

Chapter 5

Reputation and the Content of Zinacanteco Gossip

K'usi mas x7ohtikinat 7o le7e (What is he known for?)

1

A. The Who's Who

The Who's Who sessions captured part of the shared information available about well-known (and notorious) Zinacantecos. We asked first for lists of well-known people generally, and then for further lists of people belonging to certain categories. The list of eliciting categories grew up informally from short characterizations and descriptions which occurred in identifying formulae. For example, if a man was identified as

'Xun from Paste7, the curer'

we added the word /h7ilol/ ('curer') to our set of categories.

The Who's Who category list thus reads like the index to an ethnography of Zinacantan. It contains labels for certain positively evaluated social identities, and at the same time it has descriptive phrases which Zinacantecos apply to the perpetrators of various undesirable acts. I suspect, in fact, that the most common identifying labels mark precisely those macro-identities (at some gross analytical level --- see Keesing (1970)) which are most culturally salient. Especially in a system where, except for nicknames,

1

I am extremely indebted to George A. Collier of Stanford University without whose counsel and collaboration I could not have brought the Who's Who into existence. The Who's Who would never have been more than an idea without his offering to share in the elicitation and expense.

no simple name will unambiguously identify an individual, the best identifier will be a person's most salient feature: the source of his widest reputation, e.g., Xun, the curer.

Figure 4 shows the most highly developed Who's Who category list. The first categories have to do with a man's performance in the religious and civil hierarchies and their peripheral posts. About each man we asked

/mi 7ec'em ta 7abtel/
'Has he passed through any work?'²

'Work' in this context is always understood to mean 'religious cargo,' and the question would prompt informants to recount the man's whole cargo history. The first category in Figure 4,

(1) /h-pas-7abtel/
'Cargoholder'

elicited the names of men in a hamlet currently serving in a religious office or known to be expecting such a post at a definite future date. Most hamlets have at least one

(2) /pasaro/
'pasado' (man who has passed through all four levels of the cargo system)

who is a respected elder man. Occasionally a man who has decided to retire from the system after only three (and sometimes two) cargos may be called a /pasaro/.

People on Who's Who panels seemed to have remarkably full knowledge of other peoples' cargo careers; their knowledge

2

Refer again to Chapter 2 for a brief summary of the religious and civil hierarchies.

FIGURE 4: WHO'S WHO CATEGORY LIST

Tzotzil	English
Cargoholding	
(1) h-pas-7abtel	cargoholder
(2) pasaro	man who has finished cargo hierarchy
(3) totil-me7il	ritual adviser
Religious service and auxiliary personnel	
(4) c'uil mol	Holy elder
(5) hk'ecnomal	(Saint-)bearer
(6) pixkal	sacristan
(7) ck'ot ta c'omil	serves as ritual helper
Civil office	
(8) 7abtel ta kavilto	work at townhall
(9) preserente	municipal <u>Presidente</u>
(10) 7ahensya	hamlet level <u>Agente</u>
(11) krinsupal	<u>principal</u> , hamlet <u>cabildo</u> representative
(12) komite	member of <u>ejido</u> committee
(13) lukasyon	member of school committee
(14) h-zob-tak'in	tax collector
(15) h-hunta	fiesta committee member
Ritual specialists	
(16) h-cik'-pom	incense burner
(17) h-hap-kantela	candle bearer
(18) h-vabahom	musician
(19) h-7amarero, h-tampolero	flautist, drummer
(20) h-ten-kamaro	cannon tamper
Curing	
(21) h-7ilol	curer
(22) h-tamol	midwife
(23) h-z'ak-bak	bonesetter
Dispute settlement and secular skills	
(24) h-melzaneh-k'op	dispute settler
(25) sna7 rason	is wise
(26) xtohob ta k'opohel	is a capable talker
(27) sna7 k'op ryox	prays well

FIGURE 4 (continued)

Dispute settlement and secular skills (continued)

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (28) sna7 kastiya | speaks Spanish |
| (29) sna7 vun | is literate |
| (30) 7ep xpetomah | is often wedding
god-father |
| (31) h-va7aneh-na,
h-7alvanil | house builder |
| (32) h-z'is-pixalal | hat sewer |

Economic indicators

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| (33) h-k'uleh | rich |
| (34) 7oy skaro | owns truck |
| (35) 7oy smolino | owns corn mill |
| (36) 7oy styenta | owns store |
| (37) 7oy vakax, ka7, cih | owns cattle, horses,
sheep |
| (38) xak' ta c'om stak'in | lends money |
| (39) xak' ta holinom stak'in | lends money at
interest |
| (40) h-con-7az'am | salt seller |
| (41) h-7ekel-7ixim, -turasnu,
-nicim | reseller of corn,
peaches, flowers |
| (42) sna7 slakan pox | distills liquor |

