Notes

Chapter 1 A Plea for Gossip

1. Certain kinds of skills, categories, and objects that figure in "cultural codes" certainly never enter gossip at all. I do not suggest that we can know *nothing* interesting about a society if we cannot grasp its gossip. Various suggestions about what a "cultural grammar" ought to include are to be found in Kay 1966; Keesing 1970, 1971, 1974*a*.

2. Whorf (1956) suggests, perhaps tongue in cheek, that, at least in fire insurance claims, the words people use to describe a situation literally determine what the situation is. It is a commonplace of the sociological study of institutions that institutional descriptions of situations (e.g., "X is insane") are definitive; that is, they define the facts (and institutions ordinarily guarantee their definitions by applying sanctions).

3. Peter Wilson's (1974) convincing reinterpretation of the Makah case suggests that certain traditions and values *appeared* to Colson to persist in gossip, because the Makah used gossip against their neighbors but aimed precisely at the ethnographer as (a particular sort of) outsider. "Gossip among the Makah appears to have been used as a stratagem to confuse or divert an outsider whose enquiries are quite innocently aimed at an especially sensitive area, namely status and descent" (1974, p. 99).

4. Cox (1970) applies the term "information management" to gossip, following Goffman (1959). And, as we all know, managing information is no simple matter; rather, "the tactical use of these clues to convey an impression, to manage a situation, to boost a friend or to bring down a rival generates a quite formidable sophistication and com-

plexity" (Bailey 1971, p. 13). The linguistic clues Bailey has in mind include the subtleties of gossip and slander.

5. Don Handelman (1971, 1973) argues persuasively that it is difficult to claim that individuals simply manage information through gossip, since success at passing information depends on features of the interaction which may well not be individually manageable. "It is quite misleading to state only that gossip does or does not occur within the social settings of a particular social order when the medium of information transmission is the encounter, and when forms of encounter differ in their capacity to sustain the successful passing of gossip" (1973, p. 212). Handelman gives a particularly telling example of the *control* of information in his dissertation (1971, p. 409): a woman manages to exclude another woman's interjections and amendments to one version of a story because she "appeared to have all the relevant, previously closed, information about the event she was describing"—even though the other woman was a principal protagonist in the story.

6. See Haviland (1974*b*) for an account of such a recent political dispute involving a newly built road in the hamlet. In this case, gossip circulated about greed, fights between kinsmen, jealousy, and so forth; but little conversation hit on what seemed basic political forces at work in the dispute.

7. See also Szwed 1966.

8. Garfinkel's (1956) treatment of "degradation ceremonies" speaks of such manipulations (redefinition of events, transformations of "event" and "perpetrator" by locating them within particular "schemes of preferences") as *conditions* for the success of degradation ceremonies.

9. During these conversations I myself was the interlocutor; my ineptness in that role may well have impoverished the resulting sessions. Cf. chapter 4.

10. The Who's Who lists contained a revelation about naming. Collier and Bricker (1970) have demonstrated not only that the system of *nicknames* in Zinacantan is the most efficient of the naming codes (most likely to give each individual a unique, unambiguous label) that operate within a hamlet, but also that nickname groups correspond to significant lineage segments. Hence, as lineages fissure over time, nickname labels are institutionalized as ordinary surnames marking the resultant groups. The Who's Who sessions indicated that nicknames not only operate at the level of the hamlet but function as the only names in common use to describe individuals throughout the *municipio*. Occasionally an informant would announce what a man's "real name" was; the others would reply "But we don't understand that; we don't know who that is." The extent of *municipio*wide knowledge about nickname *groups* is not clear.

Chapter 2 The Ethnographic Context

1. Vogt (1969) intends these units to have greater importance ritually and socially than I accord them here. He defines the *sna* as "the grouping that is composed of one or more localized patrilineages" (p. 140). Ordinary Zinacanteco usage, however, does not necessarily entail genealogical relations of this kind. Moreover, patrilineages and identifiable lineage segments are not always localized, though there is a preference for patrilocal settlement after young men marry. Cf. G. Collier (1968), especially pp. 12–17.

2. The situation is complicated by recent introductions: all-weather truck roads, electric light posts and lines, standpipe water, long-lasting house-building materials, and so forth. Waterhole ceremonies in Nabenchauk, where potable water is available from standpipes, have virtually ceased.

3. For example, in the area of the hamlet of Voʔ ch'oj voʔ called *stzelej* or *mina carbon*, individuals associated with both the hamlets of Nachij and Pasteʔ are to be found.

4. In fact, neighborhood integrity can outweigh hamlet boundaries politically. In a recent government reorganization in which each hamlet was made an *agencia* with its own set of civil officials, the section of the hamlet Pasteʔ known as Xul Voʔ became a separate political entity in its own right. The people of the area had functioned before as a separate social unit, and according to report had "quarreled with their fellows," prompting a more definitive division.

5. I shall have considerably less to say, throughout this book, about what Zinacanteco women know and say of their neighbors and acquaintances. My wife Leslie deserves the credit for enlightening me about women's gossip.

6. In chapter 6 I consider the cargo system in some detail.

7. The man was soon preempted by those same ladino authorities and given a job in the federal office that oversees such *ejido* colonies. The move effectively defused the man's personal power in his own communities and confused his allegiances.

8. See Haviland (1974*b*) for an account of such a dispute and a characterization of the hamlet leaders involved.

Chapter 3 The Domain of Gossip

1. As Handelman (1973) points out, all that is really necessary in most societies for gossip to occur is that the protagonist (victim) be established as a nonperson for purposes of the interaction. This rule explains the so-called third person invisible. ("Look at him sitting there. He doesn't touch his soup that I slaved all day to make for him.")

2. Paine (1970) proposes a useful set of critical definitions for distinguishing such concepts ("gossip," "scandal," "rumour," etc.). And see F. G. Bailey 1971, pp. 284ff. Several of my colleagues have complained about what they consider to be my overly broad definition of gossip, suggesting that gossip, unlike ordinary news reporting, accounts of past events, speculation about future events, and so forth—all of which may well fall within the broad range of phenomena I consider—has certain distinctive properties. For some, what is crucial about gossip is the evaluative component it

manifests, allowing participants to manipulate "values" and opinions among their interlocutors. Other critics have suggested that what is distinctive about gossip is the nature of its subject matter, said to consist of news about the absent third party that is somehow damaging to him or her, or which was meant to be confidential. Consider an innocent conversation that begins by telling the news about absent X but which soon turns to more delicate topics, prompting remarks like: "We shouldn't be talking like this." Or: "*Now* we're *gossip*ing!" I examine such definitional questions with respect to Tzotzil usage in somewhat more detail in Appendix 1.

Precision with these words, and careful definition, are presumably necessary for some tasks, but not particularly so for the purposes of my present argument. Moreover, it may in fact be true that gossip, in any restricted sense, is not a universal feature of human intercourse (or even a desirable one), whereas broader sorts of conversation *are* ubiquitous and hence constant sources for ethnographic investigation.

3. Roger Abrahams (1970) argues that an important way to approach gossip is "to understand gossip in the context of the range of speech acts of a community" (1970, p. 290). That is, of a wide range of communicatory behavior, gossip or something like it may have its own rules, may be a special sort of verbal performance, which can be delimited either explicitly as a native category or—as in this chapter—by reference to implicit native theorizing.

