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Teachings From Within: Urban Wixárika Women Re-making Motherland

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in Culture and Performance

by

Cyndy Margarita Garcia-Weyandt

2015

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2015

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Teachings From Within: Urban Wixárika Women Re-making Motherland

by

Cyndy Margarita Garcia-Weyandt

Master of Arts in Culture and Performance

University of California, Los Angeles, 2015

Professor David D. Shorter, Chair

The Indigenous Wixárika community, from Western México, commonly known as the “Huichol,” continues to practice ancestral traditions despite the numerous families who have left their motherland to re-establish communities in urban areas in the state of Nayarit, México. As a direct result of these moves, Wixárika families have adopted mestizo ways of living, in regards to education and modes of production. This thesis explores how they implement forms of resistance in urban communities, allowing them to continue practicing Wixárika rituals and ceremonies. Drawing from my ethnographic fieldwork, I illustrate how Wixárika women transform their urban space to cultural knowledge. I include a discussion on how women use physical labor to transmit cultural identity in urban areas in practices that include preparation of corn-based meals and art production such as beading or weaving. In addition, the use of poetics in traditional Wixárika names provides the metaphors to link children and youth to cultural identity. This thesis serves as a case study to illustrate how Indigenous women empower children by providing the skills to continue the practice community-based knowledge.

The thesis of Cyndy Garcia-Weyandt is approved.

Allen F. Roberts

Peter Nabokov

David D. Shorter, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2015

Dedicado a mi papá Manuel García Borbón, por enseñarme el valor de la lectura.

To my soulmate Joshua Weyandt, for the unconditional love and support in the arduous labor of
giving birth to this body of work.

To Ixchel Nia, my daughter, this work is for you.

Con todo mi cariño y amor, Thank you!

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Acknowledgments

This thesis is written for the Indigenous women of the 21st century that are making their presence present in urban society. For the women that continue ancestral Indigenous practices in their everyday life despite processes of acculturation. For the women of color that resist colonialism and neo-colonialism. For other allies that understand and stand behind the struggles of Indigenous women and other *mujeres de colores* (women of color). For my advisors Dr. Allen Roberts, Dr. Peter Nabokov, and Dr. David Shorter for their guidance throughout my academic development. I have no words to express my gratitude. I am also thankful to the Department of World Arts and Culture/Dance at the University of California, Los Angeles for providing the space to foster my scholarship. Finally, to the Eugene V. Cota-Robles Fellowship and the Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Program for the generous support that has helped me accomplish my research in the past two years.

This work is dedicated to the Rivera family and all the *mujeres* in the family. The young women and the little girls, like the maize, are growing to give the grains of maize for newer generations. Dedicated with much respect to Mamachali, her ancestors, *mis comadres* Elva y Felipa, for the time we spent laughing, learning and teaching the basic ideas about how to be a proper Wixárika women. *Pamparious!* (Thank You!). For my *ahijadas* Judy and Isabel that guided me in the most simple and complex principles of why they do what they do. For the other girls and boys that became my *ahijad@s* and gave me their support and *cariño* (affection). *Y para las mujeres de mi casa* (And for the women in my house): Maye, Rosalva, Susana, Alejandra, Delia, e Ixchel. For our legacy of *mujeres de caracter fuerte* (women of strong will). I

write for all of them and the ones who will come after them, I write because I found my voice and I would like to hear the sound of our ancestors speaking through me for all of us.

Section I

Madre Maíz

Me, the *mujer*, the *hija*, the sister, the girlfriend, the spouse, the scholar, the Mother!
Mother of the Moon, fertile
The one who gave up on changing the world
To decolonize the one that she gave birth
The one who came to us unexpected, unannounced,
Nourished from the five colors of *maíz*!
Blue, red, purple, yellow, multi-color
Under the Rain, full of pain, full of rage Baby Ixchel who came to appease it all
To Remind me of how small is my world
That it fits wrap around the five little finger that grab my breast, my face, and pull my hair

And me the *guerrera*, *machetera* even *grillera* became these two syllables: Mother
With one purpose decolonize my mind through her life,
Make her remember what she already forgot and has no voice to even pronounce
And acts like if she doesn't get it

Me the *mujer*, the *hija*, the sister, the girlfriend, the spouse, the scholar, the Mother!
All sum up to just one noun Mother
Like the mother of the maize giving birth to life!

October 2014

Introduction

For the past five hundred years, Native people and particularly Indigenous women have been moved from their Native land under the promise of progress, urbanization, and industrialization. This has ultimately led to assimilation and loss of cultural heritage. My own family has experienced a great cultural loss due to migration and dislocation from our Native lands. Even though I identify as *Mexicana*, I claim my Indigenous roots to be from Oaxaca. Specifically, I claim myself as *Zapoteca* because my grandparents originated from Oaxaca and we are (though many of my relatives would deny it) from an Indigenous background.¹ Not until crossing the United States/México border as an undocumented teenager in 2001 was I perceived to be Indigenous. In the U.S., my body and my appearance mark my ethnicity in a broader context than in México; not just Mexican, I am also Indigenous.

My identity quest as well as a sense of belonging influenced my research topic. I immersed myself in learning my own cultural background and embracing part of my cultural identity. My research and volunteer work with the San Lucas Quiavini Zapotec community in Los Angeles contributed to my own quest for identity. Due to their strong ties to their Native land in the Valley of Oaxaca, I perceived the San Lucas community to be a model for experiences as Indigenous immigrants. Every year, members of the community ensure the perpetuation of traditions either by re-producing rituals or by sending members of the community to represent the family in the village. For me, imagining de-Indigenization in future generations was an issue of concern because my own family has been experiencing de-Indigenization.² Second

¹ My paternal grandfather was born in the village of San Juan Sayultepec, Nochixtlán, Oaxaca in 1922 and moved to México City in his teens.

² De-Indigenization from Guillermo Bonfil Batalla's book *México Profundo*. The term describes the population of México with deep Indigenous roots in modern society.

generations of San Luqueños, similar to other Indigenous people when becoming more mestizos, face the arduous task of maintaining both language and culture.³ When communities migrate and leave ancestral lands, cultural traditions encapsulate critical aspects of maintaining cultural identity.

For the purpose of writing my thesis, I position my experience in the discourse of Indigenous women through the use of the Maya concept of “*in lak’ech ala k’in*”; “I am another you, you are another me”. In addition, I utilize Gaspar de Alba’s concept of *re-conocimiento*, which is a dialectical process of knowing the *Other* by knowing the self.⁴ In my epistemology, I perceive that my struggle to regain my Indigenous roots mirrors the struggle of all Indigenous women to keep their Indigenous identity as well as embrace their *Mexicanidad*. By evoking the two terms, I ask for permission from my community of study to begin researching the life of Wixárika women in the Rivera family and how they maintain ties to Native land as well as to Wixárika identity in urban centers. I also ask permission to locate my life in the middle of the lives of my collaborators and bring my personal narrative concerning my identity, migration, and notions of my homeland. When I contemplate my homeland, I always imagine a mythical place in the ancestral land of Oaxaca, an urban house in México City, a small rented house in Mazatlán, and the ruins of a house that was never fully constructed in a rural village outside the city where my parents had attempted to build a home for us. In more recent times, “homeland” has become an ephemeral illusion of locations during my moves from apartment to apartment or as I moved between México and the United States. The border crossing entry marks the political

³ Mestizo will be use in my writing to denote the general difference between the Indigenous and the non-Indigenous. The definition entails the mixing of heritages from European and Indigenous descend in a case system imposed by colonizer.

⁴ Term from the *[Un]Framing the Bad Women* that refers to the praxis of recognizing the self in the Other. Dialectic process of knowing the Other by knowing the self.

boundaries of my homeland. The feelings that arise every time I come back “home” to my Los Angeles apartment, after crossing the border port in Tijuana, revives the vivid memories of my first border crossing experience and the trauma of crossing *La linea* “illegally.” I also ponder upon occupying a foreign land and the on going negotiation of feelings about not being Native to this land. However, I have learned how to let go of my feelings of guilt, nostalgia, and fear by recreating homeland in multiple places, even as an imaginary exercise. By conducting research that attempts to demonstrate how other migrant communities maintain identity outside their Native land, I am able to reconcile my own feelings.

In Indigenous communities the landscape of their Native land, or motherland engraves the memory of people. In Basso’s study among the Western Apache, the community observes the landscape to recall moral stories of ancestors.⁵ The shape of the land reminds the community about teachings on how to be proper members of the Apache society. The village of Las Cruces Cuatas inscribes the memory of my family in the landscape of our ranch in rural Mazatlán. Las Cruces safeguards the memory of a long pilgrimage looking for a home all over the country from Oaxaca to the city of Los Angeles and back again. With my own circular migration, I revisited my homeland and made sure I kept my ties to the land through my presence and also my *saudade* in the absence.⁶ In the end, the memory of my childhood and the happiest moments of my life occurred while residing in the Las Cruces Cuatas. The landscape of the rural village tells the story of my parents when they first arrived in Mazatlán seeking a good place to raise a family. In 1992 when they attempted to build a house, we all worked together to assemble *los cimientos*

⁵ From *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque: Univ. New Mexico Press

⁶ *Saudade* is a term in Portuguese with no direct translation to English that denotes the profound feelings of nostalgia and melancholia for something or someone one loves.

(concrete foundation). The land provided the stones to build *los cimientos* of my family as our house was built by my three brothers, my sister, and myself. Metaphorically, my parents represented the two pillars that sustained our home and my family similar to *los cimientos* kept our house standing. When my parents made the decision to migrate to the United States I dug dirt out from the center of our little 50x50 meter *terreno* (piece of land) and brought it with me so I could remember my roots. Since then I have kept it in my own house as a symbol of what my family stands for and what we have been through. I am nostalgic for what I had during that short period: a homeland (See Picture 1).

From my standpoint, I see a rupture concerning the literature on migration. Crossing borders to live outside a marked territory does not fracture identity unless the ties to homeland are severed or memory fails to re-create your homeland even when occupying someone else's homeland. This thesis discusses how urban Wixárika women demonstrate a form of resistance in urban communities that allow them to continue practicing Wixárika identity. Using the case study of the Rivera family from La Sierra del Nayar, who are currently living in Tepic, Nayarit, México, this study demonstrates how they transform their urban space to transmit cultural knowledge. In this work, I initially discuss scholarship regarding Wixárika and how it informs my research. Later, I engage ideas about a homogenous Mexican Identity developed by Manuel Gamio and other Mexican philosophers to redefine the term *Indigenismo* within the context of México. I aim to expand the term to understand how its meaning de-tribalizes urban Indigenous peoples.⁷ In addition, by redefining the term "*Indigenismo*," I attempt to demystify the notions of the "authentic Native" living in remote locations, in aboriginal land, and under tribal

⁷ Following Bonfil Batalla's definition in *México Profundo*.

governments. Under the ideological development of a homogeneous Mexican identity, theorist such as Manuel Gamio and José Vasconcelos theorized the development of an *Aztec-centric* Indigenous past. Such ideologies replicate a national sentiment that erases urban Indigenous communities from the discourse of *Indigenismo*.

Furthermore, in the methodology section I discuss my perspective as a researcher and how autoethnography as a genre, provides the space to understand my personal experience in the context of larger cultural experiences in which Wixárika migration and diaspora demonstrate the resistance and resilience of Indigenous identity. Finally, I provide an analysis of the interviews, field notes and personal journals collected in the summer of 2014. In the data analysis I discuss how Wixárika knowledge is transmitted using physical labor in their art production and meal preparation. In the data analysis section I aim to prove how the family contextualizes the body and divides the heart-memory from it. I engage in the conversation of concepts of the body in corporeal theories in order to contrast them with Wixárika's idea about the body and demonstrate how the body serves as a mode for transmission of knowledge. Finally, in the data analysis section I discuss the importance of dreams as sources of knowledge and how names provide a way to connect the family to their Native land. I conclude this section with a discussion of recommendations for future research. I introduce each section with a piece of creative writing to provide a window into my inner process of conducting research. The use of poetry in academic writing serves the purpose of demonstrating alternative vehicles to discuss cultural phenomena.



Picture 1: Las Cruces Cuatas, Rosario, Sinaloa, México

Section II

Proclamation

Someone claims:

Indigenous communities are our roots!

The sentiment crosses the nation...

I proclaim:

We are solid foundations of origins and place

And more like luxuriant branches

Flourishing!

December 2013

Literature Review

Multiple scholars have undertaken the task of conducting in-depth studies of traditions and culture of the Wixáritari (pl.). Carl Lumholtz (1900) and Robert M. Zingg (1930) described in detail the religion, art, and lifestyle of the group. Both studies ethnographically focus on the description of Wixárika religiosity. From the field of theology Lumholtz, a Norwegian explorer and ethnographer, was the first to document Wixárika's lifestyle. Specifically, Lumholtz documented Wixárika's paraphernalia in ceremonies and in everyday life. Thirty years later, in 1934, Zingg, an American anthropologist, published a study on the myths and origin stories about the Wixárika. In this study, Zingg's showed the art and myths of the Wixárika through pictures and extensive narratives of their stories. Both scholars contributed to the historical documentation of the Wixárika community. However, the two studies fail to address the role of Wixárika women within the community. As the first ethnographic works among the Wixáritari, Lumholtz's and Zingg's studies contribute to the understanding of culture and documentation of origin stories. In my study the two ethnographies play an important role in modeling and underlying ethnographic methods in earlier times.

In the 1960s and 1970s, numerous scholarships emerged that highlighted the life and traditions of the Wixáritari. Peter T. Furst (1964) and Barbara Myerhoff (1974) contributed to classic ethnography work about the community. These scholars worked together to document Wixárika ceremonies as well as pilgrimages to Wirikuta.⁸ Furst's study provides a body of writing that is descriptive and historical in nature. In Furst's study using ethnographic methods, he incorporates the voice of one of his collaborators to interpret the importance of Wixáritari

⁸ According to Wixárika cosmology Wirikuta is the origin of the Universe. Located in the East in the heart of the Sonoran desert.

ritual. For instance, his main collaborators provide personal accounts of their experiences in pilgrimages to Wirikuta. In interviews, Furst demonstrates that through the narratives of a *Mara'akame* (shaman) the pilgrimage is central to the community.⁹ Myerhoff published the first monograph regarding the Peyote Hunt in the pilgrimage to Wirikuta. Working with a Wixárika family from Jalisco, Myerhoff wrote from the perspective of a male *mara'akame* how the community prepares to undertake a pilgrimage to Wirikuta. Myerhoff's book became the first ethnographic work concerning the Wixárika from a female scholar, and is the most important to my study because she describes the pilgrimage from the perspective of urban Wixárika. Even though Myerhoff fails to explain the urban living situation of her collaborators, the study reveals aspects of the participants' urban life such as the proficiency in Spanish language and the living conditions of the families in close proximity to urban centers (1974: 29). The importance of Furst's and Myerhoff's work lies in the use of ethnographic methods in the documentation of Wixárika traditions. The authors use methods such as interviews and participant observation to describe and analyze the ceremonies and the pilgrimage to Wirikuta from the Wixárika perspective. Due to the nature of my research, understanding how ethnographic work was previously conducted enriches my practices in the field. The two studies provide a model to approach Indigenous communities with ethnographic field methods as well as the limitations faced by interpreting data from different sources.