NEGATIVE CHARACTERIZATIONS

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| (43) 7oy sryox | owns talking saint |
|----------------|--------------------|

Witchcraft

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (44) h-7ak'-camel | witch, sorcerer |
| (45) sna7 xconvan ta
balamil | sells souls |
| (46) sna7 xk'opoh ta
balamil | negotiates with
Earth Lord |

Agression

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| (47) h-milvaneh | murderer |
| (48) h-mak-be | highwayman, assassin |
| (49) h-7elek' | thief |

Troublemaking

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| (50) h-sa7-k'op | troublemaker |
| (51) h-cukvaneh | man who jails
people |
| (52) 7ep sta cukel,
lek xa7i pus | often jailed,
enjoys jail |
| (52a) pukuh-yo7on | ill-tempered |

FIGURE 4 (continued)

Poverty, drunkenness

- (53) h-yakubel
 (54) mu sut yu7un yil
 (55) me7on
 (56) c'ah, mu sna7
 x7abteh

drunk
 unable to repay
 debts
 poor
 lazy

Mental incapacity

- (57) cuvah
 (58) h-voviel
 (59) xcuhil
 (60) sonso
 (61) sovra
 (62) 7uma7

crazy
 madman
 feeble-minded
 stupid
 leftover, worthless,
 good-for-nothing
 dumb, with speech
 impediment

extended far into the past and well beyond the boundaries of their own hamlets. Even given the fact that much men's³ conversation has to do with cargo performance and ritual, it seems incredible that so many Zinacantecos should be able to keep track of others' cargo records without making some active effort to collect the informations. In fact, they may do so. If the cargo system is a mechanism for securing (buying) prestige, than a man will be interested in comparing his own success in the system with that of others. One might hear the following exchange in a discussion of someone's cargo career:

"Wasn't his second cargo San Pedro Martir?"

"Yes, I remember hearing that it was just a small cargo (/bik'it no7ox yabtel iyak'be/)."

The speaker betrays his feeling that the cargo was just a little one: inexpensive and inferior. (Cancian (1965) correlates the prestige derived from a cargo with the expense it entails.) Zinacantecos may keep track of --- and gossip about --- other men's cargo records, since such records are explicit models against which one can test one's own success.

3

Some Zinacantecos --- especially young men who are less and less interested in traditional ways of acquiring and using up wealth --- may take little or no interest in the cargo system. Nonetheless, it is hard not to be aware of the hierarchy of the moment, whether or not one attends to it closely enough to remember it at a later time.

Some elder men are also known to be

- (3) /totil-me7il/
'Father-mother' (Ritual adviser to cargoholder,
or for other ceremonies).

These men are well-versed in the details of correct ritual performance and thus guide their charges through ceremonies.

A fairly young Zinacanteco who had passed through two cargos before he was thirty-five told me why he had refused a request to be ritual adviser to one of his relatives.

"I guess I know the proper way to perform a cargo. I am not afraid of performing badly. But I do not want to be criticised and scolded by the elders. Even if the cargo-holders were older than I, since my head would be red (wrapped in a red kerchief as sign of office) I could not bow to them. I would be ashamed to bow as a ritual adviser. No, I am too young yet."

Two categories relate to performance beyond the ordinary bounds of the religious hierarchy:

- (4) /c^hul mol/
'holy elder'
- (5) /h-k^hecnomal/
'saint -bearer' (or 'pall bearer')

The six Holy Elders are /pasaroetik/ who serve for life, and whose most significant ritual function is nailing the Christ image to the Cross on Good Friday (Vogt (1969:259)). The

bearers carry Christ nailed to the Cross during Lenten processions; they are senior cargoholders.

Two further important classes of people are at the periphery of the religious cargo system.

(6) /pixkal/
'sacristan'

(7) /ck'ot ta c'omil/
'He goes as someone borrowed.' (i.e., he serves as a helper.)

Nowadays, it is usually young men literate in Spanish who serve as sacristanes; they care for the church, opening and closing the doors, ringing the bells, etc. During their terms they acquire ritual expertise; cargoholders cultivate them as useful allies and advisors. At the same time, rumor has it that sacristanes tend to steal from offerings to the saints and to seduce cargoholders' wives.

Men also become well-known for serving frequently as helpers to cargoholders. Helpers are responsible for assembling and carrying ritual paraphernalia, or for managing a cargoholder's supply of liquor. In this capacity they learn proper ritual form.

