“Whorish Old Man” and “One [Animal] Gentleman”: the intertextual construction of enemies and selves

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(1) “The reflexive project of the self, which consists in the sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives, takes place in the context of multiple choice as filtered through abstract systems” Giddens 1992:5.

(2) “[E]ach utterance is filled with various kinds of responsive reactions to other utterances of the given sphere of speech communication. These reactions take various forms: others’ utterances can be introduced directly into the utterance, or one may introduce words or sentences, which then act as representatives of the whole utterance” (Bakhtin 1986: 91).

“[A]n utterance is a link in the chain of speech communication, and it cannot be broken off from the preceding links that determine it both from within and without, giving rise within it to unmediated responsive reactions and dialogic reverberations.” (Bakhtin 1986: 94)

Mol Maryan (center), 1966

Kinship relations

(3): Maryan talks about his son-in-law, 1970

61. cha: Yeah, he made trouble with his older brother.
62. “OK, that’s good.
63. “So why should I be afraid of my parents-in-law?”
64. Perhaps that is what he thought to himself.
65. my: So maybe– maybe he thought of making trouble with his wife, too!
(4) “Speech” expressions signifying (un)sociability

mu s-k’opon s-ba-ik
NEG 3E-talk to 3E-SELF-PL
They don’t talk to one another.

y-ut-oj s-ba-ik
3E-scold/tell-PF 3E-SELF-PL
They have scolded each other.


65 m;
But later, the gentleman (her husband) heard about it.

66 "(And he asked) why I was selling land.

67 "(And he asked) why was I so intent on selling off property.

68 puta molon is
(And he said) I was a whoring old man

69 He got very angry over it.

(6) 25 June 1991 story, next part

71 m;
He told the commissioner of lands.

72 And the commissioner told me.

73 "This is what he said. This is what he said."

74 "(He asked) ‘What business of yours is it to sell land?"

75 "You are just intent on selling land."

76 puta molote
"You are a whoring old man."

77 That’s what Lorenzo [the then commissioner of lands] said to me.

(7) 25 June 1991 story, last part

104 "If he comes to speak to you again,
105 "(Tell him) ‘He sold his land."

106 "If he asks, ‘Have you heard about it?"

107 "Tell him I’ve heard about it. ‘I said to him.

108 "Because otherwise, I don’t want (people to say) that I am just selling"

109 "land in secret."

110 "(Say) ‘The commissioner has heard about it,‘ I told him.

112 m;
"OK, I’ll tell him that,” he said.

Example (8): Reports of fight, Mol Maryan & JBH
7 Jan. 1993

281 m;
It made me very angry.

282 "My son Manvel came to accost me in my house.

283 "Son of a bitch!” he said.

284 puta mol kavron
"Whorish old man, you bastard!

285 "This is not your house!”

286 "Get out with your whorish daughters!” he said.
(9): Mol Maryan tells the agent how his son Manvel rejects him, 20 July 1993:
90 m; "What, don't you talk to him?" he said.
91 "No, I don't talk to him."
92 "But you have received your lands [from your parents]?
93 "I have received them, yes."
94 "But he would give me lands anyway.
95 "After all, he is my father, you know,"
96 said my son Manvel evidently.

Example (11): Mol Maryan’s son Manvel asks a neighbor about the land he purchased from mol Maryan.
132 m; "Listen, I want to ask you, John.
133 "How much did you pay for this land?" he said.
134 "Because you are living here," he told him evidently.
136 "Why, it was this much," I answered evidently.
159 "Son of a bitch, damn!"
169 "I don’t know what business the whorish old man has in selling it,"
160 said my son Manvel evidently.

Example (13): Mol Maryan reports what ‘people’ have told him about his son Manvel’s plans and horrid words, extracted from a recorded conversation 5 September 1997
80 m; "If I manage to get the signature,
82 "If my father signs,
83 "Yes, indeed,
84 "He can go to shit, then.
85 "Let him just eat shit," evidently said my son Manvel
86 and his wife.

Example (14): Chep already was an enthusiastic trouble-maker as a young man, 5 September 1997
1 m; sokem onox
He was already going bad.
2 batz'i ben onox favron
calmek ich’i le’e
He was a real bastard even as he was growing up.

432 m: “Manvel,

433 "Let me ask you."

435 "Is our father still alive?"

436 "I never meet him on the path anymore."

437 "I said to him,” he said.

439 m: "Why yes, perhaps he’s alive.

441 k’usi van cha`i pu:ta mol un

442 "What (sickness) might that whorish old man suffer?"

442 He evidently said.

(16) How did Manvel go wrong? It was Chep’s fault.

359 m: He used to be all right.

360 But his head was just ruined when I got sick a long time ago.

362 m: It was because of the entry (into my house).

363 of one[animal] gentleman for two nights.

364 And the two of them provoked each other, (into fighting with me).

“Your pillar”

Conversation within conversation

• The narrator voices his enemies

• 511 jasta ti iya ki be li spirma li -

• “Wait until he has given his signature...’

• 512 ali vunal osile

• "On the land title’

• 513 e:sosi yu`un avu`un xa

• “Then, yes, it will be yours’

• 514 jipo komel

• ‘Throw him away and leave him.’

• 515 xiyut ti jbol chepe

• So says my brother-in-law Chep to me.

Voicing the ally

• Conversely, the narrator locates his own criticisms in the mouth of another

• 541 wa`i bu jok=lot che `e

• "Aa, so that is where you are hanging, then.

• 542 wa`i bu , lek avoyal -

• "That is where your strong pillar is,” he evidently said to him.”