Colonial Masca in motion: tactics of persistence of a Honduran indigenous community

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Chapter 4: Blas Cuculí and Masca

Documents are material remains of people's interactions with the colonial Spanish bureaucracy. As material things, we need to consider their creation, circulation, and storage. They were created most often by scribes, though occasionally by other individuals. The emphasis on using scribes had two purposes. First, as Kathryn Burns (2005:350) notes, scribes and notaries were the writers of official truth, and "their truth was recognizable not only by its singularity but by its very regularity; it was truth by template *–la verdad hecha de molde"*. That is, by the simple act of affixing their signature or stamp to a document, scribes made it legal, official, and truthful. The "by template" part of Burns' argument, a pun on the use of "molde" to describe script, refers to the fact that scribes molded the narratives they recorded into genres understandable to the Spanish authorities. This is the second function of scribes. Scribes made sure documents followed prescribed forms which kept them legal, valid, truthful, and understandable. These forms, in turn, shaped a reader's perception of the documents. Indeed, a cédula from 1587 took the President of the Audiencia of Guatemala to task for allowing a servant to pen a letter for him rather than a scribe, noting that it robbed the letter of validity (1587 AGCA A1 Legajo 1513 folios 667-668).

Once written, documents circulated, first through lower levels of the bureaucracy, then to successively higher levels (Sellers-Garcia 2009). At each level, documents or their copies were stored. As early as 1525, a cédula ordered scribes in the Caribbean to periodically deposit indices of notarized documents with the governing bodies of the islands (1525 AGCA A1 Legajo 2195 Expediente 15749 folio 217v). As a result, there were municipal archives (largely lost from this time period in Honduras), provincial archives (now amalgamated into the Archivo Nacional de Honduras), and Audiencia level archives (now the Archivo General de Centroamerica). Separately, ecclesiastical documents were archived at multiple levels, in the individual churches, in the curates, in Comayagua in the Archbishop's archive (the Archivo Eclesiastico de Comayagua, recently destroyed in a fire), and in the Inquisition archives in Mexico (now part of the Archivo de la Nación of Mexico).

Other kinds of documents written by individuals, for example letters and diaries, either did not circulate (like diaries), or circulated through a different system (such as the mail system) and therefore were not subject to being collected, registered, and archived in repositories. As a result, the public writings of the scribes are often our only window into everyday life in the Spanish colonies. They can be complemented by archaeologically recovered materials, where available.

The provincia del rio Ulúa has been left out of most historical studies to date because of the lack of most official kinds of documents for the region. There are scant census documents from the rio Ulúa, and tribute volumes for the area are incomplete. When I first became interested in the region, I was told by several historians that there were no documents about the Provincia del río Ulúa. That turned out not to be true; it's not that there are no documents, but rather that there are no documents of the types historians were looking for to create histories of demographics, labor, and economic institutions. There are, in fact, hundreds of documents that I have registered, with data about the provincia del río Ulúa in the colonial period. They require different methods of analysis, but can produce rich understandings of social history in the Spanish colony.

I became interested in sixteenth century Honduras when I first came there to do archaeological survey in 1981. We found a myriad of sites, but nothing we recognized, at the time, as being from the late prehispanic or colonial period. I already knew there should have been numerous indigenous communities occupying the valley in the sixteenth century, but when I asked where they were, no one had any idea, outside of Naco. I began my research at that point, using published transcriptions of sixteenth century documents in an attempt to see if they could be used to locate where indigenous people had lived in the sixteenth century. It worked. We quickly found both Ticamaya and Despoloncal right where I said they should be located (Wonderley 1984a). But that's also where my research ended for seventeen years while I took time off for a career designing computer software, continuing to excavate in prehispanic sites in and around the Ulúa valley.

I returned to my research in 2000 with the first of two trips to the Archivo General de Indias in Seville, Spain. This archive contains the Spanish side of the bureaucratic paperwork of the colonies in Latin America. At the time, one still had to request an investigator's card and pass an interview, and the catalogue was not yet on line. I was able to secure access and was introduced to the in-house digital catalogue of documents and was shown the rudiments of how to search, but left to my own resources. I had come to the archive with a list of documents about the sixteenth century Ulúa valley I wanted to see based on published references to documents in Chamberlain, Newson, and others. I was able to locate and print many of them for later reading, since at the time I had no experience with sixteenth century paleography. Many of these documents were subsequently used for the research discussed in Chapter 3.

A second trip in 2002 was more productive and I located many documents about the Ulúa valley and north coast of Honduras. Documents in this archive are generally in good shape, today preserved under climate controlled conditions, though some documents I have sought to use are unavailable for research because

of their current fragility (notably, tax records from the late sixteenth century for the Ulúa valley).

The catalogue at the Archivo General de Indias indexes only Spanish actors, Spanish city names, and economic and political topics. Notably lacking are indigenous town names and indigenous actors, which made it difficult, at first, to locate documents about the Ulúa valley unless they had been cited by another researcher. I had learned, in the meantime, not to expect to search for names, but to examine classes of documents (such as Meritos y Servicios for the named conquistadors of Honduras, and correspondence from the governors of Honduras). This yielded about 500 documents about the early colonial history of this part of Honduras. I regularly now use the online digital catalogue of the Archivo General de Indias to both locate documents, and where images exist on line, to read and potentially transcribe them. Nonetheless, only about 20% of the collection has been digitized, so this approach alone would not have been sufficient.

In 2002 and 2004 I made visits to the Archivo General de CentroAmérica, the archive of the Audiencia of Guatemala, first organized by the Spanish scribe Ignacio Guerra y Marchan in the late eighteenth century. This archive, housed in the same building as the Biblioteca Nacional in Guatemala City, contains the paperwork of the Audiencia of Guatemala, with sections for its business with all of its colonies. It has a card catalogue for locating documents of interest, with a large collection for the section of Guatemala. This pertains to the top-level government of the Audiencia, but also to everything specific about the province of Guatemala.

