operationalization.

Another means of transnationally expanding the ideas and images of indigenous video was the amplification of indigenous video audiences through screening and presenting video at festivals (I've already spelled out this argument about networking indigenous video in chapter one, pp. 9-12). As mentioned just above, Oaxacan indigenous video makers such as Crisanto had been presenting their work in international forums (e.g., the 1994 *Primer Encuentro de Cine y Video de los Pueblos Indios Abya-Yala* in Ecuador) since the early 1990s, but in 1996 their participation began to intensify. Key relationships pivotal to this expansion were facilitated by Javier Sámano Chong, who in 1992 as an INI intern attended a film and video festival coordinated by the *Consejo Latinoamericano de Cine y Video de Pueblos Indígenas* (CLACPI) in Peru. While there, he made some important contacts with individuals and institutions (such as Erica Wortham who was in attendance as a representative of the National Museum of the American Indian's Film and Video Center), who were then invited to attend the 1994 *Encuentro Interamericano de Videoastas Indígenas* in Tlaxcala (Wortham 2002, 220-1). And in 1996, three actors (Guillermo, Juan José, and Bruno) then closely connected to the CVI were invited to the fifth CLACPI film and video festival in Bolivia—not only to attend and present their media work, but also to serve as instructors during a month-long, video-training workshop in indigenous communities that preceded the festival. Subsequently, Bruno decided that he liked Bolivia (and its indigenous video making) so much that he remained there to work.[40]

This kind of transnational networking reconfigured indigenous video in a variety of ways. Crisanto, with Guillermo's assistance, used his media grant to purchase a low-end professional Beta video camera and began creating the visually-stunning, highly-acclaimed

and now widely-traveled video *Guia Toó/Montaña Poderosa* (1999). With Hermenegildo's awards, he and his cousin, Carlos Efrain Pérez Rojas[41] (who had recently arrived in Tama), amplified Tamix's range of audio and video equipment, recorded the music of their *grupo tradicional*, and made the video *Këdung Ajtk/Serving Our Pueblo* (1999), which looks at how community authorities negotiate a territorial conflict between Tama and Tlahuitoltepec. As carefully explored by Erica Wortham (2002 and 2004), however, the sometimes troubled institutional entanglements of the school teachers comprising Tamix's first generation of actors, the rather sudden influx of grant money to its second generation—young men connected to an already prominent family, and their subsequent failure to fully account (to local authorities' satisfaction) for the relationship between these resources and the videos produced by the collective have served to hinder the group's initiatives within their community. Furthermore, Teófila's video about traditional healing practices used in her Ikoods community was never made. Guillermo told me that not too long after she received the award money, Teófila contacted him about her desire to invest her media fellowship in the purchase of land so that the artisan's group in which she participated (prominently) could build its own center. According to Guillermo, since the money was still going to go toward a community-focused project this reallocation of resources wasn't terribly problematic for anyone involved in networking the funding. But while in Oaxaca, I was told by various observers that the weaving cooperatives' building was never built, supposedly because Teófila entered a relationship with a man that was not widely accepted, and so together they had left San Mateo del Mar.

Likewise, Emigdio's proposed video productions—one about the *cargo* system in his home community and another examining the same trek that he (like Sergio and many other Mixtecos) had made to work for poor pay in the fields of Baja California del Norte[42]—never

came to fruition, although he did buy a Hi-8 video camcorder. Additionally, it is possible that Emigdio encountered troubles similar to those facing Tamix. According to Juan José (in an interview in November 2001), Emigdio faced jealousies and tensions that emerged after community members and authorities learned of his financial windfall (i.e., the media fellowship), but remained uncertain about how the money related to Emigdio's video making, which focused upon the community itself. In short, folks suspected an individual was reaping profits from collective images and practices, and so Emigdio was rebuked and told to not disseminate *Viko Ndute* anymore. I can't verify Juan José's perspective (which is not shared by Guillermo, who said in an interview in August 2004 that he'd never heard about Emigdio having trouble in his pueblo) because in March of 1998, in pursuit of livelihood as well as his video project on Mixteco migration, Emigdio took his camera to the U.S.—where he remains to this day.

According to both Sergio and Juan José (who were able to visit with Emigdio during their participation in events such as the *Mexico Native Video* tour sponsored by the Museum of the American Indian in April of 2003), not only is Emigdio's (now outdated because it's analog, not digital) camera out of commission, but he has been so bogged down by his struggle to survive in the U.S. as an undocumented worker that (for a variety of reasons) he had even lost contact with his worried and cash-strapped family in San Antonio Huitepec. At the risk of making matters maudlin, I recount Emigdio's story here because, like those of Teófila and Tamix, it demonstrates the unpredictable impacts of transnational funding. Far from suggesting that these situations (which most certainly could be called failures in some way or another) provide evidence of the futility of such support, I think they offer important clues for suggested policy reforms. For example, perhaps media training programs should provide guidance on matters of accounting and accountability—not only for the individuals

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who earn grants, but also for the institutional and organizational actors that network the awards and their outcomes.

Álvaro González Ríos, Francisco Luna García, and the Grupo Mesófilo: Indigenous Conservation

Trained as an anthropologist, Álvaro González Ríos began his career working within INI as a researcher specializing in agricultural practices. Since the late 1980s, he has published important evaluations of the environmental impacts of the industrial inputs touted by institutional bureaucrats as the means to 'modernize' (theoretically through greater efficiency) the indigenous communities they generally envisioned (and approached) as troublesome relics of the past.[43] Working in tandem with Martha Rees, Salamon Nahmad, and others, Álvaro published several reports and edited collections concerned with indigenous agricultural technologies of resource extraction, and the environmental impact of their intensification (Nahmad, González and Rees 1989; González, Nahmad and Vázquez 1992). Much of his knowledge production work emphasizes the need to *not* romanticize indigenous communities as 'naturally' apt to live in harmonious ecological equilibrium, insisting instead on recognizing the profound political, population and socio-economic transformations that have shaped and continue to shape them. At the same time, however, Álvaro's intellectual work and institutional activities share the ethnopolitical perspective that distinguishes the critical work of academic advocates in Oaxaca located in CIESAS and *Culturas Populares* (e.g., González and Vásquez 1992). For instance, throughout the 1990s, he sat on the inter-institutional editorial board that oversaw the *Dishá* book series (see chapter three, pp. 100-101). In the mid-1990s, as he served as director of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) office in Oaxaca, Álvaro's analytical gaze and locus of action began to hone in on *bosques mesófilos* (cloud forest micro-regions) sprinkled throughout the Sierra Norte region,

which generally includes the areas of Oaxaca that are often identified as the Sierra Juárez and the Sierra Mixe (González and Rodríguez 1995; González 1994).

After leaving the WWF, Álvaro helped establish the *Grupo Mesófilo,* a collective comprised of three NGOs: SERBO, CAMPO, and PAIR. Run by biologists, *Sociedad para el Estudio de los Recursos Bióticos de Oaxaca* (SERBO, A.C.) centered on assessing and conserving environmental diversity. Established in 1988 as a handmaiden for NGOs, the *Centro de Apoyo al Movimiento Popular Oaxaqueño* (CAMPO, A.C.) offers technical and administrative training for a diverse range of organized actors in Oaxaca, and was at this time (the second half of the 1990s) benefiting from the financial support of the Dutch aid agency, NOVIB. The *Programa de Aprovechamiento Integral de los Recursos Naturales* (PAIR) was established by researchers in the UNAM's Science Faculty. In 1992, PAIR's three coordinators (Julia Carabias, Enrique Provencio, and Carlos Toledo) were put in charge the National Ecology Institute (INE). In 1994, before the *Grupo Mesófilo* merged, President Zedillo appointed Julia Carabias as director of the new *Secretaría de Medio Ambiente, Recursos Naturales y Pesca* (SEMARNAP).[44] Not long thereafter, in March 1995, the *Grupo Mesófilo* coalesced with the financial support from three international bodies—two international aid agencies: the WWF, an international environmental NGO; the UK's Overseas Development Administration (ODA); and the European Union. And by 1996, the *Grupo Mesófilo* had become intertwined with one of the four regional manifestations of a World Bank funded pilot project of SERMARNAP's, the *Programas de Desarrollo Regional Sustentable* (PRODERS), as it unfolded in the Chinantla, a wet tropical section of the Sierra Norte of Oaxaca adjacent to the state of Veracruz.[45] To PRODERS, *Grupo Mesófilo* contributed the design and administration of educational and technical programs geared towards the examination and incorporation of what was seen as the more environmentally sustainable development practices characteristic

of the traditional agricultural production modes, which researchers still found in some indigenous communities.

Francisco Pedro Luna García (a.k.a., Chico Luna) was born and grew up in Ixtlán de Juárez, a pueblo just down the road from Guelatao. After finishing the *secundaria* there, Chico relocated to the capital city where he finished his studies in agriculture at a technical *bachillerato* (a career-oriented high school, like the one Juan José attended). He then enrolled in a university to study Chemical Biology, but returned to Ixtlán when he was unable to finish his studies. In 1989, Chico participated in the research activities surrounding the movement to establish an INI radio station in Guelatao. The goal, he said (to me during an interview in June 2004), was to prepare the station to disseminate relevant knowledge throughout the Sierra Juárez. Starting with the first transmissions in May 1990, Chico was active in XEGLO's programming. While he never became a member of Comunalidad, with its members, he produced a live radio show that, throughout the 1990s, explored a wide range of topics (from communication, to forestry and season agricultural themes) with guests, such as Guillermo Monteforte. After the *Grupo Mesófilo* emerged in 1995, Chico was invited (by Fernando Guadarrama, then working with UNOSJO, and Gustavo Ramírez, a biologist who lives and works in Ixtlán) to join the collective in the capacity of *comunicación y difusión*, which at this time was rather novel. According to Chico, the goal of *comunicación y difusión* was the following:

> poder proyectarse hacia el exterior, poder dar a conocer todo el trabajo que venía desarrollando en las regiones donde los desarrollaba y el proyecto que ese momento estaba desarrollando el proyecto de conservación y desarrollo en las zonas de los bosques mesófilos.[46]

While spreading word about the meetings and workshops the *Grupo Mesófilo* was orchestrating in the region, Chico's radio shows summarized and shared the materials the workshops imparted. They also introduced and explained technical terms such as

biodiversity and ecosystems, sometimes in the indigenous languages spoken within XEGLO's transmission area.

Chico told me he turned to the audiovisual medium of video because it allowed *campesinos* to see what was being done in other communities and thus learn from one another. He first worked with video in 1997, during the production of *Guardians of the Forest* (*Guardianes del Bosque*).[47] This video was based on a script credited to Guillermo, recorded with XEGLO's ¾-inch video camera, edited on the radio station's equipment by Juan José, who—along with Chico—also produced the video. As its title and opening text suggest, central to this video is indigenous peoples' conceptualization of spiritual beings called Guardians, who tend territories, striving "for a harmonious relationship between the inhabitants and Mother Earth." The idea-image of Guardians helps convey the video's main argument that socio-economic crisis threatens indigenous peoples and their ways of life by encouraging unsustainable (and alien) *aprovechamiento* of natural resources. Therefore, the conservation of indigenous cultural-agricultural-spiritual practices is intimately interwoven with the conservation of environmental diversity. In addition to making this argument, this video showcases the *Grupo Mesófilo* and its alliances, and their efforts to facilitate economically solvent cultural-environmental conservation in the Sierra Juárez.[48] In 1998, the *Grupo Mesófilo* was awarded a grant from the transnationally-funded national-NGO *Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza A.C.*[49] that, combined with the revenues from the collective's PRODERS-related endeavors, allowed the collective to continue pursuing their initiatives in communities in the *bosques mesófilos*, buy its own video camera, and finance further video production about the NGO's initiatives. Chico used the *Grupo Mesófilo's* camera to produce a series of five videos (many of which were edited and post-produced in the CVI with the assistance of Juan José and Sergio) concerned with this grassroots support

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organization's activities and agendas. According to Chico, in addition to addressing an audience of other organizations and institutions, these videos[50] were utilized as instructional and inspirational tools in subsequent workshops and other gatherings.

While in Oaxaca, I had the good fortune to discuss, over after-dinner drinks, *Guardians of the Forest* with a key actor in one of the three NGOs from whence emerged *Grupo Mesófilo*. When I asked about this video, this person (who, for the record, is *not* Álvaro) actually rolled their eyes upon hearing the title. Their critique of this video, which they proceeded to share with me, sounded very similar to Conklin and Graham's analysis of the influential idea-image of the eco-Indian (see chapter one, pp. 21-4). I think this informed critic is positively spot-on in their reading of this particular video.[51] In a nutshell, the rather simplistic and uncomplicated rendering of indigenous peoples' environmental engagements portrayed in this video—while surely symptomatic of the challenge of presenting such wide-ranging material (a well-connected NGO's activities and the complexities and contingencies of spiritual-cultural traditions of environmental engagement)—fails to address a vital theme found in Álvaro's research and writing: the emphasis on indigenous communities' unavoidable and decades old immersion in the 'modern' world of state, national, regional, and indeed international politics and markets. Nonetheless, I want to emphasize that this is not the only possible interpretation of the video. Viewed as technoscience, this video provides extraordinary insight into the social-spatial dimensions of intellectual and organizational efforts to rework development 'paradigms'[52]—in this case: the introduction and promotion the idea-image of 'sustainable development.' Furthermore, *Guardians of the Forest* and its geography of production provide a glimpse of the ways in which resources and discursive practices reverberate among indigenous communities, far-flung funding agencies, and mediating institutions of different sizes, shapes and colors.

Ceberino Hipólito, Change at the CVI, and Objetivo Común

Ceberino Hipólito (a.k.a. Cheve) lives in Santa Ana del Valle, a central valley Zapotec pueblo that's even closer to Tlacolula than Teotitlan. In 1991 (when he was 17), Cheve finished his studies at Tlacolula's *secundaria* and then devoted himself to helping his father farm the family's fields, while also taking a few computer courses. Cheve's father was working in a regional conglomeration called the *Unión de Organizaciones de Pueblos de los Valles Centrales* when word came that XEGLO in Guelatao needed a Zapotec speaker (of the Central Valley variation). Despite his father's efforts, says Cheve, "no conseguimos a nadie y tuve que ir yo, llegué sin saber de que se trataba, y ya me hicieron la prueba de traducir…" [we couldn't get anybody, so I had to go, without knowing what it was all about, and they gave me a translation test]. Starting in July 1994, Cheve found himself and another young man sharing both the duties and the paltry salary of the young man who previously held their position. Rotating weeks on site (as were Emigdio and Crisanto at the CVI), their responsibilities included activating the antenna before the station went on air at 6 a.m., cleaning the station, and learning almost everything about producing radio programs; except, noted Cheve, the news, which would have been more tightly controlled after the recent dismissal of station director Aldo González for his outspoken support of the Zapatistas. After initially bunking at the station while in Guelatao, Cheve soon found a place to stay with Juan José's mother, down the lane from the radio installation. Cheve says that during the six months he worked at the station, his duties at XEGLO overlapped with the activities of Jaime Luna and Comunalidad. For instance, he provided technical assistance during Comunalidad's transmission of their videos, satellite broadcasts from the federal school system (SEP), and programs received from Channel 9—Oaxaca's public television channel.

When I asked why he stopped working at the radio station, Cheve told me that his job dissolved at the start of 1995. Given the economic crisis wracking the country at this time *and* XEGLO's recent firing of Aldo Gonález because of his stance towards the Zapatista uprising, INI was financially contracting and XEGLO's budget was cut back.

After Cheve had returned to Santa Ana del Valle, he was invited, through Juan José, to a video workshop at the CVI. Working as a technical assistant, Cheve was able to stay at the CVI as he participated in this and several subsequent workshops over the next couple years where his instructors were Bruno, Hermenegildo, Guillermo, and others. When not at the CVI, Cheve lived at home and farmed with his father. According to Cheve, volunteering and learning at the CVI was a lot like doing *tequio*. In May of 1997, after grappling with three years of a shrinking budget that steadily reduced training and production possibilities, Guillermo handed the directorship of the CVI over to Juan José. Not long thereafter, as a result of the devastating impact of Hurricane Paulina (October 8, 1997), the first opportunity arose for Guillermo to pursue his vision of an independent (from INI) media organization, which could provide technical training and creative support with income generated by video production. Operating as *Objetivo Común* and utilizing the CVI's recording and editing equipment, Guillermo, Juan José, Sergio and Cheve worked with other individuals and organizations (principally CAMPO, A.C.) to produce the video *Huracán Paulina* (1997). Through testimonies and images, this video reveals not only the havoc and heartbreak wrought by this storm, but also the persistent and pervasive political corruption that left indigenous communities more marginalized than ever. With this project, the hybrid—in the triple sense of 1) mingled government institutions and non-governmental organizations, 2) blended efforts of people who self-identify as indigenous and those who do not, and 3) technology-mediated collective now called Ojo de Agua began to congeal.

Now I want to jump ahead a bit in my narrative to examine *Shan Dany* (1999), a video production that focused on Santa Ana del Valle, and involved the same cluster of creative actors (Guillermo, the CVI and its human, financial, and technological resources, Sergio, and Cheve). More specifically, *Shan Dany* showcases Santa Ana's Community Museum, which was established not long after residents encountered burial sites and artifacts from a variety of epochs while renovating the central plaza in 1985. During public assemblies, as community members mulled over the fate of the community's discoveries and the trustworthiness of INAH (the de facto Mexican institution for investigating and coordinating archeological sites), a married couple of INAH anthropologists, who are enthused about revalorizing indigenous identity, introduced discussion about an international intellectual current that promoted community-centered museums. Agreeing to pursue the matter, citizens of Santa Ana eventually incorporated such a project into the community's structure of governance in the form of a community museum committee. One of about a dozen committees upon which (mostly) men served their *cargo* positions (see Cohen 2000 for an overview of Santa Ana's governance system), the museum committee was comprised of three to seven members. Thanks to the technical and financial support of INI and INAH, oral histories were collected and exhibitions prepared. Subsequently, Santa Ana opened Oaxaca's first community-centered museum in 1986 (see Cohen 1997 and 2001). Santa Ana's museum has since served as an exemplary model for the foundation of 15 more community museums sprinkled throughout Oaxaca. The pair of academic advocates who were pivotal to the museum's coordination went on to successfully solicit funding from the Inter American Foundation (IAF) for establishing an NGO designed to mediate INAH's orchestration and solidification of a statewide *Unión de Museos Comunitarios*. By the mid-1990s, the couple had coordinated a national *Unión de Museos Comunitarios y Ecológicos*, which now

includes 94 museums in 17 states. And in 2000, they oversaw a gathering in Santa Ana that brought together 50 representatives from 10 Latin American countries to explore the creation and maintenance of these museums. According to a recent IAF publication, this *encuentro* has since given rise to a transnational national collectivity now dispersing funding garnered from UNESCO and the Rockefeller Foundation for community museum projects throughout the Western Hemisphere (Healy 2003).[53]

According to Cheve, stimulus for the video *Shan Dany* came from Santa Ana resident Don Nicolas, a weaver of wool commodities who, in 1998, had just finished a five-year stint of working in the kitchens of Chinese-American restaurants sprinkled throughout the western United States. Don Nicolas told me (September 2003) that he returned to Santa Ana to fulfill his community service obligations. After being named to the *cargo* of leading the Community Museum Committee, he sought out Cheve and another young man in the pueblo who had experience with video. Then together they worked with the Community Museum Committee members to compose a script outlining how they wished to visually entice visitors to Santa Ana and, ideally, contribute to the pueblo's economy. The entire production took about three month's time: Cheve recorded with a video camera and cassettes from the CVI, and then edited the footage with the equipment and technical guidance available at the CVI. During this process, he shared the rough-cuts with Don Nicholas and other members of the museum committee, and then incorporated their suggestions as best he could. Although the video *Shan Dany* traveled to CLACPI's fourth Indigenous Film and Video Festivals in Guatemala (1999) and to the First Peoples Festival in Montreal (2000), no one seems to think it has served as an impetus for amplifying Santa Ana's tourism, as was anticipated. Indeed, Don Nicolas—who says he'd initially hoped selling copies of the video might augment the museum's incoming resources—sadly notes

the video project's stagnation, which he attributes to the annual turnover of cargo committees and less enterprising committee members running the community museum. Not only does this video's story illustrate the sometimes frustrating (especially for individuals and institutions not located in communities where it is practiced) facets of cargo systems, but it points to ways in which transnational labor and handicraft markets, community authorities, and indigenous identity politics have long intersected in this corner of the Tlacolula valley (cf. Stephen 1991: Wood 2000 and 2001).

Tonatiuh Díaz González, Comunalidad, and the Chiapas Media Project

At the end of 1995 Tonatiuh Díaz (a.k.a. Tona) graduated from the same communications program UAM-X that Bruno pursued. Indeed they were classmates. Tona promptly jumped on a dirt bike and headed to Cancún where he worked for the money to take the bike to South America. A few months later, his money ran out in Guatemala and he headed back to Mexico City where his (upper-middle-class) family lives. There he found work making animation for a television production house, sold his dirt bike, and ran into his friend and former fellow student in UAM-X's communications studies program, Arturo Guerrero, who was currently undertaking his social service in Guelatao.[54] Part of Arturo's undergraduate thesis included a video he made which documented the radio and video production emerging from XEGLO's and Comunalidad's activities. Tona told me (January 2005) that he was struck by the *Revista de la Sierra* video series that Juan José and others were producing at no charge for Channel 9 (talk about *tequio*!). And in July of 1996 Tona arrived in Guelatao where he visited Jaime Luna to explain that he was a media maker looking to participate, whereupon Jaime exclaimed "¡Órale carnalito, si! Pero no hay dinero…" For the next four years, Guelatao was Tona's homebase and work site where he contributed to the

now sporadic production of *Revista de la Sierra* segments, and helped out with other media making projects.

At the beginning Tona lived off his small savings, which, he notes, lasted much longer in Guelatao than it would have in Mexico City, but he soon needed to find work. In 1997, Tona was awarded a small grant from FOESCA (the state arts and cultural agency that had funded Juan José's *Así es Mi Tierra* (1995) and Tamix's *Moojk/Maíz* (1996)), to compose scripts for a series of thirteen videos exploring the history of the Sierra Norte region of Oaxaca. After he wrote nine of the scripts, a 'pilot' production was made with one of them, but unfortunately the whole project ended when further financing wasn't secured. During 1997, out of an enormous amount of video footage of the Zapatista's Indigenous Rights March to Mexico City in September 1996 that was mostly recorded by people who worked with human rights organizations in Oaxaca and had accompanied the Zapatistas, Tona created the 48 minute video *Sobre La Marcha*. The following text, inserted at the end of the video, just before the credits roll, reflects Tona's astute and acerbic analytic lens:

> Los esfuerzos de todos los participantes en la Marcha por el Reconocimiento de los Derecho Indígenas, y la realización de este video, no hubieran sido posibles sin la entusiasta participación del Dr. Ernesto Zedillo y demás integrantes de su gobierno en el doble juego, el engaño y el incumplimiento de unos acuerdos firmados ante el pueblo mexicano y la comunidad y la comunidad internacional.[55]

To edit this video for *un pago simbólico*, part of which he gave to the CVI for rent, Tona spent three months working and living at the CVI (where Juan José was now director). While the credits of *Sobre la Marcha* don't mention the CVI, Guillermo is listed as responsible for *asesoría* (which generally suggests timely technical, artistic and emotional assistance) and, along with Juan José, for *Coordinación de Producción*. Additionally, Chico Luna is credited with providing some of the footage and Sergio is credited with the video's postproduction. The

final credits of *Sobre la Marcha* indicate that it is an OMVIAC production (although it is also currently listed as an Ojo de Agua production on the NGO's website).[56]

In 1998 Luis Lupone was unable to produce a video project for INAH about Oaxaca's ethno-linguistic diversity, and so he recommended Guillermo, who was also busy. Guillermo passed the project on to Juan José, but he too was occupied elsewhere. The result was that Tona found himself in charge of gathering a maximum of ten minutes of cultural-historical (no political please) testimony, ideally *not* in Spanish, from representatives of each of the sixteen ethno-linguistic groups living in Oaxaca. To embark on this rather daunting task, Tona studied INEGI maps and spoke with Jaime Luna to identify organized movements that might be consulted as resources. After these brief preparations, he and Javier García Pérez (a member of Comunalidad) spent a month on the road in Comunalidad's VW 'Bug,' interviewing and recording. According to Tona, these interviews were then sent to Lupone, who edited them down to a video featuring 35 second segments for each ethno-linguistic group. That same year and throughout the next, Tona continued traveling. He made several trips to Chiapas to participate in the Chiapas Media Project (CMP; see chapter three, pp. 91-3). He was not the only actor in Oaxaca's indigenous video making milieu to do so; indeed, from 1998 to 1999, Guillermo worked closely with Alexandra (a.k.a. Alex) Halkin, the CMP director, coordinating (about six) workshops on camera use and editing basics that (in addition to donated video technologies) were made available to Zapatista communities. During an interview in July 2004, Guillmero said he based these workshops on the model they'd developed at the CVI. Eventually, however, Guillermo chose to give up his affiliation with the CMP in order to devote all of his energies to Ojo de Agua's forerunner, *Comunicación Alternativa* (COMAL). On the other hand, less burdened by the leadership of COMAL, Tona was able to continue working as an instructor

with CMP until workshops were given in all five of the *aguascalientes*, which was what the autonomous Zapatista communities were called at that time.

One of these trips to Zapatista zones in Chiapas (July-August 1998) included a group comprised of Alex, Guillermo, Juan José,[57] Sergio, Ricardo Dorantes (a student-advocate who was part of the collective that helped create the video *Sobre La Marcha*), Crisanto and his twenty-something son Julio, as well as some volunteers from the United States, such as retired (UMASS-Amherst) physicist George Salzman, who vividly documents this voyage on his website.[58] During an interview (July 2003), Crisanto told me that the CMP team was a mixed group of about 20 people traveling in a rented mini-bus. When they approached the heavily militarized region where the Zapatistas had established settlements, they began to travel at night and rehearsed which tourist sites they would say they going to visit if they were stopped, hoping that it would reduce unhappy encounters with a variety of check points on the roads. As George Salzman points out:

> We are behaving legally, but the government officials act arbitrarily and illegally, so we have to be careful. We may have the letter and the spirit of the law, but they have the power, and they are ready to use it to try to hide the truth. And we don't want to be expelled.

He also explains exactly why the group could travel at night: checkpoints were closed at night to allow the paramilitaries to travel at will. Crisanto described to me the group's first morning in La Garrucha, the Zapatista settlement where the minibus had arrived before dawn. Since there was no firewood, he and Ricardo went to cut it, nervous all the while because they had been warned about military snipers who were known to pick off people outside of the compound. Since there was no cookware, Crisanto grabbed a huge tin and burned some eggs for all to eat. Then they began the workshop with a survey of indigenous video production from different parts of Mexico. While there's no money to be made

making videos, emphasized Crisanto, the joy of traveling to workshops like that one in La Garrucha, as well as festivals, is what makes it all worthwhile.

ESTABLISHING AUTHORITY

Exhibiting Indigenous Identity: COMAL and INAH

Generally speaking, museums—especially ones offering 'national' overviews—are widely recognized as institutions of authoritative knowledge production shaped by colonialist representational practices (Lidchi 1997). According to Nestor García Canclini (1995, 107-144), Mexico's *Museo Nacional de Antropología* is no exception to this generalization, given the ways in which it exhibits indigenous identity as a pacified and 'pure' heritage that is frozen in time. García Canclini's argues that such representational politics erase historical and contemporary conditions of cultural violence in Mexico and deny the cultural hybridity and socio-economic diversity arising from the process of translating tradition through modernity, thus silencing contemporary indigenous peoples. Perhaps familiarity with García Canclini's scathing critique (published in Spanish in 1989), or with other similar analyses that situate museums within power relations, prompted INAH personnel who were in charge of coordinating the exhibits in Santo Domingo's *Museo de las Culturas de Oaxaca*—which opened its doors to the public in 1998 thanks to the support of UNESCO, the government of Oaxaca, and the *Fomento Cultural* division of the national bank of Mexico, Banamex—to approach *Comunicación Alternativa* (COMAL) and request proposals for video-mediated reflections on the Oaxaca's current cultural diversity. Guillermo indicated (during an interview in July 2004) their media collective was asked to propose video projects that would demonstrate the lives of indigenous peoples of today, while embedding this present in the

past. In response, COMAL suggested two productions: one exploring the community practice of *tequio* (see my definition at start of chapter) and another featuring contemporary indigenous leaders who discuss the challenges facing indigenous communities. Upon acceptance of their suggested plan, COMAL produced two very short videos: *Llin Lao/El Tequio* and *A Los Que Esta Tierra Ha Visto Nacer.*

The six-minute video *Llin Lao* offers a glimpse of a traditional *tequio* in the Zapotec pueblo Santiago Zoochila, which is located in the *Cajonos* micro-region of the Sierra Juárez. This particular *tequio* involves plowing and planting a large plot of land held in common by *los comuneros* of Zoochila, and the shared meals that follow. The maize harvested from this collectively farmed land is offered at discount prices and on extended credit to community residents who are vexed with hard times. After accompanying people to the field, the camera shows almost a dozen oxen teams as they lumber up and down rows and a large group of individuals (who, we are told, don't have an oxen team) turning over the soil with hand hoes, picks and shovels on a sharper slope nearby. Viewers learn about this communal practice through community members' comments spoken to the camera. Especially prominent is a gentleman named Don Mucio, who (according to the Spanish subtitles) enthusiastically explains both the value of *tequio* and the need to maintain it:

> El trabajo de todos, lo que es del pueblo, a eso le llamamos Tequio. Reunidos, unimos fuerzas y entonces el pueblo se siente fuerte. Por eso nosotros no vamos a permitir que desaparezca, por que nuestros abuelos lo hicieron así muchos años atrás, ellos empezaron esto del Tequio, y así seguimos haciendo hoy día. El Tequio es lo que nos une, para hacer cualquier trabajo nos reunimos en el cabildo del pueblo. El tequio es unidad.[59]

Llin Lao grew out of a short video Juan José made in 1992. More recent recordings of an interview with Don Mucio and the same field full of maturing corn plants augment earlier footage from 1992, which can be distinguished by the use of a hand-held microphone (in lieu of the invisible one, presumably extended with a boom that's out of the camera's sight)

and fewer commentaries spoken in Zapotec. Edited by Cheve and post-produced by Sergio in the CVI, *Llin Lao* is a succinct and touching portrait of tequio that—given where both the earlier and the more recent versions were made to be screened—is positioned as *authoritative*.

The video *A Los Que Esta Tierra Ha Visto Nacer*[60] offers eight minutes of commentary by five prominent figures active in an intellectual-political current that we might refer to as Oaxaca's (and Mexico's) indigenous movement. The first is Hugo Aguilar Ortíz, identified as a Mixteco affiliate of the *Academia de Promotores de Derecho Indígenas y Elaboración de Estatutos Comunitarios*, a divison of an NGO called *Servicios del Pueblo Mixe A.C.* (SER). During this segment, visually comprised of a head and shoulder shot of Aguilar speaking and images from Emigdio's video *Viko Ndute* (*Fiesta del Agua*) (see pp. 181-2), Aguilar spells out (in Mixteco, with Spanish subtitles) exactly what constitutes indigenous rights:

> Todo lo que tenemos en nuestro pueblo, todo lo que nos dejaron nuestros difuntos abuelos, la lengua mixteca, la musica, nuestro territorio, nuestro vestido, la comida; Todo esto es lo que ahora se llama "Derechos Indígenas" [spoken in Spanish], todo esto la autoridad del gobierno no quiere reconocer. No quiere hacerle caso. Asi está el problema. Por eso en la actualidad, pienso que hace falta mucho trabajo, para que la situación mejore.[61]

Aguilar is followed by Aldo González Rojas, identified as the Zapotec representative UNOSJO's *Proyecto de Derecho Indígena*. Speaking Spanish, González emphasizes the territorial component of indigenous rights and clearly connects indigenous communities' struggles to claim and control natural resources to the lack of information, which, he points out, is exacerbated by lack of access to comtech. In addition, González briefly, but favorably, mentions the Zapatistas as viewers see images from the video *Sobre la Marcha* (see pp. 208-9). Next is Gustavo Ramírez Santíago, who also speaks in Spanish and is identified as a Zapoteco. After he describes (very optimistically) indigenous communities' burgeoning interests in conservation, Ramírez is exclusively positioned as Ixtlán's *Responsable del Proyecto Comunal de Ecoturismo*, which sidesteps this biologist's connections to environmental NGOs

operating in the region.[62] The fourth figure is Juan Arelí Alcántara Bernal, a Mixe intellectual who established and coordinates the *Instituto Comunitario Mixe "Kong Oy"* in San Sebastian Totontepec.[63] Arelí insists (in Mixe) that the state government recognize and incorporate independent efforts to organize institutions designed to provide an alternative education that will encourage students to remain in their communities. The final indigenous leader featured is Adelfo Regino Montes who summarizes (in Mixe) the goals of SER, of which he is *Coordinador General*.[64]

When I first saw a copy of *A Los Que Esta Tierra Ha Visto Nacer* (in the office of Ojo de Agua), I was rather exhilarated that such a forceful review of the key themes around which Oaxaca's indigenous movement is orchestrated was showcased at the Santo Domingo museum. When I commented on this to Juan José, he somewhat checked my enthusiasm by noting that before INAH accepted this video for the new museum in Santo Domingo, COMAL had to remove Aldo's references to the Zapatistas. Upon learning this, I set off to the *Museo de las Culturas* to see for myself. Although I couldn't locate either *A Los Que Esta Tierra Ha Visto Nacer* or *Llin Lao*, I did come across a monitor in salon 14 (called *Modernización*) that was repeatedly screening Luis Lupone's documentary *Tejiendo Mar y Viento*, which includes Teófila Palofox's video *La Vida de una Familia ikoods* (see pp. 165-8 above). About a year and a half later, I once again searched the 15 exhibition salons of this museum for video presentations. This time I did indeed locate, in salon 12 (called *Pluridad Cultural*), a monitor that was repeatedly looping *Llin Lao*. The monitor in salon 14 was out of order. When I asked Guillermo about this, he shrugged his shoulders and noted that he's *never* been able to see videos in any of the museum's salons because every time he's visited, either the tape player or monitor has been out of order. Nonetheless, I think that being asked to contribute (so visibly) to the museum's exhibition of indigenous peoples indicates

the degree to which this media collective (then called COMAL) was recognized as an authoritative source of knowledge about indigenous peoples, places and practices. When I asked Juan José (during an interview in July 2004) why INAH personnel chose COMAL to identify and represent the cultural politics of Oaxaca's indigenous movement, he said:

> Es que conocemos la vida de los pueblos, los especialistas éramos nosotros no solamente en el video. Y llegamos hasta cierto punto de las ideas de la gente que quiere decir plasmar en un video y nos convertimos como en instrumentos utilizados por los pueblos para manifestar su voz y todo. Y se logran esos videos. La gente que nos ha contratado tienen la confianza de ellos, hacemos trabajos por encargo.[65]

In short, according to Juan José, he and his colleagues had become authoritative spokespeople recognized for their ability to translate-articulate an indigenous community's perspective, as well as for their creative skills with visual technologies.

As evidenced by the challenges faced by indigenous video makers in their own communities, to speak authoritatively, however, doesn't always imply a successful translation. Nor does recognition mean that a respected authority, such as Ojo de Agua, can control the images it creates (or utilizes), as indicated by their having to edit out the Zapatistas from *A Los Que Esta Tierra Ha Visto Nacer*. Furthermore, while in Mexico City this January (2005), I spent an afternoon at the *Museo Nacional de Antropología* and was gobsmacked to encounter, in the area dedicated to (some) sites and peoples of Oaxcaca, a monitor that was looping a video comprised of pieced together segments from *Llin Lao* and a later Ojo de Agua video *Nuestro Pueblo* (see two sections down below), which was created by the institution formerly known as INI. While Juan José and Roberto Olivares (see just below) are credited for their camera work and editing, there is no mention of the collective body (COMAL-Ojo de Agua) that produced the two original videos. When I mentioned this to Juan José and several other members of Ojo de Agua a week later, they weren't very surprised to learn of this institutional re-use of their material (without their having been

asked permission or even notified); but, they were rather disappointed to know that their organization wasn't credited. Clearly, Mexican institutions (such as INAH and INI) haven't been able to relocate their representation practices very far from the colonialist epistemology that García Canclini describes.

Roberto Olivares Ruiz Completes Line-Up and COMAL Becomes COMIN

In 1989, when Roberto Olivares Ruiz was 23, he finished his coursework in *Comunicación Social* at the *Universidad Iberoamericana* in Mexico City; a program he identifies as very similar to the communication studies undertaken by Bruno and Tona at the UAM-X. Since his father, a lawyer specializing in agricultural law, had recently relocated to Oaxaca, Roberto went for a December visit that year. During his stay, he found a position with the tiny and rather destitute *Centro de Radio y Televisión de Oaxaca* (CERTO)—soon called the *Instituto Oaxaqueño de Radio y Televisión* (IORT), and currently called the *Corporación Oaxaqueño de Radio y Televisión* (CORTV)*,* which broadcasts *Canal 9*, a sort of public television station with commercials. For the next two years (1990-1992), Roberto produced a television series called *Compartimiendo Ideas* co-hosted by Virgilio Caballero, the director general of the IORT, and Gustavo Esteva, who at that time was an advisor to the Governor of Oaxaca, Heladio Ramírez López (1986-1992) and head of an NGO called *Espacios de Innovación Tecnológica de Oaxaca.*[66] *Compartiendo Ideas* apparently mingled talk show and news formats. The program started with the two co-hosts chatting (sometimes with invited guests) while seated in an austere studio setting featuring two chairs. Then interviews and images outside the studio further developed the theme as it was embodied 'on the ground' (Olivares 1996, 13-14). Conceiving their audience as composed of potential agents of social change, Roberto and the program's co-hosts sought to catalyze "un vínculo productivo" [a productive link] that would

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stimulate horizontal communication wherein viewers shared what they learned with others. Tackling topics such as "el arte de habitar: alternativas de construcción y autoconstrucción" and "la otra ciencia: medicina tradicional," *Compartiendo Ideas* was designed to establish "un espacio para dar a conocer sistemas alternativos para el mejoramiento de la vida basados en la redefinición, o mejor dicho, el rescate del concepto: *Tecnología*" (ibid, 14).[67]

Roberto's thesis (Olivares 1996), with which he earned his communications degree, focuses on four particular programs dedicated to detailing the reasons for, benefits of, and mode for constructing ecological ('dry') toilets, *sanitarios ecológicos* that he produced for *Compartiendo Ideas*. More specifically, Roberto describes and analyzes—along the lines of Everett M. Roger's theories about leadership and the diffusion of technological innovations—how the series of programs on ecological toilets served as an impetus for, or an instrument of, social change. After the first three programs[68] aired, a workshop on ecological toilets was given at the IORT installations by a collective (called *Espacitos*). Two residents of the pueblo of San Luis Beltrán (located on the edge of the capital city) attended the workshop and then built ecological toilets. Pleased with the reduction in water use and the excellent fertilizer these toilets produced, they began to extol their virtues within their community. Eventually, buoyed by the organizing and creative force of advisors within *Espacitos*, the municipal agent met with the mayor of Oaxaca de Juárez to negotiate credit for building ecological toilets for each household in San Luis Beltrán. The resulting signed contract between *Secretaría de Desarrollo Urbano Comunicaciones y Obras Públicas* (SEDUCOP) and the authorities of San Luis Beltrán required the community to give up their right to demand public sewer service in exchange for the materials needed for the construction of ecological toilets throughout the entire community (Olivares 1996, 49-63). Unfortunately, however, after this successful episode in San Luis Beltrán, SEDUCOP began to wantonly

wield the ecological toilet program as a political plum. Instead of working with communities that specifically sought to pursue the construction of ecological toilets, surprised settlements along the route of governmental officials' tours found ecological toilets popping up unexpectedly in their communities. Since no one was educated on how to use them properly (e.g., it is imperative to keep urine separate from solid waste), and despite the frantic efforts of *Espacitos* to follow in SEDUCOP's footsteps offering such guidance, these communities quickly deemed ecological toilets utter failures, which (sadly) prevented further diffusion of this noteworthy and valuable technology (ibid, 66-68). Furthermore, right around this time, towards the end of Heladio Ramírez's *sexenio* (1986-1992), the IORT was beset with tension over how its employees should unionize. Finally, total revamping by the new governor, Diódoro Carrasco Altamirano, brought an end to a comtech-mediated space that was amenable programs such as *Compartiendo Ideas* and its promotion of *alternativas tecnológicas* (ibid, 68-69).

Eager to expand his creative and technological horizons after two years in a small state TV station, Roberto returned to Mexico City where he gained valuable experience working in a production house that shot commercials and music videos on film and then edited them on video. In 1994, after establishing his own business, *Azul Producciones*, Roberto once again relocated to Oaxaca. He had successfully bid on the chance to produce segments of a pilot program orchestrated by the *Unidad de Televisión Educativa* (UTE) of the *Secretaría de Educación Pública* (SEP), with the financial support of the World Bank. For the next year, he produced an average of two fifteen-minute programs a week for a television series that was broadcast via satellite to *telesecundarias* throughout Mexico.[69] With students of rural vocational *secondarias* as the target audience, and using a *telenovela* format, the goal of this series was reducing truancy by enticing students to school to see what would happen on the next

installment. Roberto told me he enjoyed making this series, particularly watching the young urban actors with whom he worked develop confidence. He also proudly noted that the *telesecundaria* series achieved sufficient success to continue broadcasting on Channel 9 for years after production finished. With proceeds from this intense year of production, Roberto equipped his business with editing machines and a professional (Betacam) video camera. This expansion allowed him to undertake commercial projects such as promotional 'clips' for political parties and government agencies (which are generally very eager to record the material results of their endeavors), and commercials. It also allowed Roberto to pursue projects along the lines of his own personal interest, such as a video he made about a Buddhist festival he attended in England.

While working in Oaxaca, which has a rather small pool of media makers that was even smaller ten years ago, Roberto had soon learned of the activities of the CVI. Given his similar interest in and experience with the politicized practices of alternative communications, Roberto was interested in their efforts and soon got to know many of the key actors involved with COMAL, which became legally recognized as *Comunicación Indígena, S.C.* (COMIN) by the end of 1998.[70] Not long after an earthquake hit much of Oaxaca in October of 1999, INAH approached Roberto about producing three television programs that would showcase the institution's restoration of damaged (and, of course, architecturally significant) Catholic church buildings in the state, and more generally examine their importance to the communities where they are located. Roberto accepted the project and turned to COMIN for his crew. For example, Tona relocated from Guelatao to his present location in Oaxaca de Juárez and spent his days in COMIN's office composing scripts for the three programs, although only one program emerged from this INAH initiative. After this project solidified linkages, the following COMIN line-up was in place: Bruno (who

returned from Bolivia at the end of 1999), Guillermo, Cheve, Sergio, Tona, Roberto, Chico Luna, Juan José, and Clara (whose name may not be as evident as other in the above recounting of activity, but whose domestic labors, child care and emotional support should be inferred every time an accomplishment or adventure of Juan José's is noted).

Popularizing Comunalidad

For a while in the mid-1990s, José Luis Velázquez Díaz was part of INI's TMA team. During that time he and Guillermo produced the short-lived television *Video Indígena Visiones*. Like Guillermo, Velázquez had left INI to produce videos in a more independent manner, what we might call free-lance. Toward the end of 1999, Velázquez approached Guillermo because he had designed, and was now coordinating, an educational series called *Los Pueblos Indígenas de México*. This project was supported by INI and the *Instituto Latinoamericano de la Comunicación Educativa* (ILCE), an international organization concerned with comtech-mediated education, established in 1956 in Mexico City under the auspices of UNESCO and the Mexico's *Secretaria de Educación Publica* (SEP), which continues today working under contract with the SEP (see note 69). Velázquez hired Guillermo as the Executive Producer of two of the series' programs that were to address the concept of autonomy, as it pertained to indigenous communities. Ojo de Agua's two video productions, *Nuestro Pueblo* and *Nuestra Ley*, were completed by mid-2000.