4. Bricker (1968, pp. 108–10) presents some of the derivational material I am concerned with, though she provides only English glosses for most words. I am indebted to Dr. Bricker for the insight that Tzotzil derivational morphology can shed conisderable light on the inner workings of the Zinacanteco mind.

5. Note that the particle *la* represents "quotative evidence" (Jakobson 1957, p. 4); that is, it qualifies a sentence to the effect that the speaker cannot vouch for its truth: it is hearsay.

Note further the possibility that *loʔil* and *loʔlo* ("deceive, trick") are etymologically related; Laughlin (1975, p. 215) lists the two stems under a common root. Perhaps the language suggests that talk is potentially deceitful; that gossip may trick the listener.

6. Several of my colleagues have suggested to me that it is a criterion of gossip that it should always recount stories which cast its protagonists in an unfavorable light—that otherwise we should be disinclined to call it gossip. Such an observation may well lead to profitable lines of inquiry (and see Allport and Postman's well-known *Psychology of Rumour*, 1947) about why gossips engage in such activity. These issues are tangential here, however. Cf. Haviland (1975).

7. Tzotzil, like other Mayan languages, employs couplets in ritual speech: prayer, formal petitioning, scolding, etc. Texts are composed of pairs of lines identical except for the last elements, which are often nearly synonyms —metaphorically, if not literally. With respect to Zinacanteco song, such

couplets are enumerated in Haviland (1967). Gossen (1970) reports similar phenomena throughout ritual speech in Chamula.

8. That is, the root *k'op* occurs frequently in conversation with verbs which may be glossed as indicated.

9. Note here that *k'op* is counted with the numeral classifier *-p'el*, used for a word, a shout, the crow of a rooster, etc.

10. This usage contrasts with a more artificial sense for the phrase *lekil k'op*, which appears in various formally elicited taxonomies. See Appendix 1.

11. I am indebted to Robert M. Laughlin for this example. Consider also the usage *muk' sk'oplal* ("there is no plan about it"), meaning "that has not been arranged" or "it doesn't matter."

12. This I take to be a conversational *rule*. That is, while we *can* in principle talk about anything we wish, no matter how normal or unmarked (or dull) it may be, we are ordinarily constrained from doing so by the conversational presumption that by mentioning something we are pointing out something *worth* mentioning. Cavell's remarks about "voluntary" (1958) suggest to me a similar moral, as do Grice's well-known ideas about conversational postulates.

13. Garfinkel (1956) notes that for a degradation ceremony to succeed, the events which are denounced "must be removed from the realm of their everyday character and be made to stand as 'out of the ordinary' " (p. 422). A similar condition holds on *successful* gossip (Handelman 1973).

14. Bricker (1973*b*, pp. 191ff.) gives a rather different treatment of the word *-laban*. I provide more details in Appendix 1.

15. It has been suggested to me that if I want to claim that there are "rules" which govern so-called gossiplike behavior then there must be rules which enable Zinacantecos, in turn, to decide whether particular talk *is* gossip. How, asks this critic, can there be rules for gossping if we don't know what gossiping is? The criticism conceals a mistaken notion of how rules govern behavior at all—there is a certain sense in which a rule applies to a given situation only by virtue of the fact that we decide to apply it (see chapter 8). But surely the claim that only a well-defined activity can have its own rules is mistaken. There are rules of conversation ("We don't tell lies to our friends. We tell the whole truth") which don't govern all conversations; there are rules of gossip ("We don't tell stories about people to their faces") which conflict with other precepts ("You shouldn't talk about someone behind his back"), and none of which depend on deciding first whether a given situation is or is not gossip or "conversation with a friend," etc. Similarly, rules of etiquette as much define a situation as are brought into play by one.

16. Few people are literate. Radios are little more than articles for prestige: Zinacantecos fluent in Spanish listen mostly to the radio announcements of the correct time, by which they can set their wristwatches. Tzotzil

announcements, mostly of the public-service variety, are very recent innovations.

17. I am indebted to David Maybury-Lewis for this phrase. Such stories can be unlikely to both native and ethnographer, though perhaps for different reasons. There is, of course, a brierpatch of unresolved questions here into which I am unwilling to be thrown. Cf. Needham (1972), Hahn (1973).

Chapter 4 The Structure of Zinacanteco Gossip

1. These participants are not named in Tzotzil, nor is there a name for what the interlocutor does. He does not simply *tak'* ("respond") or *tak'av* ("answer"). It is interesting to note the similarities between the situation in Zinacantan and that in the Saramaka village of Kadjoe, Brownsweg, Surinam, where I worked in the summer of 1968. There the positions of storyteller and listener are formal and invariant; in fact, once the headman of the village, wanting to make a formal speech to me, had to go out and find a "listener" before he could talk at all—since I myself was unable to "listen" with the appropriate responses. Recent sociolinguistic work describes similar situations closer to home (Schegloff 1968; Labov 1972).

2. See Gossen (1970, pp. 195–96) for examples of such fillers in Chamula narrative.

3. Tzotzil syntax allows noun phrases, which are indexed on the verb, to be dropped. In the face of the obvious potential confusion, transitive sentences with human subject and object must often be disambiguated to mark one person as actor, the other as patient. Tzotzil syntax provides a passive to query object, and an antipassive to query subject. See Haviland (1976) for details.

4. Zinacantecos employ the same device for snubbing someone as we do: they do not answer when he talks, and he soon stutters to a halt.

5. Robert M. Laughlin has remarked to me that a similarly outstanding feature of dreams in Zinacantan is that they are filled with dialogue. Characters in dreams always talk to one another.

6. I do not pretend here to offer a generalizable sociolinguistic scheme or even a complete presentation of the relevant variables of the particular speech interaction represented in a gossip session. An applicable and exhaustive set of variables can be found in various familiar formulations of Dell Hymes—for example, his paper in Gumperz and Hymes 1972.

F. G. Bailey sketches a somewhat different but useful schematization of gossip or scandalous interaction (1971, pp. 284–86) with special attention to the selection of "code" for transmitting a message, including overt marks which show "the degree to which S commits himself to a moral interpretation of the news he is giving" (p. 286)—for example, when a man begins a disclosure with the words, "I tell you this in the strictest confidence . . ." (one of Bailey's examples), or "I shouldn't be telling you this, but . . ."

7. Popper writes: "Because all our dispositions are in some sense adjustments to invariant or slowly changing environmental conditions, they can be described as *theory-impregnated*, assuming a sufficiently wide sense of the term theory. What I have in mind is, that there is no observation which is not related to a set of typical situations—regularities—between which it tries to find a decision" (1972, p. 72). (See also Ryle's related usage [1949, pp. 280ff.].) Of course, the ethnographer carries with him his own theory (of the world, of action, of everyday life) which informs his observations; and this theory may be perfectly good, even if unlike the native's. But it may also happen that the ethnographer will observe behavior which fits *in no* way into the sets of regularities he is prepared to choose between—for which, for example, he has no label or description (e.g., "X is talking with the ancestors," etc.). Thus, while a sensitive behavioral scientist may see a good deal more in behavior than the natives do, the reverse is also commonly true.

These I take to be anthropological commonplaces, though many behavioral scientists seem to accord some special status to observations impregnated with current "scientific theory." There may indeed be some special status to such observations (which Marvin Harris misleadingly calls "etic"), but they leave out a significant portion of what is going on: what the natives observe.

8. I use such a word despite the critique of Needham (1972). With special reference to an application of Quine's work to anthropological investigations of belief see Hahn (1973).

