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**ZAPATISTA MATERIALITY DISSEMINATED:
A CO-CONSTRUCTION RECONSIDERED**

by

ILSE BIEL

BACHELORS OF ARTS

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Masters of Arts
Anthropology**

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Albuquerque, New Mexico

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DEDICATION

To resisters everywhere.

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ZAPATISTA MATERIALITY DISSEMINATED: A CO- CONSTRUCTION RECONSIDERED

by

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ABSTRACT

In this study, I explore two central examples of Zapatista material culture, the Zapatista mask and the souvenir *muñecas zapatistas* [Zapatista dolls], as they become plot lines in the co-constructed *encuentro* that shapes the Zapatista concept internationally leading to a false image of Zapatista homogeneity. Taking on their own dynamic substance that frequently is dislodged from the context of the people they appear to represent they become indicative of the discourse *about* the Zapatistas, one that does not necessarily originate in the activities *of* the Zapatistas. I suggest that, within the broader *encuentro* process between Zapatistas and non-Zapatistas, the Zapatistas function in at least three modalities: the physical, the representation, and the idea. The mask and the doll case histories I present here show how these three modalities relate to each other and interact with outsider interpreters.

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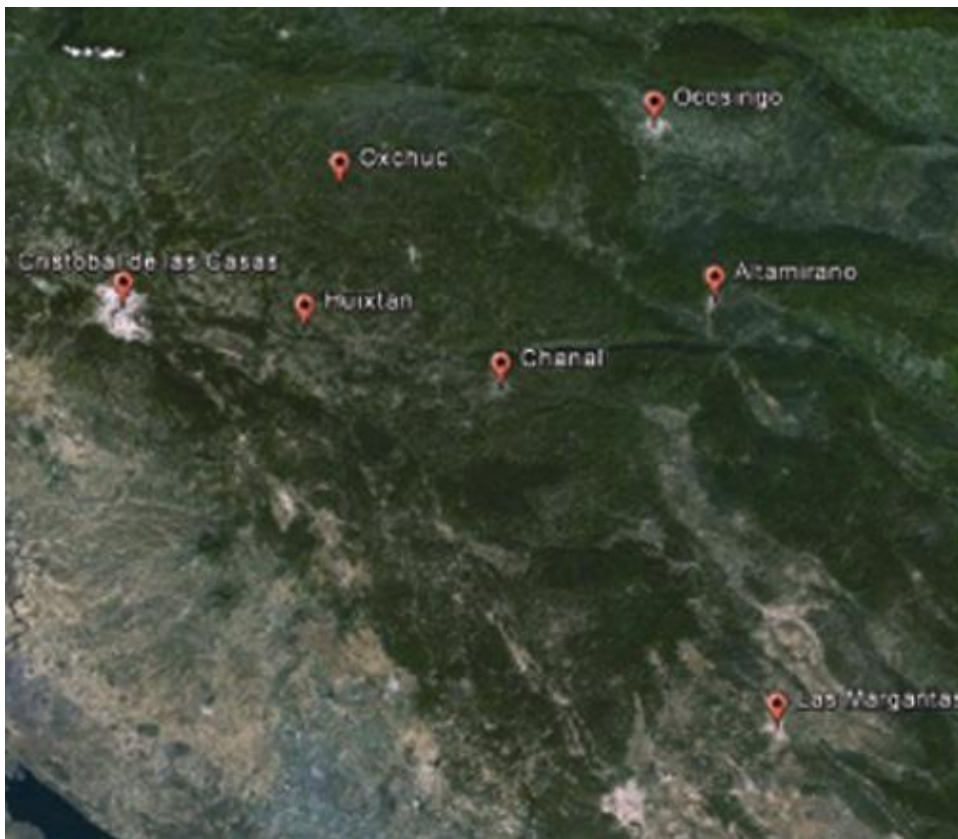
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Chapter 1: Introduction

During the night of 1 January 1994, four and a half thousand people, men and women, occupied the administrative centers of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Las Margaritas, Altamirano, Oxchuc, Huixtán, Chanal, and Ocosingo in Chiapas, southeast Mexico¹. Most of the people were Mayans. Some wore masks, either full face ski masks or cotton bandannas tied around the lower part of their faces. Some were armed with “everything from modern US M-16s, AR-15s and Ruger Mini-14s, Russian SKS Siminov’s and AK-47s, and Israeli UZIs, to the older British Sten-guns and 303 Savages, US M-1s, and German Commando 45s” (Henck 2007:103); others came unarmed or carried pieces of wood shaped like guns “with a nail in the barrel” (Taibo 2002:22).



The seven centers occupied by the EZLN

In the early hours of that New Year's morning, representatives of the group read the First Declaration from the Lacandón Jungle² and the group's Declaration of War against the Mexican government from the municipal balconies of each of the seven centers taken during the night. In San Cristóbal, the Chiapanecan tourist capital, an unmasked *comandante* Felipe introduced himself a little before 8 a.m. as a member of the General Command of the Clandestine Indigenous Revolutionary Comitee [CCRI-CG, *Comité Clandestino Revolucionario Indígena-Comandancia General*]³ and the group as "Zapatistas." Nick Henck relates that Felipe then proceeded to read "[i]n halting Spanish ... from a crumpled, handwritten address: 'We have come to San Cristóbal de las Casas to do a revolution against capitalism'" (Henck 2007:198). The formal First Declaration was on a printed pamphlet. It introduced the group's armed wing as the Zapatista National Liberation Army [EZLN, *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional*]. As Felipe read the Declaration's closing—"Long Live the Mexican Revolution! Long Live the Zapatista National Liberation Army! Long Live the Indian people in arms!"—the Zapatistas in the plaza shouted "Viva!" after each statement with their weapons held high (Henck 2007:202).

Felipe had been chosen to be the official Zapatista spokesperson (Oppenheimer 1996:19-21). However, along with the journalists that were on hand to cover the *levantamiento* [uprising], some terrified tourists had congregated on the city plaza to find out what was happening and, more urgently, what their fate would be. Members of the CCRI-CG were unable to understand the anxious questions of the English-speaking tourists. By sheer chance, the EZLN military chief, *subcomandante* Marcos, was substituting for a wounded EZLN officer transporting weapons to the plaza and could

intervene in what he describes as his “rudimentary English” (Interview with Marcos, Oppenheimer 1996:21).

‘Are you going to let us go?’ a foreign visitor to the town asks. The tourists had been previously informed that they could return to their place on 2 January. ‘Why do you want to go?’ replied the man [Marcos]. ‘Enjoy the city.’ Some were asking, shouting, if they could go by car to Cancún. Everybody wanted to speak at the same time. A guide obviously annoyed raised his voice to say that he had to take some tourists to see the ruins of Palenque. Marcos lost his patience but not his sense of humor. ‘The road to Palenque is closed,’ he said. ‘We have taken Ocosingo. We apologize for any inconvenience but this is a revolution’ (quoted in Tello Diaz 1995; cited and translated Mentinis 2006:8).

In this moment, Zapatistas and tourists officially entered into their first encounter with each other. Tourists, by definition, travel and, consequently, the tourist trade helped spread the word of the insurrection. Tourists, however, also stimulate a particular commercial backdrop centered on their convenience and amusement. Sites become sights and material culture, souvenirs.



Visitor backpacks in front of the Junta de Buen Gobierno office, Oventik

Marcos was supposed to have remained behind the scenes for obvious security concerns because of his key position within the EZLN. Andres Oppenheimer also suggests that the choice of Felipe as spokesperson was predicated on the need to emphasize the indigenous character and leadership of the Zapatistas, something which Marcos as a highly educated *mestizo*⁴ would draw into question (Oppenheimer 1996:21). After the interaction with the tourists, Felipe, however, all but disappears from the record⁵ and Marcos becomes the *de facto* Zapatista spokesperson. This means that tourists facilitated Marcos's public prominence just days before they were able to buy T-shirts emblazoned with his face.

From the first day of the uprising, a Zapatista narrative emerges that is constructed by various actors besides the tourists who happened to be present on the city plain that day and who continue to visit San Cristóbal. The uprising made international headlines and journalists have consistently played a key role in disseminating information about and commentary on the Zapatistas⁶. Marcos is a prolific writer and began issuing one communiqué after the other only five days after the uprising began (The Editorial Collective 1994:76)⁷. The growing accessibility and prominence of the Internet in 1994 became a fortuitous yet decisive factor in the spread of international awareness of the Zapatista uprising and ongoing resistance⁸. Scholarship on the Zapatistas continues to grow. Bob Kuřík notes that the 2006 selective bibliography of writings on the Zapatistas, *EZLN, Una aproximación bibliográfica*, entailed 288 pages of entries (Kuřík 2009:126). In 2010, sixteen years after the Zapatista uprising, at least three books were published dealing specifically with the movement⁹. Many social movement scholars mine the Zapatista narrative as case histories, even when these scholars are not Mexicanists or

even Latin Americanists¹⁰, framing the insurgency as an internationally acclaimed seminal instance of collective action.

Today, the construction of the Zapatista narrative persists. However, the narrative does not remain contained within the verbal sphere but is embodied in both the representative material culture surrounding the Zapatistas and the performative interactions between Zapatistas and outsiders. In this study, I concentrate on two central examples of the Zapatista material culture as they become plot lines in the co-constructed *encuentro*¹¹ that shapes the Zapatista concept internationally. These two examples, the Zapatista mask and the souvenir *muñecas* [dolls] that were transformed to resemble miniature Zapatistas, engage with the Zapatista narrative differently, in their construction and as well as in their circulation. Both examples, however, articulate and contribute to a false image of Zapatista homogeneity on the one hand and, on the other, speak to the paradoxes contained within the Zapatista experience¹².



Participants in the 2007 Second Encuentro cooking in Morelia

Both mask and doll have also taken on their own dynamic substance that frequently is dislodged from the context of the people they appear to represent. In this way, they become indicative of the discourse *about* the Zapatistas, one that does not necessarily originate in the activities *of* the Zapatistas. While this discursive tendency speaks to the multivocal co-construction of the international Zapatista narrative, it also complicates the *encuentro* process as the following case histories will show. However, the Zapatistas do not disappear from this material discourse but rather reappear as they utilize the mask and the dolls for their own purposes. Consequently, I suggest that, within the broader *encuentro* process in which Zapatistas and non-Zapatistas come into contact with each other, the Zapatistas function in at least three modalities: the flesh and blood individual person who might live in one of the *caracoles*¹³ or in one of the 111 Chiapanecan *municipios* [municipalities]; the mediated representations contained in the virtual personas or the metonymic material icons outsiders can encounter on the Web and elsewhere; and the Zapatista conceptual framework that has spawned a particular social imaginary for solidarity and activist groups. In other words, the physical, the representation, and the idea. The mask and the doll case histories I present here show how these three modalities relate to each other and interact with outsider interpreters.

The notion of “a Zapatista narrative” needs to be unpacked. Despite the cohesion suggested by this terminology, multiple histories are involved. The international dissemination process activates a series of power differentials that amplifies certain voices while muting others, however. Proficiency in a world language is one of the primary thresholds. Indigenous Zapatistas tend to speak Tzeltal, Tzotzil, Ch’ol, Tojolobal, Zoque, or Mam¹⁴. The INEGI [*Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía*

or National Statistics and Geography Institute] 2005 census shows that 24.9 percent of all Chiapanecans do not speak Spanish (SIPAZ 2011); for many Mayans in Chiapas, Spanish is at best a second language¹⁵. English—and other world languages—remain foreign as shown in the interaction described above between the tourists to San Cristóbal and members of the CCRI-CG. The very fact that Marcos could speak English positioned him as spokesperson. He is also a native Spanish speaker, making him more accessible as an interviewee where the international media are concerned.

June Nash points out that, “Many of the Zapatistas and thousands of their supporters are illiterate. Those who can *deletrar*—read haltingly, letter by letter—are cut off from most media communication (though their supreme command had access to email)” (Nash 2001:22). In 2005, CONAPO [*Consejo Nacional de Población* or the National Population Council] found that 42.7 percent of all Chiapanecans over the age of 15 had not completed a primary school education and that 20.4 percent had not received any type of formal schooling (SIPAZ 2011). The 2005 INEGI census reports that 39.2 percent of indigenous Chiapanecans over the age of 15 cannot read or write¹⁶ (SIPAZ 2011).

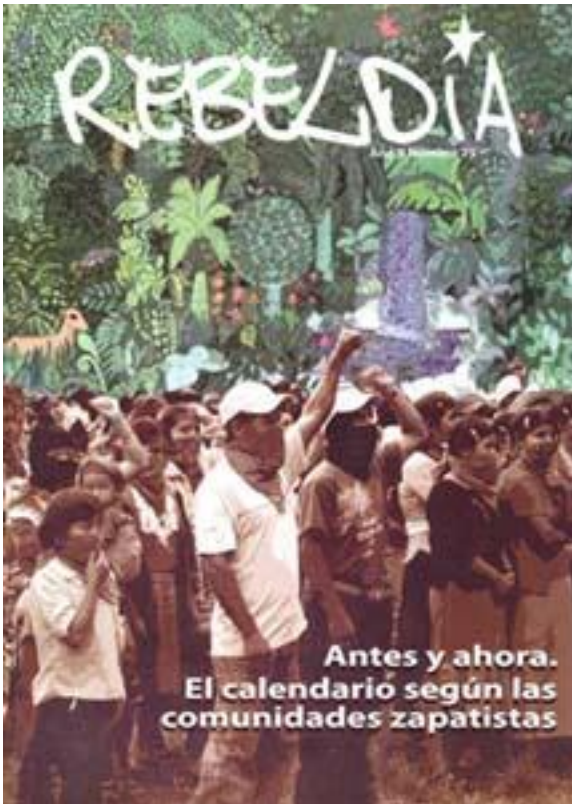
Nash, in her assessment of Zapatista access to media communication, includes the Internet without considering its highly restricted accessibility to indigenous Chiapanecans. A member of the EZLN, Major Rolando, offers a different perspective:

Well, we don't know much about that here because we live pretty isolated from the rest of the world. ... We don't have electricity in our villages, so we don't watch television. Newspaper vendors don't get to the jungle and even if they did, it wouldn't be of much use because most Indians are illiterate (Oppenheimer 1996:81).

Rolando, in contrast to Nash, does not include cybermedia as a given. Consequently, he does not mention the general lack of Internet connectivity within the Zapatista territories. In the summer of 2010, even the Oventik *caracol* computer center offered one computer only for general use at an hourly rate. There were a few other computers present within the community for one or the other dedicated, official use but connectivity—wired only—was precarious and slow. While Rolando’s comment on the lack of electricity needs to be contextualized¹⁷, the prohibitive cost of computers, Internet services, and television sets is highly relevant.

This does not mean that the Zapatistas as an official group does not participate in its own dissemination of information. On 31 December 1993, the first limited edition of the EZLN mouthpiece, *El Despertador Mexicano* [directly, The Mexican Alarm Clock or Awakener]¹⁸, appeared with a short editorial, the First Declaration from the Lacandón Jungle, and the various Zapatista Revolutionary Laws (The Editorial Collective 1994:49-62, Fuentes Morúa 2003:8) and on 17 November 2002, the Zapatistas launched their monthly magazine *Rebeldía* [Rebelliousness] (Muñoz Ramírez 2003:223). The following year, on 9 August and coinciding with the festivities surrounding the inauguration of the *caracol* system¹⁹, *Radio Insurgente* went on air for the first time as the dedicated Zapatista FM radio station²⁰. The radio station’s motto is “Voice for the voiceless” and is in keeping with the Zapatista knack of accentuating an insufficiency or absence in such a way that it becomes a decisive and rallying marker. However, as the station transmits not only in Spanish but also in Tzeltal, Tzotzil, Ch’ol, and Tojolabal for sixteen hours a day (radioinsurgente.org) (Fernandes 2005), a more descriptive motto could have been “Voice for those who otherwise could not understand.” As initially the only independent

station in Chiapas, it endeavors to address a number of the social drawbacks to media access discussed above: illiteracy, lack of electricity and computing facilities, geographical isolation, and monolingualism in an indigenous language. It further promises to be “the media through which the Zapatista communities spread their own music, words, and thoughts” (radioinsurgente.org).



The Radio Insurgente website masthead above and a front page of the Rebeldía magazine left

Two years after its inception, *Radio Insurgente* technicians along with numerous other independent media workers succeeded in the station’s first live Internet broadcast (Giordano 2005). News items and especially interviews with Marcos broadcast on *Radio*

Insurgente are frequently retransmitted by other radio stations such as the university stations *Radio Universidad* in Querétaro and *Radio UNAM* in Mexico City, and *Radio 620*, a commercial station, also based in Mexico City (Reporters Without Borders 2006). An example of international re-transmission is the US-based *Democracy Now* program on 6 July 2006. Today, both *Rebeldía* and *Radio Insurgente* have their own websites. In December 2005, the EZLN took over the ezln.org URL from Justin Paulsen as the official Zapatista website²¹.

Where exposure to an international audience is concerned, the presence of the Zapatistas on-line has had the biggest influence (Bob 2005)(Cleaver 1998a)(Cleaver 1998b)(Castells 1997). Yet, the Zapatistas only started participating directly in this medium more than ten years after their uprising. Thomas Olesen suggests that until that time, the San Cristóbal based Zapatista Information Center [CIZ, Centro de Información Zapatista]²² was “the only example ... of direct EZLN correspondence through the Internet”²³ even though the Center, too, was run independently of the Zapatistas (Olesen 2005:66). Consequently, the extent of the Zapatista presence on-line should be qualified as it, too, speaks to the co-construction of the Zapatista narrative. At the same time, it exemplifies the collaborative solidarity process that Harry Cleaver has described as weaving “the new electronic fabric of struggle”²⁴ (Cleaver 1998a:81). From the release of their first communiqués, the Zapatistas had to rely on circuitous dissemination methods. The first nine communiqués, dated from 5 to 13 January, were sent as a packet with an accompanying letter signed by Marcos to *La Jornada*, *El Financiero*, and *El Tiempo* on 13 January. In the letter, Marcos explains that the packet had to be carried from the mountains through military zones to reach its destination (The Editorial Collective

1994:76). Cleaver notes that news of the uprising “went out through a student’s call to CNN” and that journalists relayed subsequent communiqués and interviews in multiple stages by fax and electronic mail (Cleaver 1998a:81, 82). Supportive international volunteers translated many of the reports before relaying them further on-line. Clifford Bob lists three US websites, none directly affiliated with the EZLN, that have specialized in Zapatista news and commentary: the *Applied Anthropology Computer Network* housed at Michigan’s Oakland University; the *Chiapas95* site housed at University of Texas, Austin; and *¡Ya Basta!* hosted from Swarthmore College²⁵ (Bob 2005:132). Cleaver emphasizes that, “the EZLN has played no direct role in the proliferation of the use of the Internet. Rather, these efforts were initiated by others to weave a network of support for the Zapatista movement ... the reality is that the EZLN and its communities have had a mediated relationship to the Internet” (Cleaver 1998b:628).

By the time that the Zapatistas embarked on their own direct participation on-line, mediated versions of the Zapatista narrative had already been formed. These versions, even though they are related in solidarity, speak on behalf of the Zapatistas in such a way that the Zapatista voices frequently become distilled into a unified choir. The Zapatista cyberpresence, consequently, becomes largely one *about* them, not stemming *from* them. Marisa Belausteguigoitia refers to this phenomenon as the “ventriloquism” that, according to her, “seriously splintered, and thus far largely eclipsed” indigenous voices (Belausteguigoitia 2006:107). Marcos is arguably the prime ventriloquist in this regard. While Marcos has been the most accessible voice speaking on behalf of the Zapatistas, not all of his writings are official Zapatistas communiqués and his position, even as official spokesperson for the group, does not reflect the diversity within the group²⁶.

While the Zapatista narrative generally veers toward a unified representation that tends to overlap the Zapatistas with the indigenous peoples of Chiapas, the reality remains that all indigenous people in Chiapas are not Zapatista supporters²⁷, do not always remain Zapatista supporters²⁸, and do not necessarily support the Zapatistas in the same way²⁹.

This critique of the mediated representation of the Zapatistas suggests that these representations do not leave much space for the agency of those individuals who identify themselves as Zapatistas. Mediated representation becomes another way of speaking *about* the Zapatistas. The two case histories that follow, deal with artifacts that have become commodities within both the social movement and the tourist spheres. They appear as highly simplified representative signs dislodged from the everyday context of the Zapatistas. However, they also show how the Zapatistas talk back in their own voices. Consequently, referring back to the three modalities I introduced earlier, the Zapatistas do not merely provide a departure point for their representations and ideas but also reenter the cycle as actors, foregrounding their physical praxis in their interaction with and reevaluation of internationally circulated Zapatista representations and ideas.

I visited Chiapas for the first time during the summer of 2006. The Zapatistas had gone underground as part of a red alert shortly before I had arrived in San Cristóbal. 2006 was the year of the contested presidential election as well as the start of the populist APPO [*Asemblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca* or Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca] protests against the Oaxacan governor Ulises Ruiz Ortiz and his administration's repressive tactics. Before arriving in Chiapas, I had spent two weeks in Oaxaca City where the protesters had taken over several blocks around the central plain and I had left Chiapas to spend two days in Mexico City where supporters of the PRD

[*Partido de la Revolución Democrática* or Party of the Democratic Revolution]
presidential candidate, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, had blocked some twelve
kilometers of the Paseo de la Reforma, one of the most distinguished thoroughfares in the
capital, with an informal village.



The Radio Insurgente live broadcast center in Oaxaca in 2006

This visit framed the Zapatistas within the broader national expression of demonstrative politics. In the South, the Zapatistas remained a presence even when underground and people in San Cristóbal were wondering whether the Zapatistas would answer the protests in neighboring Oaxaca. In Oaxaca City, several Zapatista images were incorporated in the general visual protest and *Radio Insurgente* broadcast from the central plain. In Mexico City on the Reforma, images of Che Guevara abounded along with those of Emiliano Zapata, the Magon brothers, and, of course, Obrador, but I only saw two images referencing the Zapatistas, both of Marcos. The *muñecas zapatistas* and Zapatista-themed T-shirts continued to be standard fare at the open air and crafts markets.



Posters featuring Marcos and La Otra Campaña in Oaxaca in 2006

In 2007, I returned to Chiapas to participate in one of that year's three international *encuentros*. This *encuentro* was attended by some 3500 people representing all the continents. It was to have visited all five the caracoles but because of the torrential rains that season, roads to La Garrucha and Roberto Barrios had been washed out and the caravan visited only Oventik, Morelia, and La Realidad, in that order. I had become interested in zapatourism and the *encuentro* was obviously an important component of that but in retrospect, I realize that this first direct contact with the Zapatistas remained a

mere partial introduction. While the solidarity activists that had attended the *encuentro* networked successfully with each other, even after the close of the *encuentro*, there was little informal communication between the attendees and the Zapatistas. The formal program included mainly read reports from the various committees from each *caracol* and despite the question and answer periods little real discussion took place between the Zapatista delegates and their international supporters. The effect of Marcos was clear. The few times he entered one of the camps to speak, he would be greeted with a guard of honor consisting of EZLN soldiers holding their wooden batons between them. The night in Morelia when he told the new *cuento* [tale] of the little fat stone who wanted to become a cloud and travel to Asia and Africa, the audience, indigenous Chiapanecan and international visitor alike, seemed to listen with rapt attention. During this visit I, however, also heard for the first time criticisms of Marcos's prominence.