As director of one of the two ILCE-INI video productions, Juan José chose to return to Santiago Zoochila, where he had recorded in 1992 and then again in 1998, to work on the video *Llin Lao* (which is sometimes shown in the Santo Domingo museum). His recording crew consisted of Clara on sound, Cheve as production assistant, Roberto on half of the camerawork, and Juan José and Julio Cesar Sánchez (a colleague who works at

Channel 9) on the rest—all of which was done with a rented Betacam camera. Because one of their two-week trips to Zoochila took place at the end of October and early November (of 1999), their recordings overlapped with the preparations for, and celebrations of, the Day of the Dead. During another visit they were allowed to record a funeral in the community. Most of the resultant video, titled *Nuestro Pueblo*,[71] is "*un taco de ojo*," which is to say it is a visual feast. Scenes in the graveyard of the flowers during the day and hand-held candles at night are stunning. And scenes of the funeral in a misty graveyard and of a family decorating and explaining their altar are intensely intimate. They convey the grief of losing loved ones, as well as a family's joy upon spending time with them once again on Day of the Dead. Also emphasized is the agricultural soul of the community, embodied by men making 'all natural' *mezcal*, explaining planting cycles and labor exchange, and sadly noting the overgrown fields and their relation to increasing out-migration. As Roberto so aptly said (March 2003), *Nuestro Pueblo* offers viewers a community portrait of Zoochila.

During an interview, Juan José (July 2004) reviewed his reasons for making this video:

> Para generar una conciencia de la existencia de los pueblos de México y por otra que no son culturas estáticas. Es decir que no permanecen todo el tiempo igual, son culturas que están en movimiento, presentes, vivas que siguen hablando su lengua y que siguen luchando por la vida todos los días.[72]

Once more, the affable and enthusiastic, Don Mucio (who provided the backbone to *Llin Lao*, Juan José's earlier portrait of Zoochila) offers commentary underscoring the changing nature of his community, and, at the same time, illustrating and affirming the vibrant continuity through which change is fashioned. Although the word is not spoken by anyone featured in the video, *Nuestro Pueblo* visualizes what Jaime Luna (who is acknowledged as an *asesor* in the video's credits) calls *comunalidad*—collective labor (*tequio)*, community service (*cargo*), a spiritual-cultural concept of territory, and communal celebration. Using these four

elements as a framework, Juan José (who also edited this video when Chico Luna was not able to rise to the task) crafts his video to define and discuss autonomy as the historically-embedded everyday practices of indigenous communities that have permitted the people dwelling there to negotiate oppression and other forms of manipulation through the unifying force of their cultural inheritance. The result, *Nuestro Pueblo,* sits comfortably within the theoretical-political perspectives and practices that I sketched in chapters three and four.

Bruno scripted and directed Ojo de Agua's second ILCE-INI video production. Initially he too meant to explore autonomy from the perspective of daily life in one community, the Zapotec pubelo of Santa Cruz Yagavila in el Rincón de la Sierra Norte.[73] But, he said (during an interview in May 2004), Guillermo suggested, in the interest of a broader picture, that Bruno also travel to San Andrés Chicahuaxtla to interview Marcos and Fausto Sandoval (see chapter four, pp. 133-41). This nudge in the direction of a more generalized examination of autonomy, in tandem with the fact that, after being in Bolivia for almost four years, Bruno felt obliged to read up on "*los nuevos discursos de la autonomía*" (specifically a ms. version of Maldonado 2002). The resulting video, *Nuestra Ley*, takes a very different look at autonomy than *Nuestro Pueblo'*s. To begin with, only *Nuestra Ley* incorporates an extensive amount of texts that emphasize main points and define key terms. Furthermore, in contrast to Juan José's documentary style, Bruno's editing is jazzier, i.e., it is much edgier, more brisk, and some images rhythmically repeated while others modified in terms of color, speed or texture. For instance, the video opens with the word *Autonomía* which is then followed by the text *Auto-nomía*. When I created English subtitles for *Nuestra Ley*, I translated this very perceptive word game into Autonomy and Self-Naming. I think this beginning emphasizes Bruno's interpretation of autonomy as a complex matter of self-recognition, self-respect and self-sufficiency embedded within hotly contested cultural

politics. Like Juan José, Bruno both credits Jaime Luna as *asesor* (although Bruno also includes Benjamin Maldonado), and works with a similar set of 'four pillars' of indigenous community existence: *tequio*, territory, public assembly-*cargo*, and fiesta. Additionally, however, Bruno draws upon his trip to Chicahuaxtla to further expand this symbolic structure. During the portion of the video devoted to community governance through service, a Triqui woman observes that although women in her community have begun to be named to *cargo* positions, as yet no one pays them much mind. Also, in addition to offering critical commentary on governmental reluctance to reform, Fausto Sandoval invites the camera crew into his bilingual classroom to highlight the need for educational institutions to incorporate community-centered programs complementary to the standardized curriculum. Then Marcos Sandoval stresses food self-sufficiency by noting that the political notion of autonomy is useless if communities can not feed themselves.

Although destined to be a teaching tool, participation in the recording of *Nuestra Ley* also provided Roberto (who did all the camerawork) with important lessons for Ojo de Agua's newest affiliate. Once, when I asked him to reflect on the differences between making commercial videos and making videos about, and with, indigenous communities, he laughed and recalled his trip to Yagavila. Accustomed to recording interviews with head and shoulder shots of one or two speakers, he was surprised when almost a dozen elderly men (the *consejo de ancianos*) or six adult men (as in the case of the authorities) sat down together and began to address the camera as a group. Roberto said this experience not only taught him to revise his understanding of interviews and interviewing techniques, but it also instructed him on the collective dynamics of indigenous community governance. Roberto, however, was not the only person who garnered lessons from the production of *Nuestra Ley*. As his father (who then held the important cargo of *Comisario de Bienes Comunales*) helped

mediate between the camera crew and the community, eighteen year old Melquiades Cruz befriended the media makers. He returned to the city with them and stayed at the CVI while he translated the Zapotec dialogue into Spanish subtitles. He also provided input as Bruno edited on Roberto's off-line editing equipment in Ojo de Agua office, and watched the video's online postproduction in the CVI. While at the CVI, Melquiades became involved with Myra, the CVI's secretary-administrator. Later that year, at Myra's initiative, the two of them took the CVI's projector to Yagavila and screened *Nuestra Ley*. Through Melquiades— who now lives in the capital city and studies with Gustavo Esteva at the alternative education center, *Universidad de la Tierra*—Bruno has maintained contact with residents of Yagavila. In the summer of 2003, he and his partner Isabel Rojas (with whom he now runs *Arcanocatorce*, a video production business) traveled there to give a video workshop.

Currently (as of February 2005) *Nuestra Ley* and *Nuestro Pueblo* are listed within the *Hacia una nueva sociedad* division of programming that is broadcast via Edusat (the satellite system overseen by ILCE and SEP) on Channel 13 (*Formación Continua*, which is dedicated to long distance and institutional training). They are classified as programs that are geared towards general education on the *secundaria* and *media superior* (mid-stage of undergraduate studies) levels. The pedagogical position of their two videos within this comtech-mediated nexus of federal and international educational institutions, as well as the videos' production and content, most certainly suggest (to me) that Ojo de Agua was hired to translate indigenous movements' (or more precisely indigenous intellectuals') definitions of and demands for autonomy. In addition to providing insight into some of the ways in which autonomy is imag(in)ed, *Nuestra Ley* and *Nuestro Pueblo* work together to provide geographical lessons about the politics of representation because they embody two very different visual aesthetics. *Nuestro Pueblo* vividly portrays the sort of place-based structural-political-cultural-

spiritual entity that ground the community-centered conceptualizations of autonomy so prevalent in Oaxaca, and as such, offers opportunities for comparative analysis with other struggles for autonomy by instructors, students and scholars. *Nuestra Ley*, on the other hand, echoes such an image, but also contextualizes Juan José's documentary in two ways: 1) by enriching it—for example, through mention of the arduous, but ultimately very helpful, process of formulating and formalizing community governance into legally recognized statutes; and 2) by complicating it—for example, by emphasizing recent shifts in the ways in which women have participated in community governance and noting that Catholic priests have a significant stake in the ways that community fiestas unfold. In short, *Nuestra Ley* provides clearly-comtech-modified glimpses of the ways in which the rather organic community cohesion so beautifully rendered in *Nuestro Pueblo* may also be unevenly exclusive.

Funding Ojo de Agua

Ojo de Agua emerged from an entangled geography comprised of the socio-spatial relations among institutions, organizations, and individuals. In particular, the collective developed in a symbiotic social-spatial relationship with INI's CVI, operating under the leadership of Guillermo (1994 to mid-1997) and then Juan José (who took over in mid-1997). With its hospitality and technologies, the CVI remained central to the editing (at least until Roberto joined the group with his editing system) and post-producing of non-commercial videos made by, with and for indigenous communities in Oaxaca. In addition to arising from the CVI, Ojo de Agua took shape as a vital and distinctly urban node in the negotiation and exchange of transnational funding for the purchase and use of comtech. Furthermore, as indicated by the endeavors undertaken at the request of academic entities

such as INAH, ILCE and INI, the media collective is recognized and esteemed as a source of authoritative knowledge production. Serving as a production house—i.e., being paid to visualize indigenous peoples, places, and practices—for government agencies was, however, less a goal and more of a necessity for the collective that came to be known as Ojo de Agua. Although there was sometimes a small (so small it was referred to a *un pago simbólico*) revenue involved, part of which was diverted toward rent and telephone service after the media collective began to share an office space with Roberto's father's legal practice, much of the advocacy-activism that the members of the collective undertook with individuals and in communities that self-identified as indigenous was undertaken as a sort of *tequio*. As Clara once commented, "el altruismo pues, no se lo come…" [well, you can't eat altruism].

Such a tenuous livelihood was especially difficult for members who, with their families, had relocated to the city in order to dedicate themselves to video-mediated knowledge work. Especially for Sergio and his wife, who had begun to clean the Ojo de Agua office once a week, they had three young daughters to support with the sporadic income he derived from his time on the computer. Although a little better off because Juan José received a small salary (at its height, his monthly salary was $3,000 MXP—roughly $275 USD) as the director of the CVI, and their two children lived with Juan José's mother in Guelatao, Clara and Juan José also struggled. Despite 1999 being a busy year of video production,[74] they found themselves in increasingly dire economic situations. In addition to determined dedication of its members, one of reasons that Ojo de Agua was able to carry on as a collective was Guillermo's generosity with two financial awards he was given for media production and organizing the use of comtech for social activism. In April of 1999, Guillermo was given the same McArthur and Rockefeller funded media fellowship that he had helped indigenous video makers score during the previous four years.[75] And like Teófila

and Emigdio, Guillermo has yet to produce the video project he'd proposed to make.[76] Instead, much of this grant (totaling close to $20,000), was spent on the NGO's upkeep, maintenance, and activities over the next couple of years. Additionally, during the year 1999-2000, Guillermo received an income from the Ashoka Association in recognition of his role in mediating the training in and use of comtech by indigenous organizations.[77] In addition to allowing Guillermo to forego a salaried position with Ojo de Agua's institutionally funded projects, this award made it possible for him to accompany his partner, Paola Sesia, during the nine months (October 1999-June 2000) she spent as a scholar in residence at the University of San Diego's U.S.-Mexico Studies Center.

As it rolled into the twenty-first century, Ojo de Agua continued to serve as a channel through which individuals and videos circulated among transnational film and video festivals. For example, in August of 1999 the group proved pivotal to the orchestration of CLACPI's Indigenous Film and Video Festival in Guatemala (see chapter one, pp. 13-6), where Crisanto's video *Guia Toó* won an award. Through similar channels, this same video of Crisanto's, along with other productions from Oaxaca, was shown at the second biannual *Mostra de Cine i Vídeo Indígena d'América* in Barcelona, Spain in February 2000. Then, in June that year, Crisanto gave a talk and received special recognition at the First People's Festival in Montreal, Canada. Around the same time, he served on the Selection Jury for the NMAI's Native American Film and Video Festival in New York City, where *Guia Toó* had its U.S. premier in November. That same month *Guia Toó* was also screened at the *Festival International du Film d'Amiens* in France. But not all festival action entailed travel. In June of 2000, *Ojo de Agua* organized *Voces y Rostros de América*, an indigenous video festival held in *El Pochote*, a *cineclub* that fosters independent media in Oaxaca de Juárez. In addition to productions from Oaxaca (such as *Guia Toó*), the festival included an international collection

of videos brought back by members of Ojo de Agua from the CLACPI festival in Guatemala. Also shown was the video *Con Todo el Poder: La Represión en Loxicha*, a video of tearful and terrified testimonies about human rights abuses, produced on behalf of the *Unión de Pueblos Contra la Represión y Militarización de la Región Loxicha* by a '*colectivo*' that included members of Ojo de Agua.[78] Far from the idea-image of a picturesque cultural memory with which elements within INI conceptualized indigenous video, Ojo de Agua built upon Guillermo's vision of *comunicación de lucha*.

Although it was established as an alternative endeavor, several members of *Ojo de Agua* continued to provide *asesoría* for video projects developed at the CVI. For example, in 1999 they contributed to the video training workshop given by the CVI to members of the *Comisión de la Mujer* of the *Unión de las Comunidades Indígenas de la Zona Norte del Istmo* (UCIZONI). They were also present when this group edited and post-produced two subsequent videos at the CVI: *Abriendo Brecha* (1999) and *Ahora es el Tiempo mas Duro* (2000). Similarly, not long after Marco and Fausto Sandoval (with the assistance of Gustavo Esteva) landed a Levi's Foundation grant that allowed them to purchase the *Centro Cultural Driki'* a Macintosh G4 computer for video production, Guillermo, Sergio and Tona traveled the four hours to San Andrés Chicahuaxtla to give a workshop on its use that was attended by Fausto, Marcos, their nephew Hector García, and two of Marcos's sons. During this workshop, they edited the video *Ña'anj Du'ui* (*Dios Rayo*). Its production also supported by the regional office of *Culturas Populares,* this video explores the renewal of ritualized devotion to the god of thunder in a sacred location by a nearby Triqui community (and its *Casa del Pueblo*). At no time, however, did members of Ojo de Agua stop pursuing projects beyond the purview of this group, or the CVI. For instance, both Clara and Bruno traveled to Chiapas for endeavors not directly related to Ojo de Agua or the CVI. Clara went to help

train community health *promotores* in Zapatista communities, and, through his close friendships with the young men of Tamix, Bruno went to La Garrucha to help edit and post-produce a CMP-supported video project.

At the very end of the year 2000, Ojo de Agua gathered together for two days of reflection with someone we might call an NGO coach. More specifically, they met with Maru Mata, one of the founding members of CAMPO, who now works as a consultant giving workshops designed to help NGOs identify and enable organizational goals and strategies. This workshop gave rise to Ojo de Agua's *Documento Ejecutivo*, which is worth quoting at length. The executive document begins with a declaration of the group's faith in comtech and its conviction that visual technologies are not alien to indigenous peoples:

> Al poner herramientas de comunicación al alcance de los pueblos indígenas, se abren posibilidades de comunicación alternativa que pueden contribuir a fortalecer la diversidad étnica y cultural y al mismo tiempo, reducir la desigualdad que impera en México.
>
> Los pueblos indígenas han utilizado ancestralmente la imagen, la música y la palabra, como base de sus formas de comunicación. Los medios electrónicos, especialmente el video, les permite continuar utilizando estas formas, sumando las ventajas que las nuevas tecnologías brindan. Lo que falta es hacer que las voces y las imágenes sean pensadas y creadas para su propio beneficio.[79]

Then it describes the collective's mission, which has been augmented with the addition of internet use. Indeed, not long after this document was finalized, Sergio created the organization's website with the same text:

> Ojo de Agua es una organización de comunicadores que, mediante la producción, difusión y capacitación, prioritariamente del video y el internet, impulsa el uso y apropiación de herramientas de comunicación para los pueblos indígenas de México, principalmente en el estado de Oaxaca, creando y apoyando formas de expresión propias que promueven la diversidad y reducir la desigualdad socioeconómica y política de los pueblos indígenas.[80]

The group's vision is also spelled out:

> Construir y fortalecer espacios de comunicación que cuenten con los recursos humanos, materiales y financieros suficientes para convertirse en opciones concretas

de información, expresión y creación, y así aumentar la presencia de los pueblos indígenas y la sociedad civil en ámbitos culturales, políticos y sociales.[81]

These statements are followed by lists of Ojo de Agua's institutional objectives, institutional strategies, themes of interest, and very brief biographies of each of its nine members. Guillermo is responsible for general coordination; Juan José and Clara are in charge of "fortalecimiento institucional," which basically means building and maintaining institutional linkages; Roberto is responsible for video production, and Bruno for video training; Tona is identified as in charge of *difusión en video*; Sergio is named responsible for internet training, and Chico Luna for *difusión en internet*; and Cheve is in charge of administration, which includes handling finances and accounting. Afterward there is a diagram sketching Ojo de Agua's organizational structure. Even before the members of Ojo de Agua are listed, an *asamblea de socios*, refering to the organizations and individuals with which the media collective undertakes projects, is presented. The *asamblea* is immediately followed by a council of consultants (featuring people such as Tania Blanich of NVR, Aldo González of UNOSJO, Salomón Nahmad of CIESAS, Adelfo Regino of SER, Marcos Sandoval of *Centro Cultural Driki*, and Elizabeth Weatherford of the NMAI). Given this diagram as well as the texts found in this document, Ojo de Agua was born a service organization. In the following chapter, I suggest how these aims and ambitions played out over the next three years.

ENDNOTES

[1] Between January 2001 and August 2004, I heard this phrase spoken more than a few times within my earshot by different members of Ojo de Agua. I use the phrase to kick-off this chapter because think it nicely captures their organizational ambitions.

[2] A substantial portion of this introduction to NGOs in Mexico draws heavily upon the first draft of an NSF proposal that I helped prepare while working as a research assistant for John Paul Jones and Susan Roberts in Oaxaca during the first half of 2001. I am grateful for their permission to utilize this material.

[3] In the 1987 film discussed in the next paragraph, this cooperative is called both the *Organización de Artesanas de San Mateo del Mar* and the *Organización de Tejedoras de San Mateo del Mar.* By the time that Hernández-Díaz et al. (2001) discuss the collective, of which Teófila Palafox is *presidenta*, it is called the more gender-ambiguous *Unión de Artesanos*.

[4] This cooperative's relations with the INI regional center (*Centro Coordinador Indigenista*—CCI) were probably not unlike those characterizing the Triqui weavers of Chicahauxtla (discussed towards the end of the previous chapter) and INI's CCI in San Juan Copala.

For the record, at http://cdi.gob.mx/ini/ini/dele_oax.html you can find a handy listing of all the regional units of the federal institution formerly known as INI, which is now known as the *Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas*.

[5] According to his online biography posted by the National Video Resources, (http://www.mediaartists.org/content.php?sec=artist&sub=detail&artist_id=559), Luis Lupone studied at the *Centro Universitario de Estudios Cinematográficos* (CUEC) at the UNAM in Mexico City. Upon graduation, Lupone received a grant from the French government to study at the Documentary Film Training Center in Paris. Later he spent time at the International Film and Television School of San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba and at the Varan-Rouch Association in Paris. Since 1980, he has directed more than 30 documentaries, which have garnered many national and international awards.

[6] Sergei Eisenstein introduced the visual concept of montage editing to cinematic pursuits. In 1930, Stalin allowed Eisenstein to investigate the making of movies with sound in Hollywood. Despite the salaried invitation he received from Paramount Pictures' boss Jesse Lasky, funding never materialized for Eisenstein's direction of a Hollywood film. He was, however, able to spend almost two years shooting in Mexico because of the money that American writer Upton Sinclair raised on his behalf. When Eisenstein was recalled to the Soviet Union by Stalin in 1932, this footage was left with Sinclair under the assumption that it would be shipped to Eisenstein for editing. Although this particular project never congealed, most of the footage later comprised the film *¡Que Viva México!,* which was edited according to the director's notes 40 years later by Eisenstein's assistant, Grigori Alexandrov. Apparently (I have not seen it), the film consists of three vignettes: Sandunga, Manguei, and Fiesta. The Sandunga segment features a romanticized docu-drama of daily life in an Isthmus Zapotec pueblo. Lupone's use of this footage and the camera man's letter suggests that a substantial portion of this cinematic vignette of Eisenstein's was shot in the Ikoods pueblo

San Mateo del Mar. This here brief summary of Eisenstein's Mexican adventures was compiled using these two sources: an article called "Eisenstein's Monster" in the May 2, 1932 issue of *Time Magazine* and a website http://www.quevivamexico.com/coverage.html that is dedicated to refurbishing of Eisenstein Mexican film footage.

[7] Because of its controversial nature, the film wasn't finally finished until 1996 (Wortham 2002, 145n41), although according to his CV Guillermo was done editing in 1994. I have not had the opportunity to view this film and I am not sure why INI personnel found it so unsettling and/or challenging, but I have seen it described as: "Retrato dibujado con ironía afectuosa de la figura simbólica, icónica y venerada de la Virgen de Guadalupe" [A portrait drawn with affection irony of the symbolic, iconic and revered figure of the Virgin of Guadalupe] (http://www.contraelsilencio.org/Videoteca/Cat/especial3.htm). Perhaps it was seen as somehow irreverent? All signs suggest, however, that this is an excellent film. By 1997 it had won the Gold Plaque Award at the 32nd Chicago International Film Festival; it was nominated for best full-length documentary by the *Academia de Ciencias y Artes Cinematográficas de México;* it received Honorable Mention at the XVI *Foro Internacional de la Cineteca Nacional* in Mexico City; and it was selected for the 20th *Mostra Internacional de Cinema de Sao Paulo* (Brazil), the 39th *Internationales Leipziger Festival für Documentar –und Animationsfilm* (Germany), the 1996 Margaret Mead Film & Video Festival in New York, the *Segundo Festival de Cine y Video de las Primeras Naciones de Abya-Yala* (Ecuador), the XVIII *Festival International del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano* (Cuba), the *Recontres Cinémas d'Amérique Latine* (France), and *It's All True—Segundo Festival Internacional de Cine Documental* (Sao Paulo).

[8] Echoing the accusations of inappropriate and un-credited appropriation made by members of the K-Xhon media group (see chapter four, pp. 123-4), Marcos Sandoval Cruz responded (during an informal interview in October 2001) to my question about *Fondos Regionales* with the following story (which is how Marcos so often addresses my questions). Shortly after entering office in 1988, President Salinas came to the Mixteca region of Oaxaca and addressed a gathering of indigenous *campesinos* and institutional outreach workers (like Marcos) about his plans for greater participation and decentralization. Afterwards, during the time allotted for commentary, Marcos says he took the opportunity to inform Salinas of the unified solidarity with which indigenous communities tackled life, not to mention projects for the betterment of community well-being. Afterwards, Salinas thanked him for his insights and told him how much liked the language with which Marcos had spoken. Is it any surprise then, Marcos concluded, that Salinas then went on to name his new development scheme *Solidaridad*?

[9] Strangely enough, not one essay in the collection of thought pieces that emerged from this INI seminar and were published in the volume *Hacia un Video Indio* (1990) mentions Luis Lupone's film workshop in San Mateo del Mar, nor is Teófila Palafox's film *La Vida de una Familia Ikoods* mentioned. There are, however, two photographs credited to Alberto Becerril that appear to have been taken during Luis Lupone's cinema workshop in San Mateo del Mar at the end of 1985. This sort of 'visible omission,' I would venture, is symptomatic of INI's institutional memory wherein previous projects for which current administrators can't claim credit are ignored. Of particular note for its cynical yet incredibly insightful questioning of the feasibility of the TMA program's being sustainable are the contributions (an essay and

comments during a concluding debate) to the collection *Hacia un video Indio* by Scott Robinson.

[10] Guillermo's CV indicates that while involved with INI's TMA program, he didn't stop working on documentary projects. Between 1990 and 1992, he worked with Juan Francisco Urrusti on two documentaries for the series *Caminos de lo Sagrado* that was produced by the *Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Arte.* Guillermo co-wrote, helped direct, and edited *Señor de Otatitlán* ("Docuental sobre el culto al Criso Negro del pueblo de Otatitlán, Veracruz."), which earned Honorable Mention at the *Sexto Festival Nacional de Cine y Video Científico* in 1992. He then helped direct, wrote and edited *A Cruz y Espada* ("Documental sobre la dramatización de las guerras entre los moros y cristianos. Este evento popular, celebrado en Zacatecas, México, cuenta con la participación de más de 5000 cofrades de San Juan Bautista."), which in 1993 won *Primer Lugar en el Área de Antropología* in the *Séptimo Festival Nacional de Cine y Video Científico* and was selected for the Margaret Mead Film and Video Festival in New York. In 1992, Guillermo directed, wrote and edited *Pidiendo Vida* ("Documental acerca de un rito antiguo que pide el bienestar de todos y para todos, celebrado desde teimpo inmemorial en San Pedro Jícoras, Durango, por indígenas mexicaneros y tepehuanos."), which in 1994 won first place in the documentary category at the *Tercera Bienal de Video* in Mexico City and first place in the area of Anthropology and the *Premio Publico "Carlos Velo"* at the *Octavo Festival Nacional de Cine y Video Científico.* Also *Pidiendo Vida* was selected for the *V Festival de Cine y Video de los Pueblos Indígenas* in 1994 in Perú; the film exhibition *Oaxaca and Chiapas* that took place in both Toronto and New York in 1996; and the 8th International Native Film and Video Festival at the National Museum of the American Indian in New York City. More recently, in 2003 this documentary was chosen for inclusion in the *Video Native Mexico* tour sponsored by the Smithsonian Institute and the National Museum of the American Indian. As mentioned down below (p. 176), prize money connected to the awards bestowed upon *Pidiendo Vida* allowed Guillermo to underwrite INI's *Centro de Video Indígena* (in Oaxaca de Juárez) in 1994, the first year it was open.

[11] According to the 'official' INI review of the TMA program (Tomasini, Muratalla and Velázquez 1997), these four workshops involved 84 representatives from 36 organizations. I've no idea why there might be a discrepancy in accounts, but everyone from Oaxaca discussed the program in terms of 85 individuals from 37 organizations.

[12] My rendering of Crisanto's education and video making experiences draws upon the brief autobiography in Cristanto's curriculum vitae, my two formal interviews with him (in July of 2003 and 2004), and numerous informal conversations with both Crisanto and those with whom he has worked on various projects, most of which revolve around video production.

[13] Crisanto said that he too resisted because he was unable to imagine why or how he would ever undertake video recording:

> I tell him that I don't know how to make video…I haven't even had a photographic camera in my hands, much less a video camera. And…I even made a joke. I made a joke—I say: I'm old I'm no 'video' because in Zapotec 'video' is boy, I tell him why would I go and learn how to made 'video' if I already know how to make 'video,' no?

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[14] Enthused by his instructors' emphasis on "why indigenous culture has to be recovered: the music, dance, language, agriculture…well, everything that they've been doing all along, no?", and enchanted with the technical and artistic possibilities of video, Crisanto was smitten.

[15] During the subsequent process of reducing four hours of images to a 15 minute video short, says Crisanto, he discovered what video can do:

> Right then I realized that it's possible to transmit the feeling you have inside you, here in the heart and the mind. It was right then that I started to work with this video, no? And then I realized that oh yes, much can be done with video: transmit messages, feelings, happiness, no? Everything you might want—through the medium of sound and image.

[16] In July 2003, Crisanto explained the general reaction of the community and his strategy for surmounting their discomfort in the following way [English translation follows]:

> Entonces todo el mundo estaba sorprendido porque se maravillaban con esa cámara, e inclusive pues me hacían muchas burlas, ¿no? Me hacían muchas burlas…además se lo bautizaron, le pusieron un nombre ya no le llamaban cámara 'fotograba,' le llamaban *cheec buss, cheec buss* en zapoteco es como un tronco lleno de avispas adentro…y para ellos la entrada de la avispara era la lente, ¿no? [se ríe].

> Pero el otro reto que me enfrentaba ahí, el otro problema que yo me enfrente ahí, es que…pues, la gente no se prestaba a grabar. Nada mas iba la cámara hacías un paneo y las mujeres mas que nada se tapaban con su reboso y…no, no se dejaban grabar. Por miedo y por muchas cosas…Es muy, muy ajena [la cámara de video], era muy difícil. Pasaba mucho tiempo para que la gente se fuera acostumbrando, entonces de ahí yo empecé…para que la gente se acostumbrara, pues yo empecé a grabar bodas, quince años, bautizos—todo lo que yo podía. La idea era, es estar con la cámara, para que la gente se acostumbre con la cámara, ¿no? Muy poco era lo que grababa, lo importante era estar ahí presente…

> Back then the whole world was surprised and marveled at this camera; they also made me the butt of many jokes, no? They joked a lot about me…not only that, but they baptized it, they gave it a name, they didn't call it a photographing camera, they called it *cheec buss*, which in Zapoteco is a log filled with wasps inside…for them the wasp entry was the lens, no? [laughs]

> But the other challenge that confronted me there, the other problem that confronts me there, is that…well, the people didn't want to be recorded. If the camera came along, panning, the women would just cover themselves with their shawl and…no, they didn't want to be recorded. For fear and many other things…It [the video camera] is very, very foreign; it was very difficult. Much time passed before the people became accustomed, well that's when I started…so that the people would get accustomed, well, I started to record weddings, girls' 15 year birthdays, baptisms—everything I could. The idea was, is to be with the camera, so that the people get accustomed to the camera, no? I would only record a little, the important thing there was to be present…

[17] In addition to presenting *Don Chendo* in Tlaxcala, Crisanto also presented *Funeral de Donato Vargas,* a video focused on the funeral of a yet another murdered community leader (the director of the *Centro de Capacitación Musical Mixe* in Tlahuitoltepec) to which Crisanto had been invited by the leadership of UNOSJO.

[18] This summary of Juan José's early adventures and video-mediated achievements is composed from his curriculum vitae (from February 2003), innumerable informal conversations with him and with those with whom he has lived and worked, and two recorded interviews (in November 2001 and April 2004). Similarly, my review of the accomplishments of Clara Morales and her family also draws upon many informal conversations with Clara and her '*compas*' and more formal interviews (especially those in May 2001 and July 2004).

[19] This radio station-recording studio was part of the installations comprising the *Centro de Radio y Televisión de Oaxaca* (CERTO), which also oversaw the television broadcasts on Channel 9.

[20] Juan José points out that he spent most of this very small income on booze, which is not surprising given the fact that if he wasn't working with Jaime Luna, he was hanging out with Jaime Luna (cf. n26, pp. 148-9). Most observers sadly note the way in which Comunalidad's activities have generally revolved around excessive alcohol intake.

[21] In addition to citing this article (Melville 1997), I'd like to rave about its examination of the socio-spatial epistemology of this particular hydroelectric project. In a nutshell, Melville's essay situates the developmentalist science and social policy shaping this initiative as an import from the U.S. (think Tennessee Valley Project). Ah yes, the geography of knowledge!

[22] The catalogue of Comunalidad's video collection (Sánchez 1997) indicates that in the year 1992 alone Juan José was fully responsible for no less than nine video productions, which doesn't preclude his participation in other productions.

[23] Such a merger of initiatives never congealed, either in 1992 or more recently. Most observers-participants agree that this failure is largely due to the fact that a good part of Comunalidad's activities have traditionally revolved around alcohol consumption.

[24] Allow me to explain this a bit further; on May 31, 2003 I married Filoteo Gómez Martínez on in front of my parents' house in Mequon, Wisconsin (about 20 minutes from downtown Milwaukee). Filo grew up in the Mixe community of San Miguel Quetzaltepec and had moved to the capital city to finish high school. Prior to Filo's departure from Oaxaca de Juárez in early September 2002 and subsequent arrival in (of all places) Milwaukee, where his older brother, his wife and two of their cousins were living and working, I carefully kept my relationship with Filo separate from my research-related relationships—for a variety of reasons (many of which now strike me as absurd). It was only after we returned to Oaxaca together in June of 2003 that I showed Filo how to turn on my miniDV camcorder, mentioned that the next month Bruno Varela and his posse were given a workshop in video production, and asked if it was something he was interested in doing. Almost two years and

a half dozen video production experiences later, Filo has become an indigenous video maker and is currently working with Ojo de Agua as an apprentice. Who knew?!

About a year ago, while Filo and I were (re)viewing indigenous video productions, we absolutely astonished to discover Filo's aunt (Paula Martínez Vasquez) and cousin (Saul Rojas Martínez), who are from the Mixe pueblo Tamazulapam Espíritu Santo—not very far from San Cristóbal Chichicaxtepec, prominently figured in one of the segments on traditional healers in Juan José's video *Así es mi tierra*. Months later we gathered together with Filo's aunt and other family members to watch this video. While this experience did indeed confirm that the family had never seen this footage, much less the final edited video, I was disappointed that, despite what seemed like delighted giggles at this glimpse into the past, no one seemed terribly eager to mull over the video—especially the fact that Filo's aunt is a nurse, but chose to consult a *curandera*, not to mention their take on the *curandera*'s diagnosis and prescribed treatment, or discuss their role in its making. Given my relatively recent entry into Filo's family, my failure to understand much of their conversations (which often unfold in Mixe), and my related uncertainties about how to behave with my new family; I wasn't comfortable pursuing these matters as a researcher. Nonetheless, I hope to someday inquire after them in future conversations.

[25] Sánchez (1997, 92) indicates that *Trova Serrana A.C.* produced a video called *Segundo Encuentro de Pueblos Zapotecos,* which also examined the concurrent Day of the Dead festivities in Tehuantepec.

[26] This is something I was never able to do as this weaving cooperative has long since dissolved. And when Bill Wood and I visited Fausto Contreras (July 2002) he either no longer had copies in his possession, or if he did he didn't wish to share them (for whatever reason).

[27] A decision that hints at what Guillermo means when he comments that he's basically an anti-institutional character!

[28] Wortham (2002, 173-4) provides this description of the CVI and its technologies, as they were in 2000 when Erica undertook her dissertation research in Oaxaca:

> The brown exterior [of the 2 story concrete building] belies the vivid interior. The walls are alive with a saturated blue hue and an elegant display of framed INI photographs from the Archivo's collection. A dormitory crammed with bunk beds and lockers shares the lower level with an expansive den/dining room that serves at [sic] the Center's general meeting and eating space. Upstairs, the four rooms house the Center's office, two VHS editing suites, and the Center's "on-line" suite that features BetaSP [a video format used by professionals] decks and a computer-driven postproduction program called "Videomachine." The Macintosh computer that runs Videomachine is the computer's only computer [NOTE: by the start of 2002, the CVI's office featured a PC that was used for textual tasks, especially those requiring internet access] and is in constant demand. Three large closets upstairs store the Center's lending equipment—a fairly robust assortment of VHS and Hi-8 cameras, tripods, a few lights, cables, and batteries—and the video collection. The Center's video collection, which [Juan José] García once described as the Center's

"backbone," consists of approximately 500 catalogued titles. CVI staff and its constituency regularly check out equipment and titles from the collection.

[29] See note 10 above on p. 226.

[30] To recount the story of Sergio's life and his entry into the techno-socio-spatial realm of the CVI, I draw on informal chats with Sergio and his colleagues, and two key formal interviews with him: one in April 2001 and the other in June 2004.

[31] During the 1990s in Oaxaca, video making involved two stages of production. The first stage was "off-line" and was done on non-computerized editing machines that exclusively worked with analog (not digital) video tapes. The second stage, "on-line" post-production, was when the final version of made with the help of computers that allowed the insertion of graphics such as titles and subtitles, credits, and maps. Starting late 2000, members of Ojo de Agua began working with a digital video camera and gained access to a Macintosh G4 computer that permitted the first stage of editing to be done "on-line," which means that images could be cut and paste just like text on a word processor. In short, except for the tedious work of logging recorded materials and identifying the most useful elements, which is generally done with VHS copies of recordings and a VCR, Ojo de Agua has switched to the digital age wherein all video production is done "on-line." Nonetheless, like most video makers, they continue to differentiate and divide production labor along the lines of the first step of creating an edited version of relevant recordings (editing or in Spanish *edición*), and the final stage of perfecting transitions, adjusting audio levels and colors, and inserting graphics (post-production).

[32] I came across these titles on Emigdio's biography posted on the website of the NGO that mediated the fellowship he was awarded in 1996, which I discuss not far below in this chapter (pp. 185-6). You can see this biography at: http://www.mediaartists.org/content.php?sec=artist&sub=detail&artist_id=580. When I came across the webpage (February 2005), I was surprised to see Emigdio described as a member of Ojo de Agua—possible reasons for this unverified (and never mentioned by anyone in Ojo de Agua during my investigation) association are also offered not far below.

[33] When this video was recorded, Sergio explained to me (during an interview in June 2004), it was very difficult to record in Huitepec:

> Because there were many people that still thought that when you record them or take their picture, you steal their soul…if I see myself in the television or if others over there see me, I won't be here any more, they steal my spirit or my soul—in that time it was like that.

[34] As you'll recall from the section on Teófila Palafox's experience of recording in San Mateo del Mar (pp. 160-1), and from note 16 (pp. 227) above where Crisanto describes his initial experience in Tanetze de Zaragoza, Emigdio wasn't not the only video maker who faced socio-technological challenges when they set out to video tape in indigenous communities.

[35] Erica Wortham provides an excellent and thorough examination of the TV TAMIX media collective and their video productions (see Wortham 2002, 242-315 and Wortham 2004).

Here (2002, 273) she more describes how a television transmitter came to be abandoned in Tamazulapam, Mixes:

> Originally installed in Tama as part of a network of rural retransmitting stations for IMEVISION (a state operation that was privatized in 1980s and bought by TV Azteca, today one of Mexico's largest commercial television networks), the transmitter had never even been turned on until Tamix got their hands on it. The 10-watt transmitter allows Tamix's station *Canal 12* to reach only a limited radius of television viewers (5 kilometers at the most), but because its frequency is preset to channel 12 their signal interrupts TV Azteca programming, not only one of the few signals strong enough to reach Tama homes but, to their advantage, one of the most popular sources of soap operas and national news.

[36] Even before the Zapatista uprising in January 1994, key actors in the TMA program anticipated the demise of the TMA program. According to Guillermo, several meetings were devoted to organizing an NGO that would be called *Dispersión Visual A.C.* Their intention to open channels of support outside of INI, however, failed to congeal because, according to what Carlos Cruz told Erica Wortham (2002, 181), "We [the TMA architects] were too ingenuous, too romantic. We had too much tenderness and romanticism, and care and tenderness don't translate into money or necessary resources." The subsequent effort's focus on indigenous leadership suggests that one of the problems with this initial attempt was that it didn't sufficiently incorporate the ideas and initiative of people from indigenous communities.

[37] Here Juan Cristián Gutiérrez (one of the original members of the TMA team) answers questions about the OMVIAC during an interview with Daniela Cremoux (1997, 231) [English translation and further observations to follow]:

> D: ¿Qué fue lo que pasó con la OMVIAC?
> JC: Que nunca funcionó. En gran medida porque no era nacional, básicamente era gente de Comunalidad con difíciles historias personales. Cuando llegaron a una reunión gente de otros lados no los aceptaron porque no había *cuorum*, por supuesto no volvieron [to the OMVIAC meetings]. Estaba todo teledirigido.
> D: ¿Por quién?
> JC: Por Guillermo y estos cuates de Comunalidad. La OMVIAC nació por una necesidad del proyecto de TMA, no de las comunidades, estaba destinado al fracaso, pero revivirá en función de las necesidades de la gente.

> D: What happend with the OMVIAC?
> JC: It never worked. Mostly because it was national, it was basically people from Comunialidad, with their difficult personal histories. When they arrived at a meeting, people from elsewhere didn't accept them because there was never a *quorum*, so no one ever went back [to OMVIAC meetings]. Everything was micro-managed.
> D: By who?
> JC: By Guillermo and those dude from Comunalidad. The OMVIAC was born out of the necessity of the TMA project, not of the communities, it was destined to fail, but it will revive functionally if people need it.

But ideologically pushy leadership is not, however, the only factor. When reflecting on the failure to transfer the CVI into indigenous hands (so to speak) with Erica (Wortham 2002, 224), Guillermo underscored the challenge of surmounting deeply entrenched traditions of clinentelism: "People in communities really appreciate [the] CVI, especially being able to have a place to stay (sleep) while they are in Oaxaca, according to Monteforte, but they appreciate it in part because they don't have the burden of its expenses. 'Who would want to transfer something if INI is paying for it?'" And at this point, Erica notes that on paper (at the turn of the century) the CVI's budget is $500,000 (MXP—roughly $55,000 USD).

[38] According NVR's webpage history (http://www.nvr.org/), this NGO was established in 1990 with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation, which in 1988 had begun the Media Arts Fellowships program to fund media makers in the U.S. In 1992, with the help of the MacArthur Foundation, this program expanded to include Latin America, until 2001 when the MacArthur Foundation withdrew its support. Currently the media fellowships administered by NVR are funded through by the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations (http://www.mediaartists.org/content.php?sec=about).

[39] When I inquired after her take on Guillermo's vital role in the preparation of the fellowship proposals put forth by indigenous media makers, Tania pointed out that many American media makers hired professional grant writers to help them compose their proposals. She also noted, as did Guillermo, just how important this sort of mediation is for indigenous media makers who have little to no experience with word processing, the spreadsheet software that is so vital for the creation of detailed budgets, or more recently the latest technological advances in digital video cameras and the computers and software used for online editing.

[40] While in Bolivia, Bruno worked with the La Paz-based *Centro de Formación y Realización Cinematográfica* (CEFREC-Cinematography Education and Production Center) to provide workshops and production assistance, primarily to associates of the *Coordinadora Audiovisual Indígena Originaria de Bolivia* (CAIB-Bolivian Indigenous Peoples' Audiovisual Council). For an insight look at these two interwoven organizations, see
 http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/rose/cefrec.htm. I already briefly mentioned CEFREC and CAIB in chapter two, n18, pp. 73. And I more thoroughly (but far from completely) examine them in chapter six, pp. 266-77.

Bruno also worked in Bolivia with a small production company called *Videas Producciones*, which made educational videos (some titles of are listed in the 2005 catalogue found at: http://www.editorialdonboscobol.com/). For a while, when *Videas Producciones* had funding from GTZ, a German development agency (see their website at: http://www.gtz.de/en/), and the U.S.-based international NGO, Population International Service, Bruno helped produce videos focused on AIDs education.

[41] In the late 1990s, Carlos Efrain Pérez Rojas became very involved with the Chiapas Media Project. He now directs the CMP's office in Guerrero. In 2002, Carlos was awarded a media fellowship from the NVR, see
http://www.mediaartists.org/content.php?sec=artist&sub=detail&artist_id=619 for a glimpse of his achievements.

[42] These two projects are mentioned in Emigdio's online biographical sketch, mentioned in note 21:
http://www.mediaartists.org/content.php?sec=artist&sub=detail&artist_id=580. Also, in an essay titled "La TV no es la realidad" (E. Julían Caballero 1997), Emigdio explains how and why he decided describes to make a video about a migration with which he is personally familiar.

[43] Here I intend for 'important' to imply influential, as in noted by colleagues, policy makers and funding agencies. One way I gauge the influence of González's work is that it (1988, 1989, 1990 and 1991) underwrites parts of the economic portrait of the state of Oaxaca in Diagnostico found on CIESAS Perfiles, which you can see at: http://www.ciesasistmo.edu.mx/ciesasweb/perfilindigena/chinantecos/conte11.html. Plus I think that the diversity of the venues wherein these publications appear, not to mention these venues' institutional settings (cf. chapter three, pp. 98-101), hints at the possibility of greater exposure through a wider range of readership.

[44] When it was established in 1994, SEMARNAP merged the INE together with the *Comisión Nacional del Agua* (CONAGUA), the *Instituto Nacional de la Pesca* (INP), and the *Procurdaría Federal de Protección al Ambiente* (PROFEPA). For the record (as near as I can gather) in 2001 SEMARNAP became the *Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales* or SEMARNAT.

[45] I have pieced together these intersections among Mexican institutions and NGOs in Oaxaca with the following resources: an evaluation of community participation in PRODERS that's available through a World Bank data base: http://srdis.ciesin.columbia.edu/cases/mexico-013.html; a brief summary of an evaluation of PRODERS by the IDS (Institute of Development Studies in Sussex), http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/particip/research/oc-proders.html, which mentions a case study of PRODERS called *Of dreams and shadows: seeking change for the institutionalisation of participation for natural resource management* by Jutta Blauert and Kristina Dietz (2004). The *Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas* offers a brief overview of development programs in the Chinantla that mentions the *Grupo Mesófilo's* contributions: http://entorno.conanp.gob.mx/25/nota6.htm. Finally at http://www.eco-index.org/search/pdfs/819report_1.pdf, you'll find the *Grupo Mesófilo's* own overview of the Chinantla from the perspective of the NGO's past and current initiatives in the region.

[46] According to Chico, the goal of *comunicación y difusión* was the following:
> to be able to project to the outside—to make known all the work that was being developed in the regions where they were developing projects, and especially the project of conservation and development that was being developed in the cloud-forest region.