One elicits names of men who have served in the civil hierarchy by asking about

(8) /7abtɛl ta kavilto/
'work at the town hall'

(though, alternately, people often ask whether a man has /7ec'em ta melzaneh-k'op/ ('had experience at settling disputes.')) Zinacantecos can name past Presidentes or Agentes (hamlet-level magistrates) (see categories (9) and

(10)) more often than they can remember lesser civil officials,⁴ who are sometimes just called /kavilto/ ('town hall people').

Finally, in response to the most general question

/mi ʔo k'usi tunem ʔoc/
'Has he served as anything at all?'

members of the panel gave a wide range of hamlet-level officials, temporary fiesta offices, officials associated with short-term projects (electrification, potable water), and so on. Figure 4 retains only the most frequent such categories ((11)-(15)). Most of these positions are minor, though being on the ejido or educations committees may represent a first step towards political power.

Several categories refer to auxiliary personnel in the cargo system. There are positions which must be filled by old women.

(16) /h-cik' -pom/
'Incense burner' (who is responsible for keeping incensario lit during ceremonies).

(17) /h-hap-kantela/
'candle bearer' (for elders during Lent)

Only a few women are qualified to serve in such positions, and these are the first women to be named in a Who's Who session. Other ritual specialists include the musicians:

(18) /h-vabahom/
'stringed instrument player'

(19) /h-ʔamarero/, /h-tampolero/
'flautist', 'drummer'

4

It is important, in gossip, to remember during whose term as Presidente a particular court dispute took place. One can garner extra significance from the settlement of a case by knowing who handled it.

Musicians not only provide the musical entertainment for /kahvaltik/ ('Our Lord') during ceremonies, but also are known for their joking ability. (See Haviland (1967)). In Who's Who discussions, informants distinguished between those musicians who were good enough to play for cargoholders in Zinacantan Center, and those who only played in their own hamlets. Furthermore, people would often identify a man as a musician, and immediately comment upon his haughtiness, general tractability, and willingness to serve as a musician when asked.

A well-known musician, Cep , had agreed to serve as musician for a cargoholder; but for three successive weeks he failed to show up for the ceremony. (W 98)

"...so you see how haughty he is. Who knows what the trouble was --- maybe he wasn't fed or given liquor to drink, I don't know."

"Ahhh, no, it was simply uncooperativeness. Couldn't he have spoken up if there was something wrong? Even if he didn't come out and say that the cargoholder gave insufficient gifts, he could have said he was busy, that they should look for someone else."

"Yes, so he could have; the cargoholder could have made plans then."

"That's the way it should have been."

"But the way he did it was deceitful; he lied when he agreed to perform."

"But he hasn't been abandoned as a musician. He was old Hvakin's violinist just last year. So I guess he's still good for something."

"It's just that he is very unreliable, but I guess that can be endured..."

The rosters of available ritual specialists like these (as well as the names of qualified cannon-tampers who set off thundering blasts which accompany a cargoholder's retinue) must be public knowledge; a man's skills must accrue to his reputation if he is to be recruited.

People are known in Zinacantan for special skills outside the religious or civil hierarchies. There are the medical practitioners (categories (21)-(23)) --- both men and women (though men are ordinarily not midwives). The public always strives to discover which practicing curers are the most powerful, the most successful, those with the most recent debut. Gossips speculate about the likelihood of peoples' claims to curing power or the circumstances under which such power was (allegedly) acquired.

A Zinacanteco named Palas was subject to attacks of

epilepsy (/tup' 7ik'/). Curers reported that this was a symptom of his curing abilities, and that he himself should become a curer. (0 19)

"Palas was elated, because he would become a curer and would be able to enjoy meals of chicken (eaten at curing ceremonies); also he would recover from his sickness... So he carried his staff and prayed the way curers do; but it sounded as if he had learned the prayers --- he didn't just know them himself, because he wasn't a real curer. He had only been told that he was; and he didn't know this was just trickery and deceit because he had a simple soul... His epilepsy got worse. When he finally recovered people began to think that they would ask him to serve as their curer. For they knew that a new curer has more success in relieving sickness. But when Palas heard that he was going to be asked to cure he just fled; he didn't let anyone even catch a glimpse of him...."

Another set of categories relates to verbal skills and talents as a mediator in disputes.

(24) /sna7 smelzan k'op/
'He knows how to settle disputes.'

(25) /sna7 rason/
'He knows the proper way to do things, he is wise.'

Community elders are often called upon to settle disputes.