Recently, Arturo Gutierrez (2002), Paul Liffman (2011), and Stacey Schaefer (2002) have devoted their scholarship to the study of the Wixáritari. In Gutierrez's ethnography, *La peregrinación a Wirikuta*, he describes Wixárika culture and the pilgrimage to Wirikuta. Through

⁹ *Mara'akate* (pl.) translated as chanters or singers are responsible for conducting ceremonies and leading the family to Wirikuta during the pilgrimage. The *mara'akame* usually undergoes a special training to learn Wixárika's ways of healing.

descriptions of the journey to Wirikuta, their paraphernalia, and cosmology and worldview of the group, he demonstrates an integral understanding of the community. My own study specifically contributes to the understanding of Wixárika cosmology. By relying on Gutierrez's ethnographic work, I seek to understand Wixárika thought in a scholarly way, following Paul Liffman who has dedicated his scholarship to the understanding of Wixárika land. In Liffman's 2011 research within the Wixárika community, he examines the Wixárika's extension of their ancestral land and how the group makes place through ceremonies. In this way, his research on Wixárika territory contributes to my understanding of place-making. Although he fails to address the role of women in place-making and identity formation, Liffman's study offers an understanding of territoriality. Thus, his study contributes significantly to understanding Wixárika's notion of Native land.

Finally, Schaefer's research on Wixárika women describes the process they undertake to find identity through weaving traditions. Schaefer explains that in the process of learning how to become proper Wixárika women, weaving becomes central to the process. The author succeeds in presenting an in-depth study that focuses on the enculturation of girls, as well as the process of becoming a master weaver. Schaefer contributes to the study of Wixárika by presenting the role of women in the community. In addition, her study demonstrates how Wixárika women teach and learn "Wixárika knowledge" in informal settings (2002: 103), permitting women to pass community knowledge from mother to daughter. Schaefer further argues that women learn from family weaving traditions as a way to attain high community status. When a woman becomes a master weaver, she acquires elevated knowledge of religious aspects. Therefore, Schaefer successfully articulates, through the experiences of *mara'akate* (pl.) women, the relationship between weaving and shamanic traditions. Whereas many studies focus on the shamanic

practices of men, Schaefer concentrates on the practices of women. Her focus on women's knowledge and the transmission of knowledge from mother to daughter contributes to the understanding of how members of a community learn particular aspects of Wixárika identity from mothers.

In the literature of Indigenous women and their role in tribal communities, Kristin Erickson's study on the Yoeme/Yaqui communities in Sonora becomes important in the understanding of Indigenous identity formation and place-making. Erickson demonstrates how women recreate homeland and identity formation through narratives of movements and a sense of belonging to the land. The narratives serve a purpose of recreating homeland through the process of remembering the past. According to Erickson, Yoeme's narrative or "ethnogenesis" stories sustain Yoeme identity through the process of retelling narratives of cultural belonging and movement of people in time and space (2009: 36). Particularly, women create identity and home place by the act of retelling their stories of exile and return. Erickson makes the case that Yoeme recreate land by remembering the movement of people through the land, and recreating place and space through ritual. Accounts of displacement allow the author to prove that the landscape of Yoeme territory and the narratives surrounding the land provide the people with identity unique markers to Yoeme identity. For instance, the retelling of stories about the Yaqui River foster identity formation. Erickson uses life story interviews to trace the story of Yoeme ancestors in exile. The stories of Yoeme women create identity through the use of their memory of the journey from exile to return to the Yaqui land. In such movement, the territory of Yaqui becomes a fundamental aspect of the Yoeme identity because it creates a geographic location and links the history of its people to the land.

Erickson's discussion on female spaces adds to the discourse on Indigenous women and practices of identity formation. The author claims that women transform domestic spaces to transmit identity during ceremonies and *fiestas*. Erickson excels in demonstrating her claim of how Yoeme women are responsible for recreating identity formation at home by being responsible for the altar setting and ceremonial space. Erickson also adeptly describes domestic labor in the recreation of homeland and identity formation in such areas as cooking, altar setting, and offering the labor for ceremonies. Her discussion on Yoeme's performance of "Yaquiness" through the arrangement of space in Yoeme houses demonstrates that women create homeland in the domestic spheres even when communities live in close contact with mestizo people (Erickson, 2009: 97). Erickson's study contributes to the understanding of place-making from Indigenous women's perspective. In multiple ways, her work on narratives, memory, land, domestic labor, and childbearing among the Yoeme relates to my study with the Wixárika. By adding to the discourse of gender and practices of place-making in Indigenous communities, Erickson's work adds to my discussion of how homeland and identity are in constant negotiation with Indigenous communities bordering mestizo communities. Erickson's work provides a framework for an analysis of topics regarding homeland, identity formation, and the role of women in Indigenous communities. My study gains a deeper understanding of the domestic sphere and women's role in identity formation while I compare and contrast Erickson's case study with the Yoeme/Yaqui to my work with the Wixárika.

In order to understand Native people and how the land shapes identity outside political and governmental parameters, I attempt to understand the *Indigenismo* project and *Indigenista* policies. I endeavor to understand the origins of *Indigenismo* in México in order to trace the

genealogy of the homogenous Mexican identity, which has been discussed by various scholars. For example, Indigenous Zapotec scholar, Felipe H. López discusses the construction of the Mexican identity from an Indigenous perspective. As a Urban Planner, López maps the migration of Zapotec communities to the US. He argues that the perception that Indigenous identity is “being fixated in time and space” prevails in the scholarship of Indigenous studies (2002: 989). In addition, the same sentiment abounds in Mexican mainstream society. In the context of México, Indigenous communities have been erased from the discourse of identity. When the majority of Mexican citizens talk about Mexican identity, they associate México with a mestizo and homogenous identity. However, López argues that, “we need to recognize the different Mexican cultures that exist within Mexican culture and to an extent, within the Mexican community in the United States” (López, 2002: 992). Furthermore, he states that Mexican identity is not only comprised of mestizo identity but also a multi-cultural society (2002: 992). Under Lopez’s notion of identity formation, I intend to lay the groundwork to understand the *Indigenismo* project for the analysis of Indigenous societies in contemporary times, particularly in México.

In México, *Indegenismo* is a post-revolutionary term that describes a new wave of thoughts regarding identity formation in the country. Manuel Gamio introduced the “Official *Indigenismo*” as a project to create a national identity in México in his book *Forjando Patria* (1916). In his attempt to incorporate Indigenous communities of the past into the national society of modern México, Gamio excavated the sites of Tenochtitlán in the heart of modern México City. He dug deep into past of ancient civilizations to glorify the Aztec Empire as the foundation of Mexican history. Soon after he introduced *Indigenismo*, he incorporated Indigenous arts as the

aesthetic canon to value the ancient arts of the Aztecs. In México, *Indigenismo* arose from Gamio's idea that ancient civilizations, such as the Aztecs, were not primitive and had much to offer to the identity formation of the nation or "*Raza Mestiza*."¹⁰

Then in 1925, Mexican philosopher José Vasconcelos wrote *La Raza Cósmica*. In his book, he replicates Gamio's framework to argue that due to *Mestizaje*, the nation would eventually consist of one superior race as a result of the mixture of heritages.¹¹ The *Indigenismo* project was a way for *Mexicanos* to speak about the Indigenous communities in general terms. According to Vasconcelos, the Aztec Empire represented the nation's Indigenous roots. Thus, the project's main effect on Mexican society was to erase the other Indigenous identities within México nationalistic discourse. The concept of "*La Raza Cósmica*" became an attempt to homogenize all ethnic groups in México in an effort to formulate one national identity. The author theorizes that the population in México over the years would become a mix of multiple races resulting in one superior race. As a result, singularities among ethnicities in México would eventually disappear. In the context of Mexican society, the understanding of how Indigenous identities are formulated and conceptualized is fundamental to understanding policies of *Indigenismo*. In more recent times, the term *Indigenismo* is re-appropriated by Indigenous communities to denote a pluralistic nation and used as a way to demand rights for education, health, land, and self-government. After the first *Congreso Indigenista* in San Cristóbal de Las Casa, Chiapas in 1974, members of multiple Indigenous communities gathered to discuss their

¹⁰ People of mixing heritage.

¹¹ The process of mixing heritage.

rights and needs as communities.¹² Prior to the *Congreso Indigenista* the sentiment across the nation regarding one homogenous Mexican identity prevailed. This sentiment continues until today as a national ideology. However movements of Indigenous groups such as the EZLN, have erupted to demand rights for Native communities that include rights to land, educations, and access to services.

The effect of the *Indigenista* policies has had an impact on Indigenous communities living in foreign lands, particularly communities such as the Wixáritari (pl.). Under the parameters of the Mexican constitution, the first lines of Article 2 read as follows: “Indigenous peoples are those who descend from populations that inhabited the present territory of the country at the beginning of colonization and which retain their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions, or part thereof.”¹³ In the Mexican constitution, urban Indigenous communities remain unrecognized.

The Wixáritari have, over time, moved or been displaced for political reasons (appropriation of land, mining projects, and globalization) from their native lands to border towns of neighboring cities. Contact with the mestizo population in these neighboring

¹² In 1974 the first *Congreso Indigenista* met in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas México to address issues of land, health, education and economics of many Indigenous communities not just Aztecs. This congresso gave the foundations to the EZLN in later times.

¹³ Article 2. México is a single and indivisible.
(amended by a decree published in the Official Gazette ON 14 AUGUST 2001)
The nation has a multicultural composition SUSTAINED IN THEIR ORIGINALLY Indigenous peoples who are those who descend from populations that inhabited the present territory of the country at the beginning of colonization and which retain their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions, or part thereof.
(amended by Decree published in the Official Gazette ON 14 AUGUST 2001)
AWARENESS OF Indigenous IDENTITY TO BE ESSENTIAL CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING to whom the provisions on Indigenous peoples apply.
(amended by a decree published in the Official Gazette ON 14 AUGUST 2001)
COMMUNITIES ARE MEMBERS OF AN INDIAN VILLAGE, those that form a social, economic and cultural unity, BASED ON A LAND AND ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR AGREEMENT WITH THEIR USES AND CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES.(amended by a decree published in the Official Gazette 14TH AUGUST 2001)
<http://info4.juridicas.unam.mx/ijure/fed/9/3.htm?s>

communities has not affected their cultural identity. On the contrary, Indigenous communities displaced from ancestral land have had to find ways to endure. Their movement from Native lands to urban zones has caused them to improvise in order to continue their cultural identity. For instance, the creation of new art, the accommodation of ceremonies into the Gregorian calendar, and most importantly political litigation to continue their pilgrimage to Wirikuta are examples of their cultural endurance.

Currently, the urban Wixárika of Nayarit are in the process of “aggregation” to their new environment. By finding ways to cope with society, (attending state-sponsored schools, bilingualism, flexibility in ceremonies, and extending rituals to fit current situations) the community resists assimilation. However, under the criteria of Article 2, urban Indigenous communities and Indigenous families living outside their homelands lose status as Indigenous communities. They also lose the rights to practice their traditions and customs, and become de-indigenized by the Mexican nation. As a result, Indigenous communities transition to mainstream society. When they become acculturated, traditional living becomes part of the past. In México, *Indigenista* policies and *Indigenismo* contribute to the idea that Indigenous communities are confined to Native land. To understand *Indigenismo* and *Indigenista* policies from the past and present opens up the possibility to map Indigenous communities outside Native land. The current definition of Indigenous communities in México excludes the urban Wixárika and their right to practice cultural traditions outside Indigenous territory.

In *The Vulnerable Observer*, Ruth Behar, explores the genre of autoethnography. She claims that the research attaches the subjectivity of the researcher in the field. While conducting

research, the ethnographer encounters the community of study with internal feelings and attitudes. Behar uses her personal narrative to understand how her research takes place. This allows her to connect with her community of study and also demonstrates how her personal narrative adds to the understanding of a larger topic. The contribution of Behar's work to my work lies in the importance of intertwining a personal narrative into a larger discourse. In addition, Behar's work contributes to my work in illustrating the relationship between observer and observed in which the observer is not only observing objectively but subjectively as well. Furthermore, the book *The Vulnerable Observer*, provides a window through which to see the importance of emotions in the field of ethnography. As a researcher, Behar states that we are never apart from our emotions such as love, compassion, and anger, which objective observation dismisses (1996: 8). Most communities of study that are guided by their attitudes practice certain behaviors. As an ethnographer, my job is to document and prove why and how the Wixárika women transmit cultural knowledge to children. When I incorporate my own emotions into the conversation, as well as those of the community of study, I can demonstrate respect for their culture. Autoethnography legitimizes feelings and turns them into useful pieces of evidence to show that women actively resist the process of assimilation by implanting types of resistance when they recreate motherland.

Using the genre of autoethnography allows me the opportunity to reflect on the history of Indigenous migration and diaspora by inserting my experience into my research. It also helps me to see both a small and larger scale, the impact of migration on the nation. I aim to compare the history of the Mexican nation with the present ideologies of identity in the country by tracing the policies of *Indigenismo* in previous and present times. My intentions are not necessarily to

summarize but rather to put into perspective on micro and macro level the national sentiments regarding Indigenous peoples in México. Autoethnography as a research tool has received different contestations regarding its validation of self-reflectivity in analytic research. For instance, the use of autoethnography in Behar's work generated multiple opinions regarding the nature of the data gathered from an emotional perspective rather than the rational. However, autoethnography stimulates new and creative modes of understanding cultural events. Due to the use of innovated methods to gather data such as taking note of personal experiences, autoethnography offers a non-linear way to explore sociocultural events. Autoethnography presents data with the same validation as ethnographic research, because it validates and documents the emotional experiences of both the observer and the observed.

Section III

Now Living Heaven

I

How do I begin imagining Heaven?
First I take off my glasses and my Catholic faith imposed by family,
I removed the image of Jesus Christ for my own sanity
I stop communion on Sunday
I disintegrate the Trinity
I fly to Wixárika's land in a hurry
Forget about "High Theory"

II

I forget about History
My own history, forget that I am two in one body,
And begin seeing with my naked eyes the Real Reality,
I see through the eyes of Wixárika, I embody!
I turn into an Eagle
Fly to Wirikuta
Like little kids do, I am legal!

