Maya America: Journal of Essays, Commentary, and Analysis

Volume 1 | Issue 1

Article 13

7-15-2019

Full Issue - Maya America V1, I1

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/mayaamerica>

Part of the [Ethnic Studies Commons](#), [Indigenous Studies Commons](#), and the [Latina/o Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

(2019) "Full Issue - Maya America V1, I1," *Maya America: Journal of Essays, Commentary, and Analysis*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 1 , Article 13.

DOI: 10.32727/26.2021.12

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/mayaamerica/vol1/iss1/13>

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Maya America: Journal of Essays, Commentary, and Analysis by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@kennesaw.edu.

MAYA AMERICA

JOURNAL OF ESSAYS, COMMENTARY, AND ANALYSIS

Volume 1, Number 1

SER MAYA EN EL TIEMPO Y ESPACIO ACTUAL
TO BE MAYA ACROSS TIME AND SPACE

IN THIS ISSUE:

NITZ' AMA'Y

CARMELINA M. CADENA

JERONIMO CAMPOSECO

DANIEL CAÑO

JUAN G. FRANCISCO CRISTOBAL

DAVID J. GALBAN

KORINTA MALDONADO GOTI

JOEL B. JUDD

ALAN LEBARON

JAMES LOUCKY

SHERYL LUDWIG

VICTOR D. MONTEJO

RYAN SHOSTED

GILBERTO SIMON

ANNA TUSSEY

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

Published by Kennesaw State University Digital Commons

<https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/mayaamerica>

ISSN: forthcoming

Editor

Alan LeBaron, Kennesaw State University

Associate Editors

James Loucky, Western Washington University

Jeronimo Camposeco, Corn Maya

Production Editor

Aajay Murphy, Kennesaw State University

Ser Maya en el Tiempo y Espacio Actual

To be Maya across Time and Space

- p. 1 **Ser Maya En El Tiempo Y Espacio Actual: Una Reflexión Poética**
Daniel Caño
- p. 5 **Maya America: Introduction to the Journal of Essays, Commentary, and Analysis**
James Loucky
- p. 11 **Native American Connections, Maya Resistance, and Escape from Guatemala: Jeronimo Camposeco's Autobiography**
Jeronimo Camposeco
- p. 23 **The Rabbit and the Goat: A Trickster's Tale of Transnational Migration of Mayas to the United States of America (El Norte)**
Victor D. Montejo
- p. 46 **Measuring Levels on Collectivism and Individualism with One Maya Volunteer**
David J. Galban and Gilberto Simon
- p. 67 **The Impact of Community Partnerships on Maya Children's Identity**
Joel B. Judd and Sheryl Ludwig
- p. 85 **From There to Here: My Maya Journey and Life in America**
Carmelina M. Cadena
- p. 89 **La Vida en los Estados Unidos para los Mayas Guatemaltecos**
Henry Omar Vicente
- p. 95 **When Skills and Knowledge are not Enough**
Nitz' Ama'y
- p. 97 **The Maya Classroom in Diaspora: Blending Community-Based Research and Advocacy in Champaign County, Illinois**
Korinta Maldonado
- p. 104 **Maya Indigeneity in the Public School System: Institutional Barriers between Educators and Students**
Anna Tussey
- p. 114 **Laja'b'kanal yet' ko' q'in, the Lasting Dances of Our Fiestas: Music Embodiment as a Collective Memory of the Maya Diaspora**
Juan G. Francisco Cristobal

Ser Maya En El Tiempo Y Espacio Actual: Una Reflexión Poética

Daniel Caño

Poeta maya q'anjob'al

Guatemalan Maya Poet

Pastoral Maya USA

Abstract: This first essay written by one of Guatemala's well known Maya poets explores what it means to be Maya today, across the contemporary diaspora.

"Ésta es nuestra genealogía, que no se perderá, porque nosotros conocemos nuestro origen y no olvidaremos a nuestros antepasados." - Pop Wuj

Hablar de los mayas siempre resulta un tema apasionante; tan apasionante como bailar un son para celebrar una fiesta familiar, comunal o patronal en Los Angeles California, en Miami o cualquier otra ciudad estadounidense, tan apasionante como asistir a una elección o coronación de las princesas en las diversas fiestas patronales, tan apasionante como comer un pachito o un tamalito en una cena familiar un día sábado o en una fiesta, en algunos casos ya no con hojas de maxan sino con aluminio, tan apasionante como ir a las posadas que se celebran en las grandes ciudades del Norte, lejos de la melodía de la tortuga que se escucha en las aldeas o comunidades guatemaltecas entre el frío de Diciembre.

No se sabe exactamente el origen de la palabra maya. Algunos autores opinan que la palabra maya es de origen nahualt, con la cual los nahuas denominaban a sus antepasados. Otros afirman que maya es una palabra maya cuyo significado es discutible, porque puede entenderse como una piedra sedimentaria, blanca y porosa, con que los mayas construyeron sus pirámides en el territorio mesoamericano. Algunos más afirman que el término original es Mayab' que significa: pocos, no muchos (ma que significa negación y ya'ab, muchos). En términos toponímicos sería el lugar donde hay poca gente o de gente escogida.

Lo cierto es que el término maya se aplica tanto a una de las civilizaciones precolombinas más importantes que se desarrolló en el sudeste de México, Yucatán, Guatemala, Belice, parte de Honduras y El Salvador, así como a sus descendientes que se ramificaron en alrededor de 30 grupos étnicos que siguen ocupando el mismo territorio ancestral denominado actualmente como Mesoamérica, de los cuales ocupan el territorio

guatemalteco. Aunque hayan ciertos sectores de la sociedad que niegan cualquier tipo de vinculación de los mayas actuales con los mayas antiguos, hay elementos científicos, culturales, lingüísticos, artísticos, religiosos, etc. que evidencian este vínculo.

Para el caso particular de los guatemaltecos, luego de la guerra sucia emprendida por el Estado en contra de los mayas durante los años 70s y 80s empezó la emigración hacia otros países como México, Estados Unidos de América y Canadá. En un principio la emigración se debió a esta guerra, posteriormente, a la precaria situación económica. Muchos mayas emigraron hacia los Estados Unidos de América y la mayoría de ellos se estableció inicialmente en Los Ángeles California y después se dispersaron por todo el territorio estadounidense. Aquí empezaron a recrear su cultura, sus tradiciones, sus costumbres, su música, su marimba, sus sones, su idioma, su organización comunitaria, su cosmovisión, espiritualidad y religión.

Parte de esta expansión cultural en territorio estadounidense, distante y diferente al territorio guatemalteco, es la reproducción de los mayas como grupos étnicos; surge la nueva generación de mayas nativos estadounidenses o mayas nativos americanos. Cuando esta nueva generación expandida en todo el territorio estadounidense se autocontempla y se compara con otras personas de diversas etnias y culturas, surgen desde lo más profundo

de su ser estas interrogantes: ¿Quién soy yo? ¿Cuál es mi identidad? ¿Puedo identificarme como maya, aún cuando ya no hablo una lengua maya, ya no visto la indumentaria de mis padres, o cuando haya nacido en este país, lejos del territorio que ocuparon mis antepasados?

Ante estas interrogantes tan profundas y tan vitales en la vida de cualquier ser humano es importante abordar lo que se entiende por identidad. Generalmente se entiende por identidad como la imagen que cada persona tiene de sí misma y la que los otros tienen de ella; es una forma de ser y la aceptación de dicha forma de ser; es un proceso de construcción y apropiación de valores objetivos y subjetivos propios de un pueblo o una comunidad determinada; es tener un sentido de pertenencia y lealtad hacia esa comunidad transmitida de generación en generación, de acuerdo a su lengua, cultura, cosmovisión, etc., mediante el ser, el sentir, el pensar, el actuar de cada pueblo o comunidad.

Al hablar de la identidad se resaltan algunos elementos que tienen una dimensión objetiva, es decir, lo evidente, lo que resalta a primera vista, tales como: el idioma, la indumentaria, las costumbres, las tradiciones, el arte, la organización comunitaria, etc. Si bien es cierto muchos jóvenes mayas nativos estadounidenses ya no hablan su idioma o ya no visten la indumentaria, no solo ocurre con ellos, también ocurre lo mismo en Guatemala. Sin embargo, hay lugares de Estados Unidos donde los niños o jóvenes son trilingües, hablan Q'anjob'al, por ejemplo, así también, Español e Inglés; en otras partes son bilingües, ya sea Español – Inglés o Q'anjob'al – Inglés. Es un común denominador observar un creciente y profundo interés de parte de ellos por conocer el idioma maya, la cultura, la espiritualidad, la música y otros valores.

Es verdad que el idioma es un elemento vital de identidad, pero el hecho de que no lo hablen los jóvenes no los excluye de su ser maya, como tampoco los excluye si no visten la indumentaria. Entre las comunidades mayas de Guatemala, estos elementos tienen un valor relativo, no son absolutos; para algunas, el uso del idioma es muy importante, para otras, no; en algunas, es muy importante la indumentaria y para otras, no. El hecho de que no hagan uso de ninguno de los dos tampoco los excluye.

Al hablar de identidad también se resaltan algunos elementos que tienen una dimensión subjetiva, es decir, lo que no es visible a primera vista, tales como: la cosmovisión, la filosofía, los pensamientos, la conciencia, los sentimientos. A lo mejor esta dimensión pesa más sobre la dimensión objetiva, ya que la construcción de la identidad parte de esta dimensión. Si los mayas nativos estadounidenses ya no hablan su idioma ni visten su indumentaria todos los días como cualquier otro maya guatemalteco residente en el propio país, cabe preguntarles lo que piensan de sí mismos y las respuestas que surgen desde lo más profundo de su ser cuando se autocuestionan ¿Quién soy yo? ¿De dónde vengo? ¿Cuáles son mis raíces? Es casi seguro que al responderse se sienten parte

de alguna determinada comunidad por afinidades étnicas o culturales, o por compartir algunos elementos comunes como memoria histórica de un origen, tradiciones, costumbres, solidaridad, etc.

Otro de los elementos de identidad es la organización comunitaria que ha sido una de las características principales de las comunidades mayas en Estados Unidos; luego de que empezó la migración masiva, se fueron estableciendo por comunidad lingüística o cultural, lo que facilita la comunicación e interrelación entre las personas. Esto se debe a que la cultura presupone la vida social, la vida en comunidad hace posible a las personas y a la cultura; la vida social es una necesidad, nadie es autosuficiente.

Ya para ir concluyendo esta breve reflexión es importante no perder de vista que toda cultura es cíclica o dinámica, esto significa que se adapta y cambia, no es estática; ya que las personas o sociedades se van adaptando a las necesidades de su entorno geográfico, económico, tecnológico, etc. hay elementos que se van quedando atrás y otros se van renovando. Por lo que la identidad maya o el ser maya a través del tiempo y el espacio no es estático, sino que fluye constantemente como los ríos que serpentean entre los valles, las montañas, las quebradas, las rocas, los estanques o cascadas, que forman el devenir constante de la vida, sin perder su esencia.

Maya America: Introduction to the Journal of Essays, Commentary, and Analysis

James Loucky

Western Washington University

The history of the Americas is one of great human movement and social transformations. From the first settling of the hemisphere over 20,000 years ago, through centuries of mass trans-Atlantic crossings, migration has been a continuing phenomenon. Recent decades have seen significant numbers of people of Mesoamerica traversing north and across the continent, motivated by political unrest, violence, and the press of survival. The Maya, consisting of about twenty-five ethnic-linguistic groups spanning Guatemala, southern Mexico, and parts of Belize and Honduras, are among the diaspora peoples now present across the United States and Canada. Their heritages now blend with those native to North America, enriching yet also testing institutions, opinions, and harmonies.

In a 21st century world on the move, Maya embody the dynamism of migration and subsequent intermingling. In only four decades, people of Maya ancestry have become a vibrant and vital part of communities and neighborhoods throughout North America. How is it that Maya have come to be continental in scope? How do they not only confront but also shape social, economic, and political dynamics in new places, as well as those to which they may continue to be connected? In what ways might they be unique, and how might they also be representative of the diversity of adaptations made by people who are, or have recently been, on the move? What do their experiences and roles clarify about some of the most compelling issues of our time, particularly those concerning how societies may herald immigrant roots while rebuffing the migratory present?

Such questions are among those that have inspired a new journal, *Maya America: Journal of Essays, Commentary, and Analysis*. Twenty years ago, the first account of the emerging transnational scope of the Maya, *The Maya Diaspora: Guatemalan Roots, New American Lives* (2000), focused on the roots and emerging realities of Maya migration. Much has changed in a short time. As their contributions have become part of the American mosaic, *Maya America* is also shifting attention to the developing destinies of people beyond their traditional homelands in the highlands and lowlands of Guatemala and southern Mexico. While lives and identities continue to involve intergenerational connections to the south, they are also increasingly ones that reflect an intersection of indigenous, intercultural, and transnational experiences. They offer good insights for a

more holistic understanding of the history of all of the Americas as well as of a constantly developing U.S. society.

Maya America was chosen as the title for this journal, in recognition of those who acknowledge Maya ancestry as being essential to their ethnicity, regardless of overt cultural expressions or spoken language. It aims to demonstrate how people can contribute deeply to mutual wellbeing and transactions beyond places of origin, while also striving for acceptance and legitimacy. Among the issues the journal will cover are those relating to ethnicity and intercultural relations, including complications associated with being indigenous. For example, if acknowledged as Native Americans, Maya would substantially add to existing numbers in the United States. Their aspirations and accomplishments, as much as the terms and ways by which they are conceptualized, are significant in the evolution of increasingly diverse societies. By encouraging inquiry and inclusion, this journal encourages re-imaginings of current immigration debates as well as affirmation of humane and inclusive possibilities.

Roots and Routes

Human movement has been a common and persistent experience worldwide, and migration narratives integral to the histories of most peoples. As complex and varied as it is contentious, migration involves dreams as well as disappointments, displacement and resettlement, and separations along with suffering. It also engenders determination, creativity, and cooperation. Context is essential for comprehending its dimensions as well as outcomes. Migration from Central American and Mexico is grounded in powerful political and economic determinants. Overlaid on centuries of cultural interchange, colonialism and a plunder mentality introduced repressive plantation economies and debt servitude, including in what is today Guatemala. As the United States increasingly asserted dominance over a presumptive sphere of influence, East-West geopolitics mixed with poverty and authoritarian rule to generate mass violence and uprooting, peaking in the late twentieth century. Popular efforts to confront impoverishment and injustice were met with harsh military repression throughout the region, including in Guatemala.

Maya communities in the Guatemalan central and western highlands were especially hard hit. Brutal counter-insurgency campaigns, justified by deep-seated racism and anti-subversive ideologies, produced understandable responses of fright, fight, and flight – submission, resistance, and exodus. Many Maya fled to regions of refuge in mountains or cities, and when possible beyond Guatemala. The early 1980s witnessed an exodus of about 200,000 into southern Mexico. From scores of refugee camps along the border,

Maya in ensuing years also sought refuge in the United States, joining relatives and acquaintances who had ventured north for work in the 1970s. They, in turn, provided supportive anchors for subsequent newcomers, as migrants have done throughout human history. Primary destinations were across the “sunbelt” of the United States, to states like California, Florida and Texas offering jobs in agriculture, manufacturing, construction, and a variety of services. Both large cities and rural regions became gateways for developing social networks and new opportunities, and in turn directed people into seemingly every direction. Over the same decades, migration of Maya and other indigenous peoples from Mexico also grew. Their experiences replicated many of those of Maya from Central America, regarding search for refuge and a future, amid uncertainties, particularly those associated with the unauthorized status that many held.

Continuing dispersion and the need of many people to remain relatively inconspicuous makes it difficult to determine numbers or even locations, much less to speak of Maya as a single ethnic group. Likely half a million or more Maya from Guatemala now reside and work in cities, towns, and countryside throughout the United States, while Maya from Yucatan and Chiapas add tens of thousands more to that number. Today Maya undoubtedly live in every state of the United States, as well as in Canadian provinces from British Columbia to the Maritimes. Social networks, ethnic and kin ties, and relationships developed through employment and residence, along with serendipitous events, account for this expansion coast to coast. Commitment to families and hard work, along with creative and cooperative relationships, are key to a remarkable capacity of most Maya not only to adapt, but also to thrive amid the challenges associated with displacement and new circumstances.

Developing Destinies

As contemporary pressure on resources, concentrations of wealth, and widening inequities grow in Mesoamerica, migration *al norte* (to the north) remains a reasonable option, in spite of its considerable risks. Erosion of opportunities, as well as of arable land, combine with increasingly powerful south-north connections to compel long-lasting exodus. Many towns, and families within them, are now enveloped in a web of relations, indebtedness, and parameters characteristic of a “culture of migration.” The collective momentum is generally far more substantial than assertions of nationality for determining prospects that are increasingly mobilized and transnational in nature.

Maya children and families have today become the most prominent face of migration to the United States. Even as family separations and children’s deaths have

shocked public consciousness, thousands of lives remain hostage to politics of inertia and the shortcomings of existing protections. Worsening circumstances in Mesoamerica from which people seek refuge compound the calamity. Disposessions of land and toils of labor have been continuing themes for centuries, but today growing climate devastation and generalized violence further undermine wellbeing and survival, particularly in the northern part of Central America that includes hundreds of Maya communities.

Given such circumstances, and in an increasingly globalized 21st century, it is hardly surprising that dispersion continues. When livelihood decisions take priority over policy developments, south or north, exclusionary U.S. migration policies and mass expulsions serve only modestly to deter migration. This is the context in which Maya families and communities are likely to continue to operate for years to come. Their experiences of vulnerability as well as vibrancy, and the range of responses and transformations evident in family and civic lives, call for the kind of attention and direction that Maya America will take.

Connections

The title, *Maya America*, denotes a broad and varied space where discussion, commentary, and creativity can be freely explored. As a venue for interdisciplinary perspectives regarding interpersonal, identity, and cultural transformations, particularly as they are considered across time and space, *Maya America* draws on the experiences and voices of Maya, anthropological and social research, and endeavors of community organizations and partnerships. It will include research articles, literary contributions, book or film reviews, and “roundtable” or workshop options, along with community updates, personal narratives, and perspectives of both youth and elders. As research and resources by, and about, people of Maya descent continue to grow, this journal can serve to encourage continuing dialog about ways to build connectivity and community across cultures, generations, and borders.

In promoting breadth of knowledge, wide participation, and promoting cultural memory, *Maya America* strives for grounded evidence and informed interpretations of the complex situations of people of Maya heritage in the United States and across North America. It also aspires to be evocative. Varied lived experiences, of coming as well as becoming, and through processes of social and economic relatedness over time, illuminate the contours of everyday life while providing a window on wider political, demographic, and cultural developments. Questions that are central to ongoing cultural and political discourse, such as those regarding ethnic cooperation and conflict in the United States,

require thoughtful consideration. The power of systemic structures will be examined, to see how they can both encourage or limit civic engagement. Individual and interpersonal resourcefulness will be a primary subject of inquiry as well, along with the largely positive nature of migration, integration, and change. Including a range of places and possibilities also allows the journal to probe the complications and nuances regarding what it means to be Maya, Maya American, and even American.

Borders themselves are of many kinds, with capacity to either divide or bridge, geographic, cultural, political, and even psychological domains. Maya America can help us move beyond identity politics, and a nationalistic or statist bind. Integration, indigeneity, resilience, and dignity, and what they imply for the future of ethnic relations or the United States itself, are significant angles that the journal will feature. Contemporary practices and impacts of incarceration, deportation, and actions leading to political and social disadvantages are also areas to examine, alongside exemplary humanitarian and legal efforts to promote more humane policies.

Format

As contemporary events become history, Maya America takes up the challenge of both gathering and transmitting useful lessons. Case studies, personal and literary narratives, and commentary and analyses regarding contemporary policy concerns represent diverse entry points for inquiry and understanding. Collaborative methodologies, comparative approaches, and community research are especially welcome. All are essential for providing insights into ways that cultural understandings and intergenerational commitments shape priorities, the processes of ethnogenesis, negotiated self-identity, and language shifts.

Maya America is intended to be both accessible and compelling. As a digital, open access publication, suggestions and participation are welcome. Prominent in its development is an acknowledgment of the generations of Maya whose endeavors and sacrifices have shaped today's communities as well as countries. Their remarkable endeavors, coupled with the leadership emerging today, are invaluable for encouraging continuing engagement and for building funds of knowledge. So-called "traditional" knowledge, conveyed largely through the lessons and continuity provided by elders, will be complemented by perspectives of younger community members and scholars. Youth exemplify new energies for family and community formation, activism, and pan-ethnicity, and because they are often the most enveloped by changes, their views and social spaces are particularly useful for what they reveal about values, transfers of responsibilities, and potentials for encouraging mutual health and wellbeing.

Maya America should find a ready and varied audience, insofar as it involves people who identify as Maya and people of other ethnicities in its development and as authors, while also introducing the Maya to a wider public. Its scope and contents will resonate with community members, researchers, and practitioners. It will prove to be of value for students of U.S. history, Latin American studies, migration and ethnic issues, education, and anthropology. Inclusion of scholarly and community-based efforts, such as participatory action research, increases its usefulness for popular and community education, as well as in academic settings. Like the narratives of Irish, Chinese, Mexican, and many other peoples of the world, the experiences of the Maya are intrinsic to an American history that includes the United States as part of the Americas. Ultimately, it is hoped that Maya America will serve to reveal how greatly interconnected are the Americas, through processes of social and cultural evolution, history, and demography, and through assertions of rights of peoples south and north in shaping, and not just facing, what is ultimately a shared human destiny.

Maya Resistance, Native American Connections, and Escape from Guatemala: An Autobiography

Jeronimo Camposeco

Community Leader

Abstract: Jeronimo has been an activist for Maya justice since the 1960s, and a long-time Maya leader in exile. Jeronimo in this essay will discuss his experiences with Maya and U.S. Native American alliances in the 1970s and 1980s, and the beginnings of government violence.

Introduction

I am from Jacaltenango, a town in Guatemala, located on the slopes of the Cuchumatán Mountains, a branch of the Sierra Madre in the Department of Huehuetenango. My birth year is 1936. Growing up in the 1940s and 1950s, village life included working in our cornfields, and speaking our Maya Jakalteko (Popti'). Thanks to the Maryknoll missionaries, I could go to a seminary; then I got a scholarship to attend a national school, graduating as a schoolteacher. Later, in San Miguel Acatán, I taught at the Catholic school sponsored by Maryknoll Nuns for Mayan children who only spoke Akatec. I met there a nurse called Cristabel who was working at the Local Government Health Clinic. She had two small children Mario and Jorge and we were very good friends. I found also many years later some of my former students as Akateco refugees in Indiantown Florida. In 1967, I began working for the National Indigenous Institute. I began to understand the Guatemalan reality of the Maya People. I was a social investigator doing anthropological studies in the Mayan villages and communities, and I became very familiar with the Maya Akatecs and Q'anjob'als of San Miguel Acatán, San Rafael, Soloma, Santa Eulalia, and San Juan Ixcay. We published our work in the magazine *Guatemala Indígena*. We also did community development, as well as promoting consciousness on the reasons behind people's poverty, discrimination, and deprivation. This was something I was able to do because of my childhood experience and my time as a teacher in San Miguel Acatán. In my frequent visits to the Mayan communities, I started talking about the right to have a better life, that we are all equal as we were during our original Mayan nations that flourished in Guatemala and surrounding regions during the first millennium A.D.

After the Spanish invasion and during colonial times, land was taken from the

original people, who were submitted into slavery, reduced into “pueblo de Indios”, considered as inferior subjects, “mules” to carry heavy loads, decimating the population dramatically by infected diseases brought by Spaniards like smallpox, influenza, measles. Imperial rule also created a special social class called ladinos who endeavored to follow the Spanish culture of the oppressors and to discriminate and exploit us using the offensive term INDIANS to name the Maya peoples. Life did not improve for us after independence from Spain in 1821, and Guatemala continued to be oppressive to the majority of the people. It was racist in theory and practice and served to protect the interests of a small, privileged group. Years later under the so-called Liberal Reform of Justo Rufino Barrios, the indigenous people continued facing exploitation; their common lands taken away, forcing people to live up in the mountains where land is poor. Legal measures forced the Maya to work in the coffee plantations created by Barrios for his friends and privileged foreigners (mostly Germans) who took over those lands stolen from the indigenous people.

In 1944, when I was still a child, Guatemalans overthrew the US supported military dictator Jorge Ubico, which was a great time of great hope for a new nation. Juan José Arévalo, a university professor exiled to Argentina, was elected president. Arévalo’s successor, Colonel Jacobo Árbenz Guzmán, introduced a radical agrarian reform program and other social benefits.

These government policies became an excuse to tag the government as Communist. In 1954, the United States, claiming to fight communism and to protect US business interests, arranged a CIA backed overthrow of the democratic government of Guatemala. The Maya continued to be oppressed.

In May 1978 in Panzós Alta Verapaz, more than 100 Mayan Q’eqchi’ were killed by the Army because they were claiming their lands which had been stolen by powerful landowners. During the late 1970s, a popular resistance movement to the military governments began to operate through a collaboration among ladinos, indigenas, peasants, labor leaders, students, journalists, politicians, and Catholic priests. In response, the army and paramilitary counterinsurgency units stepped up their repression efforts. From 1980 to 1981, guerrilla forces encouraged and sometimes coerced large numbers of Maya to join them in their armed revolutionary efforts. The army retaliated by kidnapping, torturing, and murdering people suspected of supporting the guerrillas; and scorching crops and villages. Many Guatemalans, Maya and non-Maya, suffered.

How I Was Involved with the Resistance

In the 70’s I thought that the way we could do something to change the status quo

was to organize ourselves, then, a group of educated indigenous people including myself started a committee of Maya people called in Kaqchikel PATINAMIT which means “to our community”. We helped Mayan fellows on legal, economic, social, cultural and rights matters. We also assisted in the formation of various farming cooperatives. These cooperatives started suffering attacks by unknown armed men. In 1976, we were able to have our first Mayan person in the congress and this was our leader Fernando Tezagüic. With his enthusiasm, we were able to visit many Indian communities around the country, promoting rights and empowerment. This was narrated by the Guatemalan anthropologist Ricardo Falla in his article called EL MOVIMIENTO INDIGENA in the Salvadoran magazine ECA (Estudios Centroamericanos) June-July 1978. We organized ourselves in a massive demonstration before the Congress in April 1976, demanding the government to act, to return the lands stolen from 22 Indian families in Uspantán Quiché by Empresa Agrícola San Francisco Cotzal (which belonged to a ladino family who had friends in the government). In addition, we asked the government to free Indian farmworkers, held prisoners in Santa Cruz del Quiché.

Unfortunately, in 1978 another military government took office--General Romeo Lucas. He tried to gain our support because he called himself Mayan and started talking in some of his speeches in Q'eqchi'. However, he deceived the people and a terrible military repression took place in his command. Lands were taken by force, abductions and murders were common of anyone politically active. In January 31, 1980, 26 Mayan brothers and sisters were gathered in the Spanish Embassy asking for diplomatic help to tell the government to cease repression and abductions of Indian people in El Quiché. But, the response of the military government forces was to bomb and burn alive the people inside the Embassy including the Spanish diplomats and Vicente Menchú, the Father of Nobel Prize winner Rigoberta Menchú. Many of my colleagues in the resistance were abducted and assassinated, but still I kept active. For instance, Nehemías Cumes of San Juan Comalapa was taken from his hometown by armed men with rifles and machine guns. He has not been seen since. Two colleagues Roque Salazar, and Antonio Mux Cumez were abducted by many armed men on October 11, 1980.

Another colleague Francisco Sisimit was found stabbed to death in his car on the highway in May 1980. The general secretary Joselino Xoyon of our Committee who was also elected mayor of Chimaltenango was killed with machine-guns by armed men in Chimaltenango on October 14, 1980. My cousin Nazario Camposeco was a university student, one evening when he was arriving at the University of San Carlos, was intercepted by armed men and taken away. His dead body appeared in a sack on the edge of Calzada Roosevelt in Guatemala City. Finally, my friend a Mohawk Indian Kai Yutah Clouds

was kidnapped by armed men in plain clothes in front of hundreds of witnesses at the park in Chimaltenango--later his dead body appeared severely tortured on the streets of Antigua Guatemala. I was very close to him working in organic farm cooperatives in the Kaqchikel Indian villages, sponsored by the North American Indian group called Four Arrows and funded by Quakers. After his kidnapping, the same men were looking for me. I was advised by the American Embassy to leave the area to look for safety. The Indian Group Four Arrows helped me to flee and gave me sanctuary in Pennsylvania; then I applied for political asylum, which was granted due the overwhelming evidence of persecution I suffered in Guatemala.

How I Became Involved with North American Indian Group

Native American people from the United States visited Guatemala during the 1970s, organized in a communication group called White Roots of Peace, which began with the Mohawk Nation in northern New York. I was named by the Director of the National Indigenous Institute of Guatemala as the liaison of our organization. White Roots of Peace wanted to visit Guatemala to say thanks to the Maya Nations of Mesoamerica for the creation of the sacred grain Maize, which arrived to North American Indian Nations millennia ago to become the sacred and principal diet. From the United States, they brought baskets of North American Indian corn to present to the different ethnic groups in the Highlands of Guatemala. In other words, the Native Americans planned to meet, greet and give respect and offer solidarity to their brothers and sisters, as original people of the Americas, and in addition, the trip was to suggest a cultural and social interchange with their relatives of Mesoamerica.

White Roots of Peace later became Four Arrows, when we brought together Mayans, Mexicas and North American Indigenous People. It is important to mention that this movement of Native Americans, Native Mexicans and Mayas formed a communication group, which I helped to create. We traveled in the 70s to the United States and Canada giving lectures, bringing Indian dances, music, including live Mayan marimba to inform colleges, schools and universities about our plight of self-determination, Indian philosophy, culture and political activism. Originally, this was sponsored by the Indian newspaper Akwesane Notes and White Roots of Peace. As liaison for the National Indigenous Institute, I was an active participant in the travels and events.

In 1975, our first trip was to different linguistic communities in Guatemala, like Todos Santos, Momostenango, Quetzaltenango, and Coban. We shared with the Native Americans our marimba music, dances, traditional stories, handcrafts, and Indian

information, they shared with us their ways of life and thinking. We held meetings and slept in their teepees, participated in ceremonies of the sweat lodge, dances, pow wows, drum music and Indian songs and souvenirs.

These events marked the start of an Indian network with North American native people and Mesoamerican Mayas. Consequently, different Mayan groups went to the US and Canada to continue this cultural interchange visiting Indian nations, reservations, Indian Centers, Colleges, Universities, presenting art, music, cultural expressions, lectures about our culture, philosophy, survival and fights against political and economic powers foreign to our way of life. We carried from Guatemala our Marimba instrument from Todos Santos, Jacaltenango, samples of our different woven clothes, crafts but also Mayan Elders and Scholars to give lectures about our culture, philosophy and history. One of them was the great Mayan K'iche' wise elder Don Adrian Ines Chavez, native of San Francisco El Alto Totonicapán, one of the translators of our sacred book the Popol Vuh. This Native American Network was very important when the Mayan refugees fled Guatemala looking for safety into the US and Canada. My family and I arrived in late 1980 as refugees in the US at a farm owned by the Original White Roots of Peace later called Four Arrows based in York Pennsylvania.

One of the anecdotes I remember that in 1979 we gave a presentation at Humboldt State College in Northern California. Our topic was The Massacre of Panzós, which had been completely exposed by the media in this country. I was one of the two main speakers, the other one was Jesus Chacach, an elder and Mayan leader of the village of San José Poaquil, Guatemala.