Marcos surrounded by EZLN members as he leaves the stage in Oventik in 2007

In December 2009, I participated in a commercial tour organized by the San Cristóbal-based Tours Alternativos. The small group consisted of a Mexican woman studying public relations in Oaxaca, a Mexican man who works as a television sportscaster in Mexico City, a male international student of architecture from Romania studying at UNAM [the National Autonomous University of Mexico] in Mexico City, and myself. None of the other three members had been to Zapatista territory but had been following the movement for several years in the media and on-line. The package tour was to have been documented and was to have included stops at Chamula and San Andrés on the way to Oventik. In the end, the four of us bundled into a taxi on our own and visited Oventik only. As is usual when visitors enter the *caracol*, our first stop after the process of presenting our credentials was at the office of the *Junta de Buen Gobierno* [Council of Good Governance]. We were joined by two other groups of visitors, one consisting of four Mexican nationals with their tour guide and one of three Italian visitors. The *Junta* readily explained the intricacies of collective governance and autonomous education and health care. When the two male members of our group tried to push the conversation on three separate occasions to the role of Marcos and its effects on the international perception of the movement, the members of the *Junta* conferred with each other in Tzotzil before refusing to speak to these points. When our group left the *Junta* office, the conversation continued to dwell on the potential danger that Marcos's prominence could hold for the movement's standing internationally. We also discussed the implications of commercially organized tour groups to the *caracol*. My fellow group members felt that such a tour facilitated their meeting with the Zapatistas.



Me with a rotation of the Oventik Junta de Buen Gobierno in 2007. The Junta frequently invites members of visiting groups to pose for a photograph.

A few nights later I was sitting around a bonfire in a popular backpacking hostel in San Cristóbal. A Japanese woman wearing a Zapatista-themed T-shirt had just enthusiastically told the group of her experiences during another Tours Alternativos visit to Oventik when the hostel owner and two of his local friends joined the circle. 2010 was both the bicentennial of the Mexican independence and the centennial of the start of the Mexican Revolution. A distinctive stenciled graffiti had appeared on San Cristóbal walls—and I later noticed in Mexico City as well—of Emiliano Zapata and the caption *Nos vemos en 2010* [We'll see each other in 2010]. The three local men were not particularly impressed with the significance of 2010 and rather wanted to discuss the, as they viewed it, very real possibility of another Zapatista invasion of the city on New Year's Day. They were not alone in this expectation and the police and military presence

was overbearing until late afternoon on the 1st. The Zapatistas did not arrive in San Cristóbal then and, instead, closed Oventik and their other centers for “all business” from 31 December to 2 January.



Sign announcing Oventik's closure to outsiders for New Year 2010

During the summer of 2010, I spent three weeks studying at the CELMRAZ [*Centro de Español y Lenguas Mayas Rebelde Autónomo Zapatista* or the Zapatista Autonomous Rebel Centre for Spanish and Mayan Languages] in Oventik. Because the center uses Zapatista ideology as a vehicle to teach the languages and because of the intimate contact with Zapatista members, I was able to ask many of the questions that had been plaguing me since my first visit to the region. Discussions ranged widely covering the more expected topics of the prominence of Marcos and the continued importance of international solidarity. However, I was also able to broach more particular issues such as the Zapatistas' affront at being commodified as tourist destinations by groups like Tours

Alternativos. They were also incensed at the idea that entrepreneurs would transform them into dislodged souvenirs for the sake of profit. The people at the school introduced further topics they wanted to discuss and the conversations circled back to these topics numerous times. They included the finer points of the importance of not simply talking about the Zapatistas but asking them directly for clarification; praxis as the central Zapatista worldview; and how this praxis can be translated internationally. During this visit I was adamant about learning as much as possible about the Zapatistas' masking practices and I will discuss conversations I had had with the CELMRAZ staff on the Zapatista masks below.



The approach to the CELMRAZ compound in Oventik

My visits to Zapatista territory approached the Zapatistas from various directions. During each visit I continued an inventory of Zapatista-themed articles and availability of especially what has become known as the Zapatista *paliacate* design. During a visit to Ocosingo in 2009, for instance, mention of the Zapatistas was completely absent to the

casual observer even though this had been one of the most fiercely fought sites during the *levantamiento*. Possibly because this Tzeltal city is not on the usual tourist route, the only Zapatista evidence I saw during my five-day visit were the Zapatista *paliacates* that were displayed in the rambling city marker along with numerous other bandanna designs and colors. There were no *muñecas zapatistas* available for sale in Ocosingo. Chenalhó is also off the beaten tourist track and during a two week stay in the municipality during the summer of 2011 I again found no evidence of Zapatista-themed material culture outside of the Zapatista autonomous municipalities of Acteal and Polhó.



Sign at the entrance to the Acteal community in resistance

I have been struck throughout by the diversity in how Zapatistas mask in the territories in stark contrast to the increasingly homogenous depiction of Zapatista masking in the literature. I was able to investigate the significant role that tourism plays in whether Zapatista souvenirs are sold or not. I was also able to witness a change in how the Zapatistas deal with souvenir depictions of themselves on the one hand and, more recently, how far the *muñecas zapatistas* have veered from a reliable representation of the Zapatistas on the other. These observations and the implications that they suggest form the basis of this study.

Chapter 2: Theoretical and Methodological Overview

As I have stated in the introduction, I am exploring the internationally co-constructed Zapatista narrative that tends to both assume and propagate a Zapatista homogeneity that is dispelled as soon as one investigates further on the ground. In this endeavor, I am concentrating on two examples of Zapatista material culture. The mask originates with the Zapatistas and then circles outward within various, at times uncontextualized, interpretations and representations. The *muñecas*, on the other hand, were originally created outside of the Zapatista ranks and were only later incorporated by the Zapatistas on their own terms. The mask is my main diagnostic of the selective paring down of details so that a homogenous Zapatista image emerges, one wearing a black *pasamontañas* rather than any of the other masks in use in reality. However, the case history of the *muñecas* also exemplifies this process and elaborates it with additional paring down, so that only one type of traditional dress is used to represent the highly diverse Zapatista population.

In my exploration of the mask's evolution to become a central Zapatista sign, I do a historiographical reading of mostly newspaper reports on the Zapatistas paired with a chronological survey of how the Zapatistas have spoken about their masks and their masking practices. Because I deal here with non-academic writing for the most part and because terms such as “icon” and “symbol” are colloquially used as if they were interchangeable, I employ Charles Saunders Peirce's stricter definitions for “icon,” “index,” and “symbol.” Yet, as I relate below, Zapatistas will colloquially refer to the mask as symbolic. While the *muñecas* seem to stand in for the Zapatistas, in the Peircian

framework, *indexicality* best describes Zapatista deployments of these objects. The Peircian interrelatedness between interpretant, object, and sign is exemplified in my own triad of the physical, the representation, and the idea. This interrelatedness is crucial for contextualizing both the Zapatista mask and the *muñecas* and their roles in the international co-construction of the Zapatista narrative.

Peirce posits that each sign comprises two objects, “its object as it is represented and its object in itself” (Peirce 1958:390). He thus makes a distinction between the material object and its representation. The material, or “real,” object becomes the “dynamic object” in his explication of icons, indices, and symbols (Spencer Sorrell 2004:96). For Peirce, an icon is “a sign which is determined by its dynamic object by virtue of its own internal nature” (Peirce 1958:391), in other words an icon resembles its object. Webb Keane cautions that “[r]esemblance requires recognition, some construction or selection” (Keane 1997:239n12). This means that resemblance is only possible when similarities between two things are recognized—for Keane between icon and its object; in my study between Zapatistas and masked people in general as well as later between a masked Marcos and the masked Zapatistas in general. I suggest that Keane’s use of resemblance here does not mean a true copy and, therefore, a selective construction of those similarities deemed crucial to the resemblance, takes place. Extrapolating again to my study, I argue that masks, plural and varied, were selected and constructed through processes that I will outline in the next chapter to provide the evaluative structure in which initially masked people in the Chiapas region would suggest Zapatista membership. Subsequently, Marcos’s mask was similarly selected for and constructed—I argue co-constructed—into a resemblance between the *subcomandante* and masked

Zapatistas in general. The complication that I will explore below is that Marcos has only ever been associated with one type of mask, the *pasamontañas*. Yet, iconically, he comes to stand for all Zapatistas.

Peirce defines an index as “a sign determined by its Dynamic [*sic*] object by virtue of being in a real relation to it” (Peirce 1958:391). It is “a variety of sign that refers to its object” (Pollock 1995:582) and is “one that is really affected by an existent object” (Spencer Sorrell 2004:87). Keane adds that it is not only causation but also “contiguity to its object” that distinguishes the index (Keane 1997:19). Kory Spencer Sorrell points out that “[a]n indexical sign is an actual thing and has properties of its own,” which means that “[t]he indexical component ensures that sign activities, however mediated by higher forms of abstraction, inevitably include some continuing reference to the actually existing world” (Spencer Sorrell 2004:87, 88). However, William F. Hanks argues that, “For indexicality to function socially, the index as such must be made apparent, and it must be furnished with instructions” (Keane 2003:419). Below, I will show that, once the Zapatistas began explicating their masks—furnishing the masks with instructions as Keane and Hanks suggest—the masks were no longer generic masks and became specifically *Zapatista* masks including those distinguishing qualities and references that the explicatory “instructions” require as well as all features that would allow these masks to still be classed as real objects of the class “mask.”

A symbol is “a sign which is determined by its dynamic object only in the sense that it will be so interpreted. It thus depends either upon a convention, a habit, or a natural disposition of its interpretant” (Peirce 1958:391). Richard J. Parmentier explains that the Peircian symbol is “a kind of complex semiotic entity in which there is an irreducibly

triadic relation among the sign, the object, and the interpretant such that the sign and object would not be in any particular relationship if not for their being represented *as* being so related (Parmentier 1994:5,6). I show below that the various Zapatista origin stories intimate such a representational relationship; yet, the result remains indexical, albeit of a high level of complexity. I argue, however, that Zapatista explications are productive and that they feed into an international social imaginary about the Zapatistas. In that sense their indexical value informs the idea of the Zapatistas. In this study, I explore the ramifications of this process.

The concept of an interpretant is crucial in the understanding of the Peircian argument. Parmentier explains the interpretant as “the translation, explanation, meaning, or conceptualization” (Parmentier 1994:5). It is, consequently distinct from but related to the interpreter. The interpretant forms one point in Peirce’s triadic model of sign action. The other two points are constituted by the sign and the object. T. L. Short points out that, “All three items are triadic in the sense that none is what it is—a sign, an object, or an interpretant—except by virtue of its relation to the other two” (Short 2007:18). My study of the Zapatista masking practices hinges on the variable nature of the interpretant that I will show is dependent on the effects of the opposing trajectories looking-from-the-inside-of-the-mask and looking-at-the-mask-from-the-outside.

Keane also concerns himself with interconnections. He defines his notion of representational economy as “the dynamic interconnections among different modes of signification at play within a particular historical and social formation” (Keane 2003:410). He provides an example of such a representational economic analysis: “how people handle and value material goods may be implicated in how they use and interpret

words, and vice versa, reflecting certain underlying assumptions about the word and the beings that inhabit it” and notes that “[h]istorically, changes in one will be reflected in change in the other” (Keane 2003:410, 411). He argues that what he calls semiotic ideologies mediate the representational economy (Keane 2003:410) and defines the term as the “basic assumptions about what signs are and how they function in the world” all the while allowing that the “openness of things to further consequences perpetually threatens to destabilize existing semiotic ideologies” (Keane 2003:419).

My study explores the semiotic ideologies that have coalesced separately around the masks and the *muñecas*. I illustrate how both these objects remain open to especially unexpected realities and recontextualizations and thereby posing a threat to assumptions about their nature and function as signs. This potential dynamism is apparent in the appearance since July 2011 of *muñecas zapatistas* constructed more hastily than their predecessors in rainbow colors, both bright and pastel, as well as in a wider variety of materials ranging from store-bought felt to synthetic rayon. All of the new versions tend to be small and all are placed singly on horses of equally fantastic colors. Economically, this development points to the need for quicker production methods and cheaper materials. Visually, it distances the dolls even further from the Zapatista everyday reality. Semiotically, the change arguably equates the Zapatistas to magical creatures with not even natural colors to link them to reality.

As I have opted for a material culture study and as I am using material artifacts as analytical diagnostics, I look to Keane’s similar accent on the “very materiality of objects” (Keane 2006:199). His goal is “to open up social analysis to the historicity and social power of material things without reducing them either to being only vehicles of

meaning, on the one hand, or ultimate determinants, on the other” (Keane 2003:411). Consequently, he applauds Peirce’s retention of the object as part of the triadic nature of sign action (Keane 2003:413). He highlights the processual nature of Peirce’s model in which “signs give rise to new signs, in an unending process of signification” and which Keane suggests entails “sociability, struggle, historicity, and contingency” (Keane 2003:411). Keane argues that through attention to semiotic ideologies, Peirce’s dynamic model enables a close examination of “the modes of objectification, the potential for reflexivity they capacitate, and the specific character of their respective vulnerabilities to contingency” (Keane 2003:423).

To appreciate Keane’s assessment of Peirce’s model, it is necessary to look at Peirce’s inclusion of reality within his model. Spencer Sorrell suggests that Peirce made a connection between “the nature of the real” and an understanding and response to “the problem of representation” (Spencer Sorrell 2004:10). Peirce viewed only the index as actual. The icon is an abstract possibility while a symbol is general and has “being that consists in mediation or continuity only” (Spencer Sorrell 2004:24, 27). Yet, Spencer Sorrell maintains that all three modes of signs are “equally *real*, each manifesting itself in the phenomena of everyday experience in its own way” (Spencer Sorrell 2004:51). Vincent Colapietro notices that Peirce’s triadic constellation infers in sequence a generality, processes of generalization, and ultimately “the idea of generalizability” (Foreword to Spencer Sorrell 2004:xiii). The processes contained within this cycle result in “the given of actually shared values, practices, and narratives gives way to the work of *trying out* their locally inherited forms in novel locations and innovative ways” (Foreword to Spencer Sorrell 2004:xiii). The fieldwork examples I list below of the

Zapatistas' agentive and innovative use of masking and *muñecas* alike as "phenomena of everyday experience" exemplify this *trying out* while combining objectification, reflexivity, and contingency.

Keane's approach acknowledges the "ways in which material objects realize subjects by pragmatically *extending* them" where the "subject is not simply constituted through its *opposition* to the encompassment of the object; rather, it is amplified by merging *with* the object" (Keane 2006:1999, 200; emphases in original). He refers to Alfred Gell's theorization of the relationship between a soldier and the soldier's weapon where the weapon becomes "a necessary component of the soldier's agency" so that "the 'soldier' is a totality composed of the person plus the weapon" (Keane 2006:200). He argues that this approach shifts the focus to objects' "practical role in mediating actions" (Keane 2006:200). Through his concept of "bundling," Keane argues that, "material things combine an indefinite number of physical properties and qualities" although "only some of these properties are relevant and come into play" in a particular context while the "other properties persist, available for promotion as circumstance change" (Keane 2006:200). As I show below, the mask has become an integral part of the official Zapatista image similar to Gell's image of soldier-and-gun. This connection is emphasized during the creation of the *muñecas*. However, the processes of bundling that are prevalent in the cases of the mask and the *muñecas*, make use of this merging of Zapatista and mask in very different ways.

Michael Taussig, Jean Baudrillard, Walter Benjamin, and Steven Feld all consider a particular instance of the material object as they explore the creation, nature, and ramifications of the copy. Taussig defines the mimetic faculty as, "the nature that culture

uses to create second nature, the faculty to copy, imitate, make models, explore difference, yield into and become Other. The wonder of mimesis lies in the copy drawing on the character and power of the original, to the point whereby the representation may even assume that character and that power” (Taussig 1993:xiii). Baudrillard argues the opposite and wants to insert a greater distance, potentially even a severance, between the copy and the original. He critiques images and representations within the realm of simulacra and simulations: “Abstraction today is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal” (Baudrillard 2000[1994]:169). Later he lists what he classes as “the successive phases of the image”: first, “the reflection of a basic reality;” second, the masking and perversion of “a basic reality;” third, the masking of “the *absence* of a basic reality;” and fourth, bearing “no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum” (Baudrillard 2000[1994]:173).

In a similar vein, Benjamin argues that, “The presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity” (Benjamin 2007 [1968]:220). He is particularly concerned with the “aura” or authority of the original. For him, “the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence” (Benjamin 2007 [1968]:221). Due to the possibility of mechanical reproduction, Benjamin maintains that, “To an ever greater degree the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility” (Benjamin 2007 [1968]:224).

Finally, Feld considers the circulation of copied objects, in his case specifically sounds, but provides a theoretical basis that can be applied to other commodified artifacts. He builds on Murray Schaeffer's term "schizophonia" which entails "the split between an original sound and its electroacoustical transmission or reproduction" (Feld 1994:258) to coin his concept of "schizophonic mimesis." A descriptive symptom of the World Beat music phenomenon, schizophonic mimesis incorporates

a broad spectrum of interactive and extractive practices. These acts and events produce a traffic in new creations and relationships through the use, circulation, and absorption of sound recordings. ... This is to ask how sound recordings, split from their source through the chain of audio production, circulation, and consumption stimulate and license renegotiations of identity. ... At the same time their material and commodity conditions create new possibilities whereby a place and people can be recontextualized, rematerialized, and thus thoroughly reinvented (Feld 1996:13)

In an earlier paper, Feld extends his argument to include the process of schizmogogenesis and speaks directly to the politics and economies of dissemination. He explains, "Once sounds [such as the ones exemplified by World Beat and World Music] are split from their sources, that splitting is dynamically connected to escalating cycles of distorting mutuality, which in turn is linked to polarizing interpretations of meaning and value" (Feld 2003[1994]:289). In other words, after the initial split from an original and strictly authentic context, the sounds—or in the case of this study, the Zapatista-themed material artifacts—form part of a larger system that allows for the co-construction of a narrative and that calls to mind both the interrelatedness and the role of the interpretant that Peirce accentuates. For Feld, the copy of a copy, or the second generational split

from the original, becomes the key factor in the eventual dislodgement from the original context.

The Zapatista mask travels both in photographic representations as well as within narratives about and narratives by the Zapatistas that are disseminated internationally. Examples of the masks, especially the *pasamontañas*, also travel as dislodged physical objects in the shape of souvenirs. This type of travel, however, is not the norm for the masks and even when they do, they continue to embody their role as being a significant and signifying part of the official Zapatista. The traveling that the *muñecas* perform is of a different nature as the dolls travel as completed and independent objects. They, too, travel portrayed in photographs but in these instances, they retain their independent nature. They remain souvenirs first and foremost. Referring to my own interrelated triad, the schizo-iconic split occurs when the physical reality of the diversity within Zapatista ranks is elided from representations and, consequently, during the resultant schizmogogenesis, from the idea of and the co-constructed narration about the Zapatistas.

The literature that I use to discuss the *muñecas*, continue to emphasize the materiality of the objects but tend to do so within the relations of the traffic that Feld refers to that result in the recontextualization, rematerialization, and reinvention of the place and the people that launched them. This scholarship acknowledges that not only “people tour cultures” but that “cultures and objects themselves travel” (Rojek and Urry 1997:1). Following James Clifford’s lead in challenging “the fixity of the opposition between dwelling *and* traveling,” Celia Lury creates the textured composites of dwelling-in-traveling and traveling-in-dwelling (Lury 1997:75, 76). These conceptual structures allow her to foreground the object but in a way that takes into consideration the way in

which the “physical confines of the object” carries with it the culture of its foreign and “other” origins as the object enters into the “practices of acquisition, collection, and display” (Lury 1997:76). She explains that dwelling-in-traveling and traveling-in-dwelling both draw on the “very object-ness of objects and the organization of space” as they refer to and exemplify the dual capacity of “objects to travel and stay still” (Lury 1997:77).

In my study, Lury’s argument works in tandem with that of Igor Kopytoff that postulates a “cultural biography of things.” Kopytoff’s premise that biographies of things, as in the case of human biographies, are necessarily partial ties back to Keane’s concept of bundling. Kopytoff, however, is interested in a particular bundle: only those biographies that are “culturally informed,” in other words those that have as emphasis “how and from what perspective” they narrate pertinent details about their referential objects within the processes of commoditization (Kopytoff 1986:68). This approach leads to his evaluation of the connection between commodities and what he calls “the drama of identities.” He concludes that, “in the homogenized world of commodities, an eventful biography of a thing becomes the story of the various singularizations of it, of classifications and reclassifications in an uncertain world of categories whose importance shifts with every minor change in context. As with person[al biographies], the drama here lies in the uncertainties of valuation and of identity” (Kopytoff 1986:90). As does Keane, Kopytoff notices the contingent nature of the interaction between people and objects, an interaction that is destabilized further by through respective dwelling and traveling.

In my theoretical approach to this study, I am using the theories outlined here as springboards to generalize the processes of mediated representation and traveling objects.

I, however, insist on drawing these representations and objects back to the particular and physical Zapatista context.



Participants in the 2007 Second Encuentro in Oventik



Radio Insurgente promotional photograph of a live broadcast from Oventik

Chapter 3: Tracing the Zapatista Mask

Since the 1994 uprising, the Zapatista mask has become an internationally recognized logo of the insurgency movement. However, the Zapatista mask does not proclaim its categorical specificity as for example an Igbo mask would. Instead, the Zapatista mask is contextually determined. “The Zapatista mask” is also a misnomer as the Zapatistas do not use a single, uniform type of mask. Instead, they use two distinct types: the full-faced ski-mask or balaclava that they call the *pasamontañas*³⁰ and the printed cotton bandanna or *paliacate* that they tie around the lower parts of their faces. Further, not all Zapatista participants wear a mask, nor do Zapatistas wear masks at all times. Yet, these distinctions and others are glossed over in the co-construction and especially in the retellings of the Zapatista narrative.

That common and utilitarian clothing accessories such as the balaclava and bandanna could be imprinted with so much meaning is testament to the power of the disseminated Zapatista context. Both the *pasamontañas* and the *paliacate* were used for practical purposes in Chiapas—and elsewhere—before the uprising, also by people who did not become Zapatistas: the *pasamontañas* to guard against the damp cold in some of the higher altitude regions and the *paliacate* as an all-purpose work cloth worn as a neckerchief, tied in a strip around the forehead, tucked into a pocket, or even as a make-shift bandage (*La Jornada* 2005). This means that the objects referenced by “the Zapatista mask” are generic masks that, viewed simply as material objects, do not pertain exclusively to the Zapatistas.

Pasamontañas abound on ski accessories and military gear websites in Mexico just as ski masks and balaclavas do elsewhere. The term is familiar throughout Latin America³¹ and both the Mexican army and the Popular Revolutionary Army [EPR, *Ejército Popular Revolucionario*] make use of *pasamontañas*. The term *paliacate* is more specific to Mexico but, paradoxically, incorporates possible transnational roots. On the Mexican side of the argument, the Royal Academy of Spanish (2011) traces the etymology of the term to a hybridization of the Nahuatl words *pal* [color] and *yacatl* [nose], Renato Rosaldo includes the term in his list of most often used slang and colloquial expressions around Mexico City (Rosaldo 1948:443), and John Herbert Utley lists it among “the one hundred words of highest merit” in his survey of *mexicanismos* (Utley 1940:359, 360)³². Utley observes that most of the words in his list are nouns. He suggests that “the natives were much more reluctant to give up their traditional Indian names for objects than their words of description and action” and that “[n]early all the words have a direct connection to the everyday life of the *peones*” (Utley 1940:358, 359).

Patrimony scholars Eva Uchmany and Renata Schneider add that a commercial *paliacate* printing industry was established in Mexico City in 1885 (*La Jornada* 2005). However, Uchmany and Schneider track the origins of the *paliacate* to India where the paisley designs were manually stamped in yellow and black on red cloth (*La Jornada* 2005). Archaeologist Richard B. Gill agrees that the bandannas were printed in the southern Indian port city of Paliacate, today known as Pulicat (*Etimología* 2011). Kanakalatha Mukund’s survey of the Indian textile industry in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries provides possible support for this viewpoint as Pulicat formed part of

the Coromandel Coast, a region that was renowned for its cloth, and especially its distinctive red cloth (Mukund 1992:2059³³).

