Stumped Identities: Body Image, Bodies Politic, and the *Mujer Maya* as Prosthetic

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This article explores the way the Guatemalan nation, ladinos (nonindigenous people), the burgeoning Mayan cultural rights movement, and *gringa* feminism deploy the Mayan woman, or *la mujer Maya* as I call this discursive construct, as a prosthetic.¹ I suggest that these identifications (nation, ethnicity, and gender) are like wounded bodies and rely on supports like the imagined Mayan woman in order to exist. The prosthetic makes up for something missing, it covers over an opening, and as Allucqure Rosane Stone (1995) suggests, it overcomes a lack of presence. I argue that for the Guatemalan nation-state the *mujer Maya* overcomes the missing Mayan representation in the recent peace process and, like a peg leg, supports the nation's limping political economy. For the Mayan cultural rights movement, which must prove itself appropriate to modernity while retaining the tradition that legitimates it, "she" fills in this impossible divide. The *mujer Maya* also serves to support first world anthropology trying to be in solidarity with building peace and strengthening Mayan rights while being "feminist."

National, ethnic (Maya and nonindigenous), and gender identities are stumped, in the sense of being incomplete, wounded, and rudimentary, as well as being baffled and unsure. "To stump" also means to "make political speeches or support a cause" (*Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*, 2nd ed., s.v. "stump") and I argue that similarly, these identities are always political, the result of process and work. They are "cyborg bodies politic" (Gray and Mentor 1995) that rely on the figure of Woman to support identity formation. I wager that by exploring their use of the *mujer Maya* as prosthetic we can learn more about them. Thus, I do not claim to speak for actually existing Mayan women. I am primarily interested in the *mujer Maya* as a construct, a boundary marker, a prosthetic, and the ways, in turn, this helps us explore "the webs of information and power/knowledge [that] incarcerate" but also sustain and move her (Gray and Mentor 1995:435).

This work grows out of a larger research project (Nelson 1999) on the relations between the Guatemalan state and the Mayan cultural rights movement in the context of the Columbus Quincentennial and struggles over national identity (multicultural and plurilingual or mestizo assimilation?).² Beginning with studies I conducted in the mid-1980s of government counterinsurgency in the Guatemalan countryside, in 1988 I began to follow the surprising rise in Mayan organizing (Nelson 1989, 1991), which was surprising because the scale of destruction has been called "genocidal" (United Nations Commission for Historical Clarification [CEH] 1999). This led me from the highlands and solidarity work denouncing human rights abuses by the state to the capital city where Mayan activists were struggling for inclusion in that state. Trying to understand this relation as the binary of state versus Maya left me stumped, as class distinctions, domestic labor, and ladino identity, as well as transnational forces from *gringa* anthropologists to structural adjustment packages and images of modernity, cross cut these bodies politic. In fact, bodily images of cutting, injury, and being stumped filled my interviews in the literal sense of wartime damage to actual bodies and metaphorically.

Guatemalans often speak of their nation as a wounded body. When asked about Mayan cultural rights activism, both ladinos and Maya say that this activism is a "finger in the wound" (*un dedo en la llaga*), suggesting that addressing ethnic difference is a painful prodding into a constitutively open field—that identities are stumped.³ Efforts to form a "whole" national body politic often lean on particularly "raced" and "sexed" bodies, deploying, I argue, the *mujer Maya* to cover over these wounds and to mimic the body images deployed through transnational image repertoires. As a "third world" country, Guatemala is constantly comparing itself to the ideal ego image of the "first world," which (seems to) enjoy functioning infrastructure, advanced technology, peaceful political transitions, high standards of living, and pride in their national identity. Until recently a human rights pariah, split open by an apartheid-like divide between indigenous peoples and ladinos, wracked by civil war, and suffering stunningly high rates of infant mortality, poverty, and illiteracy, Guatemala's body image is a wounded body.

Similarly, 500 years of colonization and the recent massive violence of the civil war have fractured indigenous identity (never a unified thing), a process the pan-Mayan movement seeks to remedy. In utopic imaginings of healing these bodies—in fantasy descriptions of the nation or the Pueblo Maya as a nuclear family, and in state policies and the alternatives proffered by revolutionary and Mayan organizing—gender figures prominently. At a time of increasing economic stress and structural adjustment, indigenous women serve as potent tropes in efforts to construct not only Guatemalan national identity, but also Mayan identifications, as well as that ambivalent cyborg connection of *gringa* solidarity and the production of social science fictions like this essay. To understand these stumped identities we need to think them all together, paying special attention to the *mujer Maya* who, as a prosthetic, makes these wounded bodies able to function. In turn, these body images, as they "incorporate" the *mujer Maya*, do not remain the same.

Saving

I began thinking about the metaphor of the muijer Maya as prosthetic because of one of the more macabre jokes I've heard in the 16 years I've been working in Guatemala. It goes something like this: An anthropologist had lived in a highland Mayan village for several years but left when the civil war got bad in the early 80s. When he returned in the early 90s he noticed a remarkable change and mentioned it to an informant: "You know," he said, "when I lived here before, the women always walked ten steps behind the men. No matter what I would say, they wouldn't change. But now they walk ten steps in front! It seems like you are finally catching up with the times. Before, women would never walk in front of the men." The informant said, "Before there were no land mines."

I want to suggest that this awful joke "does" several things (as jokes tend to do) in post-Quincentennial Guatemala. This is a moment in which the struggles over the meanings of 1492 (the legacy of colonialism) and the recent peace treaty have highlighted the many ways ethnic and national identities are stumped, bewildered.⁴ When ladinos (nonindigenous people who comprise between 40 and 60 percent of the population) tell it, the joke may function as an artificial limb, taking the place of the more overt discourses of racism that have been amputated by the increasing strength of Mayan activism.⁵ For them, the joke may also function like the colonial discourse of *sati*, or widow burning, did for the British in India. By demonstrating the venality of Mayan men the joke allows ladinos to feel superior. Articulated with development and modernizing discourses (Warren and Bourque 1991) it may also legitimate "protective" intrusion into Mayan life. Like British intervention into *sati*, the joke allows, in Gayatri Spivak's formula, for "white[r] men saving brown women from brown men" (1988:297).⁶

Notice, too, the irruption of a discourse of progress in the joke ("you are finally catching up with the times"), in which the treatment of women becomes a mark of "modernity" or lack thereof. "Progress" discourse, of course, has legitimated assimilationist policies from the British outlawing of *sati* in India to the civil war and structural adjustment in Guatemala. However, there is clearly ambivalence here. What looks modern (like "women's rights") is something shockingly different—the grim surprise of the joke.

Ladinos are not the only ones to tell this joke. When Mayan men tell it, it may express their terror at living in the aftermath of genocidal civil war, which has killed over 70,000 (primarily indigenous) people since 1979. It may suggest the hope that brown women will save brown men from white counterinsurgency—or even from invisible (hand) counterinsurgency, as market forces are surely involved in Mayan mortality and morbidity rates, still shockingly high despite the end of the war.

When gringas recount this joke in print, or read it in *Cultural Anthropology*, we may laugh guiltily and grimace in horror. But we feel that, as offensive as the joke is, it captures something about the continuing power of patriarchy.

It may also justify an intervention (like this article), as we hope that somehow we can change that, as white women saving brown women from black humor.

Ground

Sigmund Freud (1963) suggests that jokes structure relationships. With *smut*, men tell each other dirty jokes about women who are absent. By imagining the acts invoked through the joke they form a bond over the absent body of the woman. In *smut* she is the ground for their relation, and in some sense, their subjectivities—a site on which to establish identifications, a body politic. Similarly, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1986) has shown more generally how men form homosocial connections across the excluded woman, who becomes their self-constituting other. I have argued elsewhere (Nelson 1994) that the jokes that circulated around Rigoberta Menchú Tum's Nobel Peace Prize—like the landmine joke and the imagined woman it invokes—may ground anxious identifications in the context of the Quincentennial and 35 years of civil war.

Spivak, with her "white men saving" calculus, suggests that colonial discourse on *sati* performs a similar function, reducing colonized women to an object in order for imperialism to imagine itself as good—as a modern body politic.⁷ What interests me is that the protection of woman . . . becomes a signifier for the establishment of a *good society*" (Spivak 1988:298). Lata Mani, also writing about colonial representations of *sati*, argues that women are not even objects of this colonial discourse. It is not about them. "I would argue that women are neither subjects nor objects but rather the ground of the discourse on *sati*. . . . In the course of the debates, women came to represent 'tradition' for all participants. Women became the site on which tradition was debated and reformulated . . . this is why one learns so little about them" (Mani 1990:117–118). Similarly, Rajeswari Sunder Rajan suggests that

the postcolonial nation-state is riven by the conflicts between the imperative of 'nationalism' as identity on the one hand, and the reality of the multiple regional, caste, linguistic and religious divisions within its geographical boundaries, on the other. In this contest, the state attempts to assert the forces of homogenization and centralization against the various secessionist or federalizing movements. . . . Women, to whose allegiances grounded in one or other identity appeals are frequently directed, are more often the sites of such contests than participants in them. [1993:6]⁸

Anne McClintock (1995), Partha Chatterjee (1990) and others also deploy this trope of Woman as the ground or site on which national, ethnic, modern, and traditional bodies politic are constructed. The trope serves, in part, to explain why actually existing women remain largely excluded from postcolonial nationalism and from many ethnic-rights movements (as well as from scholarly work on these subjects).

This exclusion is clearly a concern for me as a white woman hoping to save brown women from being blacked out—of both ethnography and of actual practices of nation building, "modernizing," and ethnic rights movements.⁹

Mani resists reducing women to "the object of description . . . ground for the projections for a distinctively male, voyeuristic gaze," but I am not sure I agree completely with her alternative: to "attempt to reconstruct woman as subject and to restore to the center elements that are marginalized and elided by these accounts" (Mani 1992:403). I also want to resist the objectification of women as others, but this move from ground to subject, or from "imagined" to "real" women in Rajan's (1993) terms, seems troubled by Spivak's (1988) persistent question: "can the subaltern speak?"

What Spivak is asking of intellectuals who presume to save brown women, of course, is "can you hear her?" Mani's move is to invoke "the violence of sati, the active suffering of the widows and women's resistance to and coercion in widow burning" (1992:403), but Spivak's question urges us to proceed with caution. Rajan (1993) also problematizes what might count as the subaltern speaking. She asks: Is silence always imposed? Is action or speech always self-evident?¹⁰ Is unmediated access to "real women" possible? Sangari and Vaid also suggest that "womanhood is often part of an asserted or desired, not an actual, cultural continuity" (1990:17). The transparency of access to subjectivity, the very category of "woman," and the move to "speak for" the other made by anthropologists, whites, feminists, first worlders, and solidarity activists, and so on (all locations I must speak from) have been stumped (bewildered, *and* made political) for some time now.¹¹

The response to these challenges cannot be, of course, to return to the "black-out," to give up on attempts to make present the absent woman; her voice, actions, and silences will break through here at points.