9. There is an underlying color imagery here, since some people with similar palm designs do not suffer the repeated loss of their spouses. They are said to exhibit *yaxal tzek* ("a green [blue] scorpion"). Compare the expressions *yaxal ʔora* ("good [lit., green] luck, long life") vs. *tzajal ʔora* ("bad [lit., red] luck, short destiny").

10. There is a parallel point to be made. There is no reason to suppose that, say, accounts of events accurately reflect even native theories of events (if this is a sensible notion). In a seminar dealing with Tahitian theories of disease, Tony Hooper brought out the point nicely: Does it follow from the fact that gossip about accidents (and the resulting injuries) often draws morals like "Well, he deserved to fall off his bicycle [and sprain his arm], because yesterday he beat his child" that, on the native theory, all accidents have *causes* (of the sort shown)? It seems, on the contrary, that naturally occurring accounts of events include moralizing, evaluation, rationalization, and so forth—and that all these cannot be taken to constitute (native) explanations of events (native theory of causes).

11. Thus, the commonplace of our own native theory of gossip: that it tells us a good deal more about the person gossiping than about the person gossiped about.

12. These are partly definitional matters. Gossip may employ the "third-person invisible," as I remarked in chapter 3, to treat the object of gossip *as if he or she were absent*. And a narrator may explicitly intend his gossip to be passed on from interlocutor to a wider audience. Gossiping therefore has affinities to, among other things, open mocking or denunciation and to *spreading* gossip or rumour or news. Very little hangs on the exact choice of words in this particular case: narrators and interlocutors (audiences) clearly size each other up carefully in all these activities.

13. Consider the parallel with what Jane Collier calls "rational settlement" of a legal dispute: "A legal procedure can only produce a rational solution when an attempt is made to resolve the conflict in terms of norms and procedures regarded as valid by both parties" (1970, p. 21). Gossip *rationalizes* the past behavior of others in the sense that it tends to produce agreement between parties to the gossip about the applicable norms and standards and the appropriate judgments involved. But see chapter 8.

14. Cf. Peter Wilson: "When a person gossips to another he takes someone's good name (a reputation has many facets, each of which can provide plenty to talk about) and he distorts it—not necessarily willfully and often only out of the bias implicit in any selection of information from a repertoire. At the same time the gossip's good name is, hopefully enhanced unless the listener can recognize the distortions. When similar stratagems utilising the same subjects are adopted by many persons towards one person, or group of persons, then the group may be said to gossip and the totality of information purveyed to the listener is riddled with contradictions, ambiguities and confusion" (1974, p. 100).

Chapter 5 The Content of Zinacanteco Gossip

1. Bricker (1968) suggests that much humor in Zinacantan is based on violations of a cluster of norms having to do with "Self-Image"—clothing, appearance, demeanor. People are certainly *identified* by their physical abnormalities, visible or invisible. Cf. Bricker (1973*a*, pp. 147ff.)

2. Cancian (1965, pp. 183–84) points out that having waiting lists for cargo positions allows a man to sign up for a cargo far in the future, thus fulfilling the social demand to expend wealth on religious service but avoiding the cargo itself through a convenient calendrical game.

3. I am extremely indebted to George A. Collier and the Stanford Anthropology Department for making available their resources at the Stanford Computer Center, where I began indexing this material.

In compiling an index to the corpus of gossip I abandoned a formal content analysis in favor of a more flexible coding and retrieval system. Bricker (1968) used the *General Inquirer* to index the Tzotzil humor texts she had gathered according to various ethnographic categories. For example, the cluster she calls the "Self-Image Complex" (1968, p. 54)

includes such categories as Clothing, Filth, Awkwardness, Caught, Losing, Violence, and Drunkenness. Her dictionary (according to which the computer scans text) might, for example, have assigned Tzotzil roots meaning "drunk" and "tipsy" to the category of Drunkenness. Unfortunately, Bricker's dictionary, though doubtless adequate for her purposes, was too restrictive for the range of material in the corpus of gossip. To create a suitable dictionary which included all appropriate categories would have been to survey the range of subjects in the whole corpus—in short, to complete the content analysis. In any case, I was unwilling to convert the voluminous texts and conversations I had recorded into a form suitable for the computer's maw.

Since the gossip I recorded was natural conversation, I was able to code not only subject matter (e.g., all gossip having to do with divorce, or with drunken behavior) but also certain other metalinguistic variables. I marked exchanges as joking speech, as insult, as bragging, as mocking, and so on. Similarly I used certain frankly imposed categories to index statements of beliefs, statements about personality and temperament, accounts of supernatural events, and others; such categories facilitated later retrieval of stories. I let my impressions themselves create a coding system with the help of a simple computerized routine. As I read and reread the gossip and divided it into discrete items, I associated with each story a set of ethnographic categories (topics) and metalinguistics properties (e.g., "lewd joking"); I also entered occurrences of certain Tzotzil expressions for later retrieval (see chap. 7). By continually reexamining and collapsing the categories which resulted from this haphazard process I arrived finally at the subject-matter category list which appears in Appendix 3.

I cannot claim that the resulting categories resemble native behavioral domains (though nothing serious depends on such similarity; the index of stories is merely a convenient device for retrieval and exposition). I put cases of wife-beating with other cases of wife-beating, instances of divorce with other instances of divorce, and so on. Stories in which similar things happen are grouped together under a heading which represents that sort of happening. But two instances of what I called aggressive female behavior (e.g., a woman who seeks a lover and a girl who actively solicits a fiancé) may not strike a Zinacanteco as at all the same sort of thing.

4. I am only half serious about "counting" discrete gossip stories at all. First, a single story can figure in more than one category; for example, a story in which a woman divorces her habitually drunken husband might be listed under the categories both of "drunkenness' and "divorce." Moreover, the unevenness of the corpus complicates coding. Some conversations I alone had with a single Zinacanteco cannot be compared with full transcriptions of Who's Who gossip sessions; and two-minute stories are hardly comparable to two-hour accounts of complicated events, though my index counts each as a single unit. Fortunately, very little rests on the numbers here, as the frequencies of various topics do give a relative idea of Zinacanteco gossips' preoccupations.

5. This will not be a fair test since my work in the field benefited from the previous ethnographic work of Jane Collier on law and of Victoria Bricker on humor. I freely acknowledge that in creating the category system by which I "counted" gossip themes I drew heavily on organizational principles these other researchers developed for their own work. Since I base comparison between, for example, the things people gossip about and the things they joke about on individual stories, however, the interdependence of sorting categories is only tangentially a problem.

6. Neither Collier nor I, so far as I can tell, tried to organize cases or gossip stories on the basis of some native Zinacanteco classificatory scheme. Hence, while I have a "drunkenness" category, for example, Collier associates "drunken insults" with aggression and "drunken destructiveness" with neighbor disputes—on the basis of the rules called up to justify settlements of the corresponding disputes. It would be possible, though tedious, for an informant to sort gossip stories or law cases by "similarity" and thus to exhibit whatever native classificatory dimensions there may be for organizing such things. I cannot claim to have made such an experiment. Note that J. Collier (1973) employs a slightly different set of categories.