Consequently, “the Zapatista mask” appeared first as useful and rather mundane—if well-traveled— objects that were only subsequently, after the uprising, imbued with their current, additional meaning. Therefore it follows that the Zapatista quality of these masks stems from their association with the people who call themselves Zapatistas rather than from some inherent and autonomous physical attribute. This association, like the Zapatista narrative as a whole, is a co-construction that foregrounds certain aspects while obscuring others. The result is a simplified public connection between all Zapatistas and an uncomplicated logo-like representative mask internationally. Through the iteration, amplification, and dissemination of the seminal images of those Zapatista members who wore masks on the first days of the uprising, the association between Zapatistas and mask became an undisputed fact. Because of the outspoken prominence of Marcos as spokesperson for the movement combined with the fact that he always appears in public masked by his *pasamontañas*³⁴, the black *pasamontañas* has become a shorthand reference to all Zapatista masking practices.

As is the norm in scholarly writing, authors’ insights form the die on which their discussions are cast. This is one of the main criticisms about academic writing of the movement. “*Los estan sus ideas pero no escuchan a la fuente*” [These are their ideas but they do not listen at the source], is how one Zapatista framed it in June 2010. I asked him whether it is at all possible to write academically about the movement given that the Zapatistas foreground praxis to such an extent. “It is possible to write about anything,” he answered. “Ok, but is it *acceptable* to write about the Zapatistas,” I tried to probe further.

“We don’t care. Those writings don’t affect who we are,” he shrugged. “Those writings” do, however, impact and change representations of the Zapatistas and, consequently, the outside understanding of the movement.

The Zapatista mask is a popular topic for scholars and several have attempted analyses of especially the potential significance of the masks. These discussions frequently make use of selections from mainly secondary sources, a regrettable fact that supports Dennis Tedlock’s contention that “there are plenty of writers, scores upon scores of them all the way down to the present, whose only quotations are from other anthropologists [or, I would argue, other scholars]” (Tedlock 1987:325). Besides Tedlock’s concern about the exclusion of the expertise of the native voice, this practice also lulls scholars into unquestioningly accepting what had been published before.

Where scholarship on the Zapatista mask is concerned, scholars face the unusual situation of an overwhelming amount of published quotes from Zapatistas, journalists, and other scholars. Where the Zapatista writing is concerned, at least one dangerous pitfall exists: The Zapatistas and especially Marcos have explicated Zapatista masking in various ways. This has led the Zapatista scholarship to be content in accepting the significance of the masks *carte blanche*, instead of engaging in a concerted effort to pin down the “real” reasons for and roles of the masks. As the body of Zapatista literature is so large, there is bound to be a quote to be found somewhere to bear out a stated assumption. One might ask whether it is an appropriate role for anthropologists to attempt to identify the real reasons or whether it is even a reachable goal. My contention is that, seeing as Zapatista masking forms the basis of much scholarly analysis, ignoring the specificity and variety of the masks prevents a true reflection on the practice. As I attempt

below, a detailed consideration of the trajectory of the masking practice also offers insights into the broader interactions in which the Zapatistas are involved. I do not suggest that there is only one “real” reason but rather, I bear in mind that reasons should be sought from the people. In this study, I show the disconnect between the people’s various reasons and their portrayal in both the media and the academic scholarship.

In this chapter, I will consider the development of the official Zapatista mask and the mediated representations that feed into this development. To this goal, and in an attempt to notice and grapple with gaps in scholarly thinking that had previously been left unchecked, I will project my study from the vantage point of Webb Keane’s representational economy where “the dynamic interconnections among different modes of signification [are] at play within a particular historical and social formation (Keane 2003:410). I will foreground the mask as material artifact, following Keane’s note that material objects are productively open to external events which results in their “potential for mediating the introduction of ‘contingency’ into even the most hegemonic of social orders (Keane 2003:416). I will also build upon Keane’s contention that “material objects realize subjects by pragmatically *extending* them” where “[t]he subject is not simply constituted through its *opposition* to the encompassment of the object; rather, it is amplified by merging *with* the object” (Keane 2006:199, 200; emphases in original)³⁵. Finally, I will draw on Charles Saunders Peirce’s notion of the powerful interconnections between the interpretant, the sign, and the object as this relates to the physical, the representation, and the idea.

The Mask as Material Object

As a generic mask, it presupposes the trajectories of both “looking at” and “looking from.” However, the Zapatista mask is not a rigid mask that retains its shape whether it is being worn or not. Instead, its flat fabric remains incomplete without, and is therefore predicated upon, the shape of a face behind it. This means the Zapatista mask is both plastic and uniquely embodied as the mask hugs the individual facial contours of the wearer. This overlap of plasticity and specificity directs the course of the evolution of the mask becoming a logo as it is not the limp mask as object—whether *pasamontañas* or *paliacate*—that is distilled and variously circulated but rather the unit of mask-and-Zapatista-face collapsed into a now paradoxically disembodied presence. Yet, as individual features flatten, a false image of Zapatista homogeneity emerges. This results in the Zapatista person behind the mask becoming a generic representation of the movement and ultimately dissolving into the logo. In the process, the trajectory of “looking at” becomes misdirected and does not recognize the Zapatista individual even as the masked Zapatista continues to “look from.” I argue that a major part of the Zapatista mask’s conundrum lies in the distinction between these two trajectories.

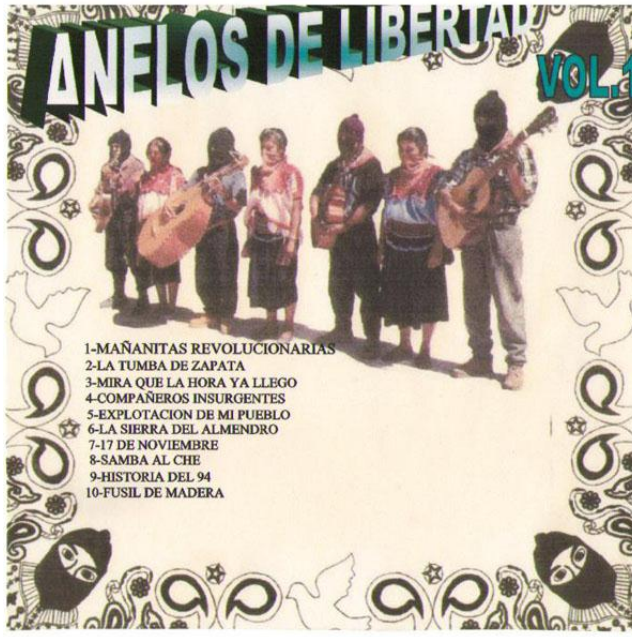
Even though the onlooker’s gaze misses a Zapatista individuality, she does so in the process of acknowledging the Zapatista category. In other words, because a person wears a Zapatista mask, the person must be a Zapatista. As I have explained above, the Zapatistas are a highly diverse group. Besides all the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic differences the blanket label of Zapatista obscures, this homogenization also ignores logical variables such as climate, cost, and availability that come into play in the choice of mask. Yet, though scholars and journalists alike notice the masks, comment on them, and even theorize at length about their potential symbolism and/or significance, the

materially differentiated character of the various masks slips by unchallenged³⁶.

However, by not questioning the flattening of the Zapatista mask into an ideogram, the full representational economy of the masks is not taken into account. Keane argues that, “the very meaning of certain kinds of goods may be inseparable from the prices they carry under certain labor regimes, or the difficulty of obtaining certain materials. Objects may thus convey into the world of socially realized meanings the *indexical* traces of causal process that remain otherwise unexpressed” (Keane 2006:200).

Zapatistas mask throughout the indigenous Eastern parts of Chiapas, a territory that encompasses a climatic range from chilly cloud forests in the Los Altos highlands where Oventik lies to the tropical rainforest of the Lacandón and La Realidad. Therefore, if only for this reason, it makes sense that people might favor the cooler or the warmer mask over the other³⁷. Lynn Stephen, in a rare example of scholarly attention to the material and practical details of Zapatista masking, quotes *comandanta* Trini’s preference for the lighter and therefore more comfortable *paliacate* in the hot and humid climate of her Las Margaritas home (Stephen 2002:103). Capitán Federico appears in Muñoz Ramírez’s celebratory overview wearing a *pasamontañas* made of a thin material as opposed to being knitted (Muñoz Ramírez 2003:45) and in the same book, Marcos appears in one photograph wearing a similar cooler *pasamontañas*³⁸ (Muñoz Ramírez 2003:18). The *pasamontañas* are also more expensive than the *paliacates*. Duncan Earle and Jeanne Simonelli allude to this in their account of the 2003 New Year’s Day march into San Cristóbal: “Men with ski masks, women and children, faces covered with red Zapatista bandanas, paraded on foot” (Earle and Simonelli 2005:227)³⁹. In the photograph on the cover of the *Anelos de Libertad* CD that was released by the EZLN,

the seven musicians are depicted, four men and three women, with all the men wearing *pasamontañas* and all the women wearing *paliacates*.



The Anelos CD cover

Initially, availability certainly played a role in which masks were used. Nick Henck relates how, in 1986, “[i]n order to inculcate a feeling of professionalism among the new [EZLN] cadres, uniforms had to be acquired” and how stolen shirts and trousers from Pemex [the nationalized oil company] filled the initial demand (Henck 2007:105)⁴⁰. A San Cristóbal street vendor sheds further light on some of the logistical preparations the EZLN had to effect:

It all started on Tuesday in May. As usual, I was in my little spot in the marketplace when a young Chamula girl came up to me, asking for ski masks. ... I have thirty here. She paid for all thirty and ordered three hundred more. I ordered ten gross of ski masks from Puebla, and she bought all of them from me. This was in May. In June, some others came to buy green pants. They arrived with their lists: fifty pairs of 28” waist, sixty 29”, seventy 30”, like that. Green pants were in fashion. Lots of business in green pants. In July they wanted brown shirts. Two hundred

size 14, three hundred 14 ½, four hundred size 15. In August, it's bandanas. The same. The first of January, I'm on my way to open up for business ... But there's no one in the marketplace. "Everyone's at the park," the man who sweeps up tells me. ... So I make up my bundle with everything I have to sell, and get myself over to the park. And there they all are, my clientele, in the City Hall, wearing my green pants, my brown shirts, with the bandana and ski mask. Since then, I haven't sold a thing (Tostón 1995:1, 2).

It is unclear whether availability or demand drove the streamlining of the *pasamontañas* and *paliacate* designs. From both the photographic and the written record it is clear that such a streamlining took place, however.

The Zapatistas have explained one of the key paradoxes of their strategy on various occasions⁴¹: they were compelled to hide their faces in order to be seen. Carlos Monsivaís observes how the success of the mask in this regard immediately translated into a change in the insurgents' demeanor on the first day of the *levantamiento*:

they've given up traditional clothing ... Their bandanas and ski masks show they are members of the EZLN's community base of support, and their secondhand clothing indicates a nearly furtive entrance into modernity... These Zapatistas, most of them men, have changed ... in the seven years since they let their springs of aggressiveness fly like panthers set free. Their body language has changed, as has the rhythm of their advance... and most unexpectedly is their gaze. These young people look and accept being looked at. They convey a sense of newness: no longer do they consider themselves perennially excluded from the vision of others. They know they are perceived, and the end of their invisibility makes them happy and reinforces their adherence to the EZLN (Monsivaís 2002:124).

Some six weeks after the *levantamiento*, when, as I will show below, the Zapatistas had taken hold of the mediated imaginary beyond random news snippets, Marcos acceded to both the success of the paradox of hiding-to-be-seen, and challenged the international

community with its necessity. On the second day of the Peace Talks in San Cristóbal he commented, “I would like to talk about the concern that exists about our faces and weapons. We do not understand why you are so concerned with what our faces look like, when before the first you didn’t even know they existed” (The Editorial Collective 1994:214).

The visual shock of the mask forces the trajectory of “looking at.” Following Peirce’s argument, individual faces literally embody the Zapatista masks, elevating the masks to an iconic sign. Dennis Pollock, also following Peirce, argues that, “Masks ... are iconic inasmuch as they resemble, and are also indexical, inasmuch as they draw upon dimensions of their object to signal their representation” (Pollock 1995:582). As a material object, the mask retains an inside and an outside. Indexically, the mask is an ideogrammatic contact point that signals the Zapatistas’ agency in transmitting their deliberate message of “Look at us.” In this sense, it opens the potential of a communicative space with the outside. As an interface, the Zapatista mask, however, retains the potential for interstitiality, a quality that is accentuated in the increased iconicity of the mask. This heightened iconicity is due to the intensified mediated traffic in and around the mask as a familiar sign.

In completing the paradox of hiding a face so that that face can be seen, the Zapatista mask introduces a further contradictory layer: indexing a masked face to be seen while hiding the individuality of the contours that enliven the very mask itself. While for the Zapatistas their masks are never an arbitrary accessory, each mask remains a mere intimation of the whole personhood of the individual Zapatista wearing it. Zapatista masking standardizes all Zapatistas to this one thing. In this sense, the Zapatista

mask remains incomplete. It falls into the same category as all the “magically effective mimetic images” that Marcel Mauss and Henri Hubert portrayed as “a poorly executed ideogram” where “[a]ny resemblance is purely theoretical or abstract” (Taussig 1993:51, 52). The practical efficacy of the mask where hiding facial features is concerned, is not the main issue. Pollock suggests that even a “minimal mask *signals* the disguise of identity” while “its success depends upon the familiar kind of suspension of disbelief through which the ‘theater effect’ is achieved” (Pollock 1995:584, 585).

This suspension of disbelief is particularly apparent in the international public’s acceptance of a recognizable yet perpetually masked Marcos. Alma Guillermoprieto describes him as “a faceless stand-in for all the oppressed” (Guillermoprieto 2001:212). This is only technically true. In practice, whereas the representative rule regarding the general Zapatista populace tends toward a collective anonymity, Marcos is named, singled out, and lionized. Even though always publicly behind exactly the mask that is generally associated with the movement, he does not appear as generic Zapatista but as Marcos. His mask’s supposed anonymity is counteracted by the various accoutrements that build his “guerrilla chic” style (Padgett 1996:14). Consequently, his prominent nose and his ever-present pipe re-establish the individualistic topography of his face. Yet, as I will discuss fully below, the government’s unmasking of Marcos shows that his familiarity includes and even depends on his *pasamontañas* being predictably in place. According to Guillermoprieto’s ironic reading of the unmasking, Marcos “yank[ed] back the mask his pursuers had torn off, donned it once more” and “re-established his credentials” (Guillermoprieto 2001:215).

The Development of the Pasamontañas' Prominence

Both the association between the Zapatistas and their masks and the construction of “the Zapatista mask” as a logo for the movement are the result of gradual processes fuelled by media dissemination. I argue that the development of both the indexical prominence of the Zapatista masks, which over time comes to favor the *pasamontañas*, and the iconicity of Marcos appear in lockstep with each other in the media. I am concentrating here on the print media although I am taking into account effects of at least one televised interview as well. The printed word was the main means in which the Zapatistas initially communicated with the outside world⁴²; but photographs frequently accompanied reports about them and these certainly cemented the international association between masks and the Chiapanecan insurgents.



A choice of masks. Radio Insurgente promotional photograph

As Taussig remarks,

It is also worth noting that, to my knowledge, neither video nor audiotaping amount to anything more than a small fraction of the representation of either the subcomandante's [Marcos's] or the Zapatistas' presence. What we who live outside of certain small areas in Chiapas have beamed at us are *written words*—and *photos, by the score, of masked persons*. Indeed there is a striking photogenicity here; the more masked the reality, the more striking the drama and even the beauty of the photography, as if the masked face, here at least, is divinely preordained for the camera (Taussig 1999:254).

I am further deliberately focusing on the early reports on and by the Zapatistas to explore my contention concerning the synchronicity between the development of Marcos's iconicity and the *pasamontañas*' prominence. I maintain that the associations and constructions I am considering were shaped during the initial period when the outside world first encountered the Zapatistas and started becoming familiar with the idea of the insurgents⁴³. I maintain that the trajectory of the discourse about the Zapatistas germinated in this period. Even though I argue that this discourse is mainly *about* the Zapatistas, the Zapatistas have remained active partners in the process to some extent and have provided, through Marcos, one communiqué and piece of writing after the other from only days after the start of the uprising⁴⁴. I, however, find that the Zapatista writings, just as the masks, become dislodged from their original contexts and timelines and are used retroactively in several instances to prove scholarly arguments.

As I am analyzing news coverage, events play a key role. Ironically, in its attempts to discredit the Zapatistas, the Mexican government fanned—and at times reignited—the media frenzy surrounding the insurgents and facilitated the growing iconicity of Marcos. In the international dissemination of news about the Zapatistas, some

Mexican reports become events in their own right in the international arena. As is usual in international news, local media enjoy the authority of being on the scene and will be quoted widely. Items generated by news agencies such as Associated Press (AP) are also influential as smaller publications often need to rely solely on these services for their international news. The media covers events but also tries to make sense of these events in their editorials and through commentaries, frequently provided by guest writers. In the Zapatista case, these guests in the Mexican newspapers included the cream of the country's intelligentsia⁴⁵. The Zapatistas' writings to this day respond to events, comment on news coverage of their activities as well as events in general, explain their position on issues, and start new threads for discussion such as the wellbeing and release of the captured Absalón Castellanos Domínguez⁴⁶. Some of their writings cause headlines and become their own news events such as the first batch of Zapatista communiqués published on 11 January 1994. Yet, because of the difficulties the Zapatistas experienced in getting their communiqués to the various publications, their comments are frequently out of step with national events and news coverage.

The Zapatista writings fall into three broad categories: the six Declarations from the Lacandón Jungle that have been issued to date; the official communiqués issued and signed by the CCRI⁴⁷; and the various sundry letters, reflections, *cuentos*, and communiqués that Marcos issues in the course of his role as Zapatista spokesperson. According to Marcos, even though he does all the writing, the editorial authority of all writing issued in the name of the Zapatistas lies with the CCRI (Foreword, Bardacke, López, et al 1995:26). The two types of communiqués are distinguished by the process in which they are created: the impetus for the official communiqués comes from the

committee while Marcos suggests topics or motivates reasons for the other pieces and offers the finished products for debate and approval to the committee (Foreword, Bardacke, López, et al 1995:26, 27). A further distinction between the CCRI-ordered communiqués and the pieces signed only by Marcos rests in the language and, frequently, in the point of view the writing encompasses. The CCRI communiqués tend to be more formal while Marcos has become known for his irreverence and sharp wit. Both types of communiqués, however, are often very poetic. The official communiqués also generally speak in a collective voice on behalf of the full Zapatista group whereas Marcos's writings frequently do not.

I identify five broad phases in the development of the masked Zapatista in international news representations during the first thirteen months after the uprising. Each of these phases provide a specific environment for the development of the Zapatista mask as logo for the movement as well as contributing to the shaping of the discourse about the Zapatistas. Over the course of these phases, the Zapatistas appear and develop sequentially as provocative news items; in their own voice; as physically present; indexically situated through explications; and as hyperreal. The distinctions between these phases are not absolute but I maintain that the outliers still follow the general trend.

Phase One: As Provocative News Items

After the first day of the uprising, the print media was clearly scrambling to make sense of the insurrection. Besides straight reportage on casualties, skirmishes, statistics, government responses, and so on, commentary and interviews in *La Jornada* concentrated mainly on situating the uprising historically and exploring the inequities of

the indigenous Chiapanecan situation as reasons for the revolt, punctuated occasionally with debated reports about foreign elements in the Zapatista leadership ranks. The masks did not warrant specific attention until much later. For example, about two-thirds through the *La Jornada* lead published on 2 January, the newspaper described the uniforms some insurgents wore on the first day and then notes the presence of both *pasamontañas* and *paliacates* (*La Jornada* 1994:17). Subsequent reports in *La Jornada* during this period rarely mentioned Marcos and tended to include quotes from a wide variety of people who self-identified as Zapatistas.

The *Gazette* of Montreal, the *New York Times*, the *Herald* of Glasgow, and the *BBC* Summary of World Broadcast on 2 and 3 January 1994, made no mention of the insurgents being masked. Tod Robberson of the *Washington Post*, on 3 January, mentioned both types of masks but only as details to the main thrust of his report on “fourteen men and boys, all wearing the red bandanas of the Zapatista force” having been shot and on “a female guerrilla whose face was covered by a ski mask” demanding a “war tax” before allowing two reporters to pass at a roadside checkpoint (Robberson 1994a). This trend of mentioning only occasionally either of the types of masks, and then only as a secondary detail, continued through most of the twelve-day armed period of the uprising in *La Jornada* as well as in the major world newspapers (*LexisNexis*) and the smaller US papers (*Access Newspaper Archive*). Similarly, Marcos, when he was named at all, mainly appeared briefly deep in the body of the reports, not in the headlines and not as a key angle to the story.

The exceptions responded to the Mexican government’s attempts to “shift blame away from those who have designed flawed government policy” and “an unwillingness to

acknowledge that conditions were so bad that the indigenous populations of Chiapas had rebelled” (Russell 1995:25) and, instead, blamed foreign “professionals of violence” for the uprising⁴⁸. Marcos, as vocal and obvious *mestizo* Zapatista commander, became an easy and favorite target of the government’s damage control strategy. On 5 January, the ministries of the Interior, Defense, and Social Development along with the office of the Attorney General issued a joint statement that the Chiapanecan uprising was not indigenous and that its leadership consisted of Mexican and foreign professionals (Russell 1995: 26)⁴⁹. On the same day, the government issued a composite sketch of Marcos, replete with *pasamontañas*, eerily foreshadowing the public relations debacle surrounding the so-called unmasking of Marcos in February 1995. The authorities also arrested a Venezuelan ornithologist, Peter Pitcher Garrido, mistaken for Marcos, in Ocosingo. *La Jornada* published a report on this arrest on 7 January under the headline *Confunden a un venezolano con Marcos* [A Venezuelan confused with Marcos] (*La Jornada* 1994:164). This was only the third time that the *subcomandante*’s name appeared in the publication’s headlines and the previous two, published on 2 and 4 January respectively, headed excerpts from the interview *La Jornada* conducted with him on 1 January. On 5 January, Mauricio Merino picked up on the government’s allegations and pointed out in his commentary that no one seemed to know for sure who was in command of the EZLN (*La Jornada* 1994:142). In her commentary on 9 January, Elena Poniatowska argued that more than just the Zapatista leadership was unknown. In her response to the photographs that had been circulating of the people of the uprising, she humanized the Zapatistas as individuals and asked why some wore *pasamontañas* and others not and why the people used such a variety of arms (*La Jornada* 1994:218).

The photographs that were published during this period contain a clue as to why masks were not much of an issue: not every insurgent wore a mask and not everyone who did, wore the same type of color of mask. Marcos responded on 1 January⁵⁰ to *La Jornada*'s question why some of the insurgents were masked and other not that, "the officers are those that are masked" (The Editorial Collective 1994:62). He did not specify the type or color of mask as he would all too frequently later highlight the black *pasamontañas*. An overview of the photographs published in *La Jornada* up to 17 January and of those included in retrospective accounts of the uprising seems to suggest that the officers-only maxim applied to the initial days only. Marcos's distinction might also have referred to the *pasamontañas* mask only⁵¹ although Blanche Petrich and Elio Henríquez interviewed six of the CCRI members on 3 and 4 February 1994—*comandanta* Ramona and the *comandantes* David, Javier, Moisés, Isaac, and Felipe (Ross 1995:206)—wearing "*cuatro pasamontañas azul eléctrico y dos paliacates rojos*" [four electric-blue *pasamontañas* and two red *paliacates*] (published in *La Jornada* 4 and 5 February; The Editorial Collective 1994:135). In a background description of the camp in which the reporters met with the Zapatistas, Petrich and Henríquez describe the guards, mostly "young people, all of their faces covered with grey or black ski masks" (The Editorial Collective 1994:136).