[47] Since the copy of this video that I bought from Álvaro during a visit to the offices of *Grupo Mesófilo,* came with a title and subtitles in English, I will refer to it by its English title. Likewise, for my convenience, all quotes from the video are copied directly from the subtitles.

[48] Of particular note is the sequence wherein the institutional and organizational entanglements that embody and enable the *Grupo Mesófilo* are conveyed with the logos of the various collectivities.

[49] Having arisen out of the UN's 1992 Earth Summit in Brazil, the *Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza A.C.* (FMCN) provides support for environmentally-focused production projects (what most folks call sustainable development). To learn more about FMCN's emergence and engagements, check out its website, especially its detailed historical overview at http://www.fmcn.org/int_historia.htm. See also chapter six, pp. 261-2 and note 45, pp. 333-4 for further glimpses of the FMCN's impact in Oaxaca.

[50] After *Guardians of the Forest,* Chico produced a total of six videos: *La Pita en la Selva de la Chinantla,* a short documentary about the cultivation and harvest of a natural fiber used to embroider those cool cowboy belts and wallets; *Tierra Viva* (1998), which looks at organic farming ventures supported by SEMARNAP through *Grupo Mesófilo; Devolviendo Vida* (1998), which illustrates the endeavors of *Productores Unidos para el Desarrollo Sustentable* a production-oriented, community-based NGO working with the *Grupo Mesófilo* and the WWF; *Juntos por la Tierra: La experiencia del PRODERS Chinantla* (1999), which, as is title suggests, explores how PRODERS has been unfolding in the Chinantla region; and *La Riqueza de los Hongos*, which focuses on the mushroom cultivation projects in the Sierra Juárez. While I haven's seen the videos about the pita plant or the mushrooms, I can note that while Chico is credited with the recording and editing, Sergio post-produced *Tierra Viva* and *Devolviendo Vida,* and Juan José post-produced *Junto por la Tierra*, which was the only one of the later videos to once again indicate the support of the EU, as well as the UK's National Lottery Charities Board.

[51] I eagerly wait for the day I can view the video with a geography class that has read the Conklin and Graham (1995) article!

[52] I've used the word paradigm as a shorthand term for identifying a diverse range of technoscientific practices and power relations that are linked (and usually classified) by their relationship to similar attitudes, aesthetics and ambitions (cf. Kuhn 1972). I recognize the exclusionary and homogenizing nature of this sort of generalizing approach to technoscientific endeavors, but dang it, sometimes you just gotta do it.

[53] Although, as of yet unpublished research (Kotmatsu 2002) indicates, these alignments and expansions haven't organically emerged out of a conflict-free arena, as suggested by Healy (2003).

[54] According to Sánchez (1997), Arturo undertook video productions on behalf of Comunalidad while in Guelatao.

[55] The following text, inserted at the end of the video, just before the credits roll, reflects Tona's astute and acerbic analytic lens:

> The efforts of all of the participants in the March for the Recognition of Indigenous Rights, and the realization of this video, would not have been possible without the enthusiastic participation of Dr. Ernesto Zedillo and other members of his

administration in the two-timing games, tricks, and failure to implement the accord signed before the Mexican people and international community.

[56] Ojo de Agua's website is found at: http://www.laneta.apc.org/ojodeagua/. To learn more about the context wherein Sergio made this website, see chapter six, pp. 281-2).

[57] Presumably, Clara didn't travel to Chiapas because, on top of staying home to care for their son, she was expecting their second child, Natalia, who was born in October of 1998 and took her first steps in the CVI.

[58] George Salzman's website, where he declares himself an anarchist and retired physicist can be found at http://site.www.umb.edu/faculty/salzman_g And the specific page where he describes his trip to Chiapas in 1998 is at:
http://site.www.umb.edu/faculty/salzman_g/Strate/Othr/1998-10-10Garrucha.htm.

[59] Especially prominent is a gentleman named Don Mucio, who (according to the Spanish subtitles) enthusiastically explains both the value of *tequio* and the need to maintain it:
> Everyone's work, work for the community, that's what we call Tequio. We meet, we united forces, and then the pueblo feels strong. That's why we aren't going to let it disappear, because our grandparents were did it many years ago. They started all this Tequio, and that's how we continue doing it today. Tequio is what unites us, to do any sort of work we gather together. Tequio is unity.

[60] This title could be translated as: *Those This Land Has Seen Born.*

[61] During this segment, visually comprised of a head and shoulder shot of Aguilar speaking and images from Emigdio's video *Viko Ndute (Fiesta del Agua)* (see pp. 181-2), Aguilar spells out (in Mixteco, with Spanish subtitles) exactly what constitutes indigenous rights:
> Everything we have in our pueblo, everything that our ancestors left us: the Mixteco language, the music, our territory, our clothing, the food—all of this is what is now called "Indigenous Rights" [spoken in Spanish]. The government doesn't want to recognize all of this, doesn't want to pay attention to it. This is the problem. And that's why I think there's a lot of work to do so that the situation may improve.

[62] Recall that Gustavo Ramírez, along with Fernando Guadarama, connected Chico Luna to the activities of the *Grupo Mesófilo*.

[63] Like Guillermo and many other Oaxaca "movers and shakers," Alcántara Bernal was elected an Ashoka fellow (in 1995), so you can read about his achievements on their website, http://www.ashoka.org/fellows/viewprofile3.cfm?reid=97200. See also George Salzman's fond reflections on Juan Arelí and his pursuit of a community-centered pedagogy in Totontepec,
http://site.www.umb.edu/faculty/salzman_g/Grass/Totontepec/index.htm.

[64] According to the Spanish subtitles, Regino states that:
> La organización que nos comuna se llama SER. Nosotros buscamos día a día la manera en que los mixes nos podemos desarrollar integralmente. Nosotros

pensamos que el crecimiento y el fortalecimiento debe empezar en el pensamiento y en la cultura de nuestros abuelos y abuelas. Debe empezar en el respeto que merecen nuestros cerros y montañas que es nuestra Madre Naturaleza. Así nosotros buscamos, así nosotros pensamos que debe florecer el pueblo y el territorio mixe. También estamos pensando cómo debería llegar la igualdad a México. Respetando la diversidad. Estamos preocupados porque existe la pobreza y no hay respeto. Hacen falta ideas positivas y buenas en estas tierras. Por eso buscamos, por eso luchamos por la igualdad…y la felicidad de todos nosotros a los que esta tierra ha visto nacer.

The organization that we comprise is called SER. Day to day we are looking for the way in which we the Mixe can integrally develop. We think that growth and strengthening should begin with the thought and culture of our grandfathers and grandmothers. It should begin with the respect that our hills and mountains—all that is our Mother Earth—deserve. This is how we search; this is how we think that the Mixe people and territory should flourish. We are also thinking that this would achieve equality in Mexico. Respecting the Diversity. We are worried because poverty exists and there is no respect. There is a shortage of good, positive ideas in these lands. This is why we search, this is why we struggle for equality…and the happiness of all those that this land has seen born.

[65] When I asked Juan José (during an interview in July 2004) why INAH personnel chose COMAL to identify and represent the cultural politics of Oaxaca's indigenous movement, he said:

It's that we know about life in the pueblos, we're not just video specialists. We can reach a certain point with the people's idea, what they want to develop in a video, and we convert it into instruments that the pueblos use to express their voice and everything. And these videos have been made. The people that have hired us, they have confidence in us, we produce what they want.

[66] *Compartiendo Ideas* appears to have been mingled talk show and news formats. According to Roberto (1996, 13-14), at the start the two co-hosts "charlaban" [chatted] in an austere studio setting featuring two chairs, then after they introduced the program's theme during their chat, which would sometimes include invited guests, interviews and images would further develop the theme as it was embodied 'on the ground.'

[67] Tackling topics such as "the art of habitation: alternatives to construction and self-construction" and "the other science: traditional medicine," *Compartiendo Ideas* was designed to establish "a space introducing alternative systems for better life that are based in a redefinition, or better yet, the rescue of the concept of technology" (ibid, 14).

[68] The programs introduced water pollution, with particular emphasis on household sewage; introduced the ecological toilet as a viable alternative; demonstrated how to construct an ecological toilet; and then shared the experience and results of a workshop focused on ecological toilets.

[69] More specifically, Roberto worked for the *Unidad de Television Educativa* (UTE), a production unit in charge of the *telesecundaria* programming that is housed within *Instituto*

Latinoamericano de la Comunicación Educativa (ILCE), an international organization concerned with comtech-mediated education, established in 1956 in Mexico City under the auspices of UNESCO and the Mexico's *Secretaria de Educación Publica* (SEP). The ILCE is in charge of coordinating the programming broadcast on Edusat, Mexico's educational television satellite system. For a very brief, but helpful, introduction to these entanglements, see http://members.tripod.com/~ILCE/pagina4.htm#. Calderoni (1998, 4-5) offers a more detailed evaluation of Mexico's Telesecundaria initiative. A more general examination of education television in Mexico is found in Chávez (2004).

[70] Everyone involved at this time (Guillermo, Cheve, Sergio, Juan José, Clara, Chico Luna, Tona—not Bruno, who did not return from Bolivia until December 1999) was very fond of the name *Comunicación Alternativa,* especially its acronym of COMAL, which is the round clay surface used for cooking hand-made tortillas. The collective could not, however, be legally constituted with the name because it was already in use. They had to settle for their second choice of *Comunicación Indígena, S.C.*, which to this day remains the entity's legal name.

[71] Most recently, when screened outside of the aegis of ILCE-INI, this video has been shown with the Zapotec title of *Lhallchho.* Much to my chagrin, as the translator into English of the of the Spanish subtitles and dialogue, the National Museum of the American Indian chose to translate the *Nuestro Pueblo* as *Our People*, which I think inappropriately speaks to a northern notion of First Nations as peoples, instead of the community-centered conception of collective autonomy that is so prevalent in Oaxaca (cf. chapter one, pp. 28-9 and note 18, p. 37). I think a far more suitable title would have been *Our Community,* or better yet *Our Pueblo*, but alas, programs had been printed and it couldn't be helped. The good news, however, is that this video's credits fail to note the English translation, whew!

[72] During an interview, Juan José (July 2004) reviewed his reasons for making this video:
> In order to generate an awareness of the existence of Mexico's peoples, and also that they are not static cultures. That is to say that they don't stay the same all the time. They are constantly moving cultures, savvy and alive, which continue struggling for life every single day.

[73] Santa Cruz Yagavila was one of the places visited during the tour that Erica Wortham orchestrated through the Smithsonian's National Museum of the Native American that brought Native American media makers (more specifically two young men from the Ho-Chunk nation in Wisconsin) to Oaxaca in 1998. According to Juan José, they chose Yagavila because Aldo González was there attending a meeting of community authorities.

[74] In addition to the ILCE-INI video project and Cheve's video *Shan Dany* (see above, pp. 197-9)*,* Ojo de Agua worked with Josefina Aranda of the CEPCO, who had been awarded a leadership grant from the McArthur foundation, to produce the video *Mujeres del Mismo Valor,* which examines the increasing (and increasingly important) participation of women in the coffee cooperative.

[75] In addition to the folks Guillermo assisted in 1994 and 1996, in 1997 he facilitated the successful procurement of this grant by María Santiago, a Zapotec woman from San Pedro Quiatoni. I have touched upon her emergence as a media maker elsewhere (L. Smith 2003).

[76] You can find Guillermo's webpage on the NVR website with this url: http://www.mediaartists.org/content.php?sec=artist&sub=detail&artist_id=609

[77] You can find Guillermo's webpage on the Ashoka website with this url: http://www.ashoka.org/fellows/viewprofile3.cfm?reid=96419. The Ashoka fellowship was initially presented as a three year award, but that after the first year, Guillermo he had to reapply and spent most of 2000 under review. He was then given another 18 months income, most of 2001 through mid-2002.

[78] For an excellent overview of the U.S. military support that had contributed to the militarization in the Loxicha, and an introduction to the collectives that are resisting it, or at least fighting to survive it, see Norget (2005).

[79] The executive document begins with a declaration of the group's faith in comtech and its conviction that visual technologies are not alien to indigenous peoples:

> To place communication tools within the reach of indigenous peoples is to open the possibilities of alternative communication that can contribute to the strengthening of ethnic and cultural diversity, and at the same time, reduce the inequality that prevails in Mexico.
>
> Indigenous peoples have historically utilized image, music, and word as a basis for their forms of communication. Electronic media, especially video, allows them to continue using these forms, augmenting them with the advantages offered by the new technologies. What remains to be done is their amplifying their voices and images for their own benefit.

[80] Indeed, not long after this document was finalized, Sergio created the organization's website with the same text:

> Ojo de Agua is an organization of communicators that, through production, diffusion and training—primarily video and the internet, facilitates the use and appropriation of communication tools by Mexico's indigenous peoples, especially in the state of Oaxaca, creating and supporting their own forms of expression that promote diversity and reduce the socio-economic and political inequality of indigenous communities.

[81] The group's vision is also spelled out:

> To construct and fortify spaces of communication, which include sufficient human, material and financial resources to become concrete options for information, expression and creation that amplify the presence of indigenous peoples and civil society in cultural, political and social environs.

CHAPTER SIX
Networking Indigenous Video:
Service and Struggle

We've reached the point where every man, woman, child and dog seems to be talking of networks.[1]

NOTES ON NETWORKS

Much (perhaps too much) is said about networks, usually when we wish to describe and/or enable a chain or collection of geographical associations that connect (ideally in cooperation and usually with comtech) the knowledges and initiatives of differentially located social actors. Jonathan Fox (2002, 351) uses the concept of *network* to refer to "ongoing relationships" generated by "exchanges of information, experiences, and expressions of solidarity." Should networks produce "shared goals, mutual trust, and mutual understandings," these relationships constitute a *coalition*, i.e., "networks in action." Fox also differentiates networks and coalitions from *movements*, which are distinguished by "a much higher degree of density and much more cohesion" and are often transnational in nature. Fox's three analytically distinct concepts (networks, coalitions, and movements) are handy. For instance, not too long ago, I found the idea-image of network helpful for sketching the far-flung and technology-mediated connections among individual, institutional and organizational actors that embody indigenous video in the proposal that landed the grant that funded a good part of my Oaxaca-based inquiry into cultural politics and organizational geographies.[2] As my project unfolded, however, I realized the geographical metaphor of network doesn't sit well with my aesthetic-political preference for focusing on partiality, positionality and practice. Network is too much like the idea-image of landscape for my taste (see chapter two, pp. 63-4).

I am not alone in my reluctance to spatialize technology-mediated knowledge production in terms of networks. John Law is also uncomfortable with applying the trope of network to the geography of technoscience. Drawing on his extensive study of the social relations of technology, Law finds that the concept of network tends to represent complex and contingent processes "in relatively foundational terms, for instance distinguishing in principle between the economic, the social and the technical, and arguing from premises that turn out to be (for instance) technological determinist" (Law 2003, 5). According to Law (ibid, 7), with network discourse "All that is solid—human and non-human—melts into the air in the face of the need to create a coherent, ordering, and functioning heroic or bureaucratic actor." I don't think Law's Marxist reference is unintentional; by uncritically reporting on networks, observes Law (5), "We are reproducing the ways in which the current orderings of the world like to represent themselves." Troubled by this "requirement for a single form of coherence," (8) Law worries that the ubiquitous use of network buys into and adds strength to a "*functional understanding of the relations between entities*," (7—his emphasis) which necessitates precisely demarcated centers and naturally completed pathways.

Additionally, Law resists representing the socio-spatial-technical relations of technoscience as networks because this (now hegemonic) visual metaphor tends to envision failure merely as a systemic breakdown. He seeks an alternative conceptualization of spatial formation, one that allows him to delineate and discuss a not-necessarily functionalist "relationality" wherein:

> …the failure of an entity (a person, a technical arrangement, a set of rules) to cohere in a single and functional manner is neither treated nor experienced as a failure but, instead, as an analytical and experiential reality – and one with possibly liberatory consequences (Law 2003, 8).

Erasing the daily collaboration and contestation that enables—indeed embodies—the geographical linkages so often summarized as networks solidifies exclusions by neatly

naturalizing unevenness and inequality. By suggesting some sort of solid, unidirectional and often downright linear structure, rendering technoscience as networks that are either in action or out of synch, the notion of network tends to erase the messy cultural work of negotiating differences. It also obscures a researcher's struggle to witness, comprehend and explain the socio-technological-spatial relationships comprising the production of knowledge.

To move beyond the rigid spatiality of the functionalist framework of 'networks of transfers' that characterized earlier social studies of technoscience, Law and Annemarie Mol (2001) turn to Donna Haraway's visualization of technoscience as webs of connection. More specifically, they seek to accommodate Haraway's arguments about the partiality of the relationships that sustain and circulate (in a fragmented fashion) situated knowledges.[3] Law and Mol propose an alternative spatial trope by evoking the Phoenix-like rebirth connotations, and transformative creative destruction[4] of fire. With the geographical metaphor of fire space, Law and Mol posit unpredictable star-shaped spatial formations with multiple centers and abrupt and discontinuous movements. Revisit, if you will, the last campfire, bonfire or lit fireplace you watched fall into glowing embers. In fire space, "there are stable shapes created in patterns of relations of cojoined alterity…a shape achieves constancy in a relation between a presence and absence: *the constancy of object presence depends on simultaneous absence or alterity*" (Law and Mol 2001, 616—their emphasis). Law and Mol argue that when looking at technoscience with this (distinctly post-structural) analytical lens, the presence-absence of difference and its influences are more apt to be taken into account— instead of swept out of sight/site/cite with the too-tidy geographical metaphor of network. The topology of fire is an arresting image because it forces recognition of how knowledge gaps and fumbled translations riddle the fragmented topography of technoscience (as

practiced by me and by those to whom I turn for insight). Because the idea-image of a topology of fire trains our analytical focus on practice, positionality and passion, fire space better suits my examination of the geographies of cooperation and conflict that comprise video-mediated indigenous identity politics.

No matter how much I wish to see the geographical connections that enable, embody and engage indigenous video made more sure, solid and steady, I don't think the metaphor of network does justice to the all the human and unhuman hard work and hustle that I witnessed during my investigation of Ojo de Agua. While the concept of network does help explain the organizational geography Ojo de Agua *strives* for, it also evokes an unsuitable 'Russian doll' model of neatly nested scales of exchange. Network doesn't successfully capture the fitful processes and contingencies whereby members of Ojo de Agua forged, filtered and/or forfeited socio-spatial relations; rather it obfuscates them. That being said, I continue to enjoy, embrace and encourage the idea-image of networking (see chapter one, pp. 9-12). If networking ignites connections, then Ojo de Agua is like a box of matches, jump starting other actors' access to a multitude of resources (video technologies, technical training, etc). Indeed, this is their goal; Ojo de Agua seeks to be of service in two ways. Firstly, members of the group network in order to make available, and when necessary (and it often is) mediate, socio-technical-spatial relations. Secondly, members of the collective strive to disseminate, and thus also translate, the oppositional cultural politics of indigenous communities. Constantly being a source of energy, however, entails a constant search for favorable conditions and further infusion of combustible resources. This task of searching for the fuel for continuing to provide service in the name of *comunicación de lucha* (communication of struggle) is an enormous challenge, and dedicating yourself to this challenge is a struggle in itself, a struggle for survival.

SERVICE

> En estos meses de constante tensión nos damos cuenta de que; si nuestra lucha no se hubiera echado mano de los medios de información; por un lado no tendríamos elementos visuales para en su momento reflejarlos y seguir contando la historia de nuestros pueblos…
>
> Ojala nacieran muchos y muchos más Ojo de Agua (fuentes de donde brota una sabiduría visual que día a día corre como la brisa que moja los campos de maíz y fríjol de tantos pueblos). Estamos orgullosos de tener y contar con grandes amigos como ustedes, pensamos que son gente con grandes principios de lucha y de gran calidad moral eso los hace ser grandes entre los grandes.[5]

Reconfiguring Political Conflict

> The group Ojo de Agua Comunicación in Oaxaca City catalyzed international response in opposition to the threats against Crisanto Manzano, his family, and others in their organization, who live in the remote mountain village of Tanetze de Zaragoza … Mobilization of international support has greatly impacted the struggle.[6]

By the end of the year 2000, the municipal authorities of Tanetze de Zaragoza had confiscated the two newest buses belonging to *Pueblos Unidos*, the regional organization currently configured as a transportation cooperative serving the Rincón of the Sierra Norte of Oaxaca (see chapter five, p. 166).[7] On January 29, 2001, Pueblos Unidos responded to this crisis by issuing a public letter signed by authorities of various nearby communities affected by the loss of the buses, as well as authorities from other pueblos affiliated with UNOSJO, a larger organization that unites several regional and community-based organizations (see chapter four, p. 128). The letter accused state officials, who had supposedly mediated agreements between the cooperative and the authorities of Tanetze de Zaragoza the year before, of placidly standing by as the agreements were trampled and the buses seized. The letter also denounced the municipal leaders who impounded the vehicles as *caciques* (political bosses) in cahoots with local entrepreneurs and PRI power brokers in the

Sierra Norte whose intentions to control the region's transportation routes for their own profit motivated their actions. To make visible its request for state intervention in the form of financial audits and mediation, the letter announced that until the buses were returned to Pueblos Unidos, the roads coming into and out of the pueblo Tanetze (the municipal seat) would be blockaded. By mid February, state authorities had not only failed to facilitate the return of the buses (despite promises to do so), but the state judicial police had repeatedly demolished the roadblock, and remained unmoved by urgent appeals from Pueblos Unidos members and their families whose lives were repeatedly threatened. This proactive letter of protest was taken to INI's radio station XEGLO in Guelatao, but those in charge refused to read the entire letter and instead delivered a brief and deliberately depoliticized news report about the road block.

At this point, Crisanto Manzano, a Tanetze resident and a central figure in Pueblos Unidos, turned to Ojo de Agua for assistance. These were not the first death threats that Crisanto had faced,[8] but they were the most collective in that they involved members of Pueblos Unidos who lived in various communities throughout the Rincón. With the help of Ojo de Agua, letters (typed by Guillermo[9] and signed by many) explaining the circumstances that endangered Crisanto and his family were faxed and emailed throughout the socio-spatial relations established by the travels of Crisanto and his videos. Reflecting on this publicity campaign, Guillermo recalled that he and others didn't wish to make Crisanto a star or martyr, which is why the letters underscore how Crisanto was just one among many suffering the consequences of the regional conflict. At the same time, he added, everyone basically realized that focusing on Crisanto the media maker—i.e., letting his personal safety embody the conflict—would expedite getting the word out. And indeed it did; Crisanto's cultural clout brought international pressure and national media attention to bear upon the

precarious situation. On February 18, 2001 *La Jornada*, one of Mexico's premier newspapers, published a letter from Ojo de Agua and many of their colleagues (such as CAMPO, SER A.C., Marcos Sandoval, UNOSJO and Fernando Guadarama). Addressed to President Fox, Secretary of State Santiago Creel, and Oaxaca governor José Murat, the letter denounced the state of affairs in Tanetze de Zaragoza. Two days later, Ojo de Agua disseminated (as widely as they and their contacts could) an email that named corrupt state and federal officials, emphasized a fear of escalating violence, and listed fax numbers for reaching Mexico's President, Secretary of State, and the governor of Oaxaca on behalf of Crisanto. Another email followed two days later, gratefully noting the "surprisingly large response" and thanking those who had responded with action and with inquiry after Crisanto, who the email described as tired and worried, but resolute.

According to the letter of appreciation sent by Crisanto to Ojo de Agua in early March, the email PR campaign had resulted in close to 1,000 letters having been delivered to people in positions of power.[10] While there's no way to confirm Crisanto's figure, copies of letters and newspaper clippings archived in Ojo de Agua do indicate a flurry of activity and attention focused on Tanetze. In addition to extensive coverage in Oaxaca newspapers, French media makers who had encountered Crisanto and his video work in 2000 wrote to the Mexican Ambassador at the Embassy in Paris to inform him of their concern for Crisanto's safety. Similarly, contacts within the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) circulated the email yet further to other individuals, agencies and organizations concerned with indigenous peoples and/or media making. For instance, Maureen Gosling, who had met Crisanto in 2000 at the NMAI's film festival in New York City, initiated the composition and circulation of an official letter from the Independent Documentary Association. When I asked Guillermo (during an interview February 2004) about the impact

of all this collective activity, he expressed confidence that their calls for action had "reached ears in high places." In particular, Guillermo told me that representatives of Mexico's *Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores*, at the urging of the United Nation's Human Rights Commission, had requested from Crisanto a statement on the conflict in Tanetze de Zaragoza. Later (during an interview in July 2004), Crisanto confirmed that he had spoken to federal officials who were reacting to the many letters from around the world, and sought to verify what was happening. He also credited the comtech-mediated surveillance stimulated by the Ojo de Agua-assisted PR campaign with reducing the threat of violence and helping to secure the safety of those who spoke out about the unjust alliances among government officials in el Rincón. Unfortunately, however, these networking efforts couldn't completely remedy the situation and the organizational strife shaping it.

Almost exactly one year later, Crisanto and his organizational *compañeros* again gathered in the office of Ojo de Agua to strategize yet another publicity campaign. Once more, Guillermo spent a pair of days hunched over the keyboard consulting with Crisanto and others, and composing statements addressed to other regional organizations and local and national press. In addition to disseminating denunciations and calls for action, they also orchestrated a press conference held in the Ojo de Agua office on January 10, 2002. This time, the goal was exposing how the newly elected municipal President of Tanetze de Zaragoza, Jacobo Chavez Yescas, had initiated his administration. Once one of the founding members of Pueblos Unidos, Chavez was now allied with powerful commercial and transportation interests in the region who sought to dismantle Pueblos Unidos in order to remove competition. On the first of January 2002, after a heavy drinking celebration of his entering office, Chavez and his supporters led a rampage. In the municipal hall (located in Tanetze), they sequestered, then beat and threatened with death 46 people (most of whom

were from the nearby community of Santa María Yaviche) who had been traveling that day on the only bus that remained in the possession of the Pueblos Unidos transportation cooperative. During this second PR campaign, all the Ojo de Agua-mediated press releases connected Crisanto (who was not one of the unfortunate 46) and his comrades in oppositional action with a collective dedicated to diverse cultivation and organic agriculture. This new group was called *Guia-Toó* (*Montaña Poderosa* or *Powerful Mountain*), which is also the title of Crisanto's best known and most widely traveled video production (see previous chapter, pp. 188 and 219-20).

Crisanto no longer participated in the multi-community alliance named Pueblos Unidos because it had ceased to exist. The seizure of its two newest buses the year before had effectively dissolved much of the glue with which this regional organization's latest incarnation (a transportation cooperative) had congealed. Furthermore, municipal president Chavez's historical link to Pueblos Unidos, and the fact that his New Year's Day attack had centered upon residents of Santa María Yaviche, precipitated the breakdown of Pueblos Unidos along community lines. Although Yaviche is a larger community, it is an *agencia* of the municipal seat in Tanetze, which makes it fiscally beholden to the smaller pueblo. Furthermore, most of the 46 individuals who suffered from the Chavez-led aggression were members of the *Consejo Indígena Popular de Oaxaca-Ricardo Flores Magón* (CIPO), a large leftist production-oriented conglomeration.[11] It was necessary for Crisanto, his family, and a handful of others (about 25 families according to Crisanto) living in Tanetze to cross community lines in order to align themselves with the aggrieved parties and denounce the corruption of municipal leaders. This made things very uncomfortable, indeed dangerous, because they were seen as traitors by many of their neighbors. As luck would have it, however, CIPO's political PR campaign on behalf of the 46 victims—spun widely via the

internet—soon eclipsed Ojo de Agua's efforts. At this point, Crisanto was rather relieved to step out of the limelight. With Crisanto's withdrawal from the action and the subsequent dilution and eventual disappearance of the group *Guia-Toó* as its members withdrew or entered into the orbits of other more active collectives such as CIPO, Ojo de Agua no longer had any reason to undertake any more (unpaid) networking in relation to this regional conflict. Crisanto told me he has not joined forces with CIPO because, as a resident of Tanetze, it wasn't an option for him, "por que era declarar la guerra al pueblo y decidimos tenemos que ser como pueblo."[12] Plus, he has doubts about some of CIPO's collective strategies and therefore isn't especially moved to contribute to them.

Largely because of the widely-admired quality and content of his video productions, but also partly because of the way his cultural capital helped widely publicize a regional conflict and the corruption that fueled it, Crisanto is perhaps Mexico's most widely-recognized indigenous video maker. This recognition, however, has complicated his life, and diminished his ease of recording in the Rincón of the Sierra Norte. Crisanto has not been allowed to record openly within his own community for several years now,[13] and for most of 2001 and much of 2002 it simply was not safe for him to spend much time in Tanetze.[14] For example, in June 2002 I accompanied Guillermo, Crisanto, his son Julio, and Hector García Sandoval (from the Triqui pueblo San Andrés Chicahuaxtla) on a trip to San Juan Yaé, a pueblo in the Rincón, where Crisanto and Julio spent a week broadcasting (both live and taped videos) from a small, hillside chapel above that community's municipality.[15] A couple hours before we reached our destination, just before the road entered the pueblo of Tanetze, Crisanto and Julio got out of the VW bus in which we were traveling to hike over a hill on foot so that when we reached a check-point (a chain crossing the road) the van wouldn't be stopped and forbidden to pass because of their presence.[16] Even though Crisanto says he's

now out of danger, mostly because he's no longer directly involved with the orchestration of collective action in the Rincón, he continues to abide by the injunction against his video taping. Nor has Crisanto been able to embark on his plan to make a video based on John Chance's history of the Sierra Norte, *Conquest of the Sierra, Spaniards, and Indians in Colonial Oaxaca*.[17] He lacks sufficient funding, especially since his nice (but now out of date) Beta video camcorder requires very expensive cassettes that hard to come by in Oaxaca. Another barrier may be that his 2003 attempt to record archival documents in another pueblo in the region (a couple hours away from Tanetze by bus) was unsuccessful; perhaps because he failed to make arrangements ahead of time with the relevant authorities.

This tale about Crisanto demonstrates that being an indigenous video maker does not assure automatic permission to video tape in indigenous communities. Another (particularly geographical) moral to this story is that networking is beneficial, and advocacy-activism like Ojo de Agua's (and CIPO's) can most certainly spark transformation, but this doesn't necessarily imply an evenly-burned field of action, i.e., comtech-mediated contact transforms socio-spatial relations, but there's no saying that each flare up results in the same reconfiguration. As Guillermo emphasized (during an interview in August 2004), the failure of several indigenous video makers (e.g., Crisanto, Emigdio, members of Video Tamix) to attain promptly their (and others') hopes and ambitions *might*, from the "outside," *look* the same, but each situation is actually unique. Furthermore, no matter how far dispersed and well-connected video makers' supporters are, or how widely renown they and/or their video-mediated knowledge, international attention doesn't guarantee personal safety or resources for future endeavors. Nonetheless (to milk my fiery metaphor a bit further), we might say that Crisanto, his camera, and/or his son remain glowing embers that, with flammable resources and favorable conditions might once more flare up in unpredictable directions and

dimensions. Guillermo mused (during an interview in August 2004) that perhaps it would be useful for him, other advocates and activists in the indigenous media making world to introduce and discuss historical (and other possible) patterns of video-mediated combustion and extinctions before, during and after they undertake the knowledge production practices (such as training, funding, editing, traveling, etc.) of visual representation.[18] In other words (mine), advocates and activists should share some geographical lessons about the politics of representation.

Transforming the CVI, Relocating Indigenous Video

Even after the consolidation of the collective called Ojo de Agua in 2000 with Juan José as its president, and despite worries and rumors about its imminent demise (Wortham 2002, 228-9), for about the next year and a half the CVI continued as a vital urban site for the production and circulation of indigenous videos. For instance, when two indigenous video makers were nominated for NVR media fellowships in 2001, they came to the city and stayed at the CVI where they composed their proposals with Guillermo (once again manning the keyboard with a video maker at his side explaining her or his ambitions).[19] In addition to providing a safe and comfortable working space, the CVI housed a large collection of videos, master copies of many indigenous video productions, and the best available (to independent media makers) editing and postproduction equipment. As director, Juan José kept very busy maintaining the CVI and acting as its liaison with the INI state headquarters located in a nearby neighborhood of Oaxaca de Juárez.[20] He had at his disposal a pick-up truck with a shell on the back, and INI officials would frequently call upon Juan José to dispatch someone from the CVI to record INI-related events such as conferences and exhibitions. If Juan José was unable to attend to these assignments, he would send along

someone else—for example, his administrative assistant Myra and her partner, Melquiades (who is from Yagavila, see p. 216 in previous chapter). Occasionally Juan José would also coordinate outreach events with other institutions and NGOs. For instance, for a week in November of 2001 he transported and set up the CVI's video projector, and then 'hosted' the nightly screenings and discussions in the *Casa de la Cultura Oaxaqueña* (a large urban version of the *Casa del Pueblo* program) during a *Semana de Cine y Video de Pueblos Indios.* The week included a night dedicated to the recognition and celebration of the 40 years of activist-linguistic research of Juan José Rendón, one of the architects of the concept of comunalidad (see chapter four, p. 116). This event most certainly underscores how in Oaxaca indigenous videos are entangled with academic advocacy.

Although the CVI really had no budget for undertaking either video productions or training seminars, when opportunities arose and time permitted, Juan José would use the CVI's truck and video equipment to help out associates within INI. For instance, in October of 2001, I accompanied Juan José and one of his INI colleagues (who is also an anthropology student) on a two hour trip to a small community in the Mixteca, where she was compiling a community history for her undergraduate thesis. There I witnessed the warmth and friendly interest with which Juan José first skillfully set folks at ease, and then asked their permission to record, which they quickly granted. Indeed, from what I could see, his research methods far outshone those of his INI colleague, but that may also have resulted from the fact that he's a man and he had a camera on his shoulder and cables at his hip. Additionally, on rare occasions, Juan José was able to coordinate with other INI personnel and finagle resources for special events. For example, with the director of XEOJN, 'la Voz de la Chinantla,' an INI radio station in San Lucas Ojitlán in the Papaloapan region of Oaxaca, Juan José orchestrated a five-day video workshop on the

occasion of the station's ten year anniversary in late November 2001. Along with Cheve, who assisted with the workshop, I accompanied Juan José on the 10 hour trip to Ojitlán. During that week in Ojitlán, I began to understand (among other things) the mightily masculinist cultural dynamics with which INI conducts much of its business. Although I'd known that Juan José's duties as director of the CVI sometimes included Friday afternoon meetings that concluded in *cantinas,* I was unprepared for the degree to which the planning and evaluation of INI-centered activities took place in drinking establishments that are far from friendly for women.[21]

According to Juan José and Clara, for the last couple years Juan José had been trying to submit his resignation so that he might devote himself exclusively to Ojo de Agua projects, but INI officials refused to accept it. Each time, they convinced him to hang on to his highly demanding and poorly paid position. Finally, in December of 2001, Juan José was able to *renunciar* (resign from) his position as director of CVI. Right around this time, the owners of the two-story residence housing the CVI decided they no longer wished to lease the building to INI. As a result, Juan José spent most of his last four months searching the city for a suitable site in which to relocate the CVI. Unfortunately, INI seized this opportunity to slash the amount of money it was willing to pay for the CVI's monthly rent payment. And so, Juan José's efforts were futile. During May 2002, *everything* in the CVI— from the kitchen blender and the dormitory bunk beds to a spanking new Macintosh computer (which had only been taken out of its packaging long enough to discover that it sorely lacked in RAM and memory, and was therefore almost useless for video editing)—was packed up and placed in storage at INI's installations in Tlacolula. It was the end of the CVI as it had functioned since its inauguration in 1994: as a safe and welcoming place for creative oppositional politics, for *comunicación de lucha* (struggle-centered communications). Not long

afterwards Mayra, Juan José's former administrative assistant, was named director of the now non-existent CVI. She held this position for a few months, also frantically hunting (with her and Melquiades's new baby on hand) for a place to house the CVI. Mayra soon realized, however, just how little institutional support there was for re-establishing the CVI; and she also resigned. Over the next year, two more people would take this job for short periods of time before giving it up in frustration.

Finally, almost exactly one year later (in the spring of 2003), Oaxaca's CVI was re-established, in a distinctly non-residential setting—a large office space above a hardware store in front of the discount store *Gigante* in the Colonia Reforma—less than a block from INI's state offices. The CVI's one employee, director Pergentino Pazo Fernández, knew next to nothing about video production or video technologies. Instead of technical assistance, the 'new' CVI only offered highly regulated access to the video collection and poorly understood cantankerous equipment.[22] I make this claim on the basis of unsolicited data about the relocated CVI that fortuitously came my way (cf. note 24 on pp. 228-9 of chapter five). Shortly after the relocated CVI opened, Bruno (with the help of Mayra, whose institutional knowledge made her an invaluable resource for the latest CVI director) was able to convince Pazo and his superiors to allow accesses to the CVI for his *Mirada Biónica* video workshop, which unfolded that July in the nearby *Universidad de la Tierra* (Gustavo Esteva's alternative education center). After attending Bruno's workshop, my husband, Filo, was hired to record the graduation of the first graduating class of the new *Telecabao* (a satellite TV-centered high school) in his home community of San Miguel Quetzaletepec, Mixes. Afterwards, he successfully requested permission of Pazo to work at the CVI, where he edited that video and added English subtitles to the one he made for Bruno's workshop. On several occasions, as he worked on these projects, Filo arrived to find the CVI transformed into a

cantina as the director and his INI colleagues gathered together. I don't mention this with the intent to defame; indeed, I don't doubt that the previous incarnation of the CVI surely saw a few parties during its existence. Rather, my aim here is to connect this style of networking with what I experienced in Ojitlán (see note 21 above), and to suggest that it is often symptomatic of INI's institutional ambiance. While many men in Mexico would feel 'at home' in such a setting, it is hardly conducive to the participation of women, especially young, single women who might feel unfairly vulnerable.

One day in the fall of 2003, Filo entered the CVI at a moment when decisions were being made, and was invited to take the place of a young woman whose parents wouldn't let her attend a six week National Video Production Workshop, much of which took place (October 27 through December 6, 2003) in an INI training center in Ixhuatlancillo, Veracruz (not far from Orizaba). The institution formerly known as INI, recently reconfigured into the *Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas* (CDI or CONDEPI), was once again offering video training programs.[23] What's more, with this workshop, video technologies—this time a decent consumer digital video camera, and a mediocre PC with amateur video editing software (a program called Pinochle)—were transferred to six *Unidades de Producción Audiovisual Indígena* (UPAI) comprised of a handful of representatives from various Mexican states.[24] For example, members of the Oaxaca UPAI were: Filo, CVI director Pazo (who is from the Zapotec community of Yalálag), Pazo's nephew (who is also from Yalálag), and a young video professional from the Mixteca (who withdrew after the first two weeks). With this new equipment, the Oaxacan group produced the video that I cite in my story about the use of video in Yalálag (see chapter four, pp. 117-21).[25] Sadly, accusations of graft directed toward (and among) its coordinators followed on the heels of the CDI video workshop in Ixhuatlancillo, and I don't know if a workshop was offered in

2004; their website doesn't mention one. What I do know, is that the once symbiotic relationship between INI's CVI and the collective now known as Ojo de Agua had ended.

The severing of Ojo de Agua from the CVI was not detrimental to the NGO's activities (although the dormitory was missed by many of its associates, especially those who lived outside of the city), largely because starting in 2001, the Macintosh G4 computer that the *Centro Cultural Driki'* had purchased with a grant given by the Levi's Foundation (see p. 220 in previous chapter) was located in Oaxaca de Juárez and at the disposal of Ojo de Agua.[26] Not only did this computer make it possible to bypass the off-line stage of editing video (in sequential order) and exclusively edit online (which allows for a much quicker and easier process), but it also removed the necessity of relying on any of the CVI's equipment. When late in the year 2000 Guillermo and Tona gave a mini-workshop on how to use the G4 in Chicahuaxtla, they had hoped also to use the Mac G4 to edit a video project they were working on at the time. A format fumble prevented this. Sandoval family members involved in the workshop said they had no immediate plans to use the computer and encouraged Guillermo and Tona to take the machine back with them to the capital city. Thinking this arrangement would last for a few months, they agreed under the condition that if the machine contributed to the making of any money, rent would be paid for its use.[27] Despite Guillermo's hopeful conviction that one day soon Hector García Sandoval's interest in video production will rekindle and move him to learn more about online editing, as of August 2004, none of the Sandovals had retrieved the G4. Instead, it remains a beefed-up (with extras purchased with rental fees), well-tended, and central actor in the production-action in the Ojo de Agua office. With its arrival on the scene, this Macintosh computer—in concert with another 18 months of income granted Guillermo by the Ashoka Association—

relocated the locus of technical support and production service from the CVI to Ojo de Agua's office, a block from the Seven Regions Fountain in the Colonia Reforma.

Echando la mano:[28] SER and Ecosta

In 1996, the *asociación civil* named *Servicios del Pueblo Mixe* (SER)[29] was configured of six areas of action: legal outreach and assistance programming; *Asamblea de Productores Mixes* (ASAPROM), an agricultural production-oriented branch that had been established in 1990, probably in relation to Solidarity funding channeled through INI's *Fondos Regionales*; a culture and education division involved in ethno-linguistic research; a women's program geared toward health and nutrition projects; the coordination of forums and seminars, and a communication and diffusion division.[30] In addition to recording short radio capsules and printing brochures, SER's communications people networked with the video equipment received in 1994 by collective after some of its members participated in a TMA workshop in Tlacolula (Cremoux 1997, 125). According to Cremoux, SER principally used video technologies for two missions. The first mission is educating the Mixe region on the political value of unity, as Cremoux phrased it (127): "SER A.C. hace video para la unificación del Pueblo Mixe,"[31] and the nuts and bolts of autonomy. More specifically, SER set out to advise communities about their legal options after 1995 changes in Oaxaca's state constitution that legalized *usos y costumbres* (community determined systems of governance). SER's second video-mediated mission was documenting the cultural and educational endeavors that the NGO undertook. These two goals came together in the *noticiero* (news) programs called *Historia y Tiempo Mixe*, which were created with footage from SER's textual and visual archives of events such as juridical workshops. The *Historia y Tiempo Mixe* programs also included updates on ASAPROM projects, usually through voice-off narration combined

with relevant images. By early 1996, 18 of these programs (roughly one every three months) had been produced (ibid, 26).

Like much of the indigenous video production related to INI's TMA pedagogical preference for a no-frills, straight-up and unadorned style of documentary, the creators of SER's *noticiero* programs believed they offered viewers an inherently truthful vision.[32] Cremoux argues that in addition to reflecting (although I would say *diffracting*)[33] the TMA program's pedagogy, the challenges faced by SER's communications division particularly warranted this aesthetic. Not only did they have to translate the intellectual work of SER's leadership into concise and understandable (to a broad range of people living in the Mixe region) terms, but they were basically starting from scratch because the Mixe region has historically been the most isolated (economically, culturally, and transportation-wise) part of the state, and folks have to be convinced of the utility and *validity* of comtech-mediated knowledge. Héctor Lorenzo, who is in charge of SER's communication division, told Cremoux (1997, 127):

> No es que la gente de las comunidades tenga "sed" de información. Los medios son algo nuevo, pero la gente no se muere por ver algún programa…hay un interés, pero no un fanatismo. Parte de la cultura mixe es la tranquilidad, pasividad, esperar el momento oportuno…en ninguna comunidad hay esa "sed."[34]

In other words, just before the turn of the century, no one was clamoring to be connected via comtech so they might be better informed. Despite this, points out Cremoux, what differentiated SER's video making ventures was the fact that the *noticiero* programs were (for a while anyway) regularly distributed through ASAPROM's 18 different groups, each of which had been equipped with TVs and VCRs for precisely this purpose (Lorenzo quoted in ibid, 128). Another geographical attribute distinguishing SER's distinctly regional focus and distribution is that none of SER's productions circulated through any of the transnational circuits of exhibition amenable to indigenous video (i.e., film and video festivals).