Chapter 6 Gossip and the Cargo System

1. Cancian chose to work in Spanish (though Francesca Cancian, his wife and fellow fieldworker in Zinacantan, concurrently became competent in Tzotzil), and he did not find this a handicap (see Cancian 1965, p. 198). Moreover, he worked from formal interviews designed to sample cargo histories and to measure economic status from a variety of informants. My work, by contrast, was conducted in Tzotzil, and with the exception of the Who's Who material described in previous chapters is wholly based on interaction that was as informal as possible, given my presence. (For some doubts about whether one can dismiss the ethnographer's presence as irrelevant, see Peter Wilson's paper (1974), "Filcher of Good Names".) I made no systematic attempt, for example, to verify people's cargo records other than recording what people said. Cancian, on the other hand, tried to get somewhat beyond the hearsay on which I relied.

2. In fact, the nature of these positions has changed drastically from their beginnings as *cofradias* introduced at various stages after the Conquest by Dominican missionaries, through various transformations wrought by Mexican civil law and internal pressures. The current historical work of Robert Wasserstrom will doubtless provide the details.

3. The numeral classifier (Berlin 1968) used to count grades in a cargo career is *koj* ("level"), also used to count, among other things, rungs on a ladder, layers on a mountain range, and songs from the fixed cycle of ritual music. Verbal forms of the same root mean "to sit astride," "to be on top of," "to get to the top of [a peak, a mountain, a difficult trail]," "to pile on top of," and so on. To trace a man's progress through the hierarchy by counting the *koj* in his service is thus reminiscent of the English idiom of success "getting to the top."

4. Tzotzil provides some fairly subtle distinctions here. Regular verbal forms on the same root *ˀabt-* never seem to apply to cargo work but rather refer to ordinary labor for gain. Cargo work is expressed verbally through compound expressions based on the noun *ˀabtel* ("[cargo] work"). Thus, to pass a cargo is to *-pas-ˀabtel* (lit., "do work") or to *-ˀech' ta ˀabtel* (lit., "pass through work"); a cargoholder is *j-pas-ˀabtel* ("work-doer"), whereas *jˀabtel* is, instead, "laborer." Hence:

> Mi snaˀ xˀabtej?
> "Does he know how to work [or is he lazy]?"
>
> Mi snaˀ {spas-ˀabtel? / xˀech' ta ˀabtel?}
> "Does he know how to do cargos [or does he lack the interest]?"

5. Not all cargos called *ˀalperes X* (where *X* is a saint-name) belong to the second level of the hierarchy, the level labeled *ˀalperesal*. Not every cargo that counts at the *ˀalkalteal* level is called *ˀalkalte*. The terminology, and Zinacanteco usage, invites a confusion which ethnographers of the cargo system have not entirely avoided. There are fourteen cargos called *ˀalperes*; the men serving these positions from a natural group who perform ritual together. Similarly, the four cargos called *rejirol* and the two *ˀalkaltes* (a senior or "large" *ˀalkalte* and his junior [or "small"] counterpart) function together in both ritual and administrative capacities as the *moletik* ("elders"). But two of the *ˀalperes*-named cargos now belong to higher levels of the hierarchy. (It seems likely that at some past time the situation was more regular—with all *ˀalperes* positions being second-level cargos. Cancian attributes the alleged change to "supply and demand" (1965, p. 29), that is, to the need for more cargo positions at the third and fourth levels). *ˀAlperes kajvaltik ryox* is a third-level cargo which, according to my informants and pace Cancian, cannot be served as a second-level cargo. Thus, despite its name, and despite the fact that its holder performs together with other *ˀalperesetik*, the cargo counts as *rejirol*. Similarly, *ˀalperes santorominko* is a common alternate final (fourth) cargo, more or less equivalent in prestige to *muk'ta ˀalkalte* as a way of ending one's career.

No single label will encompass all the possible first cargos, which may be arranged into several natural groups. At the most expensive and prestigious end of the scale there are the *martomorey*s, who perform ritual jointly with the *mexon*s in the Hermitage of Señor Esquipulas. There is also a group of *martomo* cargos, arranged in senior/junior pairs and each attached to a particular saint name. There are the lowly *mayol*s, whose tasks are little more than those of an errand boy for the civil officials and higher cargoholders. Finally there are various short-term cargos with performance limited only to particular fiestas (e.g., *kapitan*, or *paxyon*), as well as a growing number of cargos serving local hamlet-level churches. There are

many ways to begin a cargo career, though further progress is more restricted. Zinacantecos refer generically to this first level of cargo service by asking about a person's *sba-ʔabtel* ("first work").

Cancian claims that *ʔalperes santorominko* can be a second-, third-, or fourth-level cargo. I have no case in the entire Who's Who of a man passing this cargo as a second-level position. Informants admitted the formal possibility that someone might request this cargo at the second level in extraordinary circumstances; this possibility, however, immediately prompted another far-fetched suggestion: that a man with great ambition, considerable wealth, and a very long life might pass *ʔalperes santorominko* as a fourth cargo, and then go on to the unprecedented move of doing *muk-ta ʔalkalte* as *fifth* cargo! Such a career has never, to my knowledge, occurred; indeed, it would never have occurred in the old days when people strove to avoid cargos and their expenses and were drafted into service by the elders. Judging by reported careers, the rule seems to be for *santorominko* to come as third, more often fourth, cargo, and for *kajvaltik royx* to occur only at the third level. At least one man reportedly did *ʔalperes santorominko* twice, as both his third and fourth cargos.

6. Ordinarily the cargo of *mexon* is a first-level cargo involved in ritual, together with the *martomorey*, in the Hermitage of Señor Esquipulas.

7. Cancian (1965, p. 162) suggests that in the past the position of *mayol* did not belong to the cargo hierarchy at all. It is, even now, a virtual dead end in the system, formally the beginning to a career but pragmatically a damper on future ambitions.

8. Cancian notes these two cases as exceptions in the order of progression; one he calls only an apparent exception, the other a "true exception" to the rules as Zinacantecos conceive them:

> The Alcalde Shuves is always a terminal cargo. That is, a man who has passed it is considered to have completed his service and is not eligible for further cargos. It is a minor post and carries little prestige. The typical incumbent is a very old man who passed a minor first level cargo in his youth and then avoided further service in the hierarchy: too old and too poor to consider normal progression through the system, he is given this cargo and allowed, in effect, to slip away from the course of a normal career. . . .
>
> The only true exception in the system is often made with respect to the junior of the two fourth level Alcaldes Viejos [i.e., the *bik'it ʔalkalte*]. This position is sometimes served by a man who has passed only two cargos previously. It is my idea that most men who have had the resources and endurance to pass three cargos will not settle for the junior post on the fourth level. Thus the cargo has few takers. [Cancian 1965, pp. 31–32]

Cancian claims that only the latter case is "seen as [an] exception by Zinacantecos," though he does not describe how Zinacantecos distinguish between the two cases.

9. *Atole* is a corn drink which the *alferez* presents to the public when he enters his cargo. The *bik-it ʔalkalte* does not give this drink.

10. An alternate Tzotzil name for the cargo, *bik'it mol*, is itself almost an ironic joke: *bik'it* = "little," *mol* = "elder"; hence, the whole expression suggests: "an elder, but just a little one."

11. An example is the current (1975) senior musician in Zinacantan, who last cargo was first-*rejirol* (in 1966)—a high-ranking third-level cargo —but who plans not to do another cargo. Of him people say *lek xa tunem*—"He has already served well."