In one of Pedro Valtierra's best known photographs taken during the February 1994 Peace Talks in the San Cristóbal cathedral, thirteen of the senior Zapatista delegates appear, all wearing *pasamontañas* but including four worked in light colored wool, one of which incorporated bold white stripes (Muñoz Ramírez 2003:94). The Editorial Collective anthology that collects material published from the start of the uprising up to

June 1994, however, also includes a photograph of a large male audience crowding together, all wearing *paliacates* of different colors and designs and no *pasamontañas* (1994:279). Emiliano Thibaut's photograph of Castellanos Dominguez's release on 16 February shows five Zapatistas accompanying the former governor, one wearing a *pasamontañas* and four wearing *paliacates* (Tótoro and Thibaut 2001:40). This pattern of one Zapatista wearing a *pasamontañas* in the company of several others wearing *paliacates* appears in several of Thibaut's 1994 photographs suggesting the possibility of one officer with several insurgents. Yet, over time the *pasamontañas* clearly did not remain within the purview of the officer class as in two of Thibaut's photographs of Zapatista *bases de apoyo* [community bases of support], both dated 2001, everyone appears with *pasamontañas*.



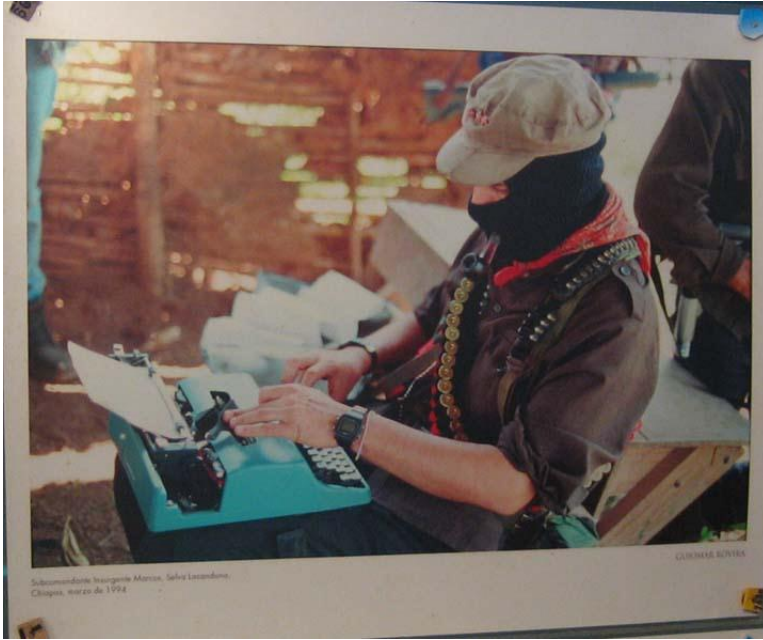
A mural on the Orange 20 cycle store in Heliotrope Road, Los Angeles

In the course of this first phase, the Zapatista masks became iconic in that they became associated with the Zapatistas and progressively came to be recognized as signs

representative of the movement. In the next phase during which the Zapatistas' voice is introduced and when the Zapatistas begin to acknowledge, explain, and highlight their connection to their masks, the Zapatista mask takes on an indexical function as well.

Phase Two: In their Own Voice

On 11 January, *Here We Are, The Forever Dead*, dated 6 January 1994, became the first published statement from the Zapatistas since the uprising began and initiated the second phase in mediated Zapatista representation. For the first time since the flurry of initial interviews that were conducted on 1 January, the Zapatistas as a group became vocal. In *Reasons And Non-Reasons Why Some Media Were Chosen*, dated 11 February 1995, Marcos reminisces that the CCRI-CG ordered him shortly after the uprising began to “[f]ind out how [the Zapatista] truth can get to those who want to hear it” because the committee believed, “We need to say our word and for others to listen. If we don’t do it now, others will take our voices and unwanted lies will come out of our mouths” (Bardacke, López, et al 1995:127). The Zapatistas consequently regained their voices through the writings published in their name. However, despite the careful Zapatista editorial policy, not all these writings were signed by the collective CCRI. The result is that, simultaneous to the Zapatistas’ becoming vocal, Marcos in his first person rhetoric became increasingly singled out and so, also, his *pasamontañas*.



A photograph on the wall of the Che Guevara café in Oventik of Marcos and his famous typewriter

Because of the circuitous dissemination of the first Zapatista communiqué as discussed above, almost the entire armed part of the uprising took place without formal input from the side of the insurgents. As in the *First Declaration from the Lacandón Jungle* read out loud on 1 January, the Zapatista masks were completely absent from *Here We Are, The Forever Dead*. The communiqué did, however, obliquely reference masking practices⁵² when it argued that “[t]he present conflict unmasks” the Mexican Federal Army’s “true character and purpose” (*La Jornada* 1994:283) (Bardacke, López, et al 1995:60). This introduced the Zapatista strategy of using the Chiapanecan indigenous circumstance to mirror back the inequities in reigning government policies. This mirroring was also evident the first time Zapatista writing explicitly mentioned the Zapatista masks, here specifically the *pasamontañas*. In his letter to the press dated 20 January, Marcos asked in the postscript, “Why so much scandal about the ski-masks?”

and offered to take off his mask if Mexican society would agree to unmask itself as well (Bardacke, López, et al 1995:86)⁵³.

On 14 January, José Cueli's commentary in *La Jornada* was titled *La magia de Marcos* [The Magic of Marcos]. On the same day, Joseph B. Frazier's AP report was picked up under the heading *Mystique builds around rebel leader* and was used with a photograph of Marcos (Wisconsin State Journal). The report listed various symptoms of the Marcosmania as it had come to be called, such as "College students in protest marches are replacing their usual bandanas with the black ski masks of Marcos and the Zapatista National Liberation Army" and "In one political cartoon, a television newscaster turns to news of the conflict of Chiapas. Every one in the family watching the program, even the dog, wears a ski mask." John Ross lists instances of support throughout the country during the first six weeks of the uprising (Ross 1995:172-179) including an indigenous march in Chilpancingo in the state of Guerrero on 25 January that was led by a young boy, nicknamed *El Subcomandante Marquesito*, wearing a *pasamontañas*. The marchers proclaimed their support of the Chiapanecan "men and women without faces" (Ross 1995:177).

The CCRI secretly invited Petrich, Henríquez, independent international correspondent Epigmenio Ibarra, Ibarra's French camera man Phillipe de Saint, and San Cristóbal photographer Antonio Turok to interview the committee and Marcos so that the Zapatistas could "express their point of view and respond to the thousands of questions that were swirling around them (Petrich 1995:48) (Ross 1995:205, 206). Petrich and Henriquez's interviews appeared in installments in *La Jornada* on 4, 5, and 8 February (The Editorial Collective 1994: 131, 141)⁵⁴ and Ibarra broadcast his footage of the

interview under the name of his film production company *Argos* through the cable network *Multivision* on 6 February (canal100.com.mx), a broadcast that became a news event in itself and was widely reported internationally. While the reporters inventoried the type and color of the masks in off-handed descriptions of the scenes in which the interviews took place, Marcos pointedly introduced the topic of the mask unprompted. The reporters asked him, “And why this moment [for the uprising], the entrance of the NAFTA, the fact that it’s an electoral year?” Before discussing the intricacies of the choice of date for the uprising, Marcos framed his answer with, “It’s like the myth of the ski-mask. We wear it because it’s very cold in the mountains. Suddenly people like it, and the ski-masks become a symbol. We had not planned to attack on the first of January” (The Editorial Collective 1994:144).⁵⁵.

The Petrich-Henríquez interviews elicited a barrage of reports especially on the mystique of Marcos in the international media, all mentioning the *pasamontañas* explicitly⁵⁶. The secondary reports did not mention the *paliacates* and distinguished the *pasamontañas* as only black, despite the interviews mentioning blue and grey *pasamontañas* as well as *paliacates* as cited above. The interviews also inspired the burgeoning Zapatista solidarity movement that embarked on a 100-hour march on the capital’s *zócalo* [central square] on 13 February (Scott 1994a). Phil Davison writes in the *Independent* of London on 11 February that, “in the capital, many students have shown their sympathy for ‘Marcos’ by using a new form of greeting; one hand held over the nose in imitation of a balaclava” (Davison 1994). This signal, however, could as easily have been translated—and perhaps more accurately so—as an imitation of a *paliacate*.



A Zapatista supporter wearing a paliacate during the opening day's protest march at the 2008 Democratic National Convention in Denver

During this second phase, Marcos is increasingly drawing attention to the Zapatistas' masking, both in his writing and during interviews. This means that, while the mask is still situated more as a Zapatista quirk without contextual justification, its iconic value is established. The international responses to the Zapatista words underscore

Marcos's own growing iconicity. A by-product of this development is the association the media draws between Marcos and his *pasamontañas* and, by inference, between the *pasamontañas* and the Zapatistas. Consequently, despite the fact that the Zapatistas are saying their words for others to listen in this phase, not only their words are heard and Marcos's ventriloquist quality becomes a powerful filter. The CCRI insisted on having the Zapatista voice heard to retain the integrity of their message. However, this phase makes it clear that others did take their voices through mediated representation and even though the CCRI fear that "lies will come out of [their] mouths" was not realized, instead of relaying the full and complicated Zapatista narrative, this mediation inserted a distance from the Chiapanecan reality where, for example, many masks and many individual faces behind those masks were possible. This distance was tested and gained textured in the next phase when the Zapatistas themselves and not just their words appeared before the public eye.

Phase Three: Physically Present

Marcos's letter dated 16 February and the official CCRI communiqué of the same date that it served to introduce both deal with the peace talks that had been scheduled to start 21 January (Bardacke, López et al 1995:141-143, 144-145). Yet, the approaches of these two pieces of writing were very different. As in his letter of 20 January, Marcos taunted the media and Mexican society in general for their obsession with his masked persona as he described his attempts at deciding what to wear to the Peace Talks if the CCRI were to allow him to attend⁵⁷. He, however, came to the conclusion that he had only one uniform topped off with "a festive red bandanna (the only one) ... and the ski-

mask, a discreet black (the only one)” (Bardacke, López et al 1995:142). Marcos distinguished between “*un alegre paliacate rojo (el único)*” [a cheerful red *paliacate* (the only one)]—using the indefinite article—and “*el pasamontañas de discreto color negro(el único)*” [the *pasamontañas* in a discreet black (the only one)]—using the definite article (EZLN 1994:154). This choice suggests that he had already cast the *pasamontañas* as definitive Zapatista sign. In contrast, the CCRI communiqué, *Those Who Fight With Honor, Speak With Honor* did not single out an individual and described the Zapatistas as faceless rather than as masked in a particular way as in, “For us, the smallest people of these lands, those without face and without history” (Bardacke, López, et al 1995:145). After this communiqué, the absence of faces, rather than the presence of masks, became a refrain in the official communiqués. In the very next CCRI communiqué, dated 26 February, there were five such references (Bardacke, López, et al 1995:151, 152), firmly establishing an association between the Zapatistas and facelessness such as “The men and women of the EZLN, those without face” (Bardacke, López, et al 1995:152)⁵⁸. This is ironic as the emphasis in both the official communiqué and Marcos’s letter rests on preparations for the peace talks where a contingent of the Zapatistas would meet a government delegation for the first time face to face in San Cristóbal. The government officials complained bitterly about the prospect of having to negotiate with masked delegates and Taussig comments on the inversion between projection and perception of the two teams, the masked rebels who see themselves as faceless and “the faceless bureaucrats of the state, whom the Zapatistas see as masked” (Taussig 1999:239).

Also on 16 February but before the publication of the Zapatista writings, the EZLN released General Castellanos Domínguez. This event, the first since the uprising in which the Zapatistas appeared in person before a general audience, held the potential of a media spectacle as some three hundred press people bussed in to witness the release (Ross 1995:183)(McCaughan 21 February). Yet, in the international news, except for some notices ahead of the event⁵⁹, the release was largely overshadowed by speculations concerning the Peace Talks. The interview with Marcos conducted by reporters from *Proceso*, *El Financiero*, and the *New York Times* the day after the release⁶⁰, further served to direct attention away from Castellanos. The interview vacillated between two modes; that of news analysis and discussion of subjects insisted on by Marcos in his role as Zapatista spokesperson—such as issues surrounding the pending Peace Talks—and the far less formal and more blatant attempts on the part of the journalists at profiling Marcos the man.

It was during the latter that the Zapatista mask, and predictably specifically Marcos's *pasamontañas*, became part of the discussion. In contrast to the Petrich-Henríquez interview, here the reporters made the leap to situating the mask as a symbol without the help of Marcos. When asked about his *nom de guerre*, Marcos admitted “it is a pseudonym, or rather, a symbol” and explains some of its significance⁶¹ (The Editorial Collective 1994:197). The reporters interrupted his reminiscences and asked, “A symbolic name then, like the ski masks?” Marcos sidestepped the potential symbolism of the masks and repeated, as he had done during the press conference on the first day of the uprising, that the masks are motivated by a need for anonymity and interchangeability in the leadership: “Because of Marcos’ work, no one can know who Marcos is. That is, if

Marcos becomes identified and disappears, it will bring problems to the Army. ... If Marcos disappears with his ski mask, *anyone of us* can put on a ski mask and become Marcos⁶²” (The Editorial Collective 1994:198, emphasis added). With the phrase “anyone of us,” Marcos split his persona into a physical and individual insurgent like any of the other Zapatistas and a masked face that, exactly because of that mask, assumes iconic proportions. However, by reiterating the role of the masks in hiding personal identity, Marcos was also solidifying the indexicality of the mask as a sign as the mask was no longer an arbitrary piece of clothing but had come to point to the common feature of facilitated anonymity that it shares with the Zapatista face.

In an interview with Dauno Tótoro in October 1995, Marcos addressed the anonymity aspect of the mask differently. He argued that, almost from the beginning, the masks ceased to act purely as a safety feature and became a symbol like a uniform, a badge or the “red bandanna.” In this interview, Marcos alluded to a distinction between the *pasamontaña* and the *paliacate* or “red bandanna”: “Whoever wears the bandanna seems to say, ‘I am one of them; even without a weapon, I’m just like them’” (Tótoro and Thibaut 2001:126). This was an unusual statement for Marcos as he generally either ignores or dispels the *paliacate*. Here, he suggested that masking, rather than one mask or the other, signaled Zapatista unity. Marcos also referred to the paradoxes residing within the masking practices of the Zapatistas. He emphasized the irony of the Zapatistas having to hide their faces in order to be seen but also how, when a Zapatista is not masked, [s]he can “hide” in the guise just another indigenous person⁶³. This, he said, frustrates the efforts of the military. He referred to the Mexican government’s determination “to remove that symbol” and the Zapatistas’ insistence that, while they might agree to

dialogue without weapons, they would not do so without masks. Introducing his question, Tótoro framed the mask as a symbol for “the faceless people who have never had either name or importance to anyone in this country” but then asked whether the Zapatistas, now that their existence and struggle are well-known, “have not earned the right to dispose of the mask, the forced anonymity.” Marcos did not think this was an option. At the end of the interview, Marcos wondered at the government’s fixation on removing the mask—illustrated by the government’s 1995 “unmasking” of Marcos—and said, “government intelligence services pride themselves on knowing who we are; why then do they want us to take it [the mask] off?” (Tótoro and Thibaut 2001:126, 127).

Although I am sifting through events and words that pertain specifically to Zapatista masking, the masks were clearly not the only or the main focus of the various actors involved. The masks formed a part of the overall contextual positioning of the Zapatistas negotiated by themselves and assigned to them by others. On 26 February⁶⁴, the CCRI-CG released the official communiqué *In Truth, Anything Can Happen*. In terms of my study this communiqué is noteworthy as it contains the first official origin story of Zapatista masking: mythic faceless men and women, “those who are the mountain,” instruct the Zapatistas to be similarly “without faces” and “dress for war so that their voice will be heard” (Bardacke, López et al 1995:151, 152). However, the communiqué was at bottom a treatise on good governance and while it addressed the pending 1994 elections as an immediate and practical concern to the Zapatistas during the Peace Talk meetings, it also explained the key Zapatista principle, *mandar obedeciendo* {to lead by obeying}.

In his explanation of the masks to a group of journalists on 1 January, Marcos said,

The mask is so that there is no protagonism ... It is about being anonymous, not because we fear for ourselves, but rather so that they [leaders] cannot corrupt us ... We know that our leadership is collective and that we have to submit to them. Even though you happen to be listening to me here now because I am here ... in other places others, masked in the same way, are talking. This masked person today is called Marcos here and tomorrow will be called Pedro in Margaritas or Josué in Ocosingo or Alfredo in Altamirano or whatever he is called. Finally, the one who speaks is a more collective heart, not a *caudillo*. ... The only image that you will have is that those who make this happen are masked, then. And the time will come when the people will realize that it is enough to have dignity and put on a mask and say: Well then, I can do this too (The Editorial Collective 1994:62, 63).

Here Marcos showed how the mask both enables and indexes the egalitarian and interchangeable anonymity that promotes collective *mandar obedeciendo*. He also introduced the inclusivity of the Zapatista movement where membership, simplistically put, requires dignity and a Zapatista mask. The 26 February communiqué also referred to this broader Zapatista allegiance: “Then other men and women, who walk on other lands, must speak, and they too should speak the truth and not get lost in lies” (Bardacke, López et al 1995:152). The Peace Talks provided the first opportunity for international Zapatista supporters to go to Chiapas to show their solidarity.

Neil Harvey notes that the Zapatistas appreciated the numerous mass protests their supporters staged and that they came to see the international solidarity movement as “their most effective ally in the struggle for a peaceful solution” (Harvey 2005[1998]:204). On 20 February, the CCRI-CG acknowledged the role that NGOs had

played thus far in the Zapatista struggle and stated that, besides having called on supporters to form “a ‘safety belt’ or ‘belt of peace’ around the place of the dialogue,” the Zapatistas would “entrust [their] lives and liberties—[their] arrival and departure routes, as well as [their lodging accommodations during the dialogue” to the NGOs (Bardacke, López et al 1995:148). At the close of the Peace Talks the Zapatista delegates returned home to confer with their constituent communities on the government’s proposals. On 23 March, Luis Donaldo Colosio, the PRI presidential candidate was assassinated signaling, according to Harvey, that governmental hard-liners were gathering force against reforms that would favor the Zapatistas (Harvey 2005[1998]:204). Harvey argues that the Zapatista plea for their international supporters not to abandon them “took on a new urgency” after the assassination (Harvey 2005[1998]:204). On the same day as the assassination, Marcos wrote a shocked response. In a postscript to the letter, he addressed the “Zapatista moles,” referring to the activists who work underground in solidarity with the Zapatistas. He closed on a despondent note, passing on the struggle and its attributes to them: “Good-bye, beloved moles ... It’s your turn to hide your face, to erase your name, to deny your past, to prepare your tender fury... because peace is moving away as fast as it came (Bardacke, López et al 1995:187).

In the third phase, the Zapatistas were physically present albeit only in the form of small representative delegations. The international media disseminated a slew of reports about the lead-up to and progress within the Peace Talks. For the period between 18 February and 18 March, Lexis Nexis shows 33 results under the search words “Zapatistas” and “Chiapas” and 46⁶⁵ results under “Zapatistas” and “Marcos.” The larger number of reports in the latter group is mainly due to Marcos’s now established authority

as Zapatista spokesperson. Four of the reports from this group do feed into Marcosmania⁶⁶, but the group also includes Phil Davison's 16 March profile on Camacho Solís for the *Independent*. Even though the international media on various occasions showed their interest in the participation of female Zapatistas, *mayor* Ana María is not mentioned once⁶⁷ and *comandanta* Ramona is only named in the captions to the photograph of her with Bishop Ruíz that was used in both the *Washington Post* and the *Dallas Morning News* on 3 March. On 25 February, Tim Golden did cover *comandante* Juan's press statement for the *New York Times*.



Muñecas zapatistas

Several reports mention the merchandising that accompanied the Zapatistas to San Cristóbal. I will deal with one form of this merchandising—the *muñecas zapatistas*—in the next chapter but here, within a chronological context, the emergence of the commodification of the Zapatistas illustrates how this phase encompassed an

intensification of both the mask's iconicity, as in the case of the dolls as well and indexicality, due to the broader communicative space the talks allowed the Zapatistas to explain their situation, needs, philosophy, and demands and so ground their masks within a more fully-fledged context. As my analysis of the press coverage of the Peace Talks shows, Marcos emerged as icon of the Zapatista movement. Because of his official role as spokesperson he remained a conduit, although an at times potentially intrusive one, for the Zapatistas. While the discussion about his identity and personal details persisted, he remained uncontextualized and, therefore, did not develop into an index for the Zapatistas. As an icon, he resembled the Zapatistas but, simultaneously, because of his prominence, the mediated impression of the Zapatistas continued to resemble him even more closely. Again, the mask is a useful diagnostic: Because Marcos wears a *pasamontañas* and he operates as the Zapatista icon, the *pasamontañas* is iconically associated with the Zapatistas and when the souvenir dolls became *muñecas zapatistas*, they did so by donning *pasamontañas* and not *paliacates*. In the next phase, the Zapatistas provide the necessary instructions, as per Keane and Hanks, to situate themselves indexically and embed their masks within a richly constructed mythology, both in their writings and during the performance of their first international *encuentro*.

Phase Four: Indexically Situated through Explications

The CCRI communiqué *Votán Zapata* issued on 10 April 1994 to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Emiliano Zapata's death, functions as a Zapatista origin myth and introduces the powerful construct *Votán Zapata*, an amalgamation of *Votán*, a Tzeltal deity, and the Mexican Revolution hero Zapata⁶⁸. On the same day, the CCRI released a

companion communiqué, *Zapata Will Not Die By Arrogant Decree*, a tribute to Zapata that links the Zapatistas as the heirs to his struggle without further mention of Votán. These two communiqués show the development from facelessness to the presence of a masked face. The first communiqué includes five references including the two progressions from facelessness, “face without features” and “With this flag that covers the face, all of us have a face again” (Bardacke, López, et al 1995:197). The companion communiqué includes three references, “They covered their faces,” “Our faces must remain hidden,” and “thousands of men and women who have denied their faces” (Bardacke, López 1995:199, 200).



A mural featuring Emiliano Zapata and the paliate in Oventik

These three references all acknowledge the existence of the Zapatista faces as well as the deliberate action of masking and the Zapatistas' intentional denial of their faces. In *Here Is Your Flag, Compañeros*⁶⁹, the speech which was delivered by Marcos at the National Democratic Convention in Aguascalientes de Tepeyac on 3 August 1994 and explicitly authorized and signed by the CCRI (*ezln.org.mx: encuentros*), the progression from passive facelessness to agentic masking continued. Here Marcos presented the full spectrum of references before naming the mask outright, using “guns and ski-masks” twice as metonymy for the uprising and its effects (Bardacke, López, et al 1995:241-251). He also continued the conflation between flag and mask when he described the Zapatistas as “the collective, anonymous will that has as its face only a five-pointed red star [referencing the Zapatista flag], symbol of humanity and struggle, and for its name only four letters, symbol of rebellion” (Bardacke and López, et al 1995:246). While Peirce would not agree that the mask acts as a symbol, this conflation established the ideological content of the mask as it elevated the mask to the flag's level of sign significance.