Unknown to any of us at the time, the future Guatemalan dictator Efraín Ríos Montt was being "saved" a few miles away from the HSU campus at the Lighthouse Ranch on Table Bluff, just south of Eureka - HQ of the Verbos ministries (Church of the Word), a subsidiary of the Gospel Outreach organization. Ríos-Montt had met the young Lighthouse Ranch group when they traveled to Guatemala in 1976 after the great earthquake. The interesting thing is that they set up earthquake relief activity in the most affluent residential area of Guatemala City.

One year later, I was the only surviving member of the group, who had traveled to HSU in 1979. Chacach had managed to escape to Honduras, but word got to him that the soldiers had captured his son in San José Poaquil, and the old man returned to attempt to save his son, but he was captured, tortured and murdered by the army. In the States, I was working to organize and assist surviving Mayans who had escaped, and I also worked along with others to try to get the media to pick up the Mayan refugees' story. One of the friends I met at HSU said, "I was trying to get more information on the Lighthouse

Ranch - something that we could prove a connection to the US government - anything. I met with a man in Eureka who had been investigating the Lighthouse Ranch for a few years, and he told me a chilling story. The Lighthouse Ranch compound was security fenced had heavily guarded - like a military compound. He persisted, but one day he was making copies at Kinkos and he was accosted by a Verbos guard and threatened: We are watching your every move!" I moved to Florida because the Akwesasne Notes asked and sponsored me to assist lawyers and help my Guatemalan fellows and my Mayan brothers and sisters who came as refugees of the Military Repression in Guatemala in the decade of the 80's.

When I was still in Guatemala, news reports announced that there would be a big miners march from Ixtahuacan Huehuetenango to the capital in November 1977, three hundred kilometers to protest against mistreatment, exploitation and discrimination suffered at the hands of the mining company. The march was a last resort to petition the national government to intervene and resolve the labor problems. The authorities never listened to these calls for justice because of the pressure from the military and from company executives. The reports also said that the organizer of the march was Mario Mujia Cordova (Wiwi) one of the sons of my nurse friend in San Miguel Acatán Cristabel Cordoba. Mario continued his struggle in behalf of the campesinos but in July 20, 1978 in his legal help office, unknown armed men assassinated him with a burst of machine-gun fire. Days later, his brother Jorge who was a radio announcer in Radio Nuevo Mundo was kidnapped and was surely assassinated, because he never reappeared. The assassins did not rest; they continued to bring pain to this family. Cristabel's youngest daughter, who was born after I left San Miguel in 1960, was also kidnapped, tortured, raped and killed by the same sorts of men who had killed her brothers. There is proof that the military of the Base Armada of Huehuetenango committed these crimes with impunity, dressed as private citizens.

Who were the original Mayan Refugees?

The Indigenous people were not willing to leave their community, their family, their fellow neighbors and their lands. There is an ancestral attachment to them. But they did not have a choice and were forced to abandon their home, their livestock and their cornfields fleeing to Mexico and the United States looking for safety. Beginning the late 1970s and 1980s, some went to the refugee camps, others to settle in Tabasco 2000, Villa Hermosa the State of Tabasco Mexico, others northern Mexico working on the vegetable fields, where they met some traditional migrant Mexican farmworkers who

come to the United States seasonally. That was the way many Akatecos and Q'anjob'als came to Florida, North Carolina and other agricultural states. People escaped with their families, many villages were destroyed, with bombs and fire or mass executions, mostly in the areas at the border with Mexico: Ixcán, Nentón, San Miguel... Barillas. So, the first refugees were families mostly with small children and women. Then after the Peace accord, the immigrants mostly were men, young and older, with a mix of ladino people.

Due the inclination of the terrain and the cold weather in the altitudes, in every rain season there is a lot of erosion and the land can only produce one harvest a year of corn, beans, squashes, wheat. According to Juan Gaspar of San Miguel, one of the Refugees who came into the U.S. in the 80s told me this: "One of the great economic problems we have is that our lands are not productive enough, there is a lot of stones and are on the slopes of the mountains, therefore we went to look for temporary work in the lowland plantations" (personal dialogue April 1992). Thus, although the damage done to Maya land by climate change is well known in 2019, in reality the availability of good land to the Maya has long been a problem.

Juan Diego from San Rafael, in one of his trips, in the early 1970s, met a Mexican who told him about economic opportunities in the United States. Afterwards they decided to go to Los Angeles: but the cultural shock, the language barrier, away from his family and community, unprepared for the work he found in a garment factory, made Juan Diego's life very difficult. Later on, he helped his friend: Jose Francisco Aguirre (Chepe) from San Miguel to come to Los Angeles. In the 1960s, when I was a teacher at the Akatec Parochial School of San Miguel, one of my colleagues was Antonio Lopez Aguirre, a native from the area. Chepe also at that time was a teacher.

During the Guatemala earthquake, February 4, 1976, many houses and villages were destroyed, about 25,000 people were killed mostly Mayans of the Highlands. The aftermath of the tragedy left people homeless, unemployed and facing a harder economic crisis. In the case of the Acatecos, some of them left their village to nearby Nentón, Jacaltenango, to lease lands along the Mexican border; others went to do service work in Guatemala City.

Chepe returned to his hometown from Los Angeles worried for his family and community due to the earthquake. After all, people approached him to get his help to travel to California because they heard about job opportunities there and that he was prepared to return to the US. So when Chepe again left for Los Angeles, he took with him Antonio and three other friends. At the end of the 1970s, there were in Los Angeles about 30 Akatecos. So, a network of Maya people was created in the U.S. West Coast.

Violence and war increased from 1980. Looking for safety, the Maya made a

decision as a group to leave their homeland to neighboring countries and to the U.S. They abandoned family members, community, the mountains, their lands, the sacred places, their roots. These events motivated a movie director to make the film *El Norte*, which was very successful in that decade: my personal experience on the matter was that in 1984 I went to Los Angeles to visit Migueleño refugees who were my friends. I met in LA the Xuncax family and their young members Efrain, Thelma and their younger sister. They told the story of their persecution in Guatemala, their difficult transit through Mexico and their arrival to the U.S. through Tijuana and San Ysidro California. The *El Norte* Movie is based on their personal story. I know it also because I met Mr. Kenneth Veronda and his wife; they have a private school in San Marino California, they met the Xuncaxes and some Q'anjob'al children who were attending the school. The Verondas are very close friends to Gregory Nava and his wife and they told me about the Movie.

It happened that the Mexican farm workers colleagues of the Mayans in Culiacan were frequent travelers to the U.S. Florida farms during the harvest season. So, they invited the Guatemalans to come with them crossing the border and the Arizona desert without inspection arriving to Indiantown, Immokalee, Fort Myers and Lake Worth... These were another transnational networks originally farm laborers, created by the Mayans.

While the political violence continued, many Akatekos and Q'anjob'als arrived either in L.A. working at the garment factories, or at the labor camps of San Joaquin Valleys CA, or Florida as well, directly from Guatemala, from the refugee camps, from Tabasco 2000 or from the vegetable farms of Northern Mexico.

"They came from remote, mist-shrouded hamlets deep in the heart of the Cuchumatanes Mountains, where Indian villagers speak a Mayan tongue and follow pagan shamans where women wear T-shirts saying Miami Vice and "Indiantown" over elaborately woven skirts and the young dream of leaving behind a life of poverty and civil unrest to joint relatives in a distant land called Florida or California" (Palm Beach Post June 24, 1990, opinion section E).

Indiantown

I also fled during October 1980 with my family to the U.S. Fortunately, I had previous contact with a North American Indian communication group called Four Arrows formerly White Roots of Peace and stayed at their Farm in York Pennsylvania.

In 1983, the Indian Law Resource Center based in Washington D.C. asked the Mohawk News Paper Akwesasne Notes editor José Barreiro to find a Maya who speaks

Q'anjob'al and English to serve as an interpreter to assist the defense lawyers for a group of Maya Q'anjob'al in Indiantown, detained by Immigration Authorities to face deportation. José called me because he thought I could help for my experience as an asylee, and because I am a member of that same ethnic group and because I am fluent in both languages. I agreed, then, Akwesasne Notes sponsored my trip and I moved to Florida.

In Indiantown, Florida, the Quakers, the Holy Cross Catholic Church with its pastor, an Irish Priest Fr. Frank O'Loughlin and others had organized immigrant farmworkers to teach them about their rights and defend them from any employer and authorities' abuses. This group was called "Santuario" (sanctuary). When the Q'anjob'al Maya came to Indiantown, they were fortunate that a team of lawyers, church advocates, the Quakers of AFSC, worked together with Mayan Leaders. Later on, I contacted Dr. Shelton Davis, an anthropologist who was the director at that time of the Anthropology Resource Center (ARC) based in Boston. I met him years ago in Guatemala when he was doing research in Santa Eulalia. He learned about the culture, land tenure and the Q'anjob'al Language. Lately he had become an advocate, a collaborator and an expert witness for the Kanjobals in their plight for political asylum assisting the dedicated lawyers of FRLS George Carr and Rob Williams. Also as part of that team were the AFSC Lawyers: Bartolome Colon, Peter Upton and Juan Gomez.

The Holy Cross Service Center in Indiantown, a social services office sponsored by the Palm Beach Diocese, was our base to assist the Mayan refugees who were arriving from Mexico and Guatemala. Even from other places of the United States: California, Idaho, Iowa, Oregon, Georgia, Arizona, and North Carolina, where they previously settled after they fled Guatemala.

Sandy Davis, father Frank, some leaders and myself, felt the need to create an organization to assist the Mayan Refugees; then, after some deliberations we created the Corn Maya Inc. in late 1983. We also saw the same needs in Los Angeles, where many Acatecos there were related to the Q'anjob'al of Florida, and because there were many refugees from the Cuchumatanes Mountains. We started then, the Integration of Indigenous Maya in Los Angeles: IXIM. This organization assisted the people on their immigration claims and helped to practice their traditions, cultural celebrations, keeping their identity to be strong in a new environment and to provide social services. Ixim had many accomplishments, for example organizing San Miguel Fiestas, the creation of a band with Q'anjob'al musicians, with a lot of success, producing commercial CDs with great marimba folk music. One of the great collaborators was Dr. Fernando Peñalosa, a University Professor, who edited many tales and stories of the Q'anjob'al and wrote

books and articles about the refugees through his press editorial Yax Te', which means green tree probably because he is from Palos Verdes CA. The original founders were: Antonio Lopez Aguirre, Juan Gaspar, Efrain Xuncax, Father Jim Curtin, Shelton Davis, Jeronimo Camposeco: one of the first directors was Dr. James Lucky, then Dr. Fernando Peñalosa, Juan Gaspar, etc.

Back to Florida, the word about the Mayan Refugees went around the States and the Country; and many good citizens, scholars and students came to Indiantown to help. Dr. Duncan Earle, a friend I met in Guatemala years ago and who was a professor at Vanderbilt University in Nashville TN, came to Indiantown and Immokalee with his students during the Spring Breaks to do social services and assist the refugees in their emergencies after their arrival from Guatemala crossing Mexico and the Arizona Desert. Dr. Earle suggested that instead of going to enjoy the beaches and have fun on their annual spring breaks, students could do something useful and different serving and learning from a community in need like the refugees.

Also Dr. Allan Burns showed up with his students from the University of Florida Gainesville. He spent a long time living and studying the culture, history and the languages of the Maya of Yucatan, Mexico. Allan came to do applied anthropology with the assistance of different students working as interpreters, on health, advocacy, transportation, law, English classes, women and children care and education. Allan produced two video documentaries: *Maya in Exile* and *Maya Fiesta*: with this Allan and I participated in an Ethnic Film Festival called *Mundos en Contraste* in Grenade Spain in 1992. I also wrote the introduction of Allan's Book "Maya in Exile" which talks about the Mayan refugees of Indiantown in Florida in the 1980s.

Most of the original refugees came as families because in the rural areas of Guatemala, the Army practiced a Scorched Earth Program, and without preparation, people left suddenly looking for safety, including women, children, and elders. In that way they traveled together until their arrival to the country of destination. If a family and community members move together, it is easier to practice costumes and culture, talk at home and at the community gatherings with their mother tongue, there is a traditional respect to the elders, they cook their own traditional food, women can still wear their traditional clothes, etc.

But they also found great differences: in the matter of shelter they have to pay rent and because of the high cost, they share it with other people. They have to use electric appliances, they no longer can cultivate and prepare the corn for the tortillas, many food items have to be bought at the supermarkets, they have to work for others and get pay for it. They no longer have a land to cultivate their corn, their beans, their herbs and their

own vegetables and fruits. Sometimes they use the backyard of their apartments or houses to plant Mayan Herbs to eat Tx'ab'in (chipilin), blede, momon, tzuy, moch' or chiltepe and other medicinal plants.

The family status also changed, the women who traditionally is the home administrator who also is the house wife, cleaning, cooking, taking care and educating the children, and in their spare time weaving traditional clothes or doing hand crafts. Now they have to work in the fields or nurseries but also do the cooking, cleaning and doing children's care. She has to get up early in the morning 4 or 5 am. Make the tortillas and prepare the meals for herself and spouse even for other workers who live with them. Prepare the children for the school, then to go to work.

The Original Job

In Indiantown, there were different labor contractors or crew leaders from Mexican American origin working for the different farms in Martin and Palm Beach County. Also at the end of the seasons (May, June), they made contacts and contracts with the farms of North and South Carolina, Georgia and elsewhere. They were accustomed to have farm laborers from Mexico, and Puerto Ricans and African Americans. Now they were pleased to have Guatemalan Mayas because they were said to be docile, and "do not complain, work hard, and are very quiet". In those days of the 1980s, work was difficult for the Maya. Occasionally, I met some who did relatively well at hard work, making good money for a wage. I met Magdalena a young girl from San Miguel, she was by herself but she missed her grandfather who stayed in their homeland. She was very fast and very skilled, with a lot of energy; according to Jacinto she made 600 or 700 dollars a week, to harvest jalapenos, cucumbers, green peppers, tomatoes...One thing the Q'anjob'al Maya couldn't do well, was picking citrus, mostly oranges. The workers need long ladders, to carry and climb, to reach the oranges and put them into big sacks. The ladder is very heavy and the orange filled sacks are also heavy, provoking sometimes the falling of the worker down to the ground. Secondly, this is a contract that they are unable to accomplish because they cannot work fast enough to make a decent earning during the day. So, employers preferred Mexicans, African Americans, and Puerto Ricans, to do this kind of job.

Postscript

I became a resident of the United States almost 40 years ago. In Florida, the Maya population is large and active. Certainly, there remain many complications, and although

Maya organizations have flourished, there are plenty of divisions as well among the people. The future of Maya in the United States seems uncertain, in particular on how the new generations will view their Maya heritage. In the next issue we can explore the continuation of efforts to connect with U.S. Native Americans, and to discuss efforts to become recognized legally as Native American by the U.S. government.

Last Thoughts

“During 1980, we, the Maya had our own holocaust with ethno-genocidal characteristics, causing the exodus of many as the only alternative to spare life, producing suddenly our arrival in the U.S... our dream as uprooted people is the need to re-invent our culture envisioning the search for our own space into the scenery of the North American Indian Nations”.

The Rabbit And The Goat: A Trickster's Tale of Transnational Migration of Mayas to the United States of America (El Norte)

Victor D. Montejo

Professor Emeritus, Native American Studies
University of California, Davis

[Editor's note: Victor Montejo wrote this essay in 2009 for an edited book project then planned by Sandy Davis and others. Victor has graciously allowed us to publish his essay in the inaugural issue of Maya America. Much has happened since 2009, but the "The Rabbit and the Goat" establishes a strong marker in time and allows the reader deep insights into the present.]

Abstract: I analyze and interpret this tale as a way of explaining current transnational migration and dislocation in Maya communities. For the storytellers, this may be just a story about the rabbit as a trickster and that is it. However, if we recognize the intricacies and ordeals that Maya migrants suffer until they cross the U.S. border, this story serves as a social criticism of modern global capitalism and transnational migration. Unfortunately, storytelling is diminishing in importance among indigenous people due to television and the internet.

Introduction

As we come to the end of the present Maya millennium, Oxhlan Baktun, we recognize that massive migration and dislocation of entire communities is occurring all over the world because of armed conflicts, ethnic discrimination, poverty, and landlessness. This, in part, is a response to the failure of the nation-states for imposing by force their hegemonic and nationalist ideologies on minority populations (Worsley 1984). In Latin America, transnational migration of indigenous people has increased as a result of political violence that has affected these countries for centuries. This is the case of the Q'anjob'al, Jakalteq, K'iche, and Mam Mayas of Guatemala who have been migrating to the United States since the early 1980s. The United States has been the most desired country for migration, especially the states of California and Florida because of the favorable weather, the language (Spanish), and the agricultural production (Burns 1993). During the 1980s and 1990s, as refugees and migrant workers arrived, many of them applied for political

asylum, some have received their residency or citizenship, and have rebuilt their lives in the United States. Others, such as the Q'anjobal Maya in Florida, have decided to live in communities that resemble their homeland in Guatemala and have revived their cultural traditions, becoming Maya-Americans in their "imagined communities" in the United States (Anderson 1990).

This essay focuses on the literary aspects of migration and transnationalism as a way of showing that folktales still have an important role in Maya communities. First, folktales serve as a form of amusement among Mayas who still joke over the great pains and sufferings that they endured in reaching *El Dorado*, or "*el Norte*." Second, they serve as lessons in history that tell younger generations about the dangers of abandoning one's own place or homeland and wandering in distant places for adventures. From an anthropological perspective, I analyze a Maya folktale, "The Rabbit and the Goat," as a metaphor or as a "trickster's tale" of transnational migration in which many Mayas are currently engaged. In this folktale, the rabbit is the trickster and he convinces the goat to travel to a distant and unknown place in search of a better life. The unknown place is called *porisal*—a subtle metaphor for the current transnational migration occurring in Maya communities today (Montejo 1999a). My hypothesis is that, in this story, the rabbit symbolizes the Ladino (non-Maya) who tricks the goat who represents the indigenous person into venturing away from home, placing the goat in danger along the way. In other words, this story is a literary reflection of the ethnic conflict in Guatemala that occurs in the current process of transnationalization and the globalization of the world economy.

My aim in this project is to describe the mechanism of displacement of Maya from their homeland in Guatemala as they are convinced by human smugglers or "coyotes" to be led to the Promised Land, *el Norte*. Among the Maya, the rabbit is considered a trickster and a manipulator, which could represent the Ladinos who constantly trick and deceive the illiterate and uneducated Maya. My research focuses on the process of how massive migration out of Western Guatemala ruptures the moral codes of community life. In other words, my research focuses on the issues of labor migration, identity, and transnationalism as a modern expression of the capitalist world system. Emphasis is placed on the difficulties of the journey, which suggests that this journey is comparable to the pilgrimage process described by Victor Turner (1987) as a rite of passage. As an anthropologist and writer, I am interested in understanding the changes and transformations that have occurred in the worldviews of the Maya who are now U.S. residents or citizens. Mainly, how the human smuggler "trickster" or "coyote", affected and transformed their lives and that of their families by taking them across the border.

Similarly, I suggest in this essay that indigenous communities have their own

traditional ways of resisting the invasion and destruction of their community's solidarity. Unfortunately, this solidarity is being destroyed by the current waves of transnational migration passing through the land of the Maya, crossing into Mexico and onward. The significance of this research project is that it focuses on the way the Maya use trickster stories as a subtle way to both avoid and accept foreign ideas that rupture their worldviews while they also assimilate. In this case, folktales reflect traditional values and offer resistance to the current tides of transnational migration. I also study the effects of migration on the lives of those Maya who are already established in communities in the United States. A good example is the community of Indiantown, Florida, where some tens of thousands Maya (Q'anjob'al, Mam, K'iche, and Jakaltek) live, maintaining their languages and celebrating traditional festivals. This transcultural experience is expressed in the poetry, songs and folktales being written by Maya exiles in California and Florida (Penalosa 1996), as well as back home on Guatemalan soil. My aim is, then, to analyze Maya transnational migration, particularly those migrating toward the United States, from a literary perspective, a subject that is not yet well researched among indigenous people. The data that inform this study was collected from the Jakaltek Maya in Western Guatemala as well as from the Q'anjob'al in Florida and in Los Angeles, California. I conducted interviews with elders (men and women) and collected folktales related to migration, such as the story used as the literary framework for this research study.

Transnational Migration and Global Capitalism

Transnational migration has become a major expression of the globalization of the world economy. The industrialized and powerful First World countries, such as the United States, are magnetic forces that pull the flow of migration around the world. The U.S. economy and the power of the dollar have become the symbol of desirable economic power, so migrants from all over the world venture to the United States, despite the dangers of crossing international borders. In this process, more and more indigenous people of the Americas are travelling north in search of the land of opportunities. In the past, only those who were economically capable of making such a transition considered migration to the United States. At this time, the immigrants in the news are not those who have the money or those intellectuals who are expelled from their countries and come to the United States to protect their lives. Now, the massive migration to the United States is composed of landless peasants, poor *campesinos*, and indigenous people who abandon their traditional ways to travel in search of a better life. Most of these migrants are not looking to stay permanently in the United States, since they still maintain a strong link

with their communities back in Guatemala. Such is the case of Maya exiles and refugees in the United States who have established diasporic communities in California, Georgia, Florida, and elsewhere. They have maintained their contact with their remembered homeland in Guatemala. According to James Clifford, this modern diaspora has “to do with decolonization, increased immigration, global communications, and transport, dwelling, and traveling within and across nations” (Clifford 1997:249). Migrant workers who every month wire money to their accounts back home are using the banking facilities offered by capitalism. Many also use Western Union or private courier services like King Express that deliver money orders directly to the families of the immigrants even in the most remote communities in Guatemala and Mexico. In the 1980s and 1990s, the telephone became the ideal instrument of connection. Relatives at home make expensive collect calls to their family members in the United States and maintain communication about the daily life and politics of their hometowns. Distance is not a big problem, given the marvels of communication technology, particularly now with the popularity of the cell phone. The time and space to be traveled has been narrowed and contact with relatives and friends back home is just a phone call away. When cell phones became available in the year 2000 in rural Guatemala, immigrants in the United States began asking their relatives back home to buy one so that they could maintain contact. James Clifford (1997) exemplifies this situation of “close contact” by describing the relationship developed between Mexicans of Aguililla, Michoacán, and their migrant community in Redwood City, California:

Today, Aguillillans find that their most important kin and friends are as likely to be living hundreds or thousands of miles away as immediately around them. More significantly, they are often able to maintain these spatially extended relationships as actively and effectively as the ties that link them to their neighbors. In this regard, growing access to the telephone has been particularly significant, allowing people not just to keep in touch periodically but to contribute to decision-making and participate in familial events from a considerable distance (Rouse, in Clifford 1997:246).

This is true, since immigrants send money home to build houses, buy land or start small businesses. Those who do not send money home and do not call their families are suspected to be involved in extramarital affairs. This problem has been generalized since among the Maya, it is usually the men who migrate alone in search of work. Therefore, after four or six years in the U.S., many Guatemalan migrants share their lives in the diasporic community with immigrant women from other parts of the world, mostly from

Mexico and Central America.

The issue of borders and frontiers as contact zones where cultures dynamically interact and clash (Pratt 1992) are important concepts here in theorizing the global migration of indigenous people, as a modern or post-modern phenomenon. Since the major desire of immigrants is to come to the United States, the border at Tijuana, for example, becomes a waiting room for the opportunity to cross into the U.S. Here at the border, Maya immigrants rid themselves of any visible sign that could give them away as Central Americans. They buy shirts with Mexican or U.S. labels, rid themselves of their identities as Maya, and start to speak with a Mexican accent. If captured on the U.S. side, they are then deported to Mexico and start their struggle to cross again. The border is a concrete reality that immigrants must conquer, some crossing or drowning in the Río Grande, some managing to cross the deserts, while a few fall dead on the way, as they journey to the land of the dollar. The border is a barrier that is not fluid, flexible, or accessible. Some immigrants refer to the ordeal of the journey as passing through the door of hell. The door of capitalism is closed to the poor and unwelcome immigrants who are seen as a danger to the white-Anglo society in the United States. In addition, as stated by Renato Rosaldo, “They become anonymous brown hordes about to engulf Los Angeles and a number of other North American metropolitan centers. In official versions, the brown invaders come bearing not culture but poverty, drugs, illiteracy, and crime” (Rosaldo 1993:214). It is then important to understand the complexity of the border situation in order to understand the rabbit tale that illustrates this story of transnational migration.

The Transformation of the Rabbit as a Trickster

The rabbit is a figure that often appears in pre-Columbian Maya art and in Maya literature such as the *Popol Vuh*. During the classic Maya period, it seems that Maya writers used the rabbit as the patron of the writer and poet. The rabbit appears holding a brush as he paints a group of codices, or ancient Maya books, as represented on Classic Maya vases.

As shown in these figures, the rabbit represents the arts of creative writing as well as the documentation of history. Why was the rabbit the symbol of the writer in classic Maya times? We do not know exactly, but we can argue that the rabbit was an image of creative power and cleverness who could find ways to solve (or cause) problems, as writers can create and provide ideas (good or bad) to the public. Even in the *Popol Vuh*, the sacred book of the Maya, the rabbit appears prominently in the creation stories as well as in the ball game. When the twins, Hunajpu and Ixbalamke, began clearing the forest

to plant corn, the animals were disappointed at the destruction of their habitat. So, when the hero twins returned to the field the next day, “they found that all the trees and vines were standing again and that the brambles and thistles have become entangled again. ‘Who played this trick on us?’ they said.’ No doubt all the small and large animals did it, the puma, the jaguar, the deer, the rabbit, [the fox], the coyote, the wild boar, the coati, the small birds, the large birds did it in a single night” (Recinos 1950:132). The twins returned and tried to capture the animals. They almost caught the deer and the rabbit, but their tails broke in their hands, “and for this reason the deer and the rabbit have short tails” (Recinos 1950:133).

Similarly, in the *Popol Vuh*, the rabbit is said to have taken part in the ball game between the hero twins and the Lords of Xibalba, or the underworld. When the hero twins were almost defeated by the Lords of the underworld, they ordered the rabbit to be ready to help them when needed. They told the rabbit to wait in the oak trees for the ball to come. Rabbit was told to run immediately with the ball toward the bushes and hide. When the ball went bouncing toward the oak grove: “Instantly the rabbit ran out and went hopping; and the Lords of Xibalba ran after it. They went, making noise and shouting after the rabbit” (Recinos 1950:153). This gave the twins enough time to change balls and rescue one of them from death, thereby winning the game. The rabbit is, then, a major figure in the oral tradition of the Maya since pre-Hispanic times, as shown in the codices and the *Popol Vuh*. The *Popol Vuh*, reportedly written after the Spanish invasion, was copied from an ancient document, perhaps written in hieroglyphs and later passed down through oral tradition. In the case of the rabbit stories from pre-Hispanic times, they have persisted with appropriate changes and transformations to be functional in modern Maya oral tradition (Montejo 1991).

The Rabbit as a Trickster

The rabbit becomes the trickster after he himself was tricked by the deer. According to Maya tradition, the rabbit used to have antlers but he lost them to the deer. Here is a fragment of the story of how the rabbit lost his antlers:

“I have come to complain, oh Shaper, of the trickery of the deer. He has cheated me out of my beautiful antlers.” “What did the deer do to rob you of your antlers?” “I placed them on his head myself because he said he would only borrow them for a moment. That moment passed and now he has not returned, the big liar. He has robbed me shamefully.” “Ah, careless rabbit.

What's done is done. Besides I cannot punish the deer for something you did with your own hands. Didn't you know the deer would do anything to have antlers?" "Now I know I was weak and foolish to let myself be tricked. For that, I beg and plead that you give me other antlers, oh, Shaper, owner of parakeets and monkeys, of foxes and raccoons and rabbits and deer, please give me more..." The incessant begging of the rabbit led the Shaper to reconsider his decision. "Very well, you demanding rabbit. The only thing I can do for you is to draw out your ears and make them long so everyone can see that you are a great animal." Without saying more the rabbit let the Shaper and Creator stretch his ears upward, and since that time rabbits have had long ears, and learned to be wise and cautious (Montejo 1991:37-38).

Since this incident, the rabbit has represented the role of the deceived person who learns that he has the power to harm and play tricks on his neighbors. I would say that the story of how the rabbit lost his antlers is the turning point where rabbit becomes alert and turns into (begins to represent) a human trickster. The rabbit as a trickster continued in the Maya oral tradition throughout the centuries. During the colonial period, the ethnic relationship between the Maya and the *Ladino/Mestizo* population became tense as the Maya became subjugated to the developing colonial elite. The Maya still remember how much they suffered at the hands of Spanish landlords and their subsequent generations of Mestizo or Ladino authorities. Because the indigenous population was constantly tricked by the *Ladinos*, the rabbit came to represent the *Ladino* dominator and deceiver. In other words, the rabbit in the oral tradition shifted its identity from being Maya and became a *Mestizo* or *Ladino* figure. And, to be a Ladino among some Maya ethnic communities is to engage in unacceptable behaviors, such as kissing a woman in public. In other words, there are certain attitudes or behavior of Ladinos that are considered immoral, that's why Maya men do not touch or kiss women in public places. For this reason, women do not stand along isolated roads or in hidden places to talk to men; they must protect their honor and personality. The behavior of rabbit, being a trickster and a deceiver, is that of a shameless Ladino. The role of rabbit is comparable to that of the coyote or raven among Native Americans in the United States and Canada. However, the rabbit is mostly a trickster and does not do good deeds for humanity as his Native North American counterpart very often does. Historically, the Ladino population has exploited the indigenous people and this unequal social relationship has been expressed in the oral tradition. The Ladino's role is that of the trickster in Maya communities.

On the other hand, we could also argue that *txitx* or *konejo*, the rabbit is sometimes Maya. The rabbit is a small animal who knows the land well, and can do tricks at the expense of a bigger animal. For example, the coyote (the animal, not the current-day smuggler) in Maya oral literature is big and dumb, so rabbit easily deceives him. The Tz'utujil Maya say, "That because he is small, the rabbit calls the coyote uncle" (Sexton 1992:24), but plays tricks on him all the time. That is why, in Jakalteq and Q'anjob'al communities, if someone plays tricks and deceives all the time, people would say to that person, "*kaw konejo bach*" ("you are a rabbit").

In this story about a rabbit and a goat, we propose that the rabbit, as trickster and manipulator, could represent the Ladinos who trick and deceive the Maya into the Promised Land, el Norte; although lately Maya people have adopted the behavior of the rabbit and are involved in smuggling immigrants. The smuggler (in real life) is not called a "rabbit" but instead those who smuggle humans across borders are referred to as "coyotes" or guides. The smuggler describes the United States as a paradise, where life is easy and money is abundant. For his work of smuggling, the guide or "coyote" collects money from those who follow him through the ordeals of travel, until they cross the U.S.-Mexico border. To illustrate what I have been describing here and to show the dangers of traveling to unknown places with "rabbit" guides, I recount the following tale:

The Rabbit and the Goat (short version)

Tired of living a poor and miserable life, one day a rabbit decided to abandon his homeland and venture to a distant and unknown place. After walking a great distance, the rabbit stopped under the shade of a bush. He was about to lie down and rest when he heard a noise on the ground not too far away. It was a horse that was grazing quietly on the prairie and kicking the ground in an effort to repel the flies on his back. The rabbit approached the horse slowly and said, "How come, as big as you are, you allow yourself to be tied there to that post without the freedom to roam wherever you please? Learn from me. Despite being very small, I am free to seek adventure. If you want to follow me, I can untie you right now."