Since no one moving within Ojo de Agua's orbit during the time I was researching it ever mentioned SER as an active site of video production, I think it's safe to say that by 2001 SER's communications division (still coordinated by Lorenzo) was no longer exerting as much energy on video-mediated programming.[35] This observation is (somewhat) confirmed by the fact that SER 'outsourced' to Ojo de Agua two video projects during my investigation. The first video project that prompted SER to turn to Ojo de Agua was initiated by Isaías Aldaz Hernández, a Mixe *etnomatemático* (ethno-mathematician) whose academic advocacy had at one point intersected with SER's. As a young elementary school teacher in his community of Asunción Cacalotepec, Aldaz earned a scholarship that allowed him to pursue further training in mathematics at the year-old *Universidad Pedagógica Nacional* (UPN) in Mexico City.[36] Aldaz retained his affiliation with the UPN when he returned to Cacalotepec; and starting in 1991, he and other school teachers who lived and worked in Cacalotepec began to pursue (in their spare time) a project focused on the formulation of first and second grade mathematics in their Mixe language. They called it *Lecto-escritura: Matemáticas en Lengua Mixe.*[37] The first step the school teachers took in developing the curriculum was to learn how to write Mixe from a non-Mixe linguist. Then they studied ethnographic methods with scholars connected to the *Centro de Investigación y Estudios Avanzados del Politécnico.*[38] Additionally, with the help of Héctor Lorenzo and other young people involved in SER, who were interested in educational and cultural matters, they began to evaluate their teaching by video taping their classes. When Aldaz learned through the UPN of an UNESCO grant competition, the Cacalotepec school teachers applied, sending along some unedited and un-translated video footage to backup up their proposal. Their efforts were rewarded with some financial support that allowed them to buy supplies for better equipping their pedagogical efforts. Sadly, however, the *Lecto-escritura* project

flourished only three or four years. According to Aldaz (interview June 2004), the school teachers found themselves, by virtue of their Spanish skills, in the middle of land conflict negotiations that were eventually resolved in ways unfavorable to Cacalotepec. Accused of being the culprits, they were run out of town and replaced by teachers who, although Mixe speakers, were not motivated to provide an intercultural education.

At the turn of the century, Aldaz was living in Oaxaca de Juárez, very close to the UPN campus in San Felipe del Agua where he worked. Late in 2001, he approached Héctor Lorenzo (SER's communication guy) to request assistance with the creation of a video-mediated summary of the *Lecto-escritura* project. Aldaz sought to strengthen a grant he and other scholars from UPN's Mexico City campus were soliciting from the Ford Foundation for the purpose of designing, and then undertaking, intercultural, bilingual pedagogy programs. After helping Aldaz cull through SER's video archive of educational conferences and forums, Lorenzo called Ojo de Agua. Guillermo promptly invited Aldaz to his house nearby, where he was working on another Ojo de Agua project with the Mac G4. They then worked together for three consecutive afternoons to produce a 10 minute video called *Matemáticas Mixes*. With Aldaz at his side, Guillermo pieced together archival images of Aldaz and others teaching and inserted Spanish subtitles. He did all this for free, as there were no funds for such an endeavor; indeed, Aldaz himself bought the necessary video tapes.[39] The video-supported proposal was successful; and by 2003, Aldaz and his UPN colleagues were undertaking an initiative they called *Proyecto Tlacuache: Educación Matemática e Interculturalidad.*[40] Aldaz told me that he is delighted with the video, not only because it helped score funding, but also because it continues to be useful for convincing state educational authorities and bilingual school teachers of the value of intercultural education. Perhaps *Matemáticas Mixes*

and the grant were factors that contributed to subsequent Aldaz's selection as the director of UPN's Oaxaca campus in the spring of 2004.

In May 2002, Ojo de Agua was again contacted by members of SER seeking technical assistance with a video project. Like Aldaz, they (three young SER associates) also sought to produce a short video celebrating their organization's previous activities in order to demonstrate the collective's suitability for an award. This time, the objective was the *Instituto Mexicano de la Juventud's* prestigious *Premio Nacional de Juventud*,[41] and instead of Guillermo, it was Roberto who put the Mac G4 to use for what amounts to a 'bargain basement' price.[42] Roberto told me (during an interview in June 2004) that he was approached by members of SER almost exactly 24 hours before the video had to be sent off with the written grant application because they had only just been encouraged to include a video with their application. The first thing Roberto did was to ask the SER representatives to select footage from their organization's ample video archive that was most relevant to the project the group would undertake if they were awarded the national prize (totaling about $4,500 USD). After they had made the selection and prepared a script of sorts outlining their vision of the video, Roberto digitized the S-VHS footage and quickly created a concise look at SER's proposal that emphasized their competency for undertaking it. According to Roberto, SER was proposing to use the prize for a training program intended to prepare young people for participating in their pueblos' composition of *Estatutos Comunitarios* (community statutes), which transformed community traditions of governance (*usos y costumbres*) into legal documents. Unfortunately, despite the collective effort, SER was not awarded the prize. When I spoke with Hugo Aguilar (then SER's key coordinator)[43] in May 2003 about this video, he told me that they didn't receive the funding because the selection committee couldn't imagine young people adequately trained in the complexities of

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indigenous rights, especially in light of the controversies over indigenous rights even the Mexican Supreme Court could not untangle easily. Unlike the video *Matemáticas Mixes* that Guillermo made for Aldaz, this promotional video seemed to be of no use to anyone. Indeed, it seems to have simply disappeared. Roberto didn't keep or couldn't find a copy, and when I went to SER to inquire about the matter with Aguilar, he was unable or unwilling to locate either the video or the written proposal it had accompanied.

Not all collectivities involved with Ojo de Agua's altruism self-identified as indigenous and the NGO *Ecosta Yutu Cuii* (hereafter Ecosta) is one example of this.[44] In 1993, Ecosta was established as a group comprised mainly of volunteers from the community of San Pedro Tututepec. This pueblo is the seat of a *municipio* of the same name that is about an hour up the coast from the well-known tourist destination Puerto Escondido. Parts of this municipio overlap with the lagoon-lined coast and are included in the National Park of Chacahua, while other parts climb up toward the Sierra Sur Mountains. From its inception, Ecosta has been led by Heladio Reyes, a college educated agronomist who was dismayed by the last 40 years of rapid declines in the coast's natural resources through the ravages of the agricultural-industry, in particular deforestation, cattle ranching and most recently cotton farming. By 1995 Ecosta had become a regional project dedicated to the collective analysis of the causes of environmental problems and the participatory pursuit of solutions such as building stoves that require less wood, innovative well and irrigation systems, and organic farming and small animal husbandry. In 1995 Ecosta solicited funding from the U.S.-based Kellogg's Foundation, but was turned down due to the collective's lack of experience in handling such an influx of resources. Not long afterwards, Ecosta established a lucrative three year relationship with the transnationally-funded national NGO *Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza A.C.* (FMCN) that provided support

for environmentally-focused production projects (what most folks call sustainable development) informed by an active acknowledgment of the importance of communication and education for social change.[45] By 1998, the Kellogg's Foundation was willing to invest in Ecosta and over the next four years (1999-2002) supported their project *Conservación del Desarrollo Comunitario* (Conservation and Community Development), which included a *difusión y capacitación* (diffusion and training) component.

Members of Ojo de Agua visited Tututepec for the first time in second-half of 2000, when they embarked upon a video project centered on the Chacahua National Park (further discussed below, pp. 306-11).[46] According to Heladio Reyes (during an interview in July 2004), over the next couple of years Ojo de Agua contributed to Ecosta's networking in two ways. First, Guillermo and others traveled to the coast to help record workshops and initiatives undertaken by Ecosta. This footage was then used to create video and radio capsules about these activities, some of which were broadcast on coastal radio stations and the semi-public TV station in Oaxaca de Juárez, Channel 9. The second manner in which Ojo de Agua (primarily Guillermo) assisted Ecosta was the provision of technical advice and training, especially in relation to the selection, purchase, and use of a Hi8 digital video camera, a tripod, and a video projector that was bought with money from Kellogg's. The goal was to equip Ecosta with the technology and know-how that would allow them to make and screen their own videos. Additionally, Guillermo was involved in an effort to establish a small transmitter in the region so that Ecosta could broadcast radio and television programming. Reyes told me that, for a while, Ecosta did indeed locally broadcast a radio station called *Estereo Lluvia* (Rain Radio), but even though the equipment remains, Ecosta suspended their radio broadcasts. It remains very difficult to procure the necessary permits for operating community radio stations in Mexico, although such endeavors are generally not

persecuted if the range is insignificant and programming is not overtly oppositional.[47] So the radio station became more of a liability than an asset when the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (PRD) put Reyes forth as the party's candidate for municipal president in 2002 and the already fierce political scrutiny of Ecosta's endeavors by PRI-affiliated political bosses in the region really began to heat up. Instead of campaigning as other politicians did, Reyes traveled to communities located in the *municipio* and offered workshops wherein he discussed pressing environmental issues and then asked people what sort of projects they wished to pursue that might alleviate the problems. And to the surprise of many, this strategy worked and he was elected. Shortly thereafter Reyes began to receive death threats.[48]

In 2000, two years after earning an undergraduate Biology degree from the *Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana* in Mexico City, Jesús Francisco Villanueva (a.k.a. Francisco) began working with a branch of Ecosta called *Raíces Costeñas*.[49] Francisco earned a small salary doing assorted tasks such as plant reconnaissance and comtech-mediated *difusión*—what we might call educational outreach. Shortly after Reyes began his term as municipal president in 2002, Francisco and others (such as a member of the Chacahua National Park's staff and Tais Andani, a young woman from Valencia, Spain, who was working in the area as a volunteer) were in a meeting coordinating Tututepec's celebration of World Environment Day (June 5th).[50] In addition to planning to design posters emblazoned with the phrase: "yo separo mi basura" (I separate my garbage) in order to encourage a new recycling program promoted by Reyes's administration, they decided to put Ecosta's new comtech to work and produce a video that would be presented on World Environment Day. Francisco and Tais went out with Ecosta's video camera and recorded at formal and informal garbage dumps in the muncipio. They selected the song, "¿Donde jugarán los niños?" ["Where will the children play?"], which is performed by the Mexican rock band

Maná.[51] And then they sat down to edit together the images and the music with a computer editing program, which Francisco had purchased with his own resources. They pieced together a short video, but were only agile enough with the software to make a very low resolution copy of the video. Because of the poor quality of the image, which was greatly exacerbated by being projected, Francisco told me he was most relieved when the video presentation was rained out. He said, "A nosotros nos salvó la campaña." (We were saved by the bell.)

Francisco had shown Guillermo around Tututepec in December of 2001 when he orchestrated a screening of videos there, and so when he was in Oaxaca de Juárez shortly after Earth Day, Francisco dropped by the Ojo de Agua office with his video footage in hand. During an interview (in July 2004), I asked Guillermo about this video project, he answered "oh yeah! I forgot about that…" When pressed for details, Guillermo laughed and said: "So, Francisco shot the garbage dump, and garbage on the side of the road, and that's *all* he shot! And he came in and said I need to do a video clip and I'm leaving tomorrow, so let's do it right now." Francisco confirmed his sudden appearance in the office and the tiny timeframe for editing the video. He also added that they weren't able to finish putting together the video before he had to dash off to a meeting and so Guillermo completed the video and then sent it to Tututepec by courier so that it would arrive the next day. To create the three minute video, Guillermo wove snippets of Francisco's shots of garbage with footage of Clara's father relaxing in a rocking chair beneath a tall tree, and Clara and Juan José's children playing in a creek and in trees while on holiday, as well as some images of people and places from the Chacahua National Park that Ojo de Agua had recorded over the last couple years. Rhythmically juxtaposing the idyllic with the disheartening, the video admirably captures the chosen song's angst (see note 51) and determinedly questions that

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particularly human folly of engaging with the environment in ways that are highly detrimental to the next generation's health and survival.

When I asked him in July 2004, Guillermo had no idea if or how this video might be used, either currently or in the past. When I asked Francisco, he said he was generally disappointed with the video. Not only was it not shown on World Environment Day as initially planned, but also, after screening the video a few times, Francisco decided that the music wasn't the right vibe for effectively capturing the attention of audiences of coastal residents. Francisco could not, however, tell me whether or not Ecosta was still using the video for outreach because when the Kellogg's grant money ran out at the end of 2002, he was obliged to find a job elsewhere and in July 2004, he was working as a technician and coordinator with the SERMARNAT office that oversees the Chacahua Lagoons National Park. When I spoke with Heladio Reyes about this video about garbage, he endorsed its usefulness for introducing and promoting the recycling program initiated by Ecosta and recently implemented by the municipality of Tututepec. He said that Ecosta remained eager and determined to pursue its own video production, and pointed out that in 2003 a young man who was working with Ecosta had spent two weeks in Oaxaca de Juárez with Ojo de Agua learning about video production. Reyes also mentioned that in December of that same year, people affiliated with the *Frente de Comunicaciones Alternativa de Oaxaca* (Alternative Communications Front of Oaxaca), including some members of Ojo de Agua, had gathered together in Tututepec for a conference. This event must of have coincided with Reyes's return to office after eight months of suspension due to unsubstantiated and unwarranted accusations of fraud made by disgruntled PRI politicians. In a nutshell, Reye's forced eight month hiatus was a serious ecological set back. Burgeoning municipal programs (many of which complemented Ecosta activities), such as the recycling initiative, came to a standstill

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because the interim president (also affiliated with the PRD) had collaborated with members of the PRI and rampantly reallocated funding at whim.[52]

In addition to illustrating the not-for-profit character of Ojo de Agua's service, the two stories (about SER and Ecosta) that I discuss here hint at the sporadic but enticing pedagogical and promotional power of video. With the help of video, a grant was (not) garnered, and discussions about the value of intercultural education and strategies for coping with garbage were (and might still be) stimulated. As in the story about Crisanto above, these comtech tales demonstrate how transnational networking is never enough to transcend the complexly overlaid and contingent politics (cultural, national, community, regional) inextricably shaping each video project. These stories articulate video's promising potential with both its inherently politicized punch, and its tendency toward inertia. Furthermore, the spontaneity, contingency, and personal relationships that enabled (or ended) these projects demonstrate that video's potency can not transcend geography, humans remain very important actors in the networking of video-mediated and motivational messages.

Mediating Advocacy: Ojo de Agua and CEFREC

In his brief sketch of indigenous video production in Bolivia and a 2002 exhibition tour sponsored by the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), Jeff Himpele mentions Ojo de Agua. He identifies the media collective as an active "node" in a transnational current of video production and circulation that is similar to the *Centro de Estudio, Formación y Realización Cinematográfica* (CEFREC) in Bolivia, which Himpele discusses in greater depth (see chapter two, pp. 61-2). Himpele (2004a, 353) describes both Ojo de Agua and CEFREC in the following way:

> These centers represent nodes in widely dispersed and mobile networks of collaboration that extend beyond their home countries to media organizations in

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Brazil and Ecuador, for example, and are affiliated through the Latin American Council of Indigenous Peoples' Film and Video (CLACPI), created in 1985 in Mexico, and now housed in Bolivia.

I fully concur with Himpele's description, and I empathize with his use of the concept of 'network,' in this case widely-dispersed and mobile ones. Network most certainly quickly and succinctly summarizes some of Ojo de Agua's and CEFREC's more visible (i.e., more successful) activity patterns. What it does not do (probably because of the small space in which Himpele's look at the 2002 tour of Bolivian indigenous videos and video makers appears), however, is articulate the processes and wider political geographies of these two video centers' networking. In what follows, I flesh out the socio-technical-spatial networking remarked upon by Himpele. I examine the individual and institutional entanglements that establish and maintain Ojo de Agua's socio-spatial relationships with(in) CLACPI and the Smithsonian's NMAI.

I have already briefly examined CLACPI's 1999 festival—the *VI Festival de Cine y Video de Pueblos Indígenas* in Guatemala—that (according to Erica Wortham) almost wasn't (see chapter one, pp. 14-17). As you might recall, my brief overview (based upon Wortham's) suggested that the media group that came to be called Ojo de Agua played vital roles in the coordination and administration of this festival. To this general observation, I add that members of this collective were also central to the unfolding of three regional tours in Guatemala that followed on the heels of the festival. These tours brought indigenous media makers (e.g., Crisanto) to rural indigenous communities to screen videos and provide video workshops.[53] After this sixth CLACPI festival in 1999, it was five years until the seventh festival in 2004 (which I discuss just below). It took a while for this transnational collectivity to recuperate (financially and emotionally) from what happened, and what *didn't* happen, in Guatemala. By 2002, however, CLACPI had regrouped sufficiently to coordinate

a *Taller de Entrenamiento en Video Indígena y Comunitario* (a training workshop focused on indigenous and other communally-conceived video) that was held at the *Escuela Internacional de Cine y Televisión* in San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba an hour outside of Havana. Through auspices of Ojo de Agua, Crisanto was invited by CLACPI to this three-week-long course, which focused on the art and science of sound recording, at Cuba's world-renown cinema school. Immediately following the workshop (November 2002), Juan José joined Crisanto. Together they attended the *Taller de Coordinación Continental del Cine y Video Indígena*, at the *Instituto de Radio y Televisión de Cuba* in Havana. During this two day meeting, CLACPI's leadership[54] reconfigured the organization. Juan José related (during an interview in April 2004) the results of this meeting: CLACPI had a new name, changed from the *Consejo Latinoamericano de <u>Cine y Vídeo</u> de los Pueblos Indígenas* to the *Consejo Latinoamericano de la <u>Comunicación y Cine</u> de los Pueblos Indígenas,* and a new general coordinator, Juan José himself. Then the following summer (2003), much to Sergio's surprise,[55] it was his turn to travel to Cuba. Sergio spent almost two months in Cuba where he undertook a workshop (of sorts)[56] on the production of educational television programming that was run by the *Instituto de Radio y Televisión de Cuba*, where the CLACPI meeting had taken place the year before. Sergio told me (during an interview in April 2004) the group invited to participate in the workshop ended up being much smaller than anticipated. Initially, eight individuals were to attend (two each from Mexico, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Columbia); but a lack of resources reduced this group to five: two Mexicans and three Bolivians. This decision certainly highlights the central roles played by CEFREC and Ojo de Agua in CLACPI.

By 2004 CLACPI had become embedded in Chile through a connection with the *Centro de Estudios y Comunicación Indígena Lulul Mawidha* in Santiago, the capital city. With Jeanette Paillán at the helm, this organization helped coordinate the *Septimo Festival*

Internacional de Cine y Video de los Pueblos Indígenas.[57] During a week in June, with the technical assistance of Cheve[58] (and others), more than 80 works from 15 countries were screened at three different venues in downtown Santiago: the *Museo Chileno de Arte Precolombino*, the *Centro Cultural de España*, and the *Goethe Institut*. Running concurrent with the screenings and other cultural performances (e.g., poetry and dance) was the *IV Taller Encuentro Interamericano de Cine y Comunicación de los Pueblos Indígenas,* which included (for example) a *Simposio sobre Pueblos Indígenas, Internet y Nuevas Tecnologías.* Preceding this festival and related events, Juan José, and Daniel Díez (from the *Instituto de Radio y Televisión de Cuba*), who has worked closely with CLACPI and CEFREC, led an intensive two-week training course in the countryside with twenty participants (15 men, 5 women) from Aymara, Likanantai, Mapuche, and Rapa Nui communities in Chile. Following the festival was an international meeting of CLACPI that built on the discussion panels of the *IV Taller Encuentro Interamericano de Cine y Comunicación.*

Out of these CLACPI-centered gatherings in Chile, a manifesto emerged.[59] This document outlines some insightful observations about what indigenous media making is, and should (or could) be. It also offers proposals for enabling and encouraging the appropriation and training in the use of comtech by indigenous communities. These recommendations emphasize the importance of maintaining a transnational body such as CLACPI to provide a unified front for soliciting and distributing funding for training and technology. Also stressed is CLACPI's need to strengthen its relationships with more localized and nationalized endeavors. Establishing and maintaining these socio-technical-spatial relationships, it is argued, will allow the involved actors to exchange *and evaluate* extremely relevant comtech-mediated knowledge—especially lessons learned through their differently situated experiences, and geared toward survival in the technoscientific world of institutions. Additionally, the manifesto demonstrates a (re)new(ed) concern for the distribution and

preservation of indigenous video productions. This concern is both commercial (in that it proposes, in the name of sustainability, the sale of videos) and extremely cautious (due to a heightened awareness of what Guillermo Bonfil called *control cultural*, and of the long history of socio-economic exploitation of indigenous peoples in Latin America).[60] Another one of the super specific suggestions made in CLACPI's manifesto is to petition UNESCO to support transnational training projects. I am happy to report that this objective has been achieved. As I type these words (late February 2005), CLACPI's *II Taller de Entrenamiento en Video Indígena y Comunitario*—a three week workshop devoted to the art and science of scriptwriting—is taking place at Cuba's *Escuela Internacional de Cine y Televisión*, thanks to the financial assistance of UNESCO's *Oficina Regional de Cultura para América Latina y el Caribe* in La Habana. According to the letters sent to those who were invited, a dozen indigenous video makers from seven different Latin American countries are attending. Two of the participants are Roberto of Ojo de Agua, and my husband, Filo.

In addition to networking with(in) CLACPI, Ojo de Agua and CEFREC have been closely networking with(in) the NMAI's Film and Video Center (FVC) in New York City.[61] Elizabeth Weatherford, committed to both expanding audiences for independent visual media, and contributing to the production of anthropological knowledge, founded the Smithsonian-NMAI's FVC in 1979.[62] With the support of the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts, Weatherford initiated (among other things) the NMAI's biannual festival that showcases indigenous film and videos produced in the Americas. Interwoven with the festival is the Native Networks initiative whereby the NMAI aims to make information resources available to both indigenous media makers and the general public. At NMAI's 1995 Festival, for instance, there was a Native Networks forum on Native American media projects in Canada, Brazil, Mexico, and the United States.

Panelists included Guillermo (then director of the CVI), as well as Emigdio Julián Caballero and Teófila Palafox, who also presented their videos *Viko Ndute (Fiesta del Agua)* and *Las Ollas de San Marcos* at the festival. The 1997 NMAI festival featured a two day Native Networks symposium on Indigenous Media in the Age of Globalization, which was made possible through the support of a variety of foundations, government offices, and media initiatives.[63] The first day of the symposium, in which Juan José and Iván Sanjinés participated as the directors of the CVI and CEFREC, was dedicated to community-based and national media projects. Elsewhere in the program, Juan José presented his video *Así Es Mi Tierra* and Genaro Rojas, a representative of the media collective Tamix, presented the group's video *Mjook (Maíz)* and spoke on a panel exploring radio in indigenous communities.

At the NMAI's festival in November 2000, however, there were no panels devoted to discussing Native Networks; instead, the Ford Foundation funded construction of the (amazing) Native Networks website embodied the initiative.[64] In addition to serving on the 2000 festival's selection committee (along with Erica Wortham, who had also coordinated the Latin American programs in the 1995 and 1997 festivals), Crisanto's 1999 production *Guia-Toó (Montaña Poderosa)* was screened. Once again, Iván Sanjinés was on hand at the 2000 festival to present and discuss the many Bolivian indigenous videos that were screened. This time he was joined by members of the *Coordinadora Audiovisual Indígena Originaria de Bolivia* (CAIB), which together with CEFREC had developed the *Plan Nacional Indígena Originario de Comunicación Audiovisual de Bolivia.*[65] In the spring of 2001, an invitation arrived in Ojo de Agua's office for Crisanto to attend a Smithsonian-sponsored event that sought to gather people together in a focus group of sorts. When Guillermo learned that the gathering would be focused on the Native Networks website, he began to lobby for Sergio's inclusion. Most every actor involved in Ojo de Agua, including Crisanto, realizes that while Crisanto has

much to say about video making and use, he isn't very interested in the internet, which is why the NMAI folks didn't just email his invitation! Guillermo's efforts were successful, and both Crisanto and Sergio spent a long weekend in Minneapolis providing feedback on the website project.[66] The following year (2003), Sergio continued to provide input to the website when he spent six weeks in residence at the NMAI in New York City under the aegis of the Community Service Department's Visiting Professional Program.[67]

At the 2000 NMAI festival, during a screening called *Andean Visions, Amazonian Dreams*: *Focus on Bolivia*, a collection of videos produced by members of CAIB working with CEFREC was introduced by Sanjinés and two CAIB video directors. In addition to Sanjinés's short video titled *Los Pueblos Indígenas: Así Pensamos*, three indigenous productions were shown: two works of fiction and one 'docudrama.' This collection was expanded to constitute *Ojo del Condor*, a traveling collection of indigenous videos produced in Bolivia, and introduced to tour audiences by Sanjinés, Marcelina Cárdenas (a Quechua video maker and journalist who is an active member of CAIB), and Jesús Tapia (an Aymara videomaker who is CAIB's President and General Coordinator). During March and April of 2002, this tour visited museums, schools and universities, public libraries, and cultural centers in the Washington, D.C. and Arlington, VA (where the advocacy groups *Alma Boliviana* and *Comité Pro Bolivia* orchestrated outreach events with the large Bolivian population in the area), New York City and Long Island, and Ontario (cf. Himpele 2004a and b). The tour climaxed with screenings of some Bolivian videos at the *Taos Talking Picture Festival,* where CEFREC-CIAB was awarded (by Weatherford) the Mountain Award, which is given in recognition of outstanding achievements by indigenous media makers.[68] The following year, FVC's program coordinator Amalia Córdova, in conjunction with Ojo de Agua, put together a similar tour called *Video México Indígena/Video Native Mexico*, wherein three indigenous video

makers—Juan José, Fabiola Gervacio (a Mixe woman from the Isthmus), and Dante Cerano (a young P'urepecha man who has worked with(in) the CVI in Morelia)—presented their work and fielded questions.[69] Accompanying them were Amalia Córdova of the FVC, Guillermo, and Sergio—for whom NMAI funding had been found enabling him to stay on after finishing his professional residency and travel with the tour as its official documenter. Expressly for this tour, Ojo de Agua (principally Roberto) produced a ten minute video called *Historias Verdaderas (True Stories)*, which provides an overview of indigenous video making, and makers (e.g., Fabiola, Crisanto, and Juan José), in Mexico. In addition to screenings in museum and university spaces in Washington D.C. and New York City, the tour hit Wisconsin, New Mexico, and California.[70] And like CEFREC-CAIB the year before, while in New Mexico Ojo de Agua received the Mountain Award from Elizabeth Weatherford at the Taos Talking Picture Festival (which, alas, was the last festival of this name).

By all accounts, the NMAI's December 2003 Festival was bigger and better than ever, screening 85 productions from Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, El Salvador, Mexico, Arctic Russia, and the continental United States and Hawai'i.[71] Once again, Sanjinés and several indigenous video makers from Bolivia introduced and discussed their works (which ranged from historical documentaries to love stories and native affairs television programming), as did members and affiliates of Ojo de Agua. Bruno introduced the Ojo de Agua video *Nuestra Ley* (see chapter five, pp. 223-5); Sergio presented *Nuestro Pueblo* (recently re-titled in Zapotec, *Lhallchho*) on behalf of Juan José who was invited, but at the last moment unable to attend; Roberto introduced *Historias Verdaderas* and *Estos Dolores Somos*, his short video about the Zapatistas, and along with Marcos Sandoval, presented another short video *Ser Triqui* that Ojo de Agua had made for satellite-mediated educational television (I

discuss this video and the project at the end of this chapter). Also in attendance was

Hermenegildo Rojas, a member of Tamix (see chapter five, p. 183) who has also worked

with the Chiapas Media Project (chapter three, pp. 91-3). Initially Hermenegildo was going

to pay for his trip out of his pocket because he wanted to network at the festival; i.e., he

hoped to establish contacts there that might lead to support for Tamix ventures. At the last

minute, however, he tapped into NMAI travel support, apparently by virtue of being the

only member (albeit occasional) of the Yucatán-based media collective, *Yoochel Kaaj*, who was

available to present an issue of *Turix (Dragonfly)*, the collective's multilingual and eclectic

video magazine.

One morning during the 2003 festival, Latin American attendees were gathered

together for a two-hour meeting for the purpose of strategizing with regard to CLACPI's

upcoming festival, and ratifying and signing a collective statement of support of said festival.

Not long after it started, however, the meeting veered off course. According to the four

attendees (Hermenegildo, Bruno, Roberto and Sergio) with whom I formally and informally

discussed this meeting, the detour was precipitated by Heremengildo's declaration of

discomfiture with what he saw as invalid claims of 'representativeness' made by CLACPI,

and by extension CLACPI's primary connection in Mexico, Ojo de Agua. He asked: who

comprises CLACPI, and why is our support of its endeavors automatically assumed?

According to Roberto, Hermenegildo declared that:

> …estaba inconforme en como se organizaban los festivales, que estaba inconforme
> de que en Oaxaca el vídeo indígena era sinónimo a Guillermo Monteforte y que en
> Bolivia era sinónimo que Iván Sanjinés, y que a él le parecía que esos filtros si no
> pasaba, o las decisiones no pasaban a través de Guillermo, no pasaban a ningún lado,
> entonces eso generó un poco de discusión.[72]

Some in the meeting echoed Hermenegildo's observation that Ojo de Agua and CEFREC

served as 'filters' (something later Hermenegildo spelled out when we talked over tacos in

Tama). They questioned the ways in which so many CLACPI-related decisions appeared to be made by non-indigenous peoples. Others defended the criticized parties and/or pointed out that there were several Mexicans in attendance whose participation wasn't directly linked to Ojo de Agua's efforts (although, apparently the same could not be said for the Bolivians). Finally, someone from another country politely requested that the Mexicans deal with their conflicts some other time and place because there was still much to discuss about the CLACPI festival and the two hours allotted for doing so as a group was quickly running out.[73]

To summarize his understanding of what happened during this meeting, and what it meant, Roberto recounted (to me during an interview in June 2004) the commentary of Alberto Muenala, a prominent figure in Latin American media making who was present at the CLACPI festival and the meeting in question.[74] According to Roberto, Muenala shared with him the following observations:

> Lo único que yo veo muy positivo es que video indígena en México ya maduró…Guillermo debe sentirse bien de que sus alumnos ya vuelan con sus propias alas, aunque de repente le reclaman cosas a él. Eso quiere decir que logró bien su trabajo, o sea que ellos ya quieren su independencia, quieren que las cosas se mueven por sus propias cuentas…Es el nivel de madurez que ha alcanzado el movimiento en México, ojala lo logren en Bolivia.[75]

Muenala saw the sparks that flew during CLACPI meeting in a positive light, as evidence that the indigenous media making initiatives were moving beyond the patterns of institutional paternalism from which so many of them had emerged. Building on Muenala's analysis, Roberto concluded:

> Pero lo real es que el movimiento ya rebasó Ojo de Agua, ya rebasó el CVI, a Guillermo, a Juan José y a quien sea, y eso es bueno por que eso es lo que se buscaba, y al final de cuentas es una buena experiencia.[76]

While I don't share Roberto's hyperbolic claim that members of Ojo de Agua are no longer central to indigenous video initiatives in Mexico, especially since he and Filo spent a good

part of March 2005 in Cuba at the invitation of CLACPI, and Juan José is this council's general coordinator, clearly Hermenegildo's outburst[77] triggered an important discussion. People called for diversifying the socio-spatial relations of advocacy that facilitated the organizational practices of indigenous video production and dissemination. These well-informed critical analysts pointed out that 'nodes,' no matter how service-oriented, are not neutral mediators; indeed, despite Ojo de Agua and CEFREC's good deeds and best intentions, these collectives have a tendency to serve as 'filters.'

Filters, like fractures and failures, are par for the technoscientific course. To clarify this, 'the course' is the comtech-mediated production of authoritative knowledge about indigenous peoples, places, practices, *as well as* the communication-negotiation of institutional and commercial policies and procedures that inform (or not) the choices available to the communities historically marginalized from state decision making and resource distribution, many of whom self-identify as indigenous. Socio-spatial-technical relationships forged and filtered along the lines of pedagogy are prone to paternalism; indeed, some folks might say they're pre-determined. These geographical patterns recall the ethnopolitical praxis of critical scholars in Mexico and the institutional restructurings that resulted from them, especially in Oaxaca (see chapter three). Clearly, the comtech-centered advocacy of Ojo de Agua and CEFREC (and by extension CLACPI and the NMAI's FVC) has selectively fueled indigenous activism. But selectiveness is only part of the story. Evidence (such as the fact that Guillermo has not attended the biannual NMAI film festival since 1995, despite being invited) also suggests that political kinship allows some self-reflective filtering bodies to listen, perhaps learn, and maybe reconfigure (personally, structurally) their practices accordingly. And advocates aren't the only actors doing this. It's nice to have father figures forge new venues for action and facilitate access to comtech; and

so it's not always expedient to relocate such author-ity, especially when new media is bewildering. For instance, given Crisanto's inability to interface with computers for email (whether due to a reluctance to learn or the lack of a computer on hand to do so on a regular basis), how will he digitally relocate his visual activism with less expensive cassettes and perhaps online editing, if not through a financial support and/or coaching? This is what makes paternalism so darned pesky—in many situations it's requested and sometimes it's even a necessary evil in the fight to enable indigenous self-representation.

STRUGGLE

Seeking Support

Since its inception, Ojo de Agua has existed (often precariously) on a project-to-project basis that requires constantly seeking the means to fuel new endeavors. This is not, however, to say that the group has not sought a steady source of financial support. When I entered the orbit of Ojo de Agua in January 2001, the organization had just met with Maru Mata, the NGO consultant. Building on the identity and strategy outlined in the *Documento Ejecutivo* that had emerged from that meeting (see the very end of chapter five), the media collective composed a grant proposal for a collaborative project involving CLACPI, CEFREC-CAIB, and the Brazilian NGO *Video nas Aldeias* (Video in the Villages),[78] which was then submitted to the European Union's Democracy and Human Rights initiative. The proposal and its $400,000 budget, largely penned (on the Mexico end) by Guillermo and Tona, outlined a three year plan in which four specific objectives were to be pursued. The first objective was *capacitación* (training) through workshops and seminars that would facilitate the appropriation and informed use of comtech by indigenous communities and

organizations. Next was the *producción* (production) of videos and television programs that would directly respond to the communication needs of Oaxaca's indigenous communities. The third objective was *difusión* (dissemination) through the creation of a video library geared toward both providing the information that indigenous communities needed and wanted, and facilitating the distribution of visual materials intended to help indigenous communities share their perspective with non-indigenous societies. The final objective was *asesoría a otras organizaciones* (assistance to other organizations), which entailed supporting other collectives' efforts to formulate and fortify their own communication strategies. Unfortunately, however, the EU could not be convinced to invest in the plan. According to Guillermo, Ojo de Agua was "the black sheep in the family," because it was the only group involved in the joint collective with no experience of being directly funded (cf. the initial reluctance of the Kellogg's Foundation to work with Ecosta). After recognizing the futility of trying once more to solicit funds from the EU,[79] Guillermo sent a letter of inquiry and a slimmed-down three year plan to the Charles Stewart Mott and Ford Foundations, neither of which have open grant competitions. Again his efforts were to no avail.

Another strategy Ojo de Agua tried was crafting project-specific proposals. In April 2001, for example, Guillermo and Tona composed detailed proposal and budget ($169,132 MXP, which at that date was just shy of $18,000 USD) for conceiving, recording, editing and post-producing a video titled *Conservación y Comunidades* that would showcase the operations of the World Wildlife Federation (WWF) in Oaxaca. A ten to fifteen minute video would introduce the state of Oaxaca, its vast biological and ethnic diversity, and the fact that 90% of its forests are communally owned. Then the state's cultural richness would be contrasted with the severe socio-economic marginalization of Oaxaca's indigenous population. Most of the video was to be dedicated to detailing the results of the first two phases of WWF-

supported sustainable development endeavors undertaken with community participation in three of Oaxaca's regions: the *mesófilos* (cloud forests) in the Sierra Norte, the *mesófilos* and tropical jungles in Chimalapas, and the dry tropical forests on the Pacific coast. The aim was to convince WWF's funders to support the third and final phase of this programming. And in addition to delivering 50 copies of this video (half in English and half in Spanish), it was proposed that Ojo de Agua would also hand over all of the footage shot during the project so that it would be at the disposal of both the WWF and the community-based organizations with which WWF worked.

The WWF office in Oaxaca embraced the proposal, but the Mexican headquarters of the WWF only saw fit to fund the recording stage of production. Late in September 2001, I accompanied Clara (who handled sound), Tona (who handled the camera) and Guillermo (who handled the direction) on a four-day trip to the coast. As their proposal had suggested, this Ojo de Agua crew met up with two WWF personnel who introduced them to the communities (first the authorities and then people who were involved in WWF supported projects), and offered guidance on what to record.[80] Unfortunately, however, the crew never reached the Chimalapas region of the isthmus because WWF representatives deemed the region too politically hot due to convoluted land conflicts.[81] Nor did Ojo de Agua record in the Sierra Norte as planned. Not long after the trip to the coast, the director of Oaxaca's WWF office left his position, and for a while there was no director. By the time a new director was in place, the video project was no longer a priority and the recorded footage entered an extended period of limbo.[82] The project, we might say, was a victim of the fractured topography of transnational NGO geographies.

One other project Ojo de Agua tried to initiate in 2001, but couldn't for a variety of reasons, was the co-production of a series of programs created from the perspective of an

indigenous community for *Argos Comunicación*. Several of the key figures in this company are Venezuelans who were Latin American war correspondents for European newspapers. It is said that these men retained their political commitments upon entering the commercial realm of television production; for example, the CEO of Argos, Epigmenio Ibarra, was the first to interview Subcomodante Marcos after the Zapatista uprising.[83] Although Argos also produces Mexican cinema, it is particularly well-known for its *telenovelas de ruptura* (dissident soap operas) that deal with pressing contemporary issues such as political corruption, *machismo*, and strident heterosexism.[84] Another Venezuelan associate of Argos, Hernán Vera (who, according to the source cited in note 84, used to run an underground radio station on behalf of leftist guerrillas in El Salvador) was an acquaintance of Jaime Luna, the leader of *Fundación Comunalidad* in Guelatao. Vera had approached Jaime about Comunalidad producing a community-focused program for a cable television project that Argos had in the works, and Comunalidad brought Ojo de Agua on board to help them formulate it (especially the budget). This alliance, however, did not last long. According to Guillermo (in an interview August 2004), the two organizations ended up bickering over how such a project should be carried out. Email communication with Guelatao was haphazard and making a phone call, or even a visit, was no guarantee of finding sober the person with whom you wished to speak. In other words, there were irreconcilable differences in the two organizations' degree of professionalism, i.e., management practices and agility with comtech. In the end it was all moot anyway because Argos couldn't convince their investors to finance the cable television channel.

In 2000, *LaNeta*—a Mexico City based NGO concerned with providing and promoting internet access and training throughout Mexico's civil society—had contacted Ojo de Agua regarding their mutual efforts to facilitate informed use of comtech. It was

soon agreed that Sergio, who had never really emailed or navigated the web (perhaps because he never had to), but had certainly accrued extensive computer skills, would be the creator and keeper of LaNeta's portal in Oaxaca de Juárez. That summer Sergio traveled to LaNeta's headquarters in Mexico City for some education on internet infrastructure and training in the production of websites. By April 2001, Sergio had designed a website focused on a largely self-selected collection of Oaxaca's community of organizations and institutions, which was linked to the main LaNeta website and server in Mexico City. Sergio said he took great care to construct a resource that wasn't too flashy or fancy as to be bewildering to viewers unaccustomed to utilizing the internet as a resource, and even more crucial: one which would not require a speedy internet connection to download easily. For establishing and then maintaining such a website, Sergio received a small salary; and for providing the space and hardware (a PC in their office), Ojo de Agua received monthly payments to cover an internet connection and the media collective's office rent.[85]

When the opportunity arose in early 2001 to coordinate two workshops devoted to computer literacy and internet agility, Ojo de Agua joined forces with Binigulazaa A.C., another LaNeta-affiliate based in Oaxaca de Juárez. This Zapotec-identified and comtech-oriented NGO had given two similar workshops the year before with the support from Canada's international aid agency.[86] When I interviewed Sergio for the first time (in April 2001), he was waiting for Binigulazaa to fulfill its obligation to determine exact dates and announce the workshops. Although dates were finally set, and (thanks to Ojo de Agua) the CVI made available as a work space with three computers (two of which were Ojo de Agua's), the workshops never quite congealed as Sergio (and others) envisioned. Indeed, only two people signed up for the first workshop at the end of May, and one of them was Cheve (who refreshed and then built upon some computer basics he'd learned in courses

before joining *Objeto Común* in 1997). According to Sergio, Ojo de Agua was never able to achieve sufficient contact-communication with Binigulazaa, perhaps because all signs indicate that this collective basically became inactive after the Canadian funding dried up at the end of 2000.[87] Sergio pointed out that another major obstacle to this workshop's success was that it was the first time that the collective that became Ojo de Agua offered a workshop requiring participants to pay a small fee. Unfamiliarity with a fee structure on the part of the organizations with which Ojo de Agua had longstanding relationships, coupled with their lukewarm interest in computers, dampened their interest in such a workshop.

This frustrating experience with the computer workshops and the need to pay rent (both for the office and for members' households), forced Ojo de Agua to give up *capacitación*--one of their four main objectives (see pp. 277-8 above).[88] Sergio explained (during an interview in June 2004):

> Pero la realidad de '98 hasta ahora, dimos un giro de lo que éramos. Ya somos una Sociedad Civil y tenemos que buscar la forma de seguir. … También hemos dejado de dar talleres. Es una realidad que estamos viendo y que lo estamos platicando como socios de Ojo de Agua. Para formar Ojo de Agua eso era nuestra misión: dar talleres de capacitación, no solamente de vídeo. … Pero algo que volvemos en el dinero para que pueda sobrevivir Ojo de Agua, entonces hemos como dejado a un lado este proceso de capacitación y de lo que hemos platicado con los compañeros, estamos 'puestisimos a compartir lo que sabemos, las experiencias, y lo poquito que sabemos, entonces ojala esto vaya cambiando y queremos seguir dando talleres.[89]

Ojo de Agua wasn't equipped to supply computer literacy and/or internet navigation training on its own. This would require the rental of space and equipment; and that was too costly to be feasible. Likewise, without the CVI providing the space required for video workshops, Ojo de Agua could only offer this: the opportunity for interested individuals to join them as they worked and learn through watching and then participating. Instruction could then be provided during 'down time' when the machines weren't occupied and members weren't busy elsewhere.

As Sergio's comments suggest, leaving behind one of its key goals has been a great disappointment to the group. While there were signs that CDI (the new version of INI) may be reanimating video training programs, and CLACPI has declared its determination to facilitate training opportunities, these endeavors have failed to directly address the inescapable fact that a more general, hands-on computer literacy is a vital element in video-mediated artistry, activism, and action. In addition to the importance of electronic communications for writing proposals, and the acquisition and management of resources, digital video is here to stay. Computer editing is a little less tedious, far more flexible, and far more mobile if a suitable laptop is available. Furthermore, if media collectives wish to consider sustainability through the commercial circulation of their end products, the need for somewhat polished *packaging* is unavoidable. An example is the production of *portadas* (the visual materials on video boxes, see Himpele 2004b and chapter two, pp. 61-2) and perhaps websites that provide insight into video projects.

In January of 2002, Ojo de Agua held an organizational meeting. LaNeta's funding had just ended and no other steady income was in sight. There the possibility that Ojo de Agua would have had to close its office. Guillermo encouraged members of Ojo de Agua to brainstorm and propose projects to pursue as a collective. Bruno came up an innovative suggestion. Not long after he made Ojo de Agua's video *Nuestra Ley*, Bruno and his partner Isabel Rojas established an independent production company called *Arcano14*. While some of the videos they made with Arcano14 were not necessarily in line with their personal convictions or terribly exciting to make, they enabled Bruno and Isabel to earn enough money to create their own artistic visions. Bruno's commercial pragmatism informed his proposal that Ojo de Agua coordinate with Martha Sanchez, a graphics designer with a funky-fresh visual aesthetic and ample experience working with NGOs,[90] to produce

promotional materials for community-based production initiatives. Their concept was to create a portfolio of sorts (comprised of a short promotional video, written material, and packaged samples) with which collectives could profile for consumers their products, as well as their organization and/or community. After contemplating a budget estimate for such a project, Guillermo decided it was creative but basically untenable for Ojo de Agua, and an unlikely option for the vast majority of community-centered and production-oriented cooperatives. Nonetheless, Arcano14 and Martha began to work with *Centéotl A.C.*, an NGO located in Zimatlán de Álvarez, about half an hour southwest of the capital city. One of Centéotl's agricultural endeavors is growing *amaranto* (amaranth), a tiny (and very tasty when toasted) grain indigenous to the Americas. After a couple of meetings in the Ojo de Agua office, it became apparent that Centéotl didn't have the resources for even the most simple of promotional videos.

What was urgent, however, was packaging. More specifically, Centéotl needed an attractive and informative label with a distinct name and logo (i.e., a name brand) designed to catch consumers' eyes. And so Martha continued working with them. After a year of often awkward, comtech-mediated negotiations (e.g., trying to send and receive large image files electronically with slow dial-up internet connections) and numerous delays due to Centéotl's internal debates over their trademark, the effort for which Martha was initially going to charge $5,000 MXP, ended in frustration. Martha had produced two completely different logos for a mere $2,000 MXP and Centéotl still didn't have their labeling materials. This was partly because they could never agree upon their choice of product name, logo color and the like, but mostly because the NGO ran out of money. Because of her conviction that it is important to support community-focused economic development endeavors, Martha is

sometimes willing to put her livelihood at risk by drastically (and in this case, she admitted, unwisely) reducing her rates. But every body, whether individual or collective, has its limits.