As is already apparent, *Votán Zapata* was not the first origin story of the masked Zapatista, nor was it the last version. In the September 1994 communiqué *The Long Journey from Despair to Hope*, Marcos traced the reason for the black *pasamontañas* back to a story Don Antonio⁷⁰ told him in December 1984 about the creation of the sun (quoted in full in Conant 2010:121-128). The gods had decided to take newly created fire “up into the sky, so that the water-night would not reach it” but realized that, to take the fire up, the carrier would have to “die below in order to live above.” Eventually, Ik’ “the blackest and ugliest of the gods” agreed to the mission: “he grabbed the fire and burned himself and turned black then gray then white then yellow then orange then red and then

he became fire and he went chattering away until he reached the sky and there he stayed round,” becoming the sun. At the end of the story, Don Antonio pulled a half-burned log from the fire with his bare hands. “‘Watch,’ he says. From red, the log traveled the reverse order of the black god in the story: orange, yellow, white, gray, black. Still hot, Old Antonio’s calloused hands took it and gave it to me.” Marcos dropped the hot log and after it had cooled down, Don Antonio gave it to him again. “‘Here ... [sic] remember that a face covered in black hides the light and the heat that the world lacks.’” The communiqué continues with the tenth anniversary of the formation of the EZLN on 17 November 1993. “The Zapatista General Command gathers around the fire. The general plans have been made and the tactical details worked out [for the *levantamiento*]. ... The formal meeting ends and now, between jokes and anecdotes, we review plans and dreams. The issue of how we will cover our faces comes up again, whether with bandanas, or veils, or carnival masks.” Marcos offers, “Ski masks.”

Moisés looks at the roof in silence and breaks up the discussion with ‘and what color should the ski-masks be?’ ‘Brown ... [sic] like the cap,” says Rolando. Someone else says green. Old Antonio makes a sign to me... ‘Do you have that charred log from the other night?’ he asks. ‘Yes, in my backpack,’ I respond. ... When I return with the bit of wood everyone is quiet, looking at the fire, as does Old Antonio ... ‘Here,’ I say and place the black wood shard in his hand. Old Antonio looks at me steadily and asks, ‘Remember?’ ... ‘Black,’ I say. ... ‘Black. The ski masks will be black...’ No one opposes the idea (Conant 2010:124, 125).

This origin myth, however, serves only to explain the supposed choice of a *black pasamontañas*, not why *pasamontañas* at all, except for Marcos having said so. As I have shown above, this was not the first time that Marcos prioritized the *pasamontañas*. What is different in this portrayal is that it relegates the *paliacate* to the more far-fetched and

irreverent notion of “veils” or “carnival masks.” The passage also suggests that whether the Zapatistas should cover their faces at all was not really at issue. The act of masking is motivated by another origin story, one that Ana María related in her speech before the International *Encuentro* in Oventik on 27 July 1996. This version incorporates elements from all the previous origin myths along with new details and establishes the mask as a complicated Zapatista index. Ana Maria also does not prioritize the *pasamontañas* in her narration but places all Zapatista masking within a historical context:

As for the power, known worldwide as “*neoliberalismo*,” we do not count, we do not produce, we do not buy, we do not sell. We are useless in the accounts of big capital. And so we went to the mountain to seek relief for our pain at begin forgotten stones and plants. Here in the mountains of Southeast Mexico our dead live. Our dead who live in the mountains know many things. They speak to us of their death and we listen. The talking boxes [*cajitas*, according to Nash possibly referring to “the boxes in which images of a saint were carried. These images spoke, advising Indians of their fate in the rebellions of Chamula in 1867-1869 and a century and a half earlier, in Cancuc in 1712”] told us another history that comes from yesterday and aims at tomorrow. The mountain spoke to us, the *macehualob* [commoners in Nahuatl] [*sic*] who are common and ordinary people. ... The mountain spoke to us, telling us to take up arms in order to have a voice; it told us to cover our faces in order to have a visage. It told us to forget our name in order to be named, it told us to care for our past so that we would have a future. In the mountains the dead live, our dead. The Votán lives with them and the Black man, the Ik'al, and the light and the darkness, the wet and the dry, the land and the wind, the rain and the fire. The mountain is the house of the *HalachWinik*, the true man, the high chief. There we learn and there we record that we are who we are, the true men (quoted in Nash 2001:224, 225).

In the July 1998 communiqué *Above and Below: Masks and Silences*, Marcos completed the arc of the mask's representative significance by displaying the mask—here again, perhaps predictably, specifically the *pasamontañas*—as prime Zapatista index. The mask appears without the supporting structure of an origin story and is fully integrated with the other referents that he includes:

After such a silence, these indigenous speak a ship, a Noah's ark, a navigable Tower of Babel⁷¹, an absurd and irreverent challenge. In case there is any doubt as to who crews and directs it, the figurehead on the prow lights a ski mask! Yes, a ski mask, the mask which reveals, the silence that speaks. A 'For everyone, everything, nothing for us' dresses the flag of the red star with five points over a black background which shines over the mainmast. In golden letters, to port, starboard and the stern, the 'Votán Zapata' names the origin and the destination of this ship, so powerfully fragile, so resoundingly quiet, so visible concealed (Vodovnik 2004:340).

In this phase, the Zapatista mask moves from being a marker of the Zapatista facelessness to being the result of the agentive act of masking. Through the progression of the various origin stories it becomes contextualized as an integral part of the Zapatista cosmovision. During the dissemination of these origin stories, the interested outside world could become enculturated in the significance of the mythical referents within the stories as well as of the mask's ascribed status within the network of these referents. While the mask remains "an actual thing" with "properties of its own" that refer back to "the actually existing world" despite the mediation of "higher forms of abstraction" (Spencer Sorrell 2004:87,88), the Zapatista mask's indexicality relies on the explications that single it out as an indexical sign. Even within the Zapatista ranks, these explications couch the mask—and the type of mask—differently.

Effective explication presupposes an audience. Yet, because of his prominence, Marcos's explication is cited more widely than that of Ana Maria's. This complicates the Keane-Hanks proviso that, "For indexicality to function socially, the index as such must be made apparent, and it must be furnished with instructions" (Keane 2003:419). While the origin stories provide the necessary explicatory context, a bias the *pasamontañas* persists through Marcos's prioritization of this type of Zapatista mask. The indexical validity of the Zapatista mask is underscored by its "contiguity to its object" (Keane 1997:19) as well as the effect its object, the Zapatista face, exercises on the mask (Spencer Sorrell 2004:87). However, as I have shown above, while a Zapatista face animates a Zapatista mask, that face remains that of an individual that is part of a highly diverse group of people just as not only one type of mask is used. Despite these objections, the necessary connection between mask and wearer remains intact and the masked face remains a unit. During the fifth and final phase, this connection was severed and the composite character of the masked face was compromised.

Phase Five: As Hyperreal

On 9 February 1995⁷², the government "unmasked" Marcos in "a strange game of peek-a-boo," sliding "an oversized black-and-white slide of a ski mask and a pair of large, dark eyes" back-and-forth over an equal-sized photograph "of a Milquetoasty-looking young man" at a press conference in the capital (Guillermoprieto 2001:207). The attorney general proceeded to out the insurgent *subcomandante* as Rafael Sebastián Guillén, philosophy and graphic design professor at the Xochimilco campus of the Autonomous Metropolitan University in Mexico City (Guillermoprieto 2002:207). Alma

Guillermoprieto suggests the government plan was to disillusion the young movement's supporters proving that "the daring guerrilla is a sappy-looking academic" (Guillermoprieto 2002:214). However, the public responded with three mass protests in the capital the following week with 100 000 people marching on the *zócalo* [the central plain] on 11 February shouting "*Todos somos Marcos*" [We are all Marcos] (Mentinis 2006:174), not only in support of Marcos the individual but making his name a banner for their general solidarity with the Zapatistas as they demanded "a halt to the [military] offensive" in Chiapas (Henck 2007:284). Several protests also took place within the United States and Europe, "making Marcos an international pop idol and the Indians in Chiapas globally famous and fantastically attractive" (Womack 1999:295). Mihalís Mentinis points out that, "What the government had not realized at the time was that the *pasamontañas* called Marcos had no hidden names ... hiding his real identity behind a black mask, but the faceless face of a revolutionary multitude whose activity had come to inspire and express desires outside the indigenous world (Mentinis 2006:174).

The unmasking echoed the government's earlier attempt the previous year. That, too, had backfired and, instead, kept the Zapatistas in the news as well as fuelled the speculation about Marcos's identity that was in part responsible for building his iconic stature. Marcos, however, had also teased his followers with the possibility of unmasking himself. On 8 August 1994, at the close of the National Democratic Convention, a reporter had asked whether Marcos would remove his mask. He promptly replied, "yes, if you want it. You tell me." The crowd cried out "No!," which Henck interprets as a confirmation "that the Marcos symbol [*sic*] should remain masked in order to preserve the legend" and to not become "an ordinary, recognizable mortal" (Henck 2007:260).



A T-shirt featuring Marcos given to me by a Zapatista supporter in Cuernavaca

In his dissection of the unmasking, Taussig concludes that the act does not diminish the mystery created by masking. Instead, the mystery “merely changes and, perhaps, becomes even deeper, certainly more complex, on account of its revelation” (Taussig 1999:190). He finds the reason for this in what he terms “a *public unbelief system*” that gives “dramatic force to the role of the half-lie, half-truth, in everyday life” (Taussig 1999:191). He suggests that unmasking results in a “refacement,” not with the same face but rather with one that now carries “the properties of an allegorical emblem” (Taussig 1999:253). He calls the transformation “hypermasking” (Taussig 1999:238).

Jean Baudrillard’s model of, as he views it, the four-stage regression of the image into hyperreality (Baudrillard 2001:173), applies in broad strokes to the Zapatista mask. The indexicality of the Zapatista mask as it points to the inequity of a power structure that drives people to hide their faces in order to be seen, complies with the first stage during

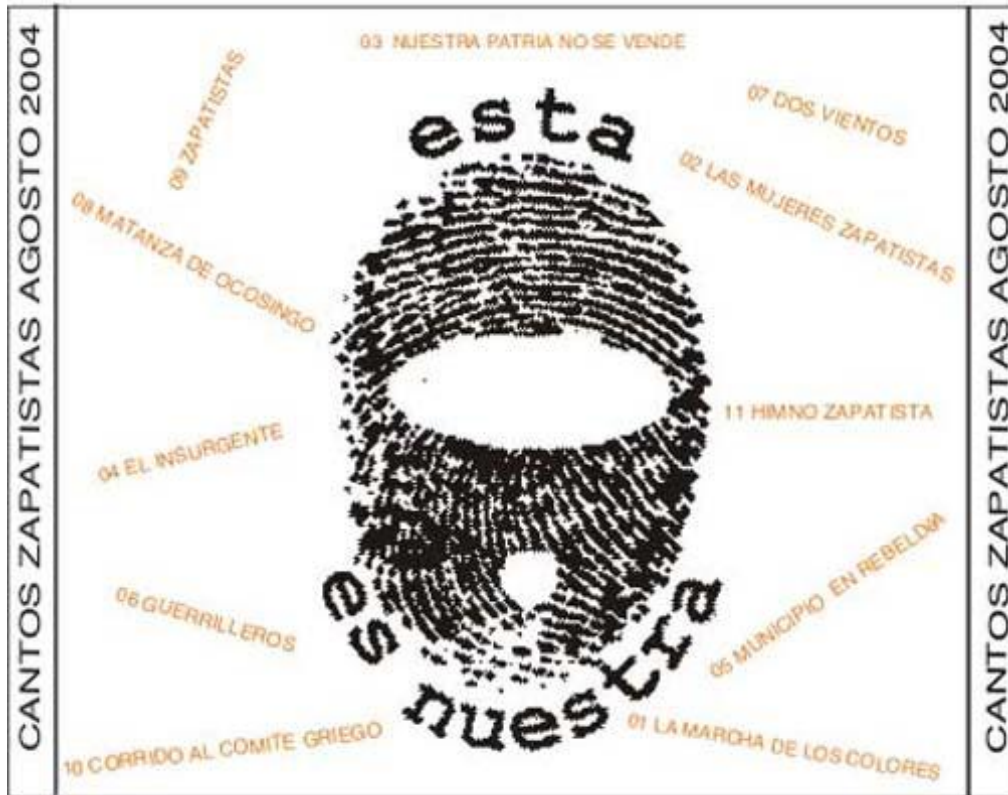
which it still reflects a basic reality. In July 1998, Marcos expanded on this quality of the mask when he turned the premise on its head, suggesting that it is the anonymity and isolation of “frantic globalization” that are masked and that those two imposed conditions “do not hide the singularity of every being, but rather the very real nightmare of the struggle of those from below” (Vodovnik 2004:332). As the international representations of the mask became increasingly truncated and distilled feeding into the prevailing iconic image of the *pasamontañas*, the second stage involving the obscuring and perversion of “a basic reality” was reached. During the third stage, the easily recognizable reproductions of the Zapatistas and their masking in various forms of merchandising hid “the *absence* of a basic reality.” In the final stage, the mask had become thoroughly dislodged from its contextual and functional fields so that Marcos’s refacement bore “no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum.”

As in the case of the first unmasking, the 1995 event generated intense press coverage but in this instance this worked in the government’s favor as it distracted, at least temporarily, from the destruction left in the path of the military’s Operation Rainbow. Scores of villages were destroyed and Lynn Stephen estimates that between ten and twenty thousand of the inhabitants became refugees (Stephen 2002:198). The Zapatista *Aguascalientes* Guadalupe de Tepeyac where Marcos addressed the thousands of international visitors to the first Zapatista *encuentro*, was razed to the ground. Operation Rainbow was, nonetheless, ultimately a failure as its primary objective had been to capture the Zapatista leadership including Marcos and “wipe out the Zapatista guerrillas within five days” (Oppenheimer 1996:242, 248). Twenty-one individuals were arrested during the operation, including two of the founding Zapatista members, Elisa and

Vicente but Marcos and many others escaped (Henck 2007:282). Consequently, Operation Rainbow officially continued until 14 February. During this time, Ana María stood in as spokesperson⁷³. The irony of this turn of events is exquisite: while Marcos became most exposed and best known through the unmasking, he also simultaneously was most elusive, silent, and hidden. As the protests of support illustrate, this did not detract from the power of his masked persona. However, his mask was now a simulacrum; it no longer served to hide and, instead, had taken on its own identity.

One of the best contextualized representations of the Zapatista mask appeared on the CD cover of an August 2004 *Radio Insurgente* in-house production. The deceptively simple graphic consists of a thumbprint reworked to follow the outlines of a *pasamontañas*. Here the mask that has already been impregnated by so much corporeality is imprinted further with one of the most uniquely individualistic traits, the fingerprint. As mask and fingerprint collapse into each other, the paradox of the Zapatistas' hiding their faces in order to be seen becomes complicated: as a polar opposite of the anonymity the mask can provide them at least in part, fingerprints are used to identify people. Here it stands for Zapatista identity. Considering the widespread illiteracy among Chiapanecan indigenous peoples, the thumbprint signals another one of its functions: it is employed when someone needs to sign a document but cannot write. Thus, this representation signifies the Zapatista signature. The title of the CD, *Esta es Nuestra* [This is ours], embraces the masked thumbprint in two half moons. It indicates Zapatista ownership of the image but it also opens up the ownership of this Zapatista sign to index a communal identity. However, this mask, like Marcos's *pasamontañas* after the unmasking, has been dislodged from its habitual context and function. Where Marcos's refaced mask can no

longer hides his face, the thumbprint mask weaves together a cohesive assembly of Zapatista attributes without the need for a face.



The Es Nuestra CD cover discussed above

Finding the Masks at Home

With the exception of very specific events⁷⁴, one does not encounter masked Zapatistas on the street in San Cristóbal. To meet a masked Zapatista, one needs to visit one of the autonomous communities or a *caracol*. However, entry to these communities and centers is restricted. Consequently, for most visitors to the Zapatista territories, their first experience with the Zapatista mask occurs when they are barred from automatic entry. Seeing as the *caracoles* are intended as spaces of dialogue between the Zapatistas and their international supporters, entry can be negotiated after a verification process of

the visitors' credentials. Despite the inclusivity that the Zapatista movement strives to inculcate, Zapatista spaces remain Zapatista spaces at all times and visitors to those spaces remain visitors and the Zapatista masks support these demarcations. Face-to-face in these territories includes the strong likelihood of a face-to-masked-face meeting. The masks, however, are not the only barriers during these meetings. The outsider supporters live and operate geographically and for the most part socio-culturally separate from the Zapatistas. The meetings between Zapatistas and their supporters are also with few exceptions temporary and generally too short to achieve a meaningful understanding of the respective Other.

As I have mentioned, my first visit to Oventik was in 2007 as part of a small group organized through the Schools for Chiapas. We were attending the year's second International Encuentro. My travel companions and I were all experiencing the Zapatista territories for the first time. We tried fervently to discern clues to the individual person behind the mask. Perhaps because language differences created an additional barrier compounding the mask's screen, I kept searching during conversations for the *compas'* mouths behind their masks. I seemed to yearn for a concrete face-to-face experience. Toward the end of the *encuentro*, I found that I was ignoring the masks and interacting with the *compas* as if they were not masked. Yet, when I caught myself doing this, I wondered whether this meant that I was still not fully facing the *caracol* reality.



Masked Zapatistas waiting welcoming international participants in the 2007 Second Encuentro at the Oventik caracol gate

Bob Kuřík argues that the Zapatistas activate an “official Zapatista identity” which is distinct from “the everyday Zapatista identity” (Kuřík 2009:136). He defines the official identity as performed, and, that once performed, it differentiates the performer from her/his own identity that links that particular Zapatista member to a particular set of personal demographics. Kuřík says, “This collective image is used in moments of publicizing in contrast with the ‘unpublicized’ character of everydayness” and during the performance of this identity, “one becomes a Zapatista ‘at first glance’” (Kuřík 2009:136). I argue that the Zapatista mask plays a key role in this process.

Our group had arrived a day early and only the officials were masked at this time. By nightfall more *encuentro* participants came trickling into the encampment and the *comandancia* made a public announcement asking the international supporters to refrain from taking any photographs as the Zapatistas were *en la casa* [as at home] and,

therefore, not masked. Once the meeting had officially started the next day, the *compas* had masked themselves and had, through this act, become “official Zapatistas.”

Consequently, “the official Zapatista,” as a reification, acts as a designated intermediary between the members of the insurgency—who remain individuals coming from a specific village, who speak a specific language, and who have personal worries, dreams, and desires—and the outside world. As a constructed interface, it creates an *encuentro* space similar to the *caracoles*.

During the summer of 2010, I visited Oventik for three weeks in the hope that I could at least make a start at cracking the nut of the Zapatista masks. My formal research plan proved to be of little use. The *compas* patiently entertained my questions but they clearly struggled to understand my obsession with what to them seemed to be a purely practical measure to hide individual identities and signal collective membership. One of the *compañeros* eventually spoke to me about how various interpretations were applied to the Zapatistas from the outside and after the fact. The *compañero* spoke fervently against any form of mediation: “*mediación es siempre de arriba hacia abajo*” [mediation is always from the top down].

During a conversation about why some Zapatista woman wear only their traditional *trajes*⁷⁵, some wear them occasionally, and some—such as the *compañera* with whom I was talking—never wear them, I asked the *compañera* whether the masks could be seen as another, new, type of *traje*. She immediately said no, it is rather a sign, a symbol. A little later in the conversation she seemed to reconsider and insisted that the main reason for the masks is anonymity. She spoke about the practical considerations of protection against the cold as people crossed the mountains. But what about La Realidad

where it is too warm for this to apply, I asked. She conceded and repeated that the mask is a symbol. She then stressed that when Zapatistas put on their masks, they simultaneously put on an identity that goes hand-in-hand with a certain consciousness. (This supports Kuřík's reading of the mask as part of the "official Zapatista" identity.) Therefore, even though the *paliacate* had been used practically in the past—tied around the head to shade against the sun, to wipe off sweat—she believes Zapatistas should always wear their *paliacates* in a particular way, as a particular sign, and in order to hide their faces. (I did, however, observe some of the young male basketball players wearing *paliacates* tied around their foreheads to catch their perspiration.) During the conversation, she referred to the *paliacate* colors but only to the red and black as referencing the traditional revolutionary colors.

That evening, in a small gathering of three *compañeras*, a Mexican national now living in Germany, and myself, I again raised the question of the masks and more specifically why yellow is included in the *paliacate*. One of the *compañeras* suggested that it might signify the sun. Another said it was the color of hope but the rest of the group quickly answered that green is supposed to be the color of hope—this is only according to Marcos's *The Story of Colors*. The third *compañera* said, seeing as the *paliacate* forms a half-moon across the Zapatista face, it could be read as "*la sonrisa zapatista*" [the Zapatista smile]. I think the main lesson from this exchange was that the women seemed to brainstorm with me about the significance of the *paliacate*'s yellow as opposed to having had a set answer to my question. This was substantiated by one of the *compañeras* who ended the conversation by concluding that the colors are not that crucial: people had used what they had available when the uprising started and most of

the people already had red *paliacates* in this design. The Mexican woman asked to take a photograph of the three *compañeras* and they quickly went to fetch their masks, two black *pasamontañas* and a red *paliacate*.

A week later, I witnessed a different masking, one that accentuates the dynamic nature of Zapatista masking and further challenges the popular acceptance of the *pasamontañas* as *the* Zapatista mask. One of the Zapatista language school's international students asked a *compañero* and a *compañera* with whom she felt she had established more of a relationship than with the other *compas*, whether she could take a photograph of them. They were on the basketball court on their way from depositing refuse from the community back to their quarters, not that far away. There was a moment of indecision and then the *compañero* smiled at the student as he took her green fleece jacket from her and, without further ado, held one of the sleeves across his and his partner's faces for the photograph.

Chapter 4: The Zapatista in Effigy

The Zapatistas and tourists have been visibly and actively interacting since the first day of the uprising. As I have shown above, tourists formed part of the San Cristóbal de las Casas audience listening to the reading of the First Declaration from the Lacandón. The insurgents' need to communicate with the tourists in the main square set the course for Marcos to become Zapatista spokesperson. The exchange between Marcos and the tourists cited above, however, also shows that a revolution disrupts tourists' plans: the Zapatistas had taken Ocosingo and closed the road leading to Palenque, one of the region's tourism highlights. It was no wonder that the tourists scurried from the city. Ironically, just as their incidental presence was seminal in the development of Marcos the icon, the tourists' hasty departure and their subsequent absence created the conditions for the creation of the *muñeca zapatista*.



The new version of the chamulita

As I discuss below, the *muñecas zapatistas* form part of a larger genealogy of Chiapanecan dolls. While some changes and developments in the production and appearance of the dolls have certainly occurred since their emergence in 1994, they seem to have remained fairly constant and, therefore, easily recognizable. The dolls are available in different sizes, ranging from one-inch high earrings to ornaments a foot high or taller. Their bodies are traditionally made of either bundles of coarse yarn or straw completely encased in the roughly felted wool used in the customary Chamulan dress. The wool has been generally black although since 2010 more cream colored versions started appearing on the streets as well⁷⁶. The earring versions have always been the exceptions where the strict color schemes are concerned and the minute earring *muñecas* are available in a wide range of felted colors. Yet, the most basic doll wears a simple black tunic and has a colored piece of yarn tied around the waist. Most of the dolls carry a bundle on their backs covered in synthetic material in various solid colors. In some of the more elaborate versions, these bundles contain a baby or some fire wood. The most common *muñeca* is around three inches high and hangs on a key ring. One of the more expensive and elaborate versions consists of a group of generally four or five Zapatistas crowded into the back of an open wooden truck that is decorated with Zapatista slogans and emblems. Another version presents two Zapatistas, generally a male and a female, on the back of a horse which is traditionally worked in black wool and since 2010 increasingly often in grays and creams as well. The *zapatistadolls.com* site catalogues a wide array of dolls, all the same size but including some slight distinguishing features allowing each doll to be named for a particular Zapatista officer. These, however, seem to be unusual collector items as they are not generally available in San Cristóbal.