But I wonder if there is a more productive way to engage the desire to "save" women from being the ground? Is there a way to keep these contradictions surrounding speaking and subjectivity alive while still investigating the formation of bodies politic? I find I am stumped, in fact, with the very metaphor of women as ground. For one thing it seems to deny the power of "imagined women." It also leaves unengaged the very processes by which national, ethnic, and modern identities are established. The metaphor assumes already constituted national (or colonial) and ethnic identities which meet to do battle on the ground of woman—a site, in turn, always already constituted. I chose to tell you the landmine joke because its content foreshadows an alternative conceit I want to deploy: that Mayan women function as prosthetics. In the joke, imagined as minesweepers, they serve as tools, as bodily extensions in desperate attempts to survive. Fittingly, the ground in this joke is a space of violent fragmentation.

Prosthetics

In *The Cyborg Handbook*, Gray and Mentor describe the cyborg body politic as ambivalent, wrapped in, dependent upon, supported, and made possible by "webs of information and power/knowledge [which] incarcerate" but also sustain and move it (1995:454). Cyborg anthropology is fascinated by connections, feedback loops, and articulations. Here I am exploring how the

mujer Maya as prosthetic sustains and moves nation, ethnicity, modernity, and feminism while she is moved by them. Mark Wigley describes a prosthesis as: "a foreign element that reconstructs that which cannot stand up on its own, at once propping up and extending its host. The prosthesis is always structural, establishing the place it appears to be added to" (Wigley 1991:9, quoted in González 1995:135; see also Kurzman's critique in this issue).

In seeking to understand the multiple interchanges among nation, ethnicity, modernity, tradition, and gender in Guatemala, this active connection, this articulation that changes and constitutes the elements involved through their joining, is how I want to describe the deployment of the *mujer Maya*. "She" (the fantasy construct), and the effects this has on actually existing women, are no passive ground. I am hoping this metaphor will help us think identity as always in process, as a sort of recombinant relation.¹²

The prosthetic metaphor does not offer transcendence or even hope of steady ground to stand on, but instead extends Gray and Mentor's cyborg dialectic—thesis, antithesis, synthesis, and prosthesis. This dialectic is "different than a synthesizing [process] . . . enhancements and replacements . . . remain lumpy and semi-autonomous" (1995:466).

The cyborg dialectic makes problematic the way images of women structure identities—not reducible to ground, in Wigley's sense she establishes that to which she appears to be added. Thinking the *mujer Maya* as prosthetic resonates with Sangari and Vaid's definition of feminist historiography, which "acknowledges that each aspect of reality is gendered . . . [and] think[s] of gender difference as both structuring and structured by the wide set of social relations" (1990:2–3). I wager that thinking of the *mujer Maya* as a (semi-autonomous) prosthesis also may help us better understand the bodies politic that deploy it.

Feeling stumped, I slip on the notion of "body image" borrowed from neuropsychology and psychoanalysis. Here I am leaning on the work of Elizabeth Grosz in *Volatile Bodies* (1994) who suggests that the body image is the ways in which a person's corporeal exterior is psychically represented and lived, an imaginary anatomy—it is what gives a subject her sense of place in the world and her connection to others (Grosz 1994:xiii). The body image is necessary for posture, movement, and facility, and is linked to the model that the subject has of other bodies and that other bodies have of the subject's body (1994:63). For example, the experience that an amputee has of a "phantom limb" is caused by the body image. Psychically, the body does not give up the limb, although often, over time, it changes shape. In the case of an arm, after several years the physical body image of the hand may nestle close to the physical stump. Doctors treating amputees have found that some control of the phantom limb is possible and people can learn to extend it into the prosthesis to facilitate maneuverability.¹³ In fact, according to Grosz, the body image is necessary for the manipulation of any prosthetic. It extends to include external objects and implements like cars, surgeon's scalpels, and, I argue, the *mujer Maya*. Drawing on this notion of the body image, the *mujer Maya* may function as a symptom, helping us map the body image of such bodies politic as the

nation, ladino ethnicities, the Mayan rights movement, modernity, and gringa feminism. I suggest these are bodies that cannot function on their own.

Now, it is easy to read as pernicious the deployment of the *mujer Maya* as prosthetic extension of these bodies politic. However, what I like about the prosthetic metaphor is that it is ambivalent: it allows for play. As bloody as it is, the landmine humor is a joke—a way both brutal and silly to deal with all most unrepresentable violence. So here I would like to strap on Alluquère Rosanne Stone's notion of prosthesis. Stone describes falling in love with prostheses—her own and others'. She writes of such interactions as "couplings" with all the affect that term implies, and she insists that "the structure of pleasure and play . . . is the heart and soul of prosthetic sociality" (Stone 1995:397).

One reason I tender the metaphor of prosthetic rather than ground is its flexibility in evoking the active and deeply affecting possibilities in these relations. With the notion of prosthetic as somewhat active, lumpy, and productive of pleasure, we may be able to distance ourselves from the "pessimistic functionalism" (Lipietz 1987) inherent in the notion of Woman as ground (i.e., that colonialism or nationalism or global capital always get what they want). For example, Stone describes her voyages in cyberspace thus: "some of the interactions are stereotypical and Cartesian, relying old power differentials whose workings are familiar. . . . But some of the interactions are novel, strange, perhaps transformative, and certainly disruptive of many traditional attempts at categorization" (Stone 1996:36).

What I will argue here is that Stone's relations with her prosthetic of cyberspace are similar to the relations of nationalism, ethnic mobilization, and feminism with the prosthetic of the *mujer Maya*. Stone suggests that this is because there are people in the box/in the tool. This is a complex relationality with a somewhat active participant—not fully synthesizable, not a passive ground, and also not the rational free agent of liberal humanism—but a semi-autonomous prosthetic in intimate connection with the self (see Haraway 1991, 1997). Without assuming access to the subjectivity of the actually existing Mayan woman (without assuming I can hear the subaltern speak) I think that the notion of the *mujer Maya* as prosthetic can disrupt traditional categories, like actor versus ground, victimizer versus victim. Even Lévi-Strauss acknowledges this special affect, reminding us that even at that quintessential site of men forming a relation with each other through the exchange of women: "even in a man's world she is still a person, and in so far as she is defined as a sign she must be recognized as a generator of signs. . . . This explains why the relations between the sexes have preserved that affective richness, ardor, and mystery" (1969:496).

National Prosthetic

That richness and ardor animate the immediately identifiable image of the *mujer Maya* in Guatemala. Dressed in "traditional" hand-woven clothes (*traje*)—with her long hair, she is a primary mode for representing the Guatemalan nation

in newspapers, postcards, international beauty pageants, business literature, museums, advertisements, and tourism brochures (Hendrickson 1995; Nelson 1994; Otzoy 1990). The nation needs the presence of the image of the *mujer Maya* in public places to suggest the incorporation of the indigenous population, rather than the open wounds of ethnic exclusion. In turn, the *mujer Maya* distinguishes Guatemala in the transnational realm. Coverage produced by and about Guatemala often includes her for her immediate identifiability.

Above Rajan described the imperative that nations face to construct some sort of identity while riven by various internal divisions. Similarly, Partha Chatterjee describes the difficulties of nation-building in India which necessitated "rationalizing and reforming the 'traditional' culture of their people," including "science, technology, rational forms of economic organization, modern methods of statecraft" and so on. But this "could not mean the imitation of the west in every aspect of life . . . the self-identification of national culture would itself be threatened" (1990:237).

If the West stands in for "modernity" with its science and rationality (clearly necessary prosthetics, and available at a discount from the United States Agency for International Development [USAID] and financing from the World Bank), this national culture also needs "tradition," historic depth, origins, a proud link to an ancient Golden Age which may return again. The deep, affecting bond of an imagined community needs more support than military parades and shopping trips to Miami. The national body image needs a relation with sincerity, with moral rectitude, with the ardor and mystery of home. The Mayan past, represented both by pre-Columbian ruins¹⁴ and by contemporary indigenous rural life (genuinely religious, authentically observing "millenarian" practices without a hint of irony), serves as this prop for Guatemala, an extension that overcomes the distances between glorious past, degraded present, and hoped-for future. A case in point: while working in a small indigenous village near Lake Atitlán during a recent presidential campaign, I was sitting in on a Catholic mass when a candidate on a flesh-pressing tour pulled into town with his entourage and tried to enter the church. After waving from the back, the candidate withdrew, under the dour gaze of the priest, but several of his ladino aides remained and I overheard one say, "My God! This is just like ancient times! See the women all on one side of the church, their heads covered? It's like going back in time!" His companion concurred, saying, "They're all in costume! We really should get out here more often. This is the real Guatemala."

Here it seems that the past, rural village life, and the nation itself get condensed into the figure of the *mujer Maya*, gender segregated in public, respectfully worshipping, clad in her traditional finery. While there are some towns where Mayan men wear *traje*,¹⁵ in most places—and especially the capital city—all but the most elder men wear "western" clothing. Because of this fashion decision Andrés Cus, a Mayan activist, says that Mayan men tend to disappear into the ladino population. "Without these markers—*caítes* (sandals), the belt, the hat, even a little piece of *traje*—especially with men, you don't even

see that they are Maya." In my interviews, most Mayans say that indigenous men do not wear traje because their contact with the ladino world has exposed them to more racism than women have faced and more pressure to blend in to survive. Irma Orzoy, a Mayan anthropologist, suggests that the *mujer Maya* retains her traje because she is more valiant than men (Orzoy 1996:147). Carol Hendrickson describes the gender component to this passing: "The values manifested by the colorful, hand-woven shirts and the calf-length pants of some male traje, for example, do not match those of, say, blue jeans and T-shirts or suits and ties. Men in traje are therefore seen as 'less' masculine, serious, and competent" (1996:162).

In part through these processes, the signification of traditional clothing has become almost isomorphic with the *mujer Maya* who weaves it and wears it far more consistently than men. And traje brings with it the weight of tradition in general, condensing a whole range of signifieds about spirituality, community, food, language, children, and the past onto the *mujer Maya*. This is why she works so well as a prosthetic extension of the modern nation's contradictory need to be simultaneously traditional.¹⁶

As Jane Collier suggests, women's association with tradition is overdetermined. "Not only do the gender conceptions associated with modernity identify women with the emotion that is reason's opposite, but they also identify women's homes with leisure and desire. Women are thus cast both as passive perpetrators of tradition . . . and as active guardians of the national culture" (1997:210).

Peace

For example, the *mujer Maya* figures prominently in coverage of the biggest news event of recent times: the peace treaty signed in December 1996 ending the civil war that had been waged since 1961. The peace process was a many-year affair and involved the government and the guerrilla commanders of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) signing a series of agreements which deal with the repatriation of refugees; a truth commission and amnesty law; the rights of the indigenous population; socioeconomic issues; and the role of the military in peacetime. Most Guatemalans are enthusiastic about the peace process and the end of armed combat, but many have deep reservations about the accords. Moreover, the process itself has been ladino men's only: the only people present at the negotiating table have been ladino men (even for the accord on indigenous rights), most of whom seem convinced they are saving their white and brown fellow citizens.