Paying the Bills

By the end of the year 2000, Clara gratefully handed over to Cheve the chore of keeping track of all of Ojo de Agua's expenditures and payments. After a workshop on NGO administration given by CAMPO,[91] some coaching at the two tiny computer workshops mentioned above, and a little help from his colleagues (especially Guillermo), Cheve was ready to tackle his new position armed with Microsoft Excell, a hand-held calculator, and large 3-ring binders containing numbered receipts. Especially pressing for Ojo de Agua (and every other legally registered collective in Mexico) was accounting for every deposit and expenditure with valid *facturas*—a specially marked (with identification number) receipt that is the only valid artifact of an exchange of funds between two legally recognized enterprises in Mexico.[92] While members of Ojo de Agua joke about Cheve being very strict and downright *codo* (miserly) in his management of the collective's financial resources, apparently no one ever complained about his accounting. Sometimes, however, initiatives came to a temporary standstill (i.e., administrative matters couldn't be clarified or necessary supplies promptly purchased) because Cheve was unable to make the trip[93] to Oaxaca de Juárez from Santa Ana del Valle, where he lives with his family. Although Cheve is dedicated to his administration position with Ojo de Agua, his foremost priority is his family and its farming, followed by his community responsibilities (such as *cargo* and *tequio*), and then Ojo de Agua. When his father expected help planting and harvesting, Cheve was basically unavailable—often not even by telephone. More recently, since the start of 2005,

Cheve has held the *cargo* position of sub-secretary to Santa Ana del Valle's municipal secretary, and Ojo de Agua has had to map its projects' paper trails without his assistance.

Since the project he proposed Ojo de Agua pursue with *Centéotl* never congealed in the first half of 2002, Bruno hasn't been directly involved with Ojo de Agua. Instead, he has devoted his time and (substantial) energy to *Arcano14* video productions—some of which have required borrowing Ojo de Agua's lighting equipment. With videos that artfully mix articulate animations, eloquent graphics, and often original recorded music with sharply critical sensibilities, Arcano14 has earned recognition and respect within artistic circles open to independent media (such as film and video festivals), especially those distinguished by oppositional cultural politics (such as protest installations).[94] And, as I mentioned a few pages back, Arcano14 also takes on hired work. One example is a short promotional video made in 2001 for an internationally-comprised NGO called *Fundación Munzam* that for a while was facilitating the delivery of some nutritional supplements (e.g. powdered milk beverages) and medical supplies to the highly marginalized Mixe pueblo, San Lucas Camotlan.[95] For the shoot in Camotlan, Aracano14 hired Hermenegildo who helped mediate in Mixe and increased the recording crew to three.

Not only did Bruno use the footage from Camotlan for Fundación Munzam's promotional video (equipped with both English and Spanish subtitles), but he also made the exquisitely engaging five minute video *Frontera Invisible* (Invisible Frontier). In this video, scenes of an elderly man playing his fiddle for a delighted audience of young boys gathered around are framed by short, thought-provoking texts imposed on a black background. As with several of Arcano14's "experimental documentary" videos, *Frontera Invisible* has been selected and screened in a variety of Mexican, Canadian and American festivals. Not all the freelance projects taken on by Arcano14 have been as fruitful. For example, in October

2001, the rector of the *Universidad Autónomo "Benito Juárez" de Oaxaca* (UABJO) hired Arcano14 to tag along with him to various functions in order to produce a visual archive of the rector's good works. This job was especially tedious for Bruno, whose political-aesthetic convictions contrasted strongly with the rector's bureaucratic practices. Since the summer of 2002 Bruno and Isabel (the duo comprising Arcano14) have, in addition to producing videos, offered three annual video production workshops called *Mirada Bionica* (Bionic Gaze). These workshops have mostly unfolded at Gustavo Esteva's *Universidad de la Tierra* (the *Unitierra*), usually including presentations by members of Ojo de Agua and/or Hermenegildo from Tamix.

Upon joining Ojo de Agua in 1999, Roberto did not close up his production business, *Azul Producciones*. In between Ojo de Agua endeavors and his own creative projects, Roberto undertook a wide range of freelance video projects. For instance, when I first arrived on the scene, he was making a promotional video about the University of Pennsylvania's study abroad course based in a language school in Oaxaca de Juárez. Later he was hired to produce a video about an annual hang gliding event in the Zimatlan corner of Oaxaca's Central Valley region. After Roberto made a television ad for the PRD in 2002, a government official hired him to record footage for a visual archive of recently constructed public works on the coast, which was to accompany his annual institutional report. Roberto and Bruno often helped each other record projects. For example, Roberto accompanied Bruno a couple of times when he recorded the UABJO's rector in action during late October 2001. Right around this time, in protest against the rector and his administration, student groups occupied the most famous of the buildings comprising UABJO's law school in the historic center of Oaxaca de Juárez. The stand-off between the students and the authorities came to a head one day—Molotov cocktails were thrown into windows, and a substantial

part of this prominent building was severely damaged. Authorities subsequently arrested several young men who had been protesting inside the occupied building. Almost a year later, when their case finally came to court, Roberto was hired as a video expert by their defense lawyer. His court testimony was: amateur video footage illustrating that it was students out on the street who had thrown the flammable materials had not been tampered with. In November 2002, Ojo de Agua hosted a meeting during which actors embedded in community radio projects met with a communications professor from Mexico City to discuss barriers to their legal status. During discussion, a young man involved in an unauthorized radio station rather hotly demanded that Roberto identify and situate himself so that it might known whether or not he was a trustworthy person. His suspicion was based on having seen Roberto working with the UABJO rector at a public event, and then later testifying in court as a witness during the accused students' hearing. While Roberto's explanation seemed to put out the momentary flare of temper, this confrontation illustrates the risks posed by involvement in unsolicited (but financially necessary) work projects. The result may be that more marginalized actors' confidence that one is committed to *comunicación de lucha* may be undermined.

After the *LaNeta* funding dried up at the end of 2001, Sergio's family was hard pressed to pay rent with the small salary his wife earned cleaning the office space shared by Ojo de Agua and Roberto's father's legal practice. Fortunately, however, the U.S.-based Iranian filmmaker, Shirin Neshat,[96] spent February and March (2002) shooting a short film in the Central Valley of Oaxaca. At the recommendation of Bruno and Isabel, who had met Neshat and were part of her Oaxaca film crew, Sergio and Hermenegildo were hired as technicians. After this project ended, however, Sergio found himself once again without an income. His desperate situation intensified by the fact that he owed a large debt to his

brothers who had loaned him the money to buy land and build a house in the city, Sergio decided to join his brothers in the United States northwest, where they (like so many Mixtecos) were working in construction. When Sergio left Oaxaca, he had hoped to be able to stay in touch with Ojo de Agua through email. This proved to be far more difficult than Sergio had imagined, because there were no internet cafés where he was located, as there are in Oaxaca de Juárez. After a niece showed him how to access the internet at the local public library, he was able to intermittently check his email, although his work schedule prevented him from doing this as frequently as he would have liked. After almost nine months, Sergio returned to Oaxaca and a pretty steady supply of post-production work because Ojo de Agua had just contracted to produce fourteen more segments for a SEP-sponsored television series (discussed at the end of this chapter).

Although he has been vital to the majority of indigenous video productions in Oaxaca, Sergio has never produced his own video project. During our last interview (June 2004), I asked him why. In response, he spoke about recording Day of the Dead activities in his pueblo, San Antonio Huitepec, for the last five years. I already knew a little bit about this because in 2003 when I had loaned him my camcorder, it was the first time he had shot Day of the Dead with digital video. Sergio related his plans to weave together the footage in such a way that the different formats don't distract from, but rather contribute to, the video. In addition to the technological challenge of not owning his own video equipment, Sergio indicated the main barrier to undertaking this project was that he's so busy making ends meet, there's simply no time for such an endeavor. He then explained that he wasn't the only member of Ojo de Agua faced with this dilemma (in June 2004):

> …creo que la mayoría los ocho de Ojo de Agua creo que se nos ha pasado lo mismo, nos consume mas en querer tener el sustento diario por que si no hacemos eso no sobrevivimos también y en caso mío tampoco mi familia que mantener, entonces hay

que trabajar para la sobrevivencia, entonces dices: hago lo mío, pero me voy a perder un mes y ¿quien me paga ese mes? Entonces es complicado.[97]

Should they take the time out to focus on their own video-mediated visions, several members of Ojo de Agua would fall even further short of the financial minimum required to maintain their families.

While having no family to support, Tona was also apparently living from payment to payment, whether these small payments derived from video projects, or student stipends. In addition to working (as an actor) on the Neshat's film project early in 2002, Tona had also been working as a freelance scholar. Beginning in the fall of 2001, he and some others (e.g., INAH scholar Benjamin Maldonado) worked several months at the *Unitierra*, helping Gustavo Esteva design a training course for the *promotores culturales* (cultural promoters) who work with *Culturas Populares*. Tona spent many an afternoon in the Ojo de Agua office seated at one of the computers mulling over puzzles such as the ways in which the dichotomy of place-space might be utilized pedagogically. Given his rather post-structural sensibility, Tona often gave up in frustration at the ways in which Esteva's binary-bound framework failed to capture the complexities of the indigenous communities with which Tona was familiar. He would then shrug his shoulders and head out to a meeting with nothing prepared. He did, however, appreciate the temporary extra income.

In the fall of 2002, Tona embarked upon a Masters in Rural Development at the *Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana* (UAM). For the next two years (four semesters), he traveled to Mexico City once a month for a week of seminars. Because of his demanding studies, Tona only sporadically participated in Ojo de Agua projects. His thesis project entails an organizational history of *Pueblos Unidos*, which has been so influential in the Rincón micro-region of the Sierra Norte. Although he has completed his research, Tona has yet to write up his project. Now that he no longer receives a small student stipend, but does have

an i-Mac computer purchased for his schoolwork, he's been taking on small and often scholarly video projects outside the aegis of Ojo de Agua (occasionally using some of their technical equipment). For example, in one video he examines the history (as understood and expressed by local actors) of severe land conflicts in the Mixteca. Another video that Tona made in collaboration with a Chilean anthropologist explores the tragic dangers faced by Honduran migrants who travel the railways through Mexico on their way to find work further north.

Despite being very busy with several different Ojo de Agua endeavors in 2002 (discussed in the following section), Juan José and Clara worried about their lack of financial security, which was exacerbated when Juan José resigned from the CVI. The picture brightened somewhat when Ojo de Agua was hired to make several ten-minute programs for a television series (details further below). At this point, they relocated to a home much closer to the Ojo de Agua office; and their two children came to live with them from Guelatao, where they had been living with their grandmother. But school tuition, unexpected expenditures, and endlessly delayed payments for finished projects (see the next section), forced Clara and Juan José to take out loans. Early in February 2003, Juan José was offered the position of director of XEOJN, the INI radio station in San Lucas Ojitlán, where he and Cheve had given a workshop in November of 2001 (see p. 251-2 above). Whether or not to accept the job was a very hard decision for Juan José to make. Far from eager to re-enter INI's bureaucracy and very satisfied with being engaged with Ojo de Agua projects, Juan José was between a rock and a hard place; and so he accepted the position. Shortly afterward, he learned that (like Guillermo, Crisanto, Hermegildo, Emigdio, María, and Teófila before him) he had been awarded one of the media fellowships (almost $20,000 USD) from the National Video Resources, which was funded by the Rockefeller

Foundation. For a short while, he considered not taking the position in Ojitlán, but then decided it would be best to take advantage of both unexpected sources of income.

Initially, Clara and the children were also going to move across the state with Juan José. But Clara was very unhappy at the idea of leaving behind her work with Ojo de Agua and being utterly dependent on Juan José and/or her family (they were to rent a home very close to her parents' place outside of Tuxtepec). At the last moment, Clara decided to stay in the capital city with the children. In April 2004, a year after he started as director of XEOJN, Juan José resigned from the INI (recently reconfigured as the CDI) and returned to Oaxaca de Juárez. Although he enjoyed working with the radio station staff and believed they were providing an important service to the many indigenous communities in the region, Juan José had other commitments. For example, he had agreed to be the general coordinator of CLACPI the year before, and it had been announced that in 2006 the CLACPI film festival would be held in Mexico, possibly in Oaxaca. Also, at the start of 2004, Ojo de Agua was contracted to produce a *radionovela* series in three indigenous languages. After spending a year immersed in the audio realm of a radio station, Juan José was the best qualified member of Ojo de Agua to edit and post-produce the project, which was under Clara's direction. Even more importantly, he sorely missed his children and wished to be with them.[98]

Networking with NGOs

One NGO that turned to Ojo de Agua for its video production needs was the *Instituto de la Naturaleza y la Sociedad de Oaxaca* (INSO), an ecology-oriented NGO with Juan José Consejo at its helm. After earning a Masters of Science degree, Consejo spent the 1980s working as an environmental consultant to state and federal agencies. Quickly learning that conservation efforts undertaken exclusively by the government were doomed to failure,

Consejo became an avid promoter of community participation. For example, he helped establish Mexico's first nature reserve under local management in Quintana Roo. Opposition of regional political bosses and their tourism business allies' opposition to this conservation project, eventually forced Consejo to relocate with his family. When they arrived in Oaxaca in 1989, the state had no environmental regulation in place, and so Consejo joined the World Wildlife Federation's efforts to coordinate an ecological forum for dialogue among state policy makers, scholars, environmentalists, and other concerned parties. When this endeavor failed to coalesce, Consejo created INSO and began to lobby for the establishment of a state-wide forum wherein all kinds of governmental authorities and officials, research institutions and NGOs could participate in the formulation of environmental regulations. As a result of these efforts, the *Comisión Oaxaqueña de la Defensa Ecológica* emerged in 1993, and Consejo served as its technical secretary until 1997. The following year, he became an Ashoka Fellow, which allowed him to center his energies on INSO's coalition building. More specifically, INSO sought to pick up where the WWF left off and coordinate "horizontal exchanges" that would allow community leaders, government officials, and local businesses to collectively discuss environmental problems and propose solutions.[99]

In 2001, INSO, along with other NGOs, was involved with the *Programa para el Control de la Erosión y Restauración de los Suelos de Oaxaca* (PCERS, Oaxacan Erosion Control and Soil Restoration Project).[100] In the interest of PCER-related outreach programming, INSO hired Ojo de Agua to produce a video that would introduce the causes of, and solutions to, erosion and soil loss. Working in Ojo de Agua's office with the Mac G4 on loan from Chicahuaxtla, Tona and his friend, Arturo Guerrero (who had turned Tona on to Guelatao, see chapter five, p. 199), composed the video *Raíces para los Suelos*, which weaves together a tale of emigration, overgrazing and grass restoration. That same year, INSO

turned its attention to community-centered ecotourism projects. By December 2001, this initiative had led to a weekend seminar in Ixtlán de Juárez that brought together about 30 people involved in such projects, most of which are located in Oaxaca. According to Consejo (during an interview in August 2004), this gathering was designed as a space where actors could share their different ecotourism experiences, and for establishing *una red* (a network) connecting the different community-coordinated ecotourism projects so that they might continue to learn from one another.

That December weekend, Cheve and Clara attended the seminar because Ojo de Agua had been hired to produce a video-mediated *memoria* of the event. Clara handled the microphone and Cheve recorded with a high-quality digital video camera on loan from the Oaxaca office of *Culturas Populares*, which was under the direction of Marcos Sandoval. From the footage they recorded, Juan José edited[101] a fourteen minute video called *De Comunidad a Comunidad: Reflexiones sobre Turismo Comunitario* (*Community to Community: Reflections on Community Tourism*). According to this video's credits, its production was made possible through the support of the WWF, the *Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza* (see note 45, pp. 333-4), and the Oaxaca office of *Culturas Populares*. The credits also indicate that the event in Ixtlán was interwoven with Mexico's celebration of the International Year of the Mountain.[102] This seminar was in preparation for the much larger *Foro Internacional Indígena de Turismo* (International Indigenous Forum on Tourism) that took place in the Santo Domingo museum on March 18-20, 2002. Coordinated by INSO and the Minnesota-based Rethinking Tourism Project, which is now known as Indigenous Tourism Rights International,[103] this event brought together more than 200 representatives from indigenous communities and organizations involved in eco-tourism projects in the Americas and Hawai'i, with representatives of scholarly institutions and advocacy-activist NGOs.[104] Again the objective

was for participating actors to share experiences, mull over the disadvantages and benefits of such endeavors, and forge socio-spatial relationships that would allow such exchanges to continue after participants returned home. Ojo de Agua was on hand (with Clara on audio and Tona on camera) to record events. Once more, Juan José created a video-mediated summary of this event and the issues discussed there. The resulting twenty-two minute video is titled *Voices of the International Indigenous Forum on Tourism.*[105]

According to Juan José Consejo (during an interview August 2004), INSO hired Ojo de Agua to produce these two videos so they might serve as tools for fueling collective reflection about the feasibility and desirability of eco-tourism projects in indigenous communities. So often, he explained, eco-tourism is presented to communities as a risk-free and sure-fire endeavor. The videos would help present some of the challenges to protecting *la naturaleza* when community territory is reconfigured to accommodate an influx of tourists. Between the dissemination efforts of INSO and Culturas Populares, about 200 copies of these videos were distributed to communities, institutions, and NGOs involved in eco-tourism. Consejo also told me (during the same interview) that "the network" of community-based eco-tourism projects in Oaxaca was no longer functioning in any capacity. Part of the problem, Consejo explained, is that the often annual or biannual rotation of community authorities means that almost none of the community representatives who initially embodied "the network" continue to represent their community's eco-tourism projects. Likewise, there is the possibility that many of the videos distributed to communities have been re-used or thrown out, or that they are collecting dust somewhere on a shelf in a municipal building. On the other hand, an internet search revealed the use of the *Voices of the International Indigenous Forum on Tourism* video in Geoffrey White's Anthropology of Tourism course at the University of Hawai'i. When I contacted White (by email), he told me that he

got his copy of the video during a NEH summer seminar at the East-West Center in Honolulu from Luis Vivanco, an anthropologist from the University of Vermont, who participated in the international forum on eco-tourism in Oaxaca on behalf Indigenous Tourism Rights International. White said that his Anthropology of Tourism class (a graduate seminar) focuses primarily on the Asian Pacific and that the video expands the conversation by sparking regional comparisons.

In April 2002, Ojo de Agua was asked to produce a video for the *Foro Oaxaqueño de la Niñez* (FONI), an 'umbrella' conglomeration that brings together nineteen different NGOs dedicated to working with disadvantaged children. FONI wanted a video that would showcase their endeavors; like Isaías Aldaz and SER, they meant to use it to seek funding. Ojo de Agua accepted the job—Clara coordinated the project, while Roberto wrote the script, edited and post-produced the video. It was agreed that, in addition to paying small salaries to those who worked on the video, FONI would provide transportation to and from the recording sites, and the use of a video camcorder that is property of one of FONI's affiliates.[106] When this camcorder turned out to be only available for a few days, and Ojo de Agua's camera was in Mexico City for repairs, Clara asked to borrow the digital video camera and Lavaliere (i.e., tiny tie-clip) microphone I had just purchased. I was delighted to be of assistance. With Roberto on camera duty and Crisanto and Clara alternating the position of sound person, the crew interviewed key figures within FONI who described the collective's infrastructure and activities and attended a meeting of representatives of FONI's associate NGOs. They also recorded some daily activities of a few of the nineteen NGOs affiliated with FONI, and some events at a large annual encounter that brought together children and staff from each of the participating NGOs. Viewers of this video, which doesn't have a title, learn that FONI is constituted by the following four commissions: *fortalecimiento institucional*

(forging institutional linkages to remain abreast of, and perhaps coordinate with, other NGOs' activities); *difusión* (getting the word out about NGOs' activities); *legislación y políticas públicas* (lobbying on behalf of children within the realm of public policies); and *formación* (training workshops for NGO staff).

The FONI video isn't one of Ojo de Agua's most polished productions, perhaps because no one ever seemed terribly enthusiastic about it. The discussions and activities related to the video (that I witnessed) were undertaken with an air of resignation more characteristic of facing a tedious, but necessary, chore. Indeed, when this video was presented at the public library in Oaxaca de Juárez on a chilly November night in 2002, no one from Ojo de Agua was present. Whether they forgot or they just weren't interested isn't clear to me—when I inquired no one seemed interested in discussing it, which to me suggests their ambivalence. At the presentation, however, the video proved an ideal introduction to the evening's panel of speakers, most of whom gave insightful overviews of the rise of children (and their advocates) as new political subjects in civil society. Perhaps this appearance of almost-apathy relates to the fact that instead of focusing on a community or a cultural-political theme arising from indigenous movements-intellectuals (e.g., autonomy), this video focused on FONI, a rather ephemeral association of NGOs. Furthermore, given FONI's nebulous nature, there were no clear channels through which the money (about $4,000 MXP for everything) and relevant *facturas* could be disbursed and it was very difficult for Ojo de Agua to collect payment for the video production. According to Clara (in an interview in July 2004), Ojo de Agua was paid "de pedacito en pedacito" (bit by bit). Months after the video was delivered and utilized, someone from FONI finally paid the remaining balance out of their pocket, hoping to be reimbursed later by the NGO with which they worked. This pattern of pokey payments soon emerged as symptomatic of

projects that brought together several different collective bodies, whether they were NGOs or institutions.

Perhaps in response to the reluctance of some of his indigenous colleagues to embrace computers and/or internet-mediated communication, toward the end of 2001 Guillermo began to strategize on how to coordinate a forum in which diverse actors could gather to discuss the intersections between indigenous communities and comtech, particularly computers and the internet. His two partners in coordination were two communications scholars: Carmen Gómez Mont and Eduardo García Vásquez. Gómez is Director of the Communication Department at the *Universidad Iberoamericana* in Mexico City, as well as the central figure of a Mexico City-based research NGO called the *Centro de Investigación de Nuevas Tecnologías de Información y Comunicación* (CINTIC). She specializes in scientific investigation and evaluation of comtech use practices.[107] At the time he was organizing a forum with Guillermo, Eduardo García was in charge of Tequio.org, a LaNeta-supported website designed to facilitate communication among community-centered development initiatives (see discussion of the NGO LaNeta above, p. 281). He was also one of Gómez's students and more recently has been connected to the private *Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Oaxaca*, which is located in Oaxaca de Juárez.[108] Initially, these three (Guillermo, Gómez, and García) sought to find funding for three different, but related, events: a three day forum; a series of six seminars centered on themes relevant to indigenous communities (e.g., comtech legislation since the San Andrés Accords, migration, predatory bio-prospecting, and autonomy); and subsequent follow-up workshops that would offer internet-oriented comtech training, intended to arm indigenous collectives to tackle issues raised in the seminars. Over a period of about five months, the following sources committed to to fund a forum limited to only three days duration: the capital city-based NGO *Fundación*

Comunitaria Oaxaca, the federal bureau CONACULTA,[109] the Smithsonian Institution, the Mexican NGO LaNeta, and the international agency *Instituto Latinoamericano de la Comunicación Educativa* (ILCE, see chapter five, p. 212). Eventually (May 24-26, 2002 to be precise), a forum titled *Las cosas que vienen de afuera: Foro y seminario sobre las computadoras y la Internet en las comunidades indígenas*[110] took place in a hotel in Oaxaca de Juárez.

Las cosas que vienen de afuera brought together representatives of indigenous collectives with representatives of advocacy NGOs, some of which, like CINTIC, are distinctly academic. For example, Juan Anzaldo gave a talk wherein he introduced the academic advocacy NGO *Ce-Acatl A.C.* and its activities.[111] Also present was Margarita Warnholtz of the NGO *Servicios Profesionales para el Desarrollo Integral, A.C.*, which is responsible for one of the finest online resources geared toward indigenous movements in the Americas.[112] Additionally, presentations of alternative media projects were given by Ramón Vera Herrera, the editor of *La Ojarasca*, a monthly magazine insert distributed by *La Jornada*, and Amalia Córdoba, who provided a preview of the Smithsonian's extraordinary Native Networks website.[113] Also noteworthy, was the participation of the following: a representative of *Promedios* (the Chiapas Media Project), the Chiapas-based advocacy NGO *IndyMedia*, and a cluster of actors involved with the *Telecentros* functioning in Morelos.[114] In addition, representatives from numerous community-based and regional indigenous collectives attended, and some presented overviews of their media initiatives. For instance, presentations (distinguished by a wide range of comtech use and knowledge) were given by members of the *Unión de Comunidades Indígenas de la Región del Istmo*, members of the *Asamblea de Migrantes Indígenas en la Ciudad de México*, and instructors and students from a handful of *Bachillerato Integral Comunitario* (community-focused high schools) from various Oaxacan communities.[115]

The resulting three-day forum, *Las cosas que vienen de afuera*, was an ambitious project, which did not always unfold as planned. One challenge that apparently caught organizers by surprise was the wide interest that led to a much larger attendance than expected. This was worrisome because it was feared that the presence of too many institutional representatives might hamper the full participation of invited representatives of indigenous collectives. Fortunately, this fear was unrealized, perhaps because of the extensive networking experience that distinguished the interventions of many of the indigenous participants. Another aspect of the forum that never quite congealed as hoped was the coordination of two workshops intended to provide hands-on exploration of the internet. Despite Clara's best efforts to rent a large internet business, it was impossible to transport forum participants to this site in a timely fashion because the conference schedule consistently remained about two hours delayed. Nonetheless, the forum was a timely event. Informed engagement with the internet is increasingly essential for *any* computer use. Internet access raises questions of security and demands even further updating of computer software. The forum was a far from perfect, but still very important, encounter. A collection of very differently located, but related, actors expressed hopes, fears, and/or ambivalences about the variety of impacts the internet and related comtech is having or might have in indigenous communities. The forum's *memoria* (i.e., collection of transcribed presentations) will surely be a document of interest to many scholars, advocates and indigenous activists, but as of August 2004, it was not yet ready for distribution, largely because Guillermo's attentions have been otherwise occupied.

In mid-July 2002, *Servicios para una Educación Alternativa, A.C.* (EDUCA)[116] hired Ojo de Agua to create a video registry of an inter-state workshop titled *Formas de Integración Política de Gobiernos Municipales Indígenas y de Ciudadanía Multicultural, Oaxaca-Chiapas*. Because everyone

else was busy elsewhere that day, I assisted Clara. We made sure no one tripped on the various cables or the tripod, and tried to open cassette packaging without making too much noise as academics and community representatives shared their research and experience of local governance practices. This incredibly interesting workshop was made possible through the Ford Foundation's support of EDUCA's project *Federalismo y Gobiernos Locales: Integración Política de Ciudadanía Multicultural*, of which this workshop was a part, as well as logistical coordination among EDUCA, CIESAS, UABJO, and the *Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales* (FLASCO). Right around this same time, EDUCA asked Ojo de Agua to make a website that would offer a scholarly-testimonial overview of 'usos y costumbres,'[117] case studies of municipal elections in Oaxaca, related press items, and excerpts from relevant legal documents. Although a couple members of Ojo de Agua expressed interest in learning how to produce internet websites, no opportunities arose for them to do this without individually paying for their own courses and that wasn't possible either economically or time-wise. And so this plan languished until Sergio returned from his NMAI-negotiated adventures in the spring of 2003. In late August 2003, the website was presented at an event where scholars praised the website initiative and its content.[118]

Around the same time that Clara and I attended the EDUCA workshop, Rodolfo López Arzola approached Ojo de Agua about making a video that would promote a community-focused educational center he was coordinating. Guillermo and López knew each other through the Ashoka Association, which had elected both of them as fellows. For more than twenty years, López has been an advocate for the economic and human rights of indigenous communities in Oaxaca. So that communities traditionally shut out of value-added industries (such as lumber) because of their lack of political power and technical skills might gain greater control of their socio-economic situations, López lobbies for the

recognition of indigenous communities' ownership of and authority over (re)sources.[119] He was a key figure in the fight in the Sierra Norte to refuse renewal of a 25-year lumber concession (1957-1982) to two large business concerns, which had been practicing destructive logging practices.[120] After this struggle was collectively won, López continued to seek rectification of the ecological damage through the promotion of more equitable and sustainable forest management. He established an NGO called *Asesoría Técnica a Comunidades Oaxaqueñas A.C.* (ASETECO-Technical Consulting for Oaxacan Communities) with the aim of equipping indigenous collectives with the technoscience that might allow them to attain the economic security by making their own (informed) decisions about resource extraction within their territories. More specifically, López seeks to empower community-based businesses' pursuit of sustainable forest management resources by offering training in accounting, finance, marketing, and organizational and computing skills. Since 1996, when his wife established a second, related NGO called the *Centro de Capacitación de la Mujer en el Estado de Oaxaca*, the efforts of ASETECO to contribute to the capacity building of indigenous collectives have also been directed toward women.

By 2000, there were 80 businesses in Oaxaca with operations clearly linked to a community-based strategy, supplying 80 percent of the state's timber supply. And ASETECO had been instrumental in the coordination and training of 25 such ventures. López turned his energies to matters of education with the intent of 'changing the rules of the game' for historically and multiply-marginalized communities.[121] To augment the public school system, López seeks to enable educational programs that foster the acquisition and development of geographically-specific knowledge and skills. Through the study of *geografía local* and field trips, these initiatives encourage students to explore life and employment options within their communities. And through introduction to and training in comtech

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(such as computers, internet and, more recently, video), students are armed with tools for undertaking locally-based endeavors in today's world. This, argues López, helps develop stronger social units capable of successfully (indeed, competitively) articulating their own collective business and resource management strategies that draw upon and contribute to community needs and customs. When López approached Ojo de Agua in mid-2002, he was seeking a video that would 'pitch' a proposal to expand upon and specialize an initiative sponsored by the *Instituto Nacional para la Educación de Adultos* (INEA) that had taken hold in the municipal hall of Tlalixtac de Cabrera, a historically rural Zapotec community located about fifteen-to-thirty minutes away from downtown Oaxaca de Juárez.[122] López sought to orchestrate an *alianza estrategica para el desarrollo comunitario* (strategic alliance for community development) that would enable and support the construction of a *Plaza Comunitaria,* a community center that would bolster INEA's adult literacy programs with educational and cultural activities targeting children, many of which are woven into computer competency courses.

López hoped a video would spark the interest and generosity of individuals, organizations, and institutions in a position to contribute to the *Plaza Comunitaria.* He had already convinced Tlalixtac's community authorities to designate a large tract of land to build the proposed educational center. Additionally, envisioning the eventual development of a technical college of sorts, the nearby Traylfer factory embraced the Plaza Comunitaria project, and one of its primary clients, a Mexico City-based company called Cinetransformer, agreed to pay for the video. Traylfer manufactures large semi-trailers such as the portable cinemas they made for Cinetransformer, and is often at a loss for a local skilled labor force.[123] Cinetransformer even offered to have their production division make the promotional video,[124] but López insisted that Ojo de Agua was far better equipped to

undertake such an endeavor, given its history of community-centered video projects. After López and Roberto developed a script, Roberto and Juan José went to Tlalixtac to record, with a professional digital video camcorder on loan from Cinetransformer. Roberto then traveled to the company's headquarters in Mexico City, where he worked with the son of the firm's owner to edit the footage. In addition to having Roberto and Juan José's travel costs covered, Ojo de Agua received $20,000 MXP for the resulting 25-minute video, which is titled *Instituto de Ciencias y Artes "Miguel Cabrera": Plaza Comunitaria Tlalixtac.*[125] The content and structure of this video attests Roberto and Juan José's immersion in the concept of *comunalidad.* The first twenty minutes review the cultural resources (the fiesta, tequio, agricultural knowledge, traditional healers) found in the community and the cultural risks of young people's ignorance of these resources (disorientation and alienation, which are suggested by awkward camera angles). It is only in the last five minutes of the video that the Plaza Comunitaria project, the site of the proposed cultural center, and the activities it will offer are introduced.

While this video was screened several times in Tlalixtac (courtesy of one of Cinetransformer's mobile cinemas), it wasn't what López had been looking for. He told me (during an interview in July 2004) that he had wanted a video that more clearly showcased the effort to establish and furnish (in the widest sense of the word) the Plaza Comunitaria. Although he acknowledged that the video has supported this effort, he also insisted that he hadn't used the video outside of the community.[126] Nonetheless, by the end of 2002, *Plaza Comunitaria Piloto en Colaboración* was declared open. The support of INEA (which included ten PCs), Cinetransformer, and the municipal authorities in Tlalixtac had been augmented by that of the *Fundación Comunitaria Oaxaca* and the *Fundación Televisa* had donated ten more PCs and related computer equipment, all of which remain housed in the municipal building. In

the middle of 2004, this alliance had grown to include a couple of NGOs with outreach programs targeting children, local schools that brought students for computer classes, and a local transportation company that provided financial and logistical support. According to a (polished) PowerPoint presentation made early in 2004, the activities of the Plaza Comunitaria have expanded by intersecting with those of family support programs, such as *Oportunidades*, coordinated through the federal *Secretaría de Desarrollo Social* (Secretariat of Social Development), and programs run through CONACULTA. It would appear that López and his allies have chosen to use such PowerPoint presentations in lieu of the video made by Ojo de Agua—perhaps because doing so more precisely situates the Plaza Comunitaria in a format they consider potentially more palatable to professionalized representatives of business concerns, government institutions, and large NGOs.

Networking with Institutions

Given its members' extensive experience producing community-focused visualizations, Ojo de Agua's technological-cultural skills are highly respected. In the interest of survival, the group hoped to draw upon this social-cultural capital, as well as build upon the institutional relations that intersected with their past and present endeavors. For example, Guillermo and/or Juan José met with INI and *Culturas Populares* staff in Mexico City several times between 2001 and 2003 to discuss how they might provide media-consultant and technical-training services. Although these particular proposals never panned out, two other federal agencies—more specifically: divisions within the *Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales* (SEMARNAT, Secretariat of the Environment and Natural Resource)[127] and the *Secretaría de Educacción Pública* (SEP)—hired Ojo de Agua to undertake

video productions. In this final section, I examine the emergence and entanglements of three videos that arose from these institutional intersections.

In 1997, biologist Gustavo Sánchez Benítez started working in Oaxaca's central SERMANAT office, where he was in charge of the state's Conservation and Protected Natural Areas Unit. Later he was named regional coordinator of SEMARNAT's National Commission of Protected Natural Areas (CONANP). In both of these positions, Sánchez worked closely with Salvador Anta Fonseca, another biologist who was then SEMARNAT's *delegado* (main director) in Oaxaca.[128] Both Anta and Sánchez can be situated within an intellectual and institutional current concerned with sustainable development, i.e., incorporating socio-cultural factors into environmental conservation efforts (cf. Consejo-INSO and Reyes-*Ecosta* above, and González Ríos-*Grupo Mesófilo* in chapter five, pp. 190-4). In 1999, CONANP was awarded a Wetlands Conservation Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Division of Bird Habitat Conservation. This grant to support the protection and conservation of the Chacahua Lagoons National Park (14,000 hectares on the coast of Oaxaca, within the *municipio* of San Pedro Tututepec (where *Ecosta* networks, see pp. 261-6 above), decreed a National Park by President Lazaro Cardenas in 1937)[129] earmarked resources for outreach programming intended to inform the public about this National Park, and SEMARNAT's activities within it. Together Anta and Sánchez decided that in addition to producing media such as posters and pamphlets, they would approach their friend Guillermo about producing a video. When I asked Anta (during an interview in July 2004) why he and Sánchez chose to work with Ojo de Agua, his response was the following:

> …los que estamos de este circulo [actors pursuing conservation through sustainable development initiatives] hemos visto varias cosas de Monteforte y su equipo. También conozco a sus gentes, con que han trabajado, con los que han trabajado en el CVI o con Ojo de Agua y que habían trabajado con grupos gubernamentales y con Gobiernos con diferentes temas. Y para muchos es un grupo muy importante…por el tipo de producción que hacen, por el enfoque, por el trabajo en las comunidades y

el entendimiento de la problemática social. Por que es un grupo independiente y puede hacer las cosas también de su perspectiva, por el trabajo técnico que realizan como de la calidad de los trabajos y fundamentalmente fueron esas razones por las cuales nos llevaron a solicitar a ellos y no hay un grupo como ellos en Oaxaca, aunque hay otras personas, pero no tienen la calidad y el compromiso que tiene este grupo en Oaxaca.[130]

According to Guillermo (during an interview in January 2002), the first thing Ojo de Agua had to do upon undertaking this project was to rework SEMARNAT's vision of what this video would look like:

> ….we modified their way; they wanted to make a video in the beginning—using a near-by community as an example of good conservation, bad community conservation. We as Ojo de Agua said that it wasn't, it probably wouldn't work too well to show somebody how the 'good kid' next door behaves. I mean it just won't work! So what's needed is more like an internal reflection on what's happening in Chacahua, and not comparing it to the guy next door.

Ostensibly, Anta and Sánchez appreciated the suggestion and revisioned their concept of the video accordingly. Since Guillermo was at the time located in San Diego (where his partner spent two semesters as a fellow at the University of California-San Diego's Center for U.S.-Mexico Studies), and he assumed that it was Ojo de Agua that had been hired to produce this video, he passed the project on to Roberto. After Roberto developed a script that was approved by SERMARNAT, he visited the park three or four times with Bruno and Tona as camera crew. All participants (with whom I spoke) indicated that the project then stalled, largely due to a lack of direction. Eventually, Tona ended up in charge. Twice more (once at his own expense), Tona traveled to the coast seeking insightful and useful footage, an effort he described as frustrating because personnel from the Park office assigned the task of showing him around weren't well informed and didn't have anything interesting to share. To complicate matters a bit further, in 2000 Carlos Solórzano—another biologist of a political-methodological bent similar to that of Sánchez and Anta—became the director of the Chacahua Park. Although Solórzano supported the video project, the turn-over in both park

and project leadership, in tandem with a lack of a clear purpose, confused everyone. According to Guillermo (during an interview in January 2002), "…there was like a lot of indefinition on both sides [i.e., both SEMARNAT and Ojo de Agua]. And that's why the video sort of ended up—it went sort of astray." When I asked Tona about this project (during an interview in April 2003), he concurred and observed that it "fue bien caótico" [it was really chaotic]. Not only was he unclear about what SEMARNAT expected from the video, but Ojo de Agua's (recently established) internal mechanics weren't clear either. Tona (rather remorsefully) observed that he had become accustomed to Comunalidad's production practices wherein endeavors were undertaken with very-low or no budget, lots of help from friends, and very little formal planning or tidy administration. He also noted that he hadn't been eager to take on the finances and production details (e.g., making contacts and arranging for interview and the like); he was hoping that Clara, who was then in charge of administering Ojo de Agua's projects, or Guillermo, who was by this time back in Oaxaca, would more actively fulfill this role.

Eventually, in early 2001, Tona delivered an edited[131] video to the Chacahua Park-SEMARNAT officials, but it wasn't what they wanted. Basically, it lacked focus. According to Solórzano (the Chacahua Park director, during an interview in July 2004), Tona's video offered:

> …una visión muy complicada pero dispersa, o sea se veía muchos problemas pero no había como un eje. Entonces le hicimos esas observaciones al equipo de Ojo de Agua y luego de bastante tiempo de discusión y estaban defendiendo su trabajo y nosotros le decimos que no nos gustaba ese trabajo que estaban haciendo, por que pensábamos que no tenia secuencia que no tenia coherencia, etcétera.[132]

Tona said that by this point he was too exasperated to continue. And so, several months later when he became available, Guillermo took charge of the video project. Unlike Tona the year before, Guillermo was able to more fully take advantage of a newly available resource:

an inter-institutional study of the Chacahua Park, which was funded by the United Nations

Fund for Development, and concurrently undertaken by SERMARNAT, the *Universidad del*

Mar (located on the coast), and CIESAS. When he traveled to the Park to record (with

Melquiades as his assistant), Guillermo interviewed Gabriela González, a biologist who was

the President of the Technical Council that was set up to orchestrate this regional diagnostic.

In Oaxaca de Juárez, he interviewed Mara Alfaro, an anthropologist at CIESAS, who was

coordinating a socio-economic survey of the Park and surrounding communities.[133]

Guillermo also included some voice-over narration at the start of the video and interspersed

a few images of animals endemic to the region that had been recorded at a zoo. Finally, early

in 2002, the 30 minute video *Chacahua: Reflejos de un Parque* was completed. With its masterful

blend of testimonies of people living in and around the park and commentaries of

researchers and municipal authorities, this extraordinary video provides many insights into

several conflicting perspectives and the resultant tensions among residents' livelihoods and

various efforts to regulate the Parks' resources in the name of conservation.

Solórzano explained (during an interview in July 2004) why he finds Guillermo's

version of the video so much better than the first one:

> Y ellos se alimentaron precisamente del conocimiento que teníamos nosotros, que
> tenía la gente que estaba en campo en aquel momento y dio esa complejidad poco
> sistemática. Para hacer un vídeo así, me parece que es mejor un antropólogo o un
> sociólogo que tuviera la cámara. Yo creo que seria lo mejor por que es un tema muy
> complicado, de mucha complejidad.

> Entonces se corrigió y entró ahí Guillermo Monteforte y junto con él empezamos a
> platicar cuales eran las cosas que queríamos mejorar, o se podían quitar o tratar de
> diferente forma. Y se empezó a hacer así y el retomó la segunda parte, por que se
> hizo casi otro vídeo, y le adicionó cosas. Y para ese momento me parece que el
> segundo año que todavía no se terminaba habíamos iniciado el programa del Parque
> Nacional Lagunas de Chacahua con un equipo interinstitucional donde estaba la
> Universidad del Mar, CIESAS, estábamos nosotros y personas con experiencia de
> sistemas de información geográfica, había gente que tenia experiencia en la
> vegetación del parque y entre todos empezamos a darle un enfoque
> sistémica…estamos hablando en sistemas complejos participativos y es un enfoque

que te permite diferenciar varios niveles de complejidad y procesos y tratamos de ajustar a ese modelo conceptual y a partir de ahí se empezaron a dar como muchos ejes. *Ejes que podían ser interpretados dentro del vídeo* (emphasis added).[134]

As indicated by his comments, Solórzano was very pleased with the authoritative manner in which Guillermo's video captures the complex socio-environmental processes shaping the Park and the communities located within and near its boundaries, *as well as* the technoscientific practices of undertaking and evaluating conservation. Although he noted that he has encountered a few viewers who are disappointed that the video does not spell out solutions to the many problems facing Park residents and regulators, Solórzano dismissed them. He emphasized that the video only set out to visualize the problems so as to contribute to their solution, ideally by catalyzing greater environmental consciousness (education) and sparking the coordination of participatory projects geared toward pursuit of sustainable development initiatives (informed action). According to Solórzano, the video was currently doing this through screenings during meetings with community authorities, and through Park efforts to support potential- and currently-practicing collectives.

The video *Chacahua: Reflejos de un Parque* was warmly received along similar lines at both of its formal presentations in Oaxaca de Juárez. The first screening took place at the Pochote cinema during the Second National Week of Conservation in Oaxaca events (November 25-30, 2002). Technically, it coincided with the presentation of a book of the same title (Alfaro and Sánchez 2002, see note 133), but since the publisher had only just delivered the book to CIESAS, no one was able to comment on it. Everyone who stood up to comment after the video was shown praised its portrayal of the park and its problems as thoughtful and thorough. For example, Gustavo Sánchez, observing that the video "nos mete en el parque" [puts us right in the park], underscored its value as an instrument for facilitating conversations among the many diverse and differentially-located actors living

and/or working within the Chacahua Park. Subsequently the book and the video were presented a second time on May 23, 2003 in the Santo Domingo complex. Though I was unable to attend this screening (I was in New Orleans for the AAG), Mara Alfaro described to me the favorable response of viewers, many of whom made declarations such as "Guau, eso es Chacahua!" [Wow, now *this* is Chacahua!] She was particularly pleased that such comments had been made by biologists, who previously (before the collective study of the Park) had not appreciated the complicated nature of the socio-economic forces shaping the Chacahua Park. Another measure of this video's visual value is that when it was entered in the 2002 competition (overseen by the UNAM's Filmoteca (film library)) for prestigious José Rovirosa Prize for best documentary film, *Chacahua: Reflejos de un Parque* earned Ojo de Agua a special honorable mention, shared with another one of their 2002 productions, *Sembrando Futuro* (*Seeding the Future*).

