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'We Want to Borrow Your Mouth' Tzotzil Marital Squabbles

If marriage is (social) order, then marital breakdown is disorder, and divorce a kind of reordering. "Order," in this triple metaphor, is a semiotic notion, that is, it is not a neutral description of an objective state of affairs, but a property *found* (or *sought*) in events and arrangements, *attributed* to behavior and protagonists (who may also be faulted for its absence, for "disorderliness"), and, often, *enforced* (by interpreters) on outcomes and consequences. A potent device for producing this kind of order—or for undermining or usurping it—is *talk*.

Tzotzil-speaking Zinacanteco Indians from highland Chiapas produce various sorts of discourse relating to marriages over the course of their natural histories. Some of this talk is fragmentary and ephemeral, such as snippets of gossip about a courtship or an adulterous liaison, or a shout from a squabbling household. Some of it is highly structured and formal, beginning with a petitioner's pleas to a reluctant prospective father-in-law or the ritual words addressed to a new bride and groom, and ending, sometimes, with the pronouncements of elders who preside over the division of property when a couple ends their marriage. I examine here fragments of Tzotzil talk, drawn from a range of circumstances relating to several different Zinacanteco marriages, to show how social order and disorder are cast into words and linearized into discourse.

Let me first allude to my theoretical starting point, although everything here belongs to the category of "old news." This "casting into words" is more than a process of (mere) reference; and "linearization" is not a simple reflection of facts in clauses (see, by contrast, the image of "narrative" in Labov 1972). All of what we know about discursive practices—footing and framing (Goffman 1974, 1983a, 1983b), dialogicality and addressivity (Bakhtin 1981, 1986), functional regimentation and metalanguage (Benveniste 1974; Hanks 1993; Jakobson 1980; Silverstein

of voicing (Bourdieu 1982a, 1982b)—is, of course, patent in Zinacanteco discourse on marriage. Goffman's "interaction order" (1983b) contrasts with the semantico-referential illusion (peculiar to Western epistemological dogma) by situating discourse in and as action: (i) indexically centered within certain participant structures, and (ii) at a higher order, also indexically, the product of the sociopolitical matrix that participants construct and project.

The notion of "order" also gives us a metaphor through which we can assess what I want to demonstrate in this paper: the *iconicity* of the discourses of marriage. The terms of this iconicity are located (i) in discursive form (which is only visible when these forms are put in counterpoint to other comparable forms), and (ii) in the *theory* of the social processes of marriage, which is not necessarily a reflection of practices or of "social structure" at some more perspicacious level (whatever the theory might be), but a clear part both of the creation and enforcement of an ideology about how married life should proceed or, at least, be considered, evaluated, or understood.

Both order and disorder emerge not simply in the *content* of nuptial exhortations or marital squabbles but also, metonymically, in three aspects of their *form* as well. My comments will start with the messages—whether the hopeful encouragement addressed by an elder to newlyweds, or the sour denunciations *before* an elder by a fed-up wife—but then address generic properties of the language itself, aspects of its sequential organization, and finally, the social organization of verbal performances. My conclusion will be of this form: the orderliness of the discourses of marriage parallels (and, in a sense to be described, brings about) a corresponding orderliness in the practices of marriage. Like Briggs (see pp. 204–242 in this volume) and Urban (1986), I am concerned with a relationship, analogic and iconic, between discursive form in interaction and (perhaps microscopic) social structure.

Marriage, Zinacanteco and Otherwise

There is, of course, a vast literature on marriage, an institution first endowed with unquestioned conceptual and functional universality, then dissected and relativized, then rethought, then gutted and restitched as symbolic opposition (Collier et al. 1982)—a cycle of death and resurrection familiar for ethnological concepts. The blind application of notions of "marriage" and "divorce" prods Needham to urge a characteristic remedy (in *Rethinking Kinship and Marriage*) that we abandon "conventional typological guidelines" (which he later terms a kind of "conceptual dust") and learn "to take each case as it comes, and to apprehend it as it presents itself" (1971:xx). His therapy takes as its model Borges' Funes the Memorios who suffered a fall, after which "his perception and memory had become infallible, and his apprehensions were so rich and bright as to be almost intolerable" (Needham 1971:xvii): "Una circunferencia en un pizarrón, un triángulo rectángulo, un rombo,

aborrascadas crines de un potro, con una punta de ganado en una cuchilla, con el fuego cambiante y con la innumerable ceniza, con las muchas caras de un muerto en un large velorio”¹ (Borges 1974:1488). Funes inhabited “a world in which there were nothing but details, almost contiguous details” (Needham 1971:xix), a predicament Needham likens to that of “an unusually perceptive and diligent ethnographer newly arrived in the field.”

This is, I might add, a predicament shared by the student of natural discourse, burdened by ever another level of transcriptional detail, together with a commitment to a certain theory about the *interactive construction* of cultural meaning. Such an ethnographer cannot disguise (to himself or, eventually, to his readers) the discursive nature of his own access to the anthropological subject. In the work reported here, I have chosen to wallow in the situated details of spontaneous verbal interaction, rather than take (invisible) refuge behind the implicit—and unanalyzed—interviews (see Briggs 1986) and questions that populate the backstage of most ethnographies of marriage.²

In Zinacantán, as just about everywhere else, marriage is seen by ethnographers (Collier 1968; Laughlin 1963; Vogt 1969) as the central institution of social (re)production. Especially in Zinacantán, I might add, a Funes-like detailed eye is seemingly *invited* by the vast corpus of ethnographic research in the *municipio*. In Tzotzil, moreover, there is little problem of definition via native categories, if we start with lexical evidence. The verbs *ik'* and *ch'ak* nicely sum up the end points: ‘take (marry)’, and ‘split (divorce)’, respectively. The ratified partners (*malal* ‘husband’ and *ajnil* ‘wife’) are terminologically quite distinct from the illegitimate ones (*antz*, literally ‘woman’, i.e., ‘man’s lover’; and *ajmul*, literally ‘agent of sin’, i.e., ‘woman’s lover’).

Getting married in Nabenchauk, the village I know best, was once high drama: the groom’s family laid siege to the house of his intended, begging the outraged parents for the girl’s hand. After much ritualized badgering, and plied with corn liquor and the layered couplets of ritual Tzotzil, the girl’s father ultimately had to agree to the long process of courtship, receiving several years of gifts and service from his would-be son-in-law, until finally the costs of raising his daughter were judged repaid, and the girl could be delivered to her husband’s household. There she would be grudgingly admitted into the new world of her in-laws, where the couple would live for a few years until, ultimately, they could set up a separate household, a separate corn supply, and perhaps a separate public career.

The Discourses of Zinacanteco Marriage

I will concentrate on several verbal events that punctuate the life history of marriage in Zinacantán. Within the spectrum of a Zinacanteco “ethnography of speaking,” the speech events I shall describe fall at the relatively structured or “formal” end (but see Irvine 1979). They involve elders or civil authorities, who sponsor a

marriage and deliver exhortation to bride, groom, and new parents-in-law, or who intercede in marital disputes, either to settle them or to declare them insoluble. The use, in these circumstances, of language that resonates with ritual tones—in this case, the characteristic parallel couplets of Mayan prayer—will turn out to be of central importance. In a seeming paradox, narrative genres, too, are permeated by these highly structured verbal forms; and narrative, ranging from ordinary amorphous gossip (Haviland 1977b) to pointed moral tales, finds its way into the discourses of marriage, both disorderly and ordered.

After the long courtship, when the church wedding is, at last, over, the marriage party returns to the groom’s natal home. The two families and their entourages have an elaborate meal in the courtyard. All prepare to dance and drink away the remaining tensions between the families that are being joined. Uncomfortable in their ritual clothing and too abashed to speak, the newlyweds stand stiffly by the table, neither eating nor participating in the rounds of drinking and formal greetings, which are led centrally by the wedding *jpetom* ‘embracer’.

This embracer—a kind of godfather—is chosen by the families of both bride and groom to sponsor not the wedding ceremonies but the marriage itself. Should the new husband beat his wife and cause her to run away, he will turn to the *jpetom* for help when he goes contritely to woo her back; if the new bride lazily fails to provide her husband with hot meals on time, it will be the *jpetom* who scolds her and reminds her of her wifely duties. The embracer’s main virtues are possessing both the necessary influence and position in the community to guarantee a marriage, and (ideally) sufficient wealth to be a resource for a new couple as it establishes itself.

In his formal greetings to the two families, delivered in the parallel couplets of ritual Tzotzil characteristic of prayer or song in Mayan languages (Bricker 1974; Edmonson 1971; Garibay 1953; Gossen 1985; Hanks 1988), the *jpetom* employs standard “stereoscopic” images that evoke the Zinacanteco model of ideal (orderly) marriage. The language, neatly and totally arranged in matching lines,³ is itself an icon of perfect order. As he approaches the door of the groom’s house, upon returning from the church, the *jpetom* greets the ritual adviser of the groom’s family with words like those of (1). (In the following transcripts explicit parallel constructions are shown with double slashes separating the paired items.)

(1) *Elicited wedding embracer prayer*, recorded in Nachij, June 1972⁴

- 1 *kumpare*
Compadre
- 2 *k'usi yepal ilok' tal yo jlumal // yo kach' elal*
How much has my earth // my mud come forth
- 3 *tzobolon tal // lotolon talel*
I have gathered here // come here side-by-side
- 4 *xchi'uk jch'ul chi'iltik // jkumparetik*
with our holy companions // our compadres

- 5 *xchi'uk chib kalabtik // jnich'nabtik*
with our two children // offspring
- 6 *a nupiuk tal // a tz'akiuk tal*
They have been and returned from meeting // joining
- 7 *ta yolon yok // ta yolon sk'ob*
under the foot // under the hand
- 8 *ti Santorenso // Santorominko*
of St. Laurence // of St. Dominic
- 9 *a kak' o chanib yo toj // chanib yo kantela*
I went to give four lowly pines // four lowly candles
- 10 *a kik'be o xch'ulel // yanima*
I went to carry their souls // their ghosts
- 11 *ti chib alabe // nich'nabe*
Of the two children // offspring
- 12 *ikil to yo jbatik // ikil ta yo jsatik*
I saw with my lowly face // I saw with my lowly eyes
- 13 *inupi un // itz'aki un*
they met // they joined
- 14 *ti alabe // ti nich'nabe*
the children // the offspring
- 15 *laj o yo jtunel uk // yo jbainel uk*
Thereby was finished my humble service // my humble duty
- 16 *yayatot // ajvetik*
Ancient father // lord.
- 17 *junikotik // chibikotik*
Let us be one // let us be two.

Notice, first, that although this is formulaic prayer, it exhibits a skeletal narrative structure, not unlike that of a typical gossip story (Haviland 1977b). That is, it introduces the participants of the narrated event (the wedding), using egocentric and alterocentric kin terms, which implicitly index the participants in the current speech event. It then traces (recounts) the "events" of the wedding ceremony just completed, using standardized couplets, and concludes the "retelling" with a return to the current circumstances, a kind of ritualized "coda." The embracer begins by speaking of himself—his own body—in the deprecatory couplet 'my earth // my mud'. He goes on to address the groom's father, his 'holy companion // compadre' (lines 1,4), having taken this fictive kinship relation with all the adults of both the families of the couple. The bride and groom ('our children, our offspring'⁵) have been married ('met and joined' [line 6]) before the patron saints of Zinacantán (line 8). The *jpetom* speaks of his obligation (line 15), symbolized by his planting candles and carrying the souls (lines 9–10) of the newlyweds in the ceremony just completed.