There are separate catalogues for documents from each of the provinces of colonial Guatemala (Chiapas, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Yucatan, which includes modern Belize). The catalogue cards were grouped by the archivist in the 1930s by what they considered the document was about (such as Indian festivals, land, plagues or piracy) but suffers from sometimes misleading descriptions of the contents of the document (for example, "ejidos" for when a town requests the right to settle in a new location). Descriptions on the cards for Honduras are terse, and often don't mention the names of indigenous towns or actors. As in the Archivo General de Indias, I began here by looking at documents for which I had a published reference (several of which were not locatable), again looking for information about the indigenous towns in the Ulúa valley, and at this time, Ticamaya in particular. I quickly turned from requesting specific documents to asking for whole legajos of documents so I could scan a large body of related documents for information about the valley. This approach was quite productive, producing records of *expedientes* not previously referred to in published sources, and not easily found within the card catalogue. These two trips yielded records of

over 500 documents from which it began to be possible to build more detailed histories of the Ulúa valley.

This archive suffers from a lack of climate-controlled storage. It binds its legajos of documents with cotton ties that abrade the edges of the pages. There are notable losses of parts of documents (holes, insect damage, tears, and missing edges of pages from abrasion) that make it difficult to use the collections today. Documents and parts of documents have simply gone missing and are unavailable to researchers.

In 2006 the library of the University of California, Berkeley, purchased a microfilmed copy of the complete Archivo General de CentroAmérica on 3,250 reels of microfilm. This microfilm was originally made in the late 1970s by McMaster University in Canada, and lacked any sort of index or finding aid. The microfilm itself is of uneven quality, having been photographed by archive volunteers without the benefit of adequate lighting. There are often dark shadows on parts of the documents which make them difficult to read. There are page images that are out of focus and sometimes, improperly exposed. They are nonetheless important because they image original documents, some of which have disappeared in the intervening years, and the images include pieces of documents now missing from the originals, so that it is possible to reconstruct missing text.

I began designing a finding aid that provided a concordance between the reels of microfilm and expedientes, so that one could find a document already known to exist on the microfilm. That finding aid is accessible at the website of the current publisher, Ross Publishing (www.rosspub.com). I also began training Spanish-speaking student researchers in how to read colonial handwriting, to begin producing an enhanced finding aid, discussed below.

In 2004 I became aware of a microfilmed collection of the Archivo Eclesiastico de Comayagua at the University of Texas, Arlington. A project headed by Maritza Arrigunaga Coello microfilmed everything except the church registers (which have been microfilmed separately by the Church of Latter Day Saints) in the 1970s. This collection is especially important because the archive burned to the ground in April 2009, and only a few bound *legajos* were saved. While there were a few seventeenth century documents in the archive, the bulk of its contents are from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The online finding aid (http://libraries.uta.edu/speccoll/findaids/ComMicroflm.html) lists many eighteenth century church *padrones* (listings of residents by name) for towns in northern Honduras, including Ticamaya and Candelaria/Masca. In 2004 I borrowed and printed many of the padrones for the north coast of Honduras. An undergraduate, Lisa Overholtzer, an anthropology and Spanish major who also

was trained in reading Nahuatl, was employed in producing a preliminary transcription from the printouts of documents from the Ulúa valley.

I have not made systematic use of other archives and collections of documents about Honduras that I know about. These include the Archivo Nacional Historico (ANH) of Honduras, organized for researcher access only beginning in 2008. The University of Texas Arlington also has a microfilmed collection of these documents (see http://libraries.uta.edu/SpecColl/findaids/HondurasMF.html for their complete holdings). Nor have I consulted the Inquisition records for Central America housed in the Archivo General de la Nacion in Mexico City.

Instead, in 2008, I began to design an enhanced finding aid that incorporated the kinds of data I wished had been indexed in the Archivo General de Indias and the Archivo General de CentroAmérica but wasn't, namely detailed document descriptions, place names (both indigenous and Spanish) and people's names (again both indigenous and European). In the process, I began a research project that trains undergraduates who already are comfortable with Spanish to read colonial handwriting and inventory reels of microfilm collecting all of the data required for the enhanced finding aid.

Why did I start building such a finding aid? To do research in Guatemala City is expensive and many researchers in the United States, Latin America, and Honduras in particular, cannot afford to do extensive research there. The microfilm collection, now held by several research libraries in the United States, is a possible solution to the cost of research, but it requires an adequate finding aid before it can be used that way. I currently support several students writing about colonial history of Honduras, including students from Honduras, helping to provide them access to the microfilms. Currently one goes to Guatemala and spends time combing through the card catalogue to find documents of interest, and only then requesting them to read. The finding aid will computerize that and provide adequate indexing of the documents, to let the researcher spend their time looking at documents rather than searching for them. It will allow them to use several different strategies to find relevant documents using different criteria, something either not possible, or very time consuming, using the current physical card catalogue. This will be of benefit both to users of the microfilm and researchers who use the archives in Guatemala. It will allow them to better plan their time in the archive.