III

I fly to the five corners of *Shi'kuri*,
The Five Corners of the Universe at the East Wirikuta
To meet the ancestors Deer, Maize, *Hikuri*!

IV

Deer unravels my *Iyari*
Maize becomes my relative,
Hikuri reminds me of my memory
I become Tutú under *Hara'mara's* initiative!

V

I am now living Heaven!
I return home and I am still in constant Heaven
Borderline, mundane
In between spaces!

December 2013

Theoretical framework

In the following section I discuss the theoretical framework that shapes my study. I engage in *Indigenismo*, Chicana feminist theory and corporeality theories. The first theories with which I engage relate to *Indigenismo* in México. The purpose of discussing the term in the Mexican context is to demonstrate how a national homogenous identity has shaped Indigenous identity politics throughout history. Under the premise that Indigenous communities are identified under the Mexican government by having rights to the land and self governance, when traditional communities move to urban centers, those identifiers disappear by virtue of leaving behind ancestral lands and abandoning their self governance.¹⁴ In consequence, many migrant Indigenous communities assimilate mestizo ways and leave traditional culture behind. For many Indigenous communities in México, the processes of assimilation correlate to the processes of accommodation and innovation to new practices and new ways of living.¹⁵ I use the case study of the Rivera family, a Wixárika family in Tepic, México, in an attempt to demonstrate how the women in the Rivera family preserve cultural heritage by re-creating homeland on a daily basis even when living outside homelands.

Chicana feminist theories provide the theoretical lens to sustain the claim of the role of women in Indigenous societies. When using Chicana feminist theories in the context of México, I see Wixárika women from a non-Western, non-patriarchal, and non-heterosexual perspective that liberates Indigenous women in México from the typical *Machismo* ideology perspective that was imposed by the colonizer. I rely on the theories of Chicana feminist theory to inform my

¹⁴ Article Two of the Mexican Constitution

¹⁵ Bonfill Batalla discusses the tactics of Indigenous survival after processes of colonization in his book *México Profundo*.

research by using Emma Perez's work *The Decolonial Imaginary*, which proposes a third space to discuss gender as an important aspect to rewrite the history of women of color. *The Decolonial Imaginary* provides a liberating methodology to investigate Indigenous women diverting from male dominated discourse. In a neo-colonial global economy, gender and sexuality unmask patriarchal ideologies that interfere in the ideologies of Indigenous communities in which women take an important role. I use third space theory to insert the history of Indigenous women without patterns of heteronormativity and the patriarchal systems in México. The study of Indigenous women from a Chicana feminist's standpoint provides an understanding of Indigenous women as capable leaders of tactically reverse colonial ideologies. Indigenous women use their agency to rewrite their history for future generations. To write about Indigenous women in urban spaces and their resistance to cultural loss, I find it fundamental to use theories that exclude the male gaze and the objectification of women in patriarchal systems because the role of women in Indigenous communities is fundamental to identity transmission. Furthermore, I discuss corporeal theories previously addressed by Pierre Bourdieu (1990), Michel Mauss (1973), Susan L. Foster (2003), and Michel De Certeau (1984) to understand the choreographic movement of women in the everyday life and in the production of alternative histories through embodiment of Wixárika identity. I use corporeality to conceptualize the bodies in Wixárika context to understand how corporeal aspects serve as tools for pedagogical purposes.

Section IV

Echo of Resistance

I've been told I don't know how to write

That's because my community doesn't use your style

We are the Spoken People!

The ones to recite and express their realities with spoken words

From Nezahualcoyotl our king poet

All the way to Malianalli Tenepal, Juarez, and Ramona the bright orators!

People that use their words as spears

Trespassing ears, Transcending!

If you want me to write

I will learn how to write

The methodology will be my life!

Just to prove that I can navigate in your own land

I will trespass your terrain!

May my words be the tools to resist

And allow my people to fight in the echo of resistance!

March 2014

Methodology

My research among the Wixárika began with my interest in their issues of mining in Wirikuta. In 2009, the First Majesty Silver Mining Corporation acquired the rights to extract minerals in the Wixárika land from the Mexican government. When members of the community demanded rights to their Native land, I questioned the role of urban Wixárika people. As I framed my research study, I discovered that communities outside Native lands continue holding ties to places such as Wirikuta even when they reside outside their territory. Through the use of ethnography, I intend to understand Wixárika women's roles in keeping ties to land and recreating homeland in Tepic, Nayarit. I use methods such as participant observation, genealogy, and archival research. In addition, I explore the genre of autoethnography as method to interpret my experiences working with the community while learning their ways of living.

In 2012, I attended a cultural event with multiple Indigenous communities in Tequepexpan, Nayarit, México. My intention was to engage in a participatory observation and socialize with various families from the Wixárika group. Through helping members of the community to raffle a piece of yarn art, I got involved in my community of study. I did not realize that the emotions I experienced from the event contributed to a cultural exchange beyond observing cultural behavior. I entered the working spaces of the Wixárika families and the labor behind the production of art. At the time I was unaware that my participation as objective observer would eventually evolve into intersubjective participation. I took part of the field with the personal narrative of who I am: multi-ethnic, part Indigenous, part mestiza woman, and binational. My willingness to learn from people guides me to use my sensitivity; and subjectivity helps me in understanding without judgment why the Wixárika women choose what they do in

order to ensure cultural survival in cities such as in Tepic. The genre of autoethnography grants me the space to acknowledge my presence in the field.

The summer of 2013 marked the beginning of my official research with the Wixárika group in Tepic. I spent the entire summer surveying families and asking them about the arts education of children in state sponsored schools. I quickly learned that many families value the education of children in Mexican schools, and that families reinforced community-based knowledge in private spaces. This summer was also significant since I unexpectedly discovered that I was going to become a mother. My research changed as my main focus shifted from working with children in education to working with mothers and the role of Wixárika women as care providers. The following year, in the summer of 2014 I was back in the field with my three-month-old daughter, Ixchel, to conduct research. Only this time I was there to observe women's roles as I was being observed in my role as a mother. After almost three months of living with the Rivera family I discovered the potential of documenting not only the experiences of Wixárika women but also my process of familiarizing with their traditions.

As part of my fieldwork, I volunteered my participation in everyday tasks. Volunteering allows me to navigate between being considered as an insider and an outsider; I learn how it feels to be in the place of Wixárika women, at least for a short period of time. In multiple spaces, I have felt the discrimination of Mexican citizens by those who have made comments about the multiple children I had around me (with the assumption that the children were all mine) or witnessed how mestizo women referred to Indigenous art as trendy because a pop artist wore "Huichol" regalia. I am aware of my inability to fully identify myself as an Indigenous women by simply moving alongside and around Wixárika women. Yet, I have felt the discrimination and

the exoticism of the Other when I walk with them and non-Indigenous people call us using pejorative names.

Autoethnography exposes my responsibility to express the feelings in my research. As Ruth Behar describes in *The Vulnerable Observer*, sharing internal feelings while documenting cultural phenomena enriches the analysis when the researcher becomes susceptible to other human conditions. Using Behar's work as an example, I intend to share my inner process while I conduct research in order to understand Wixárika women in urban communities. Thus far, I have experienced Wixárika's long sessions of working with beads and felt incompetent in the art. Hearing a fifteen-year old girl tell me how to take care of my own sick child taught me about the roles of young girls within the community and in healing practices. Those experiences cause me to sympathize with Wixárika's experiences and allow me to understand the meaning of becoming a "proper Wixárika mother." The rationale behind understanding what it takes to become a good care provider under Wixárika's terms, helps in unpacking the key role of mother in identity formation. While I document my experiences, they become the evidence that demonstrates the arduous work in becoming a proper member of the group.

Using the experiences from my fieldwork among the family, I observe how the mothers transform their urban space in Tepic to transmit cultural knowledge as a way to resist cultural assimilation. I use my experiences in the field as a means to convey how other women create spaces at home to recreate motherland. By looking at aspects of culture that may have been dismissed in research, such as personal experiences, feelings, and desires I am able to find meaning in the experience of Indigenous women. The feelings of being part of the community stay with me and impact my research. I have found ways to transmit the feelings from the field in

creative writing. Autoethnography also allows me to express my emotions using poetry and journal entries as a device to express what quantitative research disregards in the process of becoming an objective researcher. My poetry in each of the sections of the thesis describes the inner feelings of conducting research from the beginning to the end. Because creative writing exposes my personal views about the field, incorporating poetry disrupts the traditional way of cultural interpretation. I take the risk of writing from deep inside my emotions to demonstrate that knowledge can be produced using different modes. Autoethnography allows me to see beyond the objective and introduce the subjective part of my experiences into the understanding of Indigenous women in urban settings. I move into the dimension of emotions to ask the question of how it feels to be an Indigenous woman and socializing in close proximity to urban places.

In many of my journal entries I describe how horrible I always feel after coming back home because I know that I am in a better place and over there; things are more difficult. In between are long days talking and learning new tasks, in a period of two and a half months I take what I can and leave behind my community of study. But my support and commitment with the Rivera family goes beyond interviewing or photographing them. I know this commitment will last a lifetime because I make my life vulnerable by taking my daughter with me and letting her grow up with the community. The experience of building community along with the family is also part of the task in translating Wixárika traditions to academic writing. In the field, both objectively and subjectively, I observe how women in the family use their labor in practices that include art production, such as beading and weaving, and the preparation of corn-based meals that help the family reconnect with *el costumbre* (the custom) the custom of being who they are.

All my capabilities as a researcher (my senses, my feelings, and my ability to process data) become important methods that lead my research inquiry. I investigate practices that have been disregarded in past ethnographic work. I gather data from my personal life and the lives of women to intertwine our life experiences with the purpose of making sense of migration, Indigenous diaspora, and women's labor in cultural preservation. Autoethnography as a method grants me the opportunity to analyze other types of knowledge as well. For instance, I pay attention to Wixárika modes of learning such as the body and dreams which allows me to continue learning about sources of knowledge within the community. Without taking into consideration my experiences in learning, I would have missed the opportunity to inquire about other methods of transmitting cultural knowledge.

In the following section I present the analysis of data from excerpts of journal entries, dialogues from interviews, and field notes from research in the summer of 2014. The journal entries underline my experiences of conducting research with the Rivera family, fears and doubts about my topic, and in some instances my frustration as a researcher. I present dialogue from recorded interviews that demonstrate evidence to support my arguments and field notes that demonstrate aspects of culture I observed during my ethnographic work. My main collaborators live in the neighborhood of Bellavista, Tepic, Nayarit. Previously, the family lived in La Yerbabuena, located in the municipality of La Sierra del Nayar, Nayarit in Wixárika territory.¹⁶ As I make progress in my research, I continue meeting other family members that take me to their houses and show me other aspects of Wixárika life. For instance, Felipa's family and future *comadre* resides in La Labor outside Tepic in a small agricultural town. I also discuss

¹⁶ Some relatives still live in La Yerbabuena and family in the city visit the community during the summer and vice versa.

Mamachali's and Don Costo's role in their family as a way to trace the history of the Rivera's migration to urban centers. Later I move to other women in the family, Elva and her daughters, Isabel and Berta. The intention of selecting different sources of data is to demonstrate the multiplicity of ways I am able to show how women in the Rivera family reshape spaces to create motherland in urban Wixárika communities.

Section V

Corazones Sin Rumbo

Ella quiere ser más *tewari*
Yo quiero ser más wixá!

Ella quiere viajar,
Yo quiero ir al desierto!

Su nombre Palitemai, velar en el desierto
Mi nombre Cyndy Margarita, ceniza pequeña perla del mar!

Ella tiene todo, pero lo cambia por nada
¡Yo tengo nada y lo quiero todo!

Dos mundos, dos realidades, dos formas de vivir
¡Dos corazones sin rumbo!

Ella cambia *Los secretos ocultos* por una vida ordinaria
¡Yo lo ordinario por lo oculto!

Ella tiene miedo de encontrarse con el *Hikuri*
¡Yo le quiero llegar a conocer!

Ella ve en mi lo que tanto añora
¡Y yo veo en ella, el ahora!
El costumbre, dice su abuela
¡Yo digo el buen camino!

¡Ella Wixárika tewari, y yo tewari wixárika!
Que entrelazamos nuestras vidas mientras se cruzan al caminar

Summer 2014

Data Analysis

Journal Entry, November 11, 2014: *I have been dreaming about my community of study. I had the dream and I saw women of the community getting ready to leave to Wirikuta. Elder women, young women, little girls. Everyone in the community saying goodbye, I rushed to say goodbye. Grandma Rosalia says to me that the fire is in me with my daughter, that she embodies the fire in within me. I don't know what it means but I hug her goodbye and wish her a safe trip to the desert. My fears of writing from a vulnerable space are big but my reasons for writing are bigger. Today, I want to write and begin telling the story of Rosalia or Mamachali. Tell my reader the important role of Mamachali in the ritual life of her family. I think that my dream means that Ixchel is my motivation and the burning fire that makes me going everyday because since she was born I have been finding ways of healing my life through her life by shedding all the unconscious resentment against my own mother; now that I have become one I understand my mother. So, today I would begin to unravel from my mind all the ideas that have been resting in my mind since I came back from the field couple months ago. Let the story unfold from my mind and let my body capture it by the typing of my one hand while I hold my daughter with the other and I write this thesis.*

“Utläüma” (Rosalia) has always spoken Wixárika with her family. They lived in a cave in La Sierra del Nayar and she recalls growing up without any possessions or material belongings. They would eat small game, plants, flowers, and insects from the region. She remembers the

feeling of the hot Fire at dusk and listening to the sound of jaguars at night. Later the family moved to a Cora ranch in the same municipality.¹⁷ ¹⁸ As the grandmother of the Rivera family, she is wise and very conscious of what she wants to say in front of others. Her sweet voice speaks to you as if you were one of her own grandchildren. Why does her history matter? Because she is the matriarch of the family and every story that she narrates evokes history. Her memory goes far back to when she was a little girl living in the woods without any documentation of history. Her story represents the history of migration in her family. For the Rivera family, migration has played a major role in the shift of their traditions so ritual encapsulates the most important aspects of their identity while helping them to cope with the rapid urbanization and globalization of their new lifestyle. Mamachali narrates that her husband and her family once lived in a family owned ranch in La Yerbabuena, which is part of the *ejido* (communal land). They had their cattle and land to cultivate. Over the years, relatives moved to different areas and now many travel around the country to cultural events where they are able to showcase and sell art as a way to make money. Since her older sons became seasonal farm workers for a sugar cane plantation, they relocated the entire family to Tepic, closer to agritural land and cane sugar mills.