Thus, the newly married couple is escorted into the first moments of social adulthood to the accompaniment of the most orderly of all Zinacanteco speech: the formal greeting. Not only does the greeting comprise formally and semantically

ordered couplets, with standard imagery, but the sequential organization of the verbal performance is also stylized and supremely ordered. The *jpetom* greets the *totilme'il* 'father-mother' or ritual counselor of the groom's family. Both are experts in parallel speech, and their words roll over one another in the rapid cadences of *simultaneous* greeting and response.

(2) Embracer prayer continues

- 4 *ta x'och jlok'be yo sk'u' // spok'*
I'll enter to remove their shirts // their garments
- 5 *ti chib alabe // nich'nabe*
of the two children // offspring
- 6 *ta jchotan komel // ta jvutz'an komel*
I will seat // I will settle
- 7 *ta yo sme'anal na // ta yo sme'anal k'uleb*
in their poor house // their poor treasury

This greeting anticipates, in paired images, the next stage of the wedding ceremony, as, at length, the bride and groom are invited into the house. Indeed, the prayer is a kind of "pre-narration," since it presages the sequence of actions that is to follow. The *jpetom* helps the newlyweds to strip down to ordinary garb by removing their wedding costumes (line 4), and he settles them in their 'poor house // poor treasury (lit. place of wealth)' (line 7). The imagery of installing the new couple includes (at line 6) the couplet *-chotan* 'seat' // *-vutz'an*, literally 'bend'—a reference to the knees of the new bride as she sits at her new hearth.

Now comes the central discursive moment of the wedding ceremony, when the *jpetom* addresses an elaborate exhortation to the young couple. The embracer instructs bride and groom in the canons of propriety for adult, married Zinacantecos. Such instruction is called *k'op/mantal* 'words' and 'orders', itself a ritual couplet that describes exhortatory words of instruction. As usual, the language provides its own metalanguage: here an element of the genre denotes, among other things, the genre of which it is a part. The embracer delivers a heavy dose of such words, while the newlyweds sit, eyes downcast, bowing and mumbling their thanks and acceptance of his wisdom.

The embracer's exhortation is itself *ideally* phrased in the couplets of ritual Tzotzil. Since the *jpetom* is recruited for the silver in his purse, however, rather than for the silver on his tongue, not all incumbents in the role can sustain the ideal. There is often extemporizing, within the limited creativity the generic materials can provide.⁶ Parallel verbal form gives both an authority and a solemnity to the exhortation that clearly delineates the miniature social structure of the event.

There are two further notable features of the wedding exhortation: its content and its interactive character. Standard sentiments are unfailingly expressed in the speech, although the precise message is tailored to the circumstances. If the courtship was long and hard, marred by disputes or misbehavior on the part of the groom, he will

endure a heavy sermon on obedience, faithfulness, and sobriety. If the bride's industry is suspect, or if she comes from a wealthy family, she will be lectured on the virtues of hard work, or be reminded of her changed circumstances. In either case, the *jpetom* preaches the stereotypes of Zinacanteco matrimony.

What is more, the organization of the exhortation is malleable and fluid. The *jpetom* has the responsibility for what, effectively, is exhortatory monologue, delivered in couplets. He expects no back talk, only an occasional mumbled thanks from bride and groom.

However, the exhortation, though sequentially monologic, is not necessarily univocal. Other people, particularly the embracer's "partner"—his elderly female companion who has particular responsibility for the bride—or the proud parents themselves, chime in, echoing the embracer's sentiments or adding their own, speaking simultaneously. Thus, we may have two or more concurrent monologues, all ostensibly directed at the same target, the newlyweds (compare Reisman 1974). The resulting rain of voices remains, nonetheless, highly structured, in ways to be explored.

I shall now look at exhortatory words directed to the groom, to the parents of the groom, and finally, to the bride.

First a word about the examples I present, which are transcribed in a somewhat simplified version of conversational transcript notation (Atkinson and Heritage 1984:ix-xvi).

1. Zinacanteco Tzotzil (see Aissen 1987; Haviland 1981) is written in a Spanish-based practical orthography in which the symbol ' stands for a glottal stop, and the symbol C' represents a glottalized consonant.
2. Separate numbered lines correspond roughly to extended utterances broken by pauses. Dots represent perceptible pauses within an utterance. Overlaps are marked with square brackets, and latches (lines connected with no intervening pause) with equal signs connecting latched turns. The first line of each pair shows the original Tzotzil utterance (in italics), while the second line gives a free English gloss. The spacing corresponds to the Tzotzil lines, not the glosses.
3. Marginal arrows call attention to various sorts of parallel construction, discussed in the text, according to the following key: C = formal couplet; T = formal triplet; P = parallel construction not in formal couplet/triplet form; L = linkage between matched couplets—a higher level of parallelism; E = lexical or phraseological echoing between lines. I will exemplify these forms of parallelism in the examples that follow.

The Groom

This is the beginning of what the embracer says to young newly married Antun; the Tzotzil transcript follows in (3).

Look here Antun.

Believe me, it's really true . . .

If we obey the words // if we obey the commands
 We will talk // we will speak . . .
 We will see who will get a thousand on our account//
 We'll see who will earn something on our account.

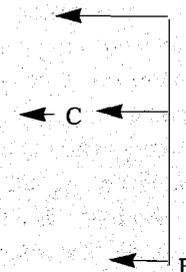
This speech is delivered largely in parallel constructions, like those we met in the *jpetom*'s formal greeting. It employs, therefore, the standard images provided by this most structured of speech genres in Tzotzil. The message in turn exploits these images: pay attention to your elders, whose wise words//commands will keep you out of trouble. You must talk // speak with them, to be instructed in the proper path to success (earning a thousand [pesos?]/something [i.e., not nothing?]).

The extracted "sense" of the embracer's exhortation, however, obscures a central fact about the performance itself. The *jpetom* (shown as m in the transcript in (3)) is not the only speaker. The groom's father (shown as p) produces a simultaneous stream of speech, partly in counterpoint to the embracer, and partly following his own preoccupations. Roughly, what he has to say is the following: 'I don't know how you will turn out if you obey the embracer's advice. You don't know if perhaps you'll end up a magistrate yourself. You still don't know if you'll end up like Domingo'. Domingo is a recent municipal president and Antun's brother-in-law, being held up here as a role model for the young groom; the allusion also serves as an indirect compliment to the current *jpetom*, a minor civil official who is thus implicitly likened to this powerful political leader.

Fragment (3) shows the delicate interweaving of the two voices—the embracer's, largely in couplets, and the father's in everyday Tzotzil—in a duet of exhortation.

(3) Exhortation to groom, recorded at a Nabenchauk wedding, June 13, 1978

- 1 m; *k'elavi ali Antun* =
 Look here, Antun.
- 2 p; = *ali kumpa mole* =
 My compadre here . . .
- 3 m; *ali vo'one, melez ka'uktik*
 As for me, it's true of course
 = [
- 4 p; *ilok' i kumpa mole ixch'un xa li kumpa Maryane*
 My other compadre left (the job),
 and my compadre Marian has accepted it.
- 5 m; *timi ta jch'untik i k'ope // mi ta jch'untik i man* =
 If we obey words // if we obey orders.
- 6 *tale*
 = [
- 7 p; *mu jna' k'u x'elan xalok' uk mi ach'un li k'op* =
 I don't know how you will come out if you obey the words



- 8 =une
 9 m; *ta xik'oponaltik // ta xiti'inalotik*
 We'll speak // we'll talk.
 [← C
 10 p; *mu xana' mi yech chakom (mu xana' to mi =*
 You don't know if you'll end up that way,
 you still don't know if . . .
 11 *chakom k'u cha'al Romin)*
 . . . you'll end up like Domingo.
 = [← P
 12 m; *ta to xkiltik ti much'u tzta jmiluk ta jtojoltike //*
 We'll still see who will gain a thousand on our behalf//
 [← C ← E
 13 p; *mu xana' k'u x'elan, muk' to =*
 You don't know how it will be,
 you haven't yet . . .
 14 = *aviloj aba*
 seen yourself.
 ← P ← C ← E
 15 m; *// ta to xkiltik ti =*
 // We'll yet see . . .
 16 *much'u tzta (??) ta jtojoltike*
 . . . who'll be able to (find something) on our behalf.

The precise orchestration here is of considerable interest, and it relates to my theme: that the *form* of marital discourse both mirrors and, in an important way, helps to create or enforce the ultimate orderliness (or disorderliness) of the social arrangements that are the explicit subject matter of the talk. First, examine the formal parallelism of the embracer's utterances (marked, as usual, with double slashes) at lines 5, 9, 12–15. In couplets (indicated by marginal arrows and the letter C), the embracer, m, enjoins the new bridegroom to be obedient and thoughtful in his words, and thereby, it is hoped, to achieve economic success. The embracer's voice is, thus, formally ordered (into couplets), structurally authoritative (since it is part of an obligatory performance by an authority figure), and also indexically distant, impersonal, and indirect—referring to Antun, the bridegroom, for example, only through first person inclusive pronominal forms.

By contrast, the interwoven anxieties of the father, p, are expressed largely in ordinary nonparallel conversational form, on a different Goffmanian footing. He addresses Antun directly, in the second person, and he displays not the standardized sentiments of the embracer's formal exhortation, but his own somewhat anarchic worries and hopes for his son, newly become a man: Will he behave properly? Will he have a political career? Nonetheless, the formal (perhaps aesthetic) flow of the exhortation is unbroken. The father does not use formal couplets, but he often repeats his sentiments in nonparallel doublets (marked with marginal P on the transcript), as at lines 10–11 and 13–14. Moreover, the father's words track closely

the simultaneous imagery of the embracer's couplets, sounding not dissonance but counterpoint: *ch'un* 'believe, obey' anticipated in line 4, incorporated into a couplet (C) by m in line 5, and echoed (E) in line 6; m's reference to formal speaking in line 9, recalled in p's allusion to dispute settling in lines 10–11; and even an echo of the root *il* 'see (what the future brings)' between lines 12 and 13. There is thus a dramatic staging to the interaction that combines, in these two voices—the confident official line of the embracer, flavored by the more anxious and contingent concerns of the father—both an onstage, performed, cultural order, and a background of potential (or actual) social and biographical disorderliness.

It is important to note that the wedding from which this exhortation is drawn was the Zinacanteco equivalent of a shotgun affair: bride and groom had behaved scandalously (they had met and talked openly before being married) and had accordingly been rushed into a wedding long before the courtship had run its normal course. A tattered courtship gets a tattered wedding. As a result, there was no proper *jpetom*, and the job of delivering the instructions to the newlyweds fell by default to a young civil official, who was hastily recruited at the last minute to fill the role and to insulate the new bridegroom from any possible legal action by the girl's family.