Ojo de Agua (principally Roberto) made the video *Sembrando Futuro* at the request the *Comisión Nacional Forestal* (CONAFOR), a special commission within SEMARNAT set up by President Fox's administration in 2001 to organize and preside over Mexico's participation in the International Year of the Mountain in 2002 (see note 102). More specifically, Ojo de Agua was hired by Raquel Aparicio who works with the recently-established *Departamento de Difusión y Cultura Forestal* within CONAFOR's Pacific South Regional Office, which is based in Oaxaca's SEMARNAT offices, but also covers the state of Guerrero.[135] More accurately, since she was its only employee, Raquel embodied this department. To this position, she brought her journalism degree, twelve years experience working on newspapers, and training in a collection of skills developed while editing book collections put together by institutional organizations such as CONAFOR, SERMARNAT, and the WWF. According to Raquel (during an interview in July 2003), her department's duty is to publicize forestry-focused

projects, and promote forestry-friendly practices (i.e., conservation-oriented education). She also mentioned that her efforts along these lines weren't taken seriously by her colleagues, who are mostly technically-trained men. Raquel emphasized how her colleagues could not or would not see the relationship between their work and hers. She said that they:

> No entienden conciliar el trabajo de comunicación con la parte técnica de las instituciones, sobre todo de gobierno. Es un pleito adentro, es difícil, peor que gente no te entiende. Te ven como, el área la ven como un apéndice así muy frívolo yo creo. Nos consideran como que somos organizadores de eventos y creen que ahí se acaba todo, y yo creo que es más que eso, muchos mas…[136]

These challenges, noted Raquel, were exacerbated by the fact that her department's miniscule budget did not cover her travel expenses. This almost completely prevents her from organizing events or orchestrating campaigns in Guerrero.

While working on a book about forest management that SEMARNAP published in 1999, Raquel interviewed a person involved in the long-term reforestation and soil restorations projects happening in some of the rural communities in the *municipio* of Santiago Tilantongo (located in Oaxaca's Mixteca Alta region).[137] Raquel recounted having been very impressed with what she learned about these initiatives. She said she was urged by colleagues to visit the region to witness the outcomes of these projects. In the spring of 2002, she decided to do just that upon learning that four Tilantongo *agencias* (El Progreso, San Antonio, La Providencia and San Isidro) had been nominated in one of four categories (conservation and forestry restoration) in SEMARNAT's annual *Premio Nacional al Mérito Forestal*.[138] Raquel decided her CONAFOR department would support this group's candidacy with a video-mediated examination of the results of their endeavors. As a correspondent for the prominent Mexico City newspaper *La Reforma*, Raquel had interviewed Guillermo in 1994 shortly after the opening of the CVI in Oaxaca and had been impressed with his work. So she decided to look him up. Eventually she found the Ojo de Agua office and negotiated

a price she could afford. During the second week of May, Raquel traveled to Tilantongo for the first time with Roberto and Juan José. They spent ten hours recording places transformed by almost twenty years of reforestation, fields terraced to deter erosion, young people planting seedlings, and the like. Roberto quickly put together a version of *Sembrando Futuro*, which he then shared with Raquel and her colleague Oscar Mejia (a SEMARNAT soil scientist). After quickly incorporating their suggestions, the video was sent to the evaluation committee, arriving in Mexico City just before the deadline.

This video begins by informing viewers that the Mixteca Alta is one of the most impoverished regions in Mexico and that 98 percent of its topsoil has eroded due to vegetation loss resulting from deforestation and over grazing, particularly by goats. This grave introduction is followed by testimonies of several men and women who proclaim love for their land, and explain how they visualize the soil as their children's future. They also stress the importance of the localized knowledge with which community members undertake specific projects such as construction of hillside ditches bordered with hardy plants. These ditches soak up rainfall to such a degree that the nearby soil can eventually support seedlings. With these strategies, says one man in the video, the community is planting 12,000 to 15,000 seedlings a year. A photograph of one solitary tree fading into a more recent image of the same tree surrounded by a veritable forest of medium-sized trees illustrates the success of these efforts. *Sembrando Futuro*, a powerful video with striking footage of severely eroded hillsides juxtaposed with the results of collective soil restoration and reforestation initiatives, captures the determination and reverence with which the *comuneros* speak about the soil and trees. Despite the visual force of this video, however, the four Tilantongo communities earned only honorable mention, not the *Premio Nacional al Mérito Forestal*.[139]

According to Raquel, she is deeply touched by the fervor and faith with which Tilantongo residents have participated in these projects, and is very pleased with the ways in which *Sembrando Futuro* illustrates this. She believes, and I agree, that this video is nothing short of inspirational. Accordingly, Raquel uses the video in other communities with two express aims: to warn about the dangers of rampant deforestation, and to motivate viewers to tackle the situation by proposing action and then following through. She also pointed out that rural communities are not her only target audience; this video is also useful for getting the attention of any other wood-product-using population. Sharply juxtaposed with Raquel's enthusiasm for this video has been the tepid response of some components of her target audiences. For example, a few months after the video was made, I accompanied Raquel, Guillermo, and Roberto to the municipality of Santiago Tilantongo (the municipal seat), where *Sembrando Futuro* was screened in a long office space. Raquel told me later how she left the screening incensed by the ambivalence (or absolute absence) of the municipal authorities. She reminded me how the one man who was staffing the office upon our arrival demonstrated his lack of interest in the video, and (to Raquel's mind) almost two decades of hard work by numerous residents: he continued typing as the video played.

In June 2003, I attended another screening of *Sembrando Futuro*, this time in the city hall in Oaxaca de Juárez. This event, directed toward four urban *colonias* (neighborhoods-administrative units) with forest coverage and/or severe deforestation-related problems, began with an address by the current mayor in the central courtyard as cameras whirred and clicked. Then about half of the spectators re-convened in a stuffy conference room where a panel discussion occupied the next three hours. First the urban forestry crisis was introduced by a couple of environmental-agency functionaries. This was followed by presentations by business owners and/or agronomists who used PowerPoint to showcase thriving

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community-centered forestry ventures in Oaxaca. Toward the end of what seemed like a marathon, *Sembrando Futuro* was shown, and then a key figure in the coordination of the Tilantongo projects spoke briefly about the value of their endeavors. As best I could interpret, an unspoken intent of this mini-conference was to catalyze the *colonia* authorities to action similar to those pursued in the presentations. Upon contemplation of the afternoon's events, and the video *Sembrando Futuro* as a microcosm of them, I was struck by what was missing: clarification of and guidance about the organizational and institutional relations that got the discussed ventures going and allowed them to become sustainable. More specifically, despite all its visual eloquence and inspiring portrait of what collective determination can accomplish, *Sembrando Futuro* makes no mention of assistance and support received by community groups from NGOs and government agencies that was pivotal to their collective action (see note 137). Nor did any of the PowerPoint presentations mention, much less detail, the initial steps by which communities had accumulated the resources (e.g., funding *and* knowledge) that allowed them to reconfigure their engagements with global markets. Perhaps this is why, when there was finally an opportunity for questions and comments, no one drew upon any of the presentations. Instead the discussion quickly settled on the political economic challenges currently hindering the colonias' pursuit of environment-oriented programs such as reforestation. I could only speculate whether time and money would have been better spent organizing a workshop geared toward inspiring collectives with more clearly articulated coaching on grant-writing and other networking skills.

Like Raquel, Roberto became thoroughly enamored with this video and the community projects it portrays. In particular, he was very impressed with the informed participation of children whose families were involved. Indeed, he was so taken that he returned to Tilantongo at his own expense for further recording. He then made a longer

version of the video titled *Sembrando Futuro, Cosechando Vida* (*Seeding the Future, Harvesting Life*) that more thoroughly examines the importance of children's environmental awareness and the communities' need-desire to hang onto their young people, who increasingly must look elsewhere for their livelihood because of the difficulties farmers face in making ends meet and feeding their families. And, as the first version of the video, this second clearly connects communities' survival to a cultural-spiritual commitment to environmental resources. The manner in which Roberto visualized these connections has garnered accolades. In 2003, *Sembrando Futuro* won the award for best documentary award at the *Geografías Sauves* film festival in the Yucatán and, as mentioned above, contributed to Ojo de Agua's honorable mention distinction by the UNAM's Filmoteca. That same year *Sembrando Futuro* was given a Sasá Award at an international environmental film festival in Catania, Italy. It also earned Roberto a trip to Goiás, Brazil that same year when it was one of the 28 videos selected (out of about 600 submissions) for the Fifth Environmental Film and Video Festival. In 2004, the video once again merited honorable mention status, this time at the *Contra el Silencio* film festival in Mexico City.

While Raquel was thrilled with the video's achievements, seeing them as an indication of the merits of the Tilantongo forestry project, she was not at all pleased that Roberto made a second version of the video. With a sigh, she told me she wished she'd asked Roberto to sign a contract specifying that once the final product was delivered to her at CONAFOR, it was to remain just that—a final project. Raquel's response was partly due to her disagreement with the way Roberto expanded the video to focus on children. She said that she didn't see the link between children and the astounding achievements of community-based *cultura forestal*. Furthermore, since she wasn't consulted until the second version was finished, I suspect that Raquel did not appreciate what she interpreted as a lack

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of respect and a reminder of the lack of control that too often characterized her position within CONAFOR.

In July 2002, José Luis Velázquez once again (see chapter five, p. 212) approached Ojo de Agua about producing television programs for the SEP and the *Instituto Latinoamericano de la Comunicación Educativa* (ILCE). More specifically, Velázquez was producing a series titled *Pueblos de México, México Multicultural* for the SEP's *Coordinación General de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe*, which was earmarked for inclusion in *Telesecundaria* and *Telebachillerato* curricula broadcast through the ILCE-SEP-supported satellite-mediated education system run by Edusat.[140] When Velázquez offered Ojo de Agua the opportunity to produce nine ten-minute programs, each of which would focus on a different indigenous group, members struggled over whether or not to accept. They were leery of the format, fearing it to be formulaic and so painfully general as to be, as Juan José lamented, "poco intimo," [hardly intimate]. Just imagine, they joked, the impossibility of capturing the widely-diverse Zapotec language and culture in ten-minutes without causing uproar among Zapotec organizations! During the same discussion, however, Guillermo countered someone's observation that ten-minute examinations would be too rigid to allow Ojo de Agua's 'anthropological' approach by suggesting that they could "jugar con eso…cruzar los temas" [play with this...cross themes].

The chance to experiment and reconfigure the categories with which indigenous peoples are so often represented, in tandem with the possibility of earning a very enticing professional salary (according to Juan José, about $60,000 MXP for each ten-minute segment), led the group to take on the mission. Juan José described (during an interview in July 2004) Ojo de Agua's socio-political reasons for accepting this particular institutional project:

Creo que como dos orientaciones, yo le veo que debe ser social, para generar una conciencia de la existencia de los pueblos de México y por otra que no son culturas estáticas. Es decir que no permanecen todo el tiempo igual, son culturas que están en movimiento, presentes, vivas que siguen hablando su lengua y que siguen luchando por la vida todos los días y que algunos tienen problemas muy fuertes. Y por lo tanto hay video que no se habla de otra cosa más que de queja y por otros pueblos que han superado esa parte están haciendo cosas por resolver por que el estado no responde la necesidad de los pueblos de manera natural si no, de manera forzada, tiene como esas dos orientaciones.[141]

Velázquez and his institutional liaisons were immensely pleased with the quality of the programs made by Ojo de Agua, more pleased than they were with some of the segments produced by Mexico City-based media makers (who were friends of Velázquez). In the summer of 2003, Ojo de Agua was asked to produce fourteen more programs. This second round of the SEP programs was linked (in the opening credits) to the outreach campaign of the recently established *Consejo Nacional para Prevenir la Discriminación*.[142] Here I discuss four of programs that Ojo de Agua made for the television series, *Pueblos de México*, and point out some of the lessons they offer.

First I want to reflect upon two videos Guillermo directed,[143] *Esta Tierra Es Nuestra* and *El Camino que no Pidió Permiso*, because both of them so artfully convey the distinct cultural-spiritual framework with which many indigenous communities' engage their territory, without recourse to stereotypes of timeless environmental harmony. *Esta Tierra Es Nuestra* (which is translated as *Our Land is Not for Sale*) introduces viewers to the *Consejo de Pueblos Nahuas del Alto Balsas* and their struggle against the construction of the proposed hydroelectric Tetelcingo Dam, which would flood the Alto Balsas region in the north-central part of the state of Guerrero (cf. Hindley 1999). This portrait in miniature demonstrates how and why the Nahua communities' fierce attachment to their territory fuels their refusal to accept imposed development projects: it provides the clay with which many of them earn their livelihood through the manufacture of colorful crafts; and it is where their grandparents

and children's umbilical cords are buried. *Esta Tierra Es Nuestra* also illustrates that the collective's fight against the dam is not an isolated act of resistance, but rather interwoven with a campaign for recognition and paid employment for their volunteer bilingual school teachers, and a demand for production-oriented programs tailored to their communities' needs. Viewers of *Esta Tierra Es Nuestra* witness the many protests and marches of the *Consejo de Pueblos Nahua* through the use of a Nahua artist's rendering of them on handmade paper. The visual affect is stunning.

The video *El Camino que no Pidió Permiso* (*The Road that Did Not Ask Permission*) was also recorded in Guerrero, but in a Tlapaneco community located in a mountainous region not far from the Oaxaca border. Considering its isolated location, this community did not initially contest the construction of a road that passes through it. They have since reconsidered—the poor quality of construction has led to extensive damage from landslides. Furthermore, despite warning and pleas from the community, the construction crew destroyed their water tank, and construction-related landslides threaten to seal off the source of the spring that supplies water. The devastation is forcefully illustrated by footage of a truck trying to pass through mud that reaches its axle; angry and well-informed testimonials; and young schoolchildren describing the ravages of the road with a hand-drawn map. Additionally, the brutal manner in which community authorities were callously ignored by the municipal authorities in charge of the road project is vividly juxtaposed with a reverential pre-dawn dedication ceremony (featuring prayers, candles, flowers, and other offers) for a concrete court constructed by community labor. Given their short duration and powerful visual impact, these two videos are extraordinary resources for classroom lessons about *why* indigenous peoples are mobilizing and demanding that authorities (of all kinds) responsibly, thoughtfully, and respectfully account for their participation in development interventions.

Ser Triqui (Being Triqui) is another Ojo de Agua video made (by Roberto) for the SEP series. My first impression of this video was its unfortunate title, which tries to generalize much more than the video's content: a snapshot of the bicultural education programs (for elementary students and adults) in San Andrés Chicahuaxtla. The title belies the presence of Triqui people living and working outside of Oaxaca (in Mexico City, Baja California, and parts of the U.S.).[144] The fact that Roberto uses an alternate title of *Educación Triqui* on his curriculum vitae suggests that others may have noticed the inappropriate title. Key figures in this video, three male bilingual schoolteachers—the most prominent of which is Fausto Sandoval (brother of Marcos, see chapter four, pp. 133-41)—eloquently describe the goals of these culturally-specific educational programs. Some of the most interesting lessons that can be learned from this video arise from what is *not* shown, but most certainly configure the video. Like the title, the video also neglects to situate the success of bilingual education in Chicahuaxtla within the context of the prominent role of the Sandoval family in this community and the institutional settings that have contributed to their influence (as discussed in chapter four). This lesson in the politics of representation is further solidified by what my informants (Roberto, Clara, and Sergio) told me happened when they arrived in Chicahuaxtla to make this video. Contrary to their standard operating procedure, the Ojo de Agua crew did not initially pay their respects to the community authorities, having assumed that Fausto had already spoken with them about their project. After briefly speaking with someone who gave permission without really having the authority to do so, they began to record, only to be rebuked and asked to stop. Fortunately, they located Fausto in the school and tended to his classroom while he went to sort things out with the authorities and so the awkwardness dissipated for the time being. Although not visible in the video *Ser Triqui*, this incident certainly illustrates the political importance of cultural brokers.

To their chagrin, Ojo de Agua has not yet had the opportunity to screen the video *Ser Triqui* in Chicahuaxtla. Indeed, Ojo de Agua has been extremely frustrated by its (in)ability (due to lack of resources and time) to sufficiently explain and share their SEP-funded video visions with communities, organizations, and individuals who generously helped them make contacts and provide material. Furthermore, Ojo de Agua's *compromiso* [commitment] to their partners in visualization to further (as in contribute to) their struggles by disseminating their perspective[145] has been compromised by the weight of what I call institutional inertia. An excellent example of this is the program *Policía Comunitaria*. This video explores how a collection of mountain communities in Guerrero have coped with the indiscriminant violence in the surrounding countryside, which is manifest by bandits feeding upon the region's illicit drug trade and the meager response of (terrified and/or bribed) authorities. Drawing upon the communities' traditions of justice, members of a volunteer police force, coordinated and equipped with rifles, regularly patrol the area and oversee the public work-oriented punishment of those apprehended for unacceptable behavior. Although this system has made the region much safer, since the video was recorded in 2003, actors involved in this community police force have been protesting their unfair treatment by state authorities, at times occupying the central plaza in front of the state government building.

Although the members of Ojo de Agua believe, more than ever, that the video *Policía Comunitaria* should be shown widely to rally support for the communities' arguments and initiatives, all the other author(itie)s listed in the standardized credits that open and close each *Pueblos de México* program don't agree. They have refused to broadcast the program, and have also insisted that Ojo de Agua not disseminate the program by way of video festivals. Apparently, SEP officials are reluctant to be seen as championing an armed cause that so

clearly challenges a state government with charges of corruption and negligence. Members of

Ojo de Agua dispute José Luis Velázquez's and his SEP relations' claims of ownership. They

insist that the images and words their videos visualize belong to the people and places. Clara

explained (during an interview in July 2004):

> Por eso el conflicto con José Luis con Ojo de Agua. El decía esos videos pertenecen a la SEP y la SEP decide. Y todos los de Ojo de Agua hemos platicado y comentado que ¡ni madres no es así! La SEP es otra cosa, pero nosotros somos los que llegamos con las comunidades y hicimos el compromiso con a gente que nos permitió grabar y ese materia lo tienen que pasar.[146]

Basically all Ojo de Agua has been able to do about this disagreement over institutional

versus cultural-creative control is provide the organizers and promoters of the community

police forces in Guerrero copies of the video to disseminate as widely as they can. Despite

the way it challenges its priorities, Ojo de Agua has continued to work for Velázquez and the

SEP. Not only has the SEP series allowed Ojo de Agua to access an unprecedented outlet

(i.e., televised) for indigenous peoples' voices, dreams, and achievements; but it has also

greatly contributed to the group's professionalization. Working on the series has expanded

and deepened members' technological skills. With income from the series, the group has

purchased new and necessary equipment, such as: a truck, a well-equipped Macintosh G4,

and a higher-end digital video camera.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The overview of the triumphs and travails of Ojo de Agua's efforts to network in the

name of indigenous video that this chapter provides offers insight into the nature of

advocacy and its intersections with indigenous cultural activism. I have shown how Ojo de

Agua's comtech-mediated networking has reconfigured political and cultural conflicts in

ways that have empowered marginalized actors—often by expanding the geographical reach of their visions and voices. I have also suggested how their networking sometimes went no where, and even on occasion created discord. The diverse, uneven, and unpredictable experiences of Ojo de Agua disclose the living conditions and behavioral patterns of a political actor that is increasingly vital in the global south: an intermediary NGO that is hired by a variety of organizations, institutions, and individuals *for the express purpose of serving as authoritative, but clearly adjunct, knowledge producers*. Additionally, Ojo de Agua's work, and the socio-spatial relations that enable and maintain it, demonstrate (in no uncertain terms) that it is impossible to discuss indigenous identity politics without delving into matters of socio-economic development and environmental conservation. In other words, through intention and by accident, Ojo de Agua's networking politicizes place-based practices and processes, while also *making cultural* environmental and developmental inquiry and interventions. This, I believe, is an incredibly important step in making technoscience more inclusive though greater participation.

Ojo de Agua's activities and ambitions also illustrate that the metaphor of network is inappropriate for mapping the organizational practices of networking collected around the production of video-mediated knowledge. Network is far too grid-like a metaphor to capture the fractured topography of the spaces of participation orchestrated by well-intentioned clusters of research-oriented individuals, NGOs and institutions. When I discussed this with Juan José Consejo (of INSO), he agreed and then pointed out that the practice of networking might be described using the invented word *concertación*, which suggests the act of *concertar* (to assemble, to bring to a union of purposes). Similarly, when I decried the static sense of the network metaphor and lamented the lack of a Spanish word for the verb networking one day in July 2004 while conversing with Patricia Díaz-Romo, another

Oaxcaca-based academic advocate with ample experience in networking,[147] she laughed and then suggested the phrase she had coined to cope with this conundrum: *haciendo 'redaciones'* (making networked-relationships). Driven by their desire to be of service by preparing indigenous collectivities to establish and maintain socio-spatial relationships of their own design, and despite their need to work for hire, Ojo de Agua members struggle to continue doing just that—concertación and haciendo 'redaciones.'

ENDNOTES

[1] This quote is found on page 5 of the PDF version of John Law's essay, "Networks, Relations, Cyborgs: on the social study of technology," which I will cite throughout as Law 2003. Initially made available online as a Word document in 2000 on the website of the Lancaster Center for Science Studies at Lancaster University, this essay was slightly revised into said PDF version in December 2003 and is available at the following url: http://www.comp.lancs.ac.uk/sociology/papers/Law-Networks-Relations-Cyborgs.pdf.

[2] I am referring to Dissertation Research Grant # SES-0136035 from the National Science Foundation's Science and Technology Studies Program.

[3] For your convenience, here is a quick recap of highlights from chapter two. Arguing "for situated and embodied knowledges and against various forms of unlocatable, and so irresponsible, knowledge claims" (1991, 191), Haraway declares technoscience *partial*—in two senses of the word. Technoscience is partial in that it is geographically and culturally specific and thus limited (and not somehow universal or 'from no where'), which means it is inevitably sculpted (which is not necessarily the same as predetermined) by particular institutional, political and socio-economic contingencies. And second, technoscientific ways of seeing are partial in the sense of favoring particular aesthetics, ethics, and politics (as in I'm partial to whisky (or whatever) myself).

[4] I use this phrase most deliberately because I am keen to reference the transformations of "actually existing neoliberalism." Brenner and Theodore (2002, 349) find the concept of creative destruction "a useful means for describing the geographically uneven, socially regressive, and political trajectories of institutional/spatial change that have been crystallizing under these conditions [of neoliberalism]."

[5] This passage is from a letter of thanks that hung on Ojo de Agua's office wall for several months in 2001 after it was given to this advocacy organization by members of another organization, *Pueblos Unidos* on April 12. The letter's watery language plays upon the meaning of the phrase 'ojo de agua,' which as you'll recall signifies a fresh water spring. My translation is as follows:

> Given these months of constant tension, we realize that if our struggle had not been disseminated via the information media, we wouldn't have visual materials for later reflection and future telling of the story of our pueblos…
>
> May many many more Ojo de Aguas emerge as fountains from whence visual wisdom wells and daily wets the corn and been fields of many pueblos. We are proud to have, and to count on, great friends such as you all. We think you're people of great moral quality and with great principles of struggle, and this makes you greats among the greatest.

[6] This quote is from the website maintained by the retired U-Mass physics professor and self-proclaimed anarchist, George Salzman, who met Crisanto in 1998 during a media workshop undertaken by the Chiapas Media Project (see chapter five, pp. 201-3). In addition to providing an overview of events and English translations of many of the key letters and

emails I discuss here, Salzman argues that Ojo de Agua's role in spreading the word about the conflict in Tanetze is an excellent example of grassroots activism. Salzman's website (and the socio-spatial linkages it harbors) is an insightful testament to the energy, emotion, and effectiveness of networking political public relations (PR). You can see it at following url: http://site.www.umb.edu/faculty/salzman_g/Grass/Tanetze/index.htm.

[7] In the Mexican republic, each state entity contains various *distritos* and Oaxaca has 32. Each distrito is a collection of smaller administration units called *municipios*, which are roughly equivalent to state counties in the United States. And within each municipio there are various settlements of varying sizes and these are referred to as *agencias*. The municipio of Tanetze de Zaragoza is comprised of several agencias, some of which are larger than the 'county seat', the pueblo with the same name as the municipio. For clarification, I refer to the municipio as Tanetze de Zaragoza and to the pueblo where the municipio offices and Crisanto's home are located as Tanetze.

[8] In 1990 Señor Rosendo (a.k.a., Don Chendo), the President of *Pueblos Unidos* who had worked closely with Crisanto (when he was municipal President of Tanetze de Zaragoza) to construct a road in the Rincón, was murdered by an angry, drunken mob of *comuneros* from Santo Domingo Cacalotepec, a small pueblo where Don Chendo had established his home, not far from Tanetze. Don Chendo was accused of pocketing a substantial part of the government funding for the road construction project, and instead of calling for investigation, the mob took what they saw as justice in their own hands. In 1993 Crisanto made the 53 minute video, *Don Chendo* which celebrated the life and achievements of this organizational leader, largely through interviews with his family members. Afterwards, not only was Crisanto warned that he was no longer welcome in Santo Domingo Cacalotepec, but he also received death threats. Crisanto responded by no longer circulating the video.

When tempers flared up again over the requisitioning of Pueblos Unidos's buses in the year 2001, he and his son Julio once again began to make and disseminate copies of *Don Chendo* and the 1992 video *Logros y Desafios*, which examines the emergence and experiences of Pueblos Unidos. Doing so certainly exacerbated tensions, but, as Crisanto explained to me (during an interview July 2003):

Es una obligación que tiene un comunicador indígena, tienes que acercarse a la verdad posible es una obligación, si te echas de enemigo a alguien pues ni modos, pero tu dices la verdad, ¿no?

[An indigenous communicator has an obligation, you have to get as close to the truth as possible; it's an obligation. If you end up somebody's enemy, well, that's how it goes. You're telling the truth, no?]

[9] When I asked Guillermo to describe his role, he said that he worked as a translator, putting on paper what they wanted to say in an eye-catching presentation style.

[10] Cf. note 6 above.

[11] For CIPO's self-presentation, see its website http://www.nodo50.org/cipo/. To get a sense of CIPO's far-flung alliances with a wide range of other leftists, and often self-

identified as anti-globalization collectives, just do a goggle search for CIPO-RFM and see the diverse sources for news about the group's activities and protests and the many different European languages in which this news appears.

[12] Crisanto told me he hasn't joined forces with CIPO because, as a resident of Tanetze, it wasn't an option for him "because doing so was like declaring war on the pueblo, and we decided that we have to be a community."

[13] This restriction on Crisanto's open use of video technology in his community seems to be related to the way in which his video *Don Chendo* 'stirred the barrel' after the murder of the leader of Pueblos Unidos (see note 9 above). Also, the fact that Crisanto held the position of municipal president for the rather astounding length of four consecutive years (1984-1989, see introduction to Crisanto in previous chapter) indicates that Crisanto is not just your regular *campesino*; but also a very influential actor in his community. He undoubtedly faced cross-checks on his ability to represent Tanetze de Zaragoza to audiences far beyond the pueblo itself that resemble those shaping the activities (or lack thereof) of Emigdio Julían Caballero, Teófila Palafox, and members of the media collective Tamix (see chapter five).

[14] Fortunately their married daughter lives in Oaxaca de Juárez, so Cristano, his wife, as well as their son Julio had a place to stay when tensions made life in Tanetze unbearable. Furthermore, Crisanto's wife is a retired school teacher and receives a monthly pension. These safety nets permitted them to remain financially solvent when forced to live outside their community.

[15] This wasn't their first Ojo de Agua-assisted broadcast (albeit with a very small signal) in the region. The year before, during *Semana Santa* or the pre-Easter holy week, Crisanto and Julio had broadcast from Lalopa, another Zapotec pueblo in the Rincón. Before both transmissions, formal requests for permission were granted by relevant community authorities. The semana santa broadcast was particularly embraced by those with access to televisions because in 1995 Crisanto had made a video, *Kujey*, about Lalopa's festivities, and when it was broadcast in during semana santa in 2002, viewers were delighted to catch a glimpse the past seven years ago, e.g., to see no longer living family members and observe how children had grown, etc.

[16] Once the chapel in San Juan Yaeé (another couple hours down the unpaved road from Tanetze) was cleaned up and the antennae up and transmitting, their broadcasts were warmly welcomed by the households in the immediate area that were equipped and willing to receive the signal.

[17] Chance first published this ethnohistory of the Sierra Norte in 1989. Crisanto read the Spanish translation of the book that in 1998 was published by the Dishá book series (see chapter three, pp. 100-1).

[18] This suggestion of mine is based upon a conversion with Guillermo (during the last interview in August of 2004) in which he mulled over the community-related challenges that Crisanto and other indigenous video makers faced in their pursuit of comtech-mediated visualization. The following is a very relevant excerpt, and my apologies to Guillermo for not

editing out the hemming and hawing. I left it in because it helps illustrate how he was mulling these matters over, perhaps articulating them out loud for the first time.

> So, I don't know, maybe it's the way, maybe the idea is to…you're making me think about this right now, but…maybe we have to warn 'em about all this, before they start making videos, now that we see a pattern, right? [me: That's right, it could be part of the training, to think about making a video has repercussions, or…] or, they *could* have them [i.e., repersussions], depending how they manage it.

> The thing is, at the beginning, the whole community commitment thing is very solid. And so you'd never imagine this to happen. And it happens. But you know, there's something else that should be taken into account: I think it happens to a lot of people and a lot of things, and video is just one of many reasons why people leave their community, or, or, or stop doing things that they're doing.

> It's not just that video *always* causes this problem. It's everything else: if you start a business, if you buy a truck, if you go up north and come back and you don't have money to…to show. If you ah, you don't want to take on a *cargo*, ahm, you know…if you, if you, all of the sudden your house looks better than the one next door, you know, all these things cause certain criticisms, so…So I don't think it's video in itself, I think it's just how the community tries to protect itself as a community, and how it tries to be careful as to what goes into it, what people take into the community.

> So, I don't know…there's always different reasons. I think that Crisanto's situation is temporary in that I think he's gonna keep doing videos because he's personally convinced that he wants to make videos. And the community thing is gonna get solved sooner or later, and he's very much respected in his community, I mean that hasn't gone.

[19] These two video makers were Fabiola Gervacio, who was a member of the Women's Commission of the UCIZONI a large organization that represents several indigenous communities in the isthmus of Oaxaca, and Mariano Estrada, who was a coordinator of a community-based human rights organization located near Palenque, Chiapas. Mariano garnered the grant and in 2002 was able to purchase a new digital video camera and a Macintosh powerbook for his video project, see http://www.mediaartists.org/content.php?sec=artist&sub=detail&artist_id=617. While Fabiola wasn't successful in this grant competition, she nonetheless pursued her video project, *Eso Viene Sucediendo*, which in the summer of 2003 she edited the same way she composed her grant proposal, in Oaxaca de Juárez with Guillermo at her side. For a brief look at Fabiola, this video, and some of their travels, see the NMAI's Native Networks website, http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/rose/gervacio_f.htm#open.

[20] Juan José was at the CVI so much, he sometimes slept there. Over one weekend in September 2001, when Juan José stayed at the CVI and Clara had gone to Guelatao to be with their children, their home (located in the Casa del Sol subdivision, far on the northeast edge of the city, close to the turn-off that heads up to Guelatao) was robbed. Needless to say the theft exacerbated their already rather desperate financial straits.

[21] For instance, one evening, after the day's workshop activities, I had joined a group of about seven people—all men, despite the fact that half of the radio's staff were women—who relocated their discussion of the video workshop and strategizing for the upcoming anniversary celebration to a *cantina*. I went with them because I was researching, and because I too was ready for a cold beer. That evening I was the only woman among about two dozen people sitting in a narrow and stuffy cement room that was only equipped with a urinal behind a shower curtain. I eventually exited (rather abruptly) when the number and nature of inappropriate jokes began to escalate, and my polite refusals of the increasingly frantic offers to buy me beer were ignored. Indeed, for a moment, I thought my companions were going to die of indignation when I stood up and asked how much I owed for my beverages (in short, my techniques for leaving Lynagh's failed miserably in Ojitlán). By the next day, thankfully, no one mentioned the matter, maybe they'd all forgotten, perhaps because they stayed up all night, drinking until breakfast.

[22] Anyone wishing to access anything—from the video library to the video recording, viewing, and editing equipment, was obliged to first submit a letter explaining who they were and why they wished to engage these materials. In a nutshell, things had become much more bureaucratic compared to the CVI under the tenure of Guillermo (1994-1997) and Juan José (1997-2002). At the ever present risk of sounding *chismosa* (like a gossip), I can say that prior to August 2004, the word in media making circles with which I am familiar in Oaxaca de Juárez is that Pazo still has not garnered a grounding in technological matters, despite participating in the two video workshops mentioned in two following notes. Instead of denigrating his technical prowess, what I mean to do here is emphasize the fact that online video isn't simple; it's time consuming and you have to want to engage so that your skills might expand.

[23] Indeed, in 2002 there had two regional workshops, one in Morelia and the other in Merida (see http://cdi.gob.mx/ini/video/videoastas/). These workshops transpired during Mayra's brief stint as the director of the CVI. She tried to convince Cheve to attend the workshop in Merida, where Heremengildo Rojas of Video Tamix participated as an instructor, but he was unable to do so because he was given a cargo position on Santa Ana del Valle's community museum committee (cf. chapter five, pp. 197-9).

[24] To read a bit about the national workshop in 2003 and access the videos that were made there, visit http://cdi.gob.mx/index.php?id_seccion=111.

[25]Although this equipment seemed destined to be installed in the CVI, where it could be accessed by motivated parties, Pazo lobbied for its relocation to Yalálag. I don't know exactly where in the community he wanted the equipment kept—it would certainly prove useful for the community's cultural center *Uken ke Uken*. Nor do I know whether Pazo was successful, largely because Filo decided to he could learn more, and be more comfortable learning, about video making elsewhere and undertook an apprenticeship with Ojo de Agua.

[26] For the first year, the computer was sometimes in the office of Ojo de Agua, and other times in the small, cozy, and much quieter adobe home of Guillermo in the Ejido Guadalupe Victoria, a community on the nearby slopes of the San Felipe hill.

[27] As briefly noted in chapter four, by April 2003 rental fees for this Mac G4 had grown sufficient for the purchase of a new and very nice digital video camera (the Sony DSR-PD150 to be exact). Juan José, Sergio and Guillermo purchased this camera while they were in New York City during the NMAI's Video Native Mexico tour (see http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/blue/vmi_03.htm), and then delivered it directly to Marcos Sandoval.

[28] The phrase "echar la mano" means to give a hand, as in providing assistance, and so *echando la mano* means 'helping out.'

[29] As you'll no doubt recall (from chapter three, p. 107), SER is a regional NGO that congealed in 1988 with Floriberto Díaz at the helm. According to Cremoux (1997, 101-2), SER emerged from the *Asamblea de Autoridades Mixes* (Asam), which had arisen in 1984 from the *Comité de Defensa y Desarrollo de los Recursos Naturales, Humans y Culturales de la Región Mixe* (CODREMI), which came together in 1980. You can find out more about SER from their webpage, http://www.redindigena.net/ser/.

[30] My 'potted history' of SER is drawn from Daniela Cremoux's thesis (1997), which in turn heavily draws upon a 1995 manuscript "Caracterización de las organizaciones de la región mixe" that Emma Beltrán and Cristina Velázquez (two anthropologists who, as you surely recall, made a video with Guillermo in 1993) prepared for the World Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO).

[31] The first mission is educating the Mixe region on the political value of unity, as Cremoux phrased it (127): "SER makes video in order to unify the Mixe people."

[32] Cremoux (1997, 129) illustrates her argument with the following quote from Héctor Lorenzo, who was in charge of SER's communications division:

> El video es la verdadera cara, tú no puedes transformar ahí, aunque los grandes consorcios pueden hacer de la imagen lo que quieran, pero el video, que también podrá transformar, trata de ser alternativo. La información que se manda es la verdad. Yo no voy a mentir, la imagen muestra la verdad. A la gente la interesa la noticia verídica, aunque haya errores técnicos, de hecho, a ellos no les interesa mucho la cuestión técnica, lo que ellos quieren saber es lo que realmente sucede en lo local y fuera. (…) En las comunidades nos dicen, si nos vas a traer algo, tráenos algo bueno, en el sentido que sea la verdad.

> Video is the face of truth because you can't transform anything there. Although professionals can do what ever they want with it and video is able to transform, it is an alternative. Information that is sent [with video] is the truth. I'm not going to lie, the image demonstrates the truth. Truthful news interests people, even if there are technical errors. The fact is that they don't care much about questions of technique,

what they want to know is what really happened locally. (…) In communities, they tell us that if you're going to bring them something, bring us something good, in the sense that it's the truth.

[33] To confirm this, Cremoux (1997, 129) quotes Guillermo's take on the matter in early 1996, when he was still director of the CVI [English translation follows]:

> Yo creo que no es casualidad que no hagan ficciones, porque ninguno de nosotros que trabajamos en TMA hacemos ficción. Pero son puntos de partida. Los videos indígenas, empiezan siempre con la toma general del pueblo, y eso es porque nos la pasamos enseñándoles videos del INI. Toman sólo ciertos elements que les sirven y otros no, pero yo creo que son sólo puntos de partida.

> I believe it's no coincidence that they [indigenous video makers] don't make fictions because none of us who work in TMA make fictions. But it's a point of departure. Indigenous videos [for example] always begin with a general shot of the pueblo and that's because that's how the INI video we used to teach them did it. They only take certain elements that work for them, others they don't; I believe that they're only just points of departure.

[34] Héctor Lorenzo, who is in charge of SER's communication division, told Cremoux (1997, 127):

> It's not that the communities thirst after information. Media are something new, but the people aren't dying to see some program…there's interest, but no fanaticism. Part of the Mixe culture is tranquility, passivity, waiting for the opportune moment…there's not a single community with this thirst [for comtech-mediated information].

[35] Perhaps their now outdated S-VHS camera and off-line editing equipment exacerbated the already challenging endeavor, or maybe ASAPROM members had decided their meetings had enough going on already without setting aside time to collectively view videos? The brochure-based overview of SER that I picked up from their central office in Oaxaca de Juárez in 2004 indicates four departments: Económico Productivo y Promoción Social; Cultura y Educación; Asuntos Políticos y Vinculación (Political Issues and Linkages); and Jurídico (Judicial). The communications division most likely worked with all four departments.

[36] The UPN (http://www.upn.mx/) emerged in the early 1980s from the institutional reforms undertaken by the academic advocates discussed in chapter three. It is designed to train school teachers to do more than teach. According to Isaías Aldaz (interview June 2004), students affiliated with this school engage with pedagogical theory and learn how to design courses and administer education-oriented programs (that may not necessarily be based in academic institutions). There are now several different UPN campuses sprinkled across Mexico. The one in Oaxaca was located in San Felipe del Agua, on the north rim of the city, until 2003 when it was relocated to Xoxocotlán, a different part of the city.

[37] During an interview (July 2004) Guillermo nicely summed up the goal of *Lecto-Escritura.* He said:

> If you teach a child within their own cultural and linguistic context, they'll learn a lot faster than if you teach them from outside of it. So…if a child learns mathematics the way they *live* mathematics—you know, learn to count in their language and to multiply in their own language, and to measure things in their own way, and to think of symmetry and proportions in the way they think of—then they'll learn faster. So it's not so much that they should count and multiply and measure the way they've always done it, and throw away the metric system, it's more like a way of fortifying their own identity, and then knowing what else there is…you know what I mean?

[38] The *Centro de Investigación y Estudios Avanzados del Politécnico* (CINVESTAV) is connected to the *Instituto Politécnico Nacional* (IPN) in Mexico City. You can find it on the web at: http://www.cinvestav.mx/.

[39] According to Aldaz (interview June 2004), Guillermo helped him for free. Guillermo recalled (in an interview July 2004) that Aldaz returned the favor by buying four extra video tapes (whether VHS or the much more costly digital ones I don't know) that he left with Guillermo and by making a symbolic payment of $100 MXP (less than $10 USD), which was basically tantamount to "doing it for no money."

[40] The *Proyecto Tlacuache* is just part of a larger academic venture, the *Diplomado en Educación Intercultural Bilingüe* (DEIB), that the UPN has coordinated with the *Secretaría de Educación Pública*, CONACULTA (the bureau housing *Culturas Populares*), CIESAS and INI. In 2003 this *Diplomado* entailed six modules that transpired over the year (the general program can be seen in all its glory at http://interbilingue.ajusco.upn.mx/docs/nicanor/Actualizado.html). Throughout the entire year, each of the presentations comprising the six modules of the DEIB was broadcast by Edusat, the satellite educational television system that is run by SEP and ILCE (see chapter five, n69, pp. 236-7). The schedule for the DEIB broadcasts are available at:
http://interbilingue.ajusco.upn.mx/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=157). You can read Aldaz's contribution, "La numeración indígena y su enseñanza" which was part of Module six, *Métodos y materiales educativosI,* at
http://interbilingue.ajusco.upn.mx/modules.php?name=News&file=print&sid=207.

[41] The *Instituto Mexicano de la Juventud* (Mexico's National Youth Institute) is an offshoot of the *Secretaría de Educación Pública.* I must confess a bit of confusion about the exact nature of the national youth award that SER solicited in June 2002. There is an announcement for the *Premio Nacional de la Juventud 2001*, which had a deadline of June 14, 2002, archived at: http://www.comminit.com/la/premios2002/labecas/lasldfecha-1138.html. This announcement encourages the applicant(s) to include "materiales bibliográficos, audiovisuales, gráficos y otros que demuestren los motivos por los cuales se considera que el candidato puede merecer el Premio" [bibliographic, audiovisual, grafic and other kinds of materials that demonstrate why the candidate might deserve the Prize]. Likewise, a much more succinct announcement for the *Premio Nacional de la Juventud 2002* was put online on June 2, 2003 is found at: http://ciepfa.posgrado.unam.mx/NAVISO-346.html#dos. It was appear that the award is dated for the year before, which seems rather strange to me.

To complicate matters, although everyone from SER and from Ojo de Agua with whom I spoke about the production of the promotional video indicated that SER was soliciting a *Premio Nacional de la Juventud*, currently the *Instituto Mexicano de la Juventud*'s website (http://www.imjuventud.gob.mx) both announces a *Premio Nacional de la Juventud Indígena 2004*, with a deadline of July 9, 2004, and lists the winners of the *Premio Nacional de la Juventud Indígena*. For the record, it also lists the 2004 results of the *Premio Nacional de la Juventud 2003*. Unfortunately the website doesn't include any further historical depth or overview of when certain awards began to be given. It is possible that in June of 2002 SER was soliciting a *Premio Nacional de la Juventud Indígena*, but I suspect that this award division has only recently appeared and at that date ONLY a *Premio Nacional de la Juventud* was offered. I could be mistaken, however, and have added this item to my list of data that analysis couldn't completely clarify.

[42] According to Roberto (during an interview in June 2004), SER paid about $3,000 MXP for this quickly produced video, an amount that barely covered the use of the Triqui's computer and his labor.

[43] As noted in the previous chapter, Hugo Aguilar is a Mixteco lawyer who appears in Ojo de Agua's short video *A Los Que Esta Tierra Ha Visto Nacer,* which is sometimes shown in Oaxaca de Juárez's Santo Domingo museum. When that video was made in 1998, Aguilar was affiliated with SER's *Academia de Promotores de Derecho Indígena y Elaboración de Estatutos Comunitarios*.

[44] Ecosta is an invented Spanish word that refers to the NGO's *eco*logical focus and its geographical location, on *la costa* (Oaxaca's Pacific coast), and Yutu Cuii is Mixteco for green tree. The following sketch of Ecosta (as the collective is generally called) draws primarily upon four sources: two interviews from July 2004, one with Ecosta's leader Heladio Reyes and the other with Guillermo, and two internet resources. The first online resource is a short interview with Reyes from April 2001 that is found at http://www.eco-index.org/new/stories/2001/april.cfm. The second online resource is an overview of Ecosta's endeavors and strategies written by the transnationally-funded national NGO *Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza A.C.* Printed in Septmeber 2003 and titled "*Tututepec, Reservas Celulares Forestales,*" this short essay is found on pp. 10-11 of volume 23 (1) of *Entorno: Un Enlace de Comunicación*, a publication of the *Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas's Dirección de Comunicación Estratégica e Identidad*. You can either download the entire issue of *Etorno* at http://conanp.gob.mx/entorno/23/imprimir.htm, or you can read the HTML version at http://conanp.gob.mx/entorno/23/interes3.htm.