The family relocated to Bellavista, a neighborhood within Tepic. The family purchased land outside the urban space and re-created a traditional Wixárika village called La Yürata community (See Picture 2).¹⁹ The physical space of La Yürata resembles the traditional housing of La Yerbabuena, their home back in Wixárika Native land. Despite the use of modern

¹⁷ The use of capital letters denote the honorific categories in the Wixárika language.

¹⁸ Coras another Indigenous group neighboring the Wixárika.

¹⁹ Translated as “where the family grows.”

construction materials, such as concrete, the layout remains the same. According to Lumholtz and his early documentation of Wixárika housing in the 1900's, he observed how buildings in Native land constituted of a *iki*' (round house) made out stones, mud and covered with "thatched roofs" (1900: 9). The outside patio includes a fireplace made out stone. Every building encloses the fireplace in the patio. In the urban communities, the Rivera family built a ramada for the transplanted Fire from their original land. The ramada serves as a location where the ceremonies take place. The family constructed a house, which includes both a kitchen and a *cali'wei* (shrine) that encloses the ramada in a rectangular shape. The women in each family cook in separate spaces because each has their own separate cooking utensils. However, for ceremonies all families collaborate in the feeding of the entire family. While some families live within the confines of the community, others have branched out beyond the walls of La Yürata. Elva and her family recently moved away from the community and now rent an apartment in Bellavista because during the rainy season their children struggled to walk from their house to the school. Other families, such as Felipa and her family, own a *cali'wei* but only stay during the ceremonies. Mamachali and papa Costo also live in La Yürata with other members of the family. Both have *cali'weis* on the property.

When the family recreated their living situation on the outskirts of Bellavista, a town of 2310 inhabitants, they replicated their traditional homeland by incorporating elements of their life there for less than forty members of the family. Even in the urban confines of Bellavista, Elva's family transplanted their Fire to the *ornilla* (Fire pit) outside of their apartment in order to cook and prepare meals during the week. Buying land for housing and corn cultivation allows them to continue practicing key elements of Wixárika identity. For instance, the ramada with the

transplanted Fire indicates that the family took an element from their homeland that characterizes ceremonial life. The physical space of La Yürata provides the setting for all cultural events. Ceremonies take place within the community, including the naming ceremony. Storytelling and art production takes place on the patio. The buildings resemble their homelands, not only the layout but also in terms of the purpose. For example, the *cali'wei* is a small structure that contains offerings, such as pieces of art, candles, food, and Catholic saints, as well as personal objects from the owners. The offerings pay tribute to entities in Wixárika's cosmology and remain in the *cali'wei* until the cleansing ceremony.²⁰ Some *cali'weis* contain Catholic symbols that demonstrate Wixárika syncretism and recent devotion to saints.

The land alongside the housing serves to harvest corn each year. During the months of May or June, the family takes part in a collaborative effort to grow corn that is used for ceremonies and personal consumption throughout the year. Thus, the cornfield allows the family to reunite when the corn is cultivated and harvested. Prior to the cultivation, the *mara'akame* of the family performs a ceremony. The family then begins the cultivation of corn as each family member works in the *coamil* (cornfield). This involves a very labor-intensive ritual in which the *mara'akame* of the family recreates the geography of Wixárika's homeland. The first *milpa* (corn) replicates Wixárika cosmology: *Te'akata*, the center, *Wirikuta* in the East, *Xapawilleme* in the South, *Hara'mara* in the West, and *Hawxamanaka* in the North. The cultivation of the *milpa* in five locations reflects the knowledge of Wixárika geography and the extension of their territory. The importance of knowing their homeland is relevant in replicating the *Shi'kuri* (God's

²⁰ Cleansing ceremony takes place after the cultivation of corn. In this ceremony the family gets together to clean the *cali'wei* and replace offerings.

eye).²¹ Components of ancestral living form part of their new urban centers in such a way of mirroring motherland in agricultural practices.

When I asked about the history of the family and how and when they migrated to Tepic, Mamachali began telling me her personal history. First she discussed the importance of her Wixárika name, which I later discovered is essential to my study. Rosalia or Mamachali is her name but in Wixárika her name is actually “Utläüma,” which means “to write.” Her name is relevant to my study because of the coincidence that I am now writing her story. I cannot stop wondering whether her parents foresaw that one day her story was going to be written, or that somehow her ancestors knew that she would be researched so they named her Utläüma. At the same time she speaks to me she is also working on her *tejido* (weaving cloth). She breaks by saying “*ya le digo, ya le platico*” (“as I say to you formal, as I chat with you formal”). She repeats to emphasize her story and keep her listeners engaged in the conversation. I try not to ask too many questions and instead let her speak. She continues to simultaneously narrate and work on the *tejido*. Sitting on the floor, she creates a work space in the middle of the patio where she is making belts from yarn. We speak very informally, without scripted questions. I simply ask her things according to my curiosity about her life.

For our first interview, I hesitate to ask for Mamachali's permission to record because I am worried that she might reject the idea. However, when I ask, she says “yes.” She separates the maize because ants steal grains of corn (See Picture 3). I see the the long line of marching red ants that carry single grains from the inside of the house, which is constructed from wood and cardboard. The line passes through the walls and goes outside under a pink trailer. I think about

²¹ Map of Wixárika cosmology.

how the trailer appears odd next to the other houses in México. While preparing to go inside, she mentions that “those ants, I was burning those ants with a stick.” She is referring to the narration of when she was young and married for the first time. She says, “I like to play with dolls, I made my dolls with sticks and old clothes.” She relates that one day a man arrived at the house and came too close to her, so she burned him with the fire, all over his face. She laughs sweetly, recognizing that she was a bad girl for burning her husband when he tried to get close to her. At age twenty-one and after a long separation, she met her current husband. She became the wife of a *mará'akame* and they have been together ever since. She states that three years ago she began her trips to Wirikuta.

According to the literature, traditional pilgrimages to Wirikuta form part of the life of many Wixárika women. In Schaefer's study, women participate by leaving offerings in the desert and ask to reach higher levels of weaver mastering. The desire to master weaving practices is based on the process holds connections to metaphysical realms. In the case of Mamachali, she did not grow up going to Wirikuta but since the time her family moved from the wilderness to the village, she initiated her participation in ceremonies. She narrates that it was not until her mother passed away that her father began conducting ceremonies to keep his family safe:

Mamachali: We make the ceremony and like I told you the other day, well I did not know about the ceremony when I was a little girl, later when I was older, when my father got stung by an scorpion we begin ceremony and then I payed attention to [learn] and I was already old and when my mom was over [dead] we started the ceremonies, my father and I, and he said “If you took a look at how your mother made *tejüino* [fermented drink make out of corn] well now you are

going to make *tejüino* because we are cropping soon so I payed attention about how they made it [*tejüino*] since he taught me [father] we made the *tejüino* and to crop corn since we start in June or May, the last of may, we all go to the cornfield²² and again when we do the cleansing ceremony like I said yesterday when we made *tejüino* we go to the cornfield and leave it there right after like in October well another ceremony of *El Tambor* [Naming ceremony] yes, because later we go to Wirikuta to leave an offering and little face, arrow and God's Eye, yarn painting.²³

At each ceremony, the space is transformed by the additional elements of ritual. The house acquires the smell of corn as the women prepare the fermented corn drink *tejüino* (fermented corn drink), tamales, and tortillas for sharing in the ceremony. The men arduously work to set up the fire for the long night ahead. Once the fire is lit, the scent of burnt wood is inevitably impregnated into the hair and clothes. Both family and outside visitors find a place and a task during the ceremony so that all share the experience. In this sense, ritual brings balance to the arduous labor that the community undertakes in putting together a performance of such great magnitude. After the ritual is over, the house becomes an ordinary space again as visitors leave, children go back to school, and everyone returns to his or her original duties. The

²² The word *coamil* cornfield also use as a verb “coamiliar” and refers to the action of working in the cornfield

²³ 5 All translations are made by the author. (Summer 2014) Mamachali: Hacemos la ceremonia y como te platique el otro día pues yo no sabia de la ceremonia cuando yo estaba chiquilla, ya después cuando estaba grande ya cuando le pico un alacrán a mi papa ya empezaron a hacer la ceremonia y entonces yo ya me fije bien y ya estaba grande y no pues cuando se acabo mi mama ya empezó hace ceremonias yo mi papa y si te fijas ahorita como lo hacia el tejüino tu mama pues ahora vas a hacer tejüino porque ya vamos a sembrar así yo me fije bien como lo hacían pues el me enseño ya pusimos el tejüino a sembrar maíz pues ya empezamos en junio en mayo, el ultimo de mayo vamos para la siembre otra vez cuando la limpia otra ceremonia como te dije ayer cuando hacíamos tejüino vamos a dejarlo en el coamil enseguida como octubre pues otra ceremonia del tambor, si porque y luego vamos a Wirikuta vamos a dejar una ofrenda y carita, flecha y ojos de dios, cuadro

house transforms into a typical working arena as the family begins to assemble the next beading project. In Mamachali's case, she stays alone in La Yürata while all her children and grandchildren go back home.

Ever since Mamachali married Papa Costo, she has accompanied him on his journey to becoming a *mara'kame*. She helped her husband in the preparation of ceremonies, although she faced many restrictions since she did not attend the pilgrimages to Wirikuta she supported her husband in every journey to the desert. When she began her pilgrimages to the desert, she made certain to participate fully in the preparation for the pilgrimage as well as in the preparation of ceremonies. According to Mamachali, she invites every family member to the ceremonies, and in order to encourage greater participation, Mamachali teaches her grandchildren the importance of rituals. However, few girls choose to participate in the pilgrimage to Wirikuta, so the girls that cannot attend stay home and learn from their mother or grandmother about the significance of the journey. To complement the teachings of women, members of the immediate family who attend the pilgrimage as representatives (usually men and boys) share their experiences and return with presents from Wirikuta, such as *Hikuri* (Peyote cactus) for those who remain in the community.

Kristin Erickson's ethnographic work among the Yoeme/Yaqui suggests that women create identity in the domestic sphere by turning their homes into venues where public and private ceremonies can be performed. Women become the bridge of cultural knowledge in their families. In a sense, these Wixárika women create spaces in their domestic sphere to implement forms of cultural preservation. When Wixárika families are away from their Native land, they recreate it in new spaces through everyday practices and ceremonies. As primary caregivers of

the family, the mothers ensure that children maintain Wixárika identity, as well as acquire the tools necessary to survive in a mestizo society. Also, through physical labor women transmit the proficiency of Wixárika culture. When girls are ready to demonstrate their own proficiency, they begin beading, weaving, or cooking without the help of their mother or sister.

During my most recent trip to Tepic, Nayarit, México to conduct research in the summer of 2014, I learned that many Wixárika families living in urban space (outside of Native villages and in mestizo cities) recreate homeland for the purpose of maintaining their Indigenous identity. Further, women reinforce identity through practices such as artwork, meal preparation, storytelling, and metaphors in Wixárika language. For instance, the production of art using specific motifs provides the family with objects for personal and commercial use. In ancestral communities, most of the artwork is created for the purpose of rituals, while outside the villages many Wixárika commercialize their artwork. In both cases, the art is a vehicle through which to demonstrate the semiotic relationship between Wixárika and the world around them.

In the preparation of meals, Wixárika families recreate homeland by placing corn as the primary focus in their daily routines. This includes rituals with corn, such as growing and harvesting the crop, and preparing it for everyday meals and future celebrations. This focus on corn continues outside the city when the family uses funds from previous work in La Sierra to purchase land beyond the urban borders. The *terreno* (piece of land) is specifically acquired to grow corn for personal use in ceremonies. Even the physical space of the apartment building is shaped to accommodate the necessary equipment for harvesting. In addition, the entire family owns another a *terreno* where they have reproduced a Wixárika village that mirrors their village in La Sierra. The setting of the new Wixárika village, La Yürata, resembles their housing in the

traditional land. Each member is responsible for maintaining the house as well as the *cali'wei* for ceremonial offerings. In addition, the Fire pit transplanted from the housing in La Sierra allows the community to maintain its connections to the aboriginal land.

In terms of language, storytelling plays a vital role in transmitting cultural identity. Elders tell stories about trips to Wirikuta as part of Wixárika life, and children learn values when retelling stories they learned from elders. Through stories, the family learns about the history of their ancestors, reinforcing Wixárika knowledge. For instance, corn stories remind the family that corn holds an importance role in the community, as well as how *Tacutzi* (Mother Earth) granted corn to the family. Finally, language metaphors act as reminders of the ontological relationship between the individual and the land. Because each name relates both to the land and also to entities in Wixárika's cosmology, the names provide a sense of identity when uttering them evokes the presence of the metaphysical.

In my research with urban Wixárika women, I demonstrate that women are the bridge to their families' knowledge. Through the use of the physical labor of their body as an archive of knowledge, metaphors in language connect children's names to ancestral land, to dreams as sources of epistemology, and to oral traditions that retell Wixárika history. Diane Tylor (2003) in the field of performances discusses the importance of the body in performances and the source of knowledge in oral communities. Her work describes how the repertoire, in contrast to the archive, embodies memory. The body in terms of the Wixárika also comprises an archive of knowledge accessible in practices such as in ceremonies, art production and cooking.

In recreating motherland, women effectively create a bridge that leads to the ancestral land. In the following five subsections, I analyze data that guides my research of how women in

the Rivera family recreate their motherland in urban cities. I will first discuss how corporeal theories conceptualized the body in contrast to how the women of the Rivera family see the use of their body. I will then discuss how the family uses bodily modes of cultural transmission in making artwork, preparing meals, telling stories, and naming children in the family. Finally, I will explore the importance of dreams as a source of knowledge.



Picture 2: La Yürata community



Picture 3: Mamachali separating the corn

The Wái (Flesh) in Wixárika's View

The approach to the body in corporeal theories of Pierre Bourdieu (1990), Michel Mauss (1973), Susan L. Foster (2003), and Michel De Certeau (1984) tells how the body has been conceptualized in terms of movements in specific cultures. However, for Indigenous communities, the source of bodily movements also encapsulates other aspects that are not necessarily a reproduction of daily movements or interaction in the social sphere. For instance, Bourdieu discusses how the body is constantly being informed by the habitus. The human body moves based on knowledge built in the memory of past experiences of the individual. In the context of the Wixárika, the body also gains data from connections to the metaphysical. Encounters with the realm of other entities such as Deer, Maize, and *Hikuri*, allow the individual to acquire information about how to move in traditional Wixárika style. Foster claims that bodies in resistance develop tactical movements to counteract the system of power. She also places an emphasis on looking at the choreographic movement of the body in protest as and instrument with rehearsed choreographic movements. Although I claim Wixárika women rationally make decisions to keep children engaged in certain activities, choreographic movements come from their connections to metaphysical realms. In Forster's terms, the movements during art production and the proficiency of art-making accentuate the knowledge of the body to resist cultural assimilation.