Indeed, the subject of the unfortunate circumstances of the marriage is explicitly raised and incorporated into the matrimonial discourse, almost as if by ordering the words, the facts themselves could be partially ironed out. It is clear that, despite the ritualized form of the exhortation, there is a background text of ordinary gossip; the scandalous facts of this ramshackle courtship are known to all present and thus available to allusion. Much of the embracer's admonition to the new couple represents an indirect dance around this presupposed narrative background. In fact, many of the people present try to get into the act. Consider, in particular, the contribution of x, one of the bride's relatives, in the continuing talk. (m is the embracer, a the groom [Antun], who merely mumbles his agreement, and p the father of the groom.)

(4) *Anarchic continuation of admonition to groom*

- 30 m; *tuk' ta xkaltik ti k'ope, ti rasone*
 . . . we correctly say the words, the reason. ← C
 31 x; *mu xavut (ta?) li antz une*
 You mustn't scold the woman.
 32 m; [*pero yok'al ali mu:k' ta =*
 But if you simply don't care
 33 = *alel avu'un le . . .*
 about that . . .
 [
 34 p; *eso .lek mantal*
 Yes, that's good advice.

- 35 m; *mu xap'is ta vinik jun atos, mu xap' is ta jun =*
If you don't respect your father, you don't respect . . .
- 36 = . . . *ta vinik jun ame'*
. . . your mother
- 37 *k'usi xata o yech un, k'usi avich' o yech un =*
What will you find from that, what will you gain from that?
= mm
- 38 a;
- 39 m; *ali vo'on yok'al*
As for me, when . . .
[
- 40 x; *chukel un*
(You'll get) jailing!
- 41 a; mm
- 42 x; *majel xa taje a'a*
(You'll deserve) beating for that, indeed!

It is obvious that x, a somewhat drunken and outraged prospective in-law, is still upset by the past misbehavior of the young couple, and at lines 40 and 42 he seizes on the embracer's rhetoric to announce his threats to his new classificatory son-in-law, in an insurrectionary voice.

On the other hand, m, the embracer, and p, the groom's father, continue their counterpoint in a reassuring passage.

(5) *Exhortation to the groom continues*

- 2 m; *ak'o mi asa' amul lavie // =*
Even if you have gotten into trouble now //
- 3 p; = *yech*
Right
[
- 4 m; *ak'o mi apas amul lavie*
Even if you have committed a sin now.
[]
- 5 p; *oy amul lavi une pero bwe:no*
You have a sin now, but, well . . .
- 6 *laj xa k'op li' une // sikubem k'op?*
The dispute is now over // the dispute has cooled off
[
- 7 m; *pero lavi muk'*
But now there isn't . . .
- 8 *ch'abal xa ti k'ope // ch'abal xa ti sti'e*
There is no longer a dispute // there is no longer scolding
[
- 9 p; *ja' mas lavi tzobolotike*
Especially now that we are gathered together.

Again, the precise choreography displays both the collaboration and the division of discursive labor between the two; m begins and p responds, in 2–3, and 4–5, whereupon p takes up the thread, even producing his own parallel couplet at line 6, which m now echoes in a further couplet at line 8. The message is: you may have gotten into trouble in the past, but now, with this ritual occasion (the ordering of marriage), these past troubles are wiped clean.

In the case of young Antun, there are, in fact, several possible causes for worry. There is first the impropriety of the courtship itself, which is smuggled into the ritual admonition as a truncated pseudonarrative. First, the embracer invokes, in "hypothetical" speech at lines 6–11 in (6), an image of a future disobedient wife.

(6) *Admonition to groom continues*

- 1 m; *tuk' chavich' abel yech*
Thus are you being properly instructed.
- 2 *xa-xapas ta mantal avajnil*
You will instruct your wife.
- 3 *xavalbe k'u xavalbe stuk un*
You will tell her directly whatever you tell her.
- 4 *ora timin yu'un atimin oy mu xch'unane*
Now if- if she doesn't obey you.
- 5 *ti mi ja' chas- ta stoye*
If she- if she is rebellious.
- 6 *ej mu jk'an xa lapason ta mantal*
"Eh, I no longer want you to boss me around."
- 7 *ej*
"Eh . . ."
- 8 *ali vo'one ma'uk jkwentauk*
"As for me, it's no business of mine."
- 9 x; *ali vo'one ma'uk kwenta . ta jpas mantal*
"As for me, it's not my business. I'll give the orders."
[
- 10 m; *ja' li mu onox bu nopem xka'i much'u spas =*
"Since I am not used to having anyone . . .
- 11 *ta mantal*
". . . boss me around."
=[
- 12 x; *aje:nte ja' sna'oj lek*
The magistrate knows what he's talking about.
[

To counter such rhetoric, the embracer suggests, the groom need only recall (as he here retells) the facts of the couple's improper courtship.

(7) Further admonition

- 13 m; *timi xi une*
If that's what she says . . .
- 14 a; *jmm*
Yes.
- 15 m; *mu snup*
That isn't right.
- 16 *mu stak' stoyel*
She can't act up.
- 17 *porke k'u yu'un ta stoye*
Because, why should she rebel?
- 18 *i: ak'anoj abaik*
. . . since you desired each other.
- 19 *i: ak'opon ti k'u x'elan ak'opone*
And you spoke to her however you spoke to her.
- 20 *isnop i antze i anop uk*
The woman decided, and you decided.
- 21 *ta parejo anopik ta cha' vo'*
And the two of you decided equally.

Another cause for concern is Antun's drinking. The petitioner puts the issue in terms of behaving *ta muk'* 'as a grown person': having respect for oneself and acting responsibly.

(8) Exhortation to the groom continues

- 1 m; *i tambien li vo'otuke*
And you, too . . .
- 2 *tuk' xavich' aba ta muk'//*
You must behave yourself as an adult//
- 3 *xavich' aba ta k'ak'aluk*
You must behave yourself as mature.
- 4 a; *mm*
- 5 m; *mu xatambe jun (yakubel?)//*
You mustn't set off on a (binge?)//
- 6 *mu xatambe jun pox*
You mustn't set off on drink.

The temptation to throw one's money away on cane liquor spells ruin, in this rhetoric.

(9) Further exhortation

- 22 m; *ora timi yu'un naka onox uch' pox//*
On the other hand, if (it's) just drinking liquor//
- 23 *naka onox yakubel*
Just drunkenness.

- 24 *muk' ta alel yajnil//*
If he pays no attention to his wife//
- 25 *muk' ta alel mi o xch' amal k' usi une*
If he doesn't worry about the fact that he has a child or whatever.
- 26 *muk' chasmaklintas uk un//*
If he doesn't provide for you//
- 27 *muk' bu chayak'be (???)*
If he doesn't give you (??)
- 28 x; *ak' on ta pertonal uke ta jtzak un*
Pardon me, but I too will grab him (to jail him).

The embracer's long monologue, in partly extemporized couplets, points out that drunkenness will result in suffering within a's newly formed family. Notice the footing changes: starting at line 24, the drunken husband is now spoken of in third person—he mistreats *his* wife and ignores *his* children. But at lines 26–27, the victim, in this changed footing, is still second person: he (the drunkard) doesn't provide for *you*, that is, the new bride. Here, x, a (himself drunken) relative of the bride, breaks in to assert that a's drunkenness will also attract the hostility of others: he himself promises to throw the young miscreant in jail.

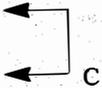
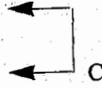
The Parents

The guardians of the new order, the real adults in the new couple's home, are the groom's parents. The words addressed to them in a wedding exhortation capture—and discursively defuse—the tensions inherent in the bride's position as a newcomer to the carefully enclosed (and fenced) world of a Zinacanteco domestic compound.

Once again, the embracer raises the issues that have clouded the wedding, in this case giving the groom's father a bit of discursive space (at lines 30 and 33 of (10)) to add a bit of self-defense to the accumulating background narrative.

(10) Embracer to the groom's father

- 17 m; *bweno k' elavi kumpa*
Well, look, compadre.
- 18 *isa'li smule isa'li skolo'e*
He sought his sin, he sought his evil.
- 19 *k'u ta xkutik*
What can we do about it now?
- 20 *isk'upin sbaik*
They desired one another.
- 21 *isk' opon sbaik*
They spoke to each other.
- 22 *ni modo*
There's no help for it.
- 23 *pero k'u ta jcha'letik*
But what can we do about it now?

- 24 *pero timin ja' to . o k'usi k'op.*
But if eventually there should be some further trouble. 
- 25 *mi ja' to o k'usi chutilan sbaik.*
If later on they keep fighting about something.
- 26 *mi mu sk'el*
If he doesn't watch (after her) 
- 27 *mi mu yil*
If he doesn't see (her).
- 28 *mi ja' to k'u iyal ti chalbe sbaik un*
If later on there is something they say that they are saying to one another
- 29 *poreso*
for that reason
- 30 p; *much'u i- ipason ta mantal*
Who obliged them?
- 31 m; *eso es pues*
That's right
- 32 *ja' ta jk'eltik un yech=*
Then we'll see . . .
- 33 p; *=ma'uk ikalbe (???)*
I wasn't the one who told them (to get married).
[
(???)
- 34 x;
35 m; *yech'o un*
Therefore 
- 36 *ak'o yik' sbaik ta muk'*
Let them marry each other with respect.
- 37 *ak'o yik' sbaik ta k'ux*
Let them marry each other in seriousness.

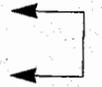
The formal features of the exhortation to the parents are again notable. The *jpetom* continues to speak largely in couplets, although they are frequently now truncated, showing only the final paired elements of what would otherwise be wholly repeated lines, differing only in a terminal word or phrase. (Such abbreviated couplets often surface when ritually expert adults instruct one another in the proper words to use on some specific occasion, such as a ritually important errand.) His interlocutors, the groom's parents, respond directly to him, in polite but necessarily parallel speech.

There is also a possible heirarchical anomaly: the parents are likely to be older than the *jpetom*, and thus may both outrank him socially and outdistance him in terms of cultural knowledge. Nonetheless, the marriage ritual places them in the position of being, if not instructed, at most treated as collaborators in the exhortation. The following fragments come from a different wedding exhortation, which followed a relatively uneventful courtship.

Here, p is the embracer, while f and m are father and mother of the groom,

respectively; p is a ritually inexperienced middle-aged man, whereas f, the father, is a renowned ritual expert and master talked. Notice, in (11), that the embracer's parallel triplet at line (8) is foreshortened, and that he truncates an obvious potential couplet at lines (7) and (10)—perhaps because of the imbalance of expertise between speaker and interlocutor, perhaps simply because f cuts him off with his responses.

(11) *Exhortation to parents*, recorded at a different Nabenchauk wedding April 26, 1981

- 7 p; *ital xa li . avalabe*
Your child has come.
- 8 *lavi tal kak' // jchotan // jvutz'ane*
Now I have come to offer them//to seat them//to bend them. 
- 9 f; *[*
bwe:no
Okay.
- 10 p; *te xavalbekon ya'i:=*
There you will explain to them for me
- 11 f; *=hi*
- 12 p; *k'u x'elan xave'ik//*
how you eat// 
- 13 *xavuch' vo'e*
(how) you drink water.

The standard image for the canons of domestic life is: 'how you eat // how you drink water'. The bride can be expected to be ignorant of the customs of her new house, and must thus be instructed, with patience and care.