Jan^e Collier characterizes such elders as:

"older men, known for their wisdom in settling conflicts, who can be approached by a person involved in a dispute. Such elders are usually leaders of their own descent groups, but affinal, compadrazgo, and political ties allow them to extend their range of influence.... In a few hamlets there is one paramount elder who handles most of the hamlet disputes. Such men are powerful political leaders, have extensive compadrazgo ties, and are known as 'looking after their hamlets.'" (1970:27)

There was usually little doubt in an informant's mind which few men were the best mediators in each hamlet; to attribute 'reasonableness' or ability at settling disputes to an elder is to speak as much about his actual political power as about his bargaining skills.

About some Zinacantecos it may be said that

(26) /xtohob ta k'opohel/
'He is successful at talking.'

This may mean that

(27) /sna7 k'op ryox/
'He knows how to talk to saints (i.e., to pray).'

or, more likely, that he is a good "mouthpiece": that he is a useful ally in any dispute because he is a convincing talker. In particular, there are the "Zinacanteco lawyers" who negotiate with ladino lawyers and legal officials. Thus, knowing Spanish is a related ability.

(28) /sna7 kastiya/
'He knows Spanish (i.e., can speak it fluently).'

(29) /sna7 vum/
'He is literate (in Spanish).'

Though many men of all ages can speak and understand some Spanish, literacy is almost totally confined to men under

the age of thirty; the percentage is low in any case. Knowing how to read and write is not a highly valued skill in Zinacantan, but there are enough occasions when Zinacantecos need documents read or written that it is important to know who can do it.

Only elder men with certain ritual skills are asked to be godparents at weddings. (Category (30)) The godfather must instruct a newly married couple in marital obligations, and he becomes responsible for the success of the marriage after the wedding. He will "serve as mediator in later marital disputes between the couple." (Jane Collier (1970: 174); and cf. Jane Collier (1968)). The choice of wedding godfather is important for the couple and for the families of both bride and groom; only a few men have the reputation of being often wanted for the role.

Particular Zinacantecos are known for their special abilities --- knowledge of adobe-making and house-building, ability to make traditional hats, Zinacanteco violins, and so on (see categories (31) and (32)) --- and when these abilities are important to others, they are frequently mentioned in conversation. Hence, one asks which of one's neighbors are competent masons when intending to build a new house.

Though Zinacantecos rarely identify others by explicit reference to wealth (or poverty), they are certainly aware of which men are

(33) /h-k'uleh/
'rich'

and which are just /h-k'ulehtik/ ('moderately rich') or /ta lekлектик no7ox/ ('just so-so'). Conversations frequently revolve around the economic fortunes and misfortunes of others.

Old Manvel was reputed to be one of the richest men in Zinacantan, having inherited wealth from his father, who in turn stole money from the Earth Lord. But now he has lost his considerable fortune from unwise lending. (W 138)

"/Kere/, the money he used to have --- lots, they say!"

"He's just spread it all around, I understand."

"But it is never given back to him; that's why the old man himself must now go into debt."

"/Putá/, but that is bad!"

"That old man just seems to have lost everything."

"Why do you suppose that is?"

"I guess it is because he just distributed his money."

"It was just like giving it away."

"He treated it as if he had as much as he wanted --- just as if he could pick it (/as one picks peaches/), just as if he could manufacture it. So he just gave it away to other people...."

Zinacantecos frequently have occasion to borrow money, whether for cargo-expenses or more immediate needs. Men can ordinarily approach their kinsmen or compadres for such loans; when they need larger amounts they may ask wealthy Zinacantecos, some of whom charge interest.

(38) /((lek) xak' ta c'om stak'in/
'He(willingly) lends his money.'

(39) /xak' ta holinom stak'in/
'He lends money at interest.'

Zinacantecos gossip about how willingly men lend the money they have. There is a certain presumption that wealthy people will lend, especially for cargo costs or the expenses of a curing ceremony. Knowledge of which men demand high interest, and which are good-hearted about lending is a crucial part of the common store of information.

Other economically motivated categorizations have to do with notable things people own (categories (34)-(37)), especially when they represent non-traditional uses of wealth: trucks, kerosine powered corn mills, stores, etc. Similarly, since most Zinacantecos still support themselves by farming corn, it is significant to make one's living in any other way.

(40) /h-con-7az'am)
'salt-seller'

(41) /h-7ekel -7ixim, -turasnu, -nicim/
'reseller of corn, peaches, flowers'

(42) /sna7 slakan pox/
'knows how to distill liquor'

A few families have traditionally supported themselves by

selling salt from Extapa throughout the highlands. (In many far-away municipios any man in Zinacanteco clothes is taken as a salt vendor.) Recently some young men have begun to derive nearly all their incomes from trade in fruit and flowers between the highlands and the lowland and coastal regions. Finally, it is still possible (though rare in Zinacantan) to earn extra money by dealing in bootleg liquor.