Allucque Rosame Stone (1995) suggests that prosthetics are about overcoming a lack of presence, and in Guatemala's peace process the *mujer Maya* as image is deployed to bridge the span between those speaking and those spoken for. Frequently used to represent the peace process as a whole for national and international audiences, she works to cover over the gap, to bandage the wounded national body politic so that those excluded feel they have a stake. For example, the government pamphlet "Peace Has Arrived," meant for

massive distribution, and which describes the accords in cartoons and simple language, prominently displays the *mujer Maya*. Widely distributed posters encouraging people to come forward to tell their stories to the CEH truth commission feature the *mujer Maya*, as do posters urging participation in the census and in fora related to the various commissions set up to implement the Accords. Rigoberta Mench Tum, while an ambiguous figure because of her international power,¹⁷ is also deployed as a quintessential *mujer Maya* in front page stories in Guatemalan newspapers and the *New York Times* (Preston 1996) trumpeting the signing of the accords (where she is shown hugging government representatives). Only six Mayas were represented in the last National Congress, which reviewed the legal reforms to institutionalize the peace accords, but it was the *mujer Maya* Rosalina Tuyuc who constantly appeared in press coverage of Congressional declarations.¹⁸ Similarly, a *mujer Maya*, Otilia Lux, figured prominently as one of the three Commissioners overseeing the CEH (CEH 1999) and is now Culture Minister. Ms. Lux is a seasoned state bureaucrat and was able to hold her own both with the other two Commissioners (a ladino lawyer and the U.N. representative from Germany) and now in the Ministry. But she is also prosthetically overcoming the lack of presence of Mayas and of Mayan women in the truth commission (almost completely staffed by foreigners and ladinos) and in all the other Ministries (which, except for the Vice Minister of Education, are run by ladinos).

Prosperity

The *mujer Maya* is also vital for the production of Guatemalan national identity in other scenes where, without her, it wouldn't have a leg to stand on. Just as the landmine joke posits the *mujer Maya* as prosthetic bearing the brunt of historic violence, she has been deployed to face the toxic conditions of Guatemala's front lines in its articulations with transnational capital. In the mid-1980s, with the war, the debt crisis, rampant corruption, and the historic effects of underdevelopment, Guatemala entered a severe and long-lasting economic crisis. The response negotiated with international lenders (in which, like the peace treaty, only "white" men were present at the table) has been termed "structural adjustment" and its aims are to lower inflation, drastically reduce public spending, and increase foreign reserves (Guatemalan Association for the Advancement of Social Sciences [AVANCSO] 1998; Barry 1987; Poitevin 1993; USAID 1982). As Grosz described the body image as intimately connected with its image of other bodies and vice versa, here we see the body image of the Guatemalan body politic compared with the model of other bodies (Guatemalan state officials, looking at "First World" economies, sign up for drastic surgical measures hoping to become one). In turn the images other bodies have of the subject's body (the IMF and World Bank pronounce Guatemala one sick patient) deeply affect the subject's body image. Both processes emphasize Guatemala as wounded, ill, stumped. As Willy Zapata, former president of Guatemala's Central Bank says, "the medicine must be taken" (quoted in Forster 1996).

When I asked a ladina who had recently returned from exile how it felt to be back in Guatemala she said, "I wish I were an archaeologist." When I asked why, she said, "Because it's all a ruin." Similarly, at the annual seminar of the Guatemalan Association of Managers on October 30, 1992 (with the theme "Does Guatemala have a National Strategy?") the moderator, Francisco Pérez de Antón, former editor of the weekly newsmagazine *Cronica*, summed up the proceedings by joking, "We sound a lot like Columbus. We don't know where we're going, we don't know where we are when we get there, and we're doing it all on borrowed money!" In Guatemala, the medicine prescribed to adjust this ruinous situation are nontraditional exports, which include new crops like snow peas and flowers, maquila production (primarily of textiles), and tourism. The medicine has been shown to have serious side effects in part through the increasing poverty caused by the privatization (with accompanying price increases) of various basic services and by cutting government subsidies.

These therapies are supported by particularly gendered power structures. When white men agree to take this medicine, so that Guatemala's wounded body image can function in the transnational world, they are leaning on the prosthetic of the *mujer* Maya. Throughout the world, as Enloe (1990), Miles (1991), Ong (1987), and many others have demonstrated, women's labor makes this new international division of labor possible, in part through what Miles calls the housewivization of women. Because women's work is supposedly supplemental to family income—she is "helping out" a father or husband—her wages are much lower than men's. "They see it as a complementary support, they do not value it as vital for the family's survival" (AVANCSO 1995:32).¹⁹

Similarly, the U.N. Mission to Guatemala (MINUGUA 2000) denounces that "It has become habitual in the agrarian sector that women are not recognized as workers, rather they are seen as collaborating on their husband's tasks and, due to this, they do not receive the wage due for their labors" (2000:16).²⁰ Nations attract foreign investment with an "attractive labor pool" and indigenous women, displaced by war and willing to work for four dollars a day (Green 1999:35) or less, are extremely attractive (evoking shades of Lévi-Strauss's "ardor"). Studies of the maquila and new crops in Guatemala have found that many employers prefer to hire young, unmarried women, and insist on intrusive, violent means to ensure that they remain productive (and not re-productive). Kurt Peterson, working in Guatemala, reports that "owners almost unanimously desire young, unmarried women in order to capitalize on their availability, youthfulness, and endurance" (Peterson 1992:42). He quotes the personnel manager at a Korean maquila saying: "My ideal worker is young, unmarried, healthy, thin and delicate, single, and does not have previous experience. If they have experience they come with many vices. They do not like to follow orders" (Peterson 1992:43). Over four-fifths of the workers in Guatemala's maquila factories are women and many of these are indigenous.

Women are also understood to be naturally docile, dexterous, nimble, and genetically programmed to sew and process food—unlike men, whose labor takes strength and effort (Pérez Sáinz et al. 1992; Castellanos de Ponciano et

al. 1992; Poitvin 1993). Most men and women working in the new industries in Chimaltenango, Guatemala—both workers and employers—accept these stereotypes and the resulting wage differentials (Dary Fuentes 1991:69; AVANCSO 1995).

Jane Collier suggests that the very enlightenment division between private (the home as space of leisure and desire) and public (the world of labor and alienation), and the ideals and institutions of citizenship and bourgeois law which facilitate Guatemala's incorporation into transnational markets, depend on this idea of women's natural predilections—the *mujer* Maya as prosthetic housewife. These institutions require people to have natural characteristics, to obey inner voices. "The ideal of a free market for jobs and commodities—that accompanied, and was made possible by, the spread of bourgeois legal concepts and institutions—required competitors for employment and sales to have inner capacities and desires that distinguished them from rivals" (Collier 1997:206–207). The "inner capacities" Mayan women deploy in export processing are linked to the home and to women's incarceration there as housewife—an unpaid laborer because she does it for love. In women's "hearts and homes rational men can seek the 'inner voice' that speaks their cultural heritage" (Collier 1997:210). In turn, since this is a modern home and no one is forcing women to cook and clean, she must do it because she wants to. Working in textile-manufacturing maquilas and with new crops, Mayan women are seen to be doing what comes naturally in the home—weaving, food preparation, and gardening—while simultaneously participating in modern production methods and the production of modern selves. Of course, Mayan women's decisions to participate in these activities are complex, responding to economic and familial pressures as well as hopes and dreams of their own, which often include both pride in their Mayan identity and the desire to be modern. So, while the Mayan home may seem vestigial to the national political economy and overarching transnational markets, I argue that these new industries lean on the interplay of modernity, tradition, nature, and home which coalesce in the *mujer* Maya at work on the assembly line.

Similarly, tourism in Guatemala is deeply dependent on the ardor and mystery of the *mujer* Maya—as condensation of indigenous culture, as well as on her underpaid labor. As a Culture Ministry official said to me: "Our cultural heritage is a major money-earner. It could be our entry into the global economy. We have a major industry to develop here, one that is not vulnerable to trade sanctions, to quotas, to tariffs, to rain or frost or drought. It can compete with any product on the world market and requires very little investment." When he speaks of "our cultural heritage" he really means *la mujer* Maya, since it is her incarceration in highland villages which keeps them "traditional," her ritual practices, the visual excitement of her colorful clothing, the commodification of her labor as weaver in the world famous market towns, and her willingness to sit for photos, which attract tourists from all over the world. As another state official said to me, "No one comes here to see the pollution and traffic in Guatemala City! No one comes to see the army! No one

flies all the way from Germany or Israel to see the hideous National Palace! They come to see Indians."

So, although ladino men may imagine themselves as white men saving brown women through "structural adjustment" and "national development," it is a joke. With agro-export development, tourism, maquila production, the new crops, and women's underpaid labor on plantations and in the service industries, actually, brown women are saving white men and women from red ink.

Ladino Prosthetic

The *mujer* Maya as maker of tradition and home is incorporated prosthetically to support the national body politic. As such she also structures ladino identity in various ways. While the landmine joke suggests she is a prosthetic, it also foregrounds the need for prosthetics—the way always-lurking violence shatters identifications, leaving body images stumped, haunted by phantom limbs. The ladino body politic used to seem isomorphic with national identity but the civil war and the peace process have stumped non-Mayan identities. Government counterinsurgency shocked many ladinos because it treated them like Indians—expendable, worthless, bereft of civil and human rights. Ladinos may have disproportionate power vis-à-vis, for example, Mayan women. However, the majority also inhabit disempowered positions vis-à-vis Guatemala's extremely skewed economic system, vis-à-vis the historically violent government, and as citizens of a peripheral country in the new world order. Ladinos as well as Maya were killed and disappeared in the war; ladinos as well as Maya are excluded from the negotiating tables.

In turn, Mayan organizing is increasingly revealing ladino identity as a problem for, rather than the solution to, a wounded body image. Ladino identity is culturally marked, primarily through supposedly "modern" practices—which would include, as Chatterjee suggests, "science, technology, rational forms of economic organization, modern methods of statecraft . . . the imitation of the west" (1990:237). Renato Rosaldo (1988) has pointed out that the powerful tend to represent themselves "without culture," except of course for "high" or "universal" culture. Historically in Guatemala, when Mayas shrugged off their "culture" and began to wear jeans, read books, use computers, drive cars, get elected to Congress, and so on, they were understood to be *come* ladino. It is frequently suggested (Fischer and Brown 1996; Smith 1990; Wilson 1995) that *ladinización*, or assimilation to the "modern" (either through "development" or ethnocide) is national and ladino policy towards the Maya. I am arguing, however, that these explanations black out the way these identities themselves are stumped and therefore rely on the prosthetic of Mayan ethnicity and the ardor and mystery of tradition in order to exist at all.