(12) *Exhortation to groom's father continues*

- 14 *komo . mu sna' to =*
Because she still doesn't know.
- 15 f; *=mu sna' a'a*
No, she doesn't know.
- 16 p; *mu sna' komo ja'*
She doesn't know because . . .
- 17 *yech'o ja' sk'an le'e*
therefore what one needs . . .
- 18 *chavalbekon lek ti rasonell*
(is for) you to tell her wisdom, for me//
- 19 *chavalbekon ti mantale*
(for) you to give her orders, for me. 

The pronouns display the central footing: the father-in-law must help the *jpetom*—ritual guardian of the new matrimonial union—by instructing his new daughter-in-law how to behave. Such instruction will serve to head off squabbles—and separation.

In fragment (I3), the embracer (p) turns his attention to the groom's mother, m, the incumbent boss in the bride's new kitchen. The canonical product of women's labor—the *panin* or corn dough from which tortillas are produced daily—serves here as metonym of the entire female domestic realm. The new bride brings her womanly skills, learned in her natal home, which must now be adjusted to the standards of her in-laws' household.

(I3) *Exhortation to groom's mother*

- 46 p; *melel . tzna' nan slakanel li panine*
True, perhaps she knows how to boil corn dough
- 47 *pero ja' to ta snae pero*
But that was just at her house, but
- 48 *lavi une chjel ya'el un*
. . . now that has changed.
- 49 *ma'uk xa yech chk k'u cha'al ta sna une*
It is no longer the same as in her own house.
- 50 m; *ma'uk un*
No, it isn't
- 51 p; *ma'uk yech'o xavalbekon ya'el un*
No, and therefore you will have to tell her for me.
- 52 *k'u x'elan-*
how it is
- 53 m; *an yechuk kumpare =*
Why, all right, compadre.
- 54 p; *= xave'ik//*
. . . you eat//
- 55 *xavuch'ik vo'*
. . . how you drink water.

Finally, p produces the same standard parallel image—'eat, drink water'—for household customs, but most of this exhortation is in ordinary noncouplet form, perhaps reflecting the fact that his interlocutor, the groom's mother, is not necessarily fluent in the parallel language herself, and thus can be expected to reply in minimal form (as she does, at lines 50 and 53).

The embracer ends with the plea that 'scolding // splitting up' be avoided through open and cooperative talk.

(I4) *More exhortation to new mother-in-law*

- 59 *ja' lek mi lek ibate // ja' chopol li labal =*
It will be good if it goes well//it will be bad if they only engage in
- 60 *= ut'ut baill//*
is scolding each other//
- 61 *labal . ch'akch'ak bail*
. . . just splitting up with each other.

The Bride

What of the bride's place in this rhetorically ordered matrimonial universe? The *jpetom* also addresses part of his exhortation to her, the newest member of the household. Only shortly beforehand, when her bridal garments were removed, has the bride exposed her face for the first time to the gaze of her new in-laws. She now sits uttering hardly a sound as her wedding godfather instructs her in wifely virtues. At this point, he has spoken already to the groom and his parents. He feels obliged to address only a shorter speech to the bride. The performance is univocal, virtually without interruptions, as all present strain to hear how the new bride will comport herself as she is inducted into a frightening new world.

The *jpetom's* exhortation to the bride is an ethnographically acute manifesto about a Zinacanteco woman's lot—at least, from a senior man's point of view. Inspired by the thought of proper domestic economy, the embracer exploits a further symbol of female domesticity: hauling firewood for the hearth. (The parallel structure is somewhat choppy here, as the embracer appears to struggle to find his rhetorical rhythm. At lines 57–58, for example, he launches a parallel line with *ma'uk xa* 'you won't just. . .' but he completes the line by beginning a *new* couplet: 'you won't just. . . sit idly observing things // only warm yourself by the fire.')

(I5) *Exhortation to bride, recorded at the same wedding, Nabenchauk, April 26, 1981*

- 55 *mi o bu chakuch asi'ik*
If you have occasion to haul firewood.
- 56 *xabat ta si'be uk*
You too will gather firewood.
- 57 *ma'uk xa li . chotol chakom ta nael//*
You won't just stay seated at home//
- 58 *ma'uk xa . li' xa xak'el elay // =*
You won't just sit idly observing things//
- 59 *= .yech xa nox xak'atine*
you won't just warm yourself for nothing.
- 60 *bal ti chabchab chba akuchik tal k'u ora =*
It is sufficient that you haul back two
(pieces of firewood) whenever . . .
- 61 *= xaxokobike*
. . . you have some spare time.
- 62 *yu'nox . . .*
because
- 63 *stalel ti ta jkuchtik si'el//*
it is normal for us to carry firewood//
- 64 *stalel ti ja' chive'otik o ti . x'elan kunen =*
It is normal that we eat from our little . . .
- 65 *= kostumbretik vo'otik*
. . . customs, that we have.

'Zinacantecos are not', he continues, 'like Ladinos'—non-Indians—'who don't know how to work':

(16) *More instructions to the bride*

- 66 *ma'uk yech chk k'u cha'al . jkaxlanetike*
It is not like the Ladinos.
- 67 *ja' xa ta jchantik jun xa ko'on chotolotike,*
that we can just learn to be happy sitting around
- 68 *i'i,*
No
- 69 *yu'nox chi- . chi'abtejotik jutukuk*
Because we must work a little bit.

In the following talk, which I omit here, the series of paired couplets nicely summarizes the heart of the Zinacanteco ethic of work and wealth: eating // having possessions; money // corn; arising (from bed) // waking up (decently) early.

Finally, the wedding exhortation turns to the question of central interest to the embracer: happiness and domestic tranquility, the permanence of this union.

(17) *Still more instructions to the bride*

- 79 *mu'nuk . ixtol ti nupunelell* ← C
Marriage isn't a game//
- 80 *mu'nuk . ja' nox jun chib k'ak'al lanupunik* ← C
You haven't gotten married for just one or two days.
- 81 *yu'un.*
- 82 *lanupunik o ta . sbatel osil // =* ← C
Instead you have gotten married until the end of the earth//
- 83 *= k'u cha'al xichamotik xkaltike* ← C
. . . until we die, as we say.

If things do not go well, says the *jpetom*, sounding a more ominous note, the elders should be brought into the affair. In consultation with them, any problems can be solved *ta lekil k'op* 'with good words'. Blame and punishment can be sorted out.

(18) *Final words to the bride*

- 96 *much'u ti* ← C
which one . . .
- 97 *o smule // much'u ti*
is the guilty one // which one
- 98 *ch'iline* ← C
. . . is the one who gets angry.
- 99 *bweno timin ja' . tzmul ti Chep une*
Well, if it is José's fault . . .
- 100 *stak' xich' stzitzell* ← C
he can be punished//
- 101 *stak' xich'.* ← C
He can receive . . .

- 102 *xich' abel, jp' el // cha'p' eluk noxtok* ← C
He can be told, a word // or two words, too.
- 103 *pero ta komun chka'itikitik un*
But we'll think about it in common.

The wrong thing, the embracer goes on, would be for a wife to follow her impulse to leave the husband's home and return to her own parents. The inevitable spats and discord must be ignored.

Marital Squabbles

The words of warning in the examples given seem to foreshadow a future more disorderly than the rest of the wedding rhetoric might suggest. Marriage has always been fragile in Zinacantán—as a look at the gossip about marriages, even 30 years ago, would show (Haviland 1977b). Nowadays, however, it seems positively brittle. First, courtship is no longer the elaborate affair it once was. Often a suitor will simply pay cash for his bride—or, as jokes would have it, hand over a cow, a corn harvest, or the keys to a truck—to avoid performing the expected bride-service. Or the couple may simply elope and buy their way back into the good graces of the father-in-law, after the fait accompli. Moreover, the landscape is now littered with abandoned wives, (socially) fatherless children, and young divorced people, of both genders, who defy both the ethnographer's and the oldtimer's claims—based, no doubt, as much on normative memory as on actualities—that life in Zinacantán is for pairs, not singles.⁸

Before a year of marriage is out, any new couple is bound to experience the fragility of marriage in Zinacantán. Unmarried sisters-in-law, viewing the new bride as both incompetent and an intolerable spy in their midst—always running home to complain to her mother, not knowing how her poor husband likes his beans or his *uch'imo* 'atol' or corn gruel—can make life unbearable for a young woman who has never before lived away from her own hearth. For the new wife, the demands of a child soon drain energy away from both domestic obligations (the food and the firewood) and girlish pastimes: weaving one's own decorative clothing, or socializing with cousins and sisters in the forest.

For many young men, on the other hand, growing independence from fathers, long periods spent away from the village in the cornfields or on the job, and the pressing need to provide for one's own hearth and larder promote wanderlust and drinking.

Occasionally, the angry shouts of a fighting couple echo through the valley of Nabenchauk, breaching the normally hermetic walls of village house compounds (Haviland and Haviland 1983). More frequently, though, the discourse of marital strife is secondhand: it surfaces in gossip, in the words of dispute settlement, and in

the metacommentary of village elders who try to stitch up the seams in what sometimes seems a tattered Zinacanteco social fabric.

When a girl runs home to her parents' house, after a fight or beating, the threat of separation and divorce drives one family or the other to seek the help of the *jpetom* or of other village elders to try to bring the couple together again. It is ordinarily the bride who runs away and who must be coaxed back into her husband's home. Collier gives a functionalist explanation.

Marital disputes are a normal and indeed necessary part of Zinacanteco life, since they lead to the reordering of social relations crucial to maintaining cohesion in the developing patrilineal family. . . . It is no coincidence that the early years of marriage are the most unstable, for all the strains inherent in extended family living come to a head in this period. Young brides are unhappy at leaving home and having to work for their mothers-in-law, and young husbands may wish to break away from working with the family group but fear the wrath of the father or the risks of farming alone. Wives, always viewed as selfishly looking out for their own interests, provide convenient scapegoats for husbands who wish to break away without quarreling openly with their patrilineal kinsmen. Marital disputes are thus outlets for the tensions of extended family living. The fact that they are frequent, highly patterned and seldom serious makes them efficient vehicles for dissipating the hostile feelings that develop [1973:198].

Zinacantecos are aware that, sooner or later, all married couples end up squabbling. When angry words spill violently over the edges of the domestic order, the measured words of dispute settlers, on one view, can be seen as domesticating the resulting disorder. It falls to the discourses of marriage settlement—the “words and orders” of elders—to restore domestic harmony. Another view is possible: that it is breaches of the *public* order that require *re*-domestication; and that the function of the authoritative and culturally monolithic voices of elders is to drown out bickering domestic voices, to lock them back, where they belong, *ta yut mok*—inside their own household fences.

Marital squabbles explode as angry words: a snappish remark, a sullen response; scolding, leading to shouted accusations, inspiring countercharges; and finally a full-scale dispute. The process of dispute settling, then, is necessarily *metalinguistic*: it is, at least in part, language *about* language. We have seen that ordinary Tzotzil, and even ritual couplets, make explicit metalinguistic reference to both the codes and the circumstances of speech. A dispute about a dispute encompasses a further semiotic remove: current talk can aim not only at the content of the dispute—the “facts of the case”—but also at the processes and circumstances of the dispute (see Haviland and de León 1988). There are several discursive levels. First marriage partners quarrel partly through what they say. Second, accounts of their quarreling—including “reported quarrels,” a subvariety of “reported speech” (Banfield 1982; Hill and Irvine 1992; Lucy 1991; Vološinov 1986)—form the raw material for dispute settlement sessions, themselves comprising discursive forms. Finally, gos-

sip and commentary about the process of settlement—a subject to which I shall turn at the end of this essay—represent metalinguistic discourse in which the original fighting words of the protagonists are at a third level of remove.