The last categories on the Who's Who lists distinguish people with undesirable character traits or abnormalities.

(43) /7oy sryox/
'He has a (talking) saint.'

Saint images and certain other objects in Zinacantan and throughout the highlands are often reputed to have the power of speech, as well as, for example, the ability to diagnose and cure disease or to impregnate barren women. Nativistic movements in the highlands have been inspired by such oracles. (See Gossen (1970:61 ff.) and Vogt (1969:21ff.)) Zinacantecos consult these talking saints (called /h-k'opohel ryox/ ('talking saint') or more commonly /kuxul ryox/ ('living saint')) about diseases, difficult pregnancies, and so forth. Some saint owners call themselves curers but acknowledge that their powers are due to their saints. There is always a fee for a saint's services, and a patient is expected to sponsor small ritual meals and to give candle offerings to the saint. In Who's Who gossip sessions talking saint owners are objects of considerable scorn; none of my informants

seemed to be a believer, though I know that at least one has
consulted a talking saint recently.⁵

Witches are unambiguously thought to be evil.

(44) /h-ʔak'-cancl/
'witch (lit: giver of sickness)'

Jane Collier (1970:103-109) distinguishes six or seven witchcraft techniques, two of which appear in Figure 4.

(45) /snaʔ xconvan ta balamil/
'knows how to sell people to the Earth Lord'

(46) /snaʔ xk'opoh ta balamil/
'knows how to pray to the Earth Lord' (e.g., to ask for sickness to be sent to other Zinacantecos)

Notorious witches are feared throughout Zinacantan; they are given wide berth and are not to be crossed.

Some men are reputed not to need to resort to supernatural aggression. They know more mundane ways to do harm.

(47) /hmilvanch/
'murderer'

(48) /hmak-be/
'highwayman, assassin'

If a man commits murder in Zinacantan, or seems implicated in a murder, his impulse is to flee. If he is caught, he

⁵ Perhaps it is only coincidental that the Who's Who panels uniformly spoke ill of talking saints and their owners; they were always quick to suggest that the saints' owners only make them appear to talk by 'squeaking in their own throats.' It may be that such scepticism is widespread; or it may be that Zinacantecos who are willing to work with anthropologists are also those least likely to believe in talking saints.

will be sent to San Cristóbal to be dealt with by ladino authorities. Instead, a murderer would rather endure several years self-imposed exile, after which he may

"return quietly to beg pardon of the close relatives of his victim, of the elders of his hamlet, and of the new Presidente. If he is successful in approaching all these men, he can return to live peacefully in Zinacantan, enjoying a reputation as a man not to be angered." (Jane Collier (1970:133)).

That so many men living in Zinacantan are known murderers testifies to the fact that one can not only get away with murder in Zinacantan but in some senses profit by it.

'Highwaymen' ambush people on the trail at night, usually to rob and murder them; since any sort of roaming about after dark is suspicious, people who seem to be unaccountably absent from home at night expose themselves to gossip as assassins, or witches. In fact, the concept of 'highwayman' seems to be a relic of past times when Indians made long journeys on foot to other municipios and hamlets. Old men alive today claim to have met /hmak-be/ in their youths.

"As far as the highwayman is concerned, old Antun was walking along, and he looked over by the side of the road where he saw a man dressed in long pants." (W 156)

"In the daytime?"

"That's what he says. He said to himself, 'What is that person up to? Perhaps he is getting a drink of water.' So

he started to pass by.

"Suddenly the man stood up. 'Let's go!' he said. He had an old horse with him. /Putá/ that's when old Antun saw the others coming out. About five or six of them gathered together.

"'Where are you going?' they asked.

"'I'm going home,' he said.

"'Do you have any tortillas?' they said.

"'None,' he said.

"'You bastard!' they said. 'If you have no tortillas, then let's play awhile.'

"'But I don't care,' said old Antun, 'I don't know what kind of a game you have in mind.' They started to play (i.e., to fight). 'I took a bad machete blow,' old Antun told me later. 'But when I hit him with my machete, he couldn't dodge the blow, and his head landed far away. He fell to the ground.'

"Then up came another of them, and three or four all tried to get into the act together. Old Antun said, 'Listen, we are not women. We should only play one at a time. If I get killed, then you can carry me away. If one of you dies then another can try, too.'

"Well, then they began fighting each other one at a time. Up came one --- zap! --- down to the ground with the highwayman. Another --- zap! --- down to the ground. He claims to have killed five or six right there on the path. Then he

dragged one over and threw him into the creek.