While Mayan traditions may appear vestigial, marked for extinction as modern Guatemalan and ladino identities rush towards the future, we must remember that tradition is prosthetic in Mark Wigley's sense, "always structural, establishing the place it appears to be added to" (1991:9, quoted in González 1995:135). Ladino identity—as national and modern—has "traditionally" defined

itself *against* the Mayan—as ethnic and nonmodern. The Maya are self-constituting others for ladinos, necessary for them to be nonethnic. For example, the *mujer* Maya supports this "modernity" in jokes which suggest that ladinos are "good" (because they do not employ women as minesweepers) and jokes that turn on indigenous peoples' inability to use or even appreciate technology. For example, when Rigoberta Menchú Tum won the Nobel Prize, many jokes hinged on her sudden ability to buy new-fangled machines that she cannot understand. They imagine her looking under the hood of her new Mercedes Benz to find the "horses" she had heard were there, or driving it in first gear around the country because she can't understand the clutch. As Enrique Añen, a Guatemalan anthropologist, explained, "Social position is important here and ladinos want to prove that they know about cars, laser discs, cable TV, that they are modern, part of the 20th century. The joke would be that even if she has money, Rigoberta is Indian, she is a brute, she doesn't know how things work. The opposite is that we're not Indians, so we do know."

As Chatterjee (1990) and Collier (1997) suggest, modernity/holds a paradox for national identity, which must define itself against what is "traditional or backward" (Collier 1997:207) yet also distinguish itself by some form of tradition. Until the pan-Mayan movement emerged, ladinos could both define themselves against and appropriate as their own past Mayan tradition. Mayan activism troubles this move, exposes the way relations between national and ethnic identities are not natural or whole, but instead are created and contingent, stumped. Like a wounded body relying on a prosthetic, these relations have a history and depend on technologies. The place where stump and prosthetic meet is suddenly itchy as Mayan organizing pushes ladinos to acknowledge that they are also an "ethnicity," rather than assuming they represent modern, national culture to be emulated by nonnational ethnic people.

Reacting to the Quincentennial, for example, the largest daily newspaper editorialized: "all the ethnicities must be involved in forming Guatemala's national future, and that means the ladino ethnicity as well" (*Prensa Libre* 1992: 15). A recently returned exile said in October 1992, "the worst part of all this 500 Years stuff is the Maya saying that the ladinos have no culture. How ignorant! I am ladino, petit bourgeois, and they tell me I have no culture! We have our literary tradition and a history of resistance! Without us there would have been no 1944,"²² or the resistance of the 1960s. We have a valiant history. We have our own Nobel Prize winner in Miguel Ángel Asturias!"

These comments reflect a shift in the previous hegemonic reading. Before, culture was a mark of powerlessness, but Mayan organizing is re-articulating "culture" as a sign of power, throwing previously unproblematic ladino identifications into question. Indigenous activists are insisting that they remain Maya while appropriating the markers of modernity, at the same time that they demand that ladinos stop exploiting the image of the Maya, especially of the Mayan woman, for their own identity purposes (Cofit 1994; Council of Mayan Organizations of Guatemala [COMG] 1991; Majawil Q'ij 1992). These demands are being written into national law through the peace treaty and through

international law in the Congressional approval of the International Labor Organization's Convention 169 on the Rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries.²³

The Maya are claiming to be both the past and future of Guatemala and in turn ladinos are having to adjust their body image, changing the shape of their phantom limb to better fit the new articulations with this prosthetic. In organized seminars and study groups, as well as informal gatherings and conversations in barrooms, beauty salons, and soccer matches, people are discussing that previously unmarked category: ladino body politics, and the new buzzword, intercultural identity. In an interview with me, Edelberto Cifuentes, professor of history at the National University, described the bind this puts the ladino in: "What can the ladinos do? Our own identity is suddenly in crisis. Indians have their own organizations, their organic cultures, and ladinos want to be a part of this, but they have not developed their own project of what the country should be like. We can no longer teach a history that erases difference or talk of a unity that doesn't exist. We do not have a nation yet." Reacting to this challenge to ladino identity in the largest circulation daily newspaper, the editorialist Mario Roberto Morales wrote, "the mestizo is pathetic, an imitator, full of complexes, a schizoid personality. He hates his Indian mother and lives on fantasies of his Spanish father. His is a divided conscience" (1992:24). So in the jokes about technology, which incorporate the *mujer Maya* to mark ladino modernity, black humor about brown women seems to save white people from turning green with envy.

Domesticity

"Hating their Indian mother" and rejecting Rigoberta Menchú Tum as Nobel Prize winner are ways the *mujer Maya* is necessary to a stumped and baffled ladino body politics. She supports it by being what it is not, at the same time that the naturalness of that prop is under question. As in these comments, many ladinos acknowledge this shift in body politics but clearly find it frightening and eerie.²⁴ An idiom frequently used in my interviews to deflect this discomfort was that of the home, deployed to describe the (ideal) relation between the nation-state and indigenous peoples. When ladinos discussed the emergence(y) of Mayan organizing, many said, "we all have to live in one house." An even more common remark was some form of the following: "but this is like a wife leaving her husband. She already has a home, a family, a legal bond, she can't just up and leave!" This metaphor concisely evokes the terrible intimacy of Maya and ladino as well as the power asymmetries embedded in the patriarchal nuclear family posing the nation as home, the ladino as father/husband, and the *Maya* as wife and mother. As with traje, ethnicity is gendered female, and women's place is naturalized as being in the home, resonating with the "housewivization" (Miles 1991) that allows the *mujer Maya* to play so integral a support role in "national development."

The metaphor of *Maya* as woman in the national family does psychic support work for ladino identity. And, in the most material way, this identity is

propped up by the *mujer Maya*. As in the maquila, where she acts on her "natural characteristics" and "inner voice" as Collier (1997) describes it, she also provides domestic labor in the ladino home: preparing food, caring for clothing, providing hospitality, raising children, supporting the leisure of others, and performing the innumerable tasks requiring nimble fingers and dexterous hands to maintain the bourgeois household. If the ladino body image has tried to define itself as modern in contrast to Mayan tradition, this image is also about class definitions. As the returned exile said above, ladino identity wants to be (at least) *petit bourgeois*. The *mujer Maya* as domestic prosthetic is what supports this body image. A surprising number of ladino households employ Mayan women as domestic "help," in both the cities and rural areas. Most middle-class ladino families have live-in servants, and the upper classes often have several Mayan women living in their houses. This domestic prosthetic is literally structural: even extremely modest apartments in Guatemala City (simply a bedroom, living room, kitchen, and bath) have the expectation of domestic labor built in—a small room and separate bathroom for the *mujer Maya*. Families who cannot afford full-time domestic labor often employ an indigenous woman to come in for one or two days a week to wash clothes, clean house, shop, cook food, and run errands.²⁵ Sitting in a tiny two-room dirt floor shack in a remote highland village, talking with a ladina woman, a single mother who supports her children by taking in washing, I asked, who was the indigenous girl who had just come in. "She's our muchacha,"²⁶ I was told. "She makes us tortillas." Here, even the poorest ladina in town leans on the labor of the *mujer Maya*.

The naturalization of the *mujer Maya* in the (even when someone else's) home undergirds what was far and away the most popular joke told about Rigoberta Menchú Tum. *Everyone* who recounted a "Rigoberta joke" told this one: "Did you hear that Mattel is making a doll of Rigoberta? They say that Barbie is really happy because now she'll have a maid." Another popular one with a similar theme goes, "Rigoberta died and went to heaven. When she got to the Pearly Gates Saint Peter looked out the door then called back inside, 'The tortillas are here!'" Ms. Menchú, of course, worked as a domestic for a ladino family in Guatemala City when she was a teenager. In her testimonial (1984) she denounces the inhumane treatment and horrifically low wages. While she was spared, sexual abuse seems to be a common experience of young Mayan women working in ladino homes.²⁷

Class categories are clearly about more than income. They are marked by hygiene, leisure practices, sumptuary codes, respectability, and other forms of cultural capital. As Ann Stoler describes in her work on Foucault and colonial biopower, bourgeois bodies are cultivated through certified knowledge and jurisdiction over how to live: "civilities, conduct, and competencies" (1995:83) which are supported through discourses of race, and in Guatemala are made possible by the intensive labor of the *mujer Maya*. This labor in turn is hidden by naturalizing the *mujer Maya*'s role as wife and mother, suggested by the metaphor of Mayan organizing being like a woman leaving her legal

husband (and where the rape of Mayan women would also be naturalized through gender, class, ethnic, and sexual taxonomies).

However, the ladino home (and public space) is increasingly less cozy as bourgeois taxonomies are stumped. The *mujer Maya* is not so naturally docile. She is increasingly a lumpy, semiautonomous prosthetic. The jokes about Rigoberta Menchú Tum are attempts to contain this international celebrity, but it is not likely the Nobel Prize winner and U.N. ambassador will be mopping a ladino's floor any time soon. Mayan and ladina women are beginning to organize domestic workers, providing spaces for companionship and information on their rights as workers. Delia Tujah is a Mayan activist frequently invited to speak to groups of ladinos on the "Ethnicity Question." She says, "People there say that they have no problems with Indians, they get along fine with them, and the proof of this is that they have Indian maids! That they let them in their houses! I told them that that is not what I am talking about. Valuing someone for their labor is not the same as valuing them as a full human being with respect for all the different aspects of their culture." Here brown women are catching white people red handed in their racism. In addition, these "muchachas" are no longer shy about appearing radiant in their traje on their days off in the Central Square of Guatemala City. As one ladino friend said, "it's gotten so my family and friends call it 'the Reconquest'; the Indians are taking back the city."

The laboring presence of Mayan women is constitutive to the ladino body politic that is based in a home with clearly demarcated ethnic and class boundaries. But those boundaries are not closed—they are open wounds that attach in often contradictory ways with the *mujer Maya*, who in turn is mobilized by constantly changing phantom limbs. Anne McClintock suggests that slaves, prostitutes, the colonized, and domestic workers in 19th-century England represent a similar paradox of abjection, that which is rejected but which imperial identity cannot do without. The "sham, the Victorian garret and kitchen . . . the bedroom. Inhabiting the cusp of domesticity and the market, industry and empire, the abject returns to haunt modernity . . . that liminal state that hovers on the threshold of body and body politic" (1995:72).

The *mujer Maya* in the ladino home (which is, or wants to be, bourgeois) is both cause for anxiety and essential for its existence. When I call her a prosthetic, I don't mean to condone the economic and often sexual exploitation that occurs in that uncanny space. I want instead to address the complex intimacy of those relations while refusing to see her only as a victim. Stone calls prosthetic relationality a coupling, which feminists know is a site of power and violence as well as seduction and joy. The intimacies and complex identifications through which ladino children are raised by Mayan women, the soothing nodes of information and gossip that ladinas and Mayan women share as they work side by side, the exchange of touches, money, food, clothing, concern, play, and work are all forms of prosthetic interaction. The highland ladina (whose mother was indigenous) was close friends with her "muchacha." The girl often spent time in that little shack tumbled close on the bed together with children

and puppies, as they arranged each other's hair, told stories, stroked away cares, and she escaped her abusive father. While I jokingly rely the discursive identities produced in those couplings (brown women saving white people from dirt and grime), the experiences on the "cusp of domesticity and the market" can be, as Allucqure Stone says, "novel, strange, perhaps transformative" (Stone 1996:36).