In Zinacantán, I argue, second-order discourse—dispute-settling talk about (first-order) fighting-talk—moves up the scale from disorderly to ordered by involving the disputants in a mediated encounter, in which their very words are cast into more controlled formal, sequential, and social surroundings. More than meta-language is involved here, of course, for this second-order discourse inhabits that special social realm that Goffman (1983b) called the “interaction order”: the face-to-face (or body to body) domain “in which two or more individuals are physically in one another's presence” (1983b:2). Such copresence—complicated, in miniature, by familiar issues of social identity and hierarchy, power and powerlessness (including voicelessness)—produces definite effects on the emergent order, both discursive and social, which is my theme.

Let me now return to scenes from a Zinacanteco marriage.

When Did You Stop Beating Your Wife?

Antun, the young man whose marriage exhortation we saw earlier, some years thereafter went out with friends to a cantina, got drunk, and had to be shamelessly hauled home by an obliging drinking partner. Sometime later, he beat his wife, accusing her of disobedience and disrespect. She ran home to her relatives, and was only induced to return by the promise of a mediated settlement.

Here is the scene: two village elders, Petul and Lol, have been summoned to help settle the dispute. The young man has (still) a reputation for drunkenness, and this is not the first time he has beaten his wife. The two elders are giving advice and counsel to the man, Antun (who is lying in bed with a miserable hangover and who takes scant part in the talk recounted here), and to his aggrieved wife, Loxa. There is little question of Antun's guilt, here, and he is really too sick even to try to defend himself against the elders' criticism.

However, the talk is still contentious: although the elders want Antun to mend his ways, they are also interested in preserving the marriage, and they therefore aim some of their criticism indirectly at the wife, intimating that she may have been insufficiently obedient or compliant. Not surprisingly, she defends herself, although often obliquely, and she rarely misses a chance to heap further abuse on her drunken husband's fogged head.

In elaborating their arguments, the speakers sometimes cooperate and sometimes oppose one another. Part of the process of dispute settlement in Zinacantán requires that the participants evolve a series of shared discursive understandings, along with articulated moral stances about what is being said. From disagreement and opposition, that is, they produce shared orderliness. This appearance of order,

of course—like the very words from which it is constructed—may deceive: irony as well as intransigent silence may represent tactics more subversive than outright opposition. The mere suppression of *public* disorder does little to ensure domestic bliss, or to prevent seeds of discord once (perhaps discursively) sown from sprouting subsequently.⁹

Nonetheless, the *outward* ordering process is evident in both the content and the form of dispute settlement sessions. The language moves from the normal, halting, brief streams of conversational Tzotzil (which characterizes the angry speech of the disputants) to fully developed parallel constructions in the elders' final pronouncements. In a similar way, the battles for floorspace and for conversational priority consolidate, little by little, one turn at a time, the moral authority of the social order.

Talking Back

Although officially the two dispute settlers are chewing out the drunken husband, they are also trying to bring a balanced reconciliation. Their moral is from time to time pointedly directed at Loxa, the wife. Her reaction at various stages clearly shows her sensitivity to their nuances. In the following fragment, Lol admonishes Loxa (shown as Lo) about how she ought to react to her husband when he comes home drunk. Precisely at the point that Lol recommends that Loxa not talk back to her drunken husband, she begins to talk back to him.

(19) *Marital dispute settlement*, recorded December 15, 1983, Nabenchauk

- 23 l; *mu ya'uk xasokbe sjol mi chyakube*
Try to avoid provoking him when he is drunk.
- 24 *tuk' xavalbe mi chve'//*
Just ask him properly if he wants to eat//
- 25 *mi ta ..xuch' panin k'usuk*
or if he wants to drink some gruel or something.
- 26 *pwes mu ya'uk xatak'bell*
But don't presume to talk back to him//
- 27 *mu ya'uk xa k'u xavalbe*
Just don't try to say anything to him.
- 28 *le' uk une k'alal chyakube este-*
That one, uh . . . when he gets drunk . . .
- 29 lo; *pero k'u yu'un ana'oj (ta) jtak'be yu'un =*
But why do you suppose I should talk back to him?
30 *= (oy k'u yech . . .)*
if I were to-
- 31 *ak'o min batz' i ta jtak'ulanbe*
And even if I DID keep talking back . . .
- 32 *yalal mu'nuk bu chkal ya'el yu'van molon*
I deliberately don't say anything,
do you suppose me an elder?
-

- 33 l; *yu'un ali:*
because uh . . .
- 34 lo; *mu jna' mi*
I don't know if . . .
- 35 *mu xa xka'i jba k'u ta xkal un*
I can't even think of anything I would say to him.

The second person verbs at line 23 are addressed directly to Loxa: 'you mustn't provoke him when he is drunk, just speak to him normally and politely, offering him food and drink'. The couplet structure gives the elder both rhetorical momentum and cultural authority.

However, Loxa breaks in at line 29, defending herself—she *doesn't* talk back, and she wouldn't know what to say to him even if she did. Is she an elder? This is ironic, and oblique, metapragmatic commentary: unlike Lol, the elder with a public, authoritative voice, she herself is mere wife—a protagonist in the first-order events—who both there and here has *nothing to say*, that is, no voice.

Lol, with Petul's rhetorical support, beats back Loxa's miniature insurrection, to regain both verbal and moral control of the floor. At line 40 of fragment (20), Loxa is apparently brought back into echoing agreement.

(20) *Marital dispute continues*

- 36 l; *ali k'al chyakube, porke*
When he gets drunk, why is that?
- 37 *porke mu sk'an tak'bel*
Because he doesn't want any back talk.
- 38 p; *jyakubel mu sk'an tak'bel*
A drunkard doesn't want back talk.
[]
- 39 l; *yu'un chopol sjol*
Because he has a bad head.
[]
- 40 lo; *mu sk'an tak'bel yu'un chopol sjol*
He doesn't want back talk because he has a bad head.
-

Petul has taken up the role of Lol's interlocutor, repeating his words and hence reaffirming his sentiments starting at line 38. Ultimately, Loxa also aligns herself with this line of argument, repeating the phrase *mu sk'an tak'bel* 'he won't stand for being talked back to', and probably agreeing with heartfelt vehemence that *chopol sjol*, literally '[her husband] has a bad head', that is, one that doesn't work properly.

Again the potential irony in the wife's subaltern voice shows the ambiguity, and a possible inversion, of a piece of standard cultural logic. The elders seem to insinuate, behind their overt criticism of Antun for public scandal, that he seeks this escape—and the consequent socially defined blamelessness (or nonresponsibility) of drunkenness—in response to his wife's back talk. She, then, must take care that her domestic behavior not produce public disorder. Her reply, apparently accepting the

from drunkenness: he has a *bad* head—a malevolent head—and that’s why he won’t stand back talk.

In the midst of such dispute settlement, narrative also has a place, as moral tales are marshalled to the disputants’ purposes. However, since narrative is discursively less highly ordered than, say, the formal couplets of admonition and resolution, it also can have subversive effects. Consider how the angry wife introduces the drunken scene of the night before into the discussion. The elders offer a good example, the tale of a now sober husband, to show Antun (and his wife) how drunkards can reform themselves.

(21) *How a good wife would behave*

- 1 p; *ali jun le' ta jote che'e*
The other (brother) there on the other side . . .
- [
- 2 l; *hmm*
- 3 p; *iyakub li . . . jmanvele*
My son Manuel used to get drunk.
- 4 l; *hmm*
- 5 p; *mi ch'ilin mi chut yajnil*
If he would get angry, if he would scold his wife
- 6 *mu xbatz' i-ba:k li antze*
The woman wouldn't make the slightest response.
- 7 *ja' ti mi ikux ta yok'obe*
Only when he would sober up the following day
- [
- 8 l; *yech che'e*
That's right.
- 9 p; *ja' to chalbe*
only then would she tell him.
- [
- 10 l; *ja' to u:n*
Only then.
- 11 *ja' to chalbe un*
Only then would she tell him.
- [
- 12 p; *mi xana' yech tey cha(pas chk li'e) xi*
“Do you know that you behaved this way,” she would say.
- 13 *mi ja'uk mu xa stak'*
He couldn't even be able to answer her.
- 14 *chi' o un*
He got frightened by that.
- 15 *chikta o li pox une*
And for that he reason he gave up drinking.
- 16 *k' exlal chava'i*
It was the shame, you see.

Now Loxa (shown as lo on the transcript) pounces. Here is her chance to tell the sorry tale of her besotted husband, being hauled home by his awful Chamula drinking partner.¹⁰ (Chamulas, Tzotzil Indians from a neighboring township, are generally regarded as rural bumpkins by Zinacantecos.)

(22) *The wife's counter-tale*

- 21 lo; *va'i mu kalbe li'*
Listen, I didn't tell this one-
- 22 *k'al skuchet to le'e*
When he was still being hauled (home) . . .
- 23 *yu'un ulo'etik pe:ro tz'ukul ta o'lol*
. . . by the Chamulas, but he was upside down in between them
- 24 *bu tajmek tz'ukul une*
or wherever he was hanging upside down.
- (. . .)
- 28 lo; *manchuk xa nox li totil ulo' jna'tik*
If it hadn't been for the old Chamula, who knows?

To disarm the opprobrium here, the elders must first divert Loxa's story in a humorous direction. Echoing her own words, they convert the incident into a joke: the poor Chamula had only been paid for agricultural labor, but he ended up having to carry his employer home. (Note that the elder, l, indexically aligns himself with the drunken Antun, at line 33, by referring to the Chamula as *kulo' 'my Chamula'*.)

(23) *Defusing the wife's story*

- 33 l; *ti manchuk li' li kulo' mole muk' bu x'eanvan*
If my Chamula hadn't been here, no one would have carried him.
- [
- 34 p; *kere, manchuk li'*
Damn, if he hadn't been here
- 35 *bal to*
That was just lucky.
- [
- 36 lo; *buch'u yan yu'un vo:kol iyul chcha'va'alik*
Who else? And the two of them had a hard time arriving here.
- [
- 37 p; *kere . bal to me stojbe =*
Damn! It was lucky that he paid . . .
- 38 *=sk'ak'al to*
(the Chamula) for his day's work.
- 39 *ja'la yech*
That's how they say it was.
- 40 *ja'la ulo'i'eanvan tal xi*
They say it was the Chamula who hauled him back.

- 41 lo; *pero yu' un mu jna'be (?? sjol)*
But I just don't understand him.
[
- 42 l; *naka ulo' a'a hehh*
Just a Chamula, indeed . . .
- 43 p; *ulo' che'e batz'i toyol un*
A Chamula, indeed; very expensive . . .
[
- 44 l; *li' (ha ha)*
Here- hehhh
- 45 p; *ak'o ba sjak' be stojol sk'ak'al povre ulo'*
Let him go and ask the poor Chamula how much his daily salary is.

Finally, having agreed that the whole event, though funny, was shameful, the elders seize control of the discursive floor, elaborating on the interlocked themes of drunkenness and shame. They continue with another collaborative narrative, about how I himself decided to give up drinking, ending with a parallel chorus.