The Documentary Record for the History of Masca/Candelaria

Among the available documents I have reviewed, I draw on seventeen documents that provide direct information about Masca, twelve in the Archivo

General de CentroAmérica (AGCA), one from the Archivo Eclesiastico de Comayagua (AEC), three from the Archivo General de Indias (AGI), and one in the Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid. The documents span the period from the late sixteenth century through to the early nineteenth century. A sixteenth century *relacion* (narrative account) provides information about the number of tributaries and an encomendero of Masca (1582 RAHM). Five documents deal with the assignment of Masca in encomienda to other individuals in the seventeenth century (1627 AGI Guatemala 99 N. 13; 1669 AGI Guatemala 104 N. 9; 1690 AGCA A3.16 Legajo 190 Expediente 1926; 1690 AGCA A3.16 Legajo 190 Expediente 1927; 1692 AGCA A3.16 Legajo 190 Expediente 1928). Five other documents record payments owed or made to the government or the church by the residents of Masca from the late seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries (1685 AGI Guatemala 29 R. 2 N. 37; 1733 AGCA A3.16 Legajo 498 Expediente 10209; 1768 AGCA A3.16 Legajo 527 Expediente 5533; 1781 AGCA A3.1 Legajo 1305 Expediente 22217 folio 15; 1809 AEC Padrones Caja No. 1). Two government reports describe the involvement of the town in eighteenth century controversies (1745 AGCA A1.20 Legajo 83 Expediente 972; 1770 AGCA A3 Legajo 496 Expediente 5200). Finally, there are three legal petitions filed by the Indians of the pueblo of Masca in the Audiencia of Guatemala, and responses to these petitions, from the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (1675 AGCA A3.12 Legajo 527 Expediente 5522; 1714 AGCA A1.45.6 Legajo 368 Expediente 3413; 1714 AGCA A1.24 Legajo 1581 Expediente 10225).

These documents provide the core materials for this study, along with documents of the same categories from other indigenous towns in the Ulúa valley. Altogether, I draw on 52 documents in this study (all listed in the References Cited) and provide transcriptions of four key documents in the Appendix. I will use a method of "reading against the grain" (Benjamin 1968 [1940]; Schwarz 2001) to give a detailed examination of what key documents tell us about colonial society both from the viewpoint of the Spanish colonists and from the viewpoint of the people of Masca. In the process I draw on Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogics to look at the co-construction of the colonial reality through the production of a new language not assignable to the colonial authorities or the indigenous actors alone. It originates in their dialogues, some of which are preserved for us as colonial administrative documents. This new language was formed by processes similar to those described by Hanks (2010) for Yucatec Maya.

For Hanks, central to the colonial process is *reducción*, by which he means the pacification, conversion, and ordering of the indigenous population (2010:iv): "Reducción was a total project aimed at the transformation of space, conduct, and language". The transformation of language happened through the process of ordering native language (through the production of grammars and dictionaries)

and then a translation process that moved Spanish concepts (religion, government) into the Maya language. Maya came to appropriate and internalize new forms of expression shaped by reducción.

The act of reducing implies, for Hanks, an analysis of the object of reduction and the attempted imposition of a different regularity. Ultimately the products of reduction are ordered towns, ordered Indians, and ordered beliefs, and in Yucatan, ordered language. Hanks (2010:xv) notes that "the ordered landscape of the towns and jurisdictions was the field in which colonial language and action was embedded". This is not syncretism, which implies a hidden core of indigenous values with a Spanish overlay, but something wholly new. Spanish values expressed in core Maya concepts through translation that results in the "dynamic fusing of elements in a new social world." In Yucatan, it was reducing Maya to a grammar (a set of rules) and dictionaries (a set of meanings) that brought about the colonial language Maya *reducida*. Once established, the new language moved outward, from religion into the spheres of government.

In Honduras, it was the Spanish ordering of the landscape into Spanish cities, jurisdictions, and pueblos de indios that in dialogue recreated indigenous people. These dialogues set indigenous peoples' expectations of, and shaped understanding of, both colonial society and their place it. These understandings were expressed as the positions indigenous people took up in different fields, through their language and action. Just as the Yucatec spoken today is not the same as the Pre-Columbian language, but rather a co-construction in the sixteenth century and after by Yucatec Maya people, the priests struggling to understand them, and colonial administrators, the nominally Spanish text of colonial documents about Masca represents a co-construction between colonial administrators, the indigenous people of the Ulúa province, and the scribes who placed their words and arguments into genres.

I use Pierre Bourdieu's concept of social fields as a formal way to describe social relations as positions taken up by speakers/writers within the documents (Bourdieu 1993). For Bourdieu, a field is a form of social organization, with social roles, agent positions, and the structures they fit into, as well as the historical processes by which those roles are taken up (Hanks 2005). Fields are dynamic forms of organization, not fixed structure; and the positions taken up embody an element of opposition. Agents who take up positions are therefore related by struggle and opposition (Hanks 2005:73). Bourdieu borrows from Foucault in seeing fields as a space of strategic possibilities where agents have many possible actions. Values circulate within fields. They are a locus for dialogue. Hanks (2005:73) notes, "speaking and discourse production are ways of taking up positions in social fields, and speakers have trajectories over the course of which they pursue various values." Hanks (2005:74) is particularly interested in

the deictic field, the socially defined context of utterance in which language is used for a variety of purposes, particularly reference and description. Values, in turn, are embedded within social fields that constrain an individual's access to positions. Hanks (2010:95) also notes that engagement with a field shapes an actor.

Central to the sketching out of social fields identifiable through dialogics are the three petitions presented by the people of Masca. The first petition, a transcription of which is included in the Appendix, requests that the people of Masca not be required to give personal service in the city of San Pedro. It is conserved in the Archivo General de CentroAmérica as Signatura A3.12 Legajo 527 Expediente 5525, and is composed of two sheets of paper, of which three sides contain writing and the last side is blank. Although *papel sellado* (paper with tax seals affixed, used to identify legal documents) had been introduced in Central America in 1638, long before this document was produced, it is written on plain paper. The earliest date in the document is January 19, 1675. A response is dated 30 January, and the final order, February 2, 1675.