National and ethnic bodies politic lean on fantasies of women and "the home" to be simultaneously modern and traditional. But as Sangari and Vaid remind us, such notions of "the home as the insulated private sphere which is to be free from even temporary challenges to male authority" (1990:12), and family and home (represented by the woman) marked as "eternal" and "traditional" are processes—effects—of modernity and nationalism.

Mayan Prosthetic

The Mayan rights movement also depends on the *mujer Maya* to prop up their wounded body politic and to extend their scope of operation, and she is also incorporated in intimate and lumpy ways. Just as Guatemala is imaged as a wounded body, split open along the fracture lines of ethnicity and class warfare and in need of prosthetics to function "normally," so the Maya image themselves as stumped, broken. The Guatemalan Mayan Language Academy (ALMG) says, "The Spanish invasion broke the process of our own evolution . . . because of the huge differences between one world and another, this experience was highly traumatic for the *pueblo Maya*. . . . We are not only oppressed, but mutilated and atomized" (ALMG 1990:26).

Pan-Mayan organizing for empowerment and against internalized colonialism entails the formation of a body politic from the stumps and wounded body images left by conquest and civil war. This emerging identity, like national and ladino bodies politic, must prove itself appropriate to modernity, which entails appropriating Chatterjee's (1990) markers like science, rationality, technology, and organization, as well as speaking Spanish, dressing "professionally" (not like a "clown"), and living in the city.²⁸

As Collier (1997) suggests, a major marker of modernity required by bourgeois law is following one's inner voice, making rational choices, rather than blindly and mindlessly following tradition. Mayan activists, hacking the national operating system by changing legal codes, lobbying ladino state officials for government funding, creating literacy programs and books and pamphlets in Mayan languages and Spanish, employing computers, desktop publishing, fax machines, modems, and video equipment to spread their message, and earning law and engineering degrees so they express themselves in these new idioms, are actively choosing how to live, and thus looking thoroughly modern. At the same time the Maya must show that they are inappropriate(d) by modernity (Nelson 1996; Trinh 1986). Otherwise they would just be ladinos, without a valid claim for a separate cultural existence. As Collier says, "modern nationalists have to find traditions that distinguish them from other nations without marking them as traditional or backward. This task is ultimately

impossible . . . but the impossibility does not relieve modern nationalists from the obligation to attempt it" (1997:207).

I argue that Mayan cultural rights activists deploy the *mujer Maya* as prosthetic to overcome this impossibility. Mayan men can take on the signs of modernity necessary for successful activism because Mayan women represent tradition. There are few women leaders in the urban-based Mayan organizations and during my fieldwork the only women working in the ALMG main office were employed as secretaries, cleaning women, and accountants.²⁹ While Mayan women are almost completely absent here, where it is most essential to look modern, the *mujer Maya* seems essential to their body image.

Many male activists commute weekly or monthly to highland villages and towns to be with their families, but some of their claim to identity seems dependent on the women's territorial incarceration. Mayan women's lack of presence in leadership positions in the Mayan cultural rights movement may betray a certain anxiety about losing this legitimizing link to the land, to the past, to tradition—all of which are condensed onto the *mujer Maya*. In turn, Mayan men who live in the city and speak Spanish most of the time can have Mayan children—who speak a Mayan language, grow up in a community with ties to the earth, and know their elder family members—because their wives or sisters or mothers remain in the villages and raise the children there.

The *mujer Maya*—who lives in the villages, raises children, is monolingual and illiterate, weaves her own clothing, retains the Mayan calendar, pairs out tortillas by hand, and maintains the *milpa* (corn crop) while her husband or brother is in the city agitating for indigenous rights—represents the living link to the past, to the Classic Maya. She is the prosthetic that extends across historical distance, making the past present. Thus she legitimizes the urban-based activist claim that as Maya they are both appropriate to the modern nation and inappropriate/d by the corruption of current events.³⁰ Some Mayan activists claim that because Mayan women stayed in the villages and their homes during the Conquest and Colony they did not interact with the damaging effects of Spanish rule. Thus, they claim, she has never been conquered, and so retains a direct link with the cultural past.

This story resonates strongly with Chatterjee's discussion of nationalism in India and its "resolution of the women's question." Indian nationalists dealt with the impossible demand of being modern and traditional by setting up barriers between the inner and outer, the home and the world. "As long as we take care to retain the spiritual distinctiveness of our culture, we could make all the compromises and adjustments necessary to adapt ourselves to the requirements of a modern material world without losing our true identity . . . The world is a treacherous terrain of the pursuit of material interests. . . . The home in its essence must remain unaffected by the profane activities of the material world—and woman is its representative" (Chatterjee 1990:238–239).

In strikingly similar ways the Mayan movement (while not nationalist in the sense of working for independence) leans on the *mujer Maya*, produced through the same phantasmatic split between public and private that supported

nationalists in India (and today supports the *maguila* and *ladino* bourgeois domesticity). The *mujer Maya* provides the support necessary for the inappropriated Mayan activist to be both traditional and modern. A symptomatic example of this is an issue of the magazine *limilew* produced by the Center for the Study of Mayan Culture (CECMA) and Cholsamaj, staunch members of the urban Mayan movement, and published in *Siglo XXI*, a major daily newspaper. Their August 9, 1996 issue was dedicated to "Mujeres Mayas" and it repeats tropes I heard over and over in interviews with Mayan male activists. The opening editorial states,

As we reach the millennium we must remember and recognize the decisive and fundamental role played by la *mujer Maya* throughout time, as the guardian of life, wisdom, knowledge, and the reproduction of our ancestral culture. We must contemplate this millenarian aspect of la *mujer Maya*, to revalorize and revitalize her role in the framework of complementarity and duality inherited from our ancestors. Especially now when feminist movements from other cultures, foreign to our own, attempt to divide indigenous peoples, as if the divisions promoted by the Protestant sects, the Catholics, the army, the guerrilla movement, and the political parties were not enough, to mention just a few. [CECMA 1996:13]

My interviews with Mayan activists are full of remarks like "it is the women who retain their Mayan culture." When Mayan women, like Francisca Alvarez, try to discuss gender issues in the Mayan movement, some Mayan men have called them "ethnocidal" in published denunciations (Alvarez 1996:8).

In my interviews with him and in public remarks, Mr. Andrés Cus of the ALMG reiterated that Mayan body politics rely on a sense of confidence and security in oneself as a Maya, and in identification with the community. "What we see is a destruction of our values at a terrible pace. People must be conscious of this. If you know who you are, it is not destructive to learn Spanish, English, French, whatever, but otherwise this can hurt you." But what are these values, this community, if not what one learned from one's mother? The "mother tongue," foods, customs, traditions—all are maintained in this body image by the *mujer Maya*.

For example, one leader of the ALMG said, "A Mayan woman is not a woman unless she makes tortillas. Some women say they don't have time, but this is part of a woman, she cannot leave it behind. My wife would be too ashamed if she did not make tortillas, she would lose the dignity of being a woman." The small, fat traditional tortillas of Guatemala are patted out by hand (unlike in Mexico where a press is often used). It can take several hours to prepare the corn and roll the tortillas for each meal. Even the most outlying villages now boast at least one *molina de nixtamal* (mechanical corn grinder) that has immensely shortened women's time devoted to tortillas. However, there are many men who claim that the only authentic tortilla is made of corn ground by hand and rolled out in hours of painstaking labor. Similarly, Richard Wilson suggests that the Mayan *Qawa Quk* a movement in Alta Verapaz which seeks to boycott national and international products in favor of traditional and local-made

goods will lean most heavily on women's labor. "Men's clothes and agricultural tools (especially machetes) are two types of goods that involve participation in the market, yet they are excluded from the boycott. . . . The boycotting of foodstuffs, manufactured soap, and plastic vases is likely to affect women's labor more than men's" (Wilson 1995:287).

Women's labor is once again naturalized. Performed in the private space, and because she wants to (since, as Collier [1997] reminds us, the home is imagined as a place of freedom, so no one is making her do it; it is just that otherwise she would be "too ashamed"), it becomes part of her essence. Hendrickson suggests that women's weaving ability is also simply assumed by Mayan men. The verve, color, and beauty are spontaneous manifestations of her soul, produced by "unschooled automatons with clever hands" (1995:151).³²

The fact that most Mayan women are monolingual is similarly naturalized as the *mujer Maya's* "valiant" commitment to maintain her language and heritage, rather than an effect of gendered schooling practices which more frequently pull girls than boys out of school to work at home or for wages (Pérez Sáinz et al. 1992).³³

Also naturalized is the hard work of saving up, preparing for, and cleaning up after festivals and *cofradía* rituals—all signs of culture, community, and identity—which "naturally" falls to the *mujer Maya* (Collier 1997; Stephen 1991).

Discussion of the genocide suffered by the Maya and emphasis on the natural role of women in passing on the culture to their children have resulted in a marked pro-natalist stance among the *Mayan* rights movement—another way this body politic leans on the *mujer Maya*. In interviews, Mayan and ladino men emphasized the importance of children for indigenous women's identity. Many Mayan activists publicly lobbied against the "Population Law" of 1993 that was denounced by the Church as "the abortion law," although abortion was nowhere mentioned and it primarily provided funds for education on reproduction and contraception. It failed to pass in the Congress.

This pro-life discourse leans on the *mujer Maya's* naturalized reproductive capacities and domestic role and also suggests the spiritual superiority of the Mayan home, so essential to establishing the Mayan body politic. Similarly, in an almost universal trope when asked about women in the Mayan movement, both male and female organizers claimed that gender relations are equal among the Maya. This is illustrated, they claim, in the *Pop Wuj* or "Mayan Bible" in which, unlike the Christian Bible, men and women are formed at the same time from the same material. This is a powerful discourse of domestic equality that the Maya deploy against the ladino model of unequal gender relations condensed into the Adam and Eve story. In turn, when one Mayan woman mentioned issues of domestic violence in Mayan homes she quickly amended herself saying, "This might exist, but it's an effect of the ladinoization of our people." This discourse of gender complementarity, central to the paeans in *Iximuleu*, separates the Mayan home, represented by the *mujer Maya*, from the outside world, and legitimates the demands of the Mayan body politic.³⁴ In turn, attempts to inoculate indigenous women against the divisive effects of

foreign feminism (which in the *Iximuleu* editorial is linked to Protestant sects and the Guatemalan army as threats to the integrity of the Mayan community), suggest an awareness that the prosthetic is lumpy, semi-autonomous, and may have a mind of her own.

In turn, detailing this *production* of the *mujer Maya* as traditional is not to say, as Collier (1997), Paul (1974), Stephen (1991), and others point out, that women do not enjoy a great deal of satisfaction from performing this work well, or that these discourses of ethnic pride do not move them powerfully and allow them to articulate a range of meanings to their labor. As a prosthetic, the *mujer Maya* is always more than an exploited victim.

Mayan Women

Intriguingly, in the intimate connection between body politic and prostheses, sandwiched in the *Iximuleu* supplement between the editorial and Mayan men musing about her new awakening to modernity, is a centerfold of notable Mayan women, where a different voice momentarily breaks through. Here are professionals, congresswomen, linguists, professors, journalists, engineers, and researchers—educated, sophisticated, and articulate.