"/Kabron/, why should I carry them?" he said to himself. 'What good is the horse anyway?' So he tied the other dead men to the horse and dragged them off into the woods."

"Ah, you see, that old man drags people around by horse. (Ha ha ha)."

The label 'thief' (Category (49)) is applied to people who have been caught by ladino authorities stealing some large item (e.g., a horse) and thrown in jail, and to the poverty stricken, pitiful old women and lazy youths who steal chickens and household goods. One man had the nickname /takwaz/ ('possum') because of his reputation for chicken-stealing. Stealing in Zinacantan is something one is ashamed of and can be openly mocked about.

Zinacantecos are aware that certain people readily involve themselves in court disputes. In large factional disputes in the hamlet of Nabencauk there have, indeed, been certain troublemakers who have /-tik' -ba/ ('stuck themselves into') nearly every controversial issue. (See Rush (1971)). Such people seem, literally, to be looking for a pretext over which a dispute can be brought to court.

(50) /h-sa7-k'op/
'troublemaker (lit.: one who looks for a quarrel)'

Zinacanteco theory on the subject of troublemaking holds that such aggressive people are as likely to be jailed themselves

as they are to win their disputes.

Moreover, to have the reputation as

(51) /h-cuk-van-eh/
'one who jails people'

or (52a) /pukuh yo7on/
'evil-hearted'

is to be known for mercilessness. Such people take every opportunity to throw someone --- whether it be debtor, political enemy, or hapless potential son-in-law --- in jail.

Similarly, some people

(52) /7ep sta cukel/ or /lek xa7i pus/
'are often jailed' or 'enjoy the sweatbath.'

Being jailed is always /sa7bil/ ('sought after'); hence, to say that one enjoys the 'sweatbath,' that he longs for the cooler, reflects the orthodox Zinacanteco view that a reasonable man restrains himself from behavior which is likely to end in jailing.

All ritual and, in fact, nearly all social intercourse in Zinacantan is accompanied by drinking. Every request is accompanied by a gift of liquor; every agreement is sealed with a bottle.

(53) /hyakubel/
'drunk'

There are alcoholics who drink more than ordinary social life requires. Zinacantecos recognize that excessive drinking impairs one's abilities to work, as well as one's moral

sense. They therefore consider perpetual drunks both laughable and self-destructive. A man's drinking habits and capacity are subject to public scrutiny, and people may label a man a 'drunk' if he is especially noticeable when intoxicated, even if it happens rarely.

The inverse of category (38) is

(54) /mu sut yu7un yil/
'He can't repay his debts'.

Some people are notoriously bad risks for a loan. It is difficult to refuse a persistent borrower outright without being patently rude; thus one tries to avoid relationships which would ordinarily let such people ask for loans.

Everyone clucks publicly over the man who doesn't repay loans and shuns his creditors; as a rich gringo I was considered an easy touch for a loan, and the largest amounts of unsolicited gossip and advice came from Zinacantecos who wanted me to know which men not to lend to. Conscious of the financial conditions of their neighbors, Zinacantecos know when men are /zinil ta 7il/ ('stuck tight in debts'). Having unpaid debts is considered as much a matter of poverty as of bad will.

(55) /mc7on/
'poor'

J. Collier reports that crimes committed while intoxicated are considered less serious than those committed sober. "Acts of drunks are excused as having been motivated by liquor." (1970:77) See below, the gossip about a man who got himself drunk to lessen his guilt.

(56) /c'ah/ or /na sna7 x7abteh/
 'lazy' or 'won't work'

Some men are said not to be able to feed themselves or their families; such men are unlucky or unskillful farmers. Even when they work they get no return. Other men are unabashedly lazy.

"But her son is terribly lazy." (H 55)

"What do you mean?"

"Well, once I went to him with a bottle of liquor.

'Please, will you work for me in Hot Country,' I said. But he didn't go. 'Please, work for me near /7Az'am/, ' I told him.

"'Allright,' he replied. 'I'll be there.' But until this very day he hasn't showed up. That was a year ago. He just drank my liquor for nothing."

"Has he a wife?"

"No, no. He is too lazy. He doesn't want work. He is still young, but even if the work is nearby, even if it is only for one day, he doesn't want to do paid labor. He just stays there, hanging around his house, or sitting on his haunches sunning himself."

The last few undesirable characteristics involve madness and feeble-mindedness.