The handwriting appears to have been done by at least three different people. The text consists of five separate segments, which are not confined to distinct pages. They nonetheless are clearly indicated by changes in the speaker/writer. In most cases, the change of speaker is also indicated by blank space, sometimes substantial. The different segments, not all written at the same time or by the same scribe, are nonetheless parts of a single whole, a dialogue.

There are six persons named in the text: Blás Cuculí, indio of Masca; Alonso de Osaguera, encomendero of Masca; Manuel de Farinas, a notary (*procurador del numero*); Don Juan Bautista de Urquiola, *Oidor* (hearing officer) of the *Audiencia de Guatemala*; Lorenzo de Montufar, *Justicia* (justice) of the *Audiencia de Guatemala*; Don Fernando Francisco de Escobedo, *Presidente de la Audiencia,* (presiding officer of the colonial government), *Capitan General*, and *Gobernador* (governor) of Guatemala. Unnamed but made present are other persons: the justicias of Masca, and those of the city of San Pedro de Ulúa, both in Honduras; the residents of San Pedro; and other Indians of Masca, the latter including *indias molenderas* (women who grind grain) and *indios y indias tesines*. "Tesines" were persons drafted as laborers in such industries as dyeworks, that is, not for personal or household labor (Sherman 1979:325-327). Even an unnamed Spanish monarch is included by reference to royal *cédulas*, perhaps the documents confirming the encomienda of Masca for Alonso de Osaguera, dated February 17, 1669, signed by Queen Mariana of Austria, regent for her son, Charles II, until 1677, that were recopied in other documents discussed in the next chapter.

Speaking as an Indian: Blás Cuculí

Every document is dialogic, in the Bakhtinian sense, because all human speech is dialogic. The first question to ask, consequently, is who the speakers were who engaged in dialogue in any document. At a minimum, the writer explicitly addressed some other, perhaps a group of authorities, or an individual representative of an institution. But beyond this simple dichotomy, each person engaged in a dialogue also speaks with what Bakhtin calls "a sideways glance" towards others with whom the speaker identifies or disidentifies. Using such clues as pronouns ("we", "I", "you" each implying a positioning of a speaker with respect to others), an analyst can begin to separate out some of the positions in fields taken up through dialogues.

In the beginning of the dialogue recorded directly in this document, although not first in order of presentation, is a narrative whose speaker identified himself as "Blás Cuculí, Indian, resident, and native of the town of San Pedro Masca [Blas Cuculi indio vecino y natural del pueblo de San Pedro Masca]". A closing statement on this section labels the entire narrative as having been spoken: "as said [por el dicho]". The written text is not speech, but it is what Bakhtin calls cited speech. It is not the same as hearing the voice of the person, but the writer who cites first person narrative does so for a reason: the claims made have a specific efficacy that derives from their association with the attributed speaker. While Blás Cuculí need not have said precisely these words, the words cited as his were understood as intelligible for such a subject, and so illuminate the scope of action open to indigenous subjects in the colony. They serve to illuminate the context of an Indian in this time and place.

A close examination of the Blás Cuculí narrative is instructive. He tells us that he has been sent on many occasions to the *corte* (court) by the justicias of his town (*mi pueblo*) on business that touches on their community (*su comunidad*). He positions himself as part of the pueblo of Masca, but at the same time, he places himself to some degree outside the community. I will return to the implications of this disjuncture between pueblo and comunidad. For now, I am more concerned with the implied positioning of Blás Cuculí himself. He is a person who can move between the pueblo and the corte. To the extent that his citation of this positioning allowed him to speak for the pueblo in an official transaction, this kind of biography must have been acceptable to officials in the Guatemalan colony, and its Honduran province.

Although he differentiates himself from the justicias of Masca, Blás Cuculí bears a surname that is shared by earlier and later community officials. In 1662 Miguel Cuculí was named as alcalde in the context of the conveyance of the encomienda of Masca to a new encomendero. In 1713, Simon Cuculí succeeds Justo Chabacan as alcalde. The Cuculí family thus demonstrably was part of the group of residents who were recognized as eligible to lead the town. Nonetheless, Blás Cuculí was not one of the officers when this document was created. He probably was a member of the group of principales of Masca, a position implied when he notes that "*los demas indios*" ["the rest of the Indians"] of the town were being asked to provide personal service in San Pedro. The equivocal status claimed by Blás Cuculí is thus doubly striking, as presumably he might have based his authority to speak on his membership in a principal family of the pueblo, but instead, he cites his own personal history of representing the town in the corte as his authority.

Speaking with Others: The *Pueblo de Indios* and the *Corte*

The remainder of the Blás Cuculí narrative uses the first person plural ("we") in reference to the pueblo and the issues that faced its population. "We… are selected to serve as watchmen for Puerto de Caballos, which occupies us all year"; "We should enjoy some rest"; "We pay all our tribute to the encomendero" ["Nosotros... estamos señalados para servir las vigias de Puerto de Caballos que nos ocupamos todo el año". "Debieramos gozar de algun descanso". "Nosotros pagamos por entero nuestros tributos al encomendero"]. These straightforward statements are the main grounds on which he bases the petition not to have people from the pueblo sent to the city of San Pedro for additional labor service. In these passages, Blás Cuculí voices a collective narrative of the experience he shares with "los demas indios" of the pueblo. He addresses the authorities in the corte from whom he evidently expects comprehension and agreement with these claims.

Blas Cuculi's words are explicitly directed to the corte, the Guatemalan authorities, who can overrule the local Spanish authorities in San Pedro, but they also take what Bakhtin called "a sideways glance" at others. The core concept of dialogics is that every utterance, whether spoken or written, is formed in anticipation of a response from another (the addressee) and in conformity with what Bakhtin calls the "super addressee". The addressee is the person (or persons) to whom the text is expressly directed. A super addressee is someone who is never explicitly addressed in the utterance, but whose presence is nonetheless made concrete by the utterance. While Blás Cuculí does not address her directly, the monarch of Spain serves as an obvious superaddressee in his petition.