This different voice suggests Mayan women find themselves in an ambivalent position, incorporated and essential to Mayan body politics, but also leaned on, and only semi-autonomous. This position is familiar to women working in nonfeminist popular or revolutionary movements, and to women of color working in white feminist organizations: how to support Mayan activism and the way it denaturalizes various power-drenched body images in post-Quincentennial Guatemala *while* it leans on the naturalized prop of the *mujer Maya*? Many Mayan women are active in the movement and find that it incorporates quite nicely with their body image. As Sangari and Vaid (1990) and others have suggested, the figure of Woman that supports national identity formation (what I am calling the *mujer Maya*) also holds "ardor and mystery" for that elusive actually existing woman. The home as free from colonial disfiguration, ancient stories of gender complementarity, the spiritual power of the *mujer Maya*, these are empowering discourses for Mayan women. *Mayan women* may also lean on the *mujer Maya* to construct their own visions of the Mayan body politic, although for them she is a less wieldy prosthetic. Questions of gender tend to be displaced by class and ethnic identification in Mayan practice and literature, which often puts Mayan women in the double bind of intense loyalty to the Mayan struggle joined with awareness of the specificity of Mayan women's issues.³⁵

For example, a Mayan woman activist said, "Indigenous women use only natural methods of birth control. They would never abort a child! You have the children God gives you and you accept it. Using contraceptives causes birth defects and in the Maya cosmology it is viewed as a sin." In another interview several weeks later, however, she asked me what kind of contraception I used and if I could supply her with information. She said that her husband had left her five years ago with one child and that abstinence was her form of birth control.

"If I had stayed with him, I would have had many more children and I would not be involved the way I am now, in the Mayan organizations, and going to school. It would have been impossible!" One Mayan woman activist described her problems with Mayan men:

Even though we have very important roles in the community, in the organizations, there are men who beat women. They think, 'the man rules, it is my right to do whatever I want.' Many men take advantage of women and leave them stuck with a child. They drink and they come home and fight in the house, in front of the children I am separated from my husband because he abused me. I don't see any men now. I already have three children and I don't need any more. My mother takes care of them so I can work and do my organizing work with women, explaining to them they don't have to endure these things, that they can participate. If I were still married, I could never do these things, be so involved. I think things are changing, some men are helping out more. What really makes a difference is when women have their own income. Then they don't have to sit through beatings. They can just leave.

Many women I interviewed would admit there were problems connected to alcohol consumption, violence, and abandonment in their communities, but would also insist that "among the Maya the man respects the woman. Men are our support, we must walk together." Such statements are both about the heterogeneity of body images (Mohanty et al. 1991; Moraga 1983) and a strategic leaning on the *mujer* Maya. Just as the Maya movement as a whole appropriates modernity and nationalist discourses of unity along with the glorious Mayan past for their own body politic, Mayan women are leaning on stories of gender equality in the *Pop Wuj*, to struggle over how that body image will look and feel.

Part of this effort included the formation of the Seminar of Mayan Women. According to participants, about 40 women first met in Antigua in 1987 to discuss the role of women in cultural and economic development. They decided that women are vital for development but tend to be marginalized, and they needed to work for more equality. Fifty women participated in the second meeting in 1989 where the emphasis was on the 500 years of Conquest and its specific effects on women. They discussed spirituality, clothing, language, economics, and the general prejudice against Mayan women who are treated like slaves. A third seminar was held to discuss women's participation in the Quincentennial and how women could learn to value themselves as Maya and as women.

Olga Xicox, one of the organizers said, "We have to fight against cultural patterns for women to participate. In the communities women worked in the home. Also, before, if a woman began to emerge as a leader and the government noticed, she would suffer government repression, violence. Women are still afraid of participating." In addition to women's own reluctance, they have encountered problems with financing and with the suspicions of Mayan men. "At first the men questioned our work. They were afraid we would tend towards feminism. Only women participate, but we are not feminist. We do not

want a westernized organization. We are not against men. We do not say that women are better. We support the organizations of the men. Some men are afraid of competition, but it is not that. Women are the ones who have participated the least, who receive the least support. To be full partners for men and partners in the struggle to maintain our culture, we need to develop ourselves, create new ways of participating."³⁶

By 1993 the Seminar seems to have stopped meeting. A similar fate seems to have befallen the Council of Maya Women, part of COMG. This may be due to combined pressures—on women's time and energy, and pressure to unify behind struggles over the peace accords, heating up in the wake of the Quincentennial. In recombinant prosthetic relationality, however, by 1994 Mayan women were organizing within the aegis of the peace accords. In the Civil Society Assembly (ASC) they are active in the multiethnic Women's Forum, and are working in COPMAGUA (Guatemalan Coordinator of Organizations of the Pueblo Maya) in various ways, including the Permanent Commission for the Rights of the Indigenous Woman (founded in August 1996 and which includes non-Mayan indigenous women and Garífunas). The Permanent Commission claims to have mobilized 27,000 indigenous women throughout the country as part of local organizing committees. It was central in founding the state-supported Mayan Women's Legal Aid Office (*Defensoría de la Mujer Maya*), which was mandated in the Peace Accords. In addition, more autonomous groups like *K'agla'* and *K'ich'in Konjel* have formed.

In 1989 I attended a two-day workshop in Mexico City of Guatemalan women, some in exile and others from Guatemala. About half the participants were Maya and half ladina. In the hours of lectures and discussion the women explored the specificities of their situation as women. Like any "consciousness raising" there was a great deal of surprise and emotion, of exclamations of "I never saw it that way before!" For example, the subject of the *molina de nixtamal* and cultural purity resting on the exploitation of women's labor was ardently discussed and several of the Mayan women vowed never to hand-grind corn again. In 1993 I ran into one of the participants in Guatemala City. She asked me if I were still involved in women's issues and she said she was not. "That feminism is all Western imperialism," she said. "I am a Maya before I am a woman."

Such a statement makes perfect sense given the fears of violence (despite the end of the war), and hostile ladino reactions to Mayan organizing. However, the sorts of pressure that Ms. Xicox suggests above, based in the naturalization of the *mujer* Maya, influence the conditions of possibility for Mayan women. The Mayan activist Delia Tujab says she has found it impossible to work in the Mayan cultural rights movement:

When you look at the Executive Councils and Boards you see there are not any women participating. Some men are worse than others, but many can't stand for anyone else to be in charge—especially not when it is a woman. I've had big fights with some of them. We have become enemies. Some of it is just infighting and personal ambition, but there is a reason there are only men in the leadership. I've seen

this happen. If there are any women who are starting to move up, then what the men do is seduce them, get them pregnant and just leave them like that, so they won't get power, to shut them up. This happens a lot.

Other women trying to be active in the movement complain of intense teasing and sexually-tinged harassment from Mayan men (often on the theme that they need to produce more Mayan babies to make up for the genocide). They also suffer subtle exclusions like the constant drain of the daily struggles to be listened to, and last-minute changes in meeting times or places which, given their dependence on fixed child care arrangements, make it difficult for them to attend.

Mayan women—like Guatemalan nationalists, ladinos, and Mayan men—are also caught between the simultaneous modernity and tradition demanded by nationalist politics, bourgeois law, and their male companions in struggle. Jane Collier says, "I do question whether tradition is modernity's opposite. Tradition, I have argued, is modern as well" (Collier 1997:215). Similarly, I argue that the *mujer Maya* is not opposed to modernity, she is part of it, produced by it. As a lumpy, semiautonomous prosthesis she sustains modernity and is in turn changed by it, made problematic. For example, the historic struggles creating the conditions of possibility for Mayan organizing (Catholic Action, the bilingual education system, peasant organizing, development programs, the war) also mean that more Mayan women are pursuing education, are holding information-service jobs, and are getting involved in Mayan activism, rather than staying in their villages. Many of these women do not have time to weave or make tortillas. Hendrickson writes that women active in the revitalization movement felt they had to choose as girls between learning to weave and their schoolwork. They now express interest in learning to weave, but cannot find the time (1996:161). Claudia Dary Fuentes found that modern nontraditional export production in Chimalenango has contradictory effects on Mayan women. While the crops provide employment in their communities so they are less likely to migrate (and thus more likely to retain their traje and language), these women found it harder to participate in community life, primarily for lack of time. Women are also losing the financial autonomy that allowed them to buy thread, contribute to festivals, and participate in "tradition," as their vegetable plots (for which they controlled the earnings) are now devoted to export crops whose earnings tend to be controlled by the husband or father (Dary Fuentes 1991). Because they're too tired, they have no time or they never learned, only 9 percent of the women Dary Fuentes canvassed weave for sale and only 20 percent for their own use (1991:79). In addition, many indigenous communities are now both disrupted and sustained by the emigration of young women and men, many to the capital or areas with maquila employment. Tracy Ehlers (1990) also documents how women weavers in Totonicapán are becoming more dependent on male wage earners as their daughters' unpaid labor, which once sustained their production, is lost to education and paid work. This means that more of these professional Mayan women lean on the labor of other

mujeres Mayas to be both modern and traditional (Ms. Menchú certainly does not have time or energy to weave all of her beautiful traje).

The body image of Mayan women who identify themselves with the *mujer Maya*—as the ones who uphold tradition in a culture where "gender relations have always been equal"—is in complex relation with a body politic in which Mayan women are deeply engaged in "modern" forms of production and in which the majority of activist women are divorced or widowed, and excluded from positions of power. As one said, "I would never have been political if my husband were still around." Many Mayan women are struggling valiantly, inside and out of the cultural rights movement, for inclusion with difference in both the national and Mayan bodies politic. As in the *Iximuleu* supplement where the prosthetic of the *mujer Maya* as tradition rubs in both irritating and exciting ways with images of Mayan women as engineers and lawyers, the *mujer Maya* is always more than passive ground.

Feminist Anthropology's Prosthetic Relationality

I was trained as a feminist anthropologist to seek out these irritations and excitements, to listen aggressively for the way different voices sometimes break through, because they are a site of articulation where I can connect, as a gringa, in solidarity. I love it when the *mujer* speaks as a woman, saying what I want to hear. Mayan women complaining about sexism in the cultural rights movement resonates with my experiences of misogyny, a wounded place we seem to have in common. In turn, the *mujer Maya* gets to function as my prosthetic as I speak for her here against venal national elites, the violence of transnational capital and structural adjustment, Mayan men who don't appreciate her the way I do, and other anthropologists who ignore gender. But with the slight twist of gender in the first term we are right back to Spivak's original calculation of white women saving brown women from brown (and whiter) men and women. This is kind of a sick joke since brown women are really supporting the wounded body image of U.S. white middle-class feminist anthropology, stuck with our phantom limbs of racism, classism, homophobia, and colonizing erotic investments. Like all of the bodies politic examined here, we are in a seemingly impossible situation where we must simultaneously respond to the modern demand to think for ourselves by performing critical analysis (objectivity), and hold on to the discipline's tradition of being in solidarity with the people with whom we work.