- (57) /cuvah/
'madman'
- (58) /hvoviel/
'madman'
- (59) /xcuhil/
'dim-witted person' (literally: runt)

There are Zinacanteco madmen who wander around with tattered clothes and wild unruly hair, muttering to themselves. They are harmless though bizarre, and they probably come under the category of /cuvah/. There are also people who begin to rave, strip themselves naked, and run about wildly, like rabid dogs; mad dogs and madmen are called /hvoviel/. Finally, there are individuals whom informants seem unwilling to call crazy who are nevertheless clearly considered sub-normal, dimwitted. They are likened to the runt of a litter, or a stunted peach: /xcuhil/. Such people grow old without marrying, and are unable to work or feed themselves. Several other minor forms of mental incapacity appear.

- (60) /sonso/
'stupid'
- (61) /sovera/
'leftover, worthless person/'
- (62) /ʔumaʔ/
'dumb person, speechless person/'

A man may be reputed to be /sonso/ if he is simply good, i.e., not distinguished by particular wrongdoings. Or he may be identified as either stupid or worthless if he has never done anything to distinguish himself, if he has little contact with his neighbors.

"But he's not very well known." (W 172)

"No, he hasn't served any office."

"He is just a hidden person; we never see him leave his house."

"Nope. One has nothing to ask him and nothing to tell him."

"We never see his face."

"When the whole hamlet gathers together, or when public decisions are to be made, he still doesn't come out. He stays hidden in the house just like a girl."

"When he is just a little leftover, as we say..."

"What do you mean? He's a good man; he works. It is on purpose that he hides himself, that he doesn't let other people see him."

"But in any case he doesn't want to be good for anything."

"You must admit he acts like a worthless person; he isn't a fully good man..."

Finally, a person who can't talk is often considered to be mentally deficient; a speech impediment is a serious social impediment as well in a culture which places such emphasis on verbal interaction.

Once we had elicited the names of well-known individuals for each hamlet, we completed a card for each with the following information:

- Name: most commonly understood name, and any others the panel could think of;
- Age: an estimate for comparison only (since Zinacantecos are notoriously unable to guess ages, even their own);
- Genealogy: any kin-term characterizations which were used for identification by members of the panel;
- Cargo history: names of cargos passed at each level, or cargos scheduled for the future;
- Categories: labels from our standard eliciting list which informants were willing to apply;
- Comments: remarks which the panel volunteered to us or to each other in the discussion.

Figure 5 shows 3 typical Who's Who cards with English explanations for each line.

The Who's Who categories raise a host of questions more general than those I actually tried to answer. I shall mention only a few.

(a) When does a man earn his own separate Who's Who card? We can give content to the apparent truism that what is known of a person depends on who he is. In Zinacantan, at least, it is possible that a man's public identity awaits his nickname. A young man first subject to gossip must be identified by a pathway leading to some better-known person. His own reputation can grow only as he assumes a public name, i.e., acquires a label.

(b) Relatedly, it may be possible to understand the variables that allow a person to be unambiguously identified

Figure 5: Who's Who sample cards

<p>Hok' C'enom (Kranatatik)</p> <p>Mikel Konte 37</p> <p>1. Santo Rominko (tuc'bil)</p> <p>smelzan k'op (somewhat) xtohob ta k'opohel sna7 vun (won't pay debts) nu sna7 x7abteh (has no corn, is lazy)</p>	<p><u>Paraje</u> name</p> <p>man's name approximate age</p> <p>first level cargo was <u>mayordomo</u> of Santo Domingo, but it was 'truncated' as he ran away. 'settles disputes' 'is capable talker' 'is literate'</p> <p>'won't work'</p>
<p>Hok' C'enom</p> <p>Mol Cepil Yek Mol sbankil Manvel lok'em martomorey</p> <p>approx. 80</p> <p>1. ? vo7ne 2. ? 3. rehirol ?</p> <p>4. bik'it mol (1969)</p> <p>spas mantal te ta parahel (once in a while) hk'u leh (a bit) 7oy svakax</p>	<p>name 'older brother of Manvel, the ex- <u>mayordomorey</u> age</p> <p>first cargo unknown, 'long ago' 2nd cargo unknown 3rd cargo was <u>regidor</u> but informants not sure which one. final cargo was second <u>alcalde</u> in 1969 'gives orders in his hamlet' 'rich' 'owns cattle'</p>
<p>70lon Hteklum</p> <p>Maryan Promax *Pixol Tak'in skrem mol Cep Promax</p> <p>was /7ixkirvano/ me7on (won't pay debts)</p>	<p>real name usual nickname 'son of old Cep Promax'</p> <p>was 'scribe' 'poor'</p>

by a single name or simple phrase, rather than by some more complicated (compound) formula. When do nicknames pass hamlet boundaries? Does passing a certain cargo, serving a certain job, tend to earn someone an instant name?⁷

(c) Does the fact that many individuals can be given single, short characterizations ('He is a drunk') allow us to conclude that Zinacantecos have an idea of a single overriding personality trait? Given that much speculation in gossip has to do with motivation, character, and temperament, it would be useful to extend our category list to include a wider repertoire of words relating to personality.