12. Cancian (1965, pp. 111–14) provides statistical evidence that men who pass early cargos of high prestige are also those who go on to distinguished, ultimately complete cargo careers. Summarizing the argument, he writes: "I have shown how men who reach the top level of the system usually begin with the relatively high prestige lower level positions. . . . This pattern is not based on any explicit Zinacanteco ritual practice or rule; rather, it is a behavioral tendency that reflects stratification in the community" (1974, p. 166). The pattern in the late 1960s, however, seemed somewhat different. Cancian's 1967 data "show that mobile individuals have held onto the traditional pattern, while nonmobile people have compromised to avoid the delays and frustrations brought by population growth, economic prosperity, and the consequent over-demand for expensive, prestigious cargos" (1974, p. 171). Such people have accomplished this by taking "a lower ranking second level cargo that is available immediately and that speeds them on their way to higher level service and the ultimate in . . . prestige" (1974, p. 171).

13. The *sakramentu* is the most senior *mayordomo*, literally the chief of the twelve *mayordomos*, whose duty is to make sure the others perform their duties.

14. One learns, however, only a limited amount about a person from his performance of cargo ritual. Cancian (1965, p. 34) points out that in ritual (and, in fact, in almost all circumstances during a cargo year, and for periods beforehand) people "use the name of the cargo, not the name of the person," and hence may not even know the full names of people with whom they have served for a year.

15. During the Christmas season, the *martomoetik* take turns dressing in special costumes to play with another man dressed as a bull (Cf. Vogt 1969, pp. 522–36). This is one of the highlights of a *martomo*'s year in office.

16. Ritual advisers and senior cargoholders second-level and above (as well as grooms at weddings) wear special costumes that include a red *pok'* which is tied turbanlike around the head.

17. Conversation about cargo choice and career planning clearly shows that strategic choices are subject to complex reasoning, not simply obvious from the premise that Zinacantecos will seek to maximize their prestige

from cargo performance, given certain economic constraints. A *compadre* of mine was scheduled to be *muk'ta ʔalkalte*, the most senior-ranking cargoholder, for a given year. He decided to switch, to pass instead the cargo Alferez Santo Domingo as a fourth cargo. Cancian reports that both cargos can be equally described as "very prestigious" (p. 92) and ought therefore to be equally desirable, other things being equal. (He goes on to claim that "Junior Alcalde Viejo"—the *bik'it mol* I have argued above to be a booby prize at the end of an undistinguished cargo career—"is simply prestigious" [p. 92]—a claim I suggest cannot be substantiated). In fact, the cost differential is great; during the year in question, the *muk'ta ʔalkalte* cargo was anticipated to involve expenditures of roughly 4,000 pesos; the *ʔalperes santorominko* cargo, on the other hand, was certain to cost at least 12,000 pesos, largely because of the increase in the price of beef. My *compadre* justified what seemed an economically unwise change in cargo plans by the following argument: "If I were *muk'ta ʔalkalte* I would have to spend the entire year in Zinacantan Center, with official duties every week. Being *ʔalperes* may cost more, but I am only busy then during fourteen fiestas during the year. I can have time to do my own corn farming. If I do not farm, who will take care of my fields?" This man had only very young sons who could not take full responsibility for the farming operation without their father's help. Thus he preferred to spend three times the money on a slightly lower-ranking fourth cargo in order to leave himself time free from cargo duties to oversee his farming operation in the lowlands.

18. The position involved, *martomorey*, ranks first on Cancian's Prestige Scale for first-level cargos (Cancian 1965, p. 87, table 10).

19. It is sometimes permitted to pour shots of liquor given in ritual events into one's own personal storage bottle (carried expressly for this purpose) rather than to drink it on the spot. Such liquor can be taken home. Some especially active ritualists collect large amounts of liquor, albeit mixed from various sources, in this way. But the quality of poured-off liquor is understandably suspect.

20. People requesting cargos give bottles of liquor to the elders, whose scribes then check the waiting lists to determine when cargo positions are free. Accepting a petitioner's bottle signifies accepting his request.

21. *Jch'ul-meʔtik* is listed by Cancian as the Mayordomo Virgen del Rosario, the second most prestigious first-level cargo.

Chapter 7 Gossip Words

1. This is not to suggest that such words are unintelligible or that their use is indeterminate, but only that it is singularly unilluminating to equate their meanings with *referents* (entities to which they refer). However, a good deal of work has been done to show how various concepts which have to do with "mind" in our ordinary discourse have behavioral criteria

of correct use (see especially Ryle 1947). Whether an adequate account of the meanings of such words can be given in behavioral terms is a somewhat different, more troublesome question.

2. This is admittedly a shadowy notion. What makes usage interesting? What divides literal expressions from idioms? Are exotic usages idiomatic, or are they literal uses of exotic words? These are philosophical dilemmas that would take me far afield. How does one state precisely the fascination of learning a new language? One says: What an odd/charming/obvious way to talk!

3. Christopher Boehm has suggested to me in conversation that all people have natural schemata for definition; that is, that in all languages people regularly define words—if only to instruct others in the language. Whether or not this is true, it seems unlikely that—except for philosophers—people ever offer definitions for common words (as, for example, those used in ordinary evaluation). Or, more exactly, one has occasion to define a word ("give a definition") only in quite particular circumstances; it is not, perhaps, the most common (or even most efficient) way to teach someone how to use a word. All of these techniques must be distinguished from offering a gloss (a translation?) for a word. Cf. Weinreich 1962, p. 42.

4. Laughlin (1975, p. 23) provides a classification of roots on operational grounds according to their behavior with certain desinences. Laughlin has remarked to me in conversation that many roots seem to fall into more than one "root class" or are defective in that they show some but not all of the expected forms. My procedures in compiling the groups of expressions in this chapter have been somewhat informal, and I employ slightly different categories from those Laughlin uses (see Haviland 1976). Note, of course, that not all surface adjectives, say, in Tzotzil derive from adjectival roots. The class of so-called positional roots is especially productive of surface adjectives which may apply to human beings. For example, the adjective *vaxal* comes from a "positional root" meaning "calm, quiet, tame, unmoving"; when applied to humans it ordinarily means "good natured" or simply "good" (i.e., not unruly, troublesome, or wicked).

For the interested reader, I provide some examples of the varying surface words derived from a single root. The italicized words in the following sentences are all associated with the single underlying noun root *k'op* ("word," etc.):

1. Ip'ajik ʔo ta nop-*k'op*.
   "Thus they became involved in *telling lies*."
2. Kechel ʔo *sk'oplal*.
   "The *affair in which he is involved* is still unresolved."
3. Baz'i toj xilim *chk'opoj*.
   "The way he *talks* is completely wild."
4. Saʔoj *yajk'opojel* pero isjoyp'in sba.
   "He found a *lawyer*, but he changed sides."

5. Li mole mu sk'an *k'oponel.*
"The old man doesn't want *to be talked to.*"
6. Yu?van xaval ti ?o jset' xchikin *xak'opon.*
"Don't try to tell me that he will listen to you at all if you try *to talk to* him."
7. Lek ?amiko *jk'opon jba* jchi?uk.
"I *talk to him* [treat him] as a friend."

5. The Tzotzil expressions relevant here are

Lek xchi?in sbaik.
"They accompany each other well."
Lek snup sbaik.
"They meet well; they fit together."
Batz'i ko?ol xk'ot.
"They come to the same thing; they translate the same."

For expressions which do not fit together:

Ch'abal snup.
"It has nothing to match with it, no mate."
Jtos ?o tajmek.
"This is quite different."