[45] The *Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza A.C.* (FMCN) arose out of the UN's 1992 Earth Summit in Brazil. To learn more about FMCN's emergence and engagements, check out its website, especially its detailed historical overview at http://www.fmcn.org/int_historia.htm. Financial details of Ecosta's relationship with the FMCN can be found at http://www.fmcn.org/int_mapa.htm. They are as follows: In 1996 FMCN gave Ecosta $106,853 MXP for a program devoted to promoting and supporting *reservas celulares* (conservation cells), i.e., small patches of wooded land voluntarily set aside by (mostly small) land owners. The next year Ecosta received $88,000 MXP for the coordination of fire brigades with Tututepec's *bienes comunales* (the municipal office in charge

of commonly owned land), and $235,800 for training *promotores* who would offer environmental education in their communities. And in 1998 FMCN once again funded Ecosta's *reservas celulares* program, this time with $661,500 MXP. According to the two online resources cited in the note just above, Ecosta is lauded for its recognition that communication is vital, concern for ample and flexible participation, insistence on transparency, and efforts to work with and encourage community and municipal authorities.

[46] For an overview of what Ecosta looked like then, see their website that was last revised in June of 200: http://www.laneta.apc.org/ecosta/.

[47] Activists and their advocates (such as Ojo de Agua) are fighting to change this. They are slowing making some headway. For instance, Radio Jën Poj, which is based in Santa María Tlahuitoltepec, Mixes in Oaxaca was granted a permit in December 2004, see http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/63211. For a recent general overview of community radio in Mexico from the angle of sustainable develoment, see http://www.fao.org/documents/show_cdr.asp?url_file=/DOCREP/006/Y5106E/y5106e08.htm.

[48] This bit of information is mentioned in the resource discussed in note 52 below.

[49] Ecosta was a *sociedad de solidaridad social* (SSS), which is a more business-oriented type of NGO that has to pay taxes on its incoming resources. Apparently *Raíces Costeñas* (Coastal Roots) had been established as an *asociación civil* so that funding, such as that coming from the Kellogg's Foundation, could be channeled into Ecosta's projects without being heavily taxed. According to Francisco, despite the different names, these two groups were basically one and the same.

[50] June 5 is designed World Environmental Day by the United Nations, which promotes the date as a time for environmental awareness education, see http://www.wed2005.org/0.0.php.

[51] Given its lyrics below (with my translation following), this is an especially apt song.
Cuenta el abuelo que de niño/El jugó/Entre árboles y risas y alcatraces de color/Recuerda un río transparente si olor,/Donde abundaban peces, no sufrían/Ni un dolor/Cuenta el abuelo de un cielo/Muy azul,/En donde voló papalotes que él/Mismo construyó/El tiempo pasó y nuestro viejo ya murió/Y hoy me pregunté después de tanta/Destrucción/Dónde diablos jugarán los pobres niños?/Ay ay ay! en dónde jugarán /Se esta pudriendo el mundo Ya no hay lugar/La tierra está a punto de/Partirse en dos/El cielo ya se ha roto, ya se ha roto/El llanto gris/La mar vomita ríos de aceite/Sin cesar/Y hoy me pregunté después de/Tanta destrucción/Dónde diablos jugarán los pobres/Nenes? Ay ay ay. En dónde jugarán?/Se esta partiendo el mundo/Ya no hay lugar

The old man says that when he was young, he played between trees and laughter and colorful geese. He remembers a transparent river that didn't reek, abundant with fish that didn't suffer. The old man speaks of a very blue sky where he flew kites he'd made himself. Time passed and the old man died. And today I ask myself, after so much destruction, where the hell will the poor children play? Ay ay ay! Where will they play? The world is rotting, now

there's no place. The earth is at the point of splitting in two. Now the sky has broken, it has broken. A grey flood of tears, the ocean vomits rivers of oil nonstop. And today I ask myself, after so much destruction, where the hell will the poor infants play? Where will they play? Ay ay ay. Where will they play? The world is splitting, there is no place.

[52] This brief summary of events and their impacts is based upon an issue (number 9, January 23, 2004) of *Ecología* (a weekly supplement published by *Las Noticias*, the most widely circulated of Oaxaca's newspapers) that was titled *Mandar Obedeciendo: Democracia, Desarrollo y Ecología en Tututepec* (Ruling through Obedience: Democracy, Development and Ecology in Tututepec) and devoted to environmentally friendly endeavors in the municipio of Tututepec, all of which favorably mention Ecosta and/or Heladio Reyes. Most especially helpful for getting a grasp of the situation is an interview with Reyes wherein he discusses his suspension and its devastating affect on his administration.

[53] For instance, consider the *convocatoria* (call for participation) for this festival, which thanks to the Dutch internet company XS4ALL, continues to be available online at: http://www.xs4all.nl/~rehue/act/act187.html. There are three regional contacts listed for those interested in submitting visual material or participating in the festival's seminars. CLACPI-CEFREC received inquiries and submissions from South America and 'the rest of the world,' the NGO that hosted the festival received those from Guatemala, and CLACPI-OMVIAC received those from North and Central America. According to this document, CLACPI-OMVIAC consisted of Guillermo, Juan José, and Carlos Martínez from Comunalidad, who was also OMVIAC's coordinator. According to Erica Wortham, by 1999 OMVIAC basically only existed on paper (see chapter five, p. 185).

[54] According to Juan José (during an interview in April 2004), at this CLACPI meeting in November 2002 he, Crisanto, and an indigenous video maker from Michoacán joined Ivan Sangines and Franklin Gutiérrez who are members of CEFREC in Bolivia, Beatriz Bermúdez who is from Venezuela, Marta Rodríguez who is a well-known Columbian filmmaker and political activist, Jeanette Paillán who is from Chile, and Daniel Díez who is the Vice President of the *Instituto de la Radio y Televisión de Cuba* and the director of *Televisión Serrana*.

[55] Sergio told me (during an interview in June 2004) that since he had just returned from two months in the United States at the invitation of the NMAI (details provided further below), he most certainly didn't expect to be chosen for the workshop in Cuba. He explained that Roberto and Clara were very eager to have the chance to attend the workshop, but their participation was stymied by the fact that CLACPI insisted that the participant be someone who self-identified as indigenous. When Ojo de Agua tried to propose other indigenous media makers, they were informed that at least one of the two Mexican representatives had to be a member of Ojo de Agua. For a variety of reasons (which will be discussed in a later section of this chapter), Juan José was not available, nor was Cheve, who was obliged to fulfill his cargo position in his community. This left Sergio who, as I said, was most surprised, but delighted nonetheless.

[56] Sergio said (during the same April 2004 interview) that he was a bit disappointed in the workshop. Assigned to *La Televisión Educativa*, an affiliate of the *Instituto de Radio y Televisión de*

Cuba in La Habana, Sergio's learning experience was supposed to be grounded in the mentorship of this televsion station's media makers. According to Sergio, however, their workload and lack of resources (Sergio was amazed at how extensively the camera people were obliged to conserve video cassettes by taping over previous material) prevented this. Although he was given free rein to roam the television station where these people worked, it just wasn't what Sergio had hoped for.

Furthermore, the other indigenous Mexican participant was David Pacheco, who is from Tlahuitoltepec and very involved in community radio projects, both the one in Tlahui and that of CIPO's. Apparently there had been hope that after the workshop in Cuba, Pacheco would continue to remain in contact with Ojo de Agua and fortify its growing interest in community radio. Sergio also indicated his (and others') disappointment that this relationship never panned out.

[57] This summary of the seventh CLACPI festival and related events is drawn from both a page on the NMAI's fantastic Native Networks website (http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/blue/clacpi_04.htm#fmi), as well as the websites whose links are featured on this page.

[58] Cheve's participation was made possible through a deal that Ojo de Agua made with the large intermediary NGO, *Fundación Comunitaria de Oaxaca* (FCO). In exchange for paying for Cheve's (very expensive) plane ticket, Ojo de Agua agreed to send a representative (Cheve) to record activities during the FCO's 'Volunteer Camp,' which took place in a couple different communities that participate in the cooperative *Pueblos Mancomunados*. After Cheve shot footage, Sergio also visited the camp to record. Then Roberto reviewed the visual material and whipped up a short promotional video for FCO's program.

[59] Well, they don't call a manifesto, but after reading it I think it sure could be defined as such. This document is available for viewing (although the print is infuriatingly miniscule) at: http://www.clacpi.org/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=9.

[60] This CLACPI document also announces the formation of a commission dedicated to investigating and undertaking suggestions for the distribution, *difusión*, and archiving of indigenous video—despite the name change, the majority of this document dwells on video-mediated matters. This commission is comprised of Alex Halkin of the Chiapas Media Project, Juan José, Amalia Córdova (program director at the NMAI), two Bolivians, someone from Perú, and someone from Chile.

[61] Although the NMAI's new building on the National Mall in Washington D.C. opened to the public in September 2004, all signs indicate that the NMAI's Film and Video Center (FVC) remains housed in the George Gustav Heye Center in New York City. The signs serving as guideposts to this assumption of mine are the webpage devoted to the FVC on the NMAI's website (http://www.nmai.si.edu/subpage.cfm?subpage=collections&second=film), and an announcement of the new building's opening posted by Amalia Córdova, the FVC's Program Coordinator on CLACPI's new website, wherein Córdova's contact information indicates her worksite remains located in New York City (http://www.clacpi.org/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=6).

[62] Central to my understanding of the development of NMAI's FVC is a brief sketch of how and why she founded the FVC that Weatherford posted while participating in the Alliance for Media Arts and Culture's 2002 Seattle Conference session, "An Intergenerational Dialogue about Organizational Life and Leadership Development in the Media Arts." You can find it at
http://www.namac.org/community_salons_detail.cfm?catid=16&salon=2&id=16.

[63] According to the 1997 Festival's program, which along with the 1995 and 2000 Festival's programs is available online (at
http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/esp/blue/festival_past.htm), the 1997 the two day Native Networks symposium was made possible through the support of the Ford Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Mexican Cultural Institute and the Mexican Government Tourism Office, the Canadian Consulate General and the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the NAPT Native American Public Telecommunications, and Thirteen/WNET. The differences among the Canadian and Mexican government bureaus sure do speak volumes about the countries' respective positioning of indigenous peoples!

[64] See this super site yourself at: http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu.

[65] After a CLACPI festival in Bolivia in 1996, CAIB and CEFREC composed Bolivia's national plan for indigenous audiovisual communication together with three key Bolivian collectivities: the *Confederación de los Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia*, *Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia*, and the *Confederación Sindical de Colonizadores de Bolivia*. Not surprisingly, the Native Networks website offers a page (http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/esp/rose/cefrec.htm#open) that outlines the emergence of CEFREC, CAIB, and the national plan. This same page also provides urls for accessing the collectives' websites. See also Himpele (2004a and b).

[66] According to Sergio, it was a rather lost long weekend because, on top of Crisanto's total lack of interest in the internet, they arrived in Minneapolis without having received the extensive written materials the gathering's organizers had hoped all the participants would read beforehand. Clearly the internet isn't surmounting all communication barriers—Mexican snail mail remains untrustworthy and the vast majority of residents of rural communities (like Crisanto) don't have telephones in their homes.

[67] For further information, see
http://www.nmai.si.edu/subpage.cfm?subpage=collaboration&second=visiting.

[68] Again, the Native Networks website offers a handy (especially since there is no longer a Taos Talking Picture Festival or website) summary of recipients of the Mountain Award since this festival began in 1995. Check it out at:
http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/purple/awards_honors_arch.htm.

[69] To see what videos were presented and where, see
http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/blue/vmi_03.htm.

[70] More specifically, in Wisconsin the tour was hosted by the Ho-Chunk Hotel and Convention Center, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Chicano/a Studies Program, the Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque New Mexico, and in California—a gathering of the *Frente Indígena Oaxaqueño* in Fresno, a Catholic church in Madera, UCLA, and the *Casa del Mexicano* in Los Angeles.

[71] For details, see http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/blue/nafvf_03.htm.

[72] According to Roberto, Hermenegildo declared that:
> …[he] was opposed to how the festivals were being organized, that [he] was opposed to the way in which indigenous video in Oaxaca is synonymous with Guillermo Monteforte and that in Bolivia it's synonymous with Iván Sanjinés. And it that it seems to him that if something doesn't pass through these filters, it doesn't go anywhere. That's to say that if decisions aren't validated by Guillermo, they go nowhere. Well, this generated a bit of discussion.

[73] For the record, I don't think any joint declaration has been signed. The manifesto that arose from the festival in Chile (see note 59 above), doesn't offer any names of people who signed it, although it does begin with the claim that it was composed by those whose names appear below.

[74] Alberto Muenala is from Ecuador, where he founded the *Abya-Yala* Indigenous Film and Video Festival. In 1994, he was associated with the *Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador* (CONAIE) and coordinating the *Abya-Yala* Festival with Erica Wortham, who was then working at the NMAI's FVC (see http://www.native-net.org/archive/nl/9407/0000.html). Muenala no longer works with CONAIE, but remains in contact with the FVC, and participates in its events (see http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/esp/rose/muenala_a.htm). Now married to a *Juchiteca,* Muenala lives in Mexico City, where he graduated from UNAM's *Centro de Estudios Cinematográficos*. He has been an instructor for numerous video workshops targeted towards indigenous peoples, for example, the CDI sponsored one that Filo attended in Veracruz (see http://cdi.gob.mx/index.php?id_seccion=111).

[75] According to Roberto, Muenala shared with him the following observations:
> The only positive thing I see here is that indigenous video in Mexico has matured…Guillermo should feel good that his students now fly with their own wings, even if they suddenly criticize him. This means that he's accomplished something important with his work. That is to say now they want their independence, they want handle things on their own…That's to what degree the movement has matured in Mexico, and hopefully they'll accomplish the same in Bolivia.

[76] Building on Muenala's analysis, Roberto concluded:
> The reality is that the movement has moved beyond Ojo de Agua; it's moved beyond the CVI, Guillermo, Juan José and anybody else, and this is good because that's what was sought and in the end it was a good experience.

[77] Two of my four eye-witness informants emphasized that there were other reasons why Hermenegildo was feeling so cross. One is that he had brought with him to New York a short video that encapsulated the history of Tamix in the hopes of an occasion in which he might share it with possible funders. Given the action-packed conference schedule (see http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/blue/nafvf_03.htm), this simply wasn't possible. Furthermore, Heremenegildo was vexed that almost no one came to the screening in which he presented the video-magazine project *Turix*. He blamed it on it having been scheduled at the same time as other works that had been much better advertised (plenary presentations you might say). Another reason for Hermenegildo's disappointment with Ojo de Agua stems from his not being invited to participate in the production of programs for the *México Multicultural* television series, which I discuss in the last part of this chapter.

[78] I briefly mentioned this NGO in relation to my earlier discussion of Kayapó video making (chapter one, pp. 12-3 and 17-20). See Aufderheide (1995) for a look at this NGO's emergence in 1987 and its activities up in the mid-1990s. See the group's brand-new website that was made with the support of NORAD, Norway's International Development Aid Agency, it's at: http://www.videonasaldeias.org.br. Especially useful is the page listing texts composed by advocates who have facilitated the visual activism and art of indigenous communities in Brazil, for example, "Moi, un Indien" by Vincent Carelli, which provides an overview of this key actor's motivations and achievements.

While I haven't mentioned it, Carelli and indigenous media makers with whom he networks have regularly participated in the NMAI's film and video festivals. As an aside, I should note that some of my informants have suggested that Brazil's comtech-mediated advocacy is the most paternalistic indigenous media project going down in the Americas.

[79] Guillermo also told me that the effort to rework and resubmit the proposal later that year (2002) was scraped when he learned that the EU had reconfigured its funding regions' borders and it was no longer accepting proposals for projects that linked Central American with South American initiatives.

[80] Ojo de Agua recorded in three communities not far from Huatulco: San Isidro Chacalapa, Playa Grande, and Santa María Petatengo. In each community, they were 'hosted' by José de la Paz Hernández Girón and Rigoberto Castro Rivera, who in addition to working with WWF at this time, are affiliated with the *Centro Interdisciplinario de Investigación para el Desarrollo Integral Regional, Unidad Oaxaca, Instituto Politécnico Nacional*. To catch a glimpse of their work on the coast see their article "Autogestión y sistemas de producción rural en la costa de Oaxaca" at http://www.itox.mx/Posgrado/Revista7/art1.html.

While in Playa Grande one day, Hernández Girón lingered with some fishermen whose efforts had just been recorded because he was returning to Oaxaca de Juárez shortly and wanted to be sure to bring fresh fish with him. The Ojo de Agua crew began working with an older gentleman who was growing lime trees on the other side of the lagoon. At this point, Castro Rivera asked me if I would like to accompany him as he walked back to rejoin his colleague. Eager to stretch my legs before spending the rest of the day traveling back over the mountains, I joined him. Later, after we had said goodbye to these two scholars, the members of Ojo de Agua began to thank me profusely for having 'drawn off' Castro Rivera and leaving them to work without supervision. Not only was this young man annoying with

his manner, but they felt that people behaved very differently in the researchers' presence. For example, they said after Castro Rivera left, the elderly lime farmer had critiqued some the projects the WWF, and thus these two academics, were promoting in his community. More specifically, he found their promotion of lime trees absurd because they were worth very little on the market.

[81] Another explanation may be that WWF couldn't be sure that people living in those strife-torn communities who speak highly the impact of outside interventions (such as the WWF's) in the region, which like most of rural Oaxaca is marked by violent tussles over who controls incoming resources.

[82] Guillermo recently (August 2004) told me that WWF had contacted Ojo de Agua and asked them to produce a short video with some of that footage, which Roberto did. Apparently some aspect of WWF's programming on the coast had been awarded a prize, and the Oaxaca office wished to visually encapsulate the projects in order to publicize WWF's recognition.

[83] For a little insight into Epigmenio Ibarra's political perspective and how it informs his view of the cultural industries, see a 2000 interview wherein he compares Mexican television industry to a plantation during the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz (http://www.canal100.com.mx/telemundo/entrevistas/?id_nota=1199).

[84] For example, Argos is responsible for the telenovelas *Nada Personal*, *Mirada de Mujer* y *La vida en el espejo*, none of which I've seen. For an overview of telenovelas de ruptura (or dissident soap operas), see a *Time Magazine* article "Latin America's vastly popular soap operas are taking a new look at local reality" from 1997 that is archived on the TV Azteca website: http://200.23.37.104/latest/presscoverage/time_97.shtml.

[85] The website that Sergio created can be seen at: http://www.laneta.apc.org/oaxaca/. For the record, *LaNeta* ran out of funding to continue paying Sergio and Ojo de Agua at the end of 2001 (something I will return to in the following section), and so the Oaxaca-focused LaNeta website is a time capsule of sorts because Sergio last updated it in February 2002. From the looks (and links, many of which no longer work) of the main LaNeta website (http://host.laneta.org/), LaNeta may have recently experienced even greater cutbacks. This website no longer features a link to the Oaxaca one. Furthermore, I recollect there being other state websites as well a year or two back (e.g., Guerrero), but now there is only a link to a Chiapas LaNeta subsidiary, (http://www.laneta.apc.org/sclc/) and that website was last updated in August of 2004.

[86] Early in 2000, Binigulazaa received funding for establishing both a communications network that would link indigenous organizations and provide vital information, and a bilingual newspaper for the communities that couldn't access the website. This funding came from the International Development Research Center (IDRC) in Ottawa, Canada, which has a research program concerned with 'ICTs.' The division of this program that is focused on Latin America and the Carribean is called PAN-Americas Networking (see http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-2707-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html). One of their two liaisons in

Mexico is (or more likely *was*) Binigulazaa A.C. (see http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-2774-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html). In addition to these two resources, the PAN-Americas funding was also to support workshops that would focus on comtech and internet training.

After tapping into *LaNeta's* internet server, Binigulazaa did indeed create a website and it remains available at http://www.laneta.apc.org/rio/, but it has not been updated since August 15, 2000. According to the IRDC website, Binigulazaa orchestrated two workshops in 2000—one in March with 16 participants and the other in August with 10 participants (see the final evaluation, which is available at http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-3700-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html).

[87] See previous note and see the original proposal and budget with which Binigulazaa scored the funding from PAN-America's affiliate Mistica, which remains archived at: http://www.funredes.org/mistica/castellano/aplicaciones_pilotos/prop24.html. Upon perusal, the prominent role of the French anthropologist, Pierre Johnson, quickly becomes evident. Perhaps Binigulazaa emerged as the pet project of an academic and then dissipated when the funding dried up and the scholar's local contacts lost interest and/or had to redirect their energies elsewhere so that they could make ends meet.

[88] As a group, Ojo de Agua had to give up offering workshops. Guillermo, however, has had the opportunity (and the resources) to provide for little to no payment a couple of workshops single handedly. For example, in the spring of 2004, Guillermo traveled to Cuetzalan, Puebla and gave a video workshop to members of *Tosepan Titataniske*, a regional agricultural cooperative (http://www.laneta.apc.org/tosepan/). Around this same time, he went to Matías Romero in the isthmus of Oaxaca and gave a video workshop to members of *Naaxwiin*, a regional organization focused on women's rights, in which participates Fabiola Gervacio (the Mixe media maker who traveled with the NMAI-sponsored *Video México Indígena* tour in April 2003).

[89] Sergio explained (during an interview in June 2004):
> The reality is that since '98 we've totally switched course from what we were. Now we are a *sociedad civil* and we have to look for the means to carry on. … Also we've stopped offering workshops. It is a reality that we're seeing and we've discussed it all together as Ojo de Agua. When we formed Ojo de Agua that was our mission: to give training workshops, and not only in video. … But now, money's got to come back to us if Ojo de Agua is going to survive. And so we had to leave the process of training along the wayside. We've discussed this with our *compañeros* [their partners in production and circulation]. We're super-ready to share what we know—the experiences, the wee bit that we know. Hopefully this will change…we want to continue giving workshops.

[90] Martha Sanchez relocated to Oaxaca from Mexico City, where she earned her graphics arts degree. After a stint of producing imagery for institutions, Martha has successfully established a clientele of NGOs of all shapes and sizes. She is a freelance professional working with(in) Oaxaca's complex NGO industry. If you are familiar with the Pochote cinema and its garden, which is located in the historical heart of Oaxaca de Juárez, you may recall seeing her boisterous posters whereby each month's offerings are announced.

[91] In chapter five (p. 191), I introduced the *Centro de Apoyo al Movimiento Popular Oaxaqueño* (CAMPO, A.C.) as an NGO that provides training and support for other NGOs.

[92] When in the *zocalo* (central plaza) of the historic center of Mexico City in January 2005, a couple of times I passed men on one side of the cathedral who were hawking *facturas* and *recibos* (which are less official receipts). Perhaps they were vendors of the empty receipt booklets like the ones that Cheve kept in a 3-ring binder, but the fact that they had no wares on view and simply repeated *"facturas….receibos…"* as people passed leads me to doubt that. It is also illustrates how pressing this hunt for *facturas*—the only legally recognized paper trail—is in Mexico. See also n21, pp. 147-8 in chapter four for a brief look at how the fuss over *facturas* contributed to the reconfiguration of UNOSJO.

[93] During much of the time I was in Oaxaca, workers were laboriously widening the leg of the Pan-American that exited the capital city and headed toward Tlacolula (and then to the isthmus and on through Chiapas to Guatemala) and traffic often came to a crawl at points as vehicles bumped through dreadfully dusty stretches of pot hole ridden dirt roads. Even though there is now a beltway that skirts the *Tule* tree (an often crowded tourist site on the route) and its surrounding pueblos, traveling to Santa Ana del Valle on bus still requires catching a bus heading that way, arriving at the Tlacolula bus station, and then taking the shuttle bus that runs to and from the nearby pueblo of Santa Ana del Valle. The length of time for this commute continues to vary wildly, taking at least half an hour on a very lucky day and sometimes an hour and a half on not so lucky days.

[94] For example, one Arcano14 video, *Conmoción y pavor/Commotion and Terror* (2003), could be described as animated anti-war poetry. Another one of their videos, *Indignación* (2001) features a visual treatise on the tragic (and still unsolved) murder of human-rights activist-lawyer Digna Ochoa composed of digitally modified images sampled from television news programs. Arcano14 also regularly helps organize events where Bruno and others perform live music accompaniment to silent films projected in outdoor spaces.

[95] San Lucas Camotlan's already high degree of political economic marginalization was greatly exacerbated for several years because of land disputes with nearby San Miguel Quetzaletpec. Because they could not safely travel through Quetzaltepec, Camotlan residents were forced to walk for hours to another pueblo where they could access road transportation.

[96] To catch a glimpse of Neshat's aesthetic-political vision, see: http://www.iranian.com/Arts/Dec97/Neshat/.

[97] Sergio then explained that he wasn't the only member of Ojo de Agua faced with this dilemma (in June 2004):

> I believe that most of Ojo de Agua's eight [members], I believe that it's been the same for us. We're consumed by the need for daily sustenance, because if we don't do that, we won't even survive. In my case, to maintain my family, well there's the need to work for survival and so you say, I'll do *my* own [project], but I will lose a month and who pays me for that month? Well, it's complicated.

[98] Clara and Juan José have maintained separate (but relatively nearby) households since his return to Oaxaca de Juárez.

[99] My overview of Consejo's career is drawn directly from his detailed profile on the Ashoka Association's website. You too can see it, it's at: http://www.ashoka.org/fellows/viewprofile3.cfm?reid=96728.

[100] The *Programa para el Control de la Erosión y Restauración de los Suelos de Oaxaca* (PCERS) was created in 1995 and it included the NGO, *Lazos para el Agua y Semillas de Oaxaca* (LASOS), INSO and the *Centro Regional Universitario Sur* (CRUS) of the *Universidad Autónoma de Chapingo*. You can read about the program and the associates who made happen on the (unfinished) website: http://www.laneta.apc.org/pcers/.

[101] This was a particularly challenging chore. Not only was this Juan José's first time to entirely edit a video online with the Mac G4 that everyone referred to as 'the Triqui's,' but he had spent days pouring over the seminar's presentations and discussions that Clara had transcribed and then select the best 'sound bites' to encapsulate the complicated matter of community ecotourism initiatives. The post-production of this video was done by Guillermo and Roberto, with the help of fellow media makers, Julio Ceasar Sánchez and Jesse Elliot, who was in town for an experimental film workshop that overlapped with Arcano14's *Mirada Biónica* workshop.

[102] More specifically, the video's credits indicate that it was interwoven with the *Comisión Nacional Forestal* (CONAFOR), which is the special commission that President Fox's administration set up in order to organize and preside over Mexico's participation in the International Year of the Mountain. For the record, CONAFOR is associated with the *Programa de Desarrollo Forestal Comunitario* (PROCYMAF, the Community Forest Development Program), which is housed with the *Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales* (SERMARNAT, the federal environmental and natural resource agency).

[103] See this group's website at: http://www.tourismrights.org/.

[104] A press release about the event, which lists many of the attendees, remains available on website of the *Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes* (CONACULTA), the federal agency that houses *Culturas Populares*. You can find it at: http://www.conaculta.gob.mx/saladeprensa/2002/14mar/foroiit.htm. For the record, not everyone who wanted to attend this event was able. For instance, Ron Mader the founder of an eco-tourism business (see www.planeta.com) had expressed great enthusiasm about participating and promoting the forum. People involved in organizing the event, however, decided Ron's interest was too entrepreneurial and might inhibit the participation of representatives who came to discuss their community-centered organizations' experiences. Undeterred, ever since then Ron has been setting up online forums for discussing rural tourism, as well as hosting occasional gatherings devoted to the same.

[105] This second video was subtitled in English, and since this is the version with which I am working, I use its English title.

[106] FONI's affiliate with is camera was the *Coalición de Maestros y Promotores Indígenas de Oaxaca* (CMPIO), which, as I noted in chapter three (n27), emerged and operated within the powerful national teachers union, Section 22 (see Jorge Hernández-Díaz 2001, 99-112).

[107] CINTIC has a very basic website, it's at: http://www.cintic.org.mx/. To catch a glimpse of Gómez's scholarship, you'll find a short essay on television viewing and computer use that she presented at a communications conference in 1997 at http://cvc.cervantes.es/obref/congresos/zacatecas/television/ponencias/gomezmon.htm#tevisión,%20comput. Also available is a collection of short lectures that Gómez has delivered on a public education radio station: http://www.losmedios.org/comcar/lista.html.

[108] From its appearance, the website www.tequio.org never really caught on. It appears that no one ever became in involved in the discussion forums since they were established in 2001. Perhaps the rather complicated interface is partly to blame; although I see this website's failure as further evidence that public and private resources should be focused on knowledge exchanges through means other comtech besides internet-based ones. I would argue that the vast majority of Oaxaca's population doesn't have access to (or much interest in) online resources, much less the technological equipment for doing so. I will be returning to this argument in my concluding chapter.

According to a communications association's listing of theses competing for its national (2002-2003) prize (see
 http://www.coneicc.org.mx/publicaciones/tesis/2005.03_tesislicenciatura03.html),
Eduardo García served as an advisor of a student who earned their communications degree from the *Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Oaxaca*. Although several government webpages listing higher education institutions' websites feature this url,   http://www.uada.edu.mx/, this site seems to have disappeared, which leads me to wonder whether the Institute itself continues.

Also, according to the July 2002 news item found at: http://www.cimacnoticias.com/noticias/02jul/02072208.html, after the forum he coordinated with Guillermo, García was (for a time) the director of the state bureau, *Instituto de la Mujer Oaxaqueño*.

[109] As you may recall, CONACULTA stands for the *Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes* and housed within this federal bureau is the *Dirección General de Culturas Populares e Indígenas*. Marcos Sandoval, then in charge of the state office of *Culturas Populares e Indígenas*, was central to the successful solicitation of the support of this bureau.

[110] Things that come from outside: A forum and seminar on computers and the internet in indigenous communities.

[111] *Ce-Acatl* stands for the *Centro de Estudios Antropológicos, Científicos, Tradicionales y Lingüísticos* and you can see the breadth of its activities, such as publications, via its website (http://www.laneta.apc.org/ceacatl/).

[112] The website to which I refer is the *Red de Información Indígena* and it can be seen at: http://www.laneta.apc.org/rci/. This particular website remains regularly updated, and because it offers extensive materials in English, it is an excellent resource for all kinds of

students. You can find out more about Margarita Warnholtz, who became an Ashoka Fellow in 2003, and *Servicios Profesionales para el Desarrollo Integral, A.C.* at http://www.ashoka.org/fellows/viewprofile3.cfm?reid=147687.

[113] Since its inception, *La Ojarasca* has been championing the causes of indigenous collectivities and you can access online issues dating back to mid-1998 at: http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2005/mar05/050321/oja95-anteriores.html. As you'll recall from earlier in this chapter, the Native Networks website (www.nativenetworks.si.edu) is a project of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, and Amalia Córdoba is currently in charge of the NMAI's Film and Video Center. While Amalia was in Oaxaca for the forum in May 2002, she was conceptualizing with Guilllermo and others the *Video México Indígena* tour of April 2003.

[114] Scott Robinson, a Scottish anthropologist based in Mexico City's *Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana*, coordinates these *Telecentros*, initially with support from the United Nation's Research Institute for Social Development. You can download a 1999 examination of this project's first phase at http://www.eldis.org/static/DOC7036.htm. A more contemporary overview of Telecentros in Latin America is available at: http://www.tele-centros.org/.

[115] The *Unión de Comunidades Indígenas de la Región del Istmo* has recently produced a website that is available in English and would most likely be useful for teaching. (http://www.uciri.org/). Schools represented at the forum were the *Bachillerato Integral Comunitario* from Guelatao, the *Bachillerato Integral Comunitario Ayuukj Polivalente*, which is located in the Mixe pueblo of Tlahuitoltepc (see their unfinished website at http://www.bicap.edu.mx/), as well as a similar educational center in Jaltepec de Candoyoc, another Mixe community. Also in attendance was Sofia Robles, a key figure in the establishment and current coordination of SER (see n31 above).

[116] You can find out more about EDUCA on their website, http://www.educaoaxaca.org/.

[117] One of the speakers was Joel Aquino from the Zapotec community of Yalálag (see chapter four, pp. 117-21), who is also a key actor in the *Uken ke Uken* cultural center located there. During his commentary, he took the time to reject the phrase *usos y costumbres*, as much too vague and far too folkloric term to be very useful for encapsulating indigenous community dynamics.

[118] You can see this website, which is an excellent resource (provided you read Spanish), at www.usosycostumbres.org. In addition to the support of the Ford Foundation, this website was made possible with support from the University of New Hampshire and USAID. Unfortunately, however, it has not been updated since early January 2004, probably because funding for paying Sergio a salary to do so has dried up.

[119] I have used the word (re)source to recognize the argument made by Rundstrom et al. (2000), and others, that the struggles faced by indigenous communities require the reconfiguration of technoscience so that environmental inquiry is recognized as cultural as well technological. Here they explain why they've chosen this visual reminder:

The material elements of the biosphere normally termed *resources* might also be worth considering simply as *sources*. So many issues associated with the biosphere, like water quality and quantity, are deeply intertwined with sovereignty, land dispossession and restoration, planning and development, sacredness, and even gambling and tourism All these topics are sources of physical, economic, political and spiritual livelihoods. While this manipulation of language may seem thoroughly postmodern, it is not our intension to be playful. We employ ambiguity as a linguistic element expressing the intellectual richness of this subject by acknowledging the inter-penetration of its subtopics. In this section [called (RE)SOURSES] then, we seek to dissolve the traditional human-nature dichotomy by grouping these ideas together and employing *resource* and *source* as one word (Rundstrom, Deur, Berry and Winchell 2000, 89).

[120] In addition to the summary of achievements noted in López's Ashoka profile: http://www.ashoka.org/fellows/viewprofile3.cfm?reid=96736, my overview of his accomplishments and goals also draws upon an essay titled "Getting the Framework Right for Indigenous Communities in Mexico: Rodolfo López, ASETECO" that is featured in a report from the Environmental Innovations Initiative, *The Turning Tide: The People, Principles and Strategies Creating Ecological Balance*, which is found online at: http://www.ashoka.org/global/ei_book.pdf. This essay is based on a talk López gave in Hamburg, Germany, on October 26, 2000, entitled "Los Derechos Económicos de las Comunidades Indígenas en Oaxaca," which followed on the heels of The Environmental Innovations Workshop and Conference (October 13-18, 2000) that took place in London.

Beltrán and López (2002) offer a more detailed examination of the emergence and engagements of ASETECO. Any one keen on further exploring the regional struggle to resist further exploitation by 'outside' lumber interests might find useful López's 1990 book *Los Bosques en Nuestra Historia, su Utilidad, su Cuidado, y el Futuro (Forests in our history, their use, care and the future)*. I have not seen the book myself, but an annotated bibliography included in a FAO report on community forestry initiatives in Latin America (http://www.fao.org/documents/show_cdr.asp?url_file=/docrep/006/u9040e/U9040E13.htm) indicates that this book provides an overview of the *Union de Comunidades y Ejidos Forestales de Oaxaca*, a coordinating body that López helped establish, which played a central role in the fight to challenge the renewal lumber concessions in the Sierra Norte.

[121] I got these numbers and the notion of López's shifting interest from the essay "Getting the Framework Right for Indigenous Communities in Mexico: Rodolfo López, ASETECO," which is cited in the note above). In what follows, I build upon this essay with insights gleaned from a formal interview and a couple informal conversations with López in July 2004.

[122] According to promotional materials put together by ASETECO, Tlalixtac has a population of almost 7,000, about 4,600 of whom are over fifteen years of age. Fifty-two percent of the adult population is women and more than a third of them are dedicated to the production of tortillas for sale in the nearby city. Forty-eight percent of the adult population is men and more than half of them work in construction, mostly outside of their community. A serious degree of under-education (*rezago educativo*) is exacerbated by a lack of interest on the part of residents who don't see a connection between their daily labors and formal

education. Of great concern to both community residents and advocates like López is the physical-cultural loss of the pueblo's youth to the economic and recreational lure of the nearby city.

[123] You can see the jazzy website of this manufacturing firm at: http://www.traylfer.itgo.com/. See also a brief post on former Oaxaca governor José Murat's PR website from 2001, wherein Traylfer representatives bemoans the lack of skilled and willing labor in the area: http://www.oaxaca.gob.mx/noticias/271101.htm.

[124] Cinetransformer (http://www.cinetransformer.com/) is owned and operated by Fondo Raul Fernandez, who is was responsible for a series of early 1980s action films that revolved around a woman called Lola the Trailera [Lola the Trucker]. Unfortunately, I've never seen any of these films, but I've heard Lola described as a strong-willed Rambo-like character. You can catch a glimpse of this film, and even rent it on DVD at: http://www.vanguardcinema.com/lolalatrailera/lolalatrailera.html.

Interestingly, the use of one of Cinetransformer's mobile cinemas allowed the Native American director, Chris Eyre, to screen his 2002 film *Skins* on Indian reservations (http://www.flp.com/news/press%20releases/rollingrezrelease.html).

[125] This was initially the name of the community center. For the record, López recently told me (during an interview in July 2004) that the project has been renamed *Campus Comunitario de Ciencias, Artes, y Oficios*.

[126] Hopefully my ability to pursue and perhaps further unpack such ambiguities during interviews conducted in Spanish will continue to improve.

[127] As I mentioned early (chapter five, n44, p. 233): The *Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales* or SEMARNAT emerged in 2001 out of the *Secretaría de Medio Ambiente, Recursos Naturales y Pesca* (SEMARNAP-Secretariat of Environment, Natural Resources and Fishing), which had been established in 1994, when the *Instituto Nacional de Ecología* (INE) merged with the *Comisión Nacional del Agua* (CONAGUA), the *Instituto Nacional de la Pesca* (INP), and the *Procurdaría Federal de Protección al Ambiente* (PROFEPA).

[128] According to a brief biography, Salvador Anta earned his biology degree from the UNAM, where he then taught science and society courses, and throughout his institutional career, he has been networking within realms wherein natural resource management has been intersecting with indigenous communities' development strategies. This brief biography of Anta accompanies his 2004 report on "Forest Certification in Mexico" prepared for the Yale symposium *Forest Certification in Devleoping and Transitioning Societies: Social, Economic, and Ecological Effects* on July 10-11, 2004, which is available at: http://www.yale.edu/forestcertification/symposium/latinamerica.html.

After the massacre of 26 *campesinos* in Aguas Frias, Oaxaca on May 31, 2002, and governor Murat's response to it as a localized flare up of tensions between local communities bickering over resources stemming from forestry programs, Anta was forced to resign from his position as director of SERMARNAT's Oaxaca's office (see

http://www.pa.gob.mx/Noticias/2002/agosto/140802.htm#SECTOR%20AGRARIO.Ant a's 2004 biography notes that he currently networks with the *Consejo Civil Mexicano para la Silvicultura Sustentable* (see http://www.ccmss.org.mx/).

[129] CONANP's webpage for the Chacahua Park, where you download the piece of legislation through which it was established in 1937 (but you can't access the Park's management program as the page suggests you can), is found at http://conanp.gob.mx/anp/chacahua/chacahua.php. To learn about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife's enactment of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act through the disbursement of grants in Mexico see:
http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/NAWCA/MXgrants.htm. For more general information and downloading annual Progress Reports (such as the 1998-1999 one that yielded information about the grant given toward the Protection and Conservation of the Chacahua Lagoons National Park), see: http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/NAWCA/grants.htm.

[130] When I asked Anta (during an interview in July 2004) why they chose to work with Ojo de Agua, he responded with the following:
> …those of us in this circle [actors pursuing conservation through sustainable development initiatives] we have seen various things Monteforte and his team have made. I also know his people, with whom they have worked, with whom the have worked as part of the CVI or as Ojo de Agua and they have worked with governmental groups and governments on different themes. For many it's a very important group…for the type of productions they make and for their focus, for their work in communities and their understanding of social problems. Because this is an independent group and can make things from their perspective, for the technical work they produce, such as the quality of their works. Fundamentally, these are the reasons why we came to solicit them. There is no other group like them in Oaxaca, even though there are other people in Oaxaca, but they don't have the quality and commitment that this group has.

[131] This was the first video edited with the Mac G4 on loan from Chicahuaxtla.

[132] According to Solórzano (the Chacahua Park director), Tona's video offered:
> …a very complicated, but disperse, vision. That is to say many problems were visible, but there was no axis. So we made these observations to the Ojo de Agua team and later after plenty discussion—they were defending their work and we told them that we didn't like the job they were doing because it didn't have sequence, that it didn't have coherence, etcetera.

[133] During an interview in April 2003, Mara described the socio-economic survey she did as a smaller version of the evaluation model utilized by Ana Paula de Teresa, a researcher at UAM-Ixtalpa who in the mid-1990s was part of the interdisciplinary NGO *Programa de Aprovechamiento Integral de los Recursos Naturales* (PAIR) (see chapter five, p. 191), with whom Mara had studied and then worked during a regional diagnostic of the Chinantla. With Gustavo Sánchez, Mara edited the (splendid) book that arose from this study, *Chacahua: Reflejos de un Parque* (Alfaro and Sánchez 2002), which is the same title of the final version of the Ojo de Agua video.

[134] Solórzano explained (to me during an interview in July 2004) why he finds Guillermo's version of the video so much better than the first one:

> And they precisely fed off the knowledge that we had, at that time people were in the field systematizing this complexity. In order to make a video like that, it seems to me it would have been better for an anthropologist or sociologist to have the camera. I believe it would be better because it is a very complicated theme, very complex.

> And so it went along, and Guillermo Monteforte entered [the project] and with him we started to talk about what things we wanted to improve, the things that could be taken out or treated differently. And that's how it started; he took over the second part—because another video was made, he added things. And at the time, it seems to me the second year in which we still hadn't finished [the video], we were starting the Chacahua Lagoons National Park's program with an interdisciplinary team including the Universidad del Mar, CIESAS, and us [SEMARNAT]. People experienced with GIS, there were people that had experience with the Park vegetation and among all of us we started to shape a systematic focus…we are talking about complex participatory systems and it is a focus that allows you to differentiate among various levels of complexity and processes. We try to adjust to this conceptual model, and starting from there, it's starting to produce many axes. *Axes that can be interpreted through the video* (emphasis added).

[135] To learn more about CONAFOR, see their website at: http://www.conafor.gob.mx/. There's also a page with an overview and some relevant documents in English. You can find it at: http://www.conafor.gob.mx/english/english_section.htm. Anyone interested in knowing more about CONAFOR's concept of *cultura forestal*, see http://www.conafor.gob.mx/cultura_forestal/index.htm.

[136] Her colleagues, observed Raquel:

> Don't understand how to reconcile communications worth with the technical aspect of institutions, especially governmental ones. It's an internal fight; it's difficult, worse because people don't understand you. They see you like, I think they see the area [of communications] as a frivolous appendix. They consider us as even organizers and they believe that's all we do, but I believe it's much more than that, much more…

[137] With financial support from the Oklahoma-based Protestant development agency World Neighbors, these projects were initiated in the early 1980s by two NGOs: the *Centro de Desarrollo Integral Campesino de la Mixteca Ita Nuni A. C.* (CEDICAM, Center for Integrated Peasant Development) and *Centro de Estudios de Tecnologías Apropiadas para México* (CETAMEX, Center for Studies of Technologies Appropriate for Mexico).

A brief overview (published in July 2000) of these projects can be found at: http://www.leisa-al.org.pe/anteriores/161/21.html. For a brief snapshot of the World Neighbors' endeavors in the Mixteca, see http://www.wn.org/CountryPrograms.asp?Country=Mexico. A sketch of CEDICAM, is found at: http://www.laneta.apc.org/xilotl/AgendaLocal/MEXICO-organizaciones.doc. Also, for a brief glimpse the sorts of projects this group continues to undertake see an announcement of a grant it received in 2003:

http://www.worldventurepartners.org/2003grants.html. Finally, to learn more about the Nochixtlán-based division of CETAMEX that was central to the projects in the Mixteca, see Jutta Blauert's study (undertaken in 1995-1996) of the group's evaluation practices, which is available at: http://www.preval.org/documentos/00537.pdf.

[138] To gain a sense of the mission and the categories of SEMARNAT's annual *Premio Nacional al Mérito Forestal* (National Prize for Forestry Achievement), see its 2005 announcement at: http://www.conafor.gob.mx/cultura_forestal/conv_pmnf_2005.htm.

[139] One news item detailing these communities' honorable mention is found at: http://www.oloramitierra.com.mx/full.php?secc=oldnew&id=37. Another site detailing the awards is Governor Murat's at: http://www.oaxaca.gob.mx/noticias/020702.htm.