Jean Jackson (1989) and Jane Collier (1997) have eloquently explored the difficulty of how to talk about the nationalist traditions which legitimate struggles over rights, when to the long term ethnographer those traditions are clearly invented. As Jackson says, the stakes over "culture" in the Vaupes of Colombia are so high that it is easy to make enemies when she talks about it. Collier notes that regardless of academic theories about hybridity, identity as constructed, and the dangers of essentialism, for many people identity is not negotiable, "nationalists have to be right . . . scholars, too, have to be right" (1997:204).

U.S. scholars whose body image includes being in solidarity with a people in struggle often find themselves stumped by how to conduct a friendly critique (Hale 1994; Stoll 1999; Warren 1992). Aware of the colonizing nature of salvation discourses, roundly critiqued both at home and abroad for unwanted interventions, self-reflexive about the systems of transnational privilege that allow us to even be there, and of the disempowerment of people who have suffered ethnocide and genocide, who are gringos to criticize? In many field sites anthropologists have decided to remain silent rather than risk neocolonialism, and maybe losing informants (especially on the issues of feminism, often so vehemently resisted by male nationalists). The intense violence of the civil war in Guatemala has made it especially hard to make friendly critiques of the exclusions practiced by the left and the Mayan movements.

Just as ladinos think of Mayan organizing as "a finger in the wound," gender seems to be an especially fraught issue for the Mayan movement. *Itimuleu* links feminism with the army as a danger to Mayan community, and the prominent Mayan intellectual Dr. Demetrio Cojt critiques Mayan women who push for their issues to be addressed. "They are separatists! They can't have a separate space—don't they realize they are half of the Mayan movement? They are dividing us." When I first ventured a query about the lack of women in leadership positions in the ALMG, the President bawled me out for half an hour saying that "everyone critiques us for talking about Mayan identity and Mayan equality, and then going home where we have refrigerators and Western goods, and our wives taking care of our children. But who are you to judge? Do people judge your work with how you live your life at home?" His comments express both the impossible divide between modernity and tradition that the Mayan body politic must cover over, and the importance of the *mujer Maya* to do that. He is also expressing a keen understanding of context, of the way Mayan body image is formed in relation to other body images and to the images those bodies politic have of the Maya. As he is well aware, ladino and gringo racism have historically leaned on colonized women to justify often violent interventions.

Mayan body image however (like Guatemalan nationalist and revolutionary bodies politic), is also formed in relation to positive images other bodies have of it. While Mayan activists work both to salvage and maintain cultural practices in their communities, a great deal of their energy is addressed to non-treatises on their historic and legal rights in Spanish; reporting and opining in the national radio and print media; skillfully lobbying the Guatemalan government for legislative and financial support for their initiatives; holding seminars and fora open to the public; participating in the commissions which are implementing the peace accords; touring the United States and Europe to present their case; and granting thousands of interviews a year to national and foreign scholars. The value placed on the image of the body politic held by the non-Maya, especially foreign scholars, is clear in the immense amount of time devoted to these interviews—some leaders may give two or three a day!³⁷ Warren

(1992) and Fischer and Brown (1996) address the intricate relations among scholars and Mayan activists, the exchanges of information, money, suspicion, recrimination, as well as support and friendship.³⁸ Scholars, of course, lean on the Maya as subjects of analysis and supports for our careers. But the Maya body image in turn incorporates the transnational authority bestowed by this interest, some security from state violence through contacts outside Guatemala, the financial support it may provide, and the scholarly legitimization of being written about—these are also prosthetic supports.

Mayan men and women are so gracious and generous with their time and energy in part because they are acquiescing to the demands of the scholarly body politic that leans on them across a transnational power differential. This relation is neocolonial—as an anthropologist my search for the scoop on an exotic other, my excitement at seeing a new historic actor emerge, my desire to find women organizing for their rights, even if they "are not feminist." But while this characterization certainly rings true, it also returns us to the already constituted first-world scholar who produces her professional and political subjectivity over the ground of Mayan organizing and the *mujer Maya*.

I have been arguing that the *mujer Maya* is more lumpy, semiautonomous. She lobbies against a "Population Law" and asks privately for birth control advice; we talk for hours about what makes Mayan and gringo men the way they are, about housework, about sexuality, about jobs and bosses, about fears of feminism and hopes for sweeter lives, and we tell jokes—both brutal and silly. Feminist scholars may not be able to hear her, as Spivak reminds us, on a distortion-free channel, but we cannot help but be in intimate, irritating, and exhilarating prosthetic contact. Gender, like class, nation, and ethnicity, can be a medium of connection, the straps that hold body to prosthesis. It does not make us the same, but this may be so cyborg a relation that differences between body and prosthetic become unclear. Perhaps she also uses me to extend her scope of operations, to overcome distance and be re/presented here on these pages—just as Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Otilia Lux, and other Mayan women are in recombinant relations with those bodies politic that lean on them as prosthetic, changing them through the very process of articulation. Gringo anthropology and solidarity are partially, lumpily incorporated into the Mayan body image—through the prosthetic joinings I've been discussing and through Mayan men and women becoming anthropologists.

This is prosthetic relationality, in which the Maya are not only victim or ground for the formation of feminist anthropology's body politic. Both body and prosthetic change as they are joined. Rather than reified nationalism, ethnic or first-world feminist identities (the latter an unintended effect of a guilt-ridden refusal to engage), these are cyborg body politics, wounded and constitutively leaning on their prosthetics. These are stumped identities—open, wounded, bewildered, and political. They are shot through with power differentials but are never so simple as actor versus ground. Prosthetic relationality acknowledges as Rajan says, that "location is not simply an address. One's affiliations are multiple, contingent, and frequently contradictory" (1993:8).

Although Jane Collier is right when she says that "nationalists have to be right" (1997:204), I have argued that at some level the identities under discussion acknowledge this contingency. Perhaps the brutal violence of Guatemala's 35 years of civil war makes explicit that nation, ethnicity, gender, and even scholars in solidarity are wounded bodies politic.

I am suggesting that these bodies politic are gendered in specific ways and intimately related to each other, so that we cannot understand the relations among the imagined and lived body of the bleeding nation, the relation between indigenous rights and the project of nation building, the simultaneity of modernity and tradition, and the theoretical problems of the relation between real bodies and social fantasy, solidarity and critique, without thinking them all together. We need to think in all of these sites of both the manipulation and violence involved in using the *mujer Maya* as prosthetic device, and the ambivalence and affect involved in the intimate joins of that relation with an active, thinking tool (a sign and generatrix of signs). By keeping gender central, as "both structuring and structured by the wide set of social relations" (Sangari and Vaid 1990:3), we can explore the necessity of women's labor to national development, of loving relations among Mayan men and women, and the possibility of something like friendships among *gringa* anthropologists and Mayan women.

Disconnecting from these complex relationalities does not seem to be an option. I'd like to suggest *fluidarity* as an appropriate mode of prosthetic relationality.³⁶ Fluidarity is a practice of necessarily partial knowledge, in both the sense of taking the side of, and of being incomplete, vulnerable, never completely fixed—in other words, stumped. This neologism plays with the idea of solidarity in an attempt to keep its vitally important transnational relations open, while calling into question its tendency towards rigidity and its reliance on solid, unchanging identifications. Fluidarity anthropology needs to remember that a prosthetic is an "element that reconstructs that which cannot stand up on its own" (Wigley 1991:9, quoted in González 1995:135). The communication is two way, the late capitalist cyborg body politic is about connection, as well as wounds, about wetware and not very solid identities, about jokes and about fluidary relations—and maybe salvation is not the point.

Notes

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1. *Griinga* is a generally disrespectful term applied to Caucasian foreigners in Latin America. Drawing on the work of Abigail Adams (1998), elsewhere I discuss the intensely

relational nature of the term—a North American is not a *gringa* until she crosses a border (Nelson 1999).

2. Indigenous rights organizing has been split between the "Mayan" rights and the "popular" movements (Bastos and Carnus 1993, 1995; Fischer and Brown 1996; Nelson 1999; Warren 1998). Without reifying identifications and strategies that are increasingly interconnected, this division can be characterized as those more interested in cultural salvage and empowerment on the one side and those with a more class-based analysis on the other. In the late 1980s cultural activists began to use the term *Maya* to refer to pan-indigenous identifications based in linguistic use and experiences of internal colonialism. Within ten years this new signification has become a hegemonic way to refer to indigenous people in Guatemala.

3. Quotes are from interviews conducted with a range of people including Mayan organizers, Guatemalan state officials, development workers, and popular organization activists beginning in 1985. The bulk of this research was conducted in a full year of fieldwork (October 1992 to October 1993) supplemented by stays of one to three months in 1996, 1998, 1999, and 2000. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes are from author interviews.

4. The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Maya-K'iché woman Rigoberta Menchú Tum in 1992 was only the most visible sign of the increasing presence of Guatemala's indigenous majority on the national (and international) stage. While population figures are elusive, the indigenous population has been estimated at anywhere from 40 to 70 percent of Guatemala's thirteen million people. (While heterogeneous, the remaining 60 to 30 percent are generally categorized as "ladino.") The indigenous population is divided into some 22 ethnolinguistic groups, 20 of which are from the Mayan language trunk. The burgeoning cultural rights movement strives to gather together all of these people under the increasingly accepted term *Maya*, and are working for language rights in education, the courts, and other state institutions; and the revitalization of indigenous culture, including religion, law, clothing, and so on (see Bastos and Carnus 1993, 1995; Carlsen 1997; Fischer and Brown 1996; Nelson 1999; Smith 1991; Warren 1992, 1998; Watanebe 1995; and Wilson 1995).

5. The populist-authoritarian government of Alfonso Portillo and Genera Efraín Ríos Montt, inaugurated in January 2000, actively pursued indigenous candidates for its Congressional and mayoral stakes and has appointed indigenous people as ambassadors, governors, and Ministers, unlike the majority of their predecessors.

6. The point of this article is that what counts as a ladino or Guatemalan or Mayan or white or brown body politic is contingent and constantly being made to "matter" in Butler's (1993) sense—in part through jokes like these, and other forms of stumping (in the sense of political advocacy). The identity category of ladino is very complexly entangled with gendered body images and a pigmentocratic body politic (see Arenas Bianchi et al. 1999; Casaus Arzu 1992; Nelson 1999), which I am riffing on with the Spivak formulation. "Whiteness," of course, is an increasingly problematized category—for Spivak's colonizers, for ladinos, and for U.S. anthropologists. In Guatemala it is often termed *mestizo*, or mixed, but the category is marked less by phenotype than by cultural practices, which in turn are coded "modern" in contrast to Mayan "tradition"—in clothing, language, occupation, religion, and so on (T. Little-Siebold n.d. and C. Little-Siebold n.d.).