During the second half of 2011, several changes occurred in the array of dolls sold in San Cristóbal. One of these changes involves the appearance of more hastily constructed *muñecas zapatistas* worked in any number of bright and pastel colors as well as in different materials not traditionally used such as store-bought felt and synthetic rayon. All of the new *muñecas zapatistas* are relatively small at around 5 inches tall and all are on horses, but alone and not as part of the traditional equestrian couple. The new horses are uniformly made from store-bought felt in equally unrealistic colors. The horses also have glued on plastic eyes as opposed to the traditional embroidered markings. Another change is that some of the small keychain dolls are now clothed in machine-made brocaded tunics in the Zinacatán⁷⁷ color palette of purples, blues, and turquoises instead of in the traditional black woolen Chamulan tunics.



The new muñeca traje flanked by two more traditional examples



New version of the equestrian muñeca zapatista



The traditional equestrian muñeca couple

The key ingredients for all the dolls are a piece of wood held close to the body as if it were a rifle referencing the wooden staves that some of the insurgents carried instead of guns during the *levantamiento*, a strip of material cut from a red *paliacate* crossed around the neck, and a black *pasamontañas*. These items remain constant also in the dolls that have appeared since July 2011. The new “guns” are heavier pieces of wood and seem disproportionately large. They are, however, held in the same position and are tied to the dolls in the same way. Traditionally, the *muñecas*’ hands are suggested by black felted strips tied around the wooden gun. In the new horse versions, different colored cottons and synthetic materials strips are used. In the new brocaded versions, black still seems to be the preferred color but cut from a synthetic material. For the purposes of this study, the consistency of the specifically black *pasamontañas* and the red *paliacate* throughout all these developments and changes in the dolls is of particular importance.

In this chapter, I will use the *muñeca* trademark souvenir as a diagnostic tool to further probe the international co-construction of the Zapatista image and its implications. As in the previous chapter, I will again concentrate on a material object, using Keane’s conceptual structure. Besides an array of tourism literature, I will also tap into Feld’s development of his concept of schizophonic mimesis, the dislodgement that forms part of this process, and the political and economic implications inherent to Feld’s theorization of schizmogogenesis. The *muñecas* further exemplify the decontextualizing power of the copy of a copy that Feld noticed.

Adrian Franklin notes that, “tourism abounds with things, tourist things, and tourists are tied up in a world of tourist things for a considerable period of their time” (Franklin 2003:97). Since the Zapatista uprising, tourists to Chiapas are frequently “tied up” with

Zapatista tourist things and also become active agents in the development and circulation of these tourist things. However, both development and circulation entail a direct commodification of the Zapatista people and separates the people from their representations in a process of dislodgement and decontextualization. When tourists to Chiapas become tied up with Zapatista tourist things, Mary Louise Pratt's notion of the "contact zone" comes into play. Pratt demarcates this strip of contestation as "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination" (Pratt 1995 [1992]:4). Generally, the trade in tourist souvenirs adds an additional layer that both muffles and complicates the meeting, clashing, and grappling of the local and visiting culture(s). As this meeting does not as a rule take place face-to-face, the local culture(s) may or may not be the same as the hosting culture(s). Instead, a transaction concludes between some self-appointed, frequently local, proxies and the tourists. In the case of the *muñecas*, the proxies are more vested in the products as they are frequently the producer's relatives. Yet, they remain proxies for the Zapatistas whom the tourists do not encounter. In this commercial commoditizing contact zone, traveling rather than dwelling is emphasized: the *muñecas* are intended to travel out as souvenirs. They are what Jacques Maquet calls "commodities by destination" (Appadurai 1986:16). They become bought souvenirs exactly because they are successful representational images of some aspect of the Zapatistas. Appadurai adds the "satisfactory negotiation of price and the matching of consumer taste to producer skill, knowledge, and tradition" to the mix (Appadurai 1986:44).

Today the *muñecas zapatistas* are ubiquitous, not only within the main center of San Cristóbal and in tourist spots throughout the region but also in souvenir markets and

pro-Zapatista businesses⁷⁸ in the rest of Mexico. These dolls, however, have a convoluted pre-history that includes more than their immediate association with the Zapatista movement. Consequently, while they form part of the commodified tourist industry, a major economic sector in Chiapas, they also implicitly embody—and, consequently, carry with them internationally—some elements of the history and traditions of the home region. These elements pertain only in part to the iconicity of the Zapatistas. This iconicity is foregrounded because of the dolls’ deliberately obvious resemblance to the official image of the Zapatistas. As Keane’s concept of bundling reminds us, however, “material things always combine an indefinite number of physical properties and qualities” (Keane 2006:200). While the *muñecas* specifically resemble the Zapatistas because of the addition of the *pasamontañas*, they have become effigial representatives of the Tzotzil women who created them as well. However, without the necessary context, they remain dislodged as quaint dolls in costume that may or may not pertain to real people.

Nancy Parezo suggests that, “of all Indian-made objects, the souvenir is the lowliest” (Dilworth 2003:106). When they are not sold by the numerous Tzotzil *ambulantes* [sellers who roam the streets] in the San Cristóbal city centre, the *muñecas* tend to be relegated to the less prestigious nooks in shops and market stalls along with cheap plastic objects and curios and decisively set apart from the woven, embroidered, and other hand-crafted treasures for which the Chiapanecan artisans are famous. Parezo argues that souvenirs “contradict what is valuable in other markets: the singular, the handmade, the ‘detailed’” (Dilworth 2003:106). While the dolls are still handmade, there are few deviations from the general template and no doll is deliberately unique in appearance. Because of this, they are distinctive as a type and immediately recognizable. Before their

career as Zapatista emissaries, the *muñecas* were known as *chamulitas*, named and dressed for the women of San Juan Chamula. In his 1994 book on ethnic tourism in San Cristóbal, Pierre L. van den Berghe portrays the *chamulitas* as standard tourist fair in the city⁷⁹ (Van den Berghe 1994: photo 22).



New equestrian muñecas zapatistas displayed with a range of toys at the open air market in San Cristóbal de las Casas

Not surprisingly, tourism figures plummeted in Chiapas during and immediately after the Zapatista uprising and the local artisans from San Juan Chamula had problems selling their wares, including the *chamulitas* (Bartra 1998:5). Eli Bartra recounts how a journalist from Barcelona, Joaquim Ibarz, suggested to a group of *artesanas* [artisans] who tried their best to off-load their dolls, stoles, and thread *pulseras* [bracelets] in a popular San Cristóbal hotel that he would have bought all their *chamulitas* had they been Zapatistas (Bartra 1998:5). Without further ado, the women added *pasamontañas*, *paliacates*, and the wooden sliver guns (Bartra 1998:5). The *muñeca zapatista* was born.⁸⁰

On the one hand, this was an opportunistic commodification and appropriation of the Zapatista movement. However, the Chamula people had also been objectified and commodified through the sales of the *chamulitas*. The *chamulitas* also dislodged the Chamula people from their socio-cultural context. The makers of the *chamulitas* distilled only the most emblematic marker of the Chamula *traje*, the black felted wool tunic. By transforming the *chamulitas* into Zapatistas, the women set the process of dislodgement and commodification into motion yet again. They again added only the most emblematic markers to signify the Zapatistas and so superimposed one honed-down icon over another equally ideogrammatic icon. The difference in second cycle of commodification was that the women were leaving out a larger range of differentiating detail; yet they were also highlighting exactly those elements that their customers would associate with the official image of the Zapatistas. Considering my discussion in the previous chapter, this means that they were merely portraying the result of the internationally co-constructed image of the Zapatistas. As their *muñecas* appeared so soon after the Zapatistas appeared on 1 January, they, however, played a large role in solidifying this image.

The Chamula women were not alone in grasping this economic opportunity. In March 1994, Marcos exploded at this commodification, which also included more obnoxious examples such as the *Los Hombres Alzados* [the Men who Have Risen Up] condoms (Ross 1995:237, 238). *Comandante* Juan issued the statement: “We have risen up in arms because our dignity was not respected. ... People of our own blood ... are selling us like merchandise. They are selling the heroic blood of our martyrs right here, in the streets of San Cristóbal” (Ross 1995:237, 238)(Golden 1994b). Zapatista-themed

merchandise became a talking point in the press conferences the Zapatista delegates held during the Peace Talk meetings in San Cristóbal in February 1994.

David Clark Scott includes a description of indigenous women “doing a brisk business ... in the hotel entryways” selling their dolls that “now sport tiny wool ski masks” (Scott 23 February 1994). Scott tries to speak to a local hat seller and his wife who have embroidered “EZLN” and “Marcos” on to baseball caps to catch some of the Peace Talks trade but the merchant does not want to say much about his wares. “Some people don’t approve,” he says. He concludes that, “Since the Zapatista rebellion, San Cristóbal has become polarized” (Scott 23 February 1994). Tim Golden notes that “the rebels have found themselves struggling not to be trivialized by a frenzy of commercialization” (Golden 25 February 1994). The Zapatistas have subsequently relaxed their stance on at least the Zapatista dolls and when I asked the *Junta de Buen Gobierno*⁸¹ at Oventik in 2007 what the Zapatista position is on the *muñecas*, the officials guardedly answered that the Zapatistas understand that mothers make the dolls for sale in order to feed and clothe their families even though the Zapatistas would not want their women to walk the streets trying to sell dolls.

In July 2007, while sipping coffee in the spacious and comfortable *Tierra de Adentro*, a Zapatista-friendly coffee house in San Cristóbal, I was approached by a tiny urchin weighed down under the bundles of *pulseras* and key chain *muñecas*. “*Compre Marcos?*” [“Buy Marcos?”], she implored. The miniature entrepreneur, herself a *chamulita*, did brisk business among the smiling international faces in the room, none of them apparently aware of the incongruity of her sales pitch. This incident seems to draw George Yúdice’s pronouncement into question that, “The Zapatistas may not own the means of

representation, but they have found creative ways of exercising a measure of control over representations of their activities” (Yúdice 2003:106). The *chamulitas/muñecas zapatistas* are “the most prominent artifact within the prolific commodity landscape of Zapatista tie-in merchandise” (Flusty 2006:191). As I will show below, the Zapatistas did eventually participate in this commodity landscape and on their own terms. However, it remains doubtful whether they have been able to exercise control over the rest of the representational economy that has developed around them. For instance, until very recently, the traditional *muñeca zapatista* appeared only in the Chamula *traje* even though, as I have shown in the introduction, the Zapatista ranks speak six different languages, not just Tzotzil and certainly do not all hail from one municipality. The recent brocaded version of the key-ring dolls reference the Zinacantán municipality but remains within the Tzotzil Highland. The other new version transports the dolls and, by extension, the Zapatistas into the realm of the fantastic with purple hands and blue horses and clothes that bear no relation to any of the Chiapanecan *trajes*. Yet, as I will illustrate later, there are occasions in which the Zapatistas creatively recuperate use of their representations even though they might still lack full control over how they are represented.



Two pendants crafted in Zapatista cooperatives for the tourist trade

The invigorating rebirth of the *muñecas* conceals a longer, darker, story. James Clifford noticed in July 1993, that the Chamula doll sellers had been banned from the Mayan ruins in Palenque where they had circulated freely only two years earlier (Clifford 1997:226). He includes two further illustrative episodes in the dolls' and their sellers' lives. Since the mid-seventies, the producers and sellers of the *muñecas* come "largely from the poor *barrios* [neighborhoods] around San Cristóbal de las Casas: La Hormiga, Paraiso, Nueva Palestina" (Clifford 1997:226). These *barrios* are also those formed and subsequently inhabited by the Chamulas evicted from San Juan Chamula for having been evangelized⁸². It was "*la crisis*," the economic crisis of the 1980s that forced most of the Chamula women into tourist souvenir production in the first place, impelling a significant increase in the women and children who sell these souvenirs on the streets of San Cristóbal and the surrounding areas including tourist destinations such as the streets of the town of Palenque even if not the ruins themselves (Clifford 1997:229).

This extended history, one that is not immediately captured by either the *muñecas*' traditional *traje* or from the more recent mask and wooden gun additions, places the *muñeca* sellers as always on the perimeter's edge. They are never acceptable. The way in which the majority of the dolls are sold is also significant. As mentioned above, these dolls—generally paired with the cheap but beautifully colored knotted *pulseras*—are the staple of the *ambulantes* sellers who amble through the San Cristóbal streets from dawn to long after dusk. Having been forcefully, at times even violently, expelled from their home community, they are now moving through the sea of international tourists along the side streets and around the central plaza, conducting a traveling of sorts of their own, while they are searching for the next customer that will take their effigies even further away from

Chamula, San Cristóbal, and Chiapas. While Chiapas features a history of migration, internal and external, voluntary and sometime forced, the *muñecas* are still likely to travel further than the sellers can ever travel themselves. In their own ways, they are participating in the trend of “the expediency of culture as resource” (Yúdice 2003:25). The Chamula sellers’ travel by proxy takes a poignant turn when their craft arrived in Kentucky where, in 2003, the Arcadia group offered weekly “Ya Basta!” classes in “the basics of Chiapaneca doll making” and “creative resistance” to Latina immigrant farm and factory workers who, like the Chamula sellers also are a marginalized group of women (zapatistadolls.com).

Returning to the *muñecas zapatistas*’ first appearance, I believe more than just cynical opportunism must have been at play. The Zapatista uprising allowed the indigenous populations of Chiapas new hope, something akin to Taussig’s mimetic faculty. He expands on Walter Benjamin’s argument that the mimetic faculty boils down to the “compulsion of persons to ‘become and behave like something else’” (Taussig 1993:19). Taussig cites Stephanie Kane’s tale of the spirit boat incident among the Chocó Emberá Indians in Panama⁸³. This case history shows that mimesis does not require a faithful rendering of the person in the mimicking process to become a conduit of the power that mimicked person might hold (Taussig 1993:14-17); “a copy that is not a copy” (Taussig 1993:17) is sufficient to transmit mimetic power. Similarly, the Chamula artisans who were astute enough to notice the economic opportunities the Zapatista uprising presented, were also women who had been marginalized on so many different fronts. They were indigenous and they were women in a city where they had once been expected to step into the busily narrow San Cristóbal streets to allow *ladinos* to pass unhindered on the sidewalks. Surely, the excitement of the *in media res* moment of the uprising must have reached the doorstep

of the hotel where they encountered Ibarz. I believe this excitement of the impossible being realized in front of them encouraged them to empower themselves, even if only mimetically in effigy, as they dressed their miniature representatives as Zapatistas.

Susan Stewart identifies partiality as the key element to the power a souvenir holds (Stewart 1993:136). It is a sample that evokes metonymically the experience of its site of origin and, yet, “[i]t will not function without the supplementary narrative discourse that both attaches it to its origins and creates a myth with regards to those origins” (Stewart 1993:136). The *chamulitas/muñecas zapatistas* are specific examples of sampled and partial souvenirs. As such they encapsulate local production as well as touristic consumption. However, it depends on the side of the economic continuum from which one views the dolls whether production or consumption is highlighted. These particular souvenirs, when viewed in their full contextual complexity that considers both sides of the transaction, therefore question Stewart’s assertion that, “once the miniature becomes souvenir, it speaks not so much to the time of production as to the time of consumption” (Stewart 1993:144). The narrative discourse that is woven into these dolls is not only spoken by the tourist buyers but equally by the Chamula producers.

Another reading against Stewart’s statement that a souvenir foregrounds consumption at the expense of production is offered by C. A. Bayly who reminds us that, “material culture was never simply material” and that relationships are key (Bayly 1986:316). This is because “goods were only marketed commodities for a short span of their lives in society. As artifacts in the process of production, they carried the spirit of the maker” (Bayly 1986:316). Viewing the Zapatista souvenirs as commodities that are bought

to be used simply for material purposes, even if their utility is entirely ornamental as in the case of the *muñecas*, ignores these objects' other life.

This intertwining is the site for the longing Stewart describes, a “yearning desire” where that desire is located in and directed toward “a future-past, a deferment of experience in the direction of origin and thus eschaton, the point where narrative begins/ends, both engendering and transcending the relation between materiality and meaning” (Stewart 1993:x). Steven Flusty traces another form of travel in the dolls' biography as they are “the incidental offspring of countless back-strap looms where shuttles travel back and forth, to and fro between the taut-stretched warp of fabrics in formation” (Flusty 2006:185). What are the weavers thinking while they recreate themselves through the movements of their own hands? I believe it must again comprise more than mere economics. The Zapatistas empowered the indigenous population, rising up in their name. By mimetically refashioning the miniature images of themselves to resemble the Zapatistas, I suggest that the Chamula women are expressing their longing as congruent with that of the Zapatistas: a world into which many worlds fit, dignity for all, to be seen and acknowledged.

Flusty follows the dolls along “established circuits of domestic Mexican travel” as they reappear in different textures, sizes, and materials in southern and central Mexican regions that have been sympathetic to the Zapatista insurgency (Flusty 2006:193). I have only found the Chiapanecan version of the dolls in other centers. This streamlining of their presentation, however, amplifies Flusty's statement that, “The dolls' mass-cottage-production implies an asymmetrical disjunction between their roles as popular expressions and as commodities, a dichotomy in which the significance of the tiny Zapatistas is

rendered as they become just so much grist for the tourism engines that grind local specificities into readily comestible exotica” (Flusty 2006:196).



Muñecas zapatistas in a camione decorated with EZLN slogans

Yet, Flusty casts the *muñecas zapatistas* as co-participants in the insurgency where their masks also “become a countervailing proclamation of visibility” (Flusty 2006:191). As tiny human effigies, they do conduct revolutionary work as actors in the immense network of global awareness about the Zapatistas. Many Zapatista-themed articles share this dual and necessarily intertwined responsibility of souvenir and resistance-messaged art. However, these dolls are human effigies and as such, they become a third narrator in the

discourse that surrounds their existence as souvenirs. This became clear when a contingent of *muñecas zapatistas* became—rather than merely resembled and represented—revolutionaries.

During the first week of January 1999, more than four hundred *muñecas* became directly involved in the international Zapatista struggle when they appeared hidden among California seedless grapes in the fresh produce department of Wholefoods, Safeway, Calafoods, Von's, and Lucky's supermarkets throughout California (STTF 1999). The California state feared terrorism and pulled all table grapes from circulation in case the grapes were poisoned (STTF 1999). None were and two days later, the respective supermarket managements quietly returned the grapes to the shelves (STTF 1999). *Las Artesanas Zapatistas Les Ganarán A Los Artistas Derrotistas* [Zapatista Artisans Will Triumph Against Defeatist Artists] sent a press release to the main media outlets claiming responsibility and charging the American consumer to reconsider the US's "duplicitous relationship" with the Mexican government and to calculate the human costs for the people of Chiapas (STTF 1999). In this incident, the dolls broke frame by appearing within the unlikely setting of table grapes, as if by their own volition, as no longer mere souvenirs carried from Chiapas to California by happy tourists but as symbols of the Zapatistas themselves. Yet, this symbolic quality becomes debatable if one takes into consideration that the Zapatista image was co-opted by the Artesanas.

Through this incident, it appears that souvenirs—even those depicting armed insurgents, masked in a way that carry connotations of criminality in the US—are rendered safe and acceptable as long as they remain framed as souvenirs. If they should overstep the boundaries of what constitutes a souvenir, they cause alarm as in the case of

the grapes. The dolls' surprising independence supports Adrian Franklin's contention that "movements of objects and humans are not synonymous, objects do not always accompany humans and they engender effect separate from those of the travelers themselves" (Franklin 2003:111). This means that the "uncomfortable possibility" remains that souvenirs could "reanimate" themselves, asserting their "subjectivity as historical agents, wreaking revenge for the violence done to [them]" as James Luna fears (Dilworth 2003:113).

The fresh produce invasion was sandwiched between the Zapatista virtual "hacktivism"⁸⁴ sit-ins on various international websites including that of the White House and the Pentagon in mid-1998 (Bernard 2000:29), and the Battle of Seattle during which "Zapatistas" joined the mass street protests against the World Trade Organization in November 1999, both in the form of protesters dressed as Zapatistas and 12-foot tall Zapatista puppets (Olesen 2005:146, 147). These other two invasions were framed by their obvious activist environments. Zapatistas did not seem out of place in the carnivalesque chaos of Seattle and hacktivism lacks the tangible corporeality of a doll lurking among fruit. Consequently, framing an artifact as a souvenir renders it safe just as framing it as part of a protest renders it intelligible. The collapsing of the framing boundaries surrounding the renegade fresh produce dolls speaks to Tim Edensor's description of the modern tourist as "constantly moving between an embrace of familiar comforts and the sensualities of the unfamiliar" (Edensor 2006:44). The conceptually unframed dolls diminished the anticipated neutral zone between familiar comforts such as supermarket fruit and unfamiliar sensualities such as effigies of armed and masked insurgents.

Arguably, this was exactly what the *Las Artesanas Zapatistas* group had hoped for: to dislodge the US consumers from their comfortable acceptance of their commodity way of life. True to Zapatista form, they achieved this by self-inflicting change: the Zapatistas covered their faces because they were invisible to the rest of the world.⁸⁵ By covering their faces, they drew attention to those faces and forced the world to acknowledge them and grant them visibility. The *Artesanas* mimetically dislodged their personas in miniature effigy from the realm of neutralized tourism to have them reappear, not in a domestic framing traditionally suitable for such dislodged souvenirs, but in the historically politicized environment of grapes, fresh produce, and NAFTA free trade. In so doing, the activists forced the supermarket world as a whole to consider and acknowledge the *muñecas zapatistas* as ideological insurgents rather than as impotent felted dolls. The Zapatista dolls displayed themselves as if for sale, serving as a biting commentary on the Mexican government that entered into NAFTA, thereby ratifying the sale of the Chiapanecan indigenous subsistence. In this context, the dolls are political statements and accusations about human rights violations. They are not quaint toys or ornaments.

Part of the reason for the shift in projected meaning that occurred during the fresh produce incident lies in Appadurai's insight that "it is in the biography of objects that their agency and social life become apparent" (Appadurai 1986:36). The Zapatista dolls have a definitive biography, as I have shown above. As souvenirs, they should enable both "the recreation of a touristic experience to occur" as well as the embodiment and retention "of the place (and its significance) where they were purchased" (Franklin 2003:108). Both characteristics color these dolls' biography. However, during normal souvenir commerce, the dolls remain dolls and lose their particular significance as pieces of contemporary

resistance art that address the intricacies inherent in the Chiapas-Chamula-Zapatista territories palimpsest.

Consequently, the army of miniature Zapatistas camping among Californian grapes, harnessed the mobility John Urry lauds in his updated conclusion to his study of “the tourist gaze” (Urry 2002:156) while this same cadre of masked insurgents simultaneously violated the rules by moving outside of the framed control of the souvenir stand. The dolls are frequently as close as tourists come to “real” Zapatistas. Yet, among the grapes, these travelers were deemed out of place and potentially too close to real terrorists to be tolerated.

That these souvenirs are deemed appropriate only when contained and on-script *as* souvenirs despite the fact that their very visual appearance is so intensely connected to not one but two specific cultural contexts, resembles the dislodgement Feld notices of different musics from their original cultural contexts in the World Beat commodity genre. While I am not considering a music event, Feld’s observation of how subsequent multiplications of an original can become dislodged from that original applies to the case of the *muñecas* as well. In this case, rather than dealing with a *schizophonic* mimesis that leads to schizmogogenesis, I argue for *schizo-iconic* mimesis. As in Feld’s consideration of musical copies, the “material and commodity conditions” of the dolls “create new possibilities whereby a place and people can be recontextualized, rematerialized, and this thoroughly reinvented” (Feld 1996:13). Here, too, the split from the original results in “the schizoid iconicity of a simultaneous unity and multiplicity” (Feld 1996:16) and places the dolls within the “escalating cycles of distorting mutuality, which in turn is linked to polarizing interpretations of meaning and value (Feld 2003[1994]:289).