Of course, Blás Cuculí does not directly write the petition that is assigned to him through the use of the first person. That is the work of the scribe, who writes "as said". Bakhtin called citing, quoting, or simply employing terms used previously, in other contexts, by oneself or others, revoicing. Blás Cuculí's narrative is revoiced as indirect cited speech even in the original petition, which is actually written (and signed) by a scribe. It is revoiced again by the Guatemalan authorities who use his words to justify auditing the accounts of the encomendero to determine if he is fulfilling his role in the encomienda of Masca. Through revoicing, terms gain some of their meaning from their previous use but are endowed with further significance as they are reused.

Because revoicing ties words to their previous contexts of utterance, it links the contexts of utterances in space and time, creating distinctive characteristics of what Bakhtin calls a chronotope. In a dialogic analysis, the nature of the time and space as understood by the speaker is part of what gives meaning to what is said. In Blás Cuculí's petition, the abundant references to place hint at the kind of chronotope he envisions, one that is at odds with how officials in Guatemala understand the context.

There is some ambiguity about the location of the corte where Blás Cuculí informs us "I have been sent by the justicias of my pueblo on different business [he sido inviado por las justicias de mi pueblo a diferentes negocios]". Where has he been in the habit of representing the pueblo? In the city of San Pedro? Comayagua? Santiago de Guatemala? There are clues that lead us to identify this corte as the Audiencia in Santiago de Guatemala. First, there is the siting of San Pedro Masca for the corte not only as in the jurisdiction of San Pedro, but also as in the Province of Honduras, a relative reference. Would he need to do this if the corte was in Comayagua, capital of Honduras, or San Pedro de Ulúa? Second, Manuel de Farinas, who signs Cuculí's testimony, is a notary who practices in Santiago de Guatemala. In addition, Lorenzo de Montufar, who pens the earliest date in the document, preceding Cuculí's testimony, works in Santiago de Guatemala.

It is in fact the audiencia of Guatemala that provides us the record of this dialogue. In it, Blás Cuculí's narrative is represented as a form of indirect cited speech. Although presented as a first person narrative, which would be direct cited speech, his petition is framed between two other sections of the document, an introduction by Lorenzo de Montufar, and the conclusions of the hearing officer, Don Juan Bautista de Urquiola. At the end, the status of Blás Cuculí's narrative as a spoken testimony is reinforced by the terse signature of Manuel de Farinas. While he signs it "as said" ("por el dicho"), his signature, of course, immediately calls that into question. He includes no title or other information to let us know who he is or where the testimony was given. We know from his appointment

papers that in 1670 (AGI Guatemala 90 N31) Farinas was appointed notary for the audiencia of Guatemala. This would again imply that the spoken testimony of Blás Cuculí was heard in Santiago de Guatemala.

Blás Cuculí's speech glances sideways at super-addressees that we might try to understand in order to gain a better sense of the moral order under which he is speaking. Who (or what) might be the super-addressees, a consciousness of whom shapes Blás Cuculí's narrative? There is no evident recourse to divinities here. No formulaic "may god witness" (although such formulas are abundant in other documents of the time and place). Blás Cuculí invokes royal authority, when he says that the actions of the citizens of San Pedro are "prohibited by the royal decrees" ("prohibido por reales cédulas"). His claim here will be followed in later petitions from Masca by an even more explicit citation of chapter and verse of the *Recopilacion de leyes*, the published laws of the Indies of the Spanish crown. For indios de Masca in the late seventeenth century, the rule of Spanish law was a moral force that shaped social life.

The direct nature of this appeal to Spanish law contrasts with another claim Blás Cuculí advances on behalf of the pueblo of Masca. "The paying of the tithe and church instruction…is charged to us but we don't owe it [El pagar el diezmo y doctrina…le cobra de nosotros siendo asi que no la debemos.]." His indirection here is governed by another super-addressee. He is asking the Audiencia of Guatemala for relief from being charged for the church tithe when the pueblo pays its tribute in full to their encomendero, who is then by law financially responsible for the payments to the church. Cuculí states "we completely pay our tribute to the encomendero…it is his responsibility to pay the tithe and instruction [nosotros pagamos por entero nuestros tributos al encomendero…es de su obligacion al pagar el diezmo y doctrina]." While the encomendero, Alonso de Osaguera, is never explicitly addressed in this petition, he is named in this part of their complaint.

Speaking in Relation to Others: Social Fields and Genres

By carefully looking at the use of pronouns which imply a positioning of the speaker with respect to some other, we begin to see how Blás Cuculí positions himself with respect to others through this dialogue. The positions being taken up define what Bourdieu has called social fields, each a social universe that has its own laws of functioning (Bourdieu 1996:102). Fields are also a locus for dialogue. Social fields are overlapping and embedded in a field of power (1996:215). Bourdieu (1996:214-215) identifies three steps necessary to understand fields. First one needs to analyze the position of a social field within

the field of power, and then look to the evolution of this position over time. Bourdieu's second step is to evaluate the internal structure of the field, its laws of functioning, transforming, meaning, and culture. Third, from these, we should derive an understanding of the *habitus* of the occupants of these fields.