In "Techniques of the Body," Mauss alerts the reader to the disposition of bodies to move in correspondence to one's culture. We learned from our parents, more precisely from primary care givers, such techniques as moving, squatting, and even swimming. Bodies reproduce such techniques without even using the mind to reproduce the movements. In the case of the Wixárika

women, they teach other females how to weave or how to create artwork. The physical labor of women can be reproduced under Mauss's ideas about the body. However, cultural proficiency of creating patterns in art comes from the connections to the metaphysical through visions, dreams, and by having a close relationship and understanding of Wixárika cosmology. When women attend the pilgrimages to Wirikuta, the origin of the universe, their connections to the metaphysical realms via *küpüle* provide connections to gain cultural proficiency and mastery of art. Felipa describes *küpüle* as follows:

Felipa: The shamans say that we also have a *küpüle*, my dad that sees, says that here [pointing to the head] that we have five little strings that go to the sky, well when you age or get sick they break, when sick, and when one is old

Cyndy: When you grow up

Felipa: Yes, and then later it breaks again when you are sicker and just when all of them break then you die and to that you call *küpüle*

Cyndy: And that is to all Wixárika or every human being?

Felipa: Well to every human being I imagine because we are all equal people.²⁴

Küpüle as describes by Felipa can be understood as a passage that connects individuals to the center of the universe in Wirikuta. Felipa explains that as young girls initiate in ceremonial practices, the metaphysical connections increase with art production. For example, Schafer

²⁴ Interview Summer 2014 37:00

Felipa: (37:36) Dicen los chamanes que también tenemos un *küpüle*, dice mi papa que el ve que aquí tenemos 5 hilos [apuntando a la cabeza] que se va hacia el cielo, bueno que cuando tu ya eres viejito o estas enfermo cuando se te rompe uno estas enfermo, pero ya uno de viejo

Cyndy: Si cuando vas creciendo

Felipa: Si, y ya pues se te vuelve a romper cuando estas mas enfermo y así cuando se te rompen todos pues ya estas muerto y a eso se le dice *küpüle*

Cyndy: Y eso es a todas las personas Wixárikas o todos los seres humanos?

Felipa: Bueno a todos los seres humanos me imagino porque somos personas igual

demonstrates that through weaving practices, women become master weavers when offering their weaving cloths in a ceremony. By participating in ceremonies, they gain connections to the metaphysical. The knowledge that they gain from ceremonies constantly increases through participation and the active labor of putting together yearly events of great magnitude. The creation of art reflects knowledge of how to elaborate artwork, and the body creates all the physical, choreographic movements as guided by the knowledge of connections to metaphysical realms.

Moreover, Michel de Certeau envisions the human body in daily practices such as walking “as a space of enunciation” (1984: 98). The human body moves in urban settings as a signifier of physical statements that resist the environment. De Certeau contrasts “maps” and “itinerary” to demonstrate how strategies function as maps and tactics as itineraries. According to de Certeau, maps are an arrangement of space that control the bodily movements of ordinary people. In contrast, itineraries are bodily responses to knowledge acquired by experience and narration while being exposed to and manipulating space (de Certeau 1984: 119). De Certeau argues that the body moves in a choreography of resistance through the city not to cope with the structure of society but as a response to power dynamics. Every decision taken by the individual to resist the system of power, for example reading one material over another, emerges as a tactic. Thus, de Certeau uses “poaching” as a metaphor to describe the act of taking illegally what is needed for survival. The Wixárika women move in urban settings using the tactics of survival. Their art production translates as “space of enunciation.” In the creation of art, women enunciate tactics of resistance with their physical labor. Every time girls learn Wixárika’s techniques to produce art and create new pieces they resist assimilation to main stream society.

In Indigenous societies, the body represents a source of knowledge that connects the metaphysical to the physical. In Wixárika thought, people utilize all of their capacity in their bodies to sense and experience the world around them. The body then becomes the medium that transmits traditional knowledge or community-based knowledge that teaches children about their Indigenous identity. In the context of Wixárika concepts, the body serves the purpose of connecting the interior to the exterior and thus an instrument to transmit knowledge when connected to the metaphysical realms. The heart, memory, and its connections to entities such as Deer, Maize, and *Hikuri*, correspond to metaphysical aspects of the body. The physical body in Huichol thought is nothing more than a conduit to pass information.

According to Joseph E. Grimes, a linguist and scholar in Indigenous languages, his 1959 word list of the Huichol language of Nayarit, México, “wái” (flesh, fat) describes the body, or the physical aspect, the flesh. In his field notes he indicates that the term “wái” lacks connection to the mental or metaphysical since the term simply describes the flesh. In contrast, “iyáari” (heart) indicates the use of the "soul," in the verb form translating as "to ponder." Grimes was meticulous in specifying that the term “iyáari” includes the soul and the heart. Thus Wixárika think they use the “soul” and the heart. Another scholar to point out to the definition of the term was Schaefer. She translates the term “iyáari” as heart-memory. With the definitions of both scholars and Felipa’s account I speculate that the body in Wixárika thought holds connections to the metaphysical by what Felipa describes as *küpüle*.²⁵ *Küpüle* is the passage of energy that connects the “flesh” to the metaphysical realm. When a person becomes a regular

²⁵ In Grimes’ word list he does not include a word to describe this connection, it was until I asked my collaborators that they mentioned the word and until recent times that I realized that the *küpüle* is the metaphysical connection to Wirikuta. In my interview I translated *küpüle* as *espíritu* or *alma* in Spanish but in Mamachalis interview she defines *küpüle* as *agua bendita* (sacred water).

participant in ceremonies and desires to find a purpose in life, the connections to the metaphysical realm develop.

After analyzing the words “wái” (flesh, fat), “iyáari” (heart, soul), and “küpüle,” I conclude that the body in the Wixárika context encompasses the physical body “wái,” the cognitive-emotional “iyáari,” and the metaphysical connections to Wirikuta via “küpüle.” Women transmit knowledge through their bodies in specific choreographic movements of daily routines (e.g., art production, cooking, ceremonies, etc.). In addition women transmit knowledge using body movements and their connections to metaphysical epistemology. By concluding that the Wixárika body encompasses the physical, cognitive-emotional, and the metaphysical, it takes into account the body as sensorial. In contrast, non-Indigenous theories of the body assert that the body serves merely as a tool.

Wixárika women transmit knowledge when they find connections in which the physical and the metaphysical communicate. The body then fulfills the purpose of transmit the cultural knowledge from the metaphysical realm to the physical. For most of the ceremonies, Deer, Maize, and *Hikuri* constitute fundamental elements in Wixárika cosmology because such entities teach the community about the roles and responsibilities of each member in the family. The three provide epistemology that contributes to Wixárika identity. In contrast to the corporeality theories, the approach of the body in Wixárika thought involves both the physical and the metaphysical. In theories of corporeality, bodily practices are learned by training the physical body or by socialization in culture-specific environments but not by including other aspects beyond the physical. The concept of the “wái” (flesh) contributes to discourse about the body in corporeality theories by acknowledging that the body senses and transmits back the knowledge

from the heart and the memory to the outside world in Wixárika thought. In the previous subsection, I discussed the body for the purpose of understanding how Wixárika women transmit cultural knowledge and identity in domestic spheres for the production of identity. In the following subsection, I discuss how girls gain cultural knowledge through physical labor of art production and preparation of meals. The production of art in the family nourishes young girls with the knowledge to continue practicing Wixárika identity outside traditional settings.

Artwork and Identity production

Journal Entry, Wednesday, July 30-August 2 2014 Sayulita Cultural Event: *I gave the family a ride to Sayulita, a beach town in the Pacific coast, about two hours from Tepic Nayarit. The family got invited to participate in a cultural event to showcase art as well as to sell artwork. We left the house and picked up grandma and grandpa at the Plaza Mololoa in their usual stand in which grandpa provides healing services to the local community. The family loaded all of their stuff, mainly bags and luggage with artwork like jewelry, yarn paintings and other pieces of art. As soon as we set out our stand people came and bought jewelry. The stand next to us had similar art but their prices were more expensive. Sayulita is a tourist town; in consequence many Wixárika know that foreigners will buy their art at any price because they sell according to the location. Grandpa and the family wanted to sell and make extra money for the next ceremony so their prices were very affordable. The first night was very difficult; it was 36 degrees and we had no accommodations. We slept in the plaza inside our stand using the tarp and the tables as shelters. When we woke up we all helped in setting the tables to*

begin selling art. I remember that one day three ladies came by and started looking at the stuff and one said that Wixárika jewelry was trendy because people on the Mexican, TV are wearing all types of necklaces with Peyotes in the middles. I thought to myself “trendy? Well, as long as the family sells all the Peyote necklaces.” At two o’clock, grandma called us to have lunch, she had bought chicken, tortillas, water, beer, and soda. While we were sitting in the floor and eating, grandpa was performing some limpieas (cleansing). He is a mara’akame and uses his muwiari (feathers) to remove the illness of the body. Then he sucks on the body of the patient and spits the diseases out in the floor. Later he uses water from Wirikuta to heal the body of the patient. After lunch the girls will take a break from beading. They all want to go around and see the ocean. Although we have no permission to swim we plan to just see the ocean while we all eat raspados (ice cones). After the break we all continue helping grandma by making more bracelets, earrings or anything for the request of the tourist of the area. Sometimes people ask for specific artworks and the girls make the pieces on the spot. I watched them while they all work, Ixchel and I sit close looking at them in their working space.

The production of identity by Indigenous women within the domestic/private sphere of their societies manifests the tactics for identity survival in urban communities. The practice of weaving is not as popular outside traditional villages. In urban areas, the commercialization of artwork as a form of income is the primary mode of production among girls. In the Rivera family, eight-year-old girls work after school with beads to produce jewelry for sale at local

markets. When Wixárika girls teach other girls how to make crafts, they demonstrate the techniques multiple times. After the girls complete the task in front of the apprentice, they give the full task to the apprentice to experiment with. I experienced Wixárika's mode of learning when I sewed traditional Wixárika attire. My *comadre* took the material and sat next to me as she began making my shirt. I sat next to her waiting for the moment when I would be next to begin sewing. The girls practiced the same method when teaching me how to bead a bracelet. They use the body, specifically their hands, to create a bracelet, without any vocal instructions.

When the family sits around, usually on the floor, everyone watches the other work. The family uses few words to vocalize instructions. They focus on the sound of the hands moving up and down the string of beads. The sound of the beads in the *jicara* (bowl) resonates as they pick up the little beads one by one, and when the needle goes through the bead holes and it scratches the bowl. The women's body makes all the movement guided by the traditional knowledge of the family motifs and patterns that come from some place in the mind and heart.

Individual families possess their signature figures of plants, flowers, and animals that are designs specific to the respective families. When a person beads patterns, it comes from the imagination of the individual making the piece of art. The girls create jewelry by relying on the patterns of their mother. For instance, Elva makes Peyote blossoms in wide bracelets because she learned that pattern from her own mother. Now her daughters make the same patterns (See picture 4). Although the women do all the physical labor based on previous socialization with the other women, the patterns initially come from their imagination. As they become more advanced in art-making, women produce unique patterns. Later, the signature patterns stay in the family as they acquire a repertoire of images. According to Stacy Schaefer, women become master

weavers when they attain connections to the metaphysical by attending pilgrimages and ceremonies (2002: 91). Mamachali explains that women make *tejidos* (weaving cloths) as offerings and even ask for art-making skill during pilgrimages to Wirikuta. Mamachali also describes the process of obtaining visions during and after the ceremony. The images relate to cosmological visions during consumption of *Hikuri*, past dreams, visions of the family, and lived experiences within the world. In urban centers, young girls gain the repertoire of images from their mothers. When women produce art and teach young girls in urban settings, their art and their labor materializes as a tactic to transmit cultural knowledge.

The production of artwork in the Rivera family also demonstrates the semiotic relationship between the members of the community to entities such as Deer, Maize, *Hikuri*, Fire, and Water, to mention a few. In visions and dreams, women who attend pilgrimages gain the knowledge to produce images for art patterns. The visions contain messages from entities that communicate through images. For instance, the pattern of the Peyote blossom is a common pattern in the family. When one dreams or has a vision about Peyote flowers during the pilgrimage to Wirikuta, the dream provides the information to find Peyote in the Peyote Hunt the next day.²⁶ Mamachali explains in one of the interviews how she dreamt about seeing Peyote followers close to a snake. The following day, she saw the snake and Don Costo the *mara'akame* and Mamachali's husband remove the snake to find Peyote. Thus, the messages sent during the visions or dreams can become images of inspiration for art production. However, when young girls are absent from pilgrimages they learn the patterns from the members that participated. The girls learn the art of beading mainly from the mother, and they learn how entities such as the

²⁶ See Appendix B for complete interview

Deer, Maize, and Peyote interact with their family in multiple realms. Even though most girls have not yet participated in the Peyote Hunt, they are familiar with the patterns. In addition, the girls are able to narrate how the entities interact with people in ceremony and daily life.

To know the significance of patterns and be able to narrate the stories onto the patterns demonstrates their proficiency in Wixárika culture. Their physical labor in art production is a vehicle to transmit this proficiency. When the girls are ready to show that they are proficient, they begin artwork without the help of the mother or sister. They learn the art of beading based on their socialization with their family. They all began with simple patterns or by making one single string of multiple colors of beads. Until they are ready to make a full pattern, they practice by making simple patterns.

The knowledge of cosmology within the Wixárika community contributes to imagery for complex patterns in artwork. Making these patterns involves the mastering of images and their meanings. Members of the family come to understand that the patterns from their visions and dreams are messages from entities that remind them about their origin stories or connections to land, such as Wirikuta. Some pieces of art retell the story of the first Peyote Hunt, Deer Dance, geographical location of ancestral land, or performance of ceremonies in general. In Wirikuta, the family interacts with *Hikuri* and learns the story of the first Peyote Hunt. Girls that have not yet taken part in the pilgrimage learn the stories by beading or weaving it into artwork. This demonstrates the semiotic relationship between the person and *Hikuri*. In addition, the relationship between the two tightens the connections to Native land by allowing the person to communicate with entities in places such as Wirikuta, the origin of the world in Wixárika cosmology. The girls learn about Wixárika identity by making art using the family's motif and

designs. The reproduction of art allows them to reinforce their Wixárika identity through the labor of art-making. In the following subsection, I transition to the preparation of corn-based meals and how cooking as a performance made only by women transmits cultural knowledge through the use of the body.