[140] According to the official history of the *Coordinación General de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe* (http://eib.sep.gob.mx/index.php?seccion=1&id=30), this recently established division of SEP embodies President Fox's administration's effort to incorporate bilingual, intercultural education (as opposed to the more simplistic and telelogical model of bicultural, which has historically mapped the one-way street: *indio→mestizo*) at all educational levels, not just the *primaria.*

[141] Juan José described (during an interview in July 2004) Ojo de Agua's socio-political reasons for accepting this particular institutional project:
> I think of it as having two orientations that I see as being social, to generate a consciousness of the existence of the peoples of Mexico and the fact that they aren't static cultures. That is to say that they don't stay the same all the time, they're cultures in motion, up to date and alive. They continue to speak their language and continue struggling for life every day; some of them confront very daunting problems. Although there are videos that don't talk about anything but complaints, other people that have risen above this are doing things to resolve [the problems] because the state doesn't just naturally respond to indigenous communities' necessities, it has to be forced. These are the two orientations.

[142] Another product of the Fox administration, the *Consejo Nacional para Prevenir la Discriminación* was established in late April, 2003. See their website for further details: http://www.conapred.org.mx.

[143] Since Juan José relocated to San Lucas Ojitlán shortly after production of the SEP programs began, Roberto and Guillermo were in charge of most of the productions.

[144] For a glimpse of Triqui populations living in Baja California, see the video *La Vida de los Migrantes de Baja California,* which was made during the CDI's video production workshop in Veracruz by *Unidad de Producción Audiovisual Ecoarte triqui.* You can view it at: http://cdi.gob.mx/index.php?id_seccion=111.

[145] During an interview in July 2004, Juan José described Ojo de Agua's commitment [English translation follows]:

Y desde la perspectiva de Ojo de Agua el video tiene que ser útil para la comunidad y para la organización que nos ha permitido estar ahí grabando, estar recogiendo sus palabras…entonces hay como una responsabilidad en términos comunicacionales de Ojo de Agua, bien fuerte.

From Ojo de Agua's perspective, the video has to be useful for the community and for the organization that has allowed us to be there recording, to be collecting their words…so in communication terms, Ojo de Agua has a powerful responsibility.

[146] Clara explained (to me during an interview in July 2004):

That's why there's a conflict between José Luis and Ojo de Agua. He was saying that these videos belong to the SEP and that the SEP decides. And all of us of Ojo de Agua, we've talked and said like hell, that's not how it is! The SEP is one thing, but *we* are the ones that arrive in the communities and *we* made the commitment to the people that permitted us to record. This material has to be broadcast.

[147] With Guillermo, Patricia co-wrote the 1994 video *Huicholes y Pesticidas*, which Guillermo edited. By 2000, this video has been released in a dozen indigenous languages spoken in Mexico. You can get a copy with English subtitles (it would make an excellent teaching aid on a variety of topics) through the Pesticide Action Network-North America website at www.pannta.org/shop/shop.html.

CHAPTER SEVEN
Advocating Indigenous Video:
A Conclusion

El video indígena implica un compromiso de hacer retratos fieles y dignos a cómo ellos se conciben a sí mismos, que la imagen sea resultado de la manera en que quieren presentarse, y que sean ellos quienes controlen la manera en que la sabiduría, la espiritualidad y el conocimiento que estas imágenes conllevan se puedan dar a conocer a través de dicho medio de comunicación. … Aún así, al margen de los apoyos necesarios, al margen de un justo reconocimiento, al margen de la ley, al margen de todo, los pueblos originarios continúan expresando y comunicando sus realidades, visiones, mitos y sueños por medio del video indígena (Monteforte, 2002, 25-6).[1]

INTRODUCING THE CONCLUSION

I begin this dissertation's conclusion by offering three intersecting definitions of the cultural politics, organizational relationships, and representational practices of indigenous video. With each definition I spell out key overlapping themes made apparent by my investigation: marginality, authoritative knowledge, and identity politics. Afterward follows an explication of the principal geographic lesson I have learned from my case study of Ojo de Agua: indigenous cultural activism and the academic advocacy that has been pivotal to its formulation and circulation in Oaxaca are best understood in terms of fractured topologies and not networks. This concluding chapter ends with a brief review of two of my research project's partialities and the ways in which I will address them more fully in my post-dissertation life.

IDENTIFYING INDIGENOUS VIDEO

Indigenous Video as a Spatial Strategy: Articulating the Margins

According to Guillermo (Monteforte 2002), what differentiates indigenous video from other audiovisual media making is the analytical-aesthetic goal of making visible the

perspectives, visions, and expressions of the people comprising the communities that culturally self-identify as indigenous—communities, notes Monteforte (see quote above) usually positioned on multiple margins. In other words (mine), indigenous video seeks to enhance marginalized peoples' control over the identification and articulation of indigenous geographies. Given this aim, indigenous media makers and their supporters (many of whom are scholars) situate their ambitions and endeavors squarely within struggles for cultural and political autonomy. With heavy reliance on Erica Wortham's research, which draws deeply upon the work of Faye Ginsburg, I get geographically specific in chapters four and five. Video was introduced to, and appropriated by, indigenous communities in Oaxaca as a communication tool that would allow local and regional actors to formulate and fortify the collective traditions and cultural practices commonly referred to as *comunalidad*. For example, affiliates of SER drew upon video technologies (and the assistance of Ojo de Agua) to augment the proposals with which they solicited further funding for culturally appropriate and politically pertinant education programming for indigenous communities.

While I fully concur with Wortham's and Ginsburg's arguments and believe that my research corroborates their analyses, this study has made more visible another motivation for the pursuit and production of indigenous video: the opportunity to rally resources.[2] Given the recent history of comtech-mediated activism in Oaxaca (explored in chapters four and five) and my even more recent experience of these processes and practices (detailed in chapter six), many indigenous actors (individual or organizational) that have utilized video technologies are (or were) affiliated with a commercial production-oriented collectives and/or community authorities intent on (among other things) bettering residents' income and well-being by expanding and protecting their markets. For instance, Teófila Palafox's institutionally-mediated introduction to visual technologies and cultural conservation was

embedded in her weaving cooperative's relationship with INI. Crisanto's community status, organizational commitments, and institutional contacts have enabled and informed his video training and video making; and in turn, his video making has furthered organizational efforts to reveal and address regional political violence. The cultural activism of *Fundación Comunalidad* in Guelatao has been directly related to the political economic endeavors (e.g. regional transportation infrastructure and localized sustainable forest resource management) of UNOSJO in Oaxaca's Sierra Juárez. And socio-spatial relationships woven into globalized labor markets shaped the video Cheve produced for Santa Ana del Valle's community museum committee. My study of Ojo de Agua also illuminates how organizations and institutions that do not identify as indigenous, but are committed to facilitating the initiatives of indigenous groups in Oaxaca, have utilized video technologies to publicize and/or promote sustainable development policies and programming. For example, in the videos made by Chico Luna, *Grupo Mesófilo* showcased their support for non-lumber forestry projects. INSO hired Ojo de Agua to produce a video to encourage critical considerations of community-controlled eco-tourism. And a video about fostering local human resources emerged when an alliance of commercial, advocacy, and community concerns (comprised of Ojo de Agua, ASETECO, Cinetransformer, and the municipality of Tlalixtac) coalesced.

The moral of these video-centered stories about cultural politics and political economy is twofold. The first maxim, which is hardly new, is that indigenous cultural politics are not removed from the socio-political patterns and processes that marginalize indigenous communities and significantly dictate their ecological engagements. The second, more original lesson I learned (and want to emphasize) is that we may no longer examine the commercial, environmental, and cultural ventures taking place in indigenous (and other marginalized) communities without accounting for the ways in which more localized actors'

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access to comtech (such as video) determines their participation in these ventures. I don't wish to suggest that comtech and the skills for utilizing it are suddenly more vital than more traditional developmental goals and standards (e.g., potable water or infant nutrition). Rather, I insist that comtech can no longer remain absent from the frame of analysis with which these matters of life and death are examined and debated. To meditate and make more visible with comtech their participation in development and conservation programming enhances indigenous actors' means of negotiation and navigation of the transnational geographies currently shaping contemporary indigenous communities.

Indigenous Video as Decolonization: Relocating Authority

As Erica Wortham argues and my research confirms, despite our (and others') desire to visualize the oppositional cultural politics of indigenous video as resistance to the noxious blend of state-sanctioned oppression, paternalism, and neglect that has historically shaped the lot of indigenous (and other marginalized) communities in the Americas, indigenous video in Oaxaca arose from state institutional apparatus and ambitions. Ojo de Agua was born at the end of the 1980s. A burst of state-sponsored programming, designed and administered by INI to buffer structural adjustment policies, made it possible to support the *Transferencia de los Medios Audiovisuales a las Organizaciones y Comunidades Indígenas* (TMA) program. And in 1994, from the ashes of the extinguished TMA program, arose the semi-independent (from INI supervision) *Centro de Video Indígena* (CVI) in Oaxaca de Juárez. Both the TMA program and the CVI were pet projects of a handful of scholars and media professionals who were enamored with visual anthropology and determined to enable ethnopolitics by opening new spaces for indigenous self-representation. Chapters three and four flesh out the intellectual currents agitating for decolonization; and they detail some state

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and federal institutional reconfigurations in Oaxaca informed by the goal of decolonization. Shortly after the CVI opened, however, its funding began to decline steadily as further federal decentralization reduced available resources, and even more importantly, eventually removed the CVI from the aegis of its initial patrons in Mexico City.

Chapter five situates the media makers who came to comprise Ojo de Agua squarely within this deliberately politicized intellectual goal of collaborative decolonization. I also argue that their collective practices and corpus of videos established the group as an alternative and yet authoritative source of visual knowledge about indigenous peoples, places, and practices. Chapter six illustrates how the collective that came to be called Ojo de Agua transformed from an isolated appendage to a government bureau seeking to create cultural promoters with video skills, into an intermediary NGO dedicated to facilitating comtech-mediated indigenous communications. I demonstrate how this media group has networked in the name of indigenous video by pragmatically built upon the cultural-political aims and the technological-socio-spatial connections forged through the TMA program and the CVI. I argue that this relocation of advocacy-activism (from federal experiment to an NGO) was made possible through access to new video technology—specifically, the Mac G4 the Triqui video makers from Chicahuaxtla purchased and leased to Ojo de Agua, as well as transnational funding—from the likes of the Rockefeller and Levi's Foundations and the Ashoka Association. While remaining (often wistfully) dedicated to their primary objectives of training, distribution, and production, members of Ojo de Agua have found their service goals somewhat stymied by their (sometimes uncomfortable) position within a flexible labor force of knowledge producers contracted by other NGOs and government agencies to authoritatively visualize indigenous (and other marginalized) communities. Nonetheless, their (often uncertain) livelihood allows Ojo de Agua to continue contributing to the

decolonization of knowledge production by providing the means to amplify (somewhat) the voices of indigenous actors by making media such as the televised programs on cultural difference the group produced for the SEP.

These observations about the cultural and institutional relocations of indigenous video production provide two important insights into indigenous identity politics in Latin America. First, my emphasis on academic advocates' entanglements with the ideas and activities of actors commonly classified as indigenous intellectuals highlights how, despite its name, indigenous video is collaboratively co-produced. By refusing to fit neatly within the dualistic and hierarchical (non-indigenous vs. indigenous) framework of *mestizaje*, the intellectual-technological hybridity of indigenous video (as just one example of comtech-mediated, community-centered cultural activism) moves far beyond the worn-out and biologically-bound binary of metropolitan authority/indigenous authenticity. And even more importantly, indigenous video offers material means whereby scholars might rearrange their knowledge production so as to include indigenous visualizations, opinions, and suggestions in their research, teaching, and lives. Second, the story of Ojo de Agua indicates that state decentralization is no anathema to decolonization. Indeed decentralization of the state is a necessary condition for decolonization. The transnational and technological forces that fueled Ojo de Agua's emergence as an advocacy-activist NGO exemplify the creative destruction so symptomatic of the neo-liberal economic policies that have been reconfiguring spaces of cooperation and conflict in Latin America for the last twenty-plus years. Alongside the rampant closure of windows of opportunity generated by severed subsidies, dissolved agencies, and other symptoms of slimmed-down states, are comtech-mediated apertures for (somewhat) more inclusive collective action among diverse actors.

Indigenous Video as Technoscience: Mediating Indigenous Identity Politics

During an interview in August 2004, I asked Cheve to share his thoughts about indigenous video and those producing it. He responded to my query by observing that practioners of indigenous video (which, Cheve emphasized, visualizes communities' problems) need not self-identify as indigenous. I then asked Cheve if there was a special technique for making indigenous video. He said no, but stressed that in addition to offering insight into a community's way of life, indigenous video must also convey a community's necessities.[3] Given the variety of indigenous videos I have witnessed in progress and/or on screen during this research project, I agree that there is no one special technique for making indigenous video. Rather, indigenous video is a collection of technoscientific practices and institutional-organizational relationships that is capable of amplifying (some) indigenous actors' articulations of indigenous identity politics, by which I mean their analyses of the economic, political, and cultural processes shaping their (and their communities') socio-spatial locations. It is this post-colonial potential of indigenous video that offers means (albeit imperfect means) for reconfiguring technoscience, especially in regard to the production of authoritative knowledge about indigenous peoples, places, and practices. Not only does video allow indigenous communities to create place-centered cultural archives, but video can insert (again only some, but at least more) indigenous voices into previously inaccessible analytical and administrative dialogues about indigenous communities' welfare.

Indigenous video's ability to rework the geopolitics of knowledge, however, does not mean that video technologies allow indigenous communicators and their allies to transcend individuals' and collectives' entanglements in socio-political geographies of power, and their attendant cultural contestations. Indeed, as illustrated by the stories of Crisanto, Teófila, the

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Centro Cultural D'riki, Tamix, and Ojo de Agua: creating and mobilizing video-mediated visualizations may complicate tension-ridden relationships with authorities and within organizational bodies, just as easily as it may catalyze collective action. Given its inevitably conflicted and impure 'nature,' conceiving indigenous video as a mirror (as in common in Oaxaca) suggests that because a camera was held or footage edited by a person who self-identifies and/or is identified as indigenous, the resultant footage is somehow unmediated. Defining indigenous video as a mirror-like reflection of truth makes it all too easy to be insufficiently aware of, or attentive to, the fact that *all* representations (even the semiotic technologies of scholarly dissertations) are embedded within power relations. What inquiry unfolds without risk? As an alternative, I propose we theorize and practice indigenous video as a technoscience that is shaped by actors' uneven mobility and unequal institutional access to resources. It is thus not unlike my own scholarly practices of ethnographic inquiry and geographical analysis.

This angle of analysis allows us to distinguish the technoscientific practices of indigenous video (e.g., camcorder-mediated investigation, editing, and post-producing), and the institutional-organizational linkages that make them possible, in terms of a methodology. It seems to me that with this particular methodology, actors strive (not always successfully) to establish and sustain reciprocal and respectful relationships with the indigenous peoples, places, and practices captured by a video camcorder's lens.[4] Far from detracting from indigenous video's (mighty post-colonial) potential to enhance and acknowledge the participation of indigenous actors in the production of authoritative knowledges, this perspective focuses attention on the mutual politics of positionality in which media makers, their subjects, and viewer-analysts are entangled. In short, such an analytical focus allows us to investigate how actors' geographical entanglements contour the video-mediated

representations they propose, produce, and/or present. Although there is surely much this (as any) investigation into these matters will miss, approaching indigenous video in this way forces us think about *whose* technology-mediated visualizations of indigenous peoples, places, practices, and products appear to be the most mobile, and thus most likely be *meaningful* for the analysis and administration of the same. The analytical lens also centers the question *why* (some) indigenous actors tend to be disabled actors in the socio-technological-spatial relations interpolating their lives and livelihoods. And it allows us to tease out—not just in technological, but also methodological terms—*what* is being done to remedy the uneven power relations configuring these geopolitics of knowledge. With this kind of methodology, we just might rework technoscience in ways that would empower actors that have historically been marginalized from its imaginations and machinations.

FRACTURED TOPOLOGIES: MAKING AND MOVING INDIGENOUS VIDEO

As we have seen, Ojo de Agua emerged through the transfer of advocacy endeavors geared toward enabling indigenous cultural-political activism: from an experimental institutional innovation, to an NGO fueled by transnational (financial, moral, and technological) support. You could say that this geographical shift (what some might see as a shift in something called scale[5]) was made possible through a fortuitous linkage with a transnational network of advocacy; but, I don't think it's that simple. As I have argued (in chapter six), network is not a helpful metaphor for this geographical relocation in advocacy. Network suggests a solid transition almost magically or mechanically generated through a geographical expansion brought on by an influx of resources, an idea-image that reminds me of high school renderings of electrons jumping nimbly and precisely from one orbit to the

next. Furthermore, even with this kind of law-bound movement, the notion of network is too static to capture the transformations initiated by an uneven infusion of resources. In lieu of looking for networks, this study focused on the messy and often incomplete practices of networking, i.e., the socio-spatial-technological processes whereby such linkages are established and (perhaps) maintained while knowledge is produced and (maybe) exchanged. I found that indigenous actors' tapping into the sporadic and selective circulation of resources earmarked for indigenous video that have been dispersed in Oaxaca has been highly contingent upon the intersection of two things: sometimes chance organization-institutional connections—almost always filtered through the collective that came to comprise Ojo de Agua, and an individual's desire to pursue long-term engagements with comtech that is strong enough to withstand the vicissitudes surrounding its access and use.

For example, because Crisanto was a respected colleague in coordination of Fernando Guadarama (an anthropologist in charge of an INI office based in Guelatao), he was invited to be one of the four (out of ten) trainees in the first TMA workshop that had been set aside for representatives of Oaxacan indigenous organizations. This TMA workshop took place in Oaxaca because that state's INI delegation exerted its influence to garner the greater institutional distribution of resources. Crisanto has remained a well-traveled and celebrated indigenous communicator because of the fortunate congruence of several inter-related factors: Crisanto's delight in the story-telling prowess of video, his fortune to have a second home in the city of Oaxaca de Juárez, and his Ojo de Agua-mediated relationship with the Smithsonian Institution's NMAI and its FVC.[6] Finally, to convolute this quirky geography even further, by his own account, Crisanto can not comfortably video tape in some communities (such as his own pueblo) in the Rincón of the Sierra, but (with Ojo de Agua assistance) has been able to broadcast a local television signal

twice in two nearby communities. Ojo de Agua emerged in a similar way. Taking a holiday in

Mexico and then reluctantly accepting job with INI so that he might protect an editing

project from INI interference, lead Guillermo to become part of the TMA program's team

of designers and later the founder of the CVI and Ojo de Agua. Consider also how Bruno

and Tona (young media professionals who don't self-identify as indigenous) ended up living

and working at the CVI: Bruno attended a professor's lecture on the newly established CVI;

while Tona encountered a former university classmate who had pieced together a video

examining the community-centered cultural activism undertaken by Jaime Luna and Juan

José. Luckily, Tona and Bruno were in a position to act upon their desire to practice and

facilitate comtech-mediated oppositional cultural politics. After living and working in the

CVI, they both went on to explore other transnational video making projects (Bruno in

Bolivia with CEFREC and Tona in Chiapas with CMP) before helping to establish Ojo de

Agua.

Despite its members' desire to constitute an independent (primarily from the

government) media organization that facilitates the production of indigenous media projects

by offering training (among other things), Ojo de Agua has ended up functioning

predominantly as a production house to which other NGOs and government institutions

out-source video projects. This unexpected turn of events is largely due to financial

pressures and the failure to procure steady funding. Moreover, Ojo de Agua's (generally

unpaid and inevitably patchy) efforts to channel transnational resources to community-based

actors, have earned the resentment of a few associates who have felt marginalized from what

they see as the excessive influence of this media group. While I don't think these

observations tarnish Ojo de Agua's post-colonial politics or the high quality of most of its

productions, the story of this media collective does highlight the clientelism that inevitably

informs the endeavors of the professionalized intermediary NGOs arising from shifting political geographies. It also hints at the pesky persistence of paternalism, which seems to shadow even the best of intentions to help other actors help themselves by accessing scanty resources.

The convergence of pragmatic and comtech-mediated practices of place-based politics with far-flung socio-spatial relations that comprise indigenous video embody not networks, but rather fractured topographies sutured-severed by disastrous discontinuity and lackadaisical standstill, as well as auspicious alliance. Nowhere is the partiality of these webs of connection more visible than in the distribution of indigenous videos. Far from massive circulation, this media is generally marketed as community-oriented cultural activism and/or pedagogical material. For instance, on the Native Networks webpage devoted to him, Crisanto is quoted saying:

> All the videos are for the community. It's a message that one offers to the indigenous community so that they can continue valuing what they are and what they want to continue being.[7]

Although Crisanto, and most other actors involved in its production and circulation, identify indigenous video as a medium designed to address indigenous communities, my dissertation research indicates that very little of the transnational funding devoted the exhibition of indigenous video has contributed to a move in this direction.[8] Instead, transnational funding (extensively and expertly funneled through the NMAI) has been focused upon exhibitions in scholarly spaces such as museums and universities, located far from the indigenous communities where these videos have been recorded. Ojo de Agua and their government and NGO-based clients, who also tend to suffer a discrepancy between ambitions and funding (and a lack experienced foresight to boot), have invested almost incidentally in distributing their video productions. Given this lack of correspondence between media

makers' goals and the travels of their videos, distributing their work (and thus networking) throughout indigenous regions is the one of the greatest challenges facing indigenous communicators.

As an academic advocate for the proliferation of indigenous video productions and the methodology used in their creation, I hope to rectify this challenging discrepancy by convincing colleagues and funding agencies of a few things I learned from my case study of Ojo de Agua. First, comtech-mediated indigenous cultural activism is not separate from indigenous communities' livelihoods; rather, it is increasingly central. Second, indigenous video offers the means to decolonize (somewhat) the production of authoritative knowledge about indigenous peoples, places, and practices. And third, given this post-colonial potential, indigenous video (as well as other comtech-mediated articulations indigenous actors seek to share, e.g., maps) should be recognized and utilized (with respect, but not blind faith) in any research and teaching relating to indigenous geographies. In addition to promoting these three calls for action, I also want to point out what can be learned from the unsuccessful efforts by members of the collective that came to be known as Ojo de Agua (e.g., trying to establish OMVIAC) and their associates (e.g., INSO's ineffective attempt to orchestrate communication among those involved with community-run eco-tourism projects). These failures offer reminders to be cognizant of disparities in social locations, mobility, and access to and training in comtech, as well as the multiple (from community to state) conventions of governance situating activists, advocates, and analysts alike. Greater recognition and consideration of such fractured, but overlapping, topologies requires that observers look longer and more closely at the everyday practices of networking. I believe this approach provides a broader and more geographically-specific perspective on indigenous identity politics and the changing state-society relationships that underwrite them.

THIS STUDY'S PARTIALITIES

Gendering and Regionalizing Indigenous Video

In the interest of composing a digestible dissertation and meeting relevant deadlines, I left out what I came to call 'the gender chapter,' which explores the highly relevant aspect of how indigenous video (and by extension, indigenous development) has been gendered in Oaxaca through the deliberate efforts and oblivious omissions of indigenous activists and their advocates. As attentive readers will have noticed, I briefly touch upon these patterns, but I fail to expand upon them. For example, I note how Juan José's video *Sigue la Vida* depicts women's labor, but neglects to introduce as a component of producing and selling wool products in highly globalized markets that is as vital as men's. I also point out how Clara's commitment to her children limited her engagements in ways that it did not affect Juan José, her children's father. Not addressing these matters more fully relates to the fact that I had previously written conference papers centered upon distinctly gendered video-stories and then set them aside, thinking I could easily blend them into the dissertation at a later date, only to discover how mistaken I was to think such writing could be done smoothly and quickly! Since a year or two had elapsed after I originally composed these conference papers, with greater hindsight and further data, I found some of the material awkward and in need of a refreshing over-haul. And alas, I simply did not have the time. So I reluctantly left this material on the roadside, from whence I hope to retrieve it right soon and give it the thorough consideration it deserves.

Another element clearly missing from my study of indigenous video is greater insertion of Ojo de Agua and other Oaxaca-based collectives within a larger national and regional picture of indigenous media making. While chapter three offers a historical glimpse of cultural programs in Mexico that are precedents to the TMA and the CVI, I soon narrow my focus to Oaxaca, where it remains transfixed, mostly because limited funding shape the range of this study. Although, in chapter six I do compare Ojo de Agua's influence to that exerted by its Bolivian counterpart, CEFREC. Indeed, through this project I have developed a regional grasp of indigenous media making that in the near future will allow me to collaborate with anthropology colleagues with similar interests to compose successful grant proposals for further research with a comparative Latin American perspective. A broader inquiry into the visual practices and organizational relations producing indigenous video in several different countries should allow us to assess the variations in funding that currently structure state and transnational advocacy-driven systems of support.

Visual Interpretation and Audience Reception

I've not delivered as much visual interpretation as I hinted I would when introducing my analytics in chapter two. Waiting to compile the 'sufficient' level of familiarity with the events, ideas, and actions that surround and shape each video's orchestration and creation, I delayed composing detailed visual interpretations. Meanwhile the dissertation grew fat with stories of video productions. For a while, I struggled to compose chapter sections centered on a close reading of one particular video, but then realized that I had become too fascinated with chronicling the organizational and individual geographies that led to videos' productions. In the end, I decided that inserting a separate visual interpretation would have made for a far more clunky narrative than I wished to offer. This hesitancy and finally refusal

to feature prominently my analyses of videos is not, however, just about awkward semiotics. Rather, I remained reluctant to situate my visual interpretations as they were 'the' definitive word on videos' impact and meaning. Not only did I feel that I lacked a grasp on the various ways that indigenous communities would engage the video-mediated ideas and images, but I had learned enough to suspect how diversity of viewing and contemplation practices hinted at the possibility of a great variety of audience reception. Obviously this did not alltogether forestall visual interpretations on my part; indeed, I wrestled with even the most innocent-looking sentence, struggling to offer a sense of video content and media makers' intent without merely copying video box text, credits, or dialogue or resorting to summaries that too violently distill complex story-telling.

I am not alone in my failure to satisfactorily delve into audience reception of indigenous video. Through email conversations, Erica Wortham has indicated audience reception is absent from her dissertation as well. Part of our problem stems from a lack of social inquiry tools tailored to the task. Much research designed to decipher audience response and understanding developed out of marketing methods such as focus groups, which are generally driven by the pursuit of the commercial success of products. Rife with cultural assumptions about questioning and listening practices, these behavioral models are unsuitable. With the time and resources, however, Erica and I (and others) could explore the possibilities of appropriating elements of focus group research in order to coordinate screenings, witness reactions, and then seek audience commentaries through group discussion and individual interviews with viewers. Ideally, our experimentation and eventual examination would be coordinated and administered with collectives such as Ojo de Agua and its associates. Not only would they have the best-informed suggestions for planning and orchestrating such a project, but an investigation that supported traveling exhibitions with

repeated screenings in indigenous communities could (if implemented effectively) contribute nicely to their as of yet unattained service goal of outreach. After facilitating the distribution of alternative media while devising and testing our audience reception methods in Mexico, we would then be prepared to turn our attention to other parts of Latin America, and then later, to other marginalized communities in other parts of the world.

ENDNOTES

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[1] Indigenous video implies a commitment to make dignified and faithful portraits of how they [indigenous communities] conceive themselves, so that the image represents them as they wish to be presented, and so that they are able to control the way in which their wisdom, spirituality and knowledge are made known through this means of communication. … Despite being marginalized from the necessary resources, from just recognition, from the law, from everything, indigenous communities continue expressing and communicating their realities, visions, myths and dreams through the medium of indigenous video (Guillermo Monteforte 2002, 25-6).

[2] I am guessing that one reason why this angle of analysis isn't present in Erica Wortham's examinations of indigenous video is that she focused on the media collective Tamix, which (as she points out) differed from the other collectives invited to participate in INI's TMA program in that it is not a production-oriented organization.

[3] My conversation-interview with Cheve unfolded in the following way [English translation follows]:

> Laurel: ¿Qué opinas del vídeo indígena, quien o quienes hacen un vídeo indígena?
>
> Cheve: Lo puede hacer cualquiera puede ser indígena o lo puede hacer que es mestizo o un extrajera. Tocando los puntos o los problemas de las comunidades, para mí es mi forma de verlo.
>
> Laurel: ¿Hay una técnica?
>
> Cheve: No hay una técnica o formato especifico para hacer un vídeo indígena, lo puede hacer un cineasta o cualquiera de otra forma de su punto de vista y en la forma en que realmente viven las comunidades o de las necesidades que ellas tengan.
>
> Laurel: What do you think indigenous video is? And who makes indigenous video?
>
> Cheve: Anyone can make it. An indigenous person can make it, as can a *mestizo* or foreigner. Touching upon communities' points or problems is, for me, one way of seeing it.
>
> Laurel: Is there a technique?
>
> Cheve: There's no specific technique or format for making indigenous video. A film maker or any one else can do it by capturing their [indigenous communities'] point of view and the way in which the communities really live or whatever necessities they might have.

[4] During a discussion panel at the 2005 AAG meeting in Denver, Renee Pualani Louis (an indigenous scholar from Hawai'i) identified these three 'r's—respect, reciprocity, and relationship—as hallmarks of indigenous methodologies. I am grateful for her astute summation. I also want to emphasize that by linking indigenous video to this particular

methodology I don't wish to imply that every effort to produce indigenous video is successful. Indeed, in chapter six I review Ojo de Agua's frustration with their (in)ability to meet their own (very similar) criteria for success.

[5] Scale is another geographical metaphor that I don't find useful because of the way it suggests something solid, which is why I've not used it (except in brief reference to how it's used to describe NGOs, circa p. 241). At this time, I relegate my critique to network only because I don't have a more clearly formulated argument to offer and before concocting one, I would wish to engage with the critical examination of this term that John Paul Jones and his colleagues at the University of Arizona will be publishing in the near future.

[6] The Smithsonian continues to showcase and sponsor Crisanto's video-centered endeavors. In May 2005, Crisanto traveled to New York City and Washington D.C. to attend the screening of his video *Guia-Toó* during the *First Nations\First Features: A Showcase of World Indigenous Film and Media*, which featured more than twenty works. This new forum for exhibiting and discussing indigenous moving media is sponsored by the NMAI's FVC, the Museum of Modern Art's (MoMA's) Department of Film and Video, and New York University's Center for Media, Culture, and History and Center for Religion and Media. For further details, see http://www.firstnationsfirstfeatures.org/index.php. Furthermore, Crisanto returned from this trip with his first computer, a Macintosh laptop, for which the FVC had paid half. He has since become a regular presence in the office of Ojo de Agua as he struggles to learn how to use it to edit video.

[7] Found at http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/rose/avella_c.htm, this webpage is dated November 2000.

[8] The only exceptions to this observation are the tour Erica Wortham organized for the NMAI's FVC in 1998, wherein Native American film makers traveled through Mexico, and the subsequent tours the NMAI organized in the United States: the Eye of the Condor (March 2002) and the Video Native Mexico (April 2003), both of which included screenings aimed toward immigrant communities. To see a complete listing of the FVC's programming, see http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/blue/fvc_past.htm#vmi.

APPENDIX ONE:
FIELDWORK FRAMEWORK

As noted, I spent more than three years (January 2001 through August 2004) studying the organizational relations and cultural politics shaping Ojo de Agua's engagements and productions. My fieldwork can be divided into three phases of roughly a year each. In the following, I offer a more detailed summary of these three stages.

First Phase

I spent the first year (2001) getting to know members of Ojo de Agua and their places of work (the organization's office, the CVI, and the communities where they visited or lived), while doing my best to let them get to know me and my research project's aims. I began the very first encounters with a review of my interest in video-mediated collective action and a sketch of my investigation.

With a formally composed instrument designed to solicit information about life history, especially as it pertained to their motivations for undertaking video-mediated activism-advocacy, I interviewed each member of Ojo de Agua—usually in or nearby the organization's office. In addition to inquiring after these folks' personal information, I asked about past and present indigenous video projects in Mexico, especially in the state of Oaxaca. Each of these interviews was recorded and then transcribed. Toward the end of 2001, I adopted this formal interview format and began to undertake more similar (but often abridged) inquiries with key actors such as Marcos Sandoval, who networked video-centered initiatives with Ojo de Agua.

Eager to contribute to Ojo de Agua's activities (in as helpful a manner as possible), I initiated two small projects during this first phase. First, after an interview

with Tona made our theoretical and methodological concordance apparent and I learned from Wolfgang Natter that a small amount of money might be available for the production of a very short video that would be housed on the International Social Theory Consortium's website; I worked with Tona to craft a proposal for such a video. This project quickly fizzled, however, when Guillermo estimated a fairly-priced budget for such a production. Second, when a contact of mine (Susan Mains) at the British Film Institute was organizing a conference on Globlization and Media, I worked with Roberto to compose a proposal for the participation of indigenous video makers from Oaxaca, complete with a budget for funding their travel to London, etc. Unfortunately, (for a variety of reasons) we were never able to rally matching resources from Mexican institutions and so sufficient support for Oaxacan participation never congealed.

After these two (frustrating) failures, I spent the rest of my time in 'the field' concentrating only on the tasks that I was asked to do, such as translating Spanish texts (e.g., letters of inquiry for funding the media group, website material, and video transcriptions).

Second Phase

During the second phase of fieldwork, my interviewing revolved around the investigation of previous video projects that had involved members of Ojo de Agua. I found that pursuing an understanding the socio-spatial relations comprising particular video productions or events required a flexible approach, rather like journalism in the sense that prepared questions had to be left behind in the pursuit of newly revealed elements, and then returned to and, before being asked, modified according to newly

acquired information. Fortunately, due to the knowledge I gained during the first round of interviewing and my improved Spanish, I was now more agile.

This interview process entailed two key steps. After repeated viewings of the video in question, I would first approach Ojo de Agua members who had participated and ask after their experiences and opinions of the events and entanglements that made the video possible. The second step was contacting folks who weren't members of Ojo de Agua, but had played central roles in these projects. I would then request interviews, which were done with questions derived from the details garnered from the interviews with members of Ojo de Agua. Whenever possible, both kinds of interviews took place someplace besides Ojo de Agua's office. In search of a calm and quiet (in relation to the Ojo de Agua office, for example) site for these interviews, I would invite the folks who were kind enough to consent to an interview to a coffee or refreshing cool beverage, often at my own home.

I interspersed such interviews among two to five hour spells spent in and around Ojo de Agua's office observing (and when possible participating in) members' daily networking practices and more intense stints of fieldwork surrounding their pursuit of activities outside of the office. While I had undertaken similar measures during the first phase of research, the second phase was far more fruitful. Basically, I felt far more comfortable because my Spanish had improved, I had forged friendships with most of my key informants, and I now had a mini-DV camcorder and Lavalier microphone that often proved helpful to Ojo de Agua.

Third Phase

By the middle of 2003, my fieldwork patterns shifted. More specifically, I reduced the amount of time I spent physically present at the side of members of Ojo de Agua as they networked and pursued the production of their video projects. Instead, my exchanges with members of Ojo de Agua increasingly consisted of social gatherings (such as shared meals) wherein we would discuss video-centered activities (e.g., proposals, productions, and presentations at festivals and the like) as we visited and sometimes traveled together. Fortunately, folks were used to me madly noting things down and requesting repetition and clarification and they would humor me, even during the most informal of chats.

As I collated and compared the results of previous interviews, past and current field notes, and extensive video viewings, I prepared super-specific lists of questions for members of Ojo de Agua. I recorded the often long and wide-ranging interviews that followed and had them transcribed for close review. I also continued to contact and interview (usually less extensively) other people who had networked with Ojo de Agua.

These activities reached a fever pitch during my last three months in Oaxaca (June, July and August 2004), which is best described with the baseball metaphor of "batting clean-up." That is to say that I undertook a flurry of interviews in an effort to wrap up any dangling threads in the video-centered stories that I had chosen to relate in this dissertation.

APPENDIX TWO:
LIST OF ACRONYMS

A.C.: *asociación civil* (a non-profit and non-governmental organization in Mexico)

ARIPO: *Artesanías y Industrias Populares del Estado de Oaxaca* (Craftwork and Popular Industries of the State of Oaxaca)

Asam: *Asamblea de Autoridades Mixes* (Assembly of Mixe Authorities)

ASAPROM: *Asamblea de Productores Mixes* (Assembly of Mixe Producers)

ASETECO: *Asesoría Técnica a Comunidades Oaxaqueñas A.C.* (Technical Consulting for Oaxacan Communities)

AZACHIS: *Asamblea de Autoridades Zapotecas y Chinantecas de la Sierra* (Assembly of Zapotec and Chinanteca Authorities)

BIC: *Bachillerato Integral Comunitario* (Community-Integrated High School)

CAIB: *Coordinadora Audiovisual Indígena Originaria de Bolivia* (Bolivian Indigenous Peoples' Audiovisual Council)

CAMPO, A.C.: *Centro de Apoyo al Movimiento Popular Oaxaqueño* (Support Center for the Oaxacan Popular Movement)

CEFREC: *Centro de Estudio, Formación y Realización Cinematográfica* (Cinematography Education and Production Center)

CDI (see also CONDEPI): *Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas* (National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Communities)

CEPCO: *Coordinadora Estatal de Productores de Café de Oaxaca* (State Coordinator of Oaxacan Coffee Producers)

CERTO: *Centro de Radio y Televisión de Oaxaca* (Radio and Television Center of Oaxaca)

CIE: *Centros de Investigación Étnica* (Ethnic Research Centers)

CIESAS: *Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social* (Center for Social Anthropology Research and Higher Education)

CINTIC: *Centro de Investigación de Nuevas Tecnologías de Información y Comunicación* (Center for Research on New Information and Communication Technologies)

CIPO: *Consejo Indígena Popular de Oaxaca-Ricardo Flores Magón* (Popular Indigenous Council of Oaxaca)

CLACPI: *Consejo Latinoamericano de Cine y Video de Pueblos Indígenas* (Latin American Council of Indigenous Peoples' Film and Video)

CMP: Chiapas Media Project (*Promedios*)

CMPIO: *Coalición de Maestros y Promotores Indígenas de Oaxaca* (Oaxacan Coalition of Indigenous Teachers and Promoters)

CNC: *Confederación Nacional Campesina* (National Peasant Confederation)

CNPI: *Consejo Nacional de Pueblos Indígenas* (National Council of Indigenous Peoples)

COCEI: *Coalición Obrera Campesina Estudantil del Istmo* (Worker Peasant Student Coalition of the Isthmus)

COCOPA: *Comisión de Concordia y Pacificación* (Commission for Concordance and Pacification)

CODECO: *Comité Organizador y de Consulta para la Unión de los Pueblos de la Sierra Norte de Oaxaca* (Organizational and Consultation Committee for the Union of Pueblos of the Sierra Norte of Oaxaca)

CODREMI: *Comité de Defensa de los Recursos Naturales y Humanos Mixes* (Committee for the Defense of Natural and Human Resources)

COMAL: *Comunicación Alternativa* (Alternative Communications)

COMIN: *Comunicación Indígena* (Indigenous Communications)

Complar: *Coordinadora General del Plan Nacional de Zonas Marginadas y Grupos Deprimidos* (General Coordinator of the National Plan for Marginalized Zones and Depressed Groups)

CONACULTA: *Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes* (National Council for the Culture and the Arts)

CONAFOR: *Comisión Nacional Forestal* (National Forestry Commission)

CONAI: *Comisión Nacional de Intermediación* (National Commission of Intermediation)

CONAIE: *Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas de Ecuador* (Confederation of Ecuador's Indigenous Nations)

CONASUPO: *Compañía Nacional de Subsistemas Populares* (National Company of Popular Subsystems)

CONDEPI (see also CDI): *Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas* (National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Communities)

CORTV: *Corporación Oaxaqueño de Radio y Televisión* (Oaxacan Radio and Television Corporation)

CVI: *Centro de Video Indígena* (Indigenous Video Center)

DGCP: *Dirección General de Culturas Populares* (Popular Cultures Bureau)

DIF: *Sistema Nacional para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia* (National System for Integrated Family Development)

EDUCA: *Servicios para una Educación Alternativa, A.C.* (Alternative Education Services)

ENAH: *Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historía* (National School of Anthropology and History)

ERC: Exterior Relations Committee of AZACHIS

EZLN: *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (Zapatista Army of National Liberation)

FMCN: *Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza A.C.* (Mexican Fund for Nature Conservation)

FOESCA: *Fondo Estatal para la Cultura y las Artes* (State Fund for Culture and the Arts)

FONART: *Fondo Nacional para el Fomento de las Artesanías* (National Fund for the Promotion of Craftwork)

FONCA: *Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes* (National Fund for Culture and the Arts)

FONI: *Foro Oaxaqueño de la Niñez* (Oaxacan Forum for Childhood)

FVC: NMAI's Film and Video Center

GCY: *Grupo Cultural Yalalteco* (Yalalteco Cultural Group)

GO: government organization

GRSO: grassroots support organization

ICTs: information and communication technologies

ILCE: *Instituto Latinoamericano de la Comunicación Educativa* (Latin American Institute of Educational Communication)

INAH: *Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* (National Institute of Anthropology and History)

INEGI: *Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática* (National Institute of Geographic Statistics and Information)

INGO: international non-governmental organization

INE: *Instituto Nacional de Ecología* (National Ecology Institute)

INEA: *Instituto Nacional para la Educación de Adultos* (National Adult Education Institute)

INI: *Instituto Nacional Indigenista* (National Indigenous Institute)

INSO: *Instituto de la Naturaleza y la Sociedad de Oaxaca* (Nature and Society Institute of Oaxaca)

IOC: *Instituto Oaxaqueño de las Culturas* (Oaxacan Cultural Institute)

IORT: *Instituto Oaxaqueño de Radio y Televisión* (Oaxacan Radio and Televsion Institute)

MULT: *Movimiento Unificado de Lucha Triqui* (Unified Movement of the Triqui Struggle)

NGO: non-governmental organization

NMAI: National Museum of the American Indian

NVR: National Video Resources

Odrenasji: *Organización en Defensa de los Recursos Naturales y Desarrollo Social de la Sierra de Juárez* (Organization in Defense of Natural Resources and Social Development in the Sierra de Juárez)

OMVIAC: *Organización Mexicana de Videoastas Indígenas A.C.* (Mexican Organization of Indigneous Video Makers)

PACMYC: *Programa de Apoyo a las Culturas Municipales y Comunitarias* (Support Program for Municipal and Community Cultures)

PAIR: *Programa de Aprovechamiento Integral de los Recursos Naturales* (Program of Integrated Use of Natural Resources)

PARM: *Partido Auténtico de la Revolución Mexicana* (Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution)

PCERS: *Programa para el Control de la Erosión y Restauración de los Suelos de Oaxaca* (Oaxacan Erosion Control and Soil Restoration Project)

PRI: *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (Institutional Revolutionary Party)

PRD: *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (Democratic Revolution Party)

PRODERS: *Programas de Desarrollo Regional Sustentable* (Programs of Sustainable Regional Development)

SAGAR: *Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadería y Desarrollo Rural* (Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, and Rural Development)

S.C.: *sociedad civil* (a Mexican NGO with profit-making aspirations, usually driven by hopes of organizational sustainability)

SEDESOL: *Secretaría de Desarrollo Social* (Secretariat of Social Development)

SEDUCOP: *Secretaría de Desarrollo Urbano Comunicaciones y Obras Públicas* (Secretariat of Urban Development, Communications, and Public Works)

SEP: *Secretaría de Educación Publica* (Secretariat of Public Education)

SER: *Servicios del Pueblo Mixe* (Mixe Peoples' Services)

SERBO, A.C.:.*Sociedad para el Estudio de los Recursos Bióticos de Oaxaca* (Society for the Study of Oaxaca's Biological Resources)

SIL: Summer Institute of Linguists

SEMARNAP: *Secretaría de Medio Ambiente, Recursos Naturales y Pesca* (Secretariat of the Environment, Natural Resources and Fishing)

SEMARNAT: *Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales* (Secretariat of the Environment and Natural Resources)

SRA: *Secretaría de la Reforma Agraria* (Secretariat of Agarian Reform)

TMA: *Transferencia de los Medios Audio visuales a Organizaciones y Comunidades Indígenas* (Transference of Audiovisual Media to Indigenous Organizations and Communities)

UABJO: *Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca*

UAM: *Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana* (Autonomous Metropolitan University)

UAM-X: *Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Unidad Xochimilco* (Autonomous Metropolitan University-Xochimilco campus)

UCIZONI: *Unión de las Comunidades Indígenas de la Zona Norte del Istmo* (Union of Indigenous Communities in the Northern Zone of the Isthmus)

UNAM: *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (National Autonomous University of Mexico)

UNOSJO: *Unión de Organizaciones de la Sierra Juárez* (Union of Sierra Juárez Organizations)

UPAI: *Unidades de Producción Audiovisual Indígena* (Indigenous Audiovisual Production Units)

UPN: *Universidad Pedagógica Nacional* (National Pedagogical University)

UTE: *Unidad de Televisión Educativa* (Educational Television Unit)

WWF: World Wildlife Fund

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