Bakhtin recognizes something analogous to social fields, what he refers to as spheres. As spheres grow and develop, occupants of the sphere develop styles of language usage. These styles, which Bakhtin calls genres, denote participation in the sphere, or in Bourdieu's terms, social field. "Each separate utterance is individual, of course, but each sphere in which language is used develops its own relatively stable types of these utterances…which we may call speech genres" (Bakhtin 1986: 60). Through the recognition of genres we acquire the ability to intuit and anticipate the content, length, and structure of another's speech from their first few words, refining that understanding as they continue to speak (Bakhtin 1986:79). By using a genre, an agent takes up a position in a social field, or fields (Bourdieu 1993:312, Hanks 2010:97). As Bakhtin puts it, speech genres serve to orient the speaker/writer in their relationships and interactions. Written genres orient the reader. The generic documents that make up the petition of Blás Cuculí and its responses can thus be used as evidence for the taking up of positions in social fields.

As we saw above, Blás Cuculí identifies with the "pueblo de San Pedro Masca de la jurisdiccion de San Pedro de Ulúa, en la provincia de Honduras". This is a precise definition of a social field in which the pueblo de Masca exists within a jurisdiction centered on what he later specifies is the city of San Pedro, within the province of Honduras. Here we see politics in the Honduran colony as envisaged by an Indian subject. Left out of this vision are the overarching political levels: the provincial power centrally located in Comayagua, the colonial capital city, and the Audiencia of Guatemala to which it belongs. This vision is based on local experience and does not take into account the fact that the encomienda of Masca is responsible to a vecino of Comayagua, not of San Pedro.

Before the Blás Cuculí narrative, the document presents a preamble referring to the Fiscal of the President of the Audiencia de Guatemala, ending with the date 19 January 1675. This framing suggests that the testimony first entered into the court system in Santiago de Guatemala itself. The field constituted by the legal decisions in Santiago de Guatemala is primarily effected, not by the narrative of Blás Cuculí, but by the written utterances of the officers of the Audiencia itself.

The field in which Blás Cuculí most securely locates himself is actually not the pueblo de Masca. He actively disidentifies with Masca as

constituted as the communidad of the justicias. Blás Cuculí's narrative is founded on the existence of a field that traverses the administrative, and likely geographic, space between pueblos de indios and the higher levels of the Spanish colonial administration. This mobility of specific persons brings sharply into focus the degree to which indigenous towns, rather than being understood as hierarchically administered, closed points on a landscape, need to be seen as actively engaged in broader, cross-cutting fields of social relations that afforded opportunities for tactical action.

From this perspective, the pueblo de indios of Masca not only is a pueblo (to which Blás Cuculí belongs) and a comunidad de justicias (to which he is responsible), but it is also a participant in wider fields of social relations through its status as encomienda, and the participation of its residents in the coastal watch. These relations are discussed in detail in later chapters. Here, it is useful to sketch out the general implications of Blás Cuculí's reference to these fields in his petition.

The encomienda was a field that revolved around the mutual obligations of an encomendero and the Indians held in encomienda. The encomienda could summon Indians outside their community to participate in ceremonies granting the encomienda, and could take encomenderos, or their representatives, into Indian communities otherwise not part of their life. From a dialogic perspective, Blás Cuculí multiplies the social fields with which he engages outside the pueblo by introducing an utterance aimed indirectly at the encomendero of Masca.

The indios of Masca also extended their social fields outside the limits of the pueblo itself through their role in patrolling the Caribbean coast to catch illicit ship trade and enemy ships coming to raid towns in the region. Such service as *vigiles* (watchmen) by the indios of Masca stands in the narrative of Blás Cuculí as a counter to demands for personal service in the city of San Pedro. While his other arguments are explicitly pursued by Guatemalan authorities, these claims for special consideration are not.

The lack of consideration for this form of service in the Guatemalan documents written about this petition is in dialogic terms a response that refutes or turns away the original claim. The social field that framed this relationship was internal to the Honduran colony, more specifically, to the part of the colony administered by San Pedro and Puerto de Caballos. The lack of response from authorities in Guatemala in no way discourages the indios of Masca, or of other communities in the vicinity, from reminding the other residents of the *partido* (district) of San Pedro and Puerto de Caballos of the unique role of the indigenous watch in ensuring their safety. Petitions by Indios of Masca from 1711 to 1714, discussed in later chapters, would

again cite service in the coastal watch as a rationale for having their rights protected. In dialogic terms, this claim was subject to different responses within and outside the district of San Pedro.

The proposal to apply to Masca a requirement for some residents to go to the city of San Pedro as domestic laborers can be seen as a proposition to form yet another field in which the pueblo de indios would have been entangled. The implied incorporation of Masca in a religious ministry, the *doctrina* for which *diezmos* (tithes) were provided to compensate the priest responsible, represents another field connected to the city of San Pedro as the center of the *curato* (religious jurisdiction), but in this case, the *cura* (priest) travelled to the pueblo bringing the sacraments to them.

Masca, as represented by the narrative of Blás Cuculí, is thus a complex of overlapping social fields. Participation in those fields was not uniform, as suggested by his own identification and disidentification with different fields in which Masca figured. At a minimum, the population of the town was divided in two groups. One, later characterized as principales, included members who served as officials. But it also included the ambivalently positioned Blás Cuculí himself, who seems deliberately to refrain from crediting to his membership in this class his own knowledge of wider fields, and his ability to negotiate. Contrasting with these principales are those Blás Cuculí calls "los demas". They also were engaged in wider fields: the encomienda; the coastal watch; the doctrina; and the demands for personal service in the city of San Pedro that were successfully contested in this document.

Nor was the complexity of the colony only visible from the position of the indigenous middleman, Blás Cuculí. If we turn our attention to the seemingly more generic utterances from Spanish colonial authorities that respond to his narrative, using the same approach, we find in them equally strong evidence of a colonial world in the process of creating novel social fields and new social meanings.