7. Spivak models this formulation on Freud's analysis of the rather slippery sentence "a child is being beaten" (Spivak 1988:296). This sentence describes a patient's fantasy which, under the pressure of analysis, reveals that it is actually a reversal—the sentence suffered a history of repressions which changed it from its original form which was "I am being beaten" (Freud 1955). In other words, the child's own fantasy of being

beaten (which is about the domestic space as a site of seduction and victimization) is displaced onto another child being beaten (suggesting the interchangeability of subject positions in fantasy). These shifting identifications reveal a slippage between who is being beaten, and who is being saved. Perhaps this is the slip of the joke from "she is being blown up" to "I am the victim of violence"; mine is the stumped body in need of prosthetic support. Such slippages may inform the fantastic figure of the *mujer Maya* in the landmine joke and in my playful reversals of Spivak's sentence—a slip that acknowledges the incorporation of the *mujer Maya* into various body images.

8. Ethnicity is also frequently understood as "the ground" for national identities (A. Smith 1986; Guidetti, Pellizi, and Tambiah 1988; Williams 1989). "Ethnicity," "tradition," and "culture" often coalesce into "Woman," and in Guatemala are often represented by the "mujer Maya."

9. Apart from their status as victims—of rape or as relatives of the dead and disappeared—very little recent work on Guatemala focuses on gender specificity. Hendrickson (1995) and Ehlers (1990) are two notable exceptions.

10. "Since speech is identified as self-expression, and silence as self-extinction, they are closely tied into the project of subject-constitution. . . . the access to speech has defined social hegemony, just as its lack has defined subalternity in unequal social structures and situations. It is these procedures that I wish to problematize. . . . speech is never transparent, and silence is not always an imposition. . . . Speech thereby derives a contradictory status in liberation discourses: in opposition to silence it is viewed positively as expressiveness, liberation, 'truth,' power; in opposition to action, it stands in danger of being dismissed as 'mere words'" (Rajan 1993:84–85).

11. While no one can offer a map through this minefield, I have been strongly influenced by Mohanty et al. 1991, Trinh 1989, Wallace 1992, and many others. I'd also like to thank audience members at the Marxist Literary Group, June 1997 for their troubling readings of an earlier version of this text, especially Modhumita Roy, Clint Burnham, and Jerry Phillips.

12. This would be similar to how Laclau and Mouffe (1985) describe articulation and identity. The authors collected in *Between Woman and Nation* are exploring this very site of mediation that I call prosthetic (Kaplan et al. 1999). Please see the accompanying article "Phantom Limbs and Invisible Hands" (this issue) for more on the prosthetic metaphor.

13. According to Stone (1996) the body image is quite malleable. Paraplegics working with neurophysiologists have managed to transport certain portions of their body image so that they rub together where there is feeling on the physical body, allowing them pleasurable sensations otherwise denied.

14. Quetzil Castañeda (1996) has eloquently shown the modernity of this "tradition."

15. A signal rite of passage for those elected or named national Presidential is to make a pilgrimage to one of these towns (often Santiago Atitlán or Todos Santos Cuchumatanes) and there don the local dress. This is usually front page news with full color illustrations and although I've heard many people snort that he looks like a *payaso* (clown), the ritual recognizes the importance of tradition, embodied in *traje*, to the national body politic.

16. Uma Chakravarti points out that in the construction of the "new" woman for nineteenth century Indian nationalists from a past written by colonial Orientalists, a very specific woman was chosen to stand in for the whole: the romantic "Aryan woman (the progenitor of the upper caste woman). . . . It is no wonder then that the Vedic *dasi* (woman in servitude), captured, subjugated and enslaved . . . disappeared" (1990:28). Similarly, the *mujer Maya* deployed as prosthetic by the Guatemalan nation is always

shown smiling, in blooming health, with full *traje* (sometimes even perfectly manicured). Rarely is she shown as poor, desperate, or malnourished. Chakravarti suggests this image held affective power for Indian women and I would argue that this image of the *mujer Maya* also has material effects on Mayan women.

17. As well as the allegations in Stoll (1999).

18. Ms. Tuyuc was not re-elected in 1999. The Portillo government has appointed a Mayan woman, Aura Marina Oizoy, as Ambassador to Norway.

19. This is similar to the (heteronormative) notion that "the man must economically maintain the woman and the woman's going to find some man to support her" (Deere and León 1999:15). Similarly, Linda Green argues that "the new opportunities created by mainstream development projects in rural Guatemala were consistently geared toward men. Men's participation in literacy programs, rural cooperatives, agricultural schemes, health projects, and political parties all served to intensify their economic independence from women and widened the discrepancy between men's and women's contribution to the household economy. As men became more fully integrated into a market economy, women's increasing economic dependency on men resulted in increasing social vulnerability" (1999:97).

20. Thanks to Liz Oglesby for pointing this out. Guatemala's "traditional" exports rely on the "housewivization" of Mayan women's labor in various ways. Labor on coffee, sugar, and cotton plantations is often not waged, but paid by the amount harvested, so entire families will work together for one payment. In cases where men alone undertake seasonal migration to the coast, women's labor in maintaining crops, raising children, and household production is also unpaid (see Oglesby n.d. on changes in the sugar industry). An increasingly vital segment of Guatemala's economy—feminarcs from primarily men's work in the United States—also depends on women staying home so that the money will be sent back. A probably low estimate suggests \$465 million dollars flows into Guatemala annually via wives, daughters, and mothers left behind in the highlands (Gazaro 2000b:12). Lynn Stephen (1991) also documents the way Zapotec women's labor is a prosthetic for men's migration from Mexico.

21. Hendrickson estimates that Mayan women backpack weavers earn "well under a dollar for an eight-hour day" (1996:161).

22. The beginning of Guatemala's "Democratic Spring"—ten years of elected governments—amputated by the CIA-backed coup of 1954.

23. And the law is, as Collier (1997) suggests, a quintessential sign of modernity. To describe something cut off from intimacy, which was once one's own but is now alienated, which haunts the subject, *Heimlich* means home, so the uncanny also means the loss of "home"—exactly what ladinos experience with the challenges of the Mayan movement. Thanks to polyglot Mark Driscoll for translation aid.

25. All but one of the foreigners I know who live in Guatemala City employ Mayan women to do housework, at least one day a week. At first I resisted doing this, remembering the snide remarks made in graduate seminars about Laura Bohannon and Hortense Powdermaker with their servants in the bush. Exploiting domestic labor was not my idea of doing the "new" ethnography, which would be painfully aware of power differentials. Several weeks of trying to wash my clothes by hand, fight the cockroaches, shop between interviews when the markets were open, and pay bills in person at distant offices when I had work to do, led me to follow in well-worn gringo footsteps and hire Isabel González to "enlarge my scope of operation" (Webster's) as my prosthetic. I'm still not comfortable with this decision, and it is embarrassing to admit to here, but it

also suggests the systemic way that life in Guatemala depends on Isabel's labor and that of many other Mayan women.

26. This literally means "girl" in Spanish and is used to speak of domestic laborers in general. A similarly disrespectful generic term is "Maria."

27. Middle and upper class Maya also employ Mayan women of lower classes to do domestic labor. I have also heard of cases of sexual abuse in these homes. Of course, many poor ladina women also do domestic work. See Gill 1994 for some of the complexities of these relations in Bolivia.

28. If Mayan representatives are not in the city to speak for themselves, they will certainly be spoken for.

29. Interestingly enough there are several Mayan and ladina women in prominent positions in the popular movement, although primarily in positions associated with their identities as widows. Rosalina Tuyuc of CONAVIGUA (the Guatemalan National Widows Coordinator) and Nineth García de Montenegro of GAM (Mutual Support Group for Families of the Disappeared), are two examples.

30. I borrow the neologism inappropriate/d from Donna Haraway (1992) who uses it to describe those who simultaneously do not fit (as in the nationalist claims that traditional Maya do not belong in modern Guatemala) and who refuse to be assimilated (the Maya proudly proclaim their difference). I develop this elsewhere (Nelson 1999).

31. The *Iximulew* editorial is followed by an article on Mayan women's clothing and tradition, arguing that "while some details have changed, the weavings worn by *mujeres Mayas* today are almost exactly like the clothing seen in the stele and codices of the Classic Mayan civilizations" (CECMA 1996:2). In other articles and interviews with Mayan men, *Iximulew* repeatedly connects the *mujer Maya* to the past, to tradition, and thus to culture. "She is just now waking up to modernity," says an interviewed Mayan leader; "She is valued in the communities as priestess, midwife, and mother," says another (CECMA 1996:3).

32. Mies (1990) writes that women's creative labor is often coded simply as "handicrafts" and "supplemental" to household production, a leisure time activity.

33. A recent study suggests that 60 percent of Guatemalan women remain functionally illiterate and that 80 percent of that group are rural Mayan women (Garzaro 2000a:12).

34. Once again, the *mujer Maya* prosthesis supports Mayan identity by defining it against ladino identity (brown women saving brown men from ladinoization). The limited ethnographic description that deals with gender at all also leans on this serenely complementary *mujer Maya* to describe Mayan communities as different from ladino. For example, Wilson (1995), who admits that gender segregation did not allow him to speak with many women, relies heavily on this trope. Maynard (1974), Paul (1974), and Smith (1995) all argue that Mayan women are comparatively better off than ladina women, at least as long as they perform their appointed roles in the community and gender system. Carol Delaney (1991) has beautifully untangled the gendered power differentials in systems of apparent complementarity, as does Stephen (1991). Hendrickson (1996) suggests that studies of women's issues are generally devalued, both in Guatemala activist circles and U.S. academia, which may be why anthropologists lean on this already constituted image of the complementary *mujer Maya*. This is a prosthetic relationship and as such may have strange and transformative effects. Thanks to Erich Fox Tree for discussion of this complex topic.

35. There is also the double bind of being interviewed by a foreign woman, which may be overdetermined by a reluctance to criticize one's organization to an outsider. Interviews were often held in office situations, where any complaints might be overheard.

and of course, I was asking questions informed by my concerns with the specificities of gender identification that may not have resonated with their experiences and consciousness. In 1998 when I presented this paper to Kaq'chi, a new organization of Mayan women, in a private and neutral space, the critiques (while still sympathetic to the Mayan project) came thick and fast.

36. The 1996 yearly report of the National Indigenous and Peasant Coordination (CONIC), an organization situated on the cusp of Mayan activism and popular organizing, admits that "despite our efforts we continue to fail in our work with women. We continue to suffer deficiencies in terms of the remarks made at last year's assembly, which argued that men are refusing to allow women to increase their participation."

37. A similar relation obtains between popular or revolutionary organizations and international solidarity, as well as between the representatives of the Guatemalan national state and international representatives of governments, finance capital, business, the U.N., and so on.

38. Through these hours of interaction, over time and in ways colored by both resentment and interest, scholars are partially incorporated into these body images. In later conversations with members of the ALMG, Dr. Cojti, and others (and through presentations at Mayan studies conferences and other venues in Guatemala) we discussed issues of gender in changing ways. Rather than seeing their comments as knee-jerk racism I began to understand the complexities of gender for wounded bodies. As I shared my changing views with them (not simply publishing critiques in English and in foreign journals) what had been antagonistic discussions became much more civil but still lumpy. Overcoming distance (as in between where we gather information and where we present analysis) is an integral part of prosthetic relationality.

39. This term is Mark Driscoll's who is both theorizing and practicing this concept (2000). See also Nelson 1999.

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