(24) "How I gave up drinking"

- 63 l; *yu'un chilom xa onox ika'i taj k'al ikikta xa li=*
Because I was on the verge of collapse, I felt, when I gave up . . .
64 =*poxe*
. . . drinking liquor.
- 65 *yu'un xa chilom*
I was just falling down already.
- 66 *chivuk' xa ta be*
I was already collapsing on the path.
[
- 67 p; *hi: k'exlal*
Ehh, the shame of it!
[
- 68 j; *puta, chopol*
Shit, that's bad.
[
- 69 l; *pero kremon to chka'i jba une*
But I still felt that I was a young man.
- 70 *vale mas ke ta xkikta li poxe*
It was better that I simply give up liquor.
- 71 *mu jk'an ya'el ti bu=*
I didn't feel I wanted that
[
- 72 p; *eso ja' o skanal xkom li poxe*
Right, it is profitable to leave off the liquor.
[]
-

- 73 l; =*xvichvo:n* =
. . . my piss to be tinkling there on-
- 74 =*k'ab ta o'lol be une*
-the middle of the path.
- 75 *yu'un mu jk'an un=*
I didn't want it-
[
- 76 lo; *k'exlal un yu'van lek une*
It's shameful; do you think it's good?
[
- 77 p; *jkobe:l k'exlal*
Fuck, it's shameful!
- 78 lo; *batz'i krixchano chk'elvan un*
The people really would stare at you.
[
- 79 l =*k'exlal un chk'elvan ti antzetike*
It is shameful; the women stare at you
- 80 *chk'elvan ti tzebetik ka'uk une*
The girls would stare at you, indeed.
- 81 p; *pu:ta*
Damn!
(. . .)
- 87 l; *k'elavil un le'e krixchano le'e xi*
"Look at him, at that person," they say.
- 88 *lek vinik yilele pero ti volje chabje*
"He looks like a good man, but yesterday, day before yesterday
[
- 89 p; *k'exlal un*
It is shameful!
- 90 l; *xvi:chvon sil k'ab le' ta be: xi chlo'ilaj un*
". . . his disgusting piss was tinkling on the path," is how they'll gossip.
[
- 91 p; *yanche =*
"Yuck!"
- 92 =*xi*
they'll say.
- 93 l; *puta pero lek vinikotik un*
Damn, but we are good men.
- 94 *lek krixchanootik un kavron pero*
we are good people, damn it, but . . .
[
- 95 p; *ke:re*
Gee!
- 96 l; *k'exlal u:n*
that is shameful.
-

Discursive sequences like this involve the attempted resolution of a matrimonial battle, which has produced public disorderliness, which has, in turn, spilled back into the domestic realm. A dispute settlement provides a discursive forum which first frees opposed lines of private interest and argument (by giving them space for expression in this public realm), and then realigns morals and conclusions in a publicly acceptable cultural arrangement. Here, the combined social and sequential weight of the two elders' speeches conspires to limit and ultimately to defuse the potentially anarchic language and sentiments of the outraged, but also outnumbered, wife.

Mature Marital Battles

Sometimes Zinacanteco couples whose marriages have survived the first brittle years find themselves in strife. According to Collier (1973), divorce is infrequent though far from unheard of. "The Presidente always tries to reconcile a separated couple. But if all attempts fail, he will acknowledge the separation and try to arrange a property settlement" (1973:196). Collier goes on to cite the factors that seem to correlate with the wife's actually receiving a share of the property of the marriage: having been married more than four years; her keeping the children; or simply formal settlement at the town hall (as opposed to less formal mediation by village elders). Such statistical tendencies, of course, do not explain the mechanisms—some of which, according to the logic of my present argument, must be discursive—that actually engineer such outcomes.

One such case arose when a husband, jealous after observing his wife talking to another man, got himself drunk and beat her savagely.¹¹ Again, elders were called—not, as it turned out, for the first time—to reconcile this couple whose children were grown, and who were shortly to embark on a year in the municipal ritual hierarchy.¹²

Here the rhetoric took a different line. First, the dispute settlers talked to the wife, who complained that she could no longer stand the repeated jealous beatings administered by her husband. The authorities seemingly urged her to consider divorce. Two elders, p and r, later joined by a third, l, mount a conjoint campaign upon the wife, whose replies, when she ventures any, are always truncated and overlapped by the dispute settlers. They pile on the same argument in tandem: if your husband is completely beyond hope, then you might as well leave him; but in that case, do so without a fuss, and consider carefully the consequences.

The organization of this performance clearly mirrors the mutually reinforcing social roles of the participants: r, the primary dispute settler, together with p—an older man with greater ritual expertise but less political power—collaborate in their exhortations to the wife; p largely echoes and amplifies r's utterances, creating a structure that resembles the parallelism of formal couplets, but here created *across* turns by *different* speakers. Thus, there is overlapping repetition (and shared sentiment) between lines 5/7/9 (spoken by r) and 6/8 (spoken by p); similarly, r's

injunction to the wife simply to bid her husband goodbye, without further fighting (lines 7/9), is interleaved with a similar move by p (lines 6/10/13).

(25) *Divorce settlement*, recorded April 26, 1981, Nabenchauk

- | | | | |
|----|----|--|---|
| 5 | r; | <i>batz' i batan ta lekil k' op un=</i>
Just leave without fighting. | |
| | | [| |
| 6 | p; | <i>esosi batan ta lekil k' op</i>
Right, just leave without fighting. | E |
| | | [| |
| 7 | r; | <i>= chapo li k' usuk avu' un tey nox k' alal</i>
Just prepare your belongings, "There's no help for it," | |
| | | [| |
| 8 | p; | <i>xavalbe</i>
You'll say to him . . . | |
| | | [| |
| 9 | r; | <i>uto laj o k' op=</i>
. . . tell him that, and that's the end of the affair. | E |
| | | [| |
| 10 | p; | <i>= (??) aba ti p' olem ti jayib k' ak' al achi' ine// =</i>
(take the things) that have accumulated
however many days you accompanied him//. | |
| | | [| |
| 11 | r; | <i>= pero ma' uk to noxtok xalahjes =</i>
But then you won't be able to forgive him | |
| | | [| |
| 12 | | <i>= k' op ta tz' akal un bi a' a</i>
later, no indeed! | |
| | | [| |
| 13 | p; | <i>jayib k' ak' al . la' och ta yut na</i>
. . . for however many days you entered the house. | C |
| | | [| |
| 14 | r; | <i>yu' un jmOj</i>
It will be FOREVER! | P |
| | | [| |
| 15 | p; | <i>kolaval un batan ta(lek)</i>
"Thank you," and go on good terms. | E |
| | | [| |
| 16 | r; | <i>min avil ti chopole</i>
If you have SEEN that he is bad. | |
| | | [| |
| 17 | l; | <i>yu' un jmoj min avil ti chopole .</i>
It will be for good, if you've seen that he is bad. | E |

As r points out to the wife at lines 11/12/14, after taking the drastic step of moving out with all one's belongings, there is of course no going back. Meanwhile, p continues with the hypothetical farewell he is suggesting the wife offer her husband (line 15).

Finally, at lines 16 and 17, r, overlapped by the third elder l, summarizes the somewhat sobering hypothetical case: this is what you should do if you're *certain* that your husband is a disaster. The three elder join forces in a highly structured

moral chorus, reinforcing each other's words and sentiments. The resulting sequential verbal torrent produces unrelieved pressure on the wife to consider (and perhaps reformulate) her complaint and its consequences.

The elders then turn to the guilty husband, appealing first to a kind of male pride. How does it look, they ask, to be accompanied by an obviously battered woman? The language switches subtly from that of admonition to that of male joking. One symptom of the switch is the lack of formally parallel structure. Notice, as well, the transitory switch, at line 4–6 to an inclusive first person pronoun, suggesting the speaker's shared perspective with the addressee.

(26) *Divorce settlement continues*

- 1 l; *mi ja' chak'an ame'elal tijil ta apat xanav* ← 2nd pers
Is what you want that your wife walk behind you
- 2 *p' ejp'ej xa sat mi lok'em xa ye k'usi*
with just one eye or with her teeth knocked out or something.
- 3 all; [(laughter)]
- 4 l; *jk'antik lek (k'an-tuch') xi jav* ←
(Do we) want her all bruised up like this?
- 5 *mu ya'uk ali . majbil k'usi ya'el ka'uktik*
We don't want her all beaten up, after all.
- 6 *ta jk'antik lek chixanavotik ta cha'vo'* ← 1st pers
We want to walk around well, the two of us.
- 7 *mi xak'an ti p' ejp' ej xa sat xa . tijil ta apat =* ←
Or do you want her following you around with one eye knocked out
- 8 *= ame'lal une*
. . . Your wife?
- 9 r; *tzobo me stojol li ya'ale kere* ←
Get together the price of some liquor for her, boy!
- 10 *ak'o xakolese* ←
So that you can get her cured.

The process of reestablishing order involves a kind of ironic transfer: the formal order of the discourse is applied to the disordered social world of the disputants. One frequent strategy emerges when the dispute settlers find a topic on which they can denounce the disputants in parallel language; they often appear to create new images extemporaneously to suit the subject, so that events are arranged in a spontaneous way into the ordered pairs of parallel couplets.

For example, the elder p "establishes" by interrogation—a rhetorical ploy, since he obviously knows in advance what the answers will be—that even the clothes on the man's back are products of the allegedly inattentive wife's labor. The husband, here, is shown as a

(27) *More chiding in divorce case*

- 1 p; *bweno lak'u' alapoj le'e*
Well, those clothes you have on there.
- 2 *mi . mi manbil avak'ojbe mi ja' yabtel =*
Did you buy them, or are they her work?
- 3 a; *= i'i ma'uk une*
No, not (bought).
- 4 *ja' tzjal*
She wove them.
- 5 p; *va'i un*
So, you see!
- 6 *ati taj . sba avajnilé*
As for your first wife . . .
- 7 *mi ja' onox yech lak'u' lakom chk le'e*
Did you always have that sort of clothes before?
- 8 a; [*kere . . ch'abal =*
Gee, no . . .
- 9 *= a'a tot*
. . . indeed, father.
- 10 *mu xu' jnop k' op =*
I can't tell lies.

The second-order nature of the dispute settlement is now clear, as p marshalls knowledge of previous "texts" (drawn from a's biography and having to do, for example, with his previous marriage, or with his previous episodes of jealous violence) in order to place their facts into the public discourse of this occasion, eliciting a's explicit acknowledgment.

Next, p drives the point home with some extemporaneous couplets, starting at line 14.

(28) *More divorce settlement*

- 12 p; *va'i un, li =*
So, listen, the . . .
- 13 *= antz une*
woman (you have here) . . .
- 14 *jalom ata // j'abtel ata* ← C
In her you found a weaver // in her you found a worker.
- 15 *k'usi yan chak'an ya'el e//* ←
What more do you want, then?//
- 16 *k'usi xa li palta tajmek* ← C
What seems to be the big problem?
- 17 *batz'i lok'el xa xa'ilin // xakap un* ← C
You're always getting angry // getting mad.