Genres of Colonial Administration

Speech genres originate in spheres of activity as in dialogue participants develop styles of usage. Styles of usage become established in groups such as bureaucracies and professions, but also in social groups, movements, regions, and so on. Texts like the Blás Cuculí petition and replies to it bring into play a multiplicity of voices and genres. Hanks (1987:670) writes that "genres can be defined as the historically specific conventions and ideals according to which authors compose discourse and

audiences receive it". Genres constrain the set of possible meanings:

> Genres then, as kinds of discourse, derive their thematic organization from the inter-play between systems of social value, linguistic convention, and the world portrayed. They derive their practical reality from their relation to particular linguistic acts, of which they are both the products and the primary resources (Hanks 1987:671).

The first-person narrative of Blás Cuculí is embedded in a typical colonial administrative document. The preamble that refers to the Oidor of the Audiencia of Guatemala is echoed in a segment that immediately follows the signature of Manuel de Farinas. Together, these two segments actually reinflect the narrative of Blás Cuculí as a form of cited speech, not the apparent direct speech suggested by the verb forms in the petition. As cited speech, the dialogic forms of the petition are used by the document's author(s) to create a new dialogic ordering among the speech genres represented.

The Oidor of the Audiencia of Guatemala is identified in the third segment of the *expediente* (dossier) as Don Juan Bautista de Urquiola. His narrative parallels that of Blás Cuculí in structure and content. It begins, like the other, with his name and titles followed by a phrase that identifies his standing to speak in this matter: "who exercises the office of prosecutor [que ejerse el oficio fiscal]" of the audiencia. The major difference is that the fiscal does not speak in the first person for any group or institution. His speech is directed to another, who in the next section is clearly identified as the President of the Audiencia. But this speech itself is indirect: the fiscal "says" in the third person: "dice que siendo Uds. servido podra mandar librarles su despacho": "he says that if it pleases you, you could order" a document be sent in support of the indios de Masca. By whom is his speech being cited? That only becomes clear at the end of the document.

The cited speech of Urquiola goes on to suggest three legal options that the President of the Audiencia might take in response to the petition from Masca. First, Urquiola notes that the President might order a document supporting the position of the Indians of Masca that they do not owe labor service to the residents of San Pedro, nor anywhere else, as specified in the royal cédulas. Second, Urquiola suggests a note might be sent proposing that the Indians pay their tribute in advance in some way. Third, Urquiola suggests the President might order the Lieutenant Governor of Honduras to audit the Indians' payments to the encomendero to see if they are owned a refund, and to report back his findings quickly to the President.

Urquiola revoices the words of Blas Cuculi with regard to the labor service. With the other two orders he is voicing new concerns, partially echoing Blas Cuculi with regard to church payments, but evincing a particularly bureaucratic concern in the third order, with the possibility that the encomendero might be profiting from the Indians and not making the required payments for their religious ministry.

The section that follows represents a similar doubled voice. The order being given is that of Don Fernando Francisco de Escobedo, the president of the Audiencia. The sole sentence preceding his signature reads "hice como lo dice el dicho fiscal": "do as the fiscal says". The phrase recalls the similarly positioned "Por el dicho" preceding the name of Manuel de Farinas.

Following the names, titles and signature of this apparent final speaker, the President of the Audiencia, comes an additional and truly final signature: Lorenzo de Montufar. Otherwise unidentified in the text, he signs at the end of the phrase "en el distrito en Guatemala los dos de febrero" of 1675. Montufar's name occupies a similar location at the end of a marginal note that completes the first segment of the document: "en su distrito en Guatemala en diez y nueve de enero" 1675. Apparently saying nothing in the text, in fact, Montufar is the writer who assembled the whole dossier, and who witnesses the exchange from start to finish. It is Montufar who is citing Urquiola's speech to obtain the orders. It is Montufar who carries out the President's order to "do as the fiscal says," and write the necessary communications of the decision on this petition.

Montufar was a member of a category of functionaries who shaped the dialogues emerging in the colonial context into recognizable administrative genres. He arrived in Santiago de Guatemala in 1666 from Spain. He was a cousin of Don Jose de Aguilar y de la Cueva, regidor for Guatemala. He married Doña Luisa Alvarez de la Vega y Toledo in Santiago de Guatemala. She was a distant relative of Pedro Alvarado, the first governor of Guatemala in the sixteenth century. Montufar's name appears in a series of documents during the 1670s concerning legal issues in the Partido of San Pedro, and in 1679 he is specifically identified as a "Justicia" of the Audiencia.

In the documents produced by Montufar, the common-language view of genre overlaps with a more specialized use of the term distinctive of the work of Bakhtin. Dialogues emerge from utterances shaped with a direction towards other speakers from whom a response is expected. They revoice the language of other speakers in part to call out a specific kind of response. Bakhtinian genres can consequently be understood as emergent forms whose

retrospective regularity is evidence of mutual orientation, rather than of some prior categorical identity. In his study of a group of letters written in Yucatec Maya, William Hanks (1987:687-688) explores how such a generic group of documents can shed light on experience:

> By officializing and regularizing their discourse, the principals brought themselves into line with aspects of the given social context, including the colonial government along with its contemporary representatives, as well as the Catholic morality imposed by the friars. At the same time, they contributed to the establishment of terms in which officialdom and regularity were defined, at least locally. They did this by combining and merging Maya representations with those of the Spanish, producing new blends and ambivalent linguistic expressions.

The generic quality of a petition like the one that begins with the narrative of Blás Cuculí is equally obvious. Even in this small region, there are many similar documents, including those drafted thirty-five years later by successors of Blás Cuculí, discussed in Chapter 6. There are evident traces in these later petitions of the kinds of social fields constituted by the 1675 dialogue.