Presumably semantic judgments of some kind underlie such pronouncements. The man who performed this sorting task for me, Chep K'obyox of ?Apas, arranged cards into piles, offering as explanation for his choices some phrase like those I have listed. As will be clear below, he solidified the relationships between words sorted together by means of often elaborate stories or examples of usage, a satisfyingly Austinian way of proceeding.

6. Although Laughlin has glosses for all these expressions, in many cases gossip usage seems to require a wider or somewhat different reading.

7. There are many kinds of eliciting tasks that could add further structure to this set of words which I never attempted in the field. For example, I could have asked informants to arrange words according to more complicated semantic relations (into antonymic pairs, for example); instead, the clusters of words represent *likely* coincidences of characteristics in single people or types of people.

8. Note that, although in the diagram several areas are indicated in which no adjectival words occur (e.g., there is no word meaning "law-abiding," no adjective meaning "wealthy"), these gaps are often filled by nominal constructions (*jk'ulej* ["wealthy man"]) or by verbal constructions (*xch'un mantal* ["obeys orders"]). How to bring these syntactically unlike units together into a semantically coherent domain is an operational problem with no obvious solution. One could easily ask informants to sort whole phrases (rather than single words, whether they be adjectives, nouns, verbs, etc.).

Note further that the gaps in the diagram indicate that gossip commonly talks only about a few evaluable properties of its subjects. The paradigm

is not defective: the language can describe much about people that is hardly worth saying.

9. E. Z. Vogt (personal communication) suggests that *batz'i,* when used to modify nouns, points to the most culturally salient or oldest referents of a noun. Hence *batz'i k'op* ("real talk") refers to the Tzotzil language; *batz'i vob* ("real music") refers to traditional as opposed to ladino music (and to the corresponding instruments); and, e.g., *batz'i moral* ("real shoulder bag") refers to an old type of woven bag which has been replaced in recent times by leather shoulder bags.

10. And, of course, very few indeed are the languages which do not employ body-part metaphor to some degree. Australian languages, including the Guugu-Yimidhirr language of Cape York (Haviland 1972), have particularly rich sets of idioms based on body parts.

Andrea Cousins has done extensive work on similar phenomena in Belizian Carib. In a forthcoming publication I shall explore some of this extremely powerful metaphor based on a universal human source—the body.

Chapter 8 Rules in Gossip

1. I benefited from criticisms of an earlier version of this discussion by David Maybury-Lewis. I expect that he would disagree with a good deal of what remains here.

2. See especially the enlightening discussion by Peter Winch (1958), to which I refer below. H. L. A. Hart's well-known *Concept of Law* (1961) suggests that a great many difficulties in defining a legal system can be elucidated by attention to the notion of rule. Landesman (1965, 1972) points out some difficulties with Winch's use of the notion "rule" while acknowledging the central importance to accounts of action and institutions of the (problematic) idea of "rule-regulated behavior."

3. Cf. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (1953):

Sec. 224. The word "agreement" and the word "rule" are *related* to one another, they are cousins. If I teach anyone the use of the one word, he learns the use of the other with it.

Sec. 225. The use of the word "rule" and the use of the word "same" are interwoven.

4. Wittgenstein (1953, sec. 291): "What we call *descriptions* are instruments for particular uses."

5. The difficulty in claiming, as Winch (1958) seems to do, that all human behavior (or all meaningful behavior) depends on rules, somehow understood, is that here the notion of a "rule" is asked to bear too much weight. It may be argued that social institutions (and the actions which occur within the framework of such institutions) are underlain in some essential way by rules; but only an elucidation of different sorts of occasions when we would say that someone was "following a rule" or "invoking a

rule" (or, equally, "violating a rule," "ignoring a rule," etc.) can lend substance to such a claim. That we must look at these expressions rather than, say, at "rule" (as a noun) is a lesson drawn from Wittgenstein, although I am afraid that my discussion does not observe the moral consistently. (See 1953, sec. 199 "a note on the grammar of the expression 'to obey a rule' ".)

6. "It is doubtful that anything to which the summary conception did apply would be called a *rule*. Arguing as if one regarded rules in this way is a mistake one makes while doing philosophy" (p. 323); and, I might add, when one tries to find rules in regularities in doing anthropology.

7. It is not clear, among other things, whether rules define a practice, or whether the existence of a practice is what enables us to talk about rules. The phrase "act as if . . . one is obeying the rules," I suggest, makes sense only within the context of a well-defined practice. (In what circumstances would we ask, or try to discover, whether someone was "actually obeying a rule" or "just acting as *if* we were [or pretending to be] obeying the rule"?) These considerations derive from my reading of certain passages in Wittgenstein, especially 1953, secs. 82–85, 100, 162–64, 199–208.

8. Diggs points out that there will certainly be many borderline cases in which a game has become so interwoven with the instrumental activities of a society that it is hard to distinguish the object of the game from some independent goal (1964, p. 39, footnote 18). And, of course, it is possible that a game may engender rules of strategy, which are instrumental maxims having to do with how best to attain the "object of the game." Similarly, the rules of a game as a whole may well have a *point* which allows us to characterize particular rules and conventions of the game as *superfluous* (with respect to the object of the game). This is Wittgenstein's point at 1953, secs. 563–64.

9. Diggs writes of the third type, "Rules of this kind are found in very different institutions. Some are rules of a 'job' in the ordinary sense. Others apply to anyone who voluntarily assumes a 'role,' such as 'automobile driver.' Others characterize a position which one is obliged to take by law, for example, that of private in the army. The goals which the rules are designed to serve may be ordinary products of labor, such as houses, steel beams, etc.; or fairly specific social goals such as 'getting vehicles to their destinations safely and expeditiously'; or goals as general as 'the national defense' (1964, p. 33).

10. It is possible to quarrel with Hart's dichotomy here, and I do not suggest that the classification is either exhaustive or particularly well-defined. What is there to exclude the possibility of tertiary (or higher-order) rules governing secondary rules, and so forth? (In this connection see Wittgenstein 1953, secs. 86 ff.)

Moreover, it is not clear that all the sorts of rules Hart mentions as secondary (rules of recognition, rules of change, power-conferring rules, rules of adjudication, etc.) are in fact *rules*, rather than, say, conditions

on social arrangements that allow us to speak of rules being in force at all. Nonetheless, it seems useful to point out Hart's dichotomy because Zinacanteco gossips do in fact spend a good deal of time discussing not simply rules of conduct but the standards of their appropriate application and scope.

11. I offer these as hypothetical rules only. That is, I do not guarantee that the facts they suggest are true in Zinacantan.

12. I thank my wife Leslie for pointing out this practical maxim.

13. I have deliberately omitted from consideration here the sort of rule most characteristic of, for example, a grammar: a characterization of a certain abstract object (say, a string of symbols) which bears various relations to actual speech and which may not be conscious or formulable to native speakers.

14. This remains true even though, as is certainly the case, there are general sources of conflict within a society—some perceived, others invisible—which result in similar conflicts of interests and parallel disputes among many people.

15. We apply rules and perform this sort of conceptual twisting whenever we talk: we use words to talk about the world by virtue of "rules" (about the mapping between word and object, or, more accurately, about the *world* itself) which govern all speech. It is precisely this operation of fitting the observed to the preconceived that is at the heart of consciousness (the consciousness we have of our world and our lives).