When the elders come to the end of a topic that they have tried to resolve, they also routinely deliver their final words in a largely parallel section, drawing on the ordered couplets of ritual Tzotzil to put their admonition in an authoritative form. In particular, the issue of a ritual office, which the quarreling couple are scheduled to enter soon, gives p, in the following passage, a context in which to invoke standard paired images.

Notice at lines 5 and 6, that the parallel form involves a triplet, the first two parts of which repeat an image—*abtel* // *patan*—from the previous couplet (see Haviland 1987, 1994).

(29) *Admonishment to divorcing couple*

- | | | |
|---|---|-----|
| 1 | p; <i>pero ta jk'antik lek un bi</i>
But we want it to turn out well, indeed. | |
| 2 | <i>ja' xa'ech'ik ta abtel</i>
You are going to pass through a (ritual) cargo// | |
| 3 | <i>xa'ech'ik ta patan</i>
You are going to pass through a contribution. | ← C |
| 4 | <i>jun vinik // jun antz</i>
One man // one woman. | ← C |
| 5 | <i>chapasik abtel // xapasik patan</i>
You will do work // you will do a contribution// | ← C |
| 6 | <i>chachap abaik</i>
You will prepare yourselves. | ← T |
| 7 | <i>yan timi chamaj abaik ta k'uxul k'ope</i>
On the other hand, if you beat each other in an angry fight. | |
| 8 | <i>mi sk'an xa xnopoj pixkal // jvabajom // avajch'omtake</i>
Will the sacristans // musicians // or helpers want to come close? | ← T |

Carrying through with a year in ritual office (Cancian 1965) requires the help and support of a small army of auxiliary personnel: church officials, musicians, and helpers of all kinds. Such people will not, the argument continues, find the disputatious ambience of jealous words congenial.

When an elder takes control of the discourse in this way, he exerts multiple forms of hegemonic control. By taking over the floor (partly through the momentum of his parallel words, partly through his social and interactive position), he *instantiates* authority. His words, drawn from the marked repertoire of ritual genres, drip with cultural power. Their form, as well, is a perfect icon of orderliness, control, sobriety, and proper public demeanor. Even in the final, self-deprecatory, and explicitly metalinguistic characterization of his own words of advice, the elder inserts a parallel construction, indexically assimilating himself to orderliness and absolving himself of further responsibility.

(30) *Final words in divorce settlement*

- | | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 31 | <i>yech 'o un</i>
Therefore . . . | |
| 32 | <i>mas lek yech chakalbe chk taje</i>
It's better that I tell you this way. | |
| 33 | <i>yuleso ta ajolik; vo'one</i>
Remember it; as for me . . . | |
| 34 | <i>yiyl mi xach'une // yiyl mu xach'une</i>
never mind if you obey me // never mind if you don't obey me | ← C |
| 35 | <i>yal ti chkal ya'ele</i>
Now that I have said it. . . . | |

Recountings of Zinacanteco Marital Squabbles

I have shown that when fighting couples bring their disputes—which may have surfaced in first-order fighting words, if not directly in blows, broken crockery, and tearful fleeings—to settlement, before village elders, a second-order discourse emerges. Whereas fights throw order to the winds, settlement—what Zinacantecos call, appropriately, *meltzanej k'op* 'the fixing (i.e., repairing) of words'—begins to reintroduce order. It redomesticates passions, smooths the pointed edges of angry words—a least those that have emerged onto a public stage—and rephrases and realigns the terms of dispute. Contention is reformulated as agreement, and oppositions are converted to parallel couplets. This is, of course, a characteristic ideological trick: the elders want to reinstitute a public order, whether or not the bickering husband and wife find contentment and happiness by the domestic hearth. The idiom available for construing the dispute is limited by the procedures and personnel of settlement, as are the voices and postures of the protagonists.

Consider, finally, third-order commentary on marital squabbles: talk (e.g., gossip) about dispute settlement itself, re-presentations of re-presentations.¹³ There is here a still *further* metalinguistic remove, as the discourse of disputes and their retellings in settlement are crystalized onto the discourse of the *narratable* event. If, as I have argued, the orderly *form* of discourse about disputes imposes an order (if only an idealized, public order) on the social events and relations themselves, we may predict that commentary on dispute settlement will invest it with an even more highly idealized discursive order.

Zinacanteco narrative abounds with recreated dialogue, and Zinacanteco storytellers are masters at portraying characters through their reported conversations rather than through explicit characterizations. Thus, to show how angry or upset a protagonist is, Zinacantecos put *angry words* into his or her mouth.

Such a rhetorical device—using angry-sounding words as a sign of a narrated protagonist's anger—is a somewhat more direct exploitation of what Bakhtin (1986)

Though previous examples illustrate men's use of formal verbal parallelism as a trapping of power and authority, here a female protagonist, through the voice of a female narrator, uses ritual forms to convey *emotional* power. Women, of course, also employ the couplet genres, although there are fewer sanctioned public contexts—outside of shamanistic curing—where they are obliged to do so.¹⁵

This *representation* of the aggrieved woman's speech to the elder is, notably, even *more* highly structured than the complaints lodged before dispute settlers that appear in previous fragments. It is almost entirely constructed in complex parallelism. Moreover, it represents a sustained monologue that, in transcripts of dispute settlement, seems uncharacteristic of complaining wives. Whatever the events of an original squabble, the discourse of settlement is interactionally staged, so as to lead to a certain sort of culturally acceptable resolution.¹⁶ In turn, this fictionalized portrayal further casts the speech into formal parallelism, perhaps as a stylized way of laying bare the protagonist's perceived underlying state of mind.

To recapitulate, the complaining woman has, as t tells p, come to the dispute settler to get him to speak with her husband; t finishes her portrayal, at line 21, by explicitly framing these portrayed words with the verb *x'i'on* 'crying, babbling'. She continues by exhibiting the dispute settler's responses, thereby not only dramatizing the woman's complaint, but also, by contrast, parodying the seemingly inarticulate reply of the dispute settler. Here, she inverts the hegemony of a cultural logic in which the powerful, notably the men, are the sources from which eloquence and parallelism emanate.

(33) *Further reported wife's lament*

- 22 t; *xi li x'i'on ta ti' na chka'i ja' ba 'ik' le'e*
That's what she said, crying at the doorway, when she
went to get him.
- 23 p; *i . i yajnil Pat 'Osile =*
the . . . the wife of Pat 'Osil?
- 24 t; *= hi =*
yes.
- 25 p; *= aa*
- 26 t; *a: xi, a: xi*
"Oh," he said, "oh," he said.
- 27 *te chkalbe xi*
"I'll tell him," he said.
- 28 *'oy 'onox chkile te chkalbe te chkalbe k'uxi x- xut chka'i =*
"I'll be seeing him, I'll tell him, I'll tell him," I heard him tell her.

At lines 26–28, t has the dispute settler saying only "yes, yes" repeatedly, as if, subjected to the unceasing stream of complaint and woe, he was unable to get a word in edgewise. (Notice, correspondingly, that p, who is hearing t's story, has not himself interrupted the long turn in which t reproduces the complaining wife's

speech; it is only at this point, at lines 23 and 25, that he resumes his normal cooperative and clarifying back channel.)

The narrative shifts swiftly from one verbal scene to the next.

(34) *Narrative transition*

- 1 t; *albon che'e xi =*
"You tell him, then", she said.
- 2 p; *= i*
- 3 t; *isn- isk' opon la un =*
Evidently he did speak to him.
- 4 p; *= mm =*
- 5 t; *= (mu jna') mi ta muk'ta be li' ta olon bu sk' opon =*
I'm not sure if it was down below here on the highway
that he spoke to him.

When the dispute settler protagonist finally confronts the offending husband (who himself has a civil position at the town hall), he begins with a man-to-man interrogation.

(35) *Dispute settler meets wife-beater*

- 8 t; *an k'u onox mi batz'i layakub xut la =*
"Well, what happened, did you get really drunk?" he said to him.
- 9 p; *= mm*
- 10 t; *liyakub a'a xi la =*
"Yes, I did get drunk," he said, evidently.
- 11 p; *= mm*
- 12 t; *mi ali . . . ana'oj to aba va'i cha'ilin une xut la =*
"Did . . . uh . . . you still know what was going on, since
you got angry," he evidently said to him.
- 13 p; *= mm*
- 14 t; *ana: mu jna' mujna' chka'i xi la*
"Well, I wasn't conscious, I didn't know," he said evidently.

The narrated dispute settler goes on, in t's representation, to chide the miscreant in couplets as well, in an artfully constructed dance between (t, the narrator's portrayal of) his presentation of the wife's voice, and his own.

(36) *Continued reported chiding of husband*

- 44 t; *'yu' un nan `a yal avajnil*
"because your wife has been to tell about it,
- 45 *'k'un la me ti `animal chamajvan // `animal cha' iline*
"why, she asks, do you beat her so much // get so angry?"
- 46 *'`an ta la me chaxchuk lavajnil `une //*
"your wife says she's going to jail you//
- 47 *'ja' la me jayibuk k'ak'al chaxchuk `une//*
"Indeed, she says she'll jail you a few days.//

- 48 *chavich' tzitzel 'une=*
"You'll be punished."
- 49 p; =mm
- 50 t; "k'u `onox ti mu xavich' aba ta muk' e
"Why don't you show some self-respect?"
- 51 "jmeltzanej-k' op-ot to noxtoke,
"What's more, you're also a dispute settler.
- 52 "k'u `onox ti mu xavich' aba ta muk' e
"Why don't you act like a grown person?"
- 53 "yechuke `ali vo' ot xa nox jtitzvanejot yechuke"
. xu:t la 'ox
"You should really be the one doing the punishing, if things
were as they should be," he evidently told him then.
-

Here, t has conjured a picture of the dispute settler showering the guilty husband with hard words, threatening him with jail and punishment, and admonishing him for not behaving himself, all the while preventing him from offering excuses or protestations. In Bakhtinian terms, there is a complex and shifting implied *addressivity* built into this speech: t puts into the magistrate's mouth a parallel couplet (at line 45); a somewhat hesitant couplet that starts with plain repetition (line 47 recycles line 46) and builds to a parallel construction ("your wife is going to jail you, she'll jail you a few days, you'll be punished"). He repeats the same words ("why don't you show some self-respect?") at lines 50 and 52—perhaps once in the wife's voice, and then in his own. In both cases, he continues with a reminder that the narrated addressee is himself supposed to be a dispute settler (*jmeltzanej-k' op* 'fixer of disputes' // *jtitzvanej* 'punisher, scolder').

Thus, even in narrative about disputes, the disputatious language is so arranged as to index iconically both (narrated) social disorder and, at least in this case, an emerging order.

Dimensions of Order in the Rhetoric of Matrimony

Here we reach the ultimate "casting into words" and "linearization into discourse" that I promised at the outset of this essay. No longer can it be imagined that textual "presentation" of "events" is a matter merely of finding the correct words to go with referents, or of lining up clauses in temporal or developmental sequences. From the first words addressed to bride and groom in the embracer's exhortation, to the last represented words about other people's words about marriage, in gossip, the discourses of marriage have tried to bring "events" *into* order, casting a selective eye over details and trying to extract what one might call a textually coherent account.