After meditating for a while, the horse replied, "It is a good proposal, Mister Adventurer, but I have a master and I must stay here where he left me. I am used to this place, so I cannot follow you, Mister Rabbit."

The rabbit continued on his way and soon he arrived at a place where an ox was tied to a post. The rabbit approached the animal and invited the

ox to travel in search of a better place to live. "Hey, Mister Ox, how come you, being so big, are there tied to a post without freedom to travel? Join me. I am going to a rich and beautiful country where life is easy."

The ox replied, "No, Mister Rabbit, this is the place where I have lived and I don't want to abandon it. Go on your way, because my master will appear with his dogs and then you will be in trouble." The rabbit continued his adventure alone.

Day after day, he walked under the heat of the sun, until he got very tired. He then decided to rest under some green bushes. Once again, he was about to rest when he heard the bleating of sheep and goats not far from there. The rabbit approached the fence where the animals were congregated and said, "Hello, my friends. I am so saddened to see you in this prison. I can only offer myself to free you if you want to follow me to the *porisal*." The sheep asked what the *porisal* was, and the rabbit explained, "The *porisal* is a marvelous place where there is money and life is easy. I don't even know where this place is, but I am eager to travel to find it and enjoy it. People say that it is truly a paradise where very few people have traveled."

All the sheep and goats were about to be convinced, but the oldest of the rams said, "Stop, Mister. Don't try to deceive us; we are tired of being deceived with lies and tricks."

The rabbit continued describing the wonderful place he was searching for, and finally one of the animals agreed to accompany him. This was a young goat who said, "Me sir, I would like to follow you if it is true that there is a better place than this one where I am living." The rabbit wasted no time in helping the goat escape from the fence.

They walked and walked for a long time until the rabbit started to limp. Then, finding a little clearing in the forest, the rabbit lay down on the ground and started to cry out as if he were very sick. The goat, worried about his companion, asked, "What's wrong, dear friend Rabbit?"

The rabbit responded in a tremulous voice, "Oh dear friend, I am dying, I am dying."

"What can I do for you? How can I help you get well?" asked the goat worriedly.

Hearing the compassionate voice of his companion, the rabbit said, "I may get better if you carry me on your back and we continue the trip. Now, I cannot move and I may die right here if you don't help me." The goat

agreed to carry the supposedly sick rabbit on his back.

The goat walked for many days, carrying the rabbit on his back. When the goat could not run faster, the rabbit started to whip him with a twig, as if he were a cowboy. "Hurry up, you're going too slowly," said the rabbit, hitting the goat once again. Then the goat realized he was being used by the rabbit and stopped suddenly.

"It seems you are already healthy since you can now hit me with all your strength. I ask you to get off my back right now," commanded the goat.

The rabbit tried his tricks once again. "Oh, Friend Goat, my bones are still hurting and I cannot walk."

"Your bones will hurt even more if you don't get down off my back right now," commanded the goat. The rabbit was stubborn, so the goat began jumping and kicking around like a wild stallion, until the poor rabbit flew off his back and landed on the gravel.

The rabbit cried out "Ouch!" when he hit his head on the hard ground. "This is what you deserve, you liar. And stop deceiving and tricking the poor inhabitants of the forest." After this fight, both of them realized that it was too late to continue walking, so they decided to find a place to rest and spend the night.

Somehow, they realized they were close to their final destination. They looked around and found a cave where three jaguar cubs were playing. "I'm scared," said the goat, retreating, ready to run for his life.

The rabbit stopped him and said, "Don't worry my friend, they are only little kittens. Besides, we have to have courage to cross this land since we have already suffered a lot to get to this point." Then the rabbit asked the playful cubs, "Eh, children, where is your mother?"

The little cubs answered without paying attention to the intruders. "She went to find food for us, and she will be back soon." The goat began to feel fear again.

Then the rabbit told the cubs, "We will spend the night here, near you. Since we don't want to bother you, we will hide high up in the crevices of the cave. Don't tell your mother that we are staying at the borders of her domain."

"She has a good nose and she will soon find you," said the mischievous cubs.

The rabbit did not care, so he and the goat moved to another hidden

section of the cave, up above the ground. The goat got scared hearing the noises down below. They truly were at the edge of a well-protected and dangerous territory. "Don't worry. Venturing into a new land always has its good and bad sides," said the rabbit.

It was already dark when they heard the roaring of the mother jaguar and others who came to sleep in the cave. "Owiyyuuuu, grrrr....!" The mother jaguar stopped abruptly when she smelled the ground where the visitors had stood. "Did anybody come to the cave when I was away?" asked the jaguar.

The cubs responded by showing their mother the crevice where the two travelers had hidden, hoping to pass through the land patrolled by the jaguars. The cubs said, "Two travelers passed by. One was big and the other small. They invaded our house while you were away."

Trembling with fear in the crevice high above and at the edge of a big hold in the cave, the goat began to cry. "My friend rabbit, I'm in big trouble, I gotta go, real bad!"

The rabbit scolded the goat, "You cannot do that right now, the jaguars will discover our hiding place and capture us."

"I cannot resist, Friend Rabbit. I need to pee immediately, or I'm going to explode," insisted the goat.

"Okay, lie down on the rock, but on your back, so you can urinate through your fur without making any noise."

The goat obeyed the rabbit and lay down on his back. The jaguar growled and the poor goat tried to stand up, but he slid across the wet rock and fell into the big hole in the cave. The rabbit and the jaguar heard the noise of the goat's body hitting the rocks as he fell into the hole. The rabbit began to shout at the unfortunate goat, "Hold on, hold on!" The rabbit tried to create confusion so the jaguar would think there were other bigger animals up there.

The mother jaguar started to flee the cave with her cubs, but then she decided to stay. "Why should I run away? This is my territory and I have to defend it. I won't let other animals pass by, since I don't want strangers to share this territory with me and those of my kind." The jaguar went inside the cave and began searching for the one that was shouting noisily, "Hold on, hold on!"

The rabbit managed to hide himself and waited until the jaguar went

down into the hold to see whom the unfortunate one was who had fallen. At the bottom of the hold was the poor goat, dead. The jaguar brought it up to her cubs and the other jaguars and they ate it ravenously.

Meanwhile, the rabbit managed to cross the borderland of the jaguars and continued his adventure in search of the *porisal*, or the place of opportunity, the paradise where there were riches and life is easy and food plentiful.

(Montejo, from my field notes)

This story was told to me by my father as well as by other elders in my community. It is told whenever Jakaltek Maya travel to distant places. They are considered culture brokers who have abandoned their communities and ventured to unknown places, the *porisal*. When someone is absent and nobody knows his whereabouts, people would say he went to the *porisal*. Before the 1960s, very few Maya traveled outside their communities or to distant cities such as Guatemala or Mexico City, but this was the starting point of migration and adventuring to distant places by some men and has continued to increase to the present day.

I analyze and interpret this tale as a way of explaining current transnational migration and dislocation in Maya communities. For the storytellers, this may be just a story about the rabbit as a trickster and that is it. However, if we recognize the intricacies and ordeals that Maya migrants suffer until they cross the U.S. border, this story serves as a social criticism of modern global capitalism and transnational migration. Unfortunately, storytelling is diminishing in importance among indigenous people due to television and the Internet. Nevertheless, some stories are being reworked and adapted by the modern Maya and other indigenous people to reflect their new experiences. The Maya are part of the globalizing world and they have their own stories to explain the forced changes that are taking place among the youth in their communities. The oral tradition is not being discarded as obsolete; rather, it is being used as a method of teaching and passing on moral values and concerns of the community. Most importantly, stories are being used to teach the dangers of abandoning one's homeland in search of an imagined world of riches and utopian paradise.

Interpretation and Textual Analysis

I want to explain, from my Maya point of view, what is being expressed in this tale. The story itself is intelligible and does not need interpretation as a tale—not even a Maya

storyteller would be interested in giving a symbolic interpretation to this story. To them, it is just a story told for entertainment and for teaching moral values. Or as Fernando Penalosa, a collector of Q'anjobal Maya folktales, said to me while I was writing this paper: "I once asked don Pedro Say what was the meaning of one of his stories and he said, "tal vez no tengan sentido, tal vez son sólo puras babosadas." ("Maybe they don't have a meaning, maybe they are just a bunch of nonsense.") But, for literary critics and academics, stories are always impregnated with multiple meanings. Therefore, for the sake of academic exercise, I want to elucidate the multiple meanings of this story. I believe that it could be used as a sociocultural, political and economic critique of the modern Maya way of life and of global capitalism. In Maya culture, the rabbit must be followed very closely, because it is a figure who knows how to adopt different forms of human behaviors. In this case, his excessive desire for adventure and to know the unknown, brings us to the edges of the modern world of capitalism. The rabbit is a visionary, a traveler who opens new paths to the place of pleasure, riches, and wealth, although he may find the opposite. My daughter read this rabbit story and exclaimed, "What a mean rabbit!" This is one of the roles of the rabbit—to be mean. He can be a trickster and a deceiver. He might do anything to achieve his goals, even if the process may lead his friends to danger and death.

In the story, the rabbit is tired of having a poor and miserable life and decides to abandon his homeland in search of adventure. The fact that the rabbit does not know exactly where to go and just travels toward an unknown land reflects the characteristic of what Maya people call "*xtob naj porisal*" (*irse al carajo* or to vanish). First, the term *porisal* exists only in Jakalteek Maya and it means "unknown place"—a place of danger and adventure. To go to the *porisal* is to abandon one's community and never be seen again. It is a metaphor for the process of uprooting and venturing to the distant places that indigenous people are exposing themselves to now. In other words, the metaphor clearly describes the uprootedness, mobilization, and cultural hybridization that characterize modern transnational migration.

In the case of Guatemala, where ethnic conflict has characterized relationships between Maya and Ladinos, we may be inclined to think that the rabbit represents only the Ladino who tricks and deceives the indigenous people (goats). But, as a result of transnational migration, Maya are already established in the United States and some who have suffered through this long journey have learned the ways of the "coyotes." Now, some of them, like the Salvadoran and Mexican "coyotes," have taken up smuggling people across borders. In other words, these Maya, who supposedly are more tied to the land than the Ladinos whose roots and identity are more liminal, have already been involved in

leading transnational migration. The Maya are part of the global capitalist economy and can travel easily, aided by modern communications technology and transportation. The U.S., once thought to be at the edge of the world, is now figuratively closer to the Maya villages of Guatemala.

In the story, the rabbit comes to see the horse and tries to convince him to abandon his place and follow the rabbit for the adventure. But, the horse thinks twice about the consequences, and rejects the rabbit's proposal. Even though the rabbit paints the unknown *porisal* so eloquently, the horse is not interested. The horse was already established in a place and accustomed to the routine of his life. The horse seemed to be more tranquil and did not need to migrate or abandon his place. The same thing happens with the ox, which also appears to be more traditional. The rabbit tries to awaken him to his situation of servitude, and convince him to break ties with his master. The rabbit offers a world to be explored, "a beautiful country where life is easy." Yet the ox replies that he is used to his home and does not want to venture to unknown places. Once again, the ox represents individuals who have deep roots in the ground, in contrast to the rabbit, who is only loosely attached to a place, since he is, by nature, a wanderer. We may also think about culture and nature or domestication and wildlife. The rabbit belongs to the forest and for this reason he is free to wander and do as he pleases, while the horse and ox are domesticated animals, trained to do specific tasks and be rewarded when the job is done.

Then the rabbit meets the sheep and goats. Here the rabbit remembers his previous failures and prepares a political discourse to win some followers. "Hello my friends, I am saddened to see you in this prison. I can only offer myself to free you, if you want to follow me to the *porisal*." The sheep and goats ask what the *porisal* is, and the rabbit explains, "The *porisal* is a marvelous place where there is money and life is easy. I don't even know where this place is, but I am eager to travel to find and enjoy it." Here, the rabbit offers the assembled animals an opportunity to travel to the unknown world, a site of magical wealth and pleasure. As usual, the old and wise individual (the ram) dissuades the members of the community from falling into a trap. The fact that the young goat believes the rabbit's promises and follows him shows us that in human communities there are gullible people who believe the flashy words and promises of politicians and "coyotes." This is true in Maya communities; the young and the inexperienced are usually the ones easily convinced by "coyotes" to travel to *El Norte* in search of better opportunities. Like the young goat, they are convinced to trade a known present for an imagined future. "Me, sir, I would like to follow you if it is true that there is a better place than this one where I am living," the goat says. Here, we are shown that the sheep and goats are congregated in one place, which is already narrow. We can think of a place that is small and where resources are

scarce, because of the numerous inhabitants making use of them. But, despite the very few resources, not all of them decide to abandon their place. There is still the word of advice from the elders, who remind the young to be faithful to their communities. In the story, the old ram confronts the trickster and says, "Stop, Mister. Don't try to deceive us; we are tired of being deceived with lies and tricks."

The story continues. On the road the goat is at the mercy of the rabbit who begins to trick him. The rabbit fakes a sudden illness and the goat asks what he can do for his guide. The rabbit convinces the naive goat: "I may get better if you carry me on your back and continue the trip. Now, I cannot move and I may die right here if you don't help me." The rabbit mounts the goat and they continue the journey. When the goat realizes he is being tricked, he tries to get rid of the rabbit. The goat manages to throw him to the ground but then finds himself without the guidance of the rabbit. In real life, poor migrants are taken advantage of in this way. Their money is stolen and they are practically mounted since they must do whatever the "coyotes" tell them to do. But because the migrant workers are not familiar with the places they are traveling through, they are unlikely to run away, they have to endure the pain of being treated like the goat in the story.

The climax of the story is reached when the rabbit and the goat approach their destination. They have to stop and prepare themselves to cross the border. They arrive at the cave of the jaguars during the day. The rabbit is already aware of the situation and he knows what to do, but the goat is just following him becomes fearful, which brings about his death. The jaguar cubs may play the role of other immigrants or workers already established in the land who denounce the presence of the newly arrived individuals. In real migration to the North, migrant workers stay for a while in border towns such as Tijuana, while they prepare to cross. They have to wait until the Border Patrol is not patrolling and then they try to cross. In the story, the rabbit tells the cubs, "Don't tell your mother that we are staying at the border of her domains." And the cubs respond, "She has a good nose and she will soon find you." Indeed, the U.S. border patrol is well equipped and can easily find those who cross without much care or planning.

Then, the goat began to feel the need to urinate while in a most dangerous situation. They truly were at the edge of a well-protected and dangerous territory. The rabbit told the goat what to do, but he got scared. The rabbit remained calm while the goat got very nervous. "Don't worry, venturing into a new land always has its good and bad sides." And here, the poor goat was being placed on the bad side of the situation. When the jaguar roared, the goat got scared, and in the effort to stand up and defend himself, he fell into the hole inside the cave. The poor goat died, while the rabbit managed to escape and cross that dangerous land or border and continued with his adventure onward.

This part of the story is also relevant in terms of modern transnational migration. Crossing the Mexico-U.S. border involves great risks and danger. Immigrants who have crossed the desert tell of others who died along the way. When the bodies are discovered, they are sometimes buried by their companions on sites marked with XX. Here, the cave of the jaguars symbolizes the border itself. The border patrols are the fierce jaguars that patrol their territory. The border is patrolled day and night and has become very difficult to cross even with the guidance of a smuggler. The “coyotes” may have legal residency in the United States and may travel comfortably in buses, airplanes, or trains, while the migrants are conducted slowly toward the borders. So, when the immigrants are captured at the border, the “coyotes” have usually already crossed because they carry their legal papers. They do not care if the goats are captured because they have already received payment for bringing these immigrants to the border. Just like the rabbit in the story, the “coyotes” will continue their lives without worrying about those who have fallen into the hands of immigration authorities. What they will do is go back to the communities and try to convince others to travel in search of dollars in the land of opportunities.

In this time of massive migration and transnationalization of cultures, it is likely that some immigrants will act like rabbits more aware of the dangers and how to avoid them. Crossing the border implies a forceful encounter with danger, which has to be avoided or challenged. Most fall and are captured and deported as more patrols are put in place to protect the U.S. border. Of course, the rabbits always find ways, such as little openings in fences, to slip through into the forbidden land.

This type of story, told by storytellers in Maya communities, alerts the young to the dangers of traveling with a rabbit, even if it is a Maya or indigenous rabbit. The Maya all know that as soon as we leave the safety of the home, danger can lurk at any corner of the road. Even worse if one is accompanied by a trickster who knows and is paid for the work of crossing borders. At present, it costs an individual \$5,000 dollars to cross the Mexico-U.S. border. After learning the way, Maya who once were guided across borders by Ladino (Salvadoran or Mexican) coyotes, now know the tricks of the trade and have become “coyotes” themselves.

Not all those who travel to *El Norte* return home. Not all those that return bring money back home, either. Some have practically disappeared; for decades, their families have not received any news of their whereabouts. Others come to the U.S. and become involved in vices (drinking, prostitution). They spend their money unwisely and when they return home or are deported, they do not take any money back home to their family. Now, a common topic of conversation in Maya villages is about who is in the United States, who is planning to go, and who has just returned. It is as common as talking

about going to work at the coffee plantations on the Guatemalan Pacific coast. Indeed, Q'anjob'al Maya have stopped migrating each year to the coffee plantations in Guatemala, and now seek work in the garment factories of California, the orchards of Florida, or the slaughterhouses of Iowa or Nebraska.

Transnational Migration as a Form of Pilgrimage

The structure of travel to the United States by the Maya and other indigenous people of Mexico and Guatemala resembles a nonreligious pilgrimage to the most powerful country in the world. Applying the symbolic analysis proposed by Victor Turner (1987), to modern Maya migration and transnationalism, we can see that it is a form of pilgrimage because of the steps that it follows. Unfortunately, most migrations have been seen as political mobilization and studied in terms of political economy. However, migration as a form of pilgrimage itself has not been studied thoroughly by scholars. Referring to the lack of anthropological interest in religious pilgrimages, Turner said, "Here was a great extant popular process, demographically comparable to labor migration, involving millions of people the world over in many days and months of traveling, rich in symbolism and undoubtedly complex in organization, and yet very largely ignored by the often competing orthodoxies of social science and religion" (Turner 1987:187). The comparable process of labor migration referred to by Turner above is the focus of my following discussion.

Concerning the dangers on the road, new immigrants are now taking the trip to the U.S. as a form of pilgrimage to Uncle Sam's golden shrine. First, those who are planning to travel to the United States in search of work go to a diviner and ask when is the best time to travel and if they will be able to cross the border or not. If the diviner tells them that the border will be clear and they will pass without problems, they initiate the trip in groups. If the diviner tells them that there will be problems along the way and that the border seems to represent a real danger at the moment, then they will wait until the right moment comes to travel. There are obvious reasons why they have to be completely sure that they will cross. Some sell their little plots of land and use the money to pay the "coyote." If the migrants are captured and deported, they could lose all they have.

The Huichol pilgrims that travel to Wirikuta, the sacred land of the peyote, take images of objects that they want when they collect the sacred peyote. Similarly, the Maya travelers carry images of what they want in their minds before they leave the community. Some imagine returning with cars, pickup trucks, and money. Some dream of building big houses and opening small businesses when they return. Much like Christian pilgrims, they have their wishes and want them to be fulfilled when they return.

The journey then begins in a group and everyone in the group has the same hopes and dreams: To reach the land of the gringos, make a lot of money, and then return to buy back the land they sold and open a small business. As in the pilgrimage process, all migrant workers are at the same social and economic level. All are immigrants with only one goal, to reach the Promised Land, do the hard work to make money, and then return home.

As they travel further away from the community, the places along the way become more dangerous so they have to rely on each other, developing stronger friendships or what Victor Turner calls *communitas* (Turner 1987). Along the road, they encounter other immigrants like themselves and they communicate with each other, regardless of their religion, ethnic background, or nationality. The only one who is different or who acts as a guru is the “coyote,” whose job is not to be the boss, but the guide. He knows all the resting places on the journey as they advance slowly toward their destination. The role of the “coyote” is very important because he is the one who knows the route and guides his followers through dangerous places, avoiding immigration authorities and border patrols. The “coyote” is usually an older man who has made the trip many times. The journey is difficult and the travelers suffer hunger and thirst along the way. Therefore, we could say they fast, not voluntarily, but because of the lack of resources along the way. For this reason, they may share among themselves whatever they have. They may carry only what they need, usually one change of clothing and bottles of water and food.

This type of profane pilgrimage is different from the religious pilgrimage in that the migrants do not sanctify themselves before leaving their community. They may pray for a safe trip and ask to have good luck and return home soon. The traveling is done through various means. First, they have to walk through forests and cross through rivers in order to avoid Mexican immigration authorities. Then, whenever possible, but usually for short periods, they take a bus, a train, or a car, and move step by step toward the resting place established by the “coyote.” Much like the Papagos’ salt pilgrimage to the ocean described by Ruth Underhill (1992). “They must never think of home and their women, for this would delay their progress” (1992:46). This applies to the Maya migrants, as well; they must not think of home or their children during the journey because if they do, they would not be fully convinced of what they are doing, so it would be easy to make mistakes and fail. They must concentrate all their energy on thinking about their destination. Otherwise, there could be accidents and the journey might turn into a disaster. While on the journey, their wives and parents at home may be praying for the men to cross the borders safely. A common prayer for travelers is one I heard very often from women in Jakaltek Maya communities:

Lord, we ask that you protect them,
that you embrace them.
Do not let any danger
cross their paths
or obstruct their journey.
Do not allow danger
to lie in wait for them
on the left side of the road,
on the right side of the road.
Protect them in their journey.
Be in front of them,
walk behind them,
do not leave them alone
and let them come home
healthy and in peace.

The journey, then, is full of danger as the travelers move along, removing themselves farther and farther from home. In addition, throughout the journey, the migrant workers are united as a form of *communitas* (Turner 1987) and they remain so during their stay in their liminal situation. This is what Renato Rosaldo calls hybrid invisibility. “Immigrants and socially mobile individuals appeared culturally invisible because they were no longer what they once were and not yet what they could become” (Rosaldo 1993:209).

The pilgrimage process, according to Victor Turner implies the cleansing of thoughts, purification, and a process of inversion. This also occurs among Maya immigrants, especially in the changing of names at the border. Pilin Xhapi, a Maya traditional name, becomes Pedro Sebastián. The newly arrived Q’anjob’al woman is no longer Xhepel Peles, but Isabel Pérez. Some immigrants even change their names completely and are called by the name of their home communities. Thus, Pel Mekel Ana becomes Don Pedro Miguel Say. He took the name of his village, Say, as his surname. This change of name is for security reasons and some immigrants retain their new names even after they receive political asylum status. Also, many immigrants give up their ethnic distinctiveness and assimilate into the multiple cultures of the southern cities such as Los Angeles. Here the liminal world of immigrant workers increases. They find themselves to be powerless and are subjected to different forms of inequalities, mainly if they fall into the category of unskilled laborers, as almost all do. Soon they begin to borrow terms and ways of

life to assimilate into the global immigrant community. This powerlessness and ethnic transition is well described by Renato Rosaldo in his discussion of border crossings by different people from all over the world. According to Rosaldo, "All of us inhabit an interdependent late-twentieth-century world marked by borrowing and lending across porous national and cultural boundaries that are saturated with inequality, power, and domination" (Rosaldo 1993:217).

Conclusion

I have presented some of the ideas concerning ethnic conflict among the Maya and Ladinos in Guatemala, represented metaphorically in the tale presented above. I have also made a symbolic interpretation of this story, using Victor Turner's discussion of pilgrimage as a social process. The trickster's tale presented here provides us with elements that can be interpreted as a critique of modern transnational migration. In the rabbit's deceitful behavior, we can recognize traces of the treatment and social relationships between Maya and Ladinos. Some Maya prefer to remain in their hometowns and are more traditional. They do not want to travel, as in the case of the horse and the ox in this story. But the goat accepts the invitation to travel to the unknown land and suffers the consequences. The rabbit continues his adventure and does not care about his companion who has suffered misfortune. This is the case of the "coyotes" who smuggle people across borders. I asked a Q'anjob'al man (a "coyote") who was convincing people in my town to travel north, "Why do you take people to the North?"

"Because they want to go."

"What do you offer them there?"

"Jobs, there are a lot of jobs."

"Where do you send them particularly?"

"I send them to different places, even to Alaska."

"Wow, Alaska is too cold, poor people."

"Well, they have to survive and do the work if they want money."

"Do you find them the job?"

"No, I just send them there; they will find a job."

In this Maya story, the rabbit is an antihero, a deceiver or trickster. He follows his dream to search for an unknown place, but in doing so, he destroys others' ways of life and places them in danger. The rabbit deals with different types of animals, thus representing

contact with cultural and ethnic diversity. The power of the rabbit, despite being a small animal, is his ability to convince. He imagines a distant and unknown world and he describes it so eloquently that he convinces others to follow him to that country of riches, a perfect paradise or *porisal*.

Also, I have tried to present here a symbolic analysis of this tale by comparing it to the modern transnational migration of Maya and other indigenous people of Latin America. I considered Maya migration as a form of pilgrimage to the shrine of Uncle Sam where most migrants want to arrive and collect the dollars for their hard work. Then, their hope is to return home, taking with them models of houses and ideas that they replicate in Guatemala. Not all migrant workers succeed or return home to fulfill their dreams. The young men who come to the U.S. unmarried are unlikely to return. However, those married men who have wives and children waiting at home hope to return after five to ten years of absence. Modern indigenous migration is, then, the result of the interconnectedness of the world and the effects of global capitalism on Third World countries. This pattern of migration will continue as long as the situation of landlessness and inequality persist in those countries exporting migrant workers and exiles. Definitively, migration has had a positive side, since immigrants continue to support the economies of their home countries by sending money back to their families.

At present (2009), migrant workers have sent enough money home so the towns in rural Guatemala have changed their appearance from traditional adobe houses to modern stucco mansions using models imported from the United States. Others engage in celebrating the Patron Saint festivities at home by paying for fireworks and marimba bands in such a way that their contribution is recognized by their communities. In this way, they give thanks to God or to the Patron Saint that has made the miracle for them to cross the border safely and make money to improve their family economy. This is a positive result of migration and some governments may hope that migration of young laborers continues indefinitely to contribute to solving the problem of poverty and the economic crises that are the major issues facing these Third World countries in Latin America.

References

- Anderson, Benedict. (1990). *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, London, New York.
- Burns, Allan. (1993). *Maya in Exile: Guatemalans in Florida*. Temple University Press, Philadelphia.
- Goldin, Liliana (editor). (1999). *Identities on the Move: Transnational Processes in the Americas*. Institute for Mesoamerican Studies, SUNY at Albany, Albany, NY.
- Gossen, Gary H. (1998). *Telling Maya Tales: Tzotzil Identities in Modern Mexico*. Routledge, London and New York.
- Kroeber, Karl (editor). (1981). *Traditional Literatures of the American Indian*. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.
- Montejo, Victor D. (1991). *The Bird Who Cleans the World and Other Maya Fables*. Curbstone Press, Willimantic, CT.
- (1999). *Voices from Exile: Violence and Survival in Modern Maya History*. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
- (1999). “Tied to the Land: Maya Migration and Transnationalism.” In *Identities on the Move: Transnational Processes in the Americas*. Institute for Mesoamerican Studies, SUNY at Albany, Albany, NY.
- (2004). “Angering the Ancestors: Transnational and Economic Transformation of Maya Communities in Western Guatemala.” In *Pluralizing Ethnography: Comparison and Representation in Maya Cultures, Histories and Identities*. Editors: John Watanabe and Edward Fisher. Santa Fe, School of American Research Press.
- Penalosa, Fernando. (1996). *Tales and Legends of the Q'anjob'al Maya*. Yax Te' Press, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. (1992). *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. Routledge, London. DOI: 10.4324/9780203163672
- Recinos, Adrian, Delia Goetz, and Sylvanus G. Morley. (1950). *Popol Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Quiché Maya of Guatemala*. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
- Rosaldo, Renato. (1993). *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*. Beacon Press, Boston, MA.
- Sexton, James D. (1992). *Maya Folktales: Folklore From Lake Atitlán*. Anchor Books, Doubleday, New York and London.
- Turner, Victor. (1987). *Dreams, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, N.Y.
- Underhill, Ruth (1992) “The Salt Pilgrimage.” In *Teachings from the American Earth: Indian*

Religion and Philosophy. Editors: Dennis Tedlock and Barbara Tedlock. Liveright, New York.

Wolf, Eric. (1982). *Europe and the People Without Histories*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press.

Worsley, Peter. (1984). *The Three Worlds: Culture and World Development*. University of Chicago Press.

Measuring Levels of Collectivism and Individualism with One Maya Volunteer

David J. Galban

North Atlanta High School

Gilberto Simon

Abstract: "Measuring Levels of Collectivism and Individualism among Maya Living in the United States" will help us understand, among other variables, their struggles, and the consequences of migrating to the most individualist nation on earth.

The Singelis Scale measures levels of collectivism and individualism in humans. Collectivism is correlated with interdependent behaviors such as sense of duty with the in-group, harmony and working collectively among other characteristics, while individualism is correlated with independent behaviors such as personal responsibility, egalitarianism and freedom. By measuring independence and interdependence, in the same test, the scale intends to show that these two aspects of self are separate factors not opposite poles. Collectivism and individualism co-exist in both collectivist and individualist societies at the same time. For example, Southerners in the U.S.A are more collectivist than Northerners who are more individualist. In *Culture's Consequences*, Geert Hofstede identifies individualism and collectivism as one of the most important dimensions of culture. According to Hofstede, collectivism and individualism describe the relationship between the individual and the collectivity that prevails in a given society. Hofstede's cross-cultural research found that Guatemala is the most collectivist society and the United States the most individualist. Based on the results of this survey, it might be reasoned that the high level of collectivism in Guatemala can be explained by Guatemala's large indigenous (Maya) population. Although the statistics vary, Mayan population counts for at least 50% of the Guatemalan population.

Measuring levels of collectivism and individualism among Maya living in the United States will help us understand, among other variables, their struggles, and the consequences of migrating to the most individualist nation on earth. For this particular project, I asked Mayan leader Gilberto Simon to undergo the Singelis test. I also asked him to provide an explanation for every answer. I wanted to go beyond the statistical analysis of the test and get into a more conscientious and humane examination of the

Mayan community in the United States. Gilberto's honesty and willingness to cooperate and to understand his Mayan-ness in a new environment resulted in an eye opening experience for him as a Maya living in the United States, and for me as a Colombian immigrant myself.

Singelis Self-Construct Scale

Instructions Provided to Gilberto

This questionnaire of 30 questions measures a variety of feelings and behaviors in various situations. Listed below are a number of statements. Read each one as if it referred to you. Beside each statement, write the number that best matches your agreement or disagreement. Please respond to every statement. Thank you.

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Somewhat Disagree
- 4 = Don't Agree Or Disagree
- 5 = Agree Somewhat
- 6 = Agree
- 7 = Strongly Agree

Question One: I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.

Response: Disagree (2).

Gilberto: I disagree because human beings are alike in many aspects, even more when we share the same culture, the same nation, the way we think, and the way we live. Our ideas are similar when we come from the same group. We are similar when we come from the same group. If I am completely different from others in my community, I won't belong with them. I will think and act different to them.

David: So it is important that the community maintains some similarity, an identity?

Gilberto: It is important, especially, for the Guatemalan community. It is important to maintain harmony in the Maya community. It is important to respect ideals, that's why communities exist. When the ideals are different in the community, the people break away and there is no community anymore.