Picture 4: Isabel making Peyote blossoms, one of the signature figures of the family

Meal preparation

Journal Entry August 22, 2014, Visit to the Coamil: *It was raining all night and we wanted to go to the coamil (cornfield) to see the waxá or milpa (corn) because grandma is leaving to México City on Sunday and she wants to see how the milpa is growing. On our way we passed by the autopista (toll road) and suddenly grandma said: "I want to go with you to your house to vacation with you." She said it in a nostalgic voice and I smiled to her daughter, my future comadre. I replied immediately and agreed with her. It was an honor to know that the matriarch wanted to travel with me. I also wanted to take her so I said: "next year we can think about going to LA; first we need the visas and all the documents so you can travel." I am not sure she meant to travel to the US or just to travel for vacations anywhere because she continue talking about traveling so she said she needed vacations because she was tired of moving around and working so much. Well, that's what I understood. When we got to the coamil we got off of the car and she walked inside to showing me the waxá, milpa. She went directly to the teyari (matrix), the center of the first milpa, to mix the chocolate. Later she set an altar in the teyari. She asked me for a lighter to light candle but I didn't have one. She continue fixing the altar, and ended by spraying water in the milpa. We spoke so much about this space that it was surreal to be here. They are always so worried about the milpa and speak so much about the milpa growing that coming to see the place brings joy and a sense of peace because the place looks in good conditions. We were walking around and my new comadre took*

baby Ixchel in her arms and we continue walking around. Then I was following grandma with my questions and so I asked her if I could take pictures. She continues talking to the milpa. And after that we walked around to see the land. The place was beautiful surrounded by mountains and blue sky and clouds. I asked grandma about the way they cultivate the ancestral corn and she told me that grandpa makes a small ceremony for the milpa before they begin growing corn. Grandpa plants the matrix, the center and around he plants daughters that honor the different points in Wixárika's cosmology. Each corner with a color of maize to complete the corn field that replicates the first pattern. Family's members, who help during the cultivation, make sure they follow the pattern.

The domestic sphere of the Wixárika's home provides the tools in urban centers to recreate motherland and identity formation. For Wixárika families in cities, practices such as keeping a bag of maize, wood, and an ornilla (Fire pit) outside their apartment complex, and owning a piece of land in the countryside to cultivate corn are common practices. Using the ancestral seed, the Rivera family grows corn every year for consumption in ceremonies and daily meals during the following year. My main collaborators live on the first floor of a two-bedroom apartment in a *vencidad* (shantytown). Since they moved, they built a Fire pit and a working station. As Erickson demonstrates through her work, Yoeme women create home place by the sacralization of home spaces (2009: 104). By turning the private space into ceremonial space in an altar building, women assure that their homes create an ethnic identity on a daily basis. Women in the household transform the ambiance for ceremonies and fiestas. The elements of the new environment, such as the altar building, host members of the family in participation of

Yoeme cultural traditions. In the transformation of urban kitchens, Wixárika create the space to transmit cultural identity both on a daily basis and during ceremonies. The preparation of meals reinforces their Wixárika identity.

In my fieldwork, I usually had meals with members of the family, and at least once a day Elva, my *comadre*, prepared tortillas for consumption by the family. When a young girl reaches the age of 12, she becomes part of the cooking space and responsible for meal preparations. In this family, only Elva and Berta prepare the tortillas because, according to them, they are the only ones who know how to make tortillas. In Felipa's family, only Judith makes tortillas because as the oldest of the family she is responsible for more tasks than her little sisters. The importance of the role of women in meal preparation is paramount in transmitting ethnic identity.

The preparation of meals in the Wixárika context involves certain routines and rituals of how to process the seeds (See Picture 5). During meal preparation my collaborators use corn that has been passed from generation to generation. In Felipa's family, every morning the girls wake up early to make *nixtmal* by boiling the corn seeds in hot water and grinding them using their neighbors' *molino* (grinder). Once the corn is ground, the mother begins preparation of the corn for the family's first meal. The Fire is set up so that the corn tortillas are prepared before everyone goes off to school or work. When the family runs out of corn, they usually buy prepared tortillas or *mazeca* (corn flour) for homemade tortillas. Corn tortilla is one of the main food staples for the family. On special occasions such as ceremonies, the mother makes a *tejüino* drink out of fermented corn, as well as small tamales for consumption.

For Wixárika women in the Rivera family, the girls learn from their mothers at a very young age how to prepare tortillas. Although the girl already has an idea about the process, the

learning starts by assisting the mother until she is ready to take on the task by herself. The girls learn every aspect of the cooking space, such as setting the Fire, making the *nixtamal*, preparing the dough, and patting it to set on the grill. When Wixárika women prepare tortillas and teach young girls the process, they replicate traditional living spaces outside Native land. The rearrangement of their living spaces to accommodate the space for a Fire pit outside the apartment recreates homeland simply because the arrangement aims to replicate the living conditions of traditional Wixárika villages. When the family moves from one place to another, it digs into the Fire pit and packs the remaining ashes to replant the Fire in a new location. The Fire pit in the *vecindad's* patio not only provides the cooking space for the family, but having a Fire that has been transplanted from their original land sets up the environment to recreate traditional Wixárika cooking style. According to my collaborators, the transplanted Fire contains the ashes of the Fire in traditional villages in which ceremonies have been taking place over and over. When the family left La Yerbabuena, Elva's parents gave her a portion of the ashes from their Fire pit. Elva replanted the ashes in her *ornilla* and she now uses the Fire pit to prepare traditional meals.

When families migrate to urban areas, some practices such as traditional ways of cooking change and adapt to the new environments. Wixárika living outside traditional Wixárika land or their *Te'akata*, the center of the Wixárika's cosmology, find ways to continue eating their primary sources of food. Despite the migration and relocation of people in urban centers, my main collaborators re-create homeland out of their daily practices by cultivating, consuming, and preparing corn in traditional ways. When the family relocated to Tepic, some members moved to independent housings. In many conversations with my collaborators, they explained that each

member received ancestral seeds from their parents because they are responsible for growing the seeds to continue harvesting corn every year. The cultivation of corn keeps the family in close relation to ancestral practices. And because they hold connections to corn since creation stories the maize forms part of their identity.²⁷ Preparing meals and consuming their ancestral seeds in the community corresponds to transubstantiation acts. This transubstantiation of ancestral corn seeds maintain the ties to ancestral land because corn was a gifted to the Wixárika for their consumption in the begin of Wixárika times.

When women cook they use their body as a mode to transmit Wixárika identity by using traditional ways of cooking that links ancestral practices of food preparation and the rituals of corn cultivation. The act of eating ancestral seeds in ceremonies or on a daily basis ties their identity to their ancestors because they also ate the same seeds in the past. The role of women in the preparation of food is crucial to ensuring that the family continues traditional Wixárika ways even when they live outside motherland. In the Yoeme/Yaqui community, Erickson demonstrates that women's labor in food preparation during public and private ceremonies provides the space to create home place. Places such as the kitchen in the Rivera family serve as spaces for women to transmit and reinforce Wixárika identity. Women transform their urban spaces into a traditional Wixárika kitchen to prepare meals on a daily basis or during ceremonies.

The role of corn in the community and the production of meals based on corn are central to Wixárika identity. The Rivera family assures the relationship with corn by harvesting it every year. For the Wixárika, corn reinforces their identity as an Indigenous group. Preparing traditional meals using traditional setting, ancestral corn seeds, and cultivating corn every year

²⁷ In ethnographic work among the Wixárika Arturo Gutierrez describes in detail their cosmology and concepts of the universe.

connects the family to ancestral practices and ways of living from their motherland. Such practices by the family recreates homeland in a domestic sphere. In the following section I discuss the narratives about corn and its role within the family as a way to reinforce identity and home place.



Picture 5: Mamachali in Felipa's house preparing the nixtamal for the tortillas

Storytelling

Members of the Rivera family use narrative as a device to reinforce ethnic identity. For the family, remembering past events reiterates the role and responsibilities of the members of the community. For example, the use of origin stories promotes identity formation by the constant reminder of the history of people. According to Erickson, Indigenous communities, such as the Yoeme/Yaqui, use storytelling as source of identity creation and a resource to perpetuate identity by passing on history through the memory of people (2009: 19). The storytelling within the Rivera family uncovers a new space for women to recreate homeland. People tell stories of the movement of people on pilgrimages, origin stories, and creation stories in the Wixárika community to reinforce identity and recreate homeland. Even young girls who have never been to ancestral land have vivid accounts of what it means to walk in the pilgrimages. Grandmothers and other family members take the time to retell their experiences. For instance, according to literature, the pilgrimage to Wirikuta is a journey that all Wixárika must undergo in order to claim their identity.²⁸ However, as far as my collaborators, none of the women nor girls have been to Wirikuta due to lack of resources and personal thoughts about the pilgrimage. Family members make sure to send a representative to each pilgrimage so that the experience will be transmitted to the rest of the family. On many occasions, girls stay home to help prepare the ceremony to greet the pilgrims. By not attending the yearly pilgrimage, they are excluded from being Wixárika, so the stories from their mothers and grandmothers transmit the experience of the pilgrimage. The girls are provided with the knowledge to discover their identity. Although the pilgrimage is important to the life of the family, knowing the stories about corn, for example, and

²⁸ Schaefer's work among Wixárika women.

being able to transmit the stories become a more crucial aspect in defining Wixárika identity. In fact, knowing the origin stories carries more meaning than walking to the desert because the retelling of stories demonstrates the cultural proficiency.

Erickson claims that memory plays an important role in reinforcing identity and also in the recreation of homeland. In the Rivera family, the purpose of storytelling is to teach members of the family about their history. In one of my interviews, I recorded Felipa talking about corn and how the Wixárika became familiar with it. She later narrates the story about its origins. She begins the story by asking me if I know the history and later she narrates corn's history and how it was given to the first men on earth.²⁹ In this section, I provide Felipa's account about corn in order to illustrate how the use of storytelling among women serves as a way to reinforce gender roles as well as to learn about the origin stories and the relationship between corn and Wixáritari (pl.). Felipa narrates:

Felipa: Well, long time ago the history that my mom tells is that there was a flood right? Ah well it was the time that *Tacutzi [mother Earth]* the one who made the rivers that later became the Earth, the Ocean I imagine, with her cane or I don't know with what I think she made a road, like a small ditch, well the sea was created and rivers and that is why there was Earth to grow corn and that was the first thing she did grow corn.³⁰

Felipa's narrative demonstrates her knowledge about how corn came into the life of the Wixárika. When Felipa states at the end of the narrative, "until now according to the history only the ones that tell [the history] know of it," she reiterates how only members of the community

²⁹ Felipa's Interview Summer 2014 21:00

³⁰ Refer to Appendix A for full narrative

possess the knowledge to retell the history of the origins of corn. Effectively communicating narratives within the family demonstrates the ability to retell the past and the familiarity with the history of the community. Furthermore, the narrative reflects how gender roles are divided in the community. Women are responsible for taking care of the handling, distribution, and preparation of the seed while men are responsible for planting and taking care of the cornfield:

Felipa: The third day when he was already gone, his mother walked there inside the shrine and scolded the girl: “you are there only, don’t you know that your husband is in the cornfield?” and “You get up and make tortillas for his lunch!” and then what the girl did was to get up and boil her body as *nixtamal*³¹ but she got all burn from her body and then she began to grind herself more so blood came out from everywhere in her body and then she said: “no I can no longer grind myself” and she left, so she disappeared and she left with her mother and then her mother got angry because the mother of the corn told the man to say anything right? because she was the corn.³²

The significance of Felipa’s narrative about corn lies in the importance of knowing its role within the community. The narrative tells the family about how corn was a gift to the first Wixárika people. Through the narrative, the Rivera family learns about the status of corn for the Wixárika. Initially, the corn came to the first Wixárika men as a gift. Now the Wixárika know how to cultivate corn, so they cultivate the crop every year. Histories of origins trace the memory of people as a way to reinforce identity (Erickson, 2009: 32). Narratives of corn in the Wixárika

³¹ Prepared corn for tortilla dough.

³² Appendix A

remind the community about the importance of the crop. When the Wixárika women narrate stories of the corn, they remember early states of the community and reinforce their connection to corn. Though corn was a gift to the community, in Felipa's narrative the community did not see the value of it. In consequence, Mother Corn took her daughter and left the Wixárika without corn until she felt compassion and then gave them the seed to harvest it by themselves. The narrative teaches the community about the importance of taking care of the seed and cultivating the corn as a main substance for the community. Wixárika claim their identity as a group and their connections to corn by narrating the history as a moral for the present community. The narratives become a resource for knowing the history of the Wixárika.

In addition, the narrative of corn serves the purpose of describing the role of women and men in the context of labor division. Since the first Wixárika men were not good to the corn's daughter, they now must work in fields and grow corn while women take care of the seed and prepare the meals using the crop. In the absence of men, women are responsible for the cornfield. For example, when men in the family travel outside the city due to migration and seasonal jobs, they leave the cornfield under the women's responsibility. In the Rivera family, Mamachali is responsible to take care of the *milpa* when papa Costo travels for cultural events or ceremonies sponsored by outsiders of the community. She must visit the milpa, talk to the milpa, and take offerings so that the crops continue to grow (See Picture 6). Other women in the family are responsible for food preparation using the seeds. Narratives of corn demonstrate its importance in the family and relate a history of the important relationship between corn and Wixárika. Storytelling serves as a device to reinforce Wixárika identity through retelling the story and reminding the family of both its history and its present role in their lives. Storytelling serves as a

device to pass on knowledge to younger generations. In addition, dreams and the use of land metaphors in dreams also serve as a vehicle to enrich Wixárika identity. In the next subsection I discuss the importance of dreams as a source of knowledge.