Yet at the same time, as in the case of the Yucatec Maya letters studied by Hanks (1987), the production of such generic documents needs to be understood as an active process through which social relations were given a quality of matter-of-factness. The citation in Blás Cuculí's petition of three separate arguments against further demands on the indios de Masca illustrates this point. The argument given reinforcement-- the utterance heard and positively evaluated in Guatemala-- was the least clearly stated one: that the encomendero should be responsible for the payments of diezmos and doctrina "pues ellos no lo deben sino el encomendero [since they do not owe this, but rather the encomendero [does]". The fiscal orders that the lieutenant governor of Honduras be made to communicate with the encomendero to verify his accounts and return what may have been charged inappropriately. He further affirms the claim that royal cédulas prohibit the vecinos and justicias of the city of San Pedro from requiring indian labor, again sending a formal notice of this finding.

These are the orders that revoice the legal requirements of the labor regimes authorized by the Spanish crown for the colonies. The silence of the same official concerning the argument that the people of Masca should be allowed to "enjoy some rest" because of their service in the coastal watch is equally eloquent. The coastal watch was a heterodox practice that, although

well established in northern Honduras, had no generic reality for the officials of the audiencia in Guatemala.

People in Place: "Form-shaping Ideologies" in Colonial Honduras

By taking a dialogic approach to the set of documents bound together as an expediente, we have identified a large number of parties to the development of the colonial genre of which these documents formed part. The actual inscription of the petition of Blás Cuculí that forms the center of this expediente was clearly the charge of persons rooted in the colonial administrative perspective, a position reflected in the arguments they found worthy of re-citation and affirmation in other documents in the dossier. But the same administrative functionaries also cite (while not responding to) arguments that represent a distinct understanding of the relative duties and privileges of actors, an understanding that emerges from the pueblo de indios and the social fields of which it was part. The dialogic production of this document foregrounds the way Spanish colonists and colonial administrators occupied shifting positions that at times aligned some Spanish colonial interests with those of indigenous residents, against the practices of other Spanish colonists.

Dialogics emphasizes the relationship between speakers and genre, what Bakhtin called the "form-shaping ideologies" that are instantiated in dialogues. Far from simply being a literary convention, dialogic forms can be understood as both shaped by and shaping experience of the world. To follow a dialogue is accordingly to follow the flow of the shaping of worldviews. For Bakhtin, that form-shaping itself has an unavoidable historical character. Defined in relation to genres, Bakhtin's (1981) concept of the chronotope relates lived understandings of space and time to their representations in everyday speech and in formalized written form (Holquist 1990:107-148; Todorov 1984:80-85). Because every dialogue is specific to its context, each participates in the orientations speakers have toward history. Dialogues are thus more than mere exchanges of words; values are affirmed, contested, revised, and reborn through the patterns of responses. Dialogics is, from this perspective, a way to move from an analysis of speech to an understanding of action and its meanings to different speakers.

Utterances from the perspective of the pueblo de indios of Masca that are directly or indirectly cited in the brief document under discussion provide a sense of the understanding of place and time from which these subjects speak. Masca is, from the first words of Blás Cuculí, a place with a history of seeking justice in the highest level of the colonial world, the corte

of the Audiencia of Guatemala. The principales on whose behalf Blás Cuculí has carried out business before see their town as part of larger social fields from which they expect, and indeed receive, response. Their vision of their own place emerges from a history of shifting physical location in the San Pedro partido, and a continuous colonial engagement as participants in a coastal watch, both for the benefit of the Spanish cities of Puerto Caballos and San Pedro, and of their own and other indigenous towns. The relationship of the pueblo and Alonso de Osaguera is represented in their words as one of obligations from the Spanish encomendero towards the pueblo, obligations to provide religious doctrine and to pay for it on their behalf. One notable characteristic of the conception of space time that shapes the arguments of the indigenous leaders is an apparent vision of the organization of the colony that moves directly from the partido of the city of San Pedro to Guatemala, leaving the actual capital city of Honduras, Comayagua, out of consideration.

This stands in contrast with the ideological understandings of Spanish colonists and pueblos de indios that shapes and is shaped by the responses of the colonial administrators. For the Oidor, Justicia, and Presidente of the Audiencia, the shape of the colony is hierarchical. Authority flows from Guatemala to Comayagua, and domination is exercised from there over the vecinos of the city of San Pedro, the encomendero, and the indios of Masca alike. The officials in Guatemala assess the arguments advanced by Blás Cuculí in terms of this formal structure of the colony, conceived of as a web of obligations. They share with the people of Masca an understanding of the encomienda relationship as reciprocal, and they also envision it as excluding other relations of labor or tribute with other citizens of the colony. It is from this perspective that perhaps the claim for consideration based on additional service in the coastal watch does not fit and thus is not even referred to by these officials.

A final set of historical relationships emerges from the close reading of this document guided by Bakhtinian dialogics. This is the challenging position of Blás Cuculí, not in relation to the Spanish colonial authorities, but to the other inhabitants of Masca. Blás Cuculí's narrative portrays him as a traveller who more than once moved between his own town and the distant seat of the Audiencia. The perspective provided by distance emerges from the way he positions himself at several points in his narrative, as of the town, but not of the community justices, as acting on behalf of the principales and of the rest of the indios of the town, while discursively excluding himself from both of these categories. The history that shapes the position he shares with no one else in this text is most powerfully indicated by the biographical

phrase "he sido": "I have been". Even the most agentive speakers in the document, the oidor and presidente of the Audiencia of Guatemala, report their own words and deeds indirectly.

For Blás Cuculí, the colonial world was different than for anyone else in this text: a sphere encompassing the partido of San Pedro where the residents of his town carried out their lives like their predecessors, and extending to the corte in distant Guatemala where he successfully negotiated matters, and also including Comayagua, the residence of the encomendero whose name he places into the record in such a way that he sets in motion a review of the encomienda. For him, and for others like him operating throughout the history of the colony, the world was not completely described by the paired sites of Spanish city and Indian town.