Question Two: I can talk openly with a person who I meet for the first time, even when this person is much older than I am.

Response: Agree (6)

Gilberto: I feel well conversing with older people (adults) because they are wiser than we (younger people) are. Sometimes they think that we (younger people) know better because we have more education, but it is not true. Regardless of the level of education that one might have, they (elders) have more wisdom; they have lived more than us.

David: Is wisdom important to you?

Gilberto: Yes, it is. The wisdom of elders is important because they have experienced life more than us.

David: Do elders have a voice in your community?

Gilberto: Yes, usually what they say is what we do. We trust in their wisdom.

David: Are elders in your community leaders?

Gilberto: Most of them serve the community.

Question Three: Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.

Response: Agree (6)

Gilberto: In any group, any community there are disagreements, even

within the same family, or with a brother there are disagreements. It is very important for me to maintain harmony. If the disagreement is small, I avoid friction and respect other opinions.

David: Even if that means you have to remain silent?

Gilberto: Yes, I prefer not to get into a confrontation if things are not too serious. I prefer not to add more fuel to the fire...for the sake of harmony.

Question Four: I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.

Response: Strongly agree (7)

David: Is question number four related to question number three?

Gilberto: I totally agree. I respect authority figures, starting with the local authorities in the communities. If someone has been elected to organize, to hold that position, I have to respect his authority.

David: That would be in the community. How about with the police?

Gilberto: I respect them too because they are doing their job. If they arrest me or give me a ticket for driving without driver license, they are doing their job.

David: How about at work?

Gilberto: I respect authorities too. I don't like to argue with my boss, or my supervisor, or with a superior, even if I disagree with what they say.

Question Five: I do my own thing, regardless of what others think.

Response: Strongly disagree (1)

Gilberto: No matter what I do, I always think about the others. What I do might affect others, and I care about other people.

Question Six: I respect people who are modest about themselves.

Response: Strongly agree (7)

Gilberto: Yes, I strongly agree. Modest people are not necessarily poor. Some people confuse modesty with poverty. Modest people are simple or humble not necessarily poor. I admire those people (modest people) because, generally, those people know more.

David: So modesty and humility are important to you.

Gilberto: They are important to me. There is a common expression that says: your attitude, not your aptitude, will determine your altitude.

David: Is that Gilberto's perception or Maya's perception?

Gilberto: I think it is Mayan perception. In Mayan culture, the elders are very important. We don't have nursing homes. An elder is an important figure at home. When the meal is served, elders tell stories. Mayan culture has been passed down from generation to generation.

David: Can you connect what you just said with modesty?

Gilberto: Modesty is related with elders because elders are simple people. The advice that grandparents always give you, is to be honest and humble.

David: So, modesty/humility is a Mayan cultural value?

Gilberto: It is a cultural value that is verbally transmitted. In the Mayan culture we don't have many books; it is verbally that we passed down culture. Grandparents tell stories to grandsons that later will do the same. In that way simplicity is transmitted. It is very important for Mayan people to remain united, to stay simple, and to be humble. We are losing that value, unfortunately. It was customary to help each other. For instance,

if you have a Milpa, my father, my brother, and I will help you with your milpa, and then you help us when we need help with our milpa. No money is involved. The same situation to help someone who does not have a house. We get together and each person donates something; boards, thatch, etc. The community works together building the house for an elder or for whomever.

Question Seven: I feel it is important for me to act as an independent person.

Response: Disagree (2)

Gilberto: I marked four first because I did not understand the question. But somewhat I disagree.

David: So would you say two or three?

Gilberto: Two. It is important to be independent but at the same time I depend on others.

David: In what aspect do you depend on others?

Gilberto: I think that I depend on all aspects from others. I am a facilitator (leader) in my community. In order to serve (lead) in my community, I need them.

David: Do you enjoy serving in your community.

Gilberto: I do. I like to work with others; I like to learn from others. When you serve others, you learn. It is a growing opportunity. I couldn't be a leader without the community. At the same time, the community won't work without a leader. To some extent, we need each other; we are connected with each other and with nature.

David: Would that be interdependent instead of independent?

Gilberto: Interdependent. It is important because we need the environment, we need each other and we need nature.

Question Eight: I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I am in.

Response: Strongly agree (7)

Gilberto: I marked seven because I strongly agree. As I said before, I enjoy working for the community. There is always something to do at home; clean, do the laundry, cook, etc. When I am at home, my mind is wondering about pending issues in the community. I have a hard time thinking that I am at home when there is so much to do in the community. I prefer to stop doing what I am doing at home and go help the community.

David: In Spanish, we called that altruismo (altruism). Are all Mayas like that?

Gilberto: Not all but most Maya are. Leaders have to be like that. I admire so many in the community that sacrifice themselves for others. We have birthdays or celebrations and people help. They come early to help and leave late cleaning and organizing. It is not easy to spare an hour or two. One of our leaders said once; we don't have money but we are alive (we have life), and that is very important.

Question Nine: I'd rather say "NO" directly, than risk being misunderstood.

Response: Disagree (2)

Gilberto: I express my ideas even when risking being misunderstood. If I have too, I explain it again. There is a big difference between what you say and how you say it. I think the question is more about how you say things. I can tell you something in different ways, and depending on that, you are going to interpret what I say.

David: So you risk and say NO when you have too?

Gilberto: I say what I have to say

Question Ten: Having a lively imagination is important to me.

Response: Strongly agree (7)

Gilberto: It is important to have a creative mind. Only with a creative mind we can do things. When you have an idea and you put it in practice - when you bring into reality your idea is when things get done.

Question Eleven: I should take into consideration my parents' advice when making education/career plans.

Response: Strongly agree (7)

Gilberto: My parents' opinions are very important for whatever I do. As I said before, they are older people and are important in my life. Whatever I do, I consult with them because they are my bosses, they are my elders, and they have more wisdom than me. They know what is better for me. I always listen to their advice.

David: Have you ever done anything against your parents' will?

Gilberto: Yes, it was not easy but it was only for a couple of days and they later understood. The disagreement was not about what I did, it was about how I did it. They did not want me to go to the City to study because they thought that they could not pay for it. I had a half scholarship and then they agreed with my decision.

David: The question asks about education and career plans. How about love? Is it important that your parents like your girlfriend and/or wife?

Gilberto: This is a different situation. Generally, they don't have to accept her. I listen to their advice anyhow. Usually, they don't say much about it. When I told my mother about it, she said: son, you are the one who is going to marry her and if you want her, we support you.

David: Did they agree to your marriage?

Gilberto: My mom, yes, my dad, not too much.

Question Twelve: I feel my fate is intertwined with the fate of those around me.

Response: Strongly agree (7)

Gilberto: As human beings we are all connected, our fate is intertwined. What I get is related to what I do. You reap what you sow; by doing good you receive good. It might take time but it will come to you. The same happens with evil acts. What I do affects the community.

David: And in the spiritual realm?

Gilberto: People are spiritually connected. We, in the community, are Catholics. We all pray to the same God, but Maya spirituality is in our blood.

David: You just mention Mayan spirituality as separate from Catholicism. Are they different?

Gilberto: It is different.

David: Can you educate us about it?

Gilberto: I am Catholic. I was baptized Catholic. Religion is a combination of norms and knowledge that tries to bring humans closer to God, but Spirituality is a natural form of communication. Spirituality is an innate way to communicate with the Ahau.

David: It is a natural way to communicate with God. How about the Catholic religion? How do you communicate with God in the Catholic religion?

Gilberto: A colleague used to say that the Catholic religion illuminates

our spirituality. I feel that it is not the same. To be Catholic is not the same as to practice Maya spirituality, but it is intertwined because there is only one God. We just invoke him differently. In the Mayan spirituality everything occurs here in nature with the Supreme Being. Ahau father-mother is the creator. Earth is important to us because it supports us. Air, fire, light are sacred; everything is sacred in nature. In the Catholic religion, as well, everything is sacred too but we don't see it. We don't have respect for earth.

David: What is the main difference between Mayan spirituality and Catholic religion? Do you perceive any dividing line?

Gilberto: The main difference that I see is that in the Catholic religion, we don't talk much about respect for Mother Nature, but in Maya spirituality, we do. For instance, when praying, we kiss the ground, each time we cut a tree we say a prayer, each time we kill a chicken (we don't eat much meat in Guatemala), we say a prayer. As I said before we all need each other; humans and nature.

Question Thirteen: I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I've just met.

Response: Disagree (2)

Gilberto: I prefer to get to know the person before being direct and forthright. What I say or what I think might hurt the other person, so I prefer to wait. I don't want to offend or to hurt someone that I don't know. I prefer to get to know the person before expressing my ideas. I am in disagreement with being direct and forthright with someone I just met.

Question Fourteen: I feel good when I cooperate with others.

Response: Strongly agree (7)

Gilberto: Yes, I feel good when I cooperate with someone. It motivates me to work in groups.

Question Fifteen: I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.

Response: Agree (6)

Gilberto: Yes, I feel comfortable, I like it. Merit is important. When I received my GED diploma, it felt so good. It was an achievement. I realized that it can be done. It might not be a big achievement but for me it was.

David: Is it common to obtain a GED in your community?

Gilberto: No, it is not.

Question Sixteen: If my brother or sister fails, I feel responsible.

Response: Agree somewhat (5)

Gilberto: Family is very important to me, my parents are important and my brothers are very important to me. I communicate with my brothers (the ones living here in the U.S.) every day. It is rare that we don't talk every day. I have a brother who was into drugs and I felt very bad for him. He used to come home drunk. One day he did not come home. I called him but he did not answer. I found him on the floor in the bathroom. I went to my bedroom and cried for him. It hurts me to see a loved one who is not doing well.

David: Is it common in the Mayan community that men get in addictions?

Gilberto: Yes, it is common.

David: Why do you think this happens?

Gilberto: Most men come to the United States without their wives, without their families. I think that the nostalgia leads them into addictions. In Guatemala a beer is expensive, but here not. You buy many with 10.00 dollars.

David: When we talk about addictions, are we talking about drugs or alcohol?

Gilberto: Alcohol. Drugs are not common in the community.

David: Is your brother younger or older? Do you think that younger men are more likely to consume alcohol?

Gilberto: I think so...and the lack of responsibility too. My younger brother did not have a wife and only worked three or four days a week. He had plenty of time doing nothing. He is 28 and came here five years ago. But now he has two jobs and doesn't have time to waste. He has seven or eight hours a day to sleep.

Question Seventeen: I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.

Response: Strongly agree (7)

Gilberto: Relationships are very important. I prefer to get along with everybody. If I focus only on my own goals, I will not care much for them.

Question Eighteen: Speaking up during class (or a meeting) is not a problem for me.

Response: Strongly agree (7)

Gilberto: I like to participate in class; I like to ask questions-many questions

David: Is that a common characteristic among Maya?

Gilberto: I think so.

Question Nineteen: I would offer my seat in a bus to my professor (or my boss).

Response: Strongly agree (7)

Gilberto: Yes, as I said before; I appreciate my bosses and teachers. I would offer my seat to them and to someone else...a woman, and elder.

Question Twenty: I act the same way no matter who I am with.

Response: Disagree (2)

Gilberto: Being multifaceted is important. I act according to the environment I am in. At work, I act different because I am working with Americans; white and brown. I act different with the people in my community...they are my people.

David: How do you act with Americans...brown and White? Any difference?

Gilberto: Yes, I feel they are different. Because I am a manager at work, I shake hands with them. In my community, it is like with family.

David: Who is more difficult to deal with, white Americans or Brown Americans?

Gilberto: The same.

David: Do you have white and brown friends?

Gilberto: Yes.

Question Twenty-one: My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me.

Response: Strongly agree (7)

Gilberto: I care a lot for others. Others' happiness is important for me. When I say others, I meant the people of my community. This weekend I had an experience with one of the leaders. He called me and told me that he was

discouraged because other leaders were not considering his opinions. I don't want to participate anymore, he said. I told him not to give up because we are different and that happens sometimes, even among brothers. If we call out the leader that is not paying attention to your ideas, we might hurt him, and he is the leader with more followers, more family. I felt uncomfortable with the situation.

Question Twenty-two: I value being in good health above everything.

Response: Strongly agree (7)

Gilberto: My health condition is very important. If I have everything but health, I won't be able to enjoy it. If my family and I have health...the rest is bearable.

Question Twenty-three: I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy with the group.

Response: Agree (6)

Gilberto: To serve the community is very important for me. If the group needs me, I stay in the group, even when I disagree with the group. I help some members of the community to fill job applications, or with any other favor. I feel happy helping my community. It is never an inconvenience. My wife tells me that I have to start charging.

Question Twenty-four: I try to do what is best for me, regardless of how that might affect others.

Response: Disagree (2)

Gilberto: All questions here are related...right? I care about others, what others say is important. If I am doing something that is affecting/bothering the rest, I will stop doing it in order to make everybody happy.

Question Twenty-five: Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me.

Response: Agree (6).

Gilberto: The question was not very clear, I did not get it.

David: To be able to take care of myself is a primary preoccupation.

Gilberto: I agree, it is important to be able to do things on your own. I like to cooperate with the community, I like to help, but it is important to be independent.

Question Twenty-six: It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

Response: Agree (6)

Question Twenty-seven: My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.

Response: Strongly agree (7)

Gilberto: I understood a collective identity.

David: No, not collective, just your identity. Is it important for you to have an identity that is independent from the others, from your group? Is your individuality (Gilberto's individuality) important to you? There are two different identities; collective identity and individual identity. The question asks; is it important for you to have an identity that is separate from the group?

Gilberto: Yes, I agree.

David: Can you tell me more about that yes?

Gilberto: Well, it is important that I identify myself...I don't know how to answer.

David: Is it because your personal identity is connected to your group?

Gilberto: To some extent, it is because without the group I am not okay. When I talk to my wife about moving to a different state, I tell her that the first thing that I would do is to find a group (community). I feel that I am not complete if I am not part of a community. It is like a passion, what I like.

Question Twenty-eight: It is important for me to maintain harmony within the group.

Response: Strongly agree (7)

Gilberto: Harmony is very important. Harmony in my family, my group, my community is very important.

David: How do you keep harmony while considering what is right and wrong?

Gilberto: By doing the right thing. Always doing the right thing is important; the right thing keeps us united. What is not right might keep us united but only for a short while. When you act right the family is happy and united. What is wrong has no foundations and can fall apart at any time. There is song by Ricardo Arjona that says: I prefer a lie that makes me happy than a truth that makes me miserable. I like the lyrics of that song.

David: And how do you apply that song?

Gilberto: I like the song but what is true is always more important. Sooner or later, they will find out about the lie. What has taken you years to build can collapse at any time because of a lie. It is important to tell the truth and to do the right thing.

Question Twenty-nine: I act the same way at home that I do at school or work.

Response: Disagree (2)

Gilberto: Yes, I act different. When I am at home with my children, I behave like a kid with them. We play together.

David: In which language do you communicate with your children?

Gilberto: In Q'anjob'al.

David: Do you communicate in Spanish sometimes?

Gilberto: No. When my wife talks in Spanish at home, it feels strange.

David: So when you are with your children at home you behave like another child and talk to them in Q'anjob'al?

Gilberto: Yes.

David: When you play with your children, do you ever use English?

Gilberto: Yes, sometimes. We speak Q'anjob'al and English.

David: So your children feel more comfortable communicating in English than in Spanish?

Gilberto: For the kids is the same...English or Q'anjob'al.

David: What language do you speak at work?

Gilberto: English.

David: Do you think that you change your behavior when you speak Q'anjob'al and when you speak English (Like a shifting)?

Gilberto: No, I don't change but I behave more professional at work. I have to be more professional because I am in charge of the restaurant and people have to follow my orders. At home is a different story.

Question Thirty: I usually go along with what others want to do, even when I would rather do something different.

Response: Strongly agree (7)

Gilberto: I go with what the groups want. I like to maintain the harmony in the group.

David: I guess sometimes you have to say no, we have to do things this way.

Gilberto: When I see that they are not doing it right, I tell them. But I do it with strong foundations.

David: If the group is having fun mocking or bullying someone, would you tell the group to stop?

Gilberto: Oh yes. I will tell the right way to behave. For example, we are organizing a party and the rent for the room is 1,000 dollars. We are going to have a Marimba and the price of the Marimba is 1,000 dollars. We all contribute. That's what I mean. If I cannot attend the event, I still contribute. Last week a marimba group from Santa Eulalia played here in Greenville. We agreed to pay 15.00 dollars per person. I had to work that day but I contributed for the party.

David: One question Gilberto. On one hand, we have harmony, which is very important for the group, and on the other hand, what is right and wrong. Do you have, sometimes, to keep harmony by doing what is wrong?

Gilberto: No, always doing what is right. The community is rooted in the Catholic Church. We are under the Guatemalan church. Priests from Guatemala come to visit us. Father Andres came from Santa Eulalia. For the Pastoral Maya conference, Father Mat Xun, who was my professor, is coming.

David: Gilberto, was it difficult to answer the questionnaire?

Gilberto: Some questions...yes, some questions.

Although Gilberto had difficulties answering some of the questions, he was able to complete the test. The Singelis Self-Construal Scale contains 15 independent items and 15 interdependent items. For the Singelis test we have to find the mean. The mean is obtained by adding all the scores and dividing the result by the number of items (15). Interdependent items are questions # 3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 16, 17, 19, 21, 23, 26, 28, 12, 14 and 30. Gilberto scored 100, so the mean is 6.66 or 6.6%. A result of 6.6% is high and it is considered statistically significant. The independent items are questions # 1, 2, 9, 10, 13, 15, 18, 20, 22, 25, 27, 29, 5, 7, and 24. Gilberto scored 59, so the mean is 3.93 or 3.9%. As we can appreciate Gilberto's collectivism value of 6.6% is much higher than his individualism value of 3.93%.

When analyzing Gilberto's explanations, some cultural patterns are observed:

- Difference/diversity within the in-group is not appreciated.
- Adults represent experience and wisdom and those characteristics are highly appreciated.
- Confrontation is avoided at almost all costs.
- Respect for authority figures.
- The importance of the other (in-group) is very significant.
- Modesty/simplicity/humility are highly appreciated.
- Highly interdependent, not only from one another, but also from nature and environment.
- Sense of sacrifice for the community.
- Connectivity is a must.
- Imagination, contrary to what is expected from collectivist societies, is very important for Gilberto.
- Mayan spirituality differs from Catholic spirituality.
- Identity is defined in reference to the other, in reference to the community.

After Gilberto took the test, we had a conversation (debriefing) about the meaning and extent of individualism and collectivism in a given community. I shared with him a list, created specifically for him, of the most salient characteristics of collectivism and individualism. Gilberto's difficulty to answer question 27 (Personal Identity, independent of others, is very important to me) was the most striking aspect of the test. He was

unwilling to separate himself from the group in order to claim some degree of individuality. Collective identity or an identity that is based on the other was the preferred way for him to understand and define himself.

Works Cited

- Singelis, T.M. "The Measurement of Independent and Interdependent Self-Concepts." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 20 (1994): 580-591. DOI: 10.1177/0146167294205014
- Hofstede, Geert (2001). *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations across Nations*. London: SAGE, 2001. Print.

The Impact of Community Partnerships on Maya Children's Identity

Joel B. Judd

Southern Utah University

Cedar City, UT

Sheryl Ludwig

Adams State College, Emeritus

Boulder, CO

Abstract: This paper explores how educational partnerships can support parents and teachers of Maya children as they navigate two worlds: their Maya home culture and the culture of their adopted country. The case presented here is of Q'anjob'al Mayan immigrants to a rural Colorado valley, and their children's presence in local public schools. Treated as Hispanics because they were brown, indigenous Q'anjob'al speaking Maya students often felt neglected and marginalized by many teachers and staff. As their children adopted local cultural identities and practices, parents felt their children were becoming "unMaya". In an effort to support Maya parents and families, teachers were given firsthand experiences with Maya culture: parent-school nights, traditional festivals, even travel to the community's home region in Guatemala. These experiences fostered cultural competence and supported teacher advocacy. Finally, this partnerships among university faculty, school teachers, a local non-profit, and Maya families enabled students to develop and assert their identity in school, while assisting parents in cultivating aspects of Maya identity at home and in the community.

Introduction

In 1979, Maya from the Huehuetenango region of Guatemala began immigrating to Colorado's San Luís Valley to work. Over the course of almost 40 years, a vibrant and powerful Maya community has developed. As is often the case, the original immigrants spent the first few years helping each other acculturate to a new country and community. With time, families and children arrived. The younger generation, especially those born in the U.S., presented parents the challenge of transmitting and maintaining enduring values endemic to Maya life in a non-traditional community. This challenge was compounded by social institutions, like public schools, that viewed Maya children as "Hispanic" because

they were brown. As a result, teachers often considered Maya students Spanish-speakers (which many were, just not as a first language) who shared the stereotypical values and behaviors of other [usually Mexican-origin] Spanish speaking students.

Alamosa, Colorado is the largest town in a sparsely populated alpine desert valley in the southeast part of the state. While Connecticut could fit inside the valley, there are only 46,000 residents scattered across 8,000 square miles, with 9,900 of them in Alamosa (San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, 2018). Depending on the year and criterion, three of the area's six counties are the poorest in the state and had the highest poverty rate (31%) in 2016 (Comen et al., 2018). Agriculture and ranching are the primary occupations, as they have been for several hundred years since early Spanish settlers encountered the Ute Indians who lived in the valley. After the United States took control, many New Mexican settlers arrived; later in the 1880s, a number of Mormon families were sent there as well. As a result, there is a mix of cultures: descendants of early Spanish settlers, descendants of primarily Caucasian immigrants, newer residents who have come to work in government, private, and tourism businesses, and more recent immigrants who have come to labor in agricultural and ranching interests (such as potato farming, sheepherding, and mushroom cultivation). The San Luis Valley is truly a valley of immigrants.

Fig. 1: San Luis Valley

In spite of this history, Maya parents and elders have struggled to find ways of keeping their traditional culture and values alive through their children while in a foreign land. This has been particularly difficult in the isolated and insular place that is the San Luis Valley. Even so, the Maya were not interested in creating a cultural enclave, “We don’t want to assimilate ourselves and we don’t want to isolate ourselves in our culture. We want to share our culture with the cultures that are here so that we can be recognized and have our rights and not be ashamed of our culture” (Maya elder, as quoted in Schensul and LeCompte, 2016). However, the valley has a record of marked discrimination against and mistreatment of Spanish-speaking, “Hispanic” immigrants and residents (Donato, 2007). Since to most residents they look like other Latino or “Mexican” groups, the Maya have been subject to the same treatment and prejudices applied to those ethnic groups. In the 1980s, when Maya immigrants dressed in the unique traje (native dress) of the village of Santa Eulalia, Guatemala, and spoke Qan’j’ob’al,

Fig. 2: Santa Eulalia

their Maya language, they were visibly and linguistically different from the Mexican migrants. However, as the guipiles (blouses) and corte (skirts) from Guatemala were gradually replaced with clothing from Walmart, they became invisible as Guatemalan Maya in the community.

Against this backdrop, we present the story of how some key initiatives supported the sharing of Maya culture with local communities, and how this hidden¹ population of hardworking Maya Americans has garnered recognition and respect from citizens of the San Luis Valley.

A Theoretical Framework

In contrast to the more rigid dichotomy of assimilation or acculturation, recent work has exposed a more nuanced perspective on immigration. For example, one prevailing thought was that immigrants who held on to their native cultural norms and practices hindered or prevented successful adaptation to their new situation. However, careful observation has shown that immigrants with a firm grounding in their original identity and language often transition more effectively than those who simply abandon their previous selves (Spindler & Spindler, 2000). Further study suggests that immigration provokes a comparison of one's "enduring self", or natal identity, to a "situated self", or one's new circumstances. The extent to which the values, norms, and funds of knowledge comprising the enduring self will offer a basis for succeeding in the new circumstance determines in large measure whether the immigrant will adapt and thrive or become alienated and isolated (Moll & Greenberg, 1990).

Along with a strong sense of enduring self, Maya culture includes the notion of *kaxlan*, or the ability to adapt. For hundreds of years Maya have integrated cultural and technological aspects of other cultures into their own, without diminishing a strong sense of being "Maya." In this way, for example, it is perfectly congruent for a Maya woman to dress in traditional, handmade clothing yet carry a cell phone for communication (cf. Ludwig & LeCompte, 2012).

Finally, the fact is that when two or more cultures come into contact through immigration neither remains static. In the same way that a bilingual realizes that knowing two languages is more than simply adding Language A to Language B, over time immigrants often feel they are neither their original self nor entirely part of their new community. To the extent that they then forge a "new" identity and place for themselves, immigrants

¹ Hidden populations are groups that are difficult to identify and understand because they have strong privacy concerns, often resulting from illegal activity (e.g., drug use) or residency status (e.g., undocumented immigrants) (Singer, 2010).

may create a “third space” (Bhabha, 1994). As with a bilingual’s two languages, this space is not simply some combination of old and new cultural components, but a new, hybrid identity that allows the immigrant to successfully adapt to new circumstances while maintaining a core sense of self.

Together, these notions of a strong self-identity (enduring self), adaptability (kaxlan), and the third space, provide useful tools for examining the changes that took place in the Alamosa Maya community over the course of just a few years.

Community Collaborations - Beginnings

Adams State University (originally a state Teacher’s College) is located in Alamosa. It is considered a “Hispanic-serving institution” due to the percentage of students attending who identify themselves as Hispanic. In 2007, one of the authors (Ludwig) joined the Teacher Education faculty. Having studied a Maya women’s weaving co-op for her dissertation (Ludwig, 2006), she was intrigued with the Maya community in Alamosa. As an educator, she was curious to know how Maya children fared in local schools: to what extent were the normative practices of school (the “hidden curriculum”; Anyon, 1980) affecting children’s relationships with their families? How could schools be more culturally responsive?

At the same time, the other author (Judd) was Principal Investigator on a teacher development grant designed to support schooling for English learners (“ESL” students). Since the grant’s main goals were improving teachers’ abilities to work with diverse students, along with increasing parental participation in school, both authors collaborated to accomplish these goals in ways that would benefit both the local Maya and teacher communities.

Community Collaborations - Initial Partnerships

Starting with the grant’s teacher development initiative, the authors sought local partnerships. Our view of educational “partnership” is student-focused, but includes partnerships in the home and community as well (Epstein, 2018). Ignoring students’ perspectives on and contributions to all three contexts leads to many of the most common teacher frustrations, including “disinterested” parents and disengaged pupils.

One of our first connections involved the Immigrant Resource Center, a non-profit that had been serving San Luis Valley immigrants for more than 20 years [<http://www.slvirc.org>]. Because the Center was already serving Maya immigrants, they had gained the

trust of the Maya community. This partnership allowed access to the most influential members of the community—the elders. It also facilitated communication with families of school-age children, which led to a study of community – family relationships (Ludwig et al., 2012).

In the public schools, we sought teachers who were acquainted with Maya children and were looking for better ways to reach them. When recruiting for the grant’s teacher “cohorts”, one criterion was the applicant’s interest in collaborating with colleagues to create more culturally responsive schools. The university’s working relationship with the Alamosa school district facilitated the identification of key teachers and principals who were supportive of the grant’s goals and in particular improving the academic experience for Maya children.

Around this same time (2007), The Colorado Trust, a health equity foundation, facilitated an Immigrant Integration initiative in the San Luis Valley. For the first six months of the grant, the Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning brought various constituent groups from Alamosa together to identify and address challenges unique to the local community. An integrated plan emerged that focused on educational, social, and immigrant services, businesses and employers, faith-based organizations, and the immigrants themselves. At the end of the four-year grant, one of the Trust’s key findings was that it was “easier” to integrate Mexican immigrants than other groups (Lee et al., 2008, p.7). This no doubt stemmed from the historical presence of Mexican-American residents in Colorado and their long-term dealings with the Anglo population.

The Issue

The experience of Maya families in Alamosa is part of a longer history of uneasy relations among the peoples of the San Luis Valley. Valley schools in particular have a history of unequal treatment of Hispanic students (Donato, 1999). As was the case in many southwest schools, Spanish-speaking students were sometimes punished for speaking their home language. They were frequently tracked into classes that did not prepare them for post-secondary education. For most of the 20th century, schools in Alamosa were effectively segregated. Children of Mexican descent were forced to attend a Prep School, better known as the “Mexican School.” Notably, the first known desegregation lawsuit in the U.S. was filed in 1914 in Alamosa by Mexican parents so that their children could attend the school closest to where they lived. The District Court ruled in the parents’ favor, but allowed that English language proficiency could be used as justification to send some children to the separate school. (Lobato, 2018; Donato et al., 2016).

That verdict was quickly forgotten and had little impact on the long-standing, pervasive sentiment among Anglo families that “Mexican” children did not have the language skills or academic preparation to succeed in a regular school setting. Spanish-speaking “Hispanos”² often lived in enclaves and segregated housing apart from the more well to do Anglo parts of town. They were treated as second-class citizens by the schools and the community at large. Teachers used racial epithets and corporal punishment with students. It wasn’t until mid-century that more Hispano students attended and graduated from school, and Hispano parents began to gain some political clout by serving on school boards. Even in 1960, however, there was no Hispano teacher in a neighboring school district, in spite of the presence of Adams State College in Alamosa and at least one qualified Hispano teacher graduate (Donato, 2007).

Although conditions slowly improved from the 1950’s on, Alamosa continued de facto school segregation practices for another 30 years. Not until the “Alamosa Plan” for desegregating schools did the district take definitive steps to ensure all same-age students attended classes together. The district’s solution was to house two grades in each elementary building (K-1; 2-3; 4-5), then have all students attend a single middle and high school. While this changed the demographics of the schools, it did not necessarily improve the academic experience for children of color. Hispano dropout rates were higher and high school graduate rates still lower than the Anglo population. Fewer Hispano students went on to post-secondary education.

Maya ‘Hispanos’

With this history, it is not surprising that when Maya children began enrolling in schools in the 1980s, the initial response from educators was to treat them as Hispano children. After all, they looked and in many cases talked like children from Spanish-speaking families. When it became apparent that many of these children only spoke a Mayan language, the schools did not know how to respond. The default solution was to put them in ESL classes (when available), enroll them in “easier” academic courses and, if native language communication was attempted, to communicate in Spanish. As a result, for roughly 20 years Maya families experienced a school culture that viewed their children as Spanish-speaking Hispanos of Mexican heritage. In this milieu, the children often responded in kind: adopting the speech, dress, and mannerisms of the local Hispanic

2 Whereas Hispanic or Latino broadly refer to peoples of Spanish language heritage, the term Hispano refers specifically to descendants of colonial Spanish families who were living in the southwest when the U.S. incorporated that region after 1848. Residents of the San Luis Valley were part of the largest Hispano group, the *nuevomexicanos*. Hispanos typically do not consider themselves “Mexican-Americans”, as they did not cross any border to live in the U.S.—the border “crossed them”. The term is not currently used by schools or the community.

population. As time went on some even married outside of the Guatemalan community. Parents of Maya children realized what was happening but were in a difficult position. Many of them immigrated without documentation, entering the U.S. from Mexico. They sometimes obtained work with false documents. Speaking up and becoming visible was risky, even if they had the political acumen to do so. Many families had mixed immigration status—children who originally came with their parents were undocumented, while children born in the U.S. were citizens. These children could grow up and enjoy all the privileges of citizenship: legal work status, driver's licenses, financial aid and resident status for college. Some of these privileges, however, required disclosing family information that could put siblings and parents at risk of discovery and deportation.