The ethnographic distillate of this excursion into marital discourse in Zinacantán is, therefore, far from unexpected. It constitutes a cultural theory that inheres in

possible discourse. Whereas marriage joins celebrants (and their families) in a 'meeting // a union,' in their 'house // treasury,' it does so by 'seating // bending the knee of the bride,' who must thus accommodate herself to the strangeness and potential hostility of her husband's household. The responsible woman's lot centers on the hearth: the firewood that fuels it, and the tortillas it produces. The responsible man's lot is his work, at home or abroad, and a measure of self-restraint, neither squandering the 'corn // the money' of their communal wealth, nor demanding the impossible of his partner. Orderly social life thus depends partly on the bride and groom themselves, who must "measure themselves" as men // women, but also on the one word // two words and wisdom of the elders. Departures from this orderly image of life represent insurrections and indulgences that must be suppressed.

Jane Collier, following Barkun (1968), depicts law, in Zinacantán and elsewhere, as a kind of language, a "system of manipulable symbols that function as a representation, as a model, of social structure" (Collier 1973:257). The model, in turn, is used for "conceptualizing and managing the social environment," partly through the decisions people make about what parts of it to marshal, what language to employ, in formulating the terms of disputes.

Notice, however, that the semiotic processes in the discourses of marriage (which surface as well in the legal discourse of the Zinacanteco *cabildo* 'courthouse') inevitably involve more than mere "representation." Just as culturally *ratified* discourse in Zinacantán provides only certain "representational" vocabulary, within which the images of parallel couplets have special privilege and authority, so, too, does it enable only certain voices. Bourdieu's critical move from "linguistic competence" to "linguistic capital," from "symbolic interaction" to "relations of symbolic power," rests on the analytical fact of what he calls "censorship." Whereas "the linguist regards the *conditions for the establishment of communication* as already secured . . . in real situations, that is the essential question. . . . Among the most radical, surest, and best hidden censorships are those which exclude certain individuals [or, we might add, by extension, certain *voices*] from communication. . . ." (1982b:648). Moreover, suppression of voices can take radically different forms. The hegemony of marital rhetoric surfaces in other sorts of silence, as when a powerful political figure's own marital scandal simply never finds its way into the courthouse (although it does surface in furtive gossip).

Bourdieu goes on to suggest that there is a direct connection between the general conditions of "linguistic production"—centrally including censorship—and linguistic form.

The particular form of the linguistic production relationship governs the particular content and form of the expression, whether "colloquial" or "correct," "public" or "formal," imposes moderation, euphemism and prudence (e.g. the use of stereotyped formulae to avoid the risk of improvisation), and distributes speaking times and therefore the rhythm and range of discourse. . . . In other words, the

form and content of discourse depend on the capacity to express the expressive interests attached to a position within the limits of the constraints of the censorship that is imposed on the occupant of that position, *i.e.* with the required *formality*. (Bourdieu 1982b:656–57)

I am now in a position to summarize the iconic relationship I have argued to obtain between Zinacanteco marital order—a culturally construed social formation—and aspects of discursive form. There are at least three aspects to this iconicity.

1. First, there is a continuum of order in what I may call *code form*. The rhetoric of marriage transforms the disorderly, extemporaneous, perhaps halting speech of ordinary conversation or of argument—with ordinary words and everyday connotations—first into the measured, parallelistic constructions of careful, sober talk, and ultimately, into the pristine couplet imagery of ritual language, the quintessential order of Tzotzil as code. Another applicable metaphorical dimension, analogous to order, is “distance.” The words of marital squabbles are drawn from a conceptual field close to the raw experience of domestic discord; the paired doublets and triplets of ritual language, on the other hand, even when applied to matrimonial matters, exhibit both cultural generality and conceptual abstraction. Observe the movement, on both the dimensions of order and of distance, between, say, the complaint ‘He yelled at me and blackened my eye’ and the denunciation ‘I am victim of his scolding // I am victim of his beating’.
2. Similarly, there is a dimension of *sequential form*, that is, what conversation analysts call “sequential organization.” The disordered shouting, the anarchic interruption, the uncontrolled overlap of fights and arguments, give way over the course of a marital squabble first to the orderly dialogic of normally responsive Tzotzil conversation (Haviland 1988b), which leads ultimately to the flowing, perhaps simultaneous and multiple, monologic streams of ritual language. As in prayer and greeting, the ritual style even in dispute settlement promotes a highly ordered sequential rhythm: if there are multiple participants, their speech is synchronized, their overlaps managed, and their contributions sequentially coordinated.
3. Finally, the evolving discourses of marriage produce order in *social form*. The social organization of talk, in and about marriage, produces a range of *voices*, ordered, contextualized, differentially evaluated, and differentially *effective*. A dispute, for instance, may begin with the subversive back talk of an angry wife, or the defensive excuses of a guilty husband. Such clamoring personal, or private, voices are gradually suppressed behind the unanimity and authority of certain *public* voices: dispute settlers, parents, and elders. In fact, this third dimension of order necessarily encompasses the previous two. It invokes code form because the morally authoritative voice is, by definition, the voice that controls the authoritative style: the legislating images of couplets and ritual, where the aesthetically and culturally valorized genres have ipso facto moral weight. The social dimension of order also encompasses sequential form, through the imposition of silence; the authoritative voices of public dispute

settlers drown out the personal voices of disputants. (Or they serve as the only sustaining thread around which alternate, offstage, whispered, possibly subversive, voices can weave themselves—as in the case of the father, talking in counterpoint to the embracer’s wedding exhortation, or the beaten wife sliding her barbed comments in between the words of elders.) In the end, private individuals may be analysed to have no voice at all. Accordingly, the ultimate order appears in the univocality of ritual specialists: those whose words capture the world as it is supposed to be and whose mouths, therefore, we borrow.

Notes

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1. ‘A circle on a blackboard, a right triangle, a rhombus: these are shapes that we can fully intuit; the same thing was true for Ireneo with the windblown mane of a foal, with a herd of cattle in a narrow pass, with the changing fire and the countless ash, with the many faces of a corpse in a long wake’ (my translation).

2. My favorite example of this mix of explicit and implicit discursive evidence is the following passage about the Trio.

It has been noted that divorce frequently occurs when a man takes a second wife, and this is the reason which women normally give for leaving a man. However, on the other side of the coin, a man often takes a second wife because of the inadequacies of the first. Inadequacy is either barrenness or failure, of either spouse, to fulfil their duties in the economic partnership of marriage.

Tasi (252) said that she had left her husband Tepepuru (245) because he had taken a second wife. Tepepuru, on the other hand, said that she is lazy. I can vouch for this from my own experience, and add that she is a slut and that her bread is repulsive. (Rivière 1969:166–67)

Students of marriage in other disciplines share with many anthropologists a proclivity for trying to extract *facts* about marriage (or divorce) from situated discourse whose own nature is often unexamined. See, for example, the use of counseling interviews by classic family therapists (Mowrer 1928), or the relatively more sophisticated use of “divorce documents” (*i.e.* family law records) by social historians (Griswold 1982; Phillips 1980).

3. For a non-Meso-American example of the work on parallelism spawned by Jakobsonian poetics (Jakobson 1985), see, for example, Fox 1977.

4. In 1972, when I was preparing to be a *jpetom* myself, I sought special instruction (from the late Chep Nuj of Nachij) in the proper prayers for a wedding, from which these fragments are drawn.

5. The words *alab // nich' nab* (in lines 5/11/14) are archaic roots for children, not used in nonritual contexts in Zinacanteco Tzotzil.

6. See Haviland (1987, 1994) for a more detailed treatment of the creative possibilities of "ritual language" in apparently "nonritual" circumstances.

7. Notice that the word *k'op* 'word, language', also has the meaning 'fight, dispute', or, indeed, in general, 'affair'.

8. In fact, research by both Collier (1968, 1973:199) and Leslie Devereaux (1987) suggests that many women, especially widows and divorcées, prefer to live alone in Zinacantán, eking out an impoverished but unencumbered existence.

9. Thus, the "dangerous words" in the title of Brenneis and Meyers 1984 may be designed to shake up political, or even ritual, affairs, whatever the official appearance of orderliness.

10. For a somewhat different treatment of this passage, see Haviland (1989).

11. This is an almost canonical case, in Zinacantán, where drunkenness seems a necessary prerequisite to beating. Drunkenness is offered as a standard excuse for misbehavior in Zinacantán (Bricker 1973; Collier 1973; Haviland 1977a). The standard Tzotzil idiom suggests that someone can *ch'ay*, that is, 'lose (awareness)', a state in which one may walk and talk as well as perform other, more sinister, movements, about which no memory will remain. Structurally, then, drunkenness can be seen as a blanket response to various private aggravations—a wife who talks back, a neighbor who slights one or steals—which, in turn, enables an equally outrageous public act: beating the wife, publicly upbraiding the neighbor, and so on, while inebriated.

12. Many Zinacantec men exchange wealth for prestige by embarking on a series of *cargos*, years during which they care for saint images and perform other ritual duties, usually at considerable personal expense. Only married men can hold such ritual office. See Cancian (1965).

13. And, of course, there can be deeper levels of embedded speech, or higher orders of discourse. See, for example, the multiple layers of Kuna reported speech detailed by Sherzer (1983).

14. Tzotzil has its fair share of such verbs, including some with affective and metapragmatic tinges: not just *-chi* and *-al* 'say', or *-ut* 'tell' (also 'shout, scold'), but also these in combination with appropriate forms based on such explicit onomatopoeic roots as *'ov* 'shout', *'i* 'babble, stutter, wail, cry', and *'a* 'sigh, say "ah", mumble to self', etcetera. More concrete metaphors (striking people verbal blows, peeling their skin with insults, or sticking them with accusations) are also available.

15. One drunken New Year's Eve, I helped put two elderly siblings to bed after a lengthy ritual in Zinacantán. One, the man, had been serving as ritual adviser to a religious official, a post that required him to display, publicly, his skills at formal prayer. His aged sister—neither curer nor officeholder, but drunk on the liquor she had consumed serving as cook for special ritual foods—mocked her brother for his drunkenness, saying: "You think

only *you* know how to talk; but I, too, know one or two words." She thereafter fell asleep, giggling, and pouring out a torrent of fluent ritual couplets.

16. There are similarities here to the restrictive, legally circumscribed nature of legal representation—or the canons of "evidence"—in Western legal systems. See Berk-Seligson (1988), Conley and O'Barr (1988), and O'Barr (1982); Haviland (1988a) discusses the consequences of this discursive manipulation in a criminal trial.

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Contents

Contributors vii

Introduction / Charles L. Briggs 3

Telling Troubles: Narrative, Conflict, and Experience / Donald Brenneis 41

The Trickster's Scattered Self / Ellen B. Basso 53

Embarrassment as Pride: Narrative Resourcefulness and Strategies of
Normativity Among Cretan Animal-Thieves / Michael Herzfeld 72

Detective Stories at Dinnertime: Problem Solving Through
Co-Narration / Elinor Ochs, Ruth C. Smith, and Carolyn E. Taylor 95

Ideological Dissonance in the American Legal
System / William M. O'Barr and John M. Conley 114

Consensus and Dissent in U.S. Legal Opinions: Narrative Structure
and Social Voices / Elizabeth Mertz 135

"We Want to Borrow Your Mouth": Tzotzil Marital
Squabbles / John B. Haviland 158

Conflict, Language Ideologies, and Privileged Arenas of Discursive
Authority in Warao Dispute Mediations / Charles L. Briggs 204