Authenticity is a frequent concern in tourism discourse. Stewart addresses this sought-after authenticity in terms of the souvenir as a form of longing: “Within the development of culture under and exchange economy, the search for authentic experience and, correlatively, the search for the authentic object become critical” (Stewart 1993:133). Yet, she maintains that such an authentic experience “becomes both elusive and allusive as it is placed beyond the horizon of present lived experience” (Stewart 1993:133). The souvenir as possessed metonymic object becomes “a kind of dispossession in that the presence of the object all the more radically speaks to its status as a mere substitution” (Stewart 1993:135). The additional problematic complexity of “the seriality of mechanical modes of production” transfigures that object into a mere “trace” (Stewart 1993: 133). Walter Benjamin perceived the damage to the aura of a reproduced artifact as a damage to its authentic historical testimony and, ultimately, to the object’s authority. This process is effected through the detachment of the serialized object “from the domain of tradition” resulting in the eventual “reactivation” of the reproduced, now no longer unique, object in its new commodified context. This reactivation is the “traffic in new creations and relationships” to which Feld refers.

A similar “split from their source” occurs when the *muñecas zapatistas* are sent into the world as tourist souvenirs. For those consumers who know the back history of the dolls and the Zapatistas, the *muñecas* will remain tactile reminders and contextual representatives of the Zapatista movement. Yet, not everyone who buys a doll will have such specific knowledge. How does such large-scale, and potentially indiscriminate, commodification affect the Zapatistas? Igor Kopytoff suggests that, “the same thing may be treated as a commodity at one time and not at another” just as it “may, at the same time, be

seen as a commodity by one person and as something else by another” (Kopytoff 1986:64). He prefers to situate commoditization “as a process of becoming rather than as an all-or-none state of being” (Kopytoff 1986:73). Even as the image of the Zapatistas is copied and reproduced, the resultant objects are increasingly removed from their inspiration, the Zapatistas. Yet, despite the potential damage to their aura, in Benjamin’s terms, they do signal that the Zapatistas exist. In this way they participate in the Zapatista endeavor of gaining widespread recognition.



Two chamulita dolls on sale at the International Folk Art festival in Santa Fe

This could explain why the Zapatistas themselves began selling their own version of the dolls in the crafts co-operative in Oventik and in their outlets in Tierra Adentro in

San Cristóbal. The Zapatista version is also available in different sizes either as three-inch high key rings or lone standing ornaments ranging from six to twelve inches tall. The Zapatista-made ornaments have an added thin wooden platform to stabilize them whereas the generic lone standing *muñecas* do not, which generally results in the tendency of their falling over. Besides the stabilizing effect of the platform, it also demarcates the Oventik version as specifically an ornament while the Chamula dolls remain dolls. This means that the Chamula *muñecas* are also more effigial than the ones found in Oventik. One of the more obvious differences between the two versions is that the Oventik dolls are made of wood and have moveable arms⁸⁶, which is ironic considering the dual function of the wooden platform. The lower parts of their legs show and they wear wooden black boots referencing the successful Zapatista boot cooperative operating from Oventik.

The Oventik dolls are also dressed in a variety of ways. Some still resemble Chamulans but with greater detail to the *traje* than is usual in the Chamula versions. Some of the other Chiapanecan *trajes* are also represented, making the Oventik dolls more representative of the cultural diversity within the movement's ranks. Many of the Oventik dolls are dressed as EZLN soldiers with well-sewn pants. Another difference is that the Zapatista version clearly distinguishes between male and female dolls, whereas the Chamula original makes no such distinction, possibly because of its pre-history as representations of specifically Chamula women. Ultimately, availability is a key distinction. The Oventik dolls are only available in the *caracol* and in the Zapatista cooperatives housed within the Tierra Adentro restaurant space in San Cristóbal. This limited availability pre-selects the people who might buy the Oventik dolls as the chances

are much higher that they will at least know something of the Zapatista context even if they might not know the Chamula back history.



Front and back views of the muñecas zapatistas sold at the Oventik cooperative

In Oventik, artifacts are also sold and grouped differently depending on the handcraft status of the items. The shop of the women's cooperative stands on the one side of what is perhaps ironically known as the "central avenue" of Oventik. Almost directly across the way, is the Café Che Guevara and its general *tienda* [all purpose shop] that also carries various Zapatista memorabilia, music and video recordings, and souvenirs. The wooden dolls are only available in the cooperative while the *tienda* sells the smallest Chamula-type dolls in the form of earrings as well as the *camioneta* trucks transporting cadres of felted *muñecas zapatistas*.

As representations of a social movement that deliberately exceed the boundaries of its geographic origins, the dolls, too, conflate local and transnational. Their local aspect is imbued with the region and its people's history and narratives of struggles; their transnational aspect is in keeping with the Zapatistas' general outreach. In the conflation of these two aspects, the dolls acquire a generative conduit character that effectively links the near and the far. This in-between yet conduit character is elaborated in Celia Lury's notion of tourist objects as opposed to tripper or traveler objects (Lury 2000 [1997]). Lury posits tourist objects as less tied to either a particular place of origin or a "final resting place": the origin is not essential in the mobility of the objects and the latter "does not erode the integrity of their object-ness" (Lury 2000 [1997]:79). For this class of objects "movement is all" while the objects remain "in and of the in-between" (Lury 2000 [1997]:80). This contrasts directly with traveler objects that "typically stay still although their images frequently move" while "retaining their authenticated relation to an original dwelling" (Lury 2000 [1997]:78).

Paradoxically, the *muñecas* can also be read as fixed and local, much as the Zapatistas maintain a global-local duality. Lury cites Ulf Hannerz and Mike Featherstone in her discussion of souvenir objects entering into a “user-friendly” global cosmopolitan relationship with people who are “open to objects” (Lury 2000 [1997]:89, 90). If classed as traveler objects, instead of tourist objects as in the previous reading, the Zapatista dolls are “arts and crafts and items of historical, political, or religious significance” that, through “practices of symbolic binding,” remain “completely tied to their specific place of origin” so that “it is often only their image that travels” (Lury 2000 [1997]:78). The *muñecas* name and dress themselves as bound to a specific Chiapanecan location as well as to the Zapatista movement. As the dolls are effigies of the Zapatistas, the Zapatistas themselves have become the real tourist objects and Zapatista dolls are their traveling images. Either way, the dolls surrounded by supermarket grapes could not be confused as exotic interior decorating elements like those “objects of travel that dwell” that Lury finds in retailers such as Habitat (Lury 2000 [1997]:83, 84). Encountering these dolls as they did, the California supermarket world proved that people might be open to “safe” objects but not to those that appear incongruous and without a suitable contextual frame.

Lury notes that, “[i]ronically, given that the ‘here’ and the ‘there’ are themselves rendered insignificant except in so far as they signal movement, the distance traveled can as well be virtual as real” (Lury 2000 [1997]:80). Lury sums up the changing need for a “bodily copresence of people in that place at that time” now that the Internet has become an acceptable and familiar travel portal. As I have shown in the introduction, the Zapatistas began appearing on Internet sites immediately after their insurrection and M.

Clint McCowan argues that the Zapatista insurgency came to be “as much a war of images, or a propaganda war, as a military endeavor” (McCowan 2003:2).

However, according to McCowan, this presents the movement with pitfalls. He extends the Zapatistas’ commodification to their having “become novelties or museum pieces for consumption” as “the Zapatista experience” finds “its place in time and space” (McCowan 2003:6). As such, the experience is static and, “like the tourist destination that markets itself to the expectations and preconceived understandings of the tourist, the popular culture industry has created and designed the essential and authentic Zapatista for consumption in the public mind” (McCowan 2003:6). McCowan concludes his mostly acerbic and cynical assessment of the Zapatista commodified presence by citing Andres Oppenheimer: “The Zapatista paraphernalia craze ... was a textbook case of self-fulfilling media coverage. ... What viewers didn’t know—and many reporters found inconvenient to acknowledge—was that the merchandising phenomenon had been created by ourselves” (McCowan 2003:7), which is underscored by Bartra’s account of how the *muñecas zapatistas* came to be. In this way, according to McCowan and Oppenheimer, the Zapatistas became “victims of their own imaginings” (McCowan 2003:7), a view reminiscent of Jean Baudrillard’s charge that, “perhaps at stake has always been the murderous capacity of images: murderers of the real; murderers of their own model ...” (Baudrillard 2001:173).

These views are as limited as Stewart’s on consumption subsuming production. Representations of the Zapatistas have to deploy differently in circulation than, for instance, representations of Che Guevara do, because the Zapatistas might have become iconic but they remain living icons; people can physically meet with them, even if just

face-to-masked-face. The ease of mobility facilitates this. This means that there is not just one type of souvenir encounter and consumption. A more nuanced reading is required to mine the textured involvements of those tourists who actively seek out the Zapatista-themed artifacts as well as those tourists who simply happen upon them without much anticipation or background knowledge. I do not, however, suggest that all tourist disseminations of the Zapatista history are serious and/or worthwhile. For instance, a casual blogger Kris writes under a snippet entitled “Meeting the EZLN,”

I had a look in the markets and went on a spending spree... I spied a couple of Zapatista dolls at 2 for a dollar and finally I came across a couple of EZLN tshirts [*sic*]. One has the balaclavared image of subcommandante [*sic*] Marcos and the next has a funny picture of the EZLN football team scoring a goal with a bicycle [*sic*] kick wearing their balaclavas and machine guns (Kris 2008).

Kris continues that he visited the Oventik *caracole*, met with the *Buen Gobierno*, bought another doll and other mementoes at the *collectivo*, and found a photograph of the Zapatista soccer team at the Che Guevara Café. He admits he had thought his soccer T-shirt had been a joke, “but it’s true, well I don’t think they play with rifles around their neck” (Kris 2008). The site includes various illustrative photographs such as the two dolls Kris had bought in San Cristóbal posed as if they were life-size people (Kris 2008).

Another Zapatista-consuming tourist, Jessica_cdn, writes,

I had one thing on my mind: I knew I wanted a zapatista doll. Now, some of you may be wondering what I would want a doll of a violent, political organization.⁸⁷ Clearly you don’t know me at all!! So I got myself a zapatista doll, for the shocking price of 1.50\$. After much bargaining, of course. I kinda [*sic*] wanted the

one on a horse, but it was pretty big, and would have been hard to hide in my luggage, hehe (Jessica_cdn:2006).

The page sports a photograph of Jessica_cdn wearing a tourist version of the Zapatista mask, i.e. one with EZLN written above the eyes. In a comment to her post, a friend responds, “I have a little Zapatista too! Robin got it for me when he was in San Cristobal [sic]!” (Jessica_cdn:2006).

These two posts appear to be from people who are neither committed Zapatista supporters nor people who are completely ignorant of the movement. They can relate their Zapatista souvenir shopping excursions without too many explanations, which mean the people they expect to read their respective blogs, have some working knowledge of the Zapatistas as well. This does not mean that all the knowledge at their disposal is correct, as Jessica_cdn shows. Yet, it does seem overly simplistic to suggest that for these tourist consumers, the Zapatistas remained a destination to be checked off: Been there, done that, got the T-shirt—or doll in this case. Kavitha Dispatch provides another perspective in which the blogger offers a knowledgeable article on the Zapatista-Chiapas situation in 1999 and uses various captioned photographs including one of *muñecas zapatistas* as illustrations rather than as quips or shopping tales (Kavitha Dispatch 1999). This last blog entry is an example of the dolls performing a strong promotional role on behalf of the movement.

It cannot be disputed that the *muñecas* commodify and appropriate the image of the Zapatistas. That the dolls now are signature popular crafts of Chiapas in their own right, at times separated from the Zapatista movement *per se*, complicates the matter further. There are, however, disparate readings on the souvenir as a circulating

commodity. The Zapatistas have come to condone the sale of the *muñecas* and have, in fact, followed suit with their own version. Through their successful show of power, the Zapatistas empowered the indigenous Chiapanecan population in general but simply through their existence, they also provided the impoverished and marginalized Chamula women with a new avenue of income. In many instances, the *muñecas zapatistas* return the favor by spreading awareness of the movement internationally. Consequently, the *encuentro* between the insurgents and tourists to San Cristóbal on that first day of the uprising in 1994 is repeated again and again, in some way or another, through the commerce in the miniature Zapatista likenesses.

One night during my visit to Oventik in July 2010, some of the *compañeras* invited me to a board game with rules very much resembling those of Snakes and Ladders. The board's design, however, was organized in the shape of a snail referencing one of the two connotative meanings of *caracol*. The five *caracoles* were represented by green blocks and spread out along the contours of the snail. If a player landed on one of these, she could throw the dice again. There were also three yellow blocks, each with a saying based on the Zapatista basic tenets. Landing on one of these required the player to ask a question. If the rest of the players believed the question was a good one, they decide how many blocks the player may advance. Grey blocks were dispersed throughout the cycle representing the paramilitaries. As might be expected, landing on these blocks was detrimental: the player has to throw the dice again and move back that number of blocks, repeating the maneuver until she lands on a neutral block. The design also included two additional spirals. On the right of the board, one of the spirals named the USA (in pitch black) and the other, in various shades of grey, the Mexican political parties and

capitalism. Each of the blocks in this spiral contained some pitfall or another to severely slow down players. On the left of the board, the other spiral represented the Zapatista path of anti-capitalism. The blocks in this spiral, all contained some bonus that facilitated the advance of the players. The snail's curve ended in the middle of the board with the Zapatista five-point red star against a peaceful rural background. The last two blocks before reaching this enticing goal—the one captioned *intergalactica* (referring to the large international Zapatista *encuentros*) and the other *anticapitalismo*—each contained the permission to move forward one block.



The Zapatista board game

While the game was fascinating in its own right as a window into the ideological transmission of Zapatismo, I was intrigued more by the play tokens. They were tiny

muñecas zapatistas, about an inch high, dressed in various colored full-length felted tunics. One of the *muñecas* in this cadre was significantly smaller than the others and, not surprisingly, the *compañeras* called her Ramona⁸⁸. One of the *compañeras*, a particularly diminutive Tzotzil who habitually wears a *traje*, smiled knowingly when the others immediately handed her the Ramona doll.



The tiny Zapatista play tokens

Besides the unsettling entry of hyperreal into real as a real Zapatista moved a logo-like effigy of herself across the board, this incident also shows that the *muñecas* travel to the Zapatista territories as well, at least to Oventik, and not just for a temporary display on the women's cooperative's shop shelves, before they continue their travels with some tourist or another. As in the closing incident in the previous chapter where the *compañero* improvised his masking practices, the board game exemplifies the potential for the Zapatistas to take back their representations for their own use and on their own terms.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In this study, I considered two material objects that have become intimately associated with the Zapatistas and how they have been disseminated. In the dissemination process, the inherent diversity of the Zapatistas has been obscured and a pared-down version of “the Zapatista” has appeared. While the international media, tourism in Chiapas, and scholars played a major role, *subcomandante insurgente* Marcos’s increasing iconicity facilitated the effect. The Zapatistas, however, have retained their heterogeneity. Yet, because of their masking practices visitors to the autonomous territories at first still meet the official Zapatista, rather than experiencing a face-to-face encounter with an individual. Yet, clear anomalies exist between what has become co-constructed as the international version of the Zapatista narrative. So much has been written about the Zapatistas that many scholars refer to and even analyze the movement without having met with its members.

I traced the development of the Zapatista mask from diverse commonly used items to a streamlined powerful logo of the movement. Its assigned and constructed homogeneity kept pace and, I argue, found its impetus in the growing familiarity and fascination of the international market with Marcos since his first *encuentro* with a group of tourists on the first day of the *levantamiento*. Once established, the mask’s false homogeneity goes unquestioned for the most part by journalists and scholars alike but is immediately challenged when tested within real everyday Zapatista situations. I identified five phases in this development and used historiographic analysis and semiotic theory to investigate the mediated representation of the Zapatista masks in each phase.

The *muñecas zapatistas* exemplify the popular distillation of diverse Zapatista masks to the singular *pasamontañas*. Even the examples that have subsequently been produced by Zapatista collectives, wear *pasamontañas* rather than *paliacates*. In contrast to the masks, the dolls were born independently of the Zapatistas as an opportunistic utilization of the Zapatistas' allure with tourists. Despite some minor changes in the *muñecas* sold in the streets of San Cristóbal and in souvenir stands throughout most of Mexico over the years, they have remained constant. In this sense, they could be seen as the true inevitably recognizable logos of the movement. Yet, as my consideration of the dolls' back history shows, they are not specifically Zapatista and it is highly debatable that the people who buy this ubiquitous souvenir know much about either the Zapatistas or the Chamulan women who craft the dolls.

The very different natures of the two object affects the ways in which they are disseminated and perceived. The masks need to be animated by Zapatista faces. As such they become part of a composite, conflated image of masked face. Consequently, they are dependant on the context of the Zapatistas. Yet, even though they are used and disseminated as a Zapatista identity marker, their very purpose is to hide the wearers' individual identity. The *muñecas*, on the other hand, can stand alone as pure souvenirs and are used as such. In the one example where the dolls were used as stand-ins for the Zapatistas, they broke frame and were no longer regarded as safe objects.

Both objects have become dislodged from their origins through the cycles of mediation and commodification. This dislodgement has not affected the Zapatista masking practices and within the Zapatista villages members mask as they had before. The only difference might be that the general availability of masks has followed the trend

toward one type of *pasamontañas* and one *paliacate* design. Where the *muñecas* are concerned, Zapatista collectives have begun producing their own versions of the dolls resembling more closely the variety of dress within the Zapatista communities even though these dolls still wear only *pasamontañas*.

My contention has been that three key modalities are interrelated in the process of dissemination: the physical, the representation, and the idea. The physical relates to more than each object but includes the tangible landscape of production and use. The representation involves both the talking about the Zapatistas and their talking about themselves. The idea is reminiscent of Peirce's interpretant. It is intertwined with the other two modalities but in varying degrees as not everyone who partakes in the Zapatista social imaginary—whether it be through media representations, scholarship, or activism—has had the opportunity to visit Chiapas. As I have shown, the indexicality of the mask is dependent not only on it being accompanied by instructions, but also on which instructions will be most widely quoted. These instructions are also contextually determined and non-solidarity souvenir buyers would be arguably more concerned about the physical authenticity of their *muñecas* or, occasionally, mask than about indexical connections. I do stress, however, that the physical has been neglected from the equation and should be restored in order to grasp not only the masks and *muñecas* better but also the complex and dynamic diversity of the Zapatistas.



The notice board in front of the Oventik primary school. Everything for everyone; nothing for us

¹ Nick Henck notes that a further two thousand combatants “remained in reserve” and that the group seized “numerous other minor towns and villages” as well (Henck 2007:185).

² The First Declaration served several purposes. It was an explicit declaration of war against the Mexican Federal Army and the Mexican government, specifically against the administration of president Carlos Salinas de Gortari. It listed the group’s demands: “work, land, housing, food, health care, education, independence, freedom, democracy, justice and peace” (EZLN 1993). It also contextualized the group as “a product of 500 years of struggle” and the “dispossessed” and introduces the Zapatista National Liberation Army [EZLN, *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional*] as the “fighting arm of [their] liberation struggle” (EZLN 1993).

³ The CCRI is the highest Zapatista authority and includes only indigenous Mayan representatives from Chiapas.

⁴ Marcos was identified in February 1995 as Rafael Sebastián Guillén Vicente, an erstwhile philosophy professor in the Department of Sciences and Arts for Design at the Xochimilco campus of the Autonomous Metropolitan University [UAM, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana] in Mexico City (Henck 2007:42, 43) (Guillermoprieto 2002:33).

⁵ I am deliberately using the present tense here as I argue Felipe’s elision still continues. Even when scholarly reports mention that the First Declaration was initially read by an indigenous man, he is generally not named. Henck is one of the few who does and he also mentions that Felipe was a “catechist from San Andrés Larráinzar” (Henck 2007:198). Live footage of the taking of San Cristóbal is included in many film productions about the uprising and frequently shows this first historic reading of the Declaration but the commentaries tend to skip over providing any details about the reader. Gloria Muñoz Ramírez’s insider history of the Zapatista movement mentions the place and date of the first reading before quoting from the Declaration, but in both the English translation and the Spanish original, this is done in the passive voice, facing a full page photograph of Marcos speaking into a hand-held microphone from the San Cristóbal municipal palace balcony (Muñoz Ramírez 2008:105). In this account, sanctioned by the EZLN as a celebratory record of the twenty year anniversary of the EZLN’s formation and the “ten years of public life” for the movement, the San Cristóbal reading is not mentioned specifically and becomes simply one of the readings that took place “from the main balcony of each of the municipal buildings taken [during the uprising]” (Muñoz Ramírez 2008:13, 105). Oppenheimer records in a footnote that Felipe was reported to have died some months after the uprising in a fight with a fellow Zapatista but that Marcos denied this report in an interview with Oppenheimer in July 1994 (Oppenheimer 1996:23).

⁶ John Ross (1995) (2000) (2006), Andres Oppenheimer (1996), and Bill Weinberg (2000) wrote book-length studies on the Zapatista uprising. Hermann Bellinghausen, Gloria Muñoz Ramírez, and Luis Hernández Navarro all continue to follow the Zapatista narrative closely and sympathetically, publishing mainly in *La Jornada*, the left wing daily based out of Mexico City. Muñoz Ramírez also published a book-length insider view of the EZLN and Zapatistas in 2003 (translated into English in 2008). In Mexico, the country’s *Wall Street Journal* equivalent *El Financiero*, the weekly news and commentary magazine *Proceso*, the San Cristóbal-based *El Tiempo*, and *La Jornada* were the first publications to carry in-depth stories about the Zapatistas. The latter three have also remained sympathetic to the Zapatista cause. The editor and owner of *El Tiempo*, Amado Avendaño Figueroa, conducted one of the first interviews with Marcos on 1 January 1994 (Henck 2007:204, 265). On 12 October 1994, the pro-Zapatista collective Chiapas State Indigenous Peasant Council [CEOIC, Consejo Estatal de Organizaciones Indígenas y

Campesino] named Avendaño “governor in rebellion” of the state of Chiapas after his defeat in the 1994 elections that were widely held as invalid (Henck 2007:268, 269).

⁷ However, his writing on the Chiapanecan indigenous plight began long before the uprising and, consequently, before he became the official spokesperson for the group. He wrote the searing travelogue, *Chiapas: The Southeast in Two Winds, a Storm, and a Prophecy*, in August 1992 at a time when the indigenous populations were still debating whether they would permit the EZLN to take up arms on their behalf. The piece was first released publicly on 27 January 1994 (The Editorial Collective 1994:25) with a slightly ironic introduction addressed to *La Jornada* and signed by the EZLN Press Office suggesting that, “Now that Chiapas has exploded in the national consciousness,” the piece might be published (Bardacke and López 1995:31, 32).

⁸ Claire Taylor and Thea Pitman (2007) offer a critical analysis of misconceptions surrounding the Zapatista use of the Internet. They also point out that the murder of Chico Mendes, the Brazilian rubber-tapper, “circulated electronically within minutes of its happening” resulting in an international outcry and that Pan-Mayan activists were also using the Internet as a tool before 1994 (Pitman 2007:99). These early instances of Internet use by social activists, however, were neither as extensive nor as long-lasting as that of the Zapatistas. A Google search on 14 October 2010 with the keyword “Zapatista” rendered 704 000 hits, for “Zapatista, Chiapas” 665 000⁸, for “EZLN” 582 000, for “Marcos, Zapatista” 350 000, and for “Zapatismo” 357 000. This narrowing of the keyword parameters seemed necessary as “Zapatistas” without the “Chiapas” delimiter would include the 1910 Mexican Revolution followers of Emiliano Zapata among other unrelated entries. For example, on the first page of eight site results for “Zapatistas,” (excluding the two video and the three book suggestions that all refer to the Chiapanecan Zapatistas), two entries are about an eponymous restaurant in Chicago. (However, none of these initial entries mentioned the original 1910 insurgents.) Comparing the broader and delimited populations, it does seem as if the neo-Zapatistas occupy the largest portion of the Google results. A further search on 12 April 2011 using the same keywords had the following results: 1 600 000 (Zapatista), 864 000 (Zapatista, Chiapas), 955 000 (EZLN), 766 000 (Marcos, Zapatista), and 175 000 (Zapatismo). It is unclear why the “Zapatismo” results had diminished so much while results for the other keywords had mushroomed.