16. Notice that Winch's account does not claim that all mistakes are violations of rules, only that if someone is claimed to be "following a rule," then it must be possible for him to make a mistake. See Landesman (1972, p. 47), who argues that, for example, a man falling off his bicycle is a "mistake" that cannot be construed as a violation of a rule or convention. Perhaps not, but it is unclear that such a mishap is, indeed, in any ordinary sense, "a mistake" (see, again, Austin 1961). To see that this is so, imagine that we see the man fall and rush up to him asking "What happened?" He may reply, but if he says "I made a mistake" he will be referring to something other than falling off the bicycle. Perhaps he will mean, "I thought you pedaled backwards to make it go, but I was mistaken"; or perhaps, "I thought I knew how to ride a bicycle, but I made a mistake [about that]." And in these cases, it is not so easy to say that here are no rules or conventions involved (underlying judgments that turn out to have been mistaken). (See also Winch's slightly different formulation of 1958, p. 58.)

17. Charles Landesman (1965, p. 345): "For the existence of certain actions presupposes the existence of various institutions and social practices, in the sense that the actions could not bear just the descriptions they do if those institutions and practices did not exist. . . . A satisfactory philosophy of mind requires an adequate theory of institutions; and here we see why

the concept of rule-regulated behavior represents not a solution but a problem."

18. Cf. Wittgenstein 1953, ca. sec. 650, and Cavell's remarks on "voluntary" (1958).

19. And, of course, as Robert Laughlin has pointed out to me, natives are occasionally surprised, baffled, confused, and puzzled. Rules may fail, and words along with them.

A good deal of ethnomethodological work has focused precisely on the process of *rationalizing* behavior through appeal to rules. Consider, for example, the following: "Ethnomethodological studies of the employment of criteria have found that the use of such ad hoc procedures as elaborating the sense of a rule so that how the rule fits in this case can be seen, reconstructing some feature of an event so that it can be seen that it fits the prescriptions of the rule, ignoring some aspect of an event that does not fit the rule, and proceeding to classify an event while some 'critical' aspects are left undetermined are essential, unavoidable practices. Whenever persons are confronted with having to make a choice and cannot rely on leaving this case in the status of undecided they will employ these practices" (Wieder 1970, p. 129).

20. I have in mind here more than a communication (Goffman 1959, p. 1967) of the facts of self and situation through interactive behavior. I claim that the rules and conventions governing behavior lend meaning to the choice between culturally appropriate alternative acts in specific situations—for example, the choice between bowing and shaking hands in greeting. Rules define the semantics of behavior.

21. Wittgenstein (1953, sec. 88): "But has this exactness still got a function here: isn't the engine idling?"

22. See especially Winch's discussion of learning what motives are (1958, pp. 80–83); and consider: "The concepts in terms of which we understand our *own* mental processes and behavior have to be learned, and must, therefore, be *socially* established, just as much as the concepts in terms of which we come to understand the behavior of other people" (ibid., p. 119). The concept of "following a rule" is just such a concept. I have learned a good deal from Winch's later essay on similar topics (1964, reprinted in 1972).

In a slightly different vein, Peter K. Manning writes: "In effect, then, the meaning of a rule resides in the practical procedures by which they are administered. . . . Rules within organizations, like grammatical rules and rules of logic, take on an indexical quality, that is, they can be understood only contextually, as practical problems that themselves arise out of those people, facing those problems, in those periods of time" (1970, p. 242).

Chapter 9 Cultural Competence

1. See Keesing (1972) for an able review of some of the underpinning of early cognitive anthropology, based on linguistic analogies.

2. "What the linguist does when he describes a language, English for example, is to construct a model, not of actual language-behavior, but of the system of regularities which underlie that behavior (more precisely of that part of language-behavior which the linguist defines by methodological decision to be "linguistic," rather than "non-linguistic" . . .)—a model of what I am calling the *language-system*" (Lyons 1972, p. 57–58). Lyons goes on to consider in some detail the (admittedly controversial) stages of "idealization" that allow the linguist to extract from actual utterances objects of the sort amenable to grammatical analysis (roughly, sentences).

3. On questions of prediction and anticipation I have benefited from discussions with George A. Collier.

4. Nor is this a matter we can *ask* our informants about. Wittgenstein speaks to this point: " 'How am I able to obey a rule?'—if this is not a question about causes, then it is about the justification for my following the rule in the way I do. If I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: 'This is simply what I do.' " (1953, sec. 217). We can imagine cases (though it is a mistake to expect a *precise* line dividing them from the normal case) in which we should be tempted to say: "but here people are not following rules at all." Perhaps we will say, "They are just making up rules as they go along." This is, of course, the point of Achilles' conversation with Lewis Carroll's tortoise.

5. See the paper by Michael Wolff in Birenbaum and Sagarin 1973, and also Goffman's discussion of the same study (1971, pp. 26–40).

6. Controlling totally automated vehicles in traffic is, of course, already a possibility. Simulation of human decision-making, however, is of a different order of complexity; and simulation by computer of human perception remains primitive at best. See Rose 1969; Kessing 1974*a*, p. 92.

7. Unremarkable, that is, in that they do not draw the gossip's attention. It is no doubt the case that many of these skills do more to defy our powers of explanation and understanding than do more clearly intellectual skills. Computers prove theorems more readily than they recognize patterns (Keesing 1974*b*, p. 261)—something a Zinacanteco does continually, and with ease, as he hoes his corn. Calling cognitive skills more remarkable, or more complex, may be simply an artifact of our own analytic ignorance of less striking but evolutionarily prior abilities.

8. Cultural interpretation will certainly go beyond gossip. At the very least, it may involve a kind of supracultural gossip, a sort of translation which brings some clarity to what, in Geertz's Moroccan example, is called "a confusion of tongues" (Geertz 1973, p. 9): a metagossip about someone else's ground rules for gossip.

9. Factoring context out of utterances is a theoretical as well as a methodological problem in linguistics, too. As Lyons notes: "Utterances are typically *context dependent*, with respect both to their meaning and their grammatical structure" (1972, p. 61).

To relate such context-dependent utterances to context-independent sentences requires the addition of various sorts of information (perhaps, simply certain sentence elements, presuppositions, indexical particulars, etc.) available from context and necessary to proper analysis. But knowledge of context and how it relates to utterances, what must be called pragmatic knowledge (Silverstein 1974), presumably belongs to a native speaker's knowledge of his language, just as analogous knowledge of the particular is inevitably part of what a gossip draws upon to interpret action.

Again, ethnomethodologists, following an insight of Schutz, have anticipated a similar conclusion. Schutz suggests that typification characterizes all our social relationships with others except those in which we confront one another face to face. In such a direct social relationship, "fugitive and superficial as it may be, the Other is grasped as a unique individuality (although merely one aspect of his personality becomes apparent) in its unique biographical situation (although revealed merely fragmentarily)" (1962, p. 17). But in gossip the direct acquaintance with Other and his biography becomes paramount (even if typified). Moreover, even typifications change, and gossips frequently manipulate typifications and channel changes. "The ideal types that are constantly being constructed in everyday life are subject to constant adjustment and revision on the basis of the observer's experience, whether the latter is direct or indirect" (Schutz 1967 3:193).

Manning suggests, furthermore, that the degree to which various members of a society (or speakers of a language) have mastered various techniques —hence, the degree to which they are themselves "competent"—is variable. "We have suggested that the ability of sepakers and hearers to make sense of conversation—when it is truncated, when "words fail," or when people speak ironically . . . , or by glossing . . . , by synecdoche . . . , or by analogy . . . —has reference to a source that clarifies the course of events. This source, however, is not equally distributed: sediments of experience in the organization [or society], biographically accumulated knowledge, and situational constraints (can't say what I mean here because of the audience) introduce barriers to socialized, fully acceptable conversational understandings and, hence, to role imputations, typifications, normal events, and the rest" (1970, p. 51).