Picture 6: Visit to the Coamil (Cornfield)

Dreams and Power of language

When I was first introduced to the community, everyone seemed to use mestizo names and they all introduced themselves with their names, which were usually Spanish. Later I learned that each family member actually has multiple names. One collaborator explained that each grandparent chooses one name. For example, one family only uses the names given by their maternal grandmother because the meaning represents their ties to the Native land. In a conversation with Mamachali, she provided information about the naming of the children in her family. She describes how dreams reveal information about the names of children. The images in dreams relate to the landscape. By the use of metaphors in Wixárika language, the images of the landscape provide the meaning for names. Once the name generates in the dream, the family presents it to the newborn in the first ceremony of initiation, known as *El Tambor*. In the following excerpt of the conversation with Mamachali I present her ideas about name dreaming:

Mamachali: you are going to dream a cornfield but very beautiful like we saw growing very pretty that is why it means “Yu’gula” and when it is flourishing it means “Magayama” because the corn spike is growing, there you are going to dream that [growing spike] and you are going to dream and then if it is a boy there will come like a raining cloud with clouds and then you are going to have a beautiful dream about a grass field, look beautiful grass, with dew that means “Huduchiya,” all that you are going to dream, that you will see in your dreams, and when you present [the baby] you already brought the name how [the baby] will be named.³³

³³ See Appendix B for full narrative

The names in the Rivera family refer to metaphors of corn, the land, or the natural world. Specifically, their children's names have to do with the color of corn, the sound of the *milpa* (corn stalks), and the growth of the *milpa*. In the family, only Mamachali's dreams provide the names for newborns. Many of them evoke images of the corn growing or the corn stalks while growing, such as "Yula," *reverdecienco* (to verdure), "Tula," *cuando la milpa crece* (when the corn grows), and "Riubani," *sonido de la espiga cuando el viento sopla* (the sound of the corn spike when the wind blows). Mamachali explains, "yesterday you did not hear it? When the wind comes chu-gua-gua the corn stalks," referring to our visit to the *milpa* (cornfield).³⁴ While there, Mamachali was not only aware of the surroundings but also attuned to the sounds and interaction of the wind with the environment. For example, I did not realize the sound of the wind touching the spike of corn until she pointed it out and vocalized the sound, "chu-gua-gua" (See Picture 7). I did not initially focus on the sound of the wind touching the corn because my senses are disconnected from the environment. For children growing up in cornfields, the task of recognizing and sensing natural phenomena rely on their daily practices while using all their senses. When their names relate to the environment, they come even more aware of the surroundings and how elements interact with other elements. For instance, the name "Riubani," which is the sound of the corn spike when the wind blows, alludes to the interaction of the wind with the corn. Naming a child with a metaphor of a sound makes Wixárika children aural learners by discovering the environment through their senses. The sensorial experience of the Wixárika teaches the community about their environment.

³⁴ See Appendix B

In addition, names such as “Ha’ulema,” “Ha’ivi,” and “Palitemai” hold connections to the land and other aspects of the world. “Haulema” refers to the movement of water. In Wixárika, *Ha* (water) is the root word for many other words. Names with the roots “Ha-” also demonstrate a relationship with the keeper of Hara’mara (Pacific Ocean). Mamacahli explained that the names come when she dreams about bodies of moving water: “I dreamt the lagoon very beautifully the lagoon, it turn like, it moved well and her name is ‘Haulema,’ because the water moved, Haulema.”³⁵ Names that refer to the desert, or Wirikuta come from the root word “palilla” or desert. “Palitemai” translates to “spend a night in the desert.” All these names allude to their territory and demonstrate connections to the land because Wixárika are very aware of their geography. When deciding the names of their children, the family relies on dreams that on a subconscious level reveal geography, cosmological views, and the landscape. The metaphors of landscape appear in dreams and provide the epistemological information to map an individual to geographic locations in Wixárika territory.

When I interacted with Mamachali, every morning she awoke and discussed her dreams with us. She discussed how the names also provide certain characteristics of nature, such as weather conditions or movements of bodies of water. In the metaphysical sense, the names provide children with information from Wixárika epistemology. Because the community is in constant interaction with the environment, the names serve to link children to their culture and ancestral land. For instance, the name of Elva’s three-month baby, “Tula” (when the corn grows), is a metaphor for corn and the relationship to Wixárika. The growth of corn parallels the growth of the baby. This demonstrates that the cycle of corn is a common metaphor to the cycle of life.

³⁵ “y luego soñe la laguna bien bonito la laguna, se hacia bien, se movia bien y se llama Haulema, porque se mueve el agua, Haulema”

In addition, the name Ha'ulema points out the Wixárika relationship to water. In a larger context, the name locates the children to the geography of Wixárika land; Hara'mara in San Blas in the Pacific Ocean. When a child is named after the ocean or a body of water, both the child and all of the relatives are reminded of the keeper of the ocean, Hara'mara. Wixárika name their children using landscape metaphors to recreate motherland. They first do this by locating the child's name in dreams that tell of Wixárika geography. Second, the multiplicity of children's names evokes the presence of land during the naming ceremony. After the ceremony, the children are reminded of their name throughout their life as a link to ancestral land. Finally, names recreate homeland by the use of Wixárika names outside traditional settings. When names are uttered they resonate with the individual, further developing a relationship between them and the land. The utterances of names remind the individual about land metaphors and effectively evoke Wixárika geography and identity through re-imagination of places and spaces within urbanity.



Picture 7: “Riubani,” *sonido de la espiga cuando el viento sopla* (the sound of the corn spike when the wind blows)

Section VI

Mi México Querido

I have the dream to come back one day

Now is just an illusion to come back where?

I have no nation They, the *gobierno* has stolen our land away

Under premisses of progress and urbanization

500 years of resistance. Do you think we are giving up?

One day mi México querido I will be back!

For now I just mourn with the other mothers in the return of our 43 that were taken away!

Taken as a game so we can surrender. The 43!

But not anymore not anymore, we are out there looking for them ‘cuz they will come back again.

Ya me cansé de ser la fiel, sumisa, callada mujer!

Mis mil voces de quetzal will come out like spears to pierce your ears

You will hear my voice, my cry, *mi lamento y como el viento* will fly from North to South this

sentir of mi pueblo. Ya nos cansamos, ya me cansé!

May the spirit of our missing brothers and sisters in México find their way to the light!

May our families encounter peace!

May the 43 and the 22,000 others bring the fire back to our bodies to fight back and come back

To continue with the years of resistance.

May justice be made in México

Mi México Querido!

Conclusion and Recommendation

The role of mothers as the primary caregivers of the family is relevant to understanding how knowledge is transmitted in Indigenous communities. A role of the mother in the Wixárika community is to ensure children maintain Wixárika identity, and that they acquire the tools to survive in a mestizo society. The making of a motherland in urban spaces is not a task for men; it is a space for women to tell their stories while feeding their families or weaving the next *morral* (weaved bag). *Mis comadres* showed me with their physical labor, not words, how to sew and embroider my skirt.³⁶ They also taught me how to remember the shape of Wixárika territory in order to trace the *Shi'kuri* (God's eye), without even looking at any supplemental material. Also, the grandmother of the family is the one who separates the ancestral seed the day prior to preparation of tortillas. *Mis ahijadas* are the ones who tell me the stories they have heard about Wirikuta, though they have never attended a pilgrimage. I found that mothers or primary caregivers were strongly linked to identity formation as well as being responsible for teaching Wixárika epistemology from within their *iyari* (heart and memory). Teachings from within their heart and their memory empower children by providing the skills to practice community-based knowledge. In an effort to resist the erasure of culture, urban Wixárika women use their body's abilities in art production and in cooking, and they utilize metaphors in language. Teachings from within their heart and memory – of the land, geography, and their labor during yearly ceremonies – connect the lineage of ancestors and relatives.

My research with the Wixárika materialized from my quest for personal growth and understanding of my own place in the world. My experiences shape my understanding of women

³⁶ According to Schaefer embroidery is exclusively done by women to attend metaphysical knowledge.

in Indigenous communities by trying to make sense of who am I, and who am I becoming, in a foreign land. The idea that I could contribute to the discourse of Indigenous communities and their struggle for land and land tenure further motivates my research. I am certain that my doctoral dissertation will show how urban families of Indigenous people connect to ancestral lands even in today's conditions. More recent events have brought me onto the path of understanding motherhood, including my role as a mother, and how I can incorporate the teachings of motherhood into my research on the discourse of primary sources of education in community-based knowledge. For my doctoral dissertation, I intend to elaborate on the main concepts that I have briefly discussed in my data analysis. My ongoing ethnographic work will demonstrate how Wixárika women use their physical abilities, storytelling, and poetics to recreate motherland. My future research will seek to understand the ontological relationship between Wixárika and other-than-human beings to demonstrate the semiotic relationship between art production and entities in Wixárika cosmology. In my future research with the Wixárika group, I intend to deepen my understanding of the role of women in Indigenous communities and their active participation in cultural endurance.

Appendix A

(Interview Summer 2014)

Felipa: Pues hace muchos años que la historia que dice mi mama que hubo una inundación hace muchos años verdad, ah pues esa vez fue el que el Tacutsi fue el primero que hizo los arroyos para que esto se hiciera tierra, el mar me imagino, que con su bastón no se que cosa yo creo que le hizo como camino, como zanjitas pues ya se hicieron mar y ríos y que es por eso que hubo tierra que para sembrar el maíz y es lo primero que hizo que sembró el maíz

Translation: Well long time ago the history/story that my mom tells that there was a flood long time ago right, ah well that times it was that the Tacutsi was the one who made the rivers for latter to become the Earth, the ocean I imagine, with her can or I don't know with what I think she made a road, like little ditches well there was made the sea and rivers and that is why there was Earth to grow corn and that was the first she made grow corn

Cyndy: Ella tenia el maíz

Translation: She had the corn

Felipa: Si, porque ella traía todas las semillas, en su arca que hizo, bueno lo hizo el Watakame, la arca

Translation: Yes, because she carried all the seeds, in a ark that she made, well the ark was made by Watakame

Cyndy: Y el Watakame que es? Es un hombre?

Translation: And what the Watakame is?

Felipa: El Watakame era un hombre trabajador, era un hombre bueno eso me se poquito primero estaba así, que mas antes había unos, que era el Watakame y su mama que no tenia que comer, que decían que íbamos a comer, que vamos a comer a entonces que vamos a comer entonces que las hormigas antes eran personas que les ofrecieron pues el maíz verdad tenia un camino de donde traían mucho maíz, entonces que el Watakame le dijo de donde traían maíz porque ellos comían hacían, hacían este, como se dice maíz tostado en el comal y entonces que le decían Watakame de donde traían maíz porque ellos también tenían hambre y entonces que ya me pase en una historia (sonrie)

Translation: The Watakame was a working man it was a good man of that I know a little bit first it was like this, long time ago there was some, which were Watakame and his mother they did not have anything to eat, they said what are we going to eat, what are we going to eat then that the ants before were people offered them corn right they had a road from where they brought a lot of corn, so Watakame told them where do you bring corn because the ants ate and made, thet made, how do you say roasted corn in the grill and then the Watakame said were do you bring conr because we are also hungry and now I'm

going over a history/story (smiles)

Cyndy: Si esta bien, ta bien

Translation: Yes, it is fine

Felipa: Entonces que la hormiga le dijo: “no pues ves en aquel cerro ahí tienes que ir por zacate mucho zacate y por ese zacate vas a hacer cambio de maíz” y entonces que el Watakame les creyó que dijo “pues tengo hambre, pues voy a tener que hacer eso” y entonces que fueron y trajeron mucho zacate muchos tercios de zacate así y entonces que le dijo la hormiga “pues mañana temprano te alistas” a pues andale pues que el otro día temprano se fueron con sus tercios de zacate, y ya cuando llegan a un cerro que se les oscureció, todavía no llegaba que las hormigas le decían “mira allá en aquellas casa que se ven blancas ahí hay maíz,” y entonces que la hormiga, este el Watakame nomas miraba “no pues me queda lejos todavía” y que le dijo a la hormiga “aquí vamos a dormir por esta noche” se quedaron a dormir ahí en el cerro pero en la noche, todo pusieron el abuelito fuego y ya alrededor se acostaron a dormir a descansar

Translation: So the Ant told him, “well do you see that hill, there is where you have to go for grass a lot of grass, and for that grass you have to exchange the corn” so Watakame belived them and said “well I am hungry, well I will have to do that” and then they left and brought a lot of grass a lot of bunches of grass, like this and then the Ant told him “well tomorrow early get ready” and well next day early morning they left with the grass bunches, and when they arrive to a hill it got dark, they did not arrive yet and the Ants told him “look up there in those houses that look with there there is corn,” and then the Ant, Watakame only looked “no it is far still” and he told the Ant “here we are going to spend the night” they stayed the night there in the hill at night, they put everything the grandfather fire and all around layed down and fell asleep to rest

Felipa: y al otro día pues no pudo abrir los ojos el Watakame porque las hormigas le comieron todas las cejitas y no se que le hicieron pero el Watakame no se pudo despertar, quería ver y no podía ver la luz le hacia daño le hacia daño el aire entonces que dijo “ahora que voy hacer mi mama tiene hambre” que decía que nomas vivían dos su mama y el y pues nada de hormigas las hormigas se había ido se escaparon ósea no lo quisieron llevar a esas casas pero las hormigas lo que hacían, ellas se iban a robar el maíz, se iban a robar el maíz no lo cambiaban con el zacate nomas le echaron mentiras y el muchacho creído llevaba su tercio de zacate y ya cuando después que ya sintió el sol que ya había salido el sol que dijo “que voy a hacer dios mío,” entonces que el Watakame se subió a una piedra, y se sentó ahí y empezó a llorar y dijo “que voy hacer” entonces cuando de repente escucho el, al Kuku no se si has oído?

Translation: and the next day Watakame well he could not open his eyes because the Ants ate his eyelashes and I don't know what else they did, but Watakame could not wake up, he wanted to see but he couldn't see the light the light border him and the wind so he said “what am I going to do my mother is hungry” he said there is only two his mother and himself and well nothing the Ants the Ants left and they escape I mean they did not want

to take him because what the Antd dis was that they used to steal the corn they did not exchange grass for the corn they only lied and the men beliving in the Ants took his bunch of grass and when he felt the sun when the sun was setting he said “what am I going to do God?” so Watakame climb a stone, and he sat there and started crying and said “What am I going to do?” then when suddenly he heard Kuku have you heard about Kuku?

Cyndy:No

Traslation: No

Felipa:A un Kuku

Translation: A Kuku

Cyndy:Que es un Kuku?