⁷ An example may clarify these questions. A Zinacanteco who has worked for some time as informant, whose name is /cep 7ernantis heronimo/ by the traditional naming system, came to be known as /cep k'obyox/, after his uncle. To distinguish him from another /mol cep k'obyox/, he was called, within his hamlet of /7Apas/, /bik'it cep/ ('little Jose'). This last name was known only to residents of /7Apas/ and was his most usual nickname. Throughout the municipio he was known as /cep k'obyox/ --- also technically a nickname, as it wasn't his 'real' name in traditional terms. After recent outstanding performance in the cargo system, and after having emerged as a political leader of his paraje, he is now commonly known throughout the municipio as /cep 7Apas/ ('Jose of 7Apas'). Clearly the use of this name signals a new stage in his acquisition of public identity: he has now become the /Cep/ from the whole hamlet of /7Apas/ --- a feat impossible without his having been associated with his hamlet in the public mind.

(d) It may happen that certain Who's Who categories are not only conceptually related (as, for example, 'lazy,' 'poor,' and 'won't return debts'), but simply coincide frequently in single individuals. For example, nearly all woman 'curers' are also 'midwives.' More interestingly, it turned out that nearly every person known to speak Spanish was also called a 'troublemaker.' It is easy to generate a hypothesis to account for such coincidences. For example, the ability to speak Spanish implies some significant contact with ladinos; for many this means having gone as indentured servants to ladino homes. Such people may be marginal (and hence dissatisfied?) Indians; or, less contentiously, they may be most confident manipulating non-Indian legal institutions in factional disputes. It is possible to look for such coincidences in other dyads of Who's Who categories.

Who's Who cards contain bits of information which arose in conversation in response to no direct questioning. Often, when we were gathering a man's nicknames, or cargo history, or matching individuals with categories on the list, someone would interject a remark like

'He is extremely hairy', or

'He fights with his elder brother,' or

'He got his wife in Chamula,' or

'He tried to murder his wife.'

These comments sometimes identified a person, but more often

they simply enlivened discussion. I tried to write down all such remarks (sometimes in English translation); in the remainder of this chapter I present examples of the comments which occur on Who's Who cards from the hamlet of /Na Cih/. They deal with about nine topics:

- (a) courtship and marriage
- (b) wealth/ poverty and their manifestations
- (c) temperament and personality
- (d) physical peculiarity or injury
- (e) religious or civil cargo career
- (f) identifying marks and peculiarities (or lack thereof)
- (g) drinking
- (h) jailing
- (i) curing practices.

(The last three categories occur infrequently in the /Na Cih/ lists.)

(a) Courtship, marriage, and sexual habits

The following phrases illustrate ways in which individuals in /Na Cih/ depart from the ideal pattern in which a young man courts his bride without incident, marries her, and expects her to enter no adulterous relationships.

'He lost his sweetheart.'

/cbat ta pohbel slekom/

'His sweetheart was stolen from him.'

/h-poh-zeb/

'He is a girl-thief (i.e., stole someone else's fiancée).'

Jane Collier (1970:186ff.) reports that many courtship disputes stem from the interference of a third-person: an engaged girl takes up with another boy. Since courtship involves considerable expense, losing a girl to another man is not only an affront but an economic setback. That informants were willing to make such comments as these shows that a man's reputation does not survive a broken courtship unscathed. The wronged suitor is thought a fool, whereas the 'girl thief' is considered laughable for failing to curb his sexual impulses.

'The man has a new wife; his first was stolen.'

/h7elek' mis, h7elek' 7anz/.

'He is a pussy-stealer, a woman-stealer.'

The phrases which pertain to adultery and subsequent divorce resemble those used to describe broken courtship. Though a cuckolded man can punish the man and woman who wrong him, he is still shamed; but the real fool in my informants' eyes seemed to be the sexually voracious man who couldn't leave another's wife alone. There are, as well, promiscuous women:

/(Id 7anze) lek xak' matanal./

'The woman gives many free gifts.'

Because women marry young, it often happens that a young widow with a marriageable daughter may herself still be a possible spouse for her daughter's suitors.

/spas preva xci7uk sni7 me7el/

'He tried out his mother-in-law.'