10. I am indebted to an unpublished paper of Nancy Jay (n.d.), who points out the similarity between what I am arguing here and Garfinkel's initial premise: "The activities whereby members produce and manage settings of organized everyday affairs are identical with members' procedures for making those settings 'accountable' " (1967, p. 1).

Appendix 1 Gossip in Taxonomies of Verbal Behavior

1. Bricker suggests that standard ethnoscientific eliciting procedures can go wrong for several reasons (including informant boredom; 1974, p. 73, and note 4); in particular she suggests that questions like "What are the kinds of ———?" are ambiguous in that they do not specify

a level of contrast or the nature of contrast by which to distinguish cases. There is a more radical difficulty, of course; namely, that such a question is drastically misconceived. Different kinds of things may not have *names* at all (Berlin, Breedlove, and Raven 1974). Moreover, for people to be able to classify things in practice it is not necessary that there be consistent or complete criteria for such classifications in the abstract. These issues are important, but they are too complicated for me to review here. Bricker notices an important phenomenon when she points out "informant variability," but she does not carry the implications far enough.

2. The difficulty of working with nominal forms is especially apparent here. The underlying forms in question here are *verbs* (unsurprisingly, since Bricker is talking about *activities*). Many derivational contortions are required to produce these nominal forms; namely:

laban	transitive verb, "to mock [someone]," "to ridicule [someone]"
labanvan	"antipassive" of the above [i.e., intransitive—"to engage in scolding or mocking people"]
labanvanej	"deverbal noun," "mocking of people" (the transitive deverbal noun—*labanel*—also occurs: *slabanel*, "the mocking of him")
-ut	transitive verb, which, with an animate object, means "scold, upbraid, criticize [someone]" (the word also means "say")
-ut -ba	reflexive/reciprocal of *-ut*; hence, "scold self" or "scold one another"
ʔut bail	deverbal noun from the above; hence "scolding of one another" (a phrase which in normal usage implies either that people were trading insults or that there was a good deal of shouting and scolding going on). The nonreflexive deverbal noun *ʔutel* ("scolding") also occurs, rather frequently to mean "angry words." Bricker's remarks seem somehow more naturally applicable to this word, although she does not choose to treat it.

3. A difficulty pervades Bricker's treatment here, in that she simply assumes the notion of "insult" as unproblematic. There is, so far as I know, no Tzotzil word which corresponds precisely to English "insult." And not all joking, scolding, or ridicule is necessarily insulting, although this is a strong presumption in North American usage. The difficulty is that Bricker ignores the fact that an utterance about a victim will be called "criticism" or "ridicule" or "insult" (and the same is true of the Tzotzil glosses for these terms) only if the utterance has a certain character (roughly: derogatory); and Bricker assumes but does not describe this character. I shall return briefly to this issue at the end of this appendix.

4. It is hard to reconcile Bricker's remarks about "truth" in Zinacanteco legal discourse here with what Jane Collier has to say about the irrelevance of truth for the settlement of disputes (J. Collier 1973, pp. 97–98).

5. In a forthcoming paper I describe just such a case in which gossip about a man prompted him to seek redress in court. However, the incident that precipitated the legal action was not gossip, but a direct insulting confrontation on the path between the man and the one who was spreading gossip about him. And the underlying issues, which surfaced decisively at the court hearing, were substantive and did not hinge on gossip at all (see Haviland 1974*b*).

Note that Bricker's use of Laughlin's (1975, p. 215) glosses for words based on the root *loˀil* again ignores syntactic and derivational facts. See Haviland (1976). Bricker distinguishes *loˀiltabe* ("gossiping") from *loˀilta* ("discussing") (1973*b*, p. 194). In fact, the basic stem here is just *loˀilta*, a two-place transitive stem, from *loˀil* ("story"), meaning "tell a story about [someone]". The longer stem employs a syntactic formative which transforms the two-place transitive into a three-place transitive which can accommodate an "indirect object"—canonically, a noun phrase which is the "possessor" of the direct object. The best gloss for *loˀiltabe* then will be "tell a story about someone's________." An example will clarify the point:

Chasloˀilta.	"He tells a story about you" (Second-person direct object).
Chasloˀiltabe latzebe.	"He tells a story [on you] about your daughter" (second-person indirect object, possessed noun direct object—"your daughter").

The implication is that gossip about someone with whom you have a connection is gossip that also touches you.

6. Tzotzil *tos* is a numeral classifier used for "kind of" and for "group"; Bricker used this root to elicit taxa as well.

7. In this sorting task I used instructions similar to those I detailed in chapter 1 (see chap. 7, note 5).

8. This is far from the ordinary use of the phrase *lekil k'op*, which is discussed in chapter 3. See example sentences (32a)–(32c), chapter 3.

9. My informant felt that people had only recently learned to joke in this way. (*ˀAch to tajmek stamoj yech krixchano*). Two short exchanges my informant offered by way of example follow:

A:	*Mi chabat?*	("Are you going?")
B:	*Chibat.*	("Yes, I'm going.")
A:	*Ta chukel chkale.*	("To jail, I would say.")
A:	*Mi chavak'bon?*	("Will you give it to me?")
B:	*Chakak'be.*	("Yes, I'll give it to you.")
A:	*Lachak chkale.*	("[You'll probably give me] your ass, I expect.")

In my experience such joking is less common than exchanges in which Zinacantecos create puns on one another's words. See especially Bricker 1968, chap. 7, pp. 106–58).

10. My informant thought that women were most likely to use the phrase *chopol k'op* to describe vulgar language. Women, he said, are likely to be angered by continual swearing and will remark:

> Naka ta chopol *k'op* snaˀ xk'opoj, naka ta yan xˀelan k'op, muˀnuk lek xk'opoj.
> "He only knows how to talk with *bad words*, with disgusting words; he doesn't speak well."

11. For example, the saying

makob kaˀ ("covering for a horse")

refers to the load of corn young men were formerly made to carry to encourage them to learn to walk strongly and bear heavy loads.

Similarly, the expression

pat p'in chkom ("he ends up like the outside of a cooking pot")

refers to the appearance of a youth's back after he is whipped. In the olden days, according to the informant, boys and girls caught in illicit relations would be beaten by four or five men who used both hands to wield tumplines; after the whipping the victim's back would be "black as the outside of a pot."

12. *Chopol* ("bad") in figure 12 seems to label two features of speech: (*a*) that it is angry, unpleasant, ill-tempered speech; or (*b*) that it deals with misbehavior or disputes.

13. In different contexts, words sometimes contrast and sometimes complement one another. For example, *loˀilta* ("tell stories on . . .") and *-laban* ("mock . . .") both contain elements of the English "gossip about . . ."; yet the words are neither synonyms nor antonyms. When the two words occur together in a couplet, the meaning of *-loˀilta* stretches to include an element of mocking. Yet to describe the shrewish public ridiculing of a man by his wife, the choice of *-laban* ("She wanted the world to know how awful he was; that she wanted nothing more to do with

him. So she mocked and ridiculed his behavior") over *-loʔilta* ("She let everyone in on his transgressions") is significant.

14. I have been enlightened in these matters by seminar comments of Derek Freeman, Anthony Forge, and Meyer Fortes.

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