Translation: What is a Kuku

Felipa: es un pájaro es como un águila y entonces que le empezó así a, que sintió que el Kuku llego y canto ahí y entonces le dijo “fuera persona” dice “para que supiera lo que yo estoy pensando lo que yo siento” y entonces el Kuku hablo que le dijo “si se lo que estas pensando lo que sientes agarrate de mis plumas que te voy a llevar” entonces se lo tercio es una historia no pero no se puede terciar a una persona y entonces que se lo tercio y se fue, que voló hacia la casa yo creo se lo llevo y entonces cuando estaba allá que le dijo “ahora si ya estamos en casa tienes hambre verdad” y que le pregunto, pero que la paloma se convirtió en persona una persona y entonces que le dijo si tengo hambre y ya le contó su historia como se había ido y como había quedado ahí y ya que le dijo “no esas hormigas nomas me vienen a robar el maíz, ellos no vienen acambiarme ni hacerme compra de maíz

Translation: It's a bird like an eagle and so that it started like this, that he felt that Kuku came and sang there so he told him “I wish you were a person” said “so that you would know what I am thinking of and what I feel” so then Kuku talked and said “I know what you are thinking what you are feeling grab from my feathers I will take you” so he grabbed him, this is story he could not grab a person and then he grab him and left, that he flied toward the house I believe he took him and when they arrived there she said “now we are home you are hungry righ?” and that he asked, but the peagon turned into a person a person and then he said yes I am hungry and then he told him the story how he left and how he got stock there and then she said that the Ants only come to steal maize from me, they don't come to exchange nor to buy maize”

Felipa: y que con sus alas como que si le echo aire en los ojos y entonces ya pudo ver bien y entonces ya es cuando vio la casa llena de maíz llena de maíz, de colores y que cada esquina tenia su color así bonito [se callan o voy] y entonces que ya le dice “bueno tienes hambre ahorita te voy a dar y que le dio dos semillitas en un cupui y que el Watakame pensó y que el Kuku le dijo “si te vas allá,” pero ósea el Watakame no dijo nada nomas pensó, pero el otro lo escucho y que le dijo que “si me vas a llevar?”

mientras que dijo el Watakame y el Kukurú escucho y entonces que ya después dijo ahora como me regreso a mi casa pues no tengo quien me lleve vas a llegar a tu casa y ya que nomas se puso a platicar porque estaba allá y tenia hambre y entonces que dijo no te preocupes yo te voy a dar maíz

Translation: and with her wings blew air in his eyes so that he could see and then he was able to see well and then that was when he saw the house full of corn full of corn, of colors and in each corner has a color like beautiful [interruption] and then she told him “are you hungry I will give you some seed now” and she gave him two little seeds in a cone and Watakame thought and Kukurú said “If you go there” but I mean Watakame did not say anything he only thought, but the other one heard him and he said “are you gonna take me?” meanwhile Watakame said and Kukurú listened and then he said how do I return home because I don’t have anyone to take me home and then he started talking about why he was there and that he was hungry and then Kukurú said “do not worry because I will give you corn”

Felipa: y entonces que este le dijo no pues yo vengo por maíz porque tenia mucha hambre y ya que la señora le dijo “pues sabes que yo te voy a dar maíz pero por una condición” que le dijo, primero te vas a ir no te lo voy a dar ahorita”, ósea le dio mucho como te quiero decir?, no se lo dio en ese momento y que le dijo “te vas a ir y me vas a hacer un caliwei” que es el rilique de nosotros onde se lleva el maíz y entonces que le dijo “bueno pero si me vas a mandar maíz?” que le dice el Watakame y que le dijo “si te voy a mandar nomas dime tu a cual quieres” que porque ella era la mama y los hijos eran los maíces que le dijo “cual de mis hijas quieres” y entonces que dijo el muchacho “hijas? de por si no tengo maíz y me esta ofreciendo una hija” y entonces que le dijo el Kukurú que le dijo “no el maíz o no quieres maíz?” le dijo, “el maíz son mis hijas y ya le empezó a mencionar los colores verdad como se llamaban

Translation: and then he told her no I come to get corn because I was hungry and the lady said “you know what I 'll give corn but a condition” that said, “first you 're going to go I am not giving it to you right now”, I mean she gave him how do I say it? She did not give the corn in at that point and she said “you 're going and you 'll make a caliwei (shirne) which is the rilique for us where we take corn and then he said “good but are you going to send corn?” that Watakame said and she told him “yes I will send you corn but tell me which corn do you want?” if he 'll because she was the mother and children were the maize that said “which of my daughters do you want?” and then said “daughters? I do not have corn and she is offering me a daughter? and then Kukurú said “no corn or you don’t want corn? He said, the maize are my daughters” and then she started to mention the colors rights as they called them

Cyndy: Tienen nombre cada uno?

Translation: Do they have names each one?

Felipa: Si, creo que si tienen nombre cada uno

Translation: Yes, I think so that each one has a name

Cyndy: No se los sabe

Translation: Do you know them?

Felipa: No me los se y entonces ya que el señor dijo “bueno pues si las quiero, si lo quiero” le dijo y que le pues llegando vas a hacer el caliwei, después del caliwei vas a tener lista una vela y los cerillos, yo te los voy a mandar en cuando escuches que callo un ruido tu enciendes la vela y entonces eso fue lo que hizo el señor que se vino e hizo una casita así de chiquita rápido y que esperaba al anochecer, estaba velando hasta que se escucho un ruido y entonces prendió la vela y entonces que ya miro a su alrededor ahí colgado muchas semillas y un puño de maíz por adentro de su casa yo creo que la mama se los envió pero el no no se dio cuenta como y entonces después al otro día que dijo pues ahora que voy a hacer con tanto maíz pues tenia mucho maíz y ya que le dijo la señora cuando ya tengas el maíz nunca andes diciendo nada y nunca los andes regañando ni nada dice mi mama porque antes eran personas también [el maíz] que ahí en el niwanari nosotros le decíamos al preterito que hacen en el que se ponen el maíz que ahí estaba una muchacha era la hija de la señora que le había mandado pero también estaba la muchacha y también había mucho maíz que en parte era maíz y que en parte era persona que es el Teyari la madre

Translation: No I don't know the names so the men said “well then I do want it” she said that as you get home you will build the caliwei [shrine], after caliwei you will have ready a candle and matches, I'm going to send it to you when you hear a noise you turn the candle and then that was what the man did we came home and made a small house like this small quickly and he was waiting for the dusk, he was watching until he heard a noise and then he lit the candle and then he looked around and he saw hanging there many seeds and a fist of corn inside his home I think the mother of corn send the seeds but he did not noticed how and then the next day that he said “what am I going to do with so much corn? because he had so much corn and the lady told him when you get the corn never say anything and never scold the daughters or nothing, my mom says because before they were people the corn and that there in the niwanari, we call it the BBQ pit and table in which we place the corn that there was a young girl the lady's daughter that she send him and there was the young girl and a lot of corn, that the young girl was part corn and part girl that is called Teyari the mother of the corn

Cyndy: Y es la que siembran en medio y a un lado

Translation: And that ones is the one they crop in the middle and to the side

Felipa: Si, y sus hijos a un lado

Translation: Yes, and his children to the side

Cyndy: Con sus hijas

Translation: With the daughters

Felipa: Si, sus hijas y entonces este y que la señora se enojo regaño a su hijo que le dijo “hijo que hiciste? yo te dije que consigueras maíz no una mujer” y entonces que ya dijo “no es que es la madre del maíz,” como si es una mujer y como la tiene sentada ahí en el pretilito y entonces que la mama se enojo, se puso celosa y entonces se le fue el maíz, bueno en ese momento no se le fue, pues yo creo que ya va a hacer en la tiempo de la coamiliada que coamilean para sembrar que dijo el señor “bueno yo voy a empezar a coamilear porque yo ya tengo maíz para sembrar” y empezó a comilear el primer día, el segundo día

Translation: Yes her daughters and then that the mother of the man was angry scolding his son said “son what did you you do? I told you to get corn not a woman” and then he said “is not she is the mother of corn,” like if she was a woman and like he has it sitting there in the BBQ table and then the mom got mad, she got jealous and he left to the cornfield, well in that moment he did not go because I think it was time to work in the field the time they work in the field cropping so the man said I will start to crop because I have corn to crop and he started working in the field the first day, the second day

Felipa: el tercer día cuando iba que ya la mama del muchacho entro allí en el caliwei y que regaño a la muchacha “tu nomas estas ahí que no sabes que tu marido anda en el coamil” y que “levantate y has tortillas para que lleves lonche” y entonces lo que la muchacha hizo se levanto puso nixtamal pero ella misma has de cuenta se cosió y se empezó a moler, se empezó a moles que cuando este se estaba moliendo ella miraba que le salía sangre por todos lados y luego cuando se puso nixtamal se pelo su cuerpo y entonces se empezó a moler mas pues le empezaba a salir sangre por los lados y entonces que dijo “no yo ya no puedo moler y se fue, pues se desapareció y se fue con su mama y que entonces la mama se enojo que porque la mama le había dicho al muchacho pues que no dijera nada pues porque era el maíz verdad

Translation: the third day when he was already gone the man’s mother walked there in the shrine and scolded the girl “you are only there do not you now that your husband is in the cornfield” and “get up and make tortillas for the lunch” and then what the girl did was to get up and her body as nixtamal³⁷ but she got all burnt from her body and then she began to grind herself more so blood came out everywhere and then she said “no I can no longer grind” and she left, so she disappeared and she left with her mother and then the mother got angry because the mother of the corn told the man to say nothing right? because she was the corn

Felipa: y llego el muchacho la casa vacía, el maíz se fue con ella pues como era el maíz pues se desapareció todo y que el muchacho llego y entonces que dijo “donde esta el maíz?” y que ya la señora le dijo “no pues yo le dije a la muchacha que te llevara lonche que hiciera que hacer y que el muchacho lloro porque con trabajo se lo habían dado y pues de esa manera en que se fue y entonces que dijo que iba a ir a buscarla a ver si

³⁷ Nixtamal boiling corn seeds for the preparation of tortilla dough.

quiere venir conmigo y que fue a buscarlo otra vez

Translations: and the man arrived to the empty house, the corn left with her and because she was the corn so all the corn disappeared and that the man came and then he said “where is the corn? and the lady told him “well I told the young girl to take you lunch to do the housework” and the man cried because with all the efforts he got the corn and well in the way she left and then he said that he was going to find her and to see if she wanted to come back with him so he left to find her again

Felipa: y que cuando llego con su mama le dijo que pues llego eda? preguntando por la muchacha y el maíz que se había ido y que le dijo no es que tu no ocupas maíz así como trataron a mi hija así no, ya no se los voy a dar y ya que el muchacho le rogó le rogó el Watakame pues el andaba el coamiliando para sembrar y estar con ella y pues la señora no se la quiso dar pero que le dijo bueno pues te voy a dar otra oportunidad porque tu le dijiste nada pues fue su mama y que le dijo “te voy a dar una oportunidad” y ya que le dijo te la llevas que le dio una hoja del maíz pues y le dijo te voy a dar la hoja a ver quien quita y llega el maíz ya a ver quien se quiere ir y que se lo dio y que le dijo en la noche vas a esperar otra vez, si te llego que bueno y pues que en la noche estuvo velando y rezando de que volviera y que si llego pero has de cuenta que le llego poquito para la pura semilla no para comer ya

Translations: and when he arrived with the mother of the corn and said if she came already? asking for the girl and the corn that left and the mother said no you do not need corn because the way you treated my daughter not like that, I am not going to give you the corn but the man bed and bed, Watakame because he was in the cornfield cropping and be with her and so the lady did not want to give him the daughter but she said “well I will give you a chance” and then she said take it and she gave him a corn leave and said “I will give you the leave and maybe the corn will come to you now we will see who wants to go” and she gave him the leave and told him “at night you will wait again, if you get it good so at night he was waiting praying for the corn to come back and it arrive but only a small quantity not for eating

Cyndy: Ya no quiso regresar con el

Translation: She did not want to come back with him

Felipa: Ya no quiso regresar con el ya nomas la pura semilla cayo ya que desde entonces de eso tenemos el maíz ya la pura semilla ya no tenemos la madre así como era antes que porque ya se cosió y se murió y entonces que ya el Watakame empezó a sembrar y es cuando ya empezó a salir el maíz, el maíz, el maíz el maíz ahora según la historia, solo los que lo cuentan lo saben

Translation: she did not want to come back to him only the seed fell and since then we have the corn only the seed we no longer have the mother like it was before because she got boiled and died and so the Watakame begin cropping and when he began cropping then corn began to sprout, corn, corn, corn until now now according to the history/story, only the ones who tell the story know about it

Apendix B

(Interview Summer 2014)

Part I:

Cyndy: Y cuando sueña sobre los nombres de los niños que nacen como sueña?

Translation: And when you dream about the children names that are born how do you dream?

Mamachali: Ese se sueña, vas a soñar una milpa pero bien bonito como lo vimos creciendo bien bonito por eso significa Yu'gula y luego cuando ya se esta espigando significa Magayama porque ya esta espigando, ahí va ese sueño eso vas a soñar y luego si es niño va venir con asi con nube lloviendo con nube y luego vas a soñar bonito zacate mira bonito zacate con sereno ese significa Huduchiya, eso todo vas a soñar, eso vas a ver en tu sueño, ya cuando lo vas a presentar pues ya lo trae el nombre como se va a llamar

Translation: That one you dream, you are going to dream a cornfield but very beautiful like we saw growing very pretty that is why it means Yu'gula and when it is flourishing it means Magayama because it is growing the corn spike, there you are going to dream that and you are going to dream and then if it is a boy there will come like a raining cloud with clouds and then you are going to have to dream a beautiful dream about a grass field look beautiful grass with dew that means Huduchiya, all that you are going to dream, that you will see in your dreams, and when you present [the baby] you already brought the name how [the baby] will be named

Cyndy: Y el nombre del niño que usted soñó tiene algún significado con el niño cuando crece cuando por ejemplo Santa nombre guardiana en Wixárika, tiene algo que ver con su personalidad de ella o suerte de ella cuando crezca?

Translation: and does the child's name that you dreamt of has a specific meaning with the child when the child grows like for example Santa's name is guardian in Wixárika, does her names has something to do with her personality or her "suerte" when she grows?

Mamachali: Pues cuando crezca ahí va también el, le va tocar también

Translation: Well when the child grows there goes [the name] too, it will be its turn too

Cyndy: Como?

translations: how?

Mamachali: Por eso ese, mismo la lluvia ese mismo haz de cuenta lo pone a su nombre, la lluvia con nube ese mismo le pone el nombre, nomas tu lo sueñas no mas

Translation: So that very same the rain, that same rain just realized that [the rain] assigned her/his name, the rain with clouds that one assigns the name, you only dream that's it

Cyndy: Entonces el la nube hace que sueñe, usted sueña y el niño tiene ese nombre o la niña y crece con ese nombre de la nube o de la lluvia?

Translation: So the cloud makes you dream, you [formal] dream and the child has the name or the girl and grows with that name of the cloud and the rain?

Mamachali: Si, como quiera o no puedes ponerle nombre porque disque se enferma, a veces yo me hago así en los sueños le digo mira ahora no soñé nada, no le voy a decir nada hasta que sueño le voy a decir

Translation: Yes, not like you pleased or you cannot assign a name because it is said that they get sick, sometimes I do it like this in my dream I tell them look today I did not dream anything, I am not going to tell you anything I tell until I dream

Part II

Mamachali: Cuando el maíz esta espigando, el aire llega y los mueve

Translation: When the corn is getting the spike, the wind comes and moves them

Cyndy: El sonido que hace

Translation: The sound that makes

Mamachali: El sonido que hace

Translation: The sound that makes

Cyndy: De la espiga

Translation: Of the corn spike

Mamachali: Ayer no lo oíste, cuando venia el viento chu-gua-gua la milpa

Translation: Yesterday you did not hear it? when the wind comes chu-gua-gua the corn stalks

Cyndy: Vi la espiguita, pero no vi no lo vi

Translations: I saw the little spike, but I did not hear it

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