⁹ They are Jeff Conant’s *A Poetics of Resistance: The Revolutionary Public Relations of the Zapatista Insurgency*; José Rabasa’s *Without History: Subaltern Studies, the Zapatista Insurgency, and the Specter of History*; and the Mexican volume edited by Marco Estrada Saavedra and Juan Pedro Viqueira, *Los Indígenas de Chiapas y la Rebelión Zapatista: Microhistorias Políticas*.

¹⁰ For instance, David Graeber uses the Zapatista example to illustrate his concept of “spaces of democratic improvisation” (2007:362-365) and Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow use the movement to explain their notion of “actor constitution” as one of the processes of claim-making in contentious politics (2007:72-74).

¹¹ I am deliberately using only the Spanish “*encuentro*.” First, the term references the Zapatista strategy of encouraging and facilitating international meetings between members of the Zapatista and interested outsiders. Naomi Klein observes that, through their large *encuentros*, the Zapatistas found “a new way to protect land and culture: Rather than locking out the world, the Zapatistas flung open the doors and invited the world inside. Chiapas was transformed—despite its poverty, despite being under constant military siege—into a global gathering place for activists, intellectuals, and indigenous groups” (Klein 2002:119). Second, the English direct translation of the term, “encounter,” does not retain all the semantic nuances of the Spanish. While the Spanish “*encuentro*” contains some of the adversarial hesitance indexed by the English “encounter,” it also allows for a coming together, a reunion, and a deliberate conversation (wordreference.com).

I believe that all of these additional connotations reflect more accurately the international Zapatista events.

¹² One of the primary paradoxes is that the Zapatista representations travel internationally while the Zapatista communities they represent generally are not able to.

¹³ Zapatista dedicated centers of good governance and interaction. There are five *caracoles* spread through indigenous Chiapas: Oventik, La Garrucha, Roberto Barrios, Morelia, and La Realidad.

¹⁴ These languages are organized into four distinct language families: Tzeltalan (including Tzeltal, Tzotzil, and Tojolobal), Mam, Ch'ol, and Mixe-Zoque. SIPAZ notes that 81.5 percent of the Chiapanecan indigenous population is concentrated in the Los Altos (Highlands), the Northern Zone, and the Selva (Jungle) regions of the state. According to the Secretary of Social Development of the State of Chiapas, in 2003 the Tzeltal people formed the largest indigenous percentage in the state at 37.9 percent followed by the Tzotzil (33.5 percent), Ch'ol (16.9 percent), Zoque (4.6 percent), Tojolobal (4.5 percent), and Mam (less than 2.7 percent) populations.

¹⁵ John Haviland notes that the three most widely spoken languages (Tzeltal, Tzotzil, and Ch'ol) "are, nonetheless, endangered, in slightly different ways and with different degrees of urgency. Children continue to learn all three [these] languages as first languages in some communities, whereas in all three cases there are also communities where children acquire Spanish despite the fact that their parents are native speakers of the Indian language. There are also instances of multilingual communities where several Indian languages are spoken, along with Spanish, or where quite divergent dialects of a single language must accommodate to each other" (Haviland 2004:230).

¹⁶ The same report states that 27.9 percent indigenous Chiapanecan men are illiterate as compared to 50.1 percent women (SIPAZ 2011).

¹⁷ The 2005 CONAPO report ranks Chiapas "with the second highest level of marginalization in Mexico." 25.9 percent of indigenous people in the state do not have running water in their homes, 85.7 percent use wood or coal for cooking, and 32.9 percent indigenous homes have dirt floors. Therefore, the statistic in the same report of 5.88 percent of indigenous homes without electricity seems low. In various Mexican states, social resistance against high electricity costs has been active but has been most prevalent in Chiapas since late 1992. Participants in this resistance argue that, "free access to electricity is a human and constitutional right" especially seeing as Chiapas contains 30 percent of Mexico's surface water and the state supplies 54 percent of the country's hydroelectric energy from the Grijalva watershed alone. Many communities have taken to tapping into electricity main lines to provide this free access for their constituents, a practice that would explain the relatively low figure for people without electricity at home.

¹⁸ This publication is eponymous with the periodical Miguel Hidalgo published from 20 December 1810 as part of the Mexican independence struggle.

¹⁹ The Zapatistas constructed their first official center, the Aguascalientes at Guadalupe Tepeyac, in preparation for their National Democratic Convention in August 1994. After this Aguascalientes was destroyed by the Mexican military on 9 February 1995, the Zapatistas built five new Aguascalientes centers, which were all inaugurated on 1 January 1996 (Muñoz Ramírez 2003:113). In 2003, the Zapatistas renamed these centers "*caracoles*" and instituted a new governance structure around the newly formed rotating local *Juntas de Buen Gobierno* [Councils of Good Governance]. In the process, the Zapatistas put in place measures to guard against paternalism of NGOs and supporters on the one hand and facilitate greater autonomy for the Zapatistas on the other (Marcos, *Chiapas: The Thirteenth Stele* in Vodovnik 2004:600).

²⁰ Ross mentions an earlier radio station, *Radio Rebelde*, that utilized "a 10-watt pirate system smuggled into Mexico for the 1996 *Intergaláctica* [encuentro] direct from *Radio Free Berkeley*" (Ross 2000:252). Its first FM107 transmission on 12 January 1998 was part of the funeral

proceedings for Guadalupe López Méndez, a young mother from La Garrucha, who had been shot and killed by the Chiapas state police during an indigenous march protesting the Acteal massacre of 22 December 1997.

²¹ The site, now *ezln.org.mx*, was launched to promote the start of *La Otra Campaña* [The Other Campaign] tour through Mexico in 2006 (Taylor and Pitman 2007:92).

²² CIZ was founded in 2001, initially to provide news specifically related to the Zapatista March for Indigenous Dignity to Mexico City in February and March of that year. Later it included an archive of material related to both the march and the San Andrés Peace Accords of 1996 as well as an extensive collection of international solidarity messages and a list of frequently asked questions answered by Marcos (Olesen 2005:65, 66).

²³ Olesen's extensive research on the mediation of the Zapatistas' cyberpresence contradicts Henck's statement that the Zapatistas had launched their own website in August 1994.

²⁴ See Claire Taylor and Thea Pitman's critique on how this "fabric of struggle" was woven in large part by Cleaver himself as founder of the *Chiapas95* listserve and as "a key player" in the subsequent *Acción Zapatista* website (Taylor and Pitman 2007:95).

²⁵ The Michigan site has subsequently been suspended; the *Chiapas95* site has been incorporated by *Acción Zapatista*, and can still be accessed through *eco.utexas.edu*; and Justin Paulson's *¡Ya Basta!* site changed its domain name to *ezln.org*. Olesen argues that *¡Ya Basta!*, launched in March 1994 by Paulson, was the earliest example of using "the web in support of an insurgency in the world" (Olesen 2005:64). As mentioned above, Taylor and Pitman do not agree with this reading.

²⁶ The distillation process present in mediated representations affects Marcos's public persona as well. José Rabasa argues that, "In addressing the subject positions of Marcos (and the CCRI-CG by extension), we must keep mind that 'he' is a series of communiqués, interviews, and speeches that have been recorded in video, and not some sort of coherent and consistent self behind the statements he utters" (Rabasa 2010:57).

²⁷ In the majority of Chiapanecan indigenous villages Zapatista supporters live interspersed with people who do not support the movement. One can generally tell the Zapatista houses apart from the others as only the non-Zapatista houses will be roofed in the more expensive silver aluminum sheeting provided by the government. Because the Zapatistas on principle refuse any government aid, they continue to use cheaper roofing materials, normally in red.

²⁸ There are various reasons why people may decide to leave the Zapatista ranks or be expelled from the ranks. Most frequently these revolve around prolonged absences from the communities and accepting aid from the government.

²⁹ For instance, the *Las Abejas* group that is active in the Chenalhó *municipio* supports the fundamental Zapatista cause but, as pacifists, does not agree with the Zapatistas' taking up arms, even if the armed struggle lasted only twelve days.

³⁰ The Zapatistas use the plural form whether they are indexing one or more ski-masks.

³¹ The EPR is an armed insurgency group that has been operating in various Mexican states since 1996. The EZLN has distanced itself from the EPR although the EPR still supports the EZLN.

³² Utley translates it as "handkerchief" and Rosaldo expands his translation to "handkerchief, usually red."

³³ However, Mukund does note that Masulipatnam, to the north of the Coromandel coast, produced a better variety of the *chayroot* red dye than that grown in Pulicat (Mukund 1992:2059). Masulipatnam, however, also succeeded Pulicat as the major port in the region from the end of the sixteenth century (Prakash 2004:454).

³⁴ Marcos is known to adhere to a very specific array of objects in his uniform ranging from his pipe and two watches to his cap with its star and the *bandoleros* crossed over his chest. Many of the items and habits pay homage to either Che Guevarra or Emiliano Zapata (Henck 2007:365).

The ever-present faded *paliacate* he wears around his neck seems to be relegated to another item in his specific brand of “guerrilla schick,” albeit one that specifically references his Zapatista compatriots.

³⁵ Keane cites Alfred Gell’s supposition that “the soldier’s weapon is not merely an object that is appropriated by an acting subject” but, instead, “a necessary component of the soldier’s agency” so that “the ‘soldier’ is a totality composed of the person plus the weapon” (Keane 2006:200). This is similar to the conflation I argue of Zapatista and mask.

³⁶ For example, Mihalís Mentínis wrote an intricately crafted philosophical reading of the importance of the Zapatista movement in radical contemporary politics and devoted a full chapter to analyzing the movement’s masks in terms of an indigenous social imaginary. Even so, he favors unquestioningly the *pasamontañas* as the typical Zapatista mask. When he does mention the *paliacate*, he does so with a strange interchangeability between the two types belied by the prominence of the *pasamontañas* in his text (Mentínis 2006:168). Michael Taussig adds an offhand bracketed comment to his lengthy discussion of the Zapatista masks: “The masks worn by the Zapatista rebels in Chiapas, you recall, are ski masks” (Taussig 1999:245).

³⁷ In an interview with reporters from *Proceso*, *El Financiero*, and the *New York Times*, Marcos addresses the connection between masks and climate when the reporters suggest an association between the Zapatistas and the Sendero Luminoso [Shining Path] who, the reporters maintained, were the only other guerrillas who had used ski-masks. Marcos suggests that Sendero Luminoso might have used masks to stave off the cold. “It must be cold in the Andes,” he said (The Editorial Collective 1994:198).

³⁸ Presumably he started wearing this lighter mask after he had made the pronouncement of having only one *pasamontañas* when contemplating what he would wear to the Peace Talks (Bardacke, López et al 1995:142).

³⁹ While the Zapatista Revolutionary Law of Women has made great inroads into the previously pervasive chauvinism that reigned in rural indigenous Chiapas, some inequalities still remained some time after the *levantamiento*. In a piece discussing the changes in the status of Zapatista women, Blanche Petrich introduces her subject by sketching the traditional way: “In the Chiapas highlands ... [if] there’s a pair of shoes for the family, they’ll belong to the man. If there aren’t enough tortillas to go around, it will be the woman who does without. He might speak Spanish. She is undoubtedly monolingual” (Petrich 1995:42).

⁴⁰ Henck also notes that boots were manufactured of leather and “remnants of tires” and that four people sewed further uniforms and caps in a San Cristóbal safe house (Henck 2007:105, 106).

⁴¹ For example, Marcos writes to Mumia Abu-Jamal in April 1999 that the Zapatistas “use black ski-masks to show [their] faces,” explaining that “[o]nly in this way can [they] be seen and heard” (Vodovnik 2004:381).

⁴² Marcos explains that “television was out of the question” and that “[r]adio presented the problem of how to deliver the material without extra risk” (*Reasons and Non-Reasons Why Some Media Were Chosen* in Bardacke, López, et al 1995:129).

⁴³ Overall, I am considering the first thirteen months of the Zapatista insurgency to include the key instance of the Mexican government attempting to dismantle the mystique built around Marcos’s persona by “unmasking” him on 9 February 1995.

⁴⁴ This communiqué was written on 6 January but only published on 11 January due to the problems the Zapatistas initially experienced in disseminating their writings.

⁴⁵ Octavio Paz, Elena Poniatowska, Carlos Monsiváis, Rodolfo Stavenhagen, Carlos Montemayor, and Carlos Fuentes among others all published commentaries in *La Jornada*.

⁴⁶ He was the governor of Chiapas from 1982 to 1988 and was kidnapped by the Zapatistas on 2 January 1994 and released, unharmed, on 16 February 1994.

⁴⁷ Marcos explains that these communiqués are “approved by the members of the committee, sometimes by all the members, sometimes by their representatives” (Foreword to Bardacke, López, et al 1995:26).

⁴⁸ These attempts were understood by especially the Zapatistas as a paternalistic attitude that questioned whether indigenous peoples were capable of staging an uprising of this nature. The Zapatista uprising was by no means the first indigenous rebellion in Chiapas. However, as Kevin Gosner and Arij Ouweneel (1996), Neil Harvey (1998), Bill Weinberg (2000), and John Womack Jr. (1999) show, the state remains racist and *ladinos* [people who self-identify as non-Indian in Chiapas], fear the possibility of indigenous unrest within their state. The government’s stance could have been an attempt to assuage these fears but it also speaks to the broader, historical mindset of bracketing the indigenous populations of the country in some way or another, frequently marginalizing these populations.

⁴⁹ See Philip L. Russell for a full account of the government’s extended and changing positioning, lasting from 1 to 10 January, on foreign impetus for and leadership within the insurgency (Russell 1995:25-27).

⁵⁰ Published in the newspaper as part of a series of transcripts collected on the first day on 19 January 1994.

⁵¹ His writings that refer to Zapatista masking do seem to favor the *pasamontañas* without mentioning the *paliacates*. See his 1994 letters dated 20 January, 14 February, and 16 February, and his opening speech at the National Democratic Convention dated 3 August (Bardacke, López, et al 1995:83-86, 112, 130, 243, 245).

⁵² In his interview with *La Jornada* on 1 January, Marcos also references masking in his disparaging remark about the Mexican national electoral process being a masquerade (*La Jornada* 1994:75).

⁵³ Taussig notes that this challenge foreshadows the later attempt by the government to unmask Marcos (Taussig 1999:245). Octavio Paz had years earlier addressed the mask of the Mexican national character, “the mask that changes into a face, the petrified face that changes into a mask” (Paz 1985 [1972]:215, 216).

⁵⁴ Petrich also published reports about the interviews in her capacity as correspondent to, for instance, *La Opinión* in Los Angeles on 5 February.

⁵⁵ At some point during the interview, he also joked with the reporters, “How much do you think I could get for my ski mask? Three thousand, seven thousand dollars?” (The Editorial Collective 1994:149). He repeats this jibe in one of the several postscripts to his letter accompanying the CCRI communiqué of 16 February: “What’s the going price, in dollars, for a dirty, smelly ski-mask?” (Bardacke, López, et al 1995:142).

⁵⁶ Gregory Katz and Tracey Eaton’s piece, *Who is that masked man?; Mysterious rebel leader has become overnight folk hero in Mexico*, appeared in the *Dallas Morning News* on 7 February (Katz and Eaton 1994), from all appearances unrelated to the Petrich-Henríquez interviews or the Ibarra footage. Instead, the Katz-Eaton piece drew on Marcos’s writings, musings about the pending peace talks, and the adulation of Marcos in the Mexican society. Headlines immediately after the interviews include on 8 February *Mexico fascinated by man of mystery behind uprising* (Gunson 1994a), and *The voice of the rebels has Mexicans in his spell* (Golden 1994a) and a background piece on 9 February *Mexico’s ski-masked rebels show flair for communicating* (Robberson 1994b).

⁵⁷ The talks commenced on 21 February with Bishop Samuel Ruíz mediating and Manuel Camacho Solís acting on behalf of the government as Commissioner for Peace.

⁵⁸ The reiteration of “facelessness” seems to contradict the password Blanche Petrich reported: “There is among us one face and one thought” (The Editorial Collective 1994:136). This phrase rather underscores the anonymity that a uniform mask brings.

⁵⁹ Such as Gregory Katz's report "Mexican Rebels Agree to Free Ex-Governor, Official Says" in the *Dallas Morning News* (Katz 14 February).

⁶⁰ Published in the *New York Times* on 20 February and in *Proceso* the following day. The *Proceso* version is included in The Editorial Collective 1994 anthology, pp. 196-210.

⁶¹ He had taken the name from one of his *compañeros* who had been part of "this struggle" and who had died years before the uprising. Vincento Leñero, reporting for *Proceso* shows how Marcos's *pasamontañas*, instead of masking his emotions accentuates them in the telling of his *compañero*'s death as "[h]e looks up as he lifts the slippery edge of his ski mask over his nose" (The Editorial Collective 1994:197).

⁶² In his report on the second day of the Peace Talks, Marcos addresses the fact that someone in the United States had been "passing himself off as a spokesperson for and combatant in our Army" (The Editorial Collective 1994:214).

⁶³ Marcos makes a similar observation on the paradox of unmasking to hide in *Dignity Cannot be Studied, You Live it or it Dies* communiqué of 5 July 1995 (Ponce de León 2002:268).

⁶⁴ For a comprehensive collection of the communiqués, reports, and interviews pertaining to the Peace Talks, see The Editorial Collective (1994) pp. 213-261.

⁶⁵ Two results—of Tracey Eaton's 3 March report in the *Dallas Morning News*—refer to two formats of the same Home Final edition.

⁶⁶ They are Michael McCaglian in the *Irish Times* on 23 February with "Mexico's most wanted man is still unknown"; Mike Lanchin in the *Scotsman* on 26 February with "Instant cult hero wages battle for Indian rights"; Phil Gunson in the *Guardian* on February 28 with "Talks shed light on Mexico's Rebels: The impact of the Zapatistas' eloquent man in the balaclava"; and Andres Oppenheimer in the *Miami Herald* on 28 February with "Mystique of rebel Marcos is expanding."

⁶⁷ An interview with Ana María was taped on 28 February but was not published until it was included in The Editorial Collective (1994) anthology.

⁶⁸ See Lynn Stephen (2002), Samuel Brunk (2008), Jeff Conant (2010), and José Rabasa (2010) for contextualized studies on Votán Zapata.

⁶⁹ *Compañero* and *compañera* are the colloquial and familiar forms of address among Zapatistas. Zapatistas and their international supporters use it reciprocally as well. The Zapatistas are very particular in referencing both genders when they address a mixed group rather than opting for the general Spanish rule of opting for the masculine form in these situations. As an orthographic shorthand, the form *compañer@* is habitually used to include both genders within the one word. Because of the Zapatistas' insistence on egalitarian conduct, *compa* is a casual—and non-gendered—contraction that is used frequently and without regard for status or seniority.

⁷⁰ Don Antonio is a frequent character in Marcos's writing. According to the CELMRAZ staff, he was a Tzeltal elder who acted as a mentor to Marcos and who became one of the first people to facilitate interaction between the EZLN and an indigenous community.

⁷¹ Marcos is referencing the auditorium at Aguascalientes Guadalupe de Tepeyac that resembled a ship because of the prow shape of its cloth roof. In communiqués commenting on the construction of the auditorium, the shape develops into a symbol of the ambitious madness of the project.

⁷² It was no coincidence that this occurred the day after the Mexican stock market index closed at its lowest level in eighteen months (Henck 2007:281). More to the point, the "unmasking" was hastily arranged after the failed Operation Rainbow that was to have resulted in president Zedillo's announcement of Marcos's arrest (Oppenheimer 1996:244, 245).

⁷³ For the period 14 to 20 February, Lexis Nexis lists fifteen international reports that quote her by name.

⁷⁴ Such as the recent participation of the Zapatistas in the national day of *La Marcha por la Paz con Justicia y Dignidad* [The March for Peace with Justice and Dignity] on 8 May 2011. The

Zapatistas, most of them masked with either *pasamontañas* or *paliacates*, arrived in convoy from Chenalhó and proceeded to march through San Cristóbal to the town square where they staged a rally in support of the new Movement for Peace and Dignity founded by poet Javier Sicilia in Cuernavaca.

⁷⁵ Customary dress which includes the *huipil*, a traditional blouse imposed during colonial times on indigenous women. Through its particular decorations and design, it indicates not only from which village a woman stems but also her marital status etcetera.

⁷⁶ These lighter colored versions are in keeping with variations in the Chamulan traje.

⁷⁷ Zinacatán is a neighboring village to Chamula. The women's *traje* is distinctively worked in the purple-blue-turquoise range. Traditionally the tunics and shawls are hand-embroidered but recently machine-made brocades in the same color scheme are increasingly used.

⁷⁸ I saw my first *muñeca zapatista* in such a coffee shop in Cuernavaca.

⁷⁹ It is interesting to note that the book appeared in the same year that the Zapatista uprising took place, the year in which the *chamulitas* were reincarnated as *muñecas zapatistas*.

⁸⁰ A newer version of the *chamulitas* returned to the San Cristóbal street markets during the second half of 2011. Their size and general composition do not suggest that they simply reverse the creation of the *muñecas zapatistas* by removing the trademark *pasamontañas* and guns.

⁸¹ The local community governing council of a particular Zapatista Autonomous Territory zone. The members of the council rotate every eight days and remain anonymous to outsiders as they all wear masks.

⁸² While the evictions themselves were at times brutal, many evangelized Chamulas were also killed during this period.

⁸³ The local shaman carves a mimetic copy of a gringo spirit boat that bewitched a group of Emberá men. The copy captures the boat, captain, and crew; yet, the captain has neither neck nor head and one of the crew members has no feet (Taussig 1993:14-17).

⁸⁴ Activism through hacking computer systems.

⁸⁵ Marcos explained, "It would appear evident that masks hide and silences hush. But it is also true that masks reveal and silences speak" (Womack 1999:357).

⁸⁶ Wandering around the 2010 International Arts and Crafts Market in Santa Fe, I came upon a man in Chamula traditional dress who sold amongst other things wooden *chamulitas*. These, too, have moveable limbs but were not fixed to a platform. The dolls are intricately carved and wear elaborate *trajes*. They show no Zapatista markers. During our conversation, I told him that I know about the San Cristóbal *chamulitas*. He immediately qualified, "Pero estas son limpias, no sucias" [But these are clean, not dirty]. With this evaluation he seemed to want to distinguish his dolls as of a handcrafted status and not of the same ilk of the ones for sale on the streets.

⁸⁷ The Zapatistas have long relinquished any violence by 2006 when Jessica_cdn is writing this blog. However, she is still associating the movement with armed power. It is, however, unclear whether this is only because the Zapatista doll she had so longed for, carries a gun.

⁸⁸ *Comandanta Ramona* was a Tzotzil woman who joined the EZLN early on and became an important icon of especially indigenous women's rights. In 1996, she traveled to Mexico City to help found the National Indigenous Congress and addressed a packed *zócalo* on 12 October 1996. She died after a long fight against cancer on 6 January 2006. The international *encuentro* for women's rights held in La Garrucha in December 2007, was held in her honor.

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