In sum, a fundamental issue for the Maya community in Alamosa became the challenge of maintaining and transmitting traditional cultural values and beliefs to the children. In their own words, parents felt their children were becoming “un-Maya”. Because the Maya community was effectively a hidden community, children faced the challenge of somehow remaining “Maya” when almost every other influence—school, the wider community, peers—pressured them to fit in. What follows describes how ongoing collaboration among local community institutions and individuals served to support Maya children in developing and asserting their identity in school while assisting parents in cultivating aspects of Maya identity at home.

Initial Community Support

The first local entity to reach out to the Alamosa Maya was the Catholic diocese. This church offered shelter and assistance to newcomers. In addition, the local school district hired a “Maya community liaison”. This person mainly functioned as a help to parents getting their children enrolled in school (e.g., filling out forms). As for helping Maya families learn about U.S. school culture, or district teachers developing culturally responsive practices, there was little progress. As one Maya adult stated, “in spite of the liaison, there was no change in the interaction between (Maya) students and their teachers and counselors” (cited in Ludwig & LeCompte, 2012).

As already mentioned, another local entity with early Maya contacts was the Immigrant Resource Center (IRC). From its beginnings in 1987, the IRC evolved into a valley-wide resource for all immigrants as well as migrant and seasonal workers. Since 2003, it has functioned as an independent non-profit assisting with immigration status, victims of abuse, homeless crime victims, and English language classes.

While these two organizations helped Maya newcomers with basic necessities,

neither focused on educational issues. The school district, except for the early effort mentioned above, generally neglected Maya children and their families. Maya students became less and less distinguishable from Hispanic students. Over time, the Maya began to be viewed as Mexicans who did not speak “good” Spanish. Such was the situation in 2006, when the efforts described below commenced.

Collaborative Efforts

Looking back, it is apparent that the Maya community’s transition from hidden to observable was not the result of one or two major events or the work of just one or two individuals. Instead, a constellation of small efforts and the cooperation of many individuals led, over a relatively short period of time, to big changes in the visibility and voice of the Alamosa Maya. Likewise, the efforts themselves were not focused on just one aspect of the community. Rather, separate activities and partnerships influenced, and were influenced by, the needs and desires of community elders and families, the attitudes of local residents, the commitment of teachers, and Maya children themselves.

In short, the efforts presented below were not one-way initiatives directed at the Maya community. Instead, the individuals and institutions discussed below joined together in a community based participatory action research³ (PAR) approach to identify ways they could support what the Maya themselves saw as important. This approach, together with the student-focused partnership of the Community Integration Grant initiative, required that the voices of children and adults form the cornerstone of social relationships: trust (Schensul and LeCompte, 2016).

Maya families in Alamosa had realized what most immigrants discover: that the cultural mores of the United States differed from their Guatemalan home culture. Maya parents often spoke of the loss of their language, Q’anjob’al, respect for parents, and a loss of community pride and unity. In the words of one Maya elder, “our culture is something that identifies us. Without identity, we don’t know who we are or where we come from. That is something important for us: That we know our identity, our culture, our customs ... always carry them with us and pass them on to our children.” Another elder told Ludwig that the Maya community needs to “pay attention to how we build the children and what we put into their minds.” These sentiments guided project partners in this project as they worked to support the maintenance of Maya culture and students’ positive identities as Maya.

³ PAR is distinguished from other types of Action Research by its explicit focus on social justice and the equality of those involved in the research (Zuber-Skerritt et al., 2015).

University, Immigrant Resource Center, and Community Integration Grants

In 2007, Adams State University (ASU) and the Immigrant Resource Center (IRC) each received a grant. ASU's Project EXCELL was a 5-year project designed to assist teachers in developing the skills to effectively work with linguistically and culturally diverse children. The IRC's 4-year grant was part of the Colorado Trust's statewide community integration initiative mentioned above. The intent of the Community Integration Grant was to build positive and productive relationships among communities of the San Luis Valley and between their individual immigrants and refugees. Education was identified as a target area. Specifically, educational goals included establishment of a climate that (a) valued and advocated for diverse learners and leaders, (b) improved English Language Learner (ELL) student academic achievement and high school retention, (c) established active parent groups, (d) created community engagement opportunities for students and (e) provided high quality professional development for educators in teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students.

A Baseline – Community Interviews

One of the early activities provided a “baseline” for home-school interactions. In the early months of the Colorado Trust grant, Antonio Sandoval, a former principal, and Ren Carbutt, a student at Adams State, were hired to implement some of the grant activities. While planning those activities, Ludwig and Judd taught both bilingual employees to write interview questions and conduct interviews with 10 sets of immigrant parents and 15 Guatemalan students. Analysis of this qualitative data revealed that immigrant students felt marginalized, disconnected from and voiceless in their educational experience (Ludwig et al., 2012). An eleven year-old student said, “Our parents always tell us to stay in school. My dad told us that when he was a little kid he had to work for himself to buy what he needs. Sometimes he ended up stealing.” The same boy later said that teachers needed to “hear what the students have to say because their opinions aren’t being heard. The dropout rates would not increase more because the school is listening to them and most of the time they don’t.” A high school student talked of being in a British literature class. “I was the only one in there who was Hispanic and . . . I felt like they misplaced me because I didn’t feel included. The English teacher was only speaking to her white students and she left me out of the conversation and she forgot all about me as if I didn’t exist.”

Interviews with immigrant parents revealed that they were frustrated by divisions

occurring in the home as their children increasingly identified with English and American culture and failed to practice the respect so rooted in Maya cosmology and social relations. A local priest who had worked with the Maya immigrants since their arrival in the late 1970s shared that although the parents wanted their children to have an education, they were upset by the “loss of the old ways”. As he put it, the parents wanted children to “keep the old values, especially respect for parents, for the family, and for the church. The families that functioned the best were the ones where the children maintained respect.” In addition, most parents talked of having lost their rights as parents. “According to my children, if you hit a child, they’ll take you to jail and lock you up. You will lose your children.” For many parents who spoke no English or who could not read or write, children lied about their attendance and their grades. “My children know more than I do” lamented many parents in families where the children’s education had caused tension within the family. However, many parents confided, “it is the vision of every parent that our children educate themselves. How we would love to have a child that is a lawyer, a doctor, or a judge, a high-ranking person. We have to give more time to our children.”

Fig. 3: Colorado Teachers and Guatemalan Students

Project EXCELL Activities

After reading and coding the surveys and interview findings, Ludwig approached Judd regarding the needs of Maya schoolchildren. Although many teachers were well meaning and pedagogically adept, they lacked understanding of the Maya culture in order to become more culturally responsive to Maya students. With Ludwig’s Guatemalan contacts, the authors arranged for select teachers to travel to Guatemala. One of the conditions of the trip was that upon their return, the teachers would agree to participate in PLCs (Professional Learning Communities). The PLCs would use these teachers’ experiences and insights to develop strategies to improve the educational experience for Maya children and their families school wide, and to determine ways to involve their parents in school. Several of these teachers subsequently participated in additional cultural sensitivity training. They then served as mentors to their district colleagues.

The teachers’ insights and improved cultural responsiveness (Gay, 2002) made them eager to foster partnerships with parents. One initial effort built on an existing elementary Family Literacy Night held each spring. These nights included mini-classes on different topics for parents and literacy materials—primarily free books—for students.

The meeting was originally designed for parents of linguistically and culturally diverse students, which usually meant Mexican-heritage students. However, it became a logical extension to reach out to Maya parents. This outreach was accomplished through a combination of direct teacher-parent contact and use of community elders to encourage attendance. Within two years, each Alamosa school was sponsoring their own Family Literacy Nights.

Fig. 4: Mr. Coj in Santa Eulalia

Fig. 5: Alamosa Teachers in Sololá

Fig. 6: Women's Agency in Santa Eulalia

The Guatemala trip also initiated personal contacts with influential Maya in Guatemala. In-country travel was facilitated by Tereso Coj and the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala. At the time, Mr. Coj was a liaison between local Maya communities and the Universidad del Valle. He helped the authors arrange for school visits in the Lake Atitlán area and for the teachers to help paint a school and plant seedlings around Sololá, a town in the Maya highlands. On a subsequent trip, teachers offered educational workshops to local Maya teachers. Later Mr. Coj accompanied Judd, who was working on a Fulbright project in Esquintla, to Santa Eulalia, the native town of most of the Alamosa Maya. During the visit, Judd met with town elders and arranged for a video conference between a women's activist agency and community members in Alamosa.

After the Guatemala trips, one of the valley teachers encouraged Mr. Coj to visit Alamosa. During the visit, he spoke to faculty and community members at the University, visited local schools and talked with students, and met with families from the Maya community. Before returning to Guatemala, he also presented at the Colorado State Conference of ESL teachers. In hindsight, Mr. Coj's visit offered Maya children a different vision of who they could be: educated professionals who worked to make a difference for the community. Seeing other influential Maya became part of the impetus for students to take pride in their heritage and make themselves more "visible" at school.

Maya Project, Pastoral Maya and the Alamosa Maya Community (Espiritu Maya)

Ludwig's initial attendance at Pastoral Maya in 2007 led to additional influential

contacts. One was Juanatano Cano, a Maya teacher and community leader teaching in the Los Angeles public school district. Another was David López, formerly a Catholic priest from Santa Eulalia, the sending community in Guatemala for many of the Alamosa immigrants. With grant money from the Catholic Bishops, Padre David traveled to the United States. The Maya community in Alamosa was the second group that he formally organized. Grant monies from the ASC Project EXCELL and the IRC's Community integration grant were used to bring these dynamic Maya leaders to Alamosa for visits with the Maya community, students, parents' nights and local teachers and administrators. These visits encouraged the teachers and adult Maya to be more actively involved with their children's teachers and schools.

Cano and López also connected the organizations then known as Pastoral Maya and The Maya Heritage Community Project of Kennesaw State University to Flora Archuleta, Immigrant Resource Center and Community Integration Grant director; Judd and Ludwig, ASC Project EXCELL; and elders of Espíritu Maya, the local Maya organization. These individuals used their respective resources in order to plan and carry out educational and community initiatives.

These partnerships also reminded the authors that schooling and parenting is a collaborative endeavor requiring both cultural understanding and respect. In this case, it was necessary to establish working relationships with Maya community elders in order to communicate effectively and work productively with Maya families. A key elder was Francisco Lucas, one of the original immigrants to the Valley. He had been instrumental in helping newer immigrants settle in the area, and had become a point of contact for both the local diocese and Immigrant Resource Center. Through him, his wife Lucía, and their extended family, inroads were made to schools in the community.

When Lucas expressed a need for the Maya community to have access to a curandero, or shaman, funds were used to bring Francisco Shapín, a school principal and shaman from Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, to Alamosa. During his visit, Shapín spoke to community groups and also trained Lucas to become a shaman. In 2012, Lucas was formally consecrated as a shaman to serve the cultural and spiritual needs of the local Maya community.

Fig. 7: Francisco and Lucia Lucas

Another request from the Maya was to purchase a marimba, an instrument native to Maya communities. Funds were raised to purchase and import one. Children received lessons and the instrument was used at community events such as the Fiesta of Santa Eulalia and performances of the Espíritu Maya folklórico troop. The marimba became

a tangible way to honor and maintain part of the community's cultural heritage. It also provided a way to share that heritage with students and parents outside the Valley. In 2012, a class of fourth grade students from Denver requested a visit with the Maya community. They, along with their parents and teachers, travelled nearly four hours to meet and spend time with Alamosa students. The Maya children's marimba tunes entertained and

Fig. 8: Alamosa Marimba

impressed the visitors, as well as the other students and teachers in their own school (Chavez, 2012).

As Alamosa teachers became more aware of their students' Maya heritage, they sought ways to recognize and incorporate that heritage in school and share it with the community. In addition to personally ensuring more parents were involved in the Literacy Nights, parent-teacher meetings, and other parent-school events, there was interest in additional events that would specifically showcase Maya culture. For example, a middle school teacher organized a soccer team largely consisting of Guatemalan Students. He asked for money to hold a banquet at the end of the soccer season in order to honor the players and their families. At the high

Fig. 9: High School Chapines Club

school, a science teacher sponsored a Chapines⁴ Club for Maya students. Empowered by the recognition, the club members' first request was to share their cultural background with teachers. Students prepared and presented a dinner for the school's teachers. Eventually, students were asked to share their stories with community groups in Alamosa as well as elsewhere in Colorado. The sponsoring teacher developed such a relationship with

students that they and their families came to her for help in matters such as applying to college and trying to prevent a father's deportation. In her words it "was a pleasure...to meet their families and get to know their gentle ways" (Kruse, personal communication).

Conclusions

This essay began with a question: How can a Maya immigrant community—and the families that comprise it—maintain their cultural identity in the face of isolation and pressure to acculturate? More specifically, how can parents ensure that their children learn and carry on what it means to be "Maya"?

⁴ 'Chapín' is a term Guatemalans often use to refer to themselves, as opposed to the more generic 'Guatemalteco'; sort of like saying one is a 'Yankee' instead of a 'New Englander.' The students chose the club name themselves. Their objective was to raise the visibility and awareness of Maya students to school personnel and their peers.

We have presented some ways various resources helped answer that question. While it would be nice to conclude that as a result of these partnerships things have permanently changed for the better, that is rarely the case with social change. Zuber-Skerritt et al. (2015) reiterate Adorno's (1973) warning about oversimplifying complicated problems:

The complex, messy, and wicked nature of the social world, including injustice in society and education, should not be simplified into neat classifications and categories, but be explored by a variety of perspectives and methods of research. (p. 25)

In addition to improving school visibility and teachers' cultural competence, one other community initiative continues to bear fruit—literally. In 2012, the K-1 elementary school was closed and the buildings razed. Initially, the land, adjacent to the Río Grande, was purchased for an RV park. After some public protest and political wrangling, funds were raised to purchase the area

Fig. 10: Maya Community Members With Crops - Credit: TPL Archive

for a community garden. Members of the Maya community in particular were encouraged to plant crops that were part of their traditional diet. Now, six years later, the Rio Grande Farm Park is a permanent 38-acre site owned by the San Luis Valley Foods Coalition (Trust for Public Land, 2016). In addition to community farming, the property contains trails, fruit trees, and space for groups to gather for celebrations. Francisco Lucas and his wife Lucía are both on the Park Committee.

The authors' work with sectors of the Alamosa community, especially the Maya students and their families, demonstrates the importance of one's culture when facing adversity and its value in building an enduring identity. As one Alamosa Maya elder explained, "Our culture is not the base, it is the root." Partnering also highlighted the power of collaborating with likeminded individuals to form community supports for the changes we sought. We found, as a contributor to the Foxfire Interviews put it,

We all need community—and since community is hard to come by in this society, we need to find ways of gathering it unto ourselves...Part of our task is to search out folks who are on this journey with us and gather them in various ways, creating communities that can help us...do the best work we can (Palmer, as cited in Hatton, 2005, p. 133).

We believe the work we carried out beyond the university and situated in the domain of community participatory engagement, is critical to understanding how to provide equitable opportunities for marginalized as well as mainstream populations of learners. Witnessing the results of making Maya culture visible to the community of Alamosa and its positive impact on the Maya as well as on the community at large has made that need clear to us. While this story has a beginning, it has no end as long as Maya live in the San Luis Valley.

Perhaps the words of one of the original Maya immigrants sums it up best. Francisco Lucas has seen the ups and downs of his family and community over the past 40 years:

Something that makes us proud as Maya within our cultural and spiritual activities is that we have integrated our culture. We have brought it and shared it with many people. Perhaps not everybody knows about us as people, but the schools, the churches, the various organizations – they know and have shared it with us. We want to have our rights and be known in this country and in this valley because if we hide ourselves it is like saying when I go out into the street they could say “that dirty Indian,” and that is how they would treat us. Because we don’t let them get to know us, a lot of times people discriminate against us, but allowing them to get to know us so that they can identify us as we are is the most beautiful thing.

Coda

Since the last author moved from the Valley in 2015, not much has changed (Lucas, personal communication). Probably the most visible aspect of the Maya community now is their cultivation of various vegetables as part of the Río Grande Farm Park, the local food Co-operative mentioned above. Several families sell what they grow in a local farmer’s market during the summer. An annual Harvest Festival also incorporates aspects of local Maya culture, such as the Espíritu Maya Marimba group.

With the retirement of the teacher sponsor, the high school Chapines Club did not continue, but there have been several academic success stories. Three students graduated from University in 2018. One, Juan Francisco, completed a music MA at UCLA on full scholarship and will now pursue a Ph.D. The local Alamosa schools have benefitted from increased involvement on the part of some mothers, who volunteer on a regular basis (High Country News, 2018). In December 2018, the daughter of one Maya couple graduated Summa Cum Laude with a major in Sociology. She completed her degree in 3 ½ years and

with no student loan debt. She works for Alamosa County and plans to stay in the Valley and serve the community (Relyea, 2018).

As is true of immigrants nationwide, the last couple of years have been characterized by increased uncertainty for the Alamosa Maya who are undocumented. The IRC receives several calls each day from individuals concerned about the threats to DACA. The Director, Flora Archuleta, says that since the last Presidential election she has fielded double the requests for Power of Attorney on the part of parents fearful that they will be deported and separated from their citizen children (Archuleta, personal communication).

References

- Adorno, T. (1973). *Negative dialectics*. London: Routledge.
- Anyon, J. (1980). Education, ideology, and the hidden curriculum. *The Journal of Education*, 162, 1, pp. 67-92. DOI: 10.1177/002205748016200106
- Bhabha, H. (1994). *The location of culture*. London: Routledge.
- Chavez, C. (2012, April 16). Ricks Center students learn firsthand about Maya culture. University of Denver Magazine. Retrieved from <https://magazine.du.edu/campus-community/ricks-center-students-learn-firsthand-about-maya-culture/>.
- Comen, E., Stebbins, S. & Sauter, M. (2018 January 22). U.S. economy: A rundown of the poorest county in every state. *24/7 Wall Street*. Retrieved from <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/economy/2018/01/22/u-s-economy-rundown-poorest-county-every-state/1045715001/>.
- Donato, R. (2016). Francisco Maestas et al. v. George H. Shone et al.: Mexican American Resistance to School Segregation in the Hispano Homeland, 1912–1914. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 16, 1, 3-17. DOI: 10.1080/15348431.2016.1179190
- Donato, R. (2007). *Mexicans and Hispanos in Colorado Schools and Communities: 1920-1960*. NY: SUNY Press.
- Donato, R. (1999). Hispano education and the implications of autonomy: four school systems in southern Colorado. *Harvard Educational Review*, 69, 2, 117-150. DOI: 10.17763/haer.69.2.j17hj5p37j4512h7
- Epstein, J. (2018). *School, family, and community partnerships*. NY: Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/9780429494673
- Gay, G. (2002). *Preparing for culturally responsive teaching*. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53, 2, 106-116. DOI: 10.1177/0022487102053002003
- Hatton, S. (2005). Pursuing something they haven't caught yet. In Hatton, S. (Ed.) *Teaching by heart: The foxfire interviews*. NY: Teachers College Press.
- Lee, K., Wismann-Horther, J. & Downs-Karkos, S. (2008). Supporting immigrant integration in Colorado: lessons learned. Retrieved from <https://www.coloradotrust.org/sites/default/files/SIRFILessonsLearned2008.pdf>.
- Lobato, S. (2018, May 12). School lawsuit from 1914 remembered. *Alamosa News*. Retrieved from <https://www.alamosanews.com/article/school-lawsuit-from-1914-remembered>.
- Ludwig, S. (2006). Making fast the thread: Cultural maintenance and transmission of Mayan women weavers who weave on backstrap looms. Doctoral dissertation, University of Colorado. DOI: 10.17730/praa.34.1.mqr47130h1jn8271
- Ludwig, S. & LeCompte, M. (2012). Reassessing the impact of indigenous Maya and modern

- Western pedagogies on identity and self. DOI: 10.1017/CBO9781139173674.016
- Ludwig, S., Lucas, F., Nicolas, L., Archuleta, F., Sandoval, A. & Carbutt, R. (2012, Winter). Supporting respect: community partnership in Alamosa, Colorado. *Practicing Anthropology*, 34, 1, 32-26.
- Moll, L. & Greenberg, J. (1990). Creating zones of possibilities: Combining social contexts for instruction. In *Vygotsky and Education*, 319-348, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Relyea, L. (2018, December 11). ASU recognizes outstanding fall grads. *Valley Courier*. Retrieved from <https://alamosanews.com/article/asu-recognizes-outstanding-fall-grads>.
- San Luís Valley Development Resources Group. (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.slvdrg.org/our-region/>.
- Schensul, J. & LeCompte, M. (2016). *The ethnographer's toolkit, v. 7*. Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield.
- Singer, M. (2010). Studying hidden and hard to reach populations. In *Specialized Ethnographic Methods: A Mixed Methods Approach, Book 4, The Ethnographer's Toolkit*. J. Schensul & M. LeCompte, eds., pp. 255-317. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.
- Spindler, G. & Spindler, L. (2000). *Fifty years of anthropology and education*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Trust for Public Land. (2016). Protection of the Río Grande Farm Park Complete. Retrieved from <https://www.tpl.org/media-room/protection-rio-grande-farm-park-complete#sm.0001vitedjynpf17yqx2k6tdelxwu>.
- Zuber-Skerritt, O., Fletcher, M. & Kearney, J. (2015). *Professional learning in higher education and communities*. NY: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: 10.1057/9781137455185

From There to Here: My Mayan Journey and Life in America

Carmelina M. Cadena

Multilingual Interpreter & Translator

Available Languages:

Akateko/Popti/Qanjobal/Kiche/Qeqchi/Kaqchiquel/Ixil/Chuj/Awakateko/Achi/Chorti/Mam

Abstract: In this personal commentary, Carmelina tell how she fled Guatemala when a small child, walking the journey with her mother.

“Chi’tit yul’in nab’al’an, xa lak’oj, go’ox-go’ox xi xal yajan eb, chi kop’be yiban stzo’otz. Ko to ji’nin’oj, xa lak’oj, bej’kan masanil, ton ki’ba’el ko ba’!” (Akateko)

“I remember it; the urgency, the hurry, the sound of many feet pounding on the earth. Running, hurrying, leave everything behind. Hide, quickly, hide!” (English)

We were hiding under a huge rock, like in a cave, in the dark; I could smell the dampness of the earth. I remember hearing the bullets zing by. I saw the flash as they fired guns, heard the noise as bullets hit the house and the huge rocks nearby. We waited, hidden, waiting for them to move on, for the soldiers to leave. We were safe for the moment but we couldn’t stay, I was 5, or 6. We had to leave. We took only what we could carry. It was my mother, and I.

We walked away in the dark of night. We couldn’t risk being seen in the daytime. We walked for a long time, staying with kind, generous people we had never met before. We walked through the mountains, we crossed over rivers, and we stayed in different regions, with people who spoke different languages. I listened, I learned, I asked my mother what they were saying. We crossed borders and walked through Mexico. We crossed another river. I clung to my mother’s back. My mother couldn’t swim, she still can’t; but we crossed the river. In 1983, we made it to El Norte, to Arizona; we lived in an orange grove in a place named Chandler Heights, AZ. Then we went to work.

We couldn’t speak the language but we knew to get on the trucks. The trucks would take us to the fields. We picked tomatoes, cucumbers, and whatever other vegetables they needed us to pick. The trucks would take us back to where we had been picked up in the early morning. We would start there again the next day. I remember my first payday for thinning sugar beets on a farm in Rupert Idaho. I received a check for ten dollars. It was

an exciting day. We moved around a lot. We followed the crops. When we picked oranges, I could only reach the low ones because of my stature.

I went to school when I could. I hungered to learn. Usually I could only stay in school for two or three months at a time, then we had to move on. Sometimes we arrived at the next location at night; we would get up early the next morning to go to work. Reality was, if we didn't work, we didn't eat.

Eventually I had six months of schooling under my belt. With that, I was referred to as "la que habla mucho ingles"; the "one who speaks a lot of English". I learned English so I could interpret for my mom. I learned to count money because I liked money. By age eight, I was interpreting for my mother from our native language of Akateko to English. I was negotiating work for us. I was able to walk up to farmers houses to ask about work, to get the farmer and my mother to agree on our work and our pay. I remember so well the first deal that I brokered. I received my first pay as an interpreter; a six pack of canned Pepsi and a Payday candy bar. I was overjoyed. Even though my mother told me to save my sodas for later, by the time we were on our ride home I had already drunk two cans, because they were all mine.

I continued to go to school when I could. I went to many different schools. All along, my mother told me "Never forget where we come from. Never forget your language", so I didn't. People asked me to go places with them to interpret because they couldn't understand English, or Spanish. I also knew how to speak the languages that I learned working side by side with people that spoke other languages from my country. When I was young, I interpreted for free. As a teenager, I was paid a Burger King sandwich for my skills. I loved BK sandwiches, but one lady never offered to get me fries or a soda, just the sandwich. I was a child; maybe she thought I didn't need the fries and drink. But sometimes I thought she was mean because she only gave me the sandwich, after all the work I did for her wherever she took me to interpret.

Eventually I graduated from high school in Florida. Then I decided it was time to further my education and I went to school to study dental hygiene. That's when I found out I needed to present proof of United States residency. Sadly, I didn't have that document and I had to drop out of the program.

I continued to help people who asked me to go with them for different appointments and to different places. In 2002, I obtained my United States residency, which changed everything for me. With that, I was able to help in capacities that I couldn't before. I went to court with a friend who needed an interpreter for our native language Akateko. The court only provided interpreters for Spanish; they didn't know much about all our indigenous languages. One day in court, a judge said to me, "Where have you been? We

need you and your language skills!”

This was the beginning of my professional career in interpreting. I worked with an agency, traveling around Florida and the United States to court rooms, medical appointments and schools. I recognized the needs of my people and realized my unique ability to help them. But my people, the Guatemalan Maya, come from a part of the world that is rugged and mountainous. Villages are separated by geographic barriers, mountains, valleys, rivers, and gorges. I was encouraged to learn about the history of my people and the tragic events that led to the Diaspora of the Guatemalan Maya. I learned a lot more about the armed conflict that took place in the 1980’s and forced my family to leave our village. I learned why we were not the only ones fleeing from Guatemala then. I learned about the things that I didn’t understand when I was young. I eventually returned to my country to see it anew. As an adult, I walked the path that we had had taken so many years prior. I studied about my own people, my own country, and my own history. There are 22 recognized indigenous languages in Guatemala and there are many dialects of each of those languages. It is difficult and often impossible to understand each other. It is also difficult to find interpreters for these languages. As more people have immigrated to the United States, the need for interpreters has grown.

Between 2002 and 2010, as I spent more time in the courtroom, I recognized the need for interpreters of indigenous languages. I was asked many times if I knew anyone who spoke Mam, or K’iche. I would think to myself “I am but one person and I do not speak all of these languages”. It was then that I realized that I did know people who could speak those languages and many more languages.

The Universe guides my path and led me to create an organization to help my people from Guatemala. I have been gifted with skills that I strive to improve daily. I began with what was gifted to me and as I grow, I learn, and more is given to me; more opportunities and more responsibilities. I founded Mayainterpreters.com. I was able to locate and enlist the help of interpreters for the needs of the courtroom by day and the hospitals and police stations by night.

As I travel around the world, I have been able to recruit and train interpreters from other lands. Our team is now able to help with interpretations and translations for indigenous languages from Guatemala and Mexico as well as a few other languages. We travel to courtrooms across the United States. We assist with immigration issues and criminal issues. We assist with medical consultations and emergencies. We help in educational institutions. Sometimes we are physically present, other times we are there telephonically or via video.

I have been invited to speak at different events. I speak to organizations of

interpreters, I speak at universities and at conferences; I receive invitations to speak on radio and on television. I have attended conferences at the UN. I speak to raise awareness about my people and our culture. I speak to stand up for our rights. I speak to let others know the truth, that the Maya people are not extinct. I speak about our journey from my country. I speak and work with my Mayan brothers and sisters; I want them to know they are important. I attend conferences to learn from other professionals about their struggles and successes with indigenous languages from around the world. Every day brings new adventures to our team as we continue to work close to home, throughout the United States and Mexico, into Central America, and across the Atlantic into Europe.

Years later I retraced the path taken by my mother and I, Pa'am to Jacaltenango

La vida en los Estados Unidos para los mayas guatemaltecos

Henry Omar Vicente

Abstract: El Maya intenta hablar el español para comunicarse con el latino, pero al hacerlo se da cuenta que es rechazado, es burlado.

Discriminación

Uno de los problemas más grande y triste que vive el Maya en Estados Unidos, es la discriminación por no hablar el idioma español; y este problema afecta al niño Maya (Mayaamericano) nacido en este país y a veces hasta la familia que se encuentra en Guatemala.

Desde que se impuso el idioma Español en Guatemala por parte del invasor español casi 500 años, el Maya ha sufrido mucha discriminación por no hablar un idioma que no es suyo. Este problema se hace más grave aún en Estados Unidos porque el indígena Maya está obligado a hablar el idioma Español en su trabajo, en el supermercado, en diferentes actividades cotidianas e incluso hasta en las Iglesias.

La discriminación hacia el Maya no viene solo del anglosajón, sino del latino, porque estos dos grupos étnicos regularmente trabajan juntos, conviven más tiempo que con otros grupos étnicos.

El Maya intenta hablar el español para comunicarse con el latino, pero al hacerlo se da cuenta que es rechazado, es burlado. Muchos de las veces los insultos son: eres un indio retrasado; porque no hablas el español si en Guatemala se habla el español; estamos en Estados Unidos tienes que hablar bien el español. Es muy triste escuchar estas frases por parte del hispano.

El idioma Español lo vino oficializar el invasor español cuando llegó en Guatemala hace más de V siglos y además en Estados Unidos no solo se habla Español sino se habla el idioma Inglés y por ejemplo los japoneses hablan su idioma y chinos también, esto no es cuestión de hablar solo un idioma, si no de comprender la situación de cada quien.

La discriminación por el idioma es un problema muy serio porque afecta directamente a los hijos Mayaamericano incluso la familia que vive en Guatemala. El indígena se da cuenta de que es muy duro no hablar bien el Español entonces se lamenta y se rechaza a sí mismo y opta de no enseñarle el idioma materno a su hijo e intente hablar a los hijos en un Español mal hablado, pero esto no arregla el problema si no que empeora; el niño nacido en Estados Unidos (Mayaamericanos) no llega a desarrollar bien su lenguaje para poder

comunicarse, crece con un lenguaje muy pobre, entiende muy poco.

Desde ese momento se corta el lazo que hay entre abuelos y nietos, porque el idioma materno es el único medio que hay para poder transmitir el amor, el cariño, que tiene un abuelo a su nieto. También se pierde la cultura porque por medio del idioma el abuelo cuenta historias, costumbres etc., a su nieto. Lamentablemente cuando el abuelo quiere contarle algo o simplemente decir Katin q'anij tex on nex (Te amo) Katin waj (Te quiero) o jas ri ab'anon (Como estas). Prácticamente el niño no entiende, se queda atónito, intenta saber qué es lo que está diciendo, entonces le pregunta a su papas y ellos interpretan pero no es igual. Hay un ejemplo, cuando un niño Maya nacido en Estados Unidos se le pregunta que narre una historia o una película en idioma Español, dice unas cuantas palabras y termina de narrar, no lo puede contar; pero a un niño Maya que vive en Guatemala se le pregunta que narre una historia lo cuenta de principio a fin en su idioma Maya, como K'iche'.

El Maya culpa a sus papas del por qué no le hablaron en Español, y entonces se enoja con ellos, les reclama, sienten rencor por la razón que están en Estados Unidos, lo rechazan por el idioma. Por el rechazo y la burla el Maya por parte del Latino: el prefiere estar callado. Limita su conversación, para evitar que sea objeto de burla e insultos; como resultado de este problema el Maya se vuelve antisocial o solitario, no se relaciona con otras personas.

Lo peor del caso es que el Maya lo calla este problema por medio de ser discriminado y por eso nadie sabe de este problema. Este es un problema de todos los Mayas que viven en los Estados Unidos.

Aprender Ingles

Aprender inglés fue algo difícil para mí, porque era el tercer idioma que estaba aprendiendo, tenía que levantarme temprano. Trabajaba en una planta de res y esto era un trabajo muy duro porque regularmente en esta planta trabajábamos como máquina; Bueno , como máquina porque se trabaja como iban llegando las piezas en la mesa por la cadena. En la línea donde yo trabajé el trabajo lo hacían 20 personas pero eso nunca pasaba regularmente éramos 11, 12, 13 personas y teníamos que sacar el trabajo a como diera lugar.

Para aprender el inglés tuve que necesitar un diccionario de español, porque muchas de las veces traducía las palabras del inglés al español, pero no sabía que significa la palabra en el idioma Español.

Tenía una ventaja porque sabía hablar el idioma K'iche', mi idioma materno, el

Inglés y el K'iche' son parecidos, por ejemplo en inglés se dice "the white house", en K'iche' se dice "saqa ja"; primero va el adjetivo y después el sustantivo, pero en Español primero el sustantivo y luego el adjetivo "la casa blanca". Quizá esto me ayudo bastante la cuestión del reglamento de los idiomas. Otra ventaja que tuve con la pronunciación de algunas palabras es que hay palabras en inglés y en K'iche' que se pronuncian igual, por ejemplo Cook = Kuk (cocina = ardilla); Hot = Jat (caliente = andate) etc.. Esto fue mi experiencia cuando fui a la escuela de adultos a aprender inglés. Yo invito a todos los wachalales Mayas que aprenden el idioma inglés.

Es triste saber que las Iglesias Cristianas no nos aceptan a nosotros los Mayas que vivimos en Estados Unidos solo por tener una creencia diferente, esta es la experiencia que he tenido. Lo misioneros cristianos frecuentan andar en las tiendas, parques, o a veces visitan las casas y no tengo nada en contra de eso. Tuve una experiencia muy particular hace unos días atrás, llegó a visitarme un "pastor" en la casa donde vivo, me saludo, se miraba muy amable y luego me dijo que bonito casa tienes. Yo respondí gracias, él dice, Dios es tan grande que te ha regalado esta casa; le dije sí, y entonces empezó a leer algunos capítulos de la Biblia, enseguida me preguntó ¿en qué iglesia vas? Yo le respondí que no iba a ninguna iglesia, pero se creo en Dios. "Te invito a mi iglesia" dijo; le respondí gracias. A la semana siguiente llega y me pregunta: "por qué no llegaste en la iglesia"? Entonces me dije que yo respetaba su religión, su creencia, y si yo no fui es que tengo mis propias creencias. Yo pongo mi candela y cada cierto tiempo un Ajq'j (Sacerdote Maya) realiza una ceremonia Maya allá en Guatemala en los Tab'al Awas (Lugares Sagrados) y esa es la manera que yo hago para darle Gracias a Dios.

Y este señor me dice, "Ay hermano aquí siento la presencia del diablo, el enemigo, tú necesitas aceptar al Señor para que te libera del mal que está dentro de ti. Le digo oiga señor que le pasa por qué habla de esa manera, no es que aquí está el mal. Le dije sabe que sálgase de mi casa por favor. Es lamentable lo que hace esta gente, con pánico quiere convencer a la gente con tal de que sea parte de su iglesia.

Desconocimiento de Su Historia

Muchos de los Mayas que viven en Estados Unidos no se consideran Mayas por dos razones; uno por desconocimiento del mismo, Segundo por ser discriminando. Sabemos que todos los gobiernos que han gobernado en toda la historia de Guatemala, ninguno de ellos se ha preocupado por la educación del indígena. En las escuelas nos enseñan historias de otros países, de otras sociedades, pero no la nuestra. Me recuerdo que el maestro decía que los Mayas existieron, y que se fueron. Eso sí, la historia de los

invasores se enseñan bien; esta es uno de las razones que el Maya que reside en Estados Unidos es indígena Maya, y muchos son analfabetos. Muchas veces el Maya prefiere no decir que pertenece al etnia Maya porque ser burlado, insultado. Es lamentable saber que hoy en día el ladino no acepta al Maya tal como es. Hace faltan programas sociales para concientizar al Maya a cerca de su cultura.

Luchando Por Una Vida en Estados Unidos

Cuando el Maya está en su país es difícil vivir en la pobreza, se necesita comprar lo que se consume diariamente en la cocina, se necesita apoyar a los niños económicamente para ir en escuela, necesita el apoyo de un padre moralmente inculcando al niño que sigue en Universidad. Pero es imposible. Sabemos claramente que el Maya desea un mejor futuro para su hijo.

Sabemos claramente en Guatemala no se consigue un trabajo fijo por ser indígena. El Maya se dedica en la agricultura: sembrar maíz, trigo, frijol y papas etc. Y no tiene suficiente terreno donde sembrar, el terreno que tiene es muy limitado, a pesar de que nosotros los Mayas somos los verdaderos dueños de esas tierras.

Desde que llegó el invasor español desde hace 500 años, han arrasado con el Maya, y los siguen haciendo en estas épocas que estamos. Hay mucha injusticia contra el Maya. Los que están gobernando Guatemala es un grupo de elite. Ellos controlan el poder. El Maya no es tomando encuentra han hecho estudio sobre la población Guatemalteca que el 60 por ciento de la población son Mayas. Gracias a los abuelos que han luchado de conservar nuestra cultura, de conserve la identidad Maya, y tener una visión Maya.

El Maya empezó a buscar un mayor futuro, dejo su pueblo, su familia y su cultura al llegar en los Estados Unidos. Es muy difícil conseguir trabajo y adaptarse a una cultura que es totalmente diferente que la suya.

Que Enfrenta el Maya en los Estados Unidos

1. El primer día que llegó el Maya venía con una nostalgia.
2. Sentirse incomoda por estar rodeada de una sociedad distinta que la suya.
3. El Maya está acostumbrado de hablar su idioma materno.
4. El Maya tiene que aprender hablar el castellano, relacionando con la gente aprende hablar el castellano.
5. El Maya sabiendo hablar un poco el castellano busca un trabajo

en un restaurante o en una planta, en la hora de la entrevista le pide que experiencia tiene o que sabe hacer.

6. El Maya cuando consigue un trabajo en una planta, no se acostumbra con el trabajo, el trabajo que se hace en una planta es muy pesado y sale muy cansado.

7. Cuando visita un doctor tiene que buscar a alguien que lo interpreta en la clínica o hospital por no hablar el idioma inglés.

8. Tiene que aprender el idioma inglés, así puede relacionar con los gringos o conseguir un trabajo en una tienda.

También en Guatemala hay un problema con el Maya que tiene hijos. La mayor parte de los Mayas que están en Estados Unidos tiene hijos, esposa, pero también hay casos que los niños se quedan recomendados con abuelos o tíos. Cuando el Maya lleva meses trabajando envía un poco de dinero a sus hijos. Los hijos se sienten felices al ver un centavo en la mano.

Ahora los niños tienen el apoyo económicamente pueden ir en una escuela primaria, seguir estudiando en el básico y llevar una carrera. Pero la mayor parte de los niños no saben por qué están en la escuela. O para qué sirve el estudio o que es una carrera. Mientras los años pasan, el Maya sigue en Estados Unidos, los niños en Guatemala necesita el apoyo moralmente, el amor, el cariño de un padre o madre. Entonces el niño tiene un vacío por dentro. Este vacío que tiene el niño le hace llevar en un mal camino, empieza a relacionar con jóvenes que beben alcohol, fuman cigarro, abandona sus estudios, etc.. Quizá porque nadie les inculca, nadie hace reflexionar, nadie enseña buenos ejemplos. Cuando el niño culmina la primaria o el básico, toma una decisión de ir a los Estados Unidos, quizá porque está rodeada de una sociedad la mayor parte están emigrado en Estados Unidos y mira los demás tiene carros, cosas de lujos.

En el momento que dejó su pueblo el Maya venía con un sueño de construir una casa, mandar dinero a su familia. Uno de los problemas es que construye una casa y no sabe cuándo regresa para vivir, y la casa se hecha a pedir solo, porque nadie vive en la casa.

La diferencia de vivir en Estados Unidos y en Guatemala

Cuando el Maya está en Guatemala llegan las fiestas titulares de su pueblo, iba con sus familiares y parientes a ver los bailes de momos, tigres, leones, venados, y un baile en particular el de los Mexicanos y al son de la marimba. Cada etnia tiene diferentes

tradiciones, como por ejemplo celebrar la Semana Santa, (Awasq'ij). En este día la mujer se levanta temprano para preparar un desayuno para sus papas, prepara tortilla, pescado, el pan lo remoja en agua con azúcar, etc.. La mujer pone las tortillas en la canasta y lo lleva encima de la cabeza, lleva chocolate en un jarro y lo lleva en la mano, y el hombre lleva gaseosa en un moral. Cuando el Maya llega en Estados Unidos, se encuentra con una cultura totalmente distinta, y no se puede celebrar las fiestas titulares porque se mantiene trabajando todo el tiempo.

La Diferencia Cuando Nace un Bebe en Estados Unidos y en Guatemala

En el pueblo natal de la mujer Maya cuando está embarazada, el esposo se encarga de buscar una comadrona, quien es la que se encarga del crecimiento del bebe en el vientre. Cuando llega la hora del parto la comadrona se encarga de recibir al bebe. La suegra de la mujer encarga de poner fuego en el temascal y la mujer se alivia en el temascal. Se usa la hoja de un árbol especialmente para el parto y la mujer se baña tres o cuatro veces después del parto, desde que la mamá le da pecho al bebe. Han hecho estudio que es mayor el pecho que la leche comprado.

El Joven Maya

La mayoría de los jóvenes que emigran viene de caseríos, aldeas, cantones, etc. En nuestra aldeas no se conoce las drogas, las vulgaridades, pero al llegar a los Estados Unidos el joven Maya se enfrenta con un lenguaje corriente y la droga. Empieza a relacionarse con el latino, estas son algunas palabras empleada por el latino: guey, cabron, vato, loco, y chingado etc.. Estas palabras son adoptadas por el indígena y lo usa cuando habla con su familia, también con la familia en Guatemala. Este es un problema grave porque el joven Maya pierde respeto hacia a la persona y a los abuelos. No existía el uso de las vulgaridades cuando el joven está en su pueblo natal. En K'iche' se dice: Awas We Kab'ij Itzel Taq Tzij que quiere decir el Respeto es Sagrado.

When Skills and Knowledge are Not Enough

Nitz' Ama'y

Abstract: Although the author received his GED diploma and has taken courses to be able to interpret from native K'iche' language to the English language; he has been unable to work as an interpreter due to the lack of the social security number.

Sib'alaj kimaltyoxij, sib'alaj kinkikotik rumal jun q'et tz'ib'anik, juntaq tzij xinya' apanoq chawe.

I'm very pleased, I am very happy for the opportunity you gave me to share these lines, to share this word with you!

Although I received my GED diploma and have taken courses to be able to interpret from my native K'iche' language to the English language; I have not been able to work as an interpreter due to the lack of the social security number.

I arrived in this great country in August 2000; I started to go to adult school to learn the language because to succeed in the United States you must first learn the English language. And to go to school I had to use a bicycle that my uncle gave me because I did not have money to buy a car. In the summer time, it was perfect to go to school by bicycle but in the winter, it was the most difficult since sometimes the temperature reached below zero. I wanted to succeed and learn part of the culture of this great nation.

After a lot of effort and hours of English grammar studies, finally after 3 years I was able to have a conversation in English with the classroom teachers. Joan was my advanced level English teacher. She suggested GED classes because she considered me ready. So I started going to classes to finish my next goal.

Mike was an instructor in GED classes and was very pleased to know that I started taking classes. I became friends with him because he was fascinated by the Mayan culture. He was learning a bit about the K'iche' language because my native language's grammar is similar to the English language. The instructor was a very good teacher because he helped me a lot with the five courses. I remember that every time I had difficulties learning algebra or writing, he told me: "if you could cross rivers, desert and many miles on the way to the United States, why can't do this sitting at a desk studying a book!" Finally, I got my GED in 2004; it was a great joy because I acquired my diploma in Nebraska, United States.

As time passed, I had the opportunity to attend some basic classes on interpreters from the Mayan languages to English at the University of Creighton Nebraska. This course was attended by young Mayans who came from different parts of the United States with the objective that each one could help in their community by interpreting for people in clinics, hospitals or other institutions that needed interpreters.

This course was quite good because they taught me the basic tools to be able to interpret from my K'iche' language to English or Spanish. And after long hours of study I felt very proud, very excited that I could finally help those who needed an interpreter of my language, especially in cities like Omaha, Lincoln, Grand Island and other towns around, where there are many people who speak K'iche' and do not speak English, and some do not speak Spanish well either.

Well after all, I wanted to help those who need an interpreter; I decided to go to Saint Francis Medical Center to offer my skills. The person who attended me was very kind and interested in my profession, she began to talk about the procedures I had to follow to be able to fulfill the requirements and she gave me an application for the job. I started to fill the application with some enthusiasm and nervousness at the same time. But I could not complete the application, because they asked me for the social security number and unfortunately, I do not have that number. I dared to ask the lady who gave me the application, what could I do in this case because I do not have social security? She could not do anything about it; to work in this institution you must have a social security number and an ID. I felt sad and disappointed; I have the necessary tools to be an interpreter of the K'iche' language but with my legal status I can't do anything. The only thing I have been able to do is voluntarily help some people or friends when they ask me to interpret for them in their doctor appointments.

In other occasions, for example, an immigration lawyer had a client who spoke only K'iche' and needed an interpreter and I had the honor of helping her over the phone. She even asked me if I could go help the person in his appointment with the immigration judge, I said no, because I'm afraid to enter an immigration court with my immigration status.

The Maya Classroom in Diaspora: Blending Community-based Research and Advocacy in Champaign County, Illinois

Korinta Maldonado Goti and Ryan Shosted

University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

Abstract: Over the past ten years, professors and students from the University of Illinois have collaborated with the rapidly growing population of Maya residents in Champaign County, Illinois to develop opportunities to use, preserve, and pass on their linguistic and cultural skills. Our general goals are to support educators and school to better understand the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Maya students and to open up spaces and build support networks for the students to continue to use their language in diaspora.

A population of Q'anjob'al Maya—conservatively estimated around 800—currently resides in Champaign County, Illinois. Many report Santa Eulalia, Huehuetenango, Guatemala, as their hometown. The population in Champaign County has been of considerable size for at least a decade. Over the past ten years, professors and students from the University of Illinois have collaborated with this community to develop opportunities to use, preserve, and pass on their Q'anjob'al linguistic and cultural skills. While our short-term objectives have changed, our three over-arching goals have remained the same:

- (1) To support local Maya as they create resources for continued Mayan language use in diaspora.
- (2) To help young people in particular value their Mayan language skills and cultural resources, and to recognize the viability of using Mayan languages in print and electronic domains;
- (3) To provide support to educators who wish to better understand the linguistic and cultural heritage of their Maya students.

Through a course in linguistic field methods offered at the University of Illinois in 2009, Ryan Shosted and his graduate students at Illinois first became familiar with the Q'anjob'al language and a handful of its speakers. A graduate student at the time, Jill Hallett, now a professor at Northeastern Illinois University, began working with the Q'anjob'al community to develop an alphabet poster and a book. She has documented her experiences in Hallett (2012). These initial efforts at producing a basic lexicon

and accompanying print materials were largely carried out through Hallett's personal collaboration with community leaders Juan Andrés, Luis Esteban, and Mateo Diego. The results were posters and illustrated alphabet books distributed to members of the Q'anjob'al community. At the time, our primary interaction with the Q'anjob'al Maya took place at the Church of St. Mary in Champaign. For some time previous to our engagement with the community, Father Tom Royer had been gathering his Q'anjob'al-speaking parishioners for a bilingual homily every other week; on occasion a visiting priest offered the mass in Q'anjob'al. A community lunch after the service afforded opportunities for Shosted and Hallett to meet and set up other appointments with members of the community throughout the next two weeks. During Sunday School, Hallett worked with the children to illustrate a Q'anjob'al version of Aesop's fable, "The Boy who Cried Wolf": "Naq Unin Ilom Kalnel". She worked with adult members of the community, including Luis Esteban, to produce a bilingual text in Q'anjob'al and English. The result was posted to a Q'anjob'al language documentation website currently <http://go.illinois.edu/qanjobal>, along with the alphabet book and poster previously mentioned, among other materials.

The Q'anjob'al documentation website began drawing some attention soon after it was launched. Over the years, we have fielded inquiries from health care, legal, and social service agencies across the United States. Professionals at these agencies are eager to learn anything they can about the Q'anjob'al Maya, their language, and their culture. Unfortunately, it has not been possible for us to provide them with comprehensive resources until more recently, when we began working more intensively with educators and Maya students in our local school district. We are currently developing an online course in Q'anjob'al language and culture to be offered free of charge through the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois.

After a few in-service meetings with teachers, we became aware of the great need for education about Q'anjob'al (and Mayan languages more generally) in the classrooms of Champaign County. For example, before we started our work, teachers were largely unaware of the differences between Mayan languages and Spanish. Some had reacted with puzzlement at the prospect of Latin American students who could not speak Spanish. There were even some attempts to place Maya students in special education classes, since the presumption was that their lack of Spanish fluency suggested a developmental challenge. It is important to note that several thoughtful and informed educators and school staff worked quickly to shift this way of thinking; our advocacy in the public schools, delivered in the form of in-service talks, may have played some role in reinforcing this welcome achievement.

When Korinta Maldonado joined the University of Illinois in 2014, her interaction

with local indigenous-immigrant communities sparked renewed interest in reaching out to the Q'anjob'al Maya. The initial goal was to collaborate with educators and local organizations working with Indigenous migrants to better understand their experiences as Q'anjob'al diaspora members in a predominantly white, Midwestern university town. A continued flow to Champaign County of members of the Q'anjob'al and Chuj nations during the early-mid decade of 2010 caught many institutions and communities off guard. It was urgent to locally underscore the specific experiences and needs of the Mayan community, to initiate a process of "*acompañamiento*" (especially in the legal realm), and to open spaces that could foster cultural exchange/visibility among distinct local communities.

It is within this context that we inaugurated the Mayan/Indigenous Working Group at the University of Illinois in 2016 in an effort to coordinate community-engaged scholars with a trajectory and interest in working alongside the Maya diasporic communities. Many of us already working with the local Mayan communities convened. From this initial meeting Veronica Paredes and Korinta Maldonado initiated conversation with ESL teachers in local school districts who showed interest in working collaboratively. In the fall of 2017, the Digital Storytelling workshop took off. Mrs. Katie Hutchinson, the ESOL teacher at Urbana High School, picked ten students that would be working on this assignment once a week during their English class time. Of the ten, eight students spoke Q'anjob'al and two were Spanish speakers. The objective of the workshop was to tell a story that was important for them.

We initiated the workshop by viewing a few short digital stories. We talked about the message in the digital stories: the structure, graphics, sounds, and the languages spoken since many were spoken in Indigenous languages but had subtitles in Spanish. Thereafter there were a series of assignments related to brainstorming topics, storyboarding them and writing down their story of choice. The students were excited at the prospect of creating something on their own; nonetheless, we faced many challenges as we set up the tasks and assignments. One challenge was that many of the students missed school often because of health-related issues, or not having the proper vaccinations to attend school. Because the workshop was only once a week for six weeks, if they missed a few sessions, catching up became really hard. Related to this was the fact that students came with distinct years/levels of schooling. Catching up felt like an enormous task especially because the workshop was writing-intensive even though we were writing in Spanish, which all participants in this group spoke fluently. We restructured the workshop to accommodate these schooling differences but the instructor still made the difficult decision to pull out the students that had fallen behind. The process was not easy. Some students initiated telling very painful personal stories and halfway through the sessions decided that they did not want to work

on that same story.

The end results were digital stories¹ told by the students about meaningful events and or spaces. One of the stories elaborated by a student from Barillas, Huehuetenango spoke of his journey to the United States. The student narrated not only the painful and hard trek up North but also how he envisioned a better future for him and his family in the US. Having access to a free education was a determinant pillar of his optimism. Although this student is a fluent speaker of Q'anjob'al he refused to tell his story in Q'anjob'al. A second story spoke of traditional sweets/candies from the specific Mexican town the student is from. She spoke of the smells, tastes that she yearned and that made her proud of her distinctive and rich culture. She spoke of how back at home she worked hard selling these candies and was able to help her parents with some of the house bills. Her story shows how students also participate in their family economies and how it is a source of pride to do so. This exercise aimed at opening spaces that would allow students to safely speak about their experiences, histories and cultures.²

In spring 2018, we began working closely with two ESOL instructors at Urbana High School, Katie Hutchison and Joy Davila. Ms. Davila's class, called "English for newcomers", was composed of around a dozen students who spoke Mayan languages--primarily Q'anjob'al, but also Chuj and K'iche'. After several rounds of consultation with the Maya students and their teachers, we chose a project: to produce a phrasebook in Mayan (Q'anjob'al, Chuj, and K'iche') that could be used by their teachers and friends who wanted to learn more about their languages.³ We wanted to make it a practical guide, including phrases that they might hear in school or use to interact with others: greetings, the names of objects in the classroom, and expressions of personal, affective state ("I'm happy", "I don't feel well", etc.).

One immediate challenge was the Mayan language diversity in the classroom: we anticipated working with just one Mayan language, but we worked with three instead. We have since engaged with even more linguistic diversity. The second challenge was that some students were Spanish-only with no indigenous language background⁴. To integrate everyone into the project, we decided that there would be three tasks: (1) translation into each of the three indigenous languages; (2) word-processing; and (3) illustration.

1 There are distinct ways to define digital storytelling. Yet, all of these definitions contain the same elements: the use of digital media to tell a short story. Fletcher and Cambre define it as the blending of digitalized still photographs and narrative in order to create short powerful multimedia pieces reflecting social change (Fletcher and Cambre, 2009)

2 To hear these stories, visit: <https://soundcloud.com/user-323754884>

3 The phrasebook, which we entitled Tzet yok a b'i? [What's your name] in Q'anjob'al, is available at <http://faculty.las.illinois.edu/rshosted/docs/8-book.pdf>.

4 The students that only spoke Spanish were from central Mexico not from Guatemala. They nonetheless, engaged with the project in very productive ways. They learned to say a few words and engaged with the classifying, typing, and drawing sections.

We made worksheets of expressions in English that needed to be translated and began sitting down with speakers of the three Maya languages to help produce transcripts of the translations. As the translations became ready, these were passed on to the typists and illustrators. Because literacy skills in the Maya languages differed considerably between students, we checked out reference dictionaries and grammars from the University of Illinois Library (which has an excellent collection of Mayan language materials) and tried to standardize the spellings as much as we could.

Despite social pressures that have historically limited or even banned instruction in Mayan languages, Q'anjob'al has been used as a means of oral instruction in Santa Eulalia schools for nearly forty years (Holbrock 2016, p. 160). Q'anjob'al literacy skills are now taught in kindergarten and fourth through sixth grade, as well as in middle school (ibid., p. 30). Many of the youth we have worked with arrived from Guatemala in the past decade and therefore could have potentially acquired literacy skills in Q'anjob'al. However, since access to formal education in Santa Eulalia is itself dependent on a number of socioeconomic and geographic factors, not all students in our classroom were proficient at writing in Q'anjob'al. Some composed short narratives entirely in Q'anjob'al, others translated sentences from Spanish and/or English, while others translated individual words. We know less about the opportunities our Chuj and K'iche' students may have had to obtain literacy in their languages.

In cases where a student was reluctant to write, an amanuensis wrote down the student's speech and then standardized the spelling by consulting a dictionary. Opportunities were taken to share the transcript with the student and double-check their approval of the expression. Shosted's previous field work on Q'anjob'al was helpful in this regard, but it did not help much for standardizing the materials in Chuj and K'iche'. As a result, we felt less confident about the accuracy of the expressions in these languages. Constraints on our time were such that we wished to give the students a final, printed product to take home and remember, before the end of the semester. Choosing not to let the perfect be the enemy of the good, we wrote a preface to the booklet acknowledging the potential for inaccuracies, but moved forward, hoping that exposure to print materials in Mayan would benefit the students. We came up with the title *Tzet yok a b'i?* 'What's your name?' in Q'anjob'al. The day we distributed the booklets to the Maya students, their teachers, and the school librarian, the students had a party. The students passed the booklets around, collecting signatures from one another, from us, and from their teachers. We felt pleased that we had supported the students' creation of an artefact in their first languages---something that they can hold on to and distribute to friends and family, something that suggests pride in their mother tongue. Further, during Maldonado's visit

to Jolom Konob' (Santa Eulalia) some samples were given to the Council of Ancestral Plurinational Authorities (Consejo de Autoridades Ancestrales Plurinacional).

We envision participating in the ongoing collaborative construction of linguistic and cultural resources with and for the local Mayan community. Our most recent project involves the collection, printing, and distribution of folk tales written by the Maya students. These include the story of Santa Eulalia, the patron saint of the city many of the Q'anjob'al students call home and the story of the Quetzal narrated by K'iche', Ixil and Poqomchi' students. As in the earlier narrative project, we provided the students with an example of a digital story narrating a traditional origin story in the Tepehua language from the 68 voices project out of Mexico. We encouraged the students to speak with family members to decide which story from their hometown they would like to write down, illustrate, and audio-record. The project is not complete at the time of this writing, but our objectives have been consistent with previous efforts. We hope the resulting publications will be a source of pride for the Maya students and another exemplar of their rich cultural heritage that can be shared with friends and teachers.

We will continue this deeply satisfying community engagement work with the Maya community of Champaign-Urbana. After a number of attempts, described here, to reach out to the community and learn what resources we might bring to help them further their own cultural and linguistic goals in diaspora, we think we have found some success along with a variety of challenges. We are hopeful that our joint activities with the Maya will foster greater understanding between Maya students and their teachers, in particular, but also between the non-Maya and Maya populations of Champaign-Urbana more generally.

Supplemental Multimedia

<https://soundcloud.com/user-323754884>

<http://bit.ly/UHSFOLKTALES>

<http://go.illinois.edu/qanjobal>

References

- Fletcher, C. and Cambre, C., (2009). "Digital storytelling and implicated scholarship in the classroom." *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 43(1), pp.109-130. DOI: 10.3138/jcs.43.1.109
- Hallett, Jill. (2012). "It's a special kind of frog: Co-creating teaching materials for the Q'anjob'al diaspora." *Proceedings of the Symposium on Teaching and Learning Indigenous Languages of Latin America (STILLA)* 2011, University of Notre Dame.
- Holbrock, Mary J. (2016). *Mayan literacy reinvention in Guatemala*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.
- La fieria que no queria ensuciarse. Proyecto 68 voces, México. <https://68voces.mx/tepehuala-fiera-que-no-queria-ensuciarse>. Last accessed January 10, 2019.

Maya Indigeneity in the Public School System: Institutional Barriers between Educators and Students

Anna Tussey

English Language Learner Teacher

Jefferson County Public Schools, Louisville, Kentucky

Abstract: This essay focuses on the theoretical conclusions drawn from a larger study on the education of Guatemalan-Maya students in a North Georgia public school system. The purpose of the study is to understand how the public-school system shapes the attitudes and perceptions of public educators in the United States towards the education of their students, and how this system ultimately affects identity, acculturation, and academic achievement. The entire document, “‘We Run a Different School Within a School’: Educator Perceptions of Guatemala-Maya Students in a North Georgia Public School System” can be found at https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/mast_etd/19/.

Introduction

The usual haste of the school year had subsided for the summer. Haley, who teaches English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), talked to me while shuffling through paperwork, in an otherwise empty classroom. She was describing a conversation between herself and a teacher earlier that day. Haley sighed, “I just heard a student get deported yesterday...I went to their teacher and I said “Well now he’s back in Guatemala”...and she said “Oh I thought he was from Mexico.”

Haley presented this account with obvious frustration. The seemingly benign comment from the teacher, who thought her Guatemalan student was Mexican, exposed and embodied a deeper and all too prevalent misunderstanding of ethnic identity composition of the Latino/a population within North Georgia, and largely, the United States. Although the student in question immigrated to the United States from Guatemala, the classroom teacher erroneously assumed his nationality was Mexican. This assumption about nationality and culture within an academic setting effectively caused cultural misinterpretation and ultimately, erasure.

Stephanie, an ESOL teacher, revealed another example of cultural misinterpretation between U.S.-born educators and Guatemalan-Maya students. On test days, the students attempted to share answers because they understood this as a communal act of helping

each other towards success. They were not acculturated in a mentality of individualized achievement. U.S.-born educators interpreted this action disapprovingly because they understood it as cheating. Stephanie explained the actions of the Guatemalan-Maya students to other educators while simultaneously stressing the importance of individual work to the students themselves. Even though the teachers were able to understand the actions of the Guatemalan-Maya students, it was ultimately the students who altered their behavior to accommodate the culture of the school system.

The conversations among teachers noted above demonstrates the effects of individual assumptions. Through the generalized dismissiveness of these students' identity, the teachers failed to notice significant needs separating them, as a Guatemalan-Maya, from other multilingual learners. In this way, the public-school system attempts to promote a monoculture environment. This systematic attempt at acculturation merely creates borders and forces students to compartmentalize their identity based on the spaces they inhabit.

Due to linguistic and cultural differences, Maya children require different resources from traditional Latino/a immigrants in order to succeed throughout the acculturation process in a Western, Anglo society. Understanding students outside of the school system is crucial for effective education. As Lisa Delpit argues, "If we do not have some knowledge of children's lives outside of the realms of paper-and-pencil work, and even outside of their classrooms, then we cannot know their strengths." (Delpit, 1995, p.173) As it relates to the Guatemala-Maya in North Georgia, educator perception of this indigenous cultural significantly influences academic achievement within the public-school system.

Background on North Georgia

In order to understand the dynamic between educators and Guatemalan-Maya families and students, it is important to acknowledge the history of the Maya in North Georgia. In the previous decades (and into the present), the Southeastern United States experienced a drastic population shift as immigrant settlements increased. This shift was, and still is, met with resistance in many communities and political arenas, including the public-school system.

Rural North Georgia does not offer the supporting culture, population, or history represented in cities such as Miami or Los Angeles. The general lack of local knowledge about Latino/a culture was compounded by the relatively sudden community growth of Spanish speakers. This lack of cultural knowledge from locals, led to generalized categorizing of all Latino/a's with a specific set of cultural traits; including assumed

language, religion, and beliefs. The Maya, as an Amerindian (native American) group were even less understood by the local citizens of Georgia. Thus, ethnic generalization erased the traits that differentiated the indigenous Maya from the Hispanic, Spanish speaking Mexican population in North Georgia.

The erasure of Maya indigeneity stalled, if not prevented, the establishment of resources tailored to the needs of this population. These resources include everything from linguistic interpreters and cultural education to financial education and immigration lawyers. Today, a local university and several churches work closely with the Maya community in North Georgia to provide much needed resources and education to the outside population. These organizations try to mobilize the resources that the Guatemalan-Maya population require to promote life and wellbeing. Although progress seems visible, there is still a high demand for interpreters, education services, and community organization specific to the Maya people.

Guatemalan students present a particular set of needs. Many of these students are not native Spanish speakers, and their parents might have received little formal education. They are an indigenous population in Guatemala, but North Georgians generally see them under the label of “Hispanic”, causing their academic needs to go largely unmet in the Georgia schools. The purpose of this project was to understand attitudes and perceptions held by teachers related to the education of their Maya students. These attitudes and perceptions were analyzed within a broader sociocultural context.

Project Methodology

Prior to conducting interviews, I met with a ‘teacher on special assignment’, in a position of administration, for the county. This educator provided me with specific names of teachers to contact for interviews. Since the ESOL administrator for the county selected the educators involved in this study, it is relevant to note their perspectives were not impartial; they were selected through purposeful sampling. These teachers were recommended because of their extensive academic involvement with the Guatemalan-Maya population in North Georgia.

The ethnicity, gender, and national identities of the educators must be recognized as they provide a lens through which they see the world. All educators interviewed for this study were women, which influenced the conversation topics taking place between them and their students. Many of these women, especially those that worked with high school-age Guatemalan-Maya students, referred to confidential conversations with female students; subjects not breached in a mixed-gender space. Their gender offered access to

guarded topics of discussion, which illuminated the perceptions of the educators towards the roles of young Maya women within their families. However, none of the participants mentioned comparable conversations with their male students. In this way, female students influenced their perspectives.

While I would argue that the personal ethnic identities of the participants influence their understandings of interactions involving Guatemalan-Maya students, they will not be specifically defined within this study. My discussion of their personal ethnicities is limited: a small portion of the educators interviewed identified as Latina, and a few had close personal connections to the Latino/a community. None were Guatemalan-Maya or had any personal connections (outside of their roles as educators) to the Guatemalan-Maya community. Five out of seven educators involved in this study were native English speakers. The remaining educators who participated in this study did not specifically identify their ethnic identity.

The teachers taught grade levels between all three major school stages: elementary, middle, and high school. Throughout the interviews, educators discussed how these grade levels largely shape the experiences conveyed through the interviews. For example, the high school educators discussed documentation status because it influences post-secondary opportunities. At the elementary level, documentation status did not appear as a topic of concern, perhaps because elementary-level Guatemalan-Maya students in ESOL classes are predominantly U.S. born citizens. Although the citizenship status of the parent does have an effect on the life of the student, from the perspective of the educator, these effects are not as discernible at a young age. Academic formats and expectations also differ between elementary, middle, and high schools. However, unlike content-based classes, ESOL courses maintain significant similarities throughout all three levels. Linguistic goals are generally the same regardless of age, and each level uses similar classroom structures. Major differences are found in the content of the general education curriculum and assumed skills/knowledge of students. I requested this balanced grade-level representation for the interviews (as far as it was possible) to understand the scope of interactions between the educators and their Guatemalan Maya students.

Interpretation

To understand the positionality of the Guatemala-Maya in public education, we can look through the lens of critical multiculturalism. According to Marom, rather than promoting diversity based on ‘celebratory’ tactics, critical multiculturalism calls for a challenge to the power relations entrenched in Western societies, through the examination

of racism that exists beyond color. As discussed at the beginning of this piece, there are mechanisms of oppression that affect immigrants from Latin America, regardless of indigeneity. Colonial culture generalizes Maya with Latino/a by painting everyone with a broad 'brown' brush. In doing so, the continual colonization of indigenous peoples occurring in the Americas vanishes from the analysis of race and racism. (Marom, 2016, p.27)

In the broader scope of the United States society, the institution of public education is one of many spaces that replicate hegemonic norms. The foundational laws of public education are constructed through colonial understandings of inclusion, and therefore establish it as a tool to promote and continue the dominant culture. This foundation in colonialism and Western thought systematically prevents public education from supporting the indigenous cultural identity of the Guatemala-Maya.

Public education is not the only institution in the United States that reinforces or replicates hegemonic culture. However, education is a unique institution in this regard because it presents itself as accessible, beyond citizenship. Students without documentation are not barred from entering into the public education system. But there is a pervasive duality within public education for immigrant students: it is accessible but will never provide the accommodations to be deemed equitable.

The educators involved in this study frequently expressed the language, literacy, and general knowledge of their Guatemalan-Maya students and families in deficit form. Because they understand this group through the established lens of public education and Western norms, their culture appears unprogressive. This perception of deficiency is applied to the Maya as an indigenous group. It is compounded further when Guatemala-Maya people are blanketed with the label 'Latino/a' or 'Hispanic', as it correlates their culture to Hispanic Latin-America and consequently erases indigenous identity.

The educator interviews were analyzed for repeating subjects, phrases, and points of conversation, which developed into the themes discussed in the thesis. They include 'language and literacy'; 'Maya knowledge deficit'; 'barriers to education', 'technology as a barrier', and 'educator training, resources, and adaptations'. At different points throughout all of these themes, educators presented their ideas within the framework of deficit ideology. This ideology emphasizes the knowledge a student 'lacks', as defined by the expectations of the public school system. (Gorski, 2016, p.382)

Below are examples of educators speaking about students through deficit ideology.

They [parents] don't really have the knowledge of school and school procedures nor the tools to support their child's education meaning they

don't know how to check their grades, how to help them with homework, etc. (Helen)

We only send them [materials] in Spanish and it is not the first language for a lot of these families, it is not even something they can partially understand for some of these families. I mean, some of the families just say, you have to speak to my dad because my mom doesn't speak any Spanish... (Haley)

...because they don't have the support at home, parents can't read or write, they don't have any, maybe a 1st grade education...So what happens is, because the students don't have that background, our students are behind. They are behind because they don't have anybody helping them or that has the knowledge to help them with math or reading... (Francesca)

They have no written language...in the most advanced academic world there is a concept of the written form of Mam and Q'anjob'al but they don't have it. (Christina)

...no education, they don't know Spanish...they speak very broken Spanish. They can't read or write in any language. (Gracie)

There are broad implications for deficit language used by educators, particularly as it applies to linguisticism and indigeneity. To better understand these consequences, it should be established that this is not an implication of individual educator beliefs. The public-school system is a subset of hegemonic culture and as such, establishes a learning environment that replicates broader ruling class ideology. Educators are not immune from these influences, and this manifests in their observations and instruction. As Endo argues, unconscious understandings of culture, without critical exposure to the complex dynamics of language and power, results in "subjective assessments about linguistically diverse learners' academic performance that could ultimately perpetuate uneven academic opportunities and outcomes". (Endo, 2015, p.208-213) Without exposing teachers to the colonial relationship with indigeneity, these underlying notions remain unchallenged, even as they influence the perceived academic competency of Guatemalan-Maya students.

The unconscious understanding of culture, as described above, presents further difficulty as it is indistinguishable for many outside its oppression. Teachers described at length the accommodations made for their Maya students, along with their desire for

thoughtful and extensive training. Changing their schedule, restructuring the format of their program, and providing personal financial assistance were only a selection of actions discussed throughout the interviews. The steps they took to promote a conducive educational environment for their Guatemalan-Maya students connects to the laws that establish barriers to education. These laws are not relegated to student academic success. The educators have illustrated how sociopolitical and economic factors increase their personal responsibility, and individual actions, towards their students.

It is obvious the educators involved in this study cared deeply for the well-being and success of their students, but recognized the challenges to establishing an environment beneficial to their education. This recognition included self-reflection and systemic critique. All the educators involved in this study actively sought to create a functional academic experience for their Guatemala-Maya students.

It must be understood: the issue is not the educators, but rather the system and its role in the maintenance of hegemony. As a component of society at-large, the structures of oppression that exist within the public school have become a collective norm. The 'goals' and 'milestones' students demonstrate across different levels are presented as preparation for their future or measures of academic success. These milestones are understood as universal truths of academic success because they are easily observed within dominant culture. This assumption of universality, as it applies to United States society, subsequently eliminates critical analysis.

Much of the research related to multiculturalism in education engages the responsibility of the educator in fostering a diverse curriculum and environment. I want to emphasize that educators are not merely proponents of this system, but also exist under its oppression. Even as teachers, they still maintain individual identities that fall under the scrutiny of dominant culture. Supplementary training and resources will not completely resolve the barriers teachers listed, because educators are not autonomous from this hegemonic system of which education is a central part. They navigate a complicated space, particularly when confronted with bridging disparities between systemic expectations and the traits of their students. Rather, to completely understand the scope of this situation is to view teachers as participants in the same system, not culprits.

Conclusion

The institution of public education serves to acculturate and socialize many students, not only the Guatemala-Maya. Any student raised outside of the dominant culture in the United States experiences some level of assimilation during their tenure as a public-school

student (as do all students). This institution begins imprinting values and methods of thought onto children at ages as young as four or five.

Through their indigenous and Latino/a identity, Guatemalan-Maya immigrants are forced to negotiate the United States, grounded in the implicit and explicit conceptions of dominant culture. These conceptions are marked by assumptions about indigeneity as an 'underdeveloped' culture, and Latino/a as 'foreign' or 'other'. The hegemonic concept of 'normal' stresses white, middle-class, English-speaking citizens as the measure of regularity. This measure of regularity compels Guatemalan-Maya identity, in its entirety, to be understood as an 'outsider' in the United States.

The effect of systemic acculturation can also be understood through subtractive bilingualism and the imposition of English-only education. (Portes and Smargorinsky, 2010, p.236) This method of learning attempts to prevent the student from speaking their native language within the space of the public school. A tangible border exists that causes students to understand the public school system as a space that only accepts hegemonic conceptions of 'normal'. Their native language and culture lacks recognition within this concept of normal, thus establishing their identity as 'other'. Subtractive bilingualism drives indigenous and Latino/a cultural identity outside of the learning environment, creating both physical and mental boundaries.

The existence of indigenous and Latino/a students in this educational system is demonstrative of transnationalism in the classroom. Their identities in this space establish cultural, legal, and linguistic borders that must be navigated daily. Regardless of cultural background and identity, educators are trapped within the borders of classrooms. They are the mediators between transnationalism and a system of colonization. Some may argue that educators implement these hegemonic methods of thought onto their students. I think, as shown by the educators involved in this study, they inhabit a complex space. It is overly simplistic to relegate their roles as the implementers of colonized culture. Educators exist within their own borders through the intersectionality of their personal identity, the identity of those they teach, and the foundations of public education. Many educators involved in this study altered the curriculum to accommodate the needs of their Guatemalan-Maya students, while simultaneously attempting to acculturate them into the United States. This was done largely for practicality and the students' ability to succeed in society. Educators did not inherently want to establish the public-school system as a space of hegemony, but without that acculturation, their students would most likely not be accepted into U.S. society.

To disrupt the current cycles of acculturation, it is important to influence laws and policies, and to encourage more research on K-12 education. For example, No Child

Left Behind (NCLB) continues to have enormous influence on the structure of public school curriculum and design. This law defines what and how many children learn, which inevitably integrates itself into their mentality. NCLB is congruent with subtractive bilingualism, taught in many ESOL classrooms throughout the nation. The overarching influence of these laws can be found in the history of the Americas, identity formation, and social structures. We must approach these policies and regulations as advocates, legal analysts, anthropologists, historians, sociologists, among many other roles. As advocates for equality in education, we must also develop spaces that promote the development and maintenance of heritage. Community spaces that encourage cultural and linguistic education allow people to cultivate their cultural identity, while simultaneously traversing societal systems. In the case of the Maya, schools generally ignore or remain unaware of indigenous languages, which further challenges the strength of Maya identity. Perhaps recognizing and helping maintain Maya languages would provide social capital to Maya students, thus strengthening their ability to maintain a culture that is otherwise marginalized.

The concepts and possible solutions mentioned here are merely a few examples of the many ways scholars and advocates can be more involved in the field of Education. The field of Education goes far beyond the discussions had in this study. Education is not relegated to identity formation but has some influence on almost every aspect of society. Education is also not limited to kindergarten through twelfth grade. Rather, education as an experience, takes place in all spaces, at all points of life. Teachers and schools deserve access to education on the intersectional identities and needs that students bring with them to the classroom. This intersectional understanding can apply to all students, not just the Guatemalan Maya, and allow teachers and schools to tailor their learning environments for more effective education.

References

- Delpit, Lisa D. (1995). *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*. New York: New Press. DOI: 10.2307/358724
- Endo, Rachel. (2015). "From Unconscious Deficit Views to Affirmation of Linguistic Varieties in the Classroom: White Preservice Teachers on Building Critical Self-Awareness About Linguicism's Causes and Consequences." *Multicultural Perspectives* 17, no. 4: 207. DOI: 10.1080/15210960.2015.1088304
- Gorski, Paul C. (2016). Poverty and the ideological imperative: a call to unhook from deficit and grit ideology and to strive for structural ideology in teacher education, *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 42:4, 378-386. DOI: 10.1080/02607476.2016.1215546
- Marom, Lilach. (2016). "A New Immigrant Experience of Navigating Multiculturalism and Indigenous Content in Teacher Education." *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* 46, no. 4: 23-40.
- Portes, Pedro R. and Peter Smagorinsky. (2010). "Static Structures, Changing Demographics: Educating Teachers for Shifting Populations in Stable Schools." *English Education* Vol. 42, No. 3, pp. 236-247.

Laja'b'kanal yet' ko' q'in, the Lasting Dances of Our Fiestas: Music Embodiment as a Collective Memory of the Maya Diaspora

Juan G. Francisco Cristobal

Department of Ethnomusicology
University of California, Los Angeles

Author's Note: This research was supported in part by several grants from the Department of Ethnomusicology at UCLA and the National Pastoral Maya Conference.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Juan Francisco Cristobal at: jgfcristobal@ucla.edu.

Abstract: Music embodiment, or dance, has long been practiced by the ancient Mayas for religious purposes and, since the Spanish Inquisition, their descendants have maintained and reinvented their dances during the patron saint fiestas. Yet, little is mentioned about the collective, music embodiment of the Maya Diaspora. The purpose of this article is to shed light on the music embodiment and collective memory of the Maya Diaspora, focusing on the Maya Q'anjob'al communities in the United States. Such participant-observations have, however, been largely derived from research conducted in rural Alamosa, Colorado and urban Los Angeles, California along with attending the annual National Pastoral Maya Conferences for the past decade. This research reveals that the Maya Q'anjob'al Diaspora often manifest their social dances at the latter-part of their fiestas, which embodies the collective memory of the homeland. The sustainability of the marimba's music embodiment as a collective memory demonstrates perseverance, and nostalgia for the Maya Q'anjob'al Homeland. I give special thanks to Virves Garcia for his interviews, collaborations, and lessons on cultural, religious, musical, historical, and dance issues in diaspora.

*Chon kanalwi ko toj ko sataq
kax chi joyon tzalok'ulal.
Suytoq ti' jeq' axka yib'an q'inal
kay chi yun b'eyik' ko q'inal*

We dance moving forward
and encircle happiness.
We revolve like the earth;
this is how our life walks.

—Virves Garcia

The Maya Q'anjob'al communities reminisce their autochthonous *q'in* (a fiesta) in diaspora by evoking the sonority of the marimba with nostalgic melodies, as they, one by one, part-take in their *kanal*—a type of socio-participatory dance. Drawing from the lyrics of *xal chikay* (Grandmother) by Maya Q'anjob'al composer, Virves Garcia, the stanza above elaborately portrays the motion of the *kanal*, where couples dance in a large, counter-clockwise circle, as they sway side-to-side and forward and backward to the vibrating pulse of the marimba. Additionally, Garcia's text not only visualizes a Maya cosmological concept of time and space; it also manifests in the repeated rhythmic movement of the *kanal*. Throughout the numerous Maya diasporic communities in the United States, the Maya people come together for their hometown's annual patron saint fiesta, where they embody the *kanal*, not only as a way to celebrate and pay homage to the saint, but also to maintain their cultural, religious, and musical heritage in the diaspora.

Music embodiment, also known as dance, has long been practiced by the ancient Mayas for religious purposes and, since the Spanish Inquisition, their descendants have maintained and reinvented their dances during patron saint fiestas (Looper, 2009). The purpose of this article is to shed light on the collective music embodiment and memory of the Maya Diaspora, specifically, focusing on the Q'anjob'al community and fiesta. Not only do I explore the relationship between traditional music and its embodiment, but I also explore the historical, musical, and ontological significances of their fiesta and social dance. The ancient Maya danced as a medium to evoke their ancient deities. Over the course the history of the *kanal*, it has attained specific Maya cosmological and ontological significance that pertains to ancient ideology and rituals, along with the transplantation of colonial music and dances, and the cultural and social values of Q'anjob'al heritage.

Various scholars from interdisciplinary fields have explored the concept of memory and its relationship with music embodiment. In the article "Embodying Music: Matching Music and Dance in Memory," Robert W. Mitchell and Matthew Gallaher (2001) claim that musical memory uses auditory, emotional, visual, and kinesthetic representations of the elements of music that have been internalized, memorized, and manifested in different perceptions (p. 69). Furthermore, I draw from renowned dance scholar and ethnomusicologist, Adrienne L Kaeppler (1991), who explores "Memory and Knowledge

in the Production of Dance,” emphasizing the social construct of movement, motifs, and memory of dance as a collective memory that results in the process and product of music embodiment through the motion of the human body (p. 190). The Diasporic Maya Q’anjob’al musical and cultural manifestations are markers that contribute to how Q’anjob’al people construct and sustain their Maya identity in the diaspora. Additionally, the sustainability of music embodiment as a collective memory demonstrates perseverance of heritage and nostalgia for the homeland.

Methodology

During my time with the Q’anjob’al communities in Alamosa, Colorado (Espiritu Maya) and Los Angeles, California (Association Q’anjob’al Ewulense)—both well-established and organized cultural, musical, and resource associations—I studied the history and practice of their music and dances. My research relies on anthropological and ethnomusicological research methods, with emphasis in participant-observation, audio and visual recording of interviews and the fiestas, and most importantly, the enculturation of the people’s music through “bi-musicality” (Hood, 1960). Additionally, I include my own musical and identity enculturation and experience as a Maya Q’anjob’al American. Although raised in Southern Colorado, my parents were able to teach me my ancestral language, Q’anjob’al, which enabled me to communicate with the elders in Colorado and Los Angeles throughout my participant observation, interviews, and ethnomusicological lessons. Furthermore, I will be incorporating various Q’anjob’al terms to identify essential concepts. Lastly, I include my experience of attending the annual National Pastoral Maya Conferences for the past decade.

Since my arrival in Los Angeles at the latter-part of 2016—to attend graduate school at UCLA—I have collaborated with the Association Q’anjob’al Ewulense in organizing the community’s main cultural and patron saint fiesta of Santa Eulalia (*Jolom Konob*)¹, where I took part as a master of ceremony along with dancing the *kanal*. I also interviewed various community members who maintain and practice the *kanal* as well as those who continue to practice the *tx’aj* (Maya rituals) and follow the *Txol’qin*² (the Maya Divinatory Calendar). My main interlocutors from both places consisted of the following individuals: Virves Garcia, Q’anjob’al music composer in Los Angeles; Francisco Lucas,

1 Literal translation: “Head of the Village”. The Q’anjob’al name of Santa Eulalia not only refers to the name of the village (LaFarge, 1947) but has taken the name of where the Maya tribal council in Santa Eulalia meet (a place where the Q’anjob’al gather for discussion and preform *miman txaj* [big Maya ritual]) (Deuss, 2009).

2 “Sequence of Life”; Q’anjob’al translation by Virves Garcia. One of three Mayan Calendars used among the Highland Mayas. It is a 260-day cycle used by Mayan shamans and chief praysayers. Q’anjob’al traditionalists use this calendar for religious and personal divination and celebration (Deuss, 2007, p. 31-2).

Alamosa's Maya community leader and *aj'tx'aj* (chief praysayer) and an ambassador to the *Pat'qum Mayab'* (Maya Parliament of Jolom Konob); Lucia Nicolas, wife of Francisco Lucas and an advocate for cultural and spiritual heritage; *Matkax* (his Maya name), an *aj'tx'aj*, an ambassador, and leader in the *Q'anjob'al tx'aj* in Los Angeles; and other various Maya Americans who grew up immersed in the culture and musical practice of the *kanal*.

In my participant-observation of the *kanal*, I used both audio and visual recordings to capture the music of the marimba, while at the same time, recorded the embodied movements of the *kanalwom* (participatory dancers). I took part in the *kanal* to further conceptualize the music embodiment and aesthetic of the *kanal*, and while I was not dancing, I observed the *kanalwom*, recorded various marimba performances, and collaborated with the *aj'sonlom* (the marimbists) in accompanying the *kanal* with music. As for the several *tx'aj* that I had witnessed, I was not able to make any audiovisual recordings due to its strict religious and sacred context. Through the courtesy of the members of the *aj'tx'aj*, I attained insight into the Maya *Q'anjob'al* ancestral, religious and ontological cultural practices and heritage.

Mantle Hood (1960) has emphasized "bi-musicality," which refers to the comprehension of the people's music and its aesthetic through mastery of performance. In my early studies of music, not only have I been enculturated with the aural and rhythms of the traditional marimba at an early age, I began my training of the marimba as an adolescent where I eventually learned all the voicing of the marimba. In other words, I learned how to play, harmonize, and accompany the melodies along with the traditional marimba techniques that are essential to making music. With the transplantation of Iberian music during the colonial period, there remains a musical commonality that has been reinvented by the Maya people, which plays an essential role in how the *Q'anjob'al* musicians make and conceptualize the autochthonous music.

A Collective Memory of the Maya *Q'anjob'al* People

The Maya-*Q'anjob'al* people lived in their homeland long before the Spanish set foot in the New World. Nestled in the northern Cuchumatán Highlands of Huehuetenango in western Guatemala, the Maya *Q'anjob'al* people currently inhabit the four municipalities of San Juan Ixcay (*yichkox*), San Pedro Soloma (*tz'uluma'*), Santa Eulalia (*jolom konob*), and Santa Cruz Barillas (*yal imox*), along with San Miguel (Acatán) and San Rafael (La Independencia), which form the boundaries and settlements of the *Q'anjob'al* people. The *Q'anjob'al* language is one of twenty-one official Mayan languages spoken throughout Guatemala, ranking it as the fifth highest in a number of speakers (Clark, 2017). Although

various scholars of different fields have conducted studies on the Q'anjob'al people, some of the earliest discovered documents and manuscripts come from the local Maya tribal council's Ordenanza, or community box, containing some of the earliest known colonial documents. Other important scholarly works come from the early 20th-century ethnography of two early scholars by the names of Oliver LaFarge and Douglas Byers, who documented the memories, practices, and knowledge of the Maya *Pop'al Ti* (Jacaltec), *Chuj*, and *Q'anjob'al* people. Their important observations recount the retention and practice of the Ancient Maya sacred long count of day and life (*txolilal ku yetoq txol'kin*) and the traditional patron saint fiestas (*k'in*) (La Farge and Byers, 1931). Eventually, La Farge would journey solo to Santa Eulalia in 1932, revealing the remaining memories of the Ancient Maya *tx'aj* (prayers or rituals), the autochthonous music and dance-dramas of the Catholic saint fiestas, and their sociocultural practice (La Farge, 1947).

Around the mid-1900s, the Maryknoll Order reintroduced Catholicism to the northern Cuchumatán Highlands. This led to a decrease in the practice of Maya-Q'anjob'al *tx'aj* among the chief praysayers and the ordinary people. During this intense period of re-evangelization, Maryknoll Father Daniel Jensen led the conversion in Santa Eulalia through several methods, with music being one of the main tools (O'Brien-Rothe, 2015). Father Jensen had discovered several Colonial music manuscripts—within the Colonial documents held by the Maya Ordenanza in the region—revealing one special music homage to Sancta Olaya (Santa Eulalia). This alternative name is as expressed in the lyrics of the music, which ethnomusicologist Linda O'Brien-Rothe transcribed into modern notation, so that Jensen's congregation could sing it (see endnote 15 of introduction in O'Brien-Rothe, 2015, p. 202). Ultimately, Father Jensen would play a significant role in this process to increase the number of Maya Catholic converts in the region.

These colonial music manuscripts from the region have been extensively studied by musicologists, revealing some of the earliest Catholic music enculturation and doctrines in the region (Borg, 1985; Girard, 1981; Stevenson, 1964). Musicologist Robert Stevenson (1951, 1964, 1968, 1970) documented several of these Q'anjob'al music manuscripts. From my personal examination of Stevenson's work and analyzing some of his transcribed music, I infer that these music manuscripts were, perhaps, once commissioned for the patron saint fiestas during the early years of the church in Santa Eulalia and the nearby vicinities.

In recent years, the Maya *txol'kin* and its practical philosophy, count, and enculturation have experienced revitalization among the Maya people in the homeland and the diaspora. One community member, while explaining the ancient Maya people's wisdom of and respect for the land, water, and natural surroundings, said: "it is necessary

to pray to both God and the land. First comes God, who represents the soul of our body as he is our boss and savior. Moreover, afterward, we have to mention the land . . . because it is from the land that we eat, and we sleep and walk on the land . . . We must discuss the sacred nature of the land...because the land gives us life” (Popkin, 2005, p. 693). Although the Maya Q’anjob’al tribal councils and elders are at the forefront of the revitalization movement in Guatemala, a few of the diasporic community members in the U.S. continue to conserve and practice the sacred Maya *txol’kin* and traditional *tx’aj*.

Components that Eric Popkin describes of the *tx’aj*, (which I have also witnessed) includes burning pine splits, copal incense, wax candles before cross shrines, and counting the sacred *txol’kin* (Popkin, 1999, p. 270). During the 2017 gathering of the four Q’anjob’al *aj’tx’aj* for their annual *Patq’um Mayab’* (council discussion) in Los Angeles—who are the ambassadors of the chief elders in *jolom konob’* to the Diaspora—I had the opportunity to join them where they also performed several *tx’aj* throughout the few days. This religious-political practice and memory represent the continuity of the *cabildo* and *cofradías* during Colonial Guatemala. Their effort in sustaining this autochthonous and sacred heritage shows the revitalization of such ancient memory and practice, which has traveled from the homeland and blossomed in the diaspora. However, this traditional practice remains threatened by encroaching religious denominations; but with resilience and unity among the diasporic Maya people, such ancient practice can thrive in such a diverse and secular society as the United States.

The Maya Q’anjob’al Diasporic Communities

In recent years, the Q’anjob’al Diaspora has been studied by various scholars from diverse fields like anthropology (Burns, 1993, 2000; Wellmeier, 1998a, 1998b, 2000; Loucky, 2000), sociology (Popkin, 1999, 2005); history (LeBaron, 2006, 2012); and even in ethnomusicology (Clark, 2017). Notably, the original roots of the Maya Q’anjob’al Diaspora in the United States can be traced back to the people of San Miguel Acatán, who first migrated in the early 1970s for labor opportunities, followed by the rest of the Q’anjob’al people from the nearby villages (Clark, 2017, p. 124). Many sought asylum in Los Angeles, while others found economic opportunity in other states. Those who settled in Los Angeles found residence in neighborhoods like Pico-Union, Westlake, and later in South Los Angeles (Clark, 2017; Hamilton & Chinchilla, 2001b, 2001a, 2011; Popkin, 1999, 2005). James Loucky acknowledges that one of the first Mayan organizations developed in Los Angeles in 1986 was under the name IXIM— “Corn” in most Mayan languages (Loucky, 2000, p. 220). Through this organization, other Mayan communities in Los

Angeles branched off and created their own “hometown associations”. Of the Q’anjob’al people in Los Angeles, they came from San Pedro Soloma, Santa Eulalia, and Santa Cruz Barillas. Clark (2017) reports that there is no organization from San Juan Ixcay. People of Santa Eulalia make up the majority of the Q’anjob’al population.

Additionally, others have formed communities in states like Arizona (Wellmeier, 1998b), Colorado (O’Connor 2008, 2012; Ludwig 2012), Florida (Burns, 1993), Georgia (LeBaron, 2012; Lopez & LeBaron, 2012), Nebraska, Illinois, and Tennessee, just to name a few (Clark, 2017). Sister Nancy Wellmeier, an anthropologist, has conducted extensive research and humanitarian work with the Q’anjob’al migrants in several of the states mentioned earlier; she has made an impact in organizing several diasporic communities and developed local organizations, e.g. Los Angeles, California; Indiantown, Florida; Mesa, Arizona; and Alamosa, Colorado. Her fieldwork in Florida revolved around the patron saint festivals and the marimba, examining how these cultural markers aid in constructing identity (Wellmeier, 1998a). In 1991, with the help of Father David Lopez (2012), a Maya Pop’al Ti from Jacaltenango, who was once the pastor of the parish in Santa Eulalia, congregated the people of Santa Eulalia in Los Angeles to establish a formal confraternity previously known as Fraternidad Ewulense Q’anjob’al or simply as FEMAQ (Clark, 2017, p. 127). It was this confraternity that branched out into other Q’anjob’al communities in other states. Emphasis on religious and cultural practices encouraged the community to stick together; for example, the community would plan activities like sports tournaments, their annual patron saint celebrations, and other religious and cultural events and fundraising (Wellmeier, 1992b; Burns, 1993, 2000). Just a side note, I had met Wellmeier at a young age when she first visited Alamosa with Father David Lopez, in organizing the local community in the mid-1990s. Although I do not have a clear recollection of the visits, my parents have kept memories of their visit through oral stories, picture, and audiovisual recordings.

Sister Wellmeier and Father Lopez played a significant role in establishing the Maya Q’anjob’al community (Espiritu Maya) in Alamosa, Colorado. Early Maya migration to Alamosa began in the late 1970s, where agricultural employment could be found; specifically, Alamosa became the central hub for Maya migrants because of the mushroom farm—many of the elders can relate in picking mushrooms back in the homeland—where the majority of its employees are Q’anjob’al (Ludwig et al., 2012; O’Connor, 2008, 2012). Rural Alamosa is nestled at the center of the San Luis Valley, which is surrounded by the high-altitude peaks of the Colorado Rockies. Similar to Los Angeles the first people migrating to Alamosa came from San Miguel Acatán. According to Sheryl Ludwig (2012), the population of the Q’anjob’al community is roughly around

500, with the majority consisting of young and first generations who attend the local school and university (Ludwig, 2012, p. 32).

Eventually, with the help of Father David and Sister Nancy, Maya communities formed the National Pastoral Maya in 1997, with its mission aimed at preserving cultural as well as religious identity and practice within the Catholic Church (Wellmeier, 1992b; Clark, 2017). With funding from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Pastoral Maya has been able to uphold its mission as well as organizing its conference annually, which initially took place in Los Angeles in 1999 (LeBaron, 2012; Lopez & LeBaron, 2012). According to Alan LeBaron (2006, 2012), the lead founder of the Maya Heritage Community Project at Kennesaw State University in Georgia, the goals of the Pastoral Maya conference include spiritual and cultural sustainability. In my experience over the past decade in attending the conference, diasporic communal collaboration has increased with various states and continues to integrate new communities by hosting its annual conference. Just within the last five years, it has hosted the conference in communities like Greenville, South Carolina (2015 and 2016) and Cookeville, Tennessee (2017 and 2018), each having the opportunity to host it for two consecutive years. This upcoming year, it will be held for the first time in Seymour, Indiana, by the Maya Chuj community. In the beginning years, conference attendees were in the majority Q'anjob'al, but in recent years, several Maya Chuj communities have joined. During my first attendance of the conference in 2008, which took place in Villa Maria, Pennsylvania, community leaders from each state dominated the meeting, but since the 2009 Conference in Omaha, Nebraska, youth participation has increased. In Cookeville, Tennessee, the conference has seen a drastic increase in youth who come from various communities, but surprisingly, most of the local attendees consisted of Maya Chuj youths, aging from toddlers to young adults. What surprised me is how educated the youths are in their mother tongue, Maya Chuj. As more youths continue to attend the conference, the mission of Pastoral Maya looks towards the future of the Maya Americans who are growing up in the United States of America.

Marimba, Music Embodiment and Fiesta in the Maya Diaspora

In the Guatemalan homeland, the Q'anjob'al people have maintained and continue to embody the *kanal*, during fiestas lasting several days while observing the patron saint of the town. Patron saint fiestas, throughout its history in the New World, draws pilgrimages of devoted followers from a nearby villages and afar. One of the several main attractions of the fiesta is the *kanal*, commonly performed in pairs forming concentric

circles and moving in a counter-clockwise motion, with the men grasping their hands together behind their backs, and the women grasping their dress with their fingertips. (Clark, 2017; Deuss, 2007; Looper, 2009; O'Brien-Rothe, 2015). In the nostalgic, collective memories of the Q'anjob'al diaspora, this music embodiment has made its way along the journey, manifesting in the various communities throughout the United States.

It is said to be that the *kanal* had been danced to the violin (*tx'ankan pay* or *tz'a'pay*) and the guitar (*te'chalbal waqab'*), leading to the argument that it may be a derivative of the colonial-era Iberian dance Zarabanda; even the term Zarabanda continues to roam among Q'anjob'al elders, especial among the musicians (Clark, 2017; O'Brien-Rothe, 2015). Over the centuries the dance has appeared during the fiestas and social events where it is danced in front of the marimba. In Q'anjob'al, the marimba is known as *te'son*, which has great significance in their identity since Santa Eulalia has been known for fabricating the marimba; currently known as *la cuna de la marimba* (cradle of the marimba) (Camposeco Mateo, 1992; Pellicer 2005:90; Clark 2017:41). My theory is that the Q'anjob'al name of the marimba, *te'son*, might reference the popular style of marimba music. The prefix *te'* translates to wooden, and the suffix *son* may be referring to the style of their repertoire that the marimba is known to play. The *son* style varies in Guatemala, as ladinos have incorporated the traditional *sónes* in their repertoire, which consists of *són típico*, *són chapín*, *són barreño*, *són ladino*, *són de Pascua* and folkloric *són* (Lehnhoff, 2005, p. 234). Among the Mayas, the marimba repertoire includes *tx'aj'ilal bit'* (ritual) music and *bit'al te'son*, Zarabanda, or traditional music, which is characterized by the melancholic melodies, the simple harmonies, and the *sesquialtera* (characterized by the rhythmic alternation 2:3 proportional value), which results in abundance of hemiola (Lehnhoff, 2005, p. 235). In other words, it can be defined by the prevalent *ostinato*, where the diminishing of two pulses into three pulses in the same time duration (Navarrete Pellicer, 2005, p. 79).

Today the marimba is an emblem of Guatemala as the national instrument politically and has become a musical marker of national and ethnic identity (Godinez, 2002; Lehnhoff, 2005; Navarrete Pellicer, 2005). In its history, it has evolved from its initial prototype, the marimba de *tecomaté* (gourd marimba) to the marimba *sencilla* (the diatonic marimba) to the contemporary marimba *doblé* (chromatic marimba) (Lehnhoff, 2005; Navarrete Pellicer, 2005; Clark, 2017, p. 42). Well near the end of the 20th century, the Q'anjob'al people were still using the marimba *sencilla*, along with either a trio or quartet of saxophone (i.e., two altos and a tenor, or two altos, a tenor, and baritone). Just recently in the last twenty years, the younger Q'anjob'al marimbist made the first transition to the marimba *doblé*. As a result of the Maya Diaspora, there has been a significant evolution on the instrumentation of the Q'anjob'al marimba ensemble with the first importation of

the keyboard synthesizer among the marimbist in Santa Eulalia and Barillas in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Clark, 2017). In its current stage of development, the marimba ensemble has taken up a technological and electronic aesthetic which Clark (2017) has described as a “marimba orquesta electronica” (an electronic marimba orchestra), consisting of the chromatic marimba, drum set, an electric bass, and several electronic keyboard synthesizers, becoming the popular instrumentation among the marimbists both in the homeland and in diaspora (p. 46).

Since the establishment of a community in diaspora, the Q’anjob’al people have maintained their *kanal* in diaspora. Some of the earliest mentions of the *kanal* and the marimba music in the diaspora have come from several scholars (Burns, 1993, 2000; Camposeco, 2000; Wellmeier, 1998a, 1998b). Alan Burns (1993) worked with Q’anjob’al migrants in southern Florida, investigating Maya migrant hardships while shedding light on the cultural and musical practices of the community. He has collaborated with Jeronimo Camposeco (2000), a Maya-Jakaletoko who immigrated to Florida. The Mayas of Indiantown, Florida have maintained their religious and cultural heritage, where the marimba and the *kanal* manifest during their social gatherings and religious fiestas. Burns (1993) observed “young people dance to the music while several hundred people stand around in a huge semicircle . . . sometimes held on Saturday night” (p. 54-55). Burns stressed the aesthetic of these occasions as a place of community socialization and enculturation:

Traditional clothing is worn, children are taught to dance to marimba music, and the queen of the fiesta [who represents the local diasporic community] work hard to prepare speeches in Maya, Spanish, and English. As the fiesta has evolved, the cultural activities have become more North American, with booths, raffle, and the incorporation of other ethnic groups in the events (1993, p. 139).

Traditional and folkloric regalia are worn by the women especially; the music embodiment is taught to the younger generation; a queen, a princess, *ix uninal* (the daughter of) or *ix xumakil* (she who blossoms) is crowned by her predecessor; the event fundraises; and, most importantly, the marimba and the *kanal* have remained the main attraction of social gatherings and celebration.

This attraction of learning to play the marimba has spread across the diasporic community from Los Angeles to Indiantown to Alamosa. In Los Angeles, Virves Garcia, marimba director of the Q’anjob’al marimba youth group “Marimba Juventud Maya”, enculturated

the young members who were interested in learning the marimba. The Association Q'anjob'al Ewulense organized the youth group, to maintain the music practice as a medium to celebrate the fiestas and to transmit the practice to the future generations. In Alamosa, Colorado, with the support of the local San Luis Valley Immigration Resource center and the music department at Adams State, Espiritu Maya was able to purchase a traditional marimba so that Q'anjob'al youth could learn to play the autochthonous instrument (Ludwig, 2012). Through this collaboration I learned to play the marimba. Currently in Alamosa, this marimba continues to be used for the community's many fiestas. In more recent studies, Logan Clark (2017) worked with the Q'anjob'al diaspora in Los Angeles, to include IXIM, the Asociación Q'anjob'al Ewulense, and their networks in the homeland. (Clark, 2017) Clark immersed herself in the music of the Q'anjob'al people, by experiencing, analyzing, and embodying their music and *kanal*, even learning the Q'anjob'al language. The *kanal*, as she points out, occurred at various religious and secular celebrations, but most importantly, during the annual patron saint fiestas (Clark, 2017, p. 134). During her three years of fieldwork with the community, she attended, observed and embodied the *kanal* in the diasporic community in Los Angeles and during her time in Santa Eulalia. Overall, her research points to how music constructs the Q'anjob'al identity and has emphasized the relationship of three fundamental features of the community: migration, music, and transnational networks.

The Lasting Dance of a Fiesta

Since the organization of the Q'anjob'al diapsoric communities in the 1990s, the Santa Eulalia community in Los Angeles has continued to manifest their main Fiesta of Santa Eulalia in early February. Since moving to Los Angeles, I have collaborated with the Association Q'anjob'al Ewulense in organizing their fiesta for the past three years, where several folkloric dances were prepared as well as the coronation of *Ix Xumakil Jolom Konob'* (the Floral Girl of Santa Eulalia) of Los Angeles. However, of all the fiestas and *kanal* that I have participated in, one stands out significantly during my fieldwork. As I mentioned earlier in this essay, in one particular gathering of the four *aj'txaj*, it so happened that their council meeting was scheduled the same time as the fundraising fiesta that has played a huge role in maintaining the communities transnational relationships with the homeland. The fund that had been collected at this particular fiesta aided towards the completion of the newly erected cathedral of *Tx'ajul Ewul* (Santa Eulalia) back in the homeland. For the Q'anjob'al community of Santa Eulalia, their patron saint continues to be an anchor for congregating the community to the fiestas. During the mid-2010s, the Santa Eulalia

community in Los Angeles received a newly constructed image of Santa Eulalia, held at the Holy Cross Church in South LA, where the Maya-Q'anjob'al community has the image on display (see figure 1). As a sacred and religious attraction, Santa Eulalia has aided the community in sustaining their Catholic faith and has become a religious marker in developing their religious, collective memory and Maya identity.

Figure 1: Statue of Santa Eulalia at Holy Cross Catholic Church in South LA. Both Santa Eulalia and the two women on the side wear the tradition white *Kolej* or *Hüipil* (Overall blouse) from *Jolom Konob*. (Photo by author)

During the night of this particular fiesta, we all expressed joy and excitement for the opportunity to dance our *kanal* and reunite with friends. Everyone was dressed for the occasion; the women wore their favorite traditional regalia, elaborated by the beautiful and colorful *kol* (Maya blouse) and *chan* (Maya dress) while the older gentleman wore their *ropil* (a Pancho made of thick wool felt). The fundraiser took place at the Holy Angels Church of the Deaf in Vernon, CA, where the *kanal* was danced. Surprisingly, as we entered the vicinity, the small, outdoor parking lot of the church had been transformed into the dance space. In my previous experiences of attending a *kanal*, they have all

occurred indoors; instead, the outdoor space provides the sufficient amount of space for the *kanal* to manifest for the anticipated *eb'kanalwom* (dancers). One of the directors of the Santa Eulalia community welcomed newcomers and visitors, as he announced the reason of the evening occasion: in part to celebrate the grand opening and completion of the new Catholic church in the homeland of Santa Eulalia, Guatemala. Community members in large numbers had already arrived, as many had attended early activities of the celebration. Rows of chairs surrounded the large dance space, except in one area, where a large mural stood, portraying a vivid illustration of the town of Santa Eulalia. As Wellmeier (1998b) observed during her early fieldwork with this community, she describes the same mural as:

One wall of the room was completely covered by a colorful painting of Santa Eulalia, the Guatemalan mountain village that once was home...with the whitewashed colonial church in the center, surrounded by the red-tiled and tin-roofed houses, the scene and the sound had transported the ten men (and me!) back into the Maya highlands, but it wasn't just a sensory illusion: these two focal points, the marimba and the parish church of Santa Eulalia, turned out to be key symbols for my understanding of the religiocultral association known as FEMAQ', the Fraternidad Ewulense Maya Q'anjob'al (p. 97).

Although the Colonial church in Santa Eulalia no longer stands, she presents an in-depth description of the early mural of the church, along with the parish and the marimba, which continues to have a significant effect on the confraternity and the contemporary community. What differentiates in my observation of the mural is that church's color; Wellmeier mentions a "whitewashed" Colonial structure, where I had observed a bright pink. This change could plausibly be the result of the blaze that scared the church in the past (Wellmeier, 1998b, p. 100). At the side of the mural stood five flag posts, on the right, the U.S. and Mayan flag; and on the left, the municipal flag of Santa Eulalia, the national flag of Guatemala, and the church flag of the Vatican. Towards the back of the venue, a vending area had been set-up where the congregation could purchase food and traditional beverages. The sales consisted of tacos, tamales, water, soda, and *uq'ejá'* or *atolé* (a maize drink). Among the audience and *kanalwom*, the women's colorful regalia pierced through the visual space and the large audience and dancers. The drastic, modern, and business-casual attire of the older men indicates the gradual decrease in use of the traditional *ropil*, whereas the three male *aj'tx'aj* ambassadors had worn the *ropil* for the occasion.

Nevertheless, those in attendance included the *Ix Xumakil Jolom Konob'* and the princess of the Maya Santa Eulalia community, and as the audience patiently waited for the next son to start up, they encouraged everyone to take part in the *kanal*, as the marimbist of Marimba Suspiro Q'anjob'ak prepares their next tune.

As one of several Q'anjob'al marimba ensembles in the Los Angeles area, Marimba Suspiro Q'anjob'al was booked for the evening. According to Clark (2017), this ensemble is known for performing the autochthonous Q'anjob'al *son* (p. 216). Their instrumentation consisted of a pair of chromatic marimba, four keyboard synthesizers, a drum set, a bass guitar, and several auxiliary percussions like the timbales used to compliment the main drum. The marimbas were stationed in an obtuse angle with the small tenor marimba on the left, the bass marimba on the right, facing towards the audience, and the keyboards standing at the vertex of the angle. The drum set was set-up in the middle-front of the marimbas, the bass guitarist stood beside the end of the "bass" marimba—as for the bass parts compliment and immitate each other—and the auxiliaries percussionist stood adjacent to the hi-hat. Clark considers the instrumentation as the "marimba orquesta electronica" (Clark, 2017, p. 46). Commonly, the range of their marimbas roughly covers the range of a grand piano, with the "tenor" marimba covering three octaves and a half, and the "bass" marimba covering just shy of five octaves. Hence, the group consists of seven marimbists, each designated with their voicing. The standard parts of the "tenor" marimba had consisted of the Tiple II, the Piccolo II, and the Tenor-Bass while the "bass" marimba consists of the Tiple I, the Piccolo I, the harmonic center, and the Bass (Lehnhoff, 2005, p. 228; Clark, 2017, p. 47-48). As for the Marimba Suspiro Q'anjob'al, they only consisted of six marimbists; the Tiple I of the "bass" marimba was missing. The essential tool to produce sound on the marimba requires the use of either two or three mallets. The five melodic parts use two mallets while the two harmonic accompaniments use three mallets. Overall, the harmonic center defines the rhythmic style of the accompaniment and the whole piece, with the bass aiding the center, and, similarly, the bass guitar reinforces the underlying base pulse. As for the other rhythmic accompaniment (the drum set and auxiliary percussion), they underlined the musical style that complements and reinforces the center. The role of the keyboardist is to reinforce the melody as a soloist; his part is performed in the B section of the form, where he has the freedom to improvise on the main melody.

Throughout the event and in between each tune, the reunion of friends never ends. The *aj'tx'aj* ambassadors reunited with old friends from their childhood, conversing and dancing. Their connection has remained stable over the years of being separated; they can easily recognize one another after all these years of living in the United States. During

the short period in between tunes, the audience waited for the next tune to begin. At the start of the melody, dancers—traditionally men—rushed in search of a partner as the dance space quickly accumulated with *kanalwom*. The *kanal* moved in a concentric counter-clockwise circle, with each adjacent partner having no contact with each other; traditionally, men would have their hand towards their back with the palm grasping together, and the women would have their hand down at their side, pinching the traditional *chan* (dress). Gender placement plays a crucial role and has its significance within each Q'anjob'al towns. For those who come from Santa Eulalia, they have the men dance inside the concentric circle, while the women would be on the outside. Clark (2017) emphasizes that the men from San Pedro Soloma dance in the opposite and outside of the circle. Whereas for the other Q'anjob'al towns, men traditionally danced on the inside of the circle (Clark, 2017, p. 49). As for the women, they dance on the opposite side of the men. The general body movement of the pair engaged in simultaneous forward momentum as the body energy sways side to side. The right foot leads towards the outside of the circle, as the left foot follows towards the inside of the circle. This energy, as Omofolabo Ajayi claims, depletes at one turning point and generates new energy going back (Ajayi, 1998, p. 18). At the turning points, a dancer may briefly rest to allow the dancer's weight to turn, inducing into a slow momentum. Each dancer's rhythm and tempo vary and may depend on the individual's inner trance or feeling. In analysing the rhythmic motion and pace, the dancer's turning point align the first count of music style of the 6/8 time meter in a slow tempo. As a faster tempo, it may align with each downbeat of the measure (i.e., count one and four in 6/8). The *kanal* continued well into the night and did not end until early next morning. Before departing, farewell send-off ended in emotions; at the same time, new friends and network had been established within the group. As we returned to our homes, everyone felt fatigued and all immediately went to rest.

Brief Analysis of the *Kanal*

Drawing from Ajayi's (1998) work on the concept of dance formation, he explores the physical components of energy, space, and rhythm. In the concept of energy, the body's momentum is the source of movements. The forward motion of the counter-clockwise circle may seem very repetitive from the etic perspective, but within the emic, it has had great significance. This repetitive cyclical motion symbolizes Maya's concept of time. Their perspective of time is elaborated in their various sacred calendars like the *txolq'in* ("the counting order of days") and the *Habb'* (solar count). The development of these calendars are based on astronomical observation of the Sun, Moon, and Venus as well as the agrarian

cycle of sowing and harvesting the maize. From the short lyrical description I presented at the very beginning of this essay, Clark (2017) emphasizes that Garcia's famous tune, *Xal Chikay* (Grandma), refers to the cosmic order and time cycle as elaborated: "We dance moving forward, and encircling happiness, we circle like the earth around the sun; this is the rhythm of our life" (p. 65). The focus of swaying the body side-to-side may point to their concept of spatial dimensionality. In other words, the concept of the four cardinal directions and their centric conjunction plays a crucial role in conceptualizing space. The north is the forward momentum of the dance (it is what lies ahead of you); the east (right) is the first swaying momentum; the west (your left) is the next; and finally, the south is the backward momentum (what lies behind you) before repeating the sequence. As for the concurrent sync of the *kanalwom*, it evokes the Maya's concept of duality (Navarrete Pellicer, 2005, p. 52-68). In other words, this concept relates to that of the Yin and Yang, where the opposite attracts; in this matter of movement synchronization, male and female are the attractions, and to fulfill the *kanal* means that the *kanalwom* would need a partner to dance. However, as I have observed during my fieldwork, this traditional practice of the opposite gender dancing has changed over the past decades. As time has changed, commonly one can observe two females dancing with each other, but rarely two males. In the second concept, space or spatial dimension is where the music embodiment take place, although meaningless until movement begins, then it creates meaning through the different productions of energy (Ajayi, 1998). In this case, the setting or venue is of the uttermost important. In this case, the *kanal* took place at a Catholic church in celebrating the grand opening and completion of the Cathedral of Txajul Ewul (Santa Eulalia) in the homeland. For the last decade, throughout the diasporic communities of Santa Eulalia, they strategically raised funds for the completion of the new modern cathedral. The new cathedral has replaced the ancient Colonial church of Santa Eulalia. This commemoration of the homeland solidifies not only their transnational communication but also affirms the diasporic identity.

The last concept is rhythm. It is the flow of time and movement, determined by the music style. As Ajayi (1998) points out, "It gives continuity and smoothness to the dancer's movements and allows the performer to concentrate more on honing the aesthetics of the dance and imparting fuller significance to the movements being performed" (p. 19). In this matter, rhythm derives from the music and, therefore, shares a similar relationship with dance. The *kanal*'s sway and turnarounds demonstrate the pulse of the underlined base of the son. Dance and music complement each other and requires the use of time, space, dynamic and the human body. At the same time, this relationship conveys a similar rhythmic pattern: the use of accents in emphasizing the turnarounds; the duration length

of the rests in between the turnarounds; the meter that determines the duration; and the tempo of momentums, which travels through the spatial dimension. Hence, the *kanal* not only manifests the embodiment of music, but also embodies their cosmology, their collective memory, and their traditional style of music-making. These all together contribute to how the diasporic communities throughout the United States shape, practice, and construct their Q'anjob'al identity.

The Future of the *kanal* and the Fiesta among the Upcoming Maya Americans

The Maya Q'anjob'al Diaspora has retained various cultural, religious, and musical memories of their homeland, along with myths and oral stories that continue to be passed down from generation to generation. Since the emergence of various Mayan organization like IXIM, Association Q'anjob'al Ewulense, the Maya Santa Eulalia Community of the Church, Espiritu Maya in Alamosa, and the National Pastoral Maya, the Q'anjob'al communities have committed to restore and maintain the prosperity of the homeland. Many have collaborated to aid the hometown parish. The milestone of the newly constructed Cathedral of Tx'ajul Ewul, in honor of Santa Eulalia of Barcelona, is evidence of transnational communication and collaboration. Through these organizations, many continue to advocate, encourage, retain, and practice their cultural and religious traditions during the fiestas. However, most importantly, the *kanal* has played a crucial role in maintaining musical practice and its embodiment, which draws and attracts the people to congregate, celebrate, and share their collective memory in the diaspora. Loucky (2000) points out that organizations play a significant part in re-creating the traditional "Maya modes of social organization" (p. 220). For examples, churches such as the Holy Cross in South LA or the Sacred Heart Church in Alamosa, Colorado have supported the Maya communities in hosting and celebrating the fiesta of Santa Eulalia. The Los Angeles community attained a statue of Santa Eulalia, which aids them in maintaining religious activities and cultural practice (Clark, 2017, p. 125-26). The Statue of Santa Eulalia symbolizes not only the hometown of the Maya-Q'anjob'al people, but she also affirms their Catholic identity, which is very strong among the diasporic communities.

Maya diaspora studies continue to question the long-term process of settlement, assimilation, integration, and sustainability as the contemporary diaspora continues to grow. At the same time, the question of returning to their homeland is uncertain. It has come up in my discussions with many community members. Many have settled down, adapted, and assimilated into American life and as for the next generation growing up in America, how will they maintain the Maya cultural practice, music embodiment,

and construct their identity? What future waits for the Q'anjob'al kanal and its music? How will the ancient Maya religious practice (*tx'aj*) be maintained and practiced by the Maya Americans? The first Maya generations have endured the hardship of leaving their homeland, migrating through a harsh environment, and settling in an unknown world, having no clue on what to expect. For the upcoming generation who are born in the U.S., they attend school to learn the English language, as U.S. citizens, giving them leverage. These factors will contribute to how they construct their identity and will compose and inscribe their footprints in the history of the United States. They are not alone; as Montejo (1999) emphasize, the "revitalization of Maya culture is a collective effort and reinforces pride in being Maya" (p. 215-216). The Maya heritage has endured its hardship in the extensive history of colonization, which has resulted in reconceptualizing and reinventing through the encounter of different cultural interactions. Through their collective memories and shared experience, the future of the Maya Diaspora will prosper in reconstruing the new Maya Identity as American.

Conclusion

In the beginning, the means of embodying sound and music in ancient times for the Mayas had been to invoke, worship the creator, communicate with the environmental deities, and give reverence to their ancestors through various musical and ceremonial performances. The relationship between dance and music complements each other, like that of the duality of how two opposites attract each other. Dance and music are very distinct in purpose, where dance is the embodiment of music and music is the product of sound. The *kanal* developed throughout the colonial epoch, tracing its history to the early Zarabanda, and attained mixed elements known as the son style of today. I have questioned whether the Q'anjob'al name of the marimba, *te'son*, could be a derivative of the musical style that its name implies. It remains unclear on how the marimba received its Q'anjob'al name but has been coined as it is now. Through the *kanal*, the communities congregate for socialization and other beneficial aid. By exploring Ajayi's work (1998) on the semiotic of dance, I have explored various symbolism, the relationship of music and dance that make up the *kanal*. As for any diasporic group, assimilating to the cultural and ecological surrounding is inevitable. For the Q'anjob'al diaspora, whether rural or urban, the *kanal* is a musical and traditional embodiment that continues to thrive within a secular and religious context. This traditional dance practice in diaspora has become a cultural inheritance for the next generation, a collective memory they share in aiding them in how they will construct their identity in the diaspora. It is in these settings that the upcoming

generation can experience the musical and cultural aesthetic of their ancestral heritage and memory. The *kanal* has taken part in the social fabric that expresses individual and social identity in the diaspora, and at the same time, it has reinforced social solidarity. It has become an essential medium in articulating religious and cultural concepts. Thus it has taken an aesthetic art form as music embodiment and collective memory of the Q'anjob'al Diaspora.

References

- Ajayi, O. S. (1998). *Yoruba Dance: The Semiotics of Movement and Body Attitude in a Nigerian Culture*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.
- Blom, F., & La Farge, O. (1927). "Tribes and Temples: A Record of the Expedition to Middle America Conducted by the Tulane University of Louisiana in 1925." In *Middle American Research Series: Vol. 2*. New Orleans: The Department of Middle American Research, The Tulane University of Louisiana.
- Borg, P. W. (1985). "The Polyphonic Music in the Guatemalan Music Manuscripts of the Lilly Library" (Ph.D. Dissertation). Indiana University, Bloomington.
- Boym, S. (2001). *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books.
- Burns, A. F. (1993). *Maya in Exile: Guatemalans in Florida*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Burns, A. F. (2000). "Indiantown, Florida: The Mayan Diaspora and Applied Anthropology." In J. Loucky & M. M. Moors (Eds.), *The Maya Diaspora: Guatemalan Roots, New American Lives* (pp. 152–171). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Camposeco Mateo, J. B. (1992). *Te' Son, Chinab', o K'ojom: La Marimba de Guatemala*. Guatemala: Sub Regional de Artesanias y Artes Populares.
- Clark, L. E. (2017). "The Mayan Marimba and the Musical Production of Place in a Transnational Migrant Community" (Ph.D. Dissertation). University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles.
- Deuss, K. (2007). *Shamans, Witches, and Maya Priests: Native Religion and Ritual in Highland Guatemala* (1st ed.). London: The Guatemalan Maya Centre.
- Girard, S. (1981). *Renaissance Wind Band Music of Guatemala*. Berkeley, CA: Musica Sacre et Profana. Music Library UCLA (Second Floor).
- Godinez, L. (2002). *La Marimba Guatemalteca*. Guatemala: Fondo De Cultura Economica.
- Hamilton, N., & Chinchilla, N. S. (Eds.). (2001a). *Central Americans in California: Transnational Communities, Economies and Culture*. Los Angeles: Center for Multiethnic and Transnational Studies, University of Southern California.
- Hamilton, N., & Chinchilla, N. S. (2001b). *Seeking Community in a Global City: Guatemalans and salvadorans in Los Angeles*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Hanna, Judith Lynne. (1992). "Dance." In Helen Myers (Eds.), *Ethnomusicology: An Introduction* (pp. 315-326). London: the Macmillan Press.
- Hood, M. (1960). "The Challenge of 'bi-Musicality.'" *Ethnomusicology*, 4(2), 55–59. DOI: 10.2307/924263
- Kaeppler, A. L. (1991). "Memory and Knowledge in the Production of Dance." In S.

- Küchler & W. Melion (Eds.), *Images of Memory: On Remembering and Representation* (pp. 109–120). Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Kaufman, T. (2003). *A preliminary Maya Etymological Dictionary*. <http://www.famsi.org/reports/01051/index.html>
- La Farge, O. (1947). "Santa Eulalia: The Religion of a Cuchumatán Indian Town." In *Ethnological Series*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- La Farge, O., & Byers, D. (1931). "The Year Bearer's People." In *Middle American Research Series: Vol. 3*. New Orleans: The Department of Middle American Research, The Tulane University of Louisiana.
- Landa, D. de. (1978). *Yucatan Before and After the Conquest* (W. Gates, Trans.). New York: Dover Publication.
- LeBaron, A. 2006. Editor. *Maya Pastoral: Encuentros Nacionales y Ensayos Sobre Los Mayas Migrantes; National Conferences and Essays on the Maya Immigrants*. Kennesaw, Georgia: Kennesaw State University Press.
- LeBaron, A. (2012). "When Latinos are not Latinos: The Case of Guatemalan Maya in the United States, the Southeast and Georgia." *Latino Studies*, 10(1), 179–195. DOI: 10.1057/lst.2012.8
- Lehnhoff, D. (1984). *Music de la epoca colonial en Guatemala*. Antigua Guatemala: Centro de Investigaciones Regionales Mesoamericanas.
- Lehnhoff, D. (2005). *Creacion musical en Guatemala*. Guatemala: Universidad Rafael Landivar Fundacion G&T Continental.
- Looper, M. G. (2009). *To Be Like Gods: Dance in Ancient Maya Civilization*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Lopez, D., & LeBaron, A. (2012). "Pastoral Maya and the Maya Project: Building Maya Civil Society in the U.S." *Practicing Anthropology*, 34(1), 13–16. DOI: 10.17730/praa.34.1.3x6887835m47446t
- Loucky, J. (2000). "Maya in a Modern Metropolis: Establishing New Lives and Livelihoods in Los Angeles." In J. and M. M. Moors (Eds.), *The Maya Diaspora: Guatemala Roots, New American Lives* (pp. 214-222). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Lovell, W. G. (2015). *Conquest and Survival in Colonial Guatemala: A Historical Geography of the Cuchumatán Highlands, 1500-1821* (4th ed.). Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Ludwig, S. A., Lucas, F., Nicolas, L., Archuleta, F., Sandoval, A., & Carbutt, R. (2012). "Supporting Respect: Community Partnership in Alamosa, Colorado." *Practicing Anthropology*, 34(1), 32–36. DOI: 10.17730/praa.34.1.mqr47130h1jn8271
- Mitchell, R. W., & Gallaher, M. C. (2001). "Embodying Music: Matching Music and

- Dance in Memory." *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 19(1), 65–85. DOI: 10.1525/mp.2001.19.1.65
- Montejo, V. (1999). *Voices from Exile: Violence and Survival in Modern Maya History*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Navarrete Pellicer, S. (2005). *Maya Achi Marimba Music in Guatemala*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- O'Brien-Rothe, L. (2015). *Songs that Make the Road Dance: Courtship and Fertility Music of the Tzutujil Maya*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- O'Connor, C. (2008, February 23). "Mayans Retain Their Culture." *The Denver Post*. <http://www.denverpost.com/2008/02/23/mayans-retain-their-culture/>
- O'Conner, C. (2012, April 14). "Alamosa Mushroom Farm's Financial Struggles trickled Down to Maya Employees." *The Denver Post*. <http://www.denverpost.com/2012/04/14/alamosa-mushroom-farms-finacial-strugglestrickle-down-to-maya-employees/>
- Popkin, E. (1999). "Guatemalan Mayan Migration to Los Angeles: Constructing Transnational linkages in the Context of the Settlement Process." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22(2), 267–289. DOI: 10.1080/014198799329486
- Popkin, E. (2005). "The Emergence of Pan-Mayan Ethnicity in the Guatemalan Transnational Community Linking Santa Eulalia and Los Angeles." *Current Sociology*, 53(4), 675–706. DOI: 10.1177/0011392105052721
- Stevenson, R. (1951). *Music in Mexico: A Historical Survey*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company.
- Stevenson, R. (1952). "The First Mention of the Sarabande." *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 5(1), 29–31. DOI: 10.2307/829447
- Stevenson, R. (1968). *Music in Aztec & Inca Territory*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Stevenson, R. (1970). *Renaissance and Baroque Musical Sources in the Americas*. Washington D. C.: General Secretariat, Organization of American States. Music Library UCLA.
- Turrent, L. (1993). *La conquista musical de Mexico*. Mexico, D.F.: Fondo De Cultura Economica.
- Wellmeier, N. J. (1998a). "Ritual, Identity, and the Mayan Diaspora." In *Native Americans*. New York: Garland Publishing.
- Wellmeier, N. J. (1998b). "Santa Eulalia's People in Exile: Maya Religion, Culture, and Identity in Los Angeles." In R. S. Warner & J. G. Wittner (Eds.), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration* (pp. 97–122). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Wellmeier, N. J. (2000). "La Huerta: Transportation Hub in the Arizona Desert." In J.

Loucky & M. M. Moors (Eds.), *The Maya Diaspora: Guatemalan Roots, New American Lives* (pp